through on the points he enumerates. The possibilities of the complexities that he identifies are never fully explored. Ultimately, the work exposes just how troublesome we still find discussing sex. As always, handling the sources remains the problem. W. knows (as we all do) that they are not mimetic. Yet it would be equally wrong to regard them as divorced from the *realia* of the world; self-contained products of their own particular genre. Such a view does disservice to the literature it seeks not to violate. For if we elevate the literary, we run the risk of depriving it of any weight on earth. Literature must have an effect in conditioning the way its consumers think and behave—both for good and evil. It choreographs transgressive action as much as providing a vocabulary for transgressive thought. We run the risk of losing all sense of agency. We can unearth the script. However, we fool ourselves if we think this equates to the performance. There is a rich level that runs alongside the discursive. W. is very good at taking us into the mouths of the *fellatores*. We still await a book that takes us into their heads.

University of Reading ALASTAIR BLANSHARD

PAST TIMES

G. Cajani, D. Lanza (edd.): *L'antico degli antichi*. Pp. 181, ills. Rome: Palumbo, 2001. Paper, €15.49. ISBN: 88-8020-298-7.

The study of the past has taken a new and productive turn of late. Historicism, guided by the nineteenth-century imperative to know the past *wie es eigentlich gewesen*, has turned in on itself. The guiding problem is no longer simply to know what the past is or was, but also to know what it is or was to have a past. More and more, scholars are turning to the way antiquity conceived its own history. And more and more, it is becoming apparent that our sense of the past is shaped by its sense of its own past. Witness the recent explosion of studies on Pausanias, antiquarianism, nostalgia, pilgrimage and tourism, cults and revivals, of new forms of palimpsestic histories, not to mention the booming interest in the history of classical studies—for example, to mention just a few, J. Boardman, *The Archaeology of Nostalgia: How the Greeks Re-created their Mythical Past* (London, 2001); S. E. Alcock, *Archaeologies of the Greek Past: Landscape, Monuments and Memories* (Cambridge, 2002); S. E. Alcock, J. F. Cherry, and J. Elsner (edd.), *Pausanias: Travel and Memory in Roman Greece* (New York, 2001); and on the modern side, L. Barkan, *Unearthing the Past* (New Haven, 1999); A. Schnapp, *The Discovery of the Past* (London, 1996). No longer unidimensional, linear, and progressive, history appears like a cascade of Chinese boxes, each moment containing its own tightly packed historical pasts within itself.

When did antiquity discover itself? The present collection of essays does not exactly set out to answer this question, but it does make an interesting go at it from twelve perspectives. The result of a Franco-Italian conference in Pavia in 1999, the essays are of uneven quality, and generally cleave too closely to the conference format to do more than skim over a vast area. But all raise important issues, and collectively they will probably be best remembered for the title that brings them together, which marks a new intensification of the problem of how antiquity responded to its internal pasts.

C. Darbo-Peschanski lays out some of the categories by which an ancient sense of historicity might be conceived and investigated today. As the objects of historical focus change, the nature of what counts as a historical event likewise changes over time.

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Does history have a beginning, a development, and an end? Not always, as the author well shows. But neither is it obvious that the ancient sense of historicity can be traced along a straight developmental line. Myth passes into history, but myth persists even in a historical age, and history is incipient even in myth: how does mythical time function in the later periods? A simple categorization of historical consciousness over a millennium that discovers teleological history for the first time in the Stoics is not convincing, but stating the need to think through such categories is. D. Bouvier has a fascinating essay that begins with Plato's critique, in the *Timaeus*, of the Greeks' shallow sense of historical time, and then seeks to trace this blindness in a backward progression, via the fifth-century historians, into Homer's idealization of the past, which in turn is read as having somehow retarded historical awareness for centuries to come. Whether this hypothesis is true is one thing; how we could ever know it was, is quite another. Similarly, it seems unfair to ask why Herodotus and Thucydides were unable to figure out just how little information they had to rely on when guessing at how much time stood between themselves and the heroic age (p. 59), when it is not clear that we have done, or could do, any better today.

F. Bertolini nicely re-emphasizes, following Parry, how the very nature of the epic language would have conveyed a sense of the strange and the archaic to the Greek ear, without however citing any evidence from antiquity. For starters, one might compare Dio's confrontation with the barbaric Iliadic types during his exile in Borysthenes. F. Gregorio looks at Aristotle's *Politics* to uncover the Stagirite's attitude to the past, though perhaps at the risk of hypostasizing this concept in Aristotle and of overgeneralizing on the basis of a single work. M. Vegetti offers a subtle reading of Galen's notion of 'ancients', which can be complex. The impulse to classicism and to a reverence for earlier authority in Galen are tempered by his awareness of deficiencies in his classical forebears (for example, in their descriptive language, which could be vague and unscientific). While generally ill-disposed to the modern neoterics (his professional rivals), Galen is also committed to scientific progress. These conflicting impulses get harmonized in a pattern that is doubtless symptomatic of other Second Sophistic thinkers: the past is invoked to validate an ongoing project and to guarantee a continuity with the present, even as it functions as a shield against unwanted influences in the present (one's competitors, a multiethnic world, creeping decadence, and so on). The present could thus be both new and old at the same time. 'Antiquity' is a two-edged weapon indeed, and one suspects that Galen's rivals would have characterized him in much the same terms as he characterizes them.

Some of that conflictedness is palpable in Lucian, who can be admiring and depreciative of 'classical' authors in the past and of slavish classicizing in the present, as G. Raina notes, and in Pseudo-Longinus' wish to transcend his contemporaneity by submitting himself to the judgement of the great writers of the past, as G. Cajani notes. The topos of *mimêsis kai zêlôsis* is obvious in both authors, and a little more digging beneath the surface might have revealed more. E. Romano observes a certain relativity and inexactitude in the notion of any antiquity, which in the writings of late Republican authors, at least, is tinged with a double-edged awareness that time obliterates as well as preserves—a sobering and qualifying factor for anyone keen to model the present on what came before. G. Mazzoli takes on the formidable and gripping topic of mythical prehistory among the poets (here, Catullus and Lucretius), and rightly notes how the passage from prehistory to history is felt as 'traumatic', an agonizing transition into *dolor* and *nefas*, and a rude confrontation with human anthropology. This observation can be extended back to the dim recollections of the first epic poets, as R. Scodel has shown (*HSCP* 1982). Prehistory seems to have had a

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subtle traumatic afterlife in a wide range of poets, and this tradition would be worth piecing together again. Its presence in a volume about antiquity in antiquity is very welcome indeed.

Living proof that 'antiquity' is a relative concept is to be found in Isidore's view of the past, for whom Church Fathers are modern ('nostri') classical *auctores*, Socrates an expositor of Stoic moral doctrine, and Democritus a follower of the Academic skeptics, while the truest core of canonical classical authors consists of six Greek writers, from Thales to Xenophon. In the encyclopedic imagination of late antiquity, F. Gasti shows, 'antiquity' is a shorthand, paradoxically, for a pagan past that one no longer understands: here antiquity has truly become antiquated, and yet—whether despite or for that reason—is all the more valuable. The volume concludes with two essays in iconography. One, by E. Calandra, is relevant: it describes Roman imperial portraiture as a palimpsestic and almost 'archaeological' undertaking, containing a sedimented stratigraphy of representational layers, each recalling different pasts. The model is attractive, but just how confident can we be about its preciseness? The other, by M. Harari, resulted from an avowed misunderstanding of the call for papers, but nonetheless illustrates nicely, *e contrario*, how productive a focus antiquity's antiquities can be, and how unidimensional a straight iconography of Pygmies on Greek vaseware can in contrast be. Its inclusion in the volume, which in other respects is a useful guide to a growing trend, is strange.

University of Michigan JAMES I. PORTER

COMMENTING ON COMMENTARIES

W. Geerlings, C. Schulze (edd.): *Der Kommentar in Antike und Mittelalter. Beiträge zu seiner Erforschung*. (Clavis Commentariorum Antiquitatis et Medii Aevi 2.) Pp. vii + 371, ills. Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 2002. Cased, €100/$116. ISBN: 90-04-12528-0.

This volume is a collection of lectures presented in the context of the 'Graduiertenkolleg "der Kommentar in Antike und Mittelalter" ' in Bochum. The papers represent the full spectrum of commentary activity in antiquity: patristic and Hebrew commentaries, pagan literary exegesis, philosophical and medical commentaries (taking into account Greek, Latin, and Arabic traditions). In spite of some strong contributions, the volume is somewhat disappointing: many papers are introductory in nature, a number of them sadly underdocumented and lacking sufficient bibliography (e.g. Geerlings, Luppe). The English of non-native speakers has not been corrected. The general index, which could have done much to increase the usefulness of the collection, is particularly sad: it is apparently the result of a request of the editors to the contributors to send in a list of items. These were then simply pasted together. As a result, it contains items in three languages and is completely unreliable. For example, under 'commentaire', one finds the inherently unlikely reference to pp. 133–4 and 149–50 only. There are no lemmata for 'commentary' and 'Kommentar', but under the letter F one finds 'Funktion eines Kommentars', which, again according to the index, is only dealt with on pp. 335–6. There is no general introduction, just a one-page 'Vorwort' which announces that 'Randbereiche des Themas' have also been taken into account, with special mention of the paper by Lucie Dolezalova: reference is to a particularly disastrous piece with

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