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SUBJECT REVIEWS

Greek Literature

When I reviewed Daniel Harris-McCoy's text, translation and commentary on Artemidorus' *Oneirocritica* (*G&R* 60 [2013], 318–19), I never dreamed that eight years later I would be reviewing two more books on Artemidorus – or, rather, a co-ordinated pair of them. It would be an uncharitable joke to describe Harris-McCoy's translation as a nightmare: even so, I was not alone among reviewers in judging it unidiomatic and often defective. Martin Hammond's characteristically fluent, lucid, and (importantly) accurate translation is supplied with notes on the Greek text and an outstandingly useful sixty-two-page index; Peter Thonemann contributes an informative introduction and explanatory notes on the content.[1]

Felicitous reciprocity has in turn made it possible for Thonemann's concise and informative monograph on dream interpretation to quote Artemidorus from Hammond's translation.[2] In his opening chapter, Thonemann entertainingly exploits the opening scene of Aristophanes' *Wasps* as a way of introducing and illustrating the practice of dream interpretation and the consultation of interpreters (1–6). That's a clever start, though it has the possible downside that every dream that follows will inevitably seem less entertaining – until, that is, we come across the man who dreamed of feeding bread and cheese to his penis (62). The study of dream interpretation turns out to reveal a great deal about Artemidorus' social, cultural, and intellectual environment. Consider, for example, Thonemann's brief commentary on personhood (43), or the disjunction between Artemidorus' 'fairly coherent set of practical rules' (43) and his seemingly total lack of interest in how or why dream interpretation works (45). Thonemann goes to great lengths to situate Artemidorus in a context, and to explicate the practice of dream interpretation in relation to its social and cultural background; the chapter on the range of Artemidorus' reading is also illuminating. Between them, Hammond and Thonemann have furnished us with an outstanding resource.

Five years ago, I reviewed Oliver Taplin's four tragedies of Sophocles (*G&R* 63 [2016], 119–20) with an uncharacteristic degree of enthusiasm. His translations, I reported, not only rose to 'the challenge of performable translation', but also outshone 'all the other versions that I have to hand and (I would guess) those that I don't'; I declared them 'deeply rewarding'. Taplin has now delivered the three remaining

[1] *Artemidorus. The Interpretation of Dreams*. Translated by Martin Hammond. With an introduction and notes by Peter Thonemann. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020. Paperback £10.99, ISBN: 978-0-19-879795-1.

[2] *An Ancient Dream Manual. Artemidorus' The Interpretation of Dreams*. By Peter Thonemann. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020. Hardback £20, ISBN: 978-0-19-884382-5.

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Sophoclean tragedies.[3] So how well do they live up to their predecessors? My enthusiasm is undiminished. What tragedy typically does, according to Taplin, is

to set up a complex and inextricable combination of strong emotion and challenging thought across a range of human experience in order to reach towards making some kind of sense out of human suffering. The fusion of emotion and cognitive engagement produce form, perceptible shape expressed in movement, poetry, and music. (xii)

An admirable formulation. Taplin's approach to translation demands 'abandoning the safe pedestrian homogeneity that is the hallmark of so many modern translations': 'poetry', he maintains, 'calls for poetry, or, at the very least, for crafted verse' (xxvii). He aspires to verse that 'makes the speech "listenable" as well speakable': 'Plain homogenous lines do not sustain attention: for Sophocles' spoken lines to come alive in English, some strangeness is needed, some twist, some grit' (xxx). So here is a brief sample:

> *You need to know the common people stand*
> *in fear of you, in case they might say things*
> *that you would not be pleased to hear.*
> *For me, though, it's still possible to listen to*
> *what's said in secret, and it's this:*
> *the city's filled with sorrow for this girl*
> *because, most undeservedly of women,*
> *she is due to die most horribly –*
> *and yet for highly admirable deeds.*
> *She is the one who did not let*
> *her slaughtered brother lie unburied,*
> *left for mutilation by wild dogs or crows –*
> *so does she not deserve a crown of golden honour?* (*Ant.* 690–9)

Taken together, these two volumes are a notable achievement.

When I then took a look at *Agamemnon*, the latest volume in David Stuttard's *Looking at...* series,[4] it occurred to me that my reviews of earlier volumes had always been focused on the essays, and that I had never given the translations more than passing attention. That neglect is underserved. Consider, for example, this eloquent version of a profoundly moving passage of Aeschylean choral song:

> *Ares, chancellor of war,*
> *gold-dealer, dealing corpses in exchange for living men,*
> *spear-shaft scales poised breathless in the balance of the battle,*
> *sends home heavy gold-dust from the fires of Troy,*
> *dry dust worth so many tears,*

[3] *Sophocles. Antigone and Other Tragedies*. Translated by Oliver Taplin. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020. Pp. xl + 223. Hardback £20, ISBN: 978-0-19-928624-9.

[4] *Looking at Agamemnon*. Edited by David Stuttard. London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. Pp. viii + 288. Hardback £85, ISBN: 978-1-3501-4953-3.

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and where there once were men he packs their ashes
tidily, efficiently in urns.
And so they mourn them, and they praise them
this man had such skill in battle
this man fell so nobly,
butchered for another's wife.
Such words as these are snarled in silence,
and so grief, cold and resentful slithers,
coils against the two commanders, the Atreidae.
And others, brave and beautiful,
lie buried there beneath the walls.
The soil of Troy enfolds them,
and so they lie forever in an enemy's embrace. (437–55)

As for the accompanying essays, there are twelve of them, ranging from eight perfunctory (and poorly edited) pages to twenty unnecessarily expansive pages. Alan Sommerstein needs only ten compact pages to deliver an illuminating analysis of the *parodos* ('Agamemnon at Aulis: Hard Choice or No Choice?') in economical and tightly argued prose, seasoned with dry wit and spiced with a crushing putdown of Denys Page: what more could one ask for? Robert Garland's 'Agency in *Agamemnon*' makes a good companion to Sommerstein; Michael Carroll's 'Wealth and Injustice' and Anna Uhlig's 'Similes and Other Likenesses' also stand out; Rush Rehm's 'Unnatural Cycles' concludes with a striking contemporary application. This, with perhaps one exception, is a rewarding volume, and the play's linguistic and conceptual challenges generate some appropriately dense and chewy thought and writing. And, as an unexpected bonus, Stuttard's description of the *aulos* as 'a wind instrument rather like the modern oboe or the Armenian duduk' (7) sent me to Wikipedia: 'the duduk or tsiranapogh, which means "apricot-made wind instrument", is an ancient Armenian double reed woodwind instrument made of apricot wood. It is indigenous to Armenia.' Unfortunately, duduk performances in YouTube give the impression that the instrument is incapable of anything beyond a tediously melancholy or 'meditative' tempo. I suspect that the YouTube sample is misleadingly skewed, but would welcome positive evidence that the duduk can match the *aulos* in energetic vigour.

Athenian, democratic, and Dionysian: such, in living memory, were the recognized trademarks of Greek theatre. But recently that construct has been increasingly eroded under critical scrutiny. Readers of the last set of reviews may recall Eric Csapo and Peter Wilson's data-led demonstration in *Greek Drama V. Studies in the Theatre of the Fifth and Fourth Centuries* BCE (*G&R* 68 [2021], 114–15) that 'it would be a serious mistake to fall back on the assumption that. . .the only contexts that really matter for interpreting drama or any other form of theatre culture in this period are democracy and Athens'. Kathryn Bosher's distinctive contribution to this trend has been to view Greek theatrical history from the perspective of Sicily and southern Italy – a project developed in her Michigan doctoral dissertation, 'Theater on the Periphery: A Social and Political History of Theater in Early Sicily' (2006); her edited volume *Theater Outside Athens. Drama in Greek Sicily and South Italy* (2012); and a crop of significant

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articles and book chapters. In the opening chapter of *Greek Theater in Ancient Sicily*,[5] Bosher acknowledges the challenges that her project faces:

> This effort is fraught with difficulties, not least the lacunose and fragmentary evidence and the relative paucity of extant literary material from plays performed in Sicily. The tale I narrate and the conclusions I draw are provisional and no doubt full of errors of interpretation. Nevertheless, despite the still raw and preliminary character of the book, I offer it here as an attempt to recuperate some of the qualities of a theater scene that inspired so many Sicilian artists to record it on vases and Sicilian tyrants to shelter and celebrate it in monumental theaters. (12–13)

Unsurprisingly, Chapter 2 begins with the fragmentary remnants of Epicharmus and the evidence for a thriving early literary culture in Sicily, and for comic competitions. Chapter 3 demonstrates that Dionysus did not have the dominant role in Sicilian drama that we recognize in Athens, but argues that there is also no strong evidence for giving Demeter a correspondingly dominant role in Sicilian drama: 'the archaeological evidence for a link between Demeter and theaters in Sicily is not very strong' (42). Chapter 4, on 'Politics and Propaganda', shows that autocracy, as well as democracy, can foster theatrical culture (see Csapo and Wilson above). Chapter 5, on images of comedy and tragedy on vases, and Chapter 6, on Sicilian theatres, shift the focus to the more fully documented fourth century. Athenocentricity is still contested: there is no implication that 'theater in fourth-century Sicily was suddenly sparked into life by the introduction of new plays and Athenian models' (107). This is a rich and complex book, written with an acute awareness of the fragility of (especially) the earlier stages of the story. The last footnote of Chapter 5 acknowledges this, and concludes: 'in future research, I hope to take up some of these questions more thoroughly' (159, n. 66). Sadly, Bosher did not have that opportunity: her most recent book was also her last, posthumously edited by Edith Hall and Clemente Marconi.

Hanna Roisman's *Tragic Heroines in Ancient Greek Drama*[6] is designed to introduce students to Greek tragedy ('Greek drama' in the title is misleading) through eleven chapters, each devoted to a single 'heroine'. Chapters typically begin with a grey explanatory box summarizing 'the mythic background' and giving an outline of the play. There is then an introduction, followed by a series of topical segments; a conclusion; and a set of discussion topics. Other explanatory boxes are provided as required. What we are to count as a single heroine is strangely unstable in Roisman's book: Clytaemnestra(s) is/are variously treated as a single entity spread over multiple plays ('in the six plays in which Clytaemnestra appears, her character changes', 8–9), or as a set of unique constructs ('each tragedian constructs a complex character for Clytaemnestra', 17–18). 'The character [*sing.*] so carefully crafted by the tragedians

[5] *Greek Theater in Ancient Sicily*. By Kathryn G. Bosher. Edited by Edith Hall and Clemente Marconi. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. xiv + 233. Hardback £75, ISBN: 978-1-108-49387-1.

[6] *Tragic Heroines in Ancient Greek Drama*. By Hanna M. Roisman. London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. Pp. x + 314. Hardback £75, ISBN: 978-1-3501-0398-6; paperback £24.99, ISBN: 978-1-3501-0399-3.

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[*pl.*]' implausibly suggests a collaborative effort on the part of the tragedians; but that is confusingly at odds with the singularity of 'the complex character created by Aeschylus' (18). The claim for complexity is in turn subverted by a fixation on 'feminine and masculine traits' (8), which results in some crude gender stereotyping: 'lack of remorse is a masculine characteristic' (9), whereas Electra is 'a highly feminine young woman' (9). There are plenty of questionable judgements. 'Bringing a concubine to cohabit with a wife was not acceptable' (20): not acceptable to whom, when, under what circumstances? 'Antigone's act is not explicitly assessed by anyone' (134): Haemon, as I recall, is quite outspoken on the topic. 'What does the loss of Polydorus signify to Hecuba?' (177): a strange question to pose to the mother of a murdered son. 'Do you think that Deianeira is merely a pawn in the hands of the gods' (206): which god or gods? Students should not be encouraged to think of 'the gods' as a collective. 'While it is likely that the chaos created by [Medea's] violence was intended as commentary on human nature, it is impossible to know whether Euripides was also commenting on any contemporary affairs affecting Athens' (211–12): but what value could one possibly extract from a 'commentary on human nature' based on such a highly atypical instance of human nature? I did not warm to the book's two concluding paragraphs on 'the messages of tragedy' (274–5).

The number of books I receive for potential review is significantly greater than the number that I have time to read; and the number that I have time to read is greater than the number that I can possibly review. Some books, therefore, must be put (not always with regret) to one side. On the face of it, then, a large and weighty book on the relationship between two early Aegean writing systems (Linear A and Linear B) was an unlikely candidate for review. But *Aegean Linear Script(s). Rethinking the Relationship between Linear A and Linear B*[7] somehow caught my attention, not least for the multiple and seemingly insuperable challenges it faced: 'the main reasons why LA still resists decipherment are the paucity of evidence, the limited (and apparently formulaic) vocabulary and syntax, and the lack of any agreed cognate language' (7, n. 20). Ester Salgarella ultimately concludes that 'it would be more sensible and productive to think of LA and LB no longer as two separate scripts. . .but rather as one single script, which underwent slight modifications over time to accommodate the needs of another language. It is here proposed to refer to this script as the "Aegean Linear Script"'. (374): 'the script remained essentially the same, yet the language and some administrative features changed' (375). So far as I can tell (which is not, perhaps, very far), Salgarella's conclusion seems to make sense.

But if Linear A remains undeciphered and is not Greek, and Linear B is Greek but not literary, I needed to find a route back to my formal remit as Greek Literature reviewer. Fortunately, a way back presented itself: the administrative purposes for which Aegean Linear Scripts were used generated inventories and lists; inventories and lists occur in Homer; and Homer undoubtedly falls within a broad definition of

[7] *Aegean Linear Script(s). Rethinking the Relationship between Linear A and Linear B*. By Ester Salgarella. Cambridge Classical Studies. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020. Pp. xx + 416. 60 illustrations, 24 tables. Hardback £90, ISBN: 978-1-108-78347-7.

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literature. And, by happy chance, *The Cambridge Guide to Homer*[8] was one of the books from the current crop of which I was bound to take notice. I initially found the architecture of the *Guide* confusing. There are three Parts: 'Homeric Song and Text', 'The Homeric World', and 'Homer in the World'. Each part comprises a set of topical essays (the essays averaging around about 11.4 pages in Parts I and II, 16.8 pages in Part III), together with a more numerous set of short 'key topics' (around three pages on average). In addition there is a sixty-four-page bibliography and a twenty-five-page index – which are, of course, inventories or lists, as are the listings of the *Guide*'s contents, figures, and contributors (v–xxvi). Furthermore, the first page of 'Homeric Epic in Performance' (9) immediately directs us to the key topic 'Catalogues' (108–9); and the introduction to Part II ('Homeric World') directs us (223) to two related key topics, 'Catalogue of Ships: Archaeology' (312–14) and 'Catalogue of Ships: Literary Aspects' (315–17), which are also referenced from 'Homer and History' (259–60). Some references to the Catalogue of Ships (244, 268–70, 277) fail to link explicitly to that key topic. It is more understandable that passing mentions of the Hesiodic Catalogue of Women (33, 45–6, 59–60) were not integrated into the *Guide*'s inventories. Of course, the *Guide* is not simply a catalogue of catalogues: the substantive content is delivered in the twenty-three essays and ninety-two key topics. At first it was disconcerting to find that 'The *Iliad*: An Overview' (161–4) and 'The *Odyssey*: An Overview' (183–6) were short key topics, covered very briefly: surely, the poems are paramount and deserve more extensive treatment? On reflection, the rationale of the *Guide*'s architecture became clearer. The essays and the key topics are two complementary toolsets: between them they provide a scaffolding that will enable readers to develop their own autonomous understanding. I doubt whether I would have stumbled across 'Jean de Sponde and Homer' (600–2) without the serendipitous assistance of the brief entry in the *Guide*. It did take me some time to find my way round the volume, but the more I have explored its contents, the more its design has impressed me. Kudos, then, to Corinne Pache and her eighty co-contributors for this well-conceived resource.

But let us return once more to lists, catalogues, and inventories. Athena Kirk's *Ancient Greek Lists. Catalogue and Inventory Across Genres*[9] might be regarded as a compilation of ancient Greek lists. Contents, figures, acknowledgements, and abbreviations aside, Kirk's first, illustrative list in the Introduction ('The Tally of Text') is Xenophon's catalogue of forty-seven names for dogs (*Cyn*. 7.5). Given the precise enumerability of Xenophon's catalogue, I couldn't help wondering why Kirk opts instead for the gratuitously imprecise 'almost fifty'. She is, however, certainly right that

> the ancient Greeks liked lists, catalogues, inventories, enumerations. Long ones. They liked composing them, performing them, hearing them, reading them, writing them down, and cutting them into marble. They did not think they were dull or uninspired,

[8] *The Cambridge Guide to Homer*. Edited by Corinne Ondine Pache. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020. Pp. xxxvi + 697. 25 illustrations. Hardback £150, ISBN: 978-1-139-22564-9.

[9] *Ancient Greek Lists. Catalogue and Inventory Across Genres*. By Athena Kirk. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. xii + 251. 7 illustrations. Hardback £75, ISBN: 978-1-108-84113-9.

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and they probably did not skip over them when they cropped up in the midst of a perfectly good narrative sequence. (1)

But, even more than that, 'in the ancient Greek world, the list in its many manifestations became the recognizable mode of expressing quantifiable and lasting value in contexts sometimes lacking standards' (2). Or should that be 'the list in *many of its* manifestations became *a* recognizable mode of expressing quantifiable and lasting value in contexts sometimes lacking standards'? The implied exclusivity in making the list *the* mode of expressing value is a very strong claim, in need of justification: but no justification is offered. It is, at any rate, true that 'the sheer quantity of lists in Greek literature hints at the importance of the form' (2). In Chapter 1 Kirk addresses 'A Number of Things', namely 'Homeric Catalogue, Numerical Authority, and the Uncountable'; in Chapter 2, 'Exchange Value in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*'; in Chapter 3, 'Inquiry as Inventory in Herodotus'; in Chapter 4, the 'Stone Treasuries: Apodictic Inscribed Inventory'; in Chapter 5, 'Citizens Who Count: Aristophanes' Documentary Poetics' (note the cute equivocation); Chapter 6: 'Unified Infinities, Catalogic Chronotopes: Disordering Lists in Early Hellenistic Poetry' – at which point, I confess, I had to replenish my depleted store of question marks. For example: what exactly is a 'catalogic chronotope'? Unfortunately, Kirk's preference is to sidestep the demands of explanatory precision in favour of ambivalent gestures: 'what we *might* call an *apeiron*-effect'; 'what we *might* call chronotopic fantasies' (41, 188; my emphasis). Well, we might, or we might not: does Kirk not have a determinate opinion, however tentative, one way or the other to share with us? But my criticisms should not be overstated. Kirk's book is sophisticated, eloquent, stimulating, challenging, and often illuminating; it opened up lines of enquiry that had not occurred to me before. Even so, I would have been happier if its creative originality had taken a more precise and disciplined form.

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Latin Literature

These have been good years for Ennius *perennis*. A couple of years on from his Loeb renewal,[1] two superb books keep the lifeblood pulsing. *Ennius' Annals. Poetry and History*, edited by Cynthia Damon and Joseph Farrell, is a masterclass of a conference volume.[2] The lucid introduction, a sort of 'Whither Ennius?', powerfully situates it in the receding wake of Otto Skutsch's monumental edition and the fresher waves of

[1] S.M. Goldberg and G. Manuwald (eds. and trans.), *Fragmentary Republican Latin. Ennius. Testimonia, Epic Fragments*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA, 2018); I said something about it in *G&R* 66.1 (2019), 118–20.

[2] *Ennius' Annals. Poetry and History*. Edited by Cynthia Damon and Joseph Farrell. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020. Pp. xiii + 351. Hardback £90, ISBN: 978-1-108-48172-4.

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