Greece & Rome, 62.2 218–265 © The Classical Association (2015)

SUBJECT REVIEWS

Greek Literature

In the latest Cambridge Green and Yellow Homer, Angus Bowie tackles *Odyssey* 13–14,[1] intent on 'rescuing the reputation of these books' (ix): a worthy project, to which he makes a significant contribution. He has good things to say on the dovetailing of the two parts of the epic, and provides illuminating analyses of some of the conversations in Book 14. He places particular stress on the major roles given to lower-status characters, in which he discerns 'a new type of epic' (16) – a phrase qualified by a cautious question mark. Caution is abandoned, however, when he goes on to say that 'the ideology of the *Odyssey*. . .represents a parity of status of the rich and poor' (22): the hyperbolic 'parity' distracts from a valid underlying point. As in his commentary on Herodotus 8 (*G&R* 56 [2009], 99), Bowie is generous in providing linguistic support. In this case, perhaps over-generous: is the attention paid to historical linguistics disproportionate to student needs? It is true that 'if one has an idea of how linguistic forms and constructions came about, they are more comprehensible and so easier to learn and retain' (ix); my own Greek teacher applied the principle to good effect – but less relentlessly, and with a lighter touch. (The introductory section on Homeric language has four subsections, the third of which has up to five nested sublevels: incorrect cross-references in the glossary under 'grade' and 'laryngeal' suggest that even Bowie struggled with this elaborate hierarchy.) Some points are forced. When the Phaeacians put Odysseus ashore asleep in a blanket, Bowie comments: 'Od. is treated almost like a tiny child coming swaddled into the world for the first time; again, the idea of a new start is evoked' (117): I am not a qualified midwife, but am fairly sure that babies do not come into the world ready-wrapped and slumbering soundly. In his note on 13.268 Bowie cites three passages in the *Iliad* in which ambush 'is presented as a cowardly tactic': one is about the use of distance weapons, not ambush (11.365–95), while the other two celebrate the target's victory without reference to the ambushers' courage or lack of it (4.391–8, 6.188–90). Ambushes are hard to execute successfully, and therefore dangerous. That is why the best men are chosen for operations of this kind (6.188–90, 13.276–86), and why Achilles is not paying Agamemnon a compliment when he claims that he takes no part in them (1.227–8).

When Aris & Phillips published the first volume of its selected fragmentary Sophoclean plays, my admiration was qualified only by an awareness of the uncertainties that beset the reconstruction of lost plays (*G&R* 54 [2007], 112–13). The second

[1] *Homer. Odyssey Books XIII and XIV*. Edited with a commentary by A.M. Bowie. Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. xii + 258. Hardback £55, ISBN: 978-0-521-76354-7; paperback £19.99, ISBN: 978-0-521-15938-8.

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S001738351500008X Published online by Cambridge University Press

(final) volume,[2] containing *Epigoni*, *Oenomaus*, *Palamedes*, the two *Nauplius* plays, *Shepherds*, and *Triptolemus* (some titles from the provisional plan having been dropped or deferred to other publications), merits the same balance of admiration with critical caution. We owe a debt of gratitude to the publisher for taking on this enterprising and valuable project, and its Euripidean counterpart, as well as to the scholars who have executed it so successfully. The publisher might, however, be more prompt in despatching review copies: this volume, published in 2012, reached me at the beginning of 2015.

So did Judith Mossman's *Medea*, published in 2011.[3] I am not the bearer of good news, therefore – but only because this commentary's excellence is by now well known. I shall instead try to ease the conscience of a commentator who admits to being 'guiltily aware' of including 'more. . .than most undergraduates and sixth formers will need (or want)' (vii). This volume is indeed notably heftier than others in the series: has it succumbed to the risks attending mission creep on which I recently remarked (*G&R* 61 [2014], 263–4)? In this case, communicative effectiveness has not been degraded by enrichment of content. Mossman does not amass heaps of information without explaining their significance, and does not assume that a commentator's duty is adequately discharged by strings of references to other books which the target readership is unlikely to have to hand. She explains clearly, and in a sensible order, all that readers with modest aspirations think they need; and her accessible treatment of more demanding material greatly increases the likelihood of those readers coming to want more than they thought they needed. The commentary on Medea's great monologue, for example, addresses the text-critical issues with exemplary clarity and succeeds in showing why these questions matter. Among much that is good in Mossman's approach to the play, I particularly admired her critique of the 'masculinized' Medea so prominent in recent scholarship; her comments on Medea's comparison of giving birth with standing in the line of battle are excellent. Since the explanation of Aegeus' presence in Corinth at that particular time is unrelated to Medea's quandary, Mossman's response to Aristotle's claim that the Aegeus scene is 'irrational' (*Poet.* 25, 1461b19–21) fails: these events are not necessary or probable consequences of any single beginning. Saying that 'Aegeus *has* to meet Medea' (280) invites a retort which Aristotle has already made (24, 1460a34–5). She is on much stronger ground when she argues that Aristotle is wrong to say that Euripides makes no *use* of the irrationality.

Looking at Medea[4] culminates in David Stuttard's translation, the rhythm and phrasing of which makes it eminently performable ('How little these men know. I'd rather stand my ground three times in battle, in the shield-line, than endure the agonies of childbirth once'). Stuttard's introduction is less successful. His allegorization ('Aegeus, the representative of Athens, invites the plague, that is Medea. . .to take up residence in

[2] *Sophocles. Selected Fragmentary Plays. Volume II*. Edited with translation and commentary by A. H. Sommerstein and T. H. Talboy. Oxford, Aris & Phillips, 2012. Pp. viii + 294. Hardback £50, ISBN: 978-0-8566-8887-4; paperback £24.99, ISBN: 978-0-8566-8892-8.

[3] *Euripides. Medea*. Edited with translation and commentary by Judith Mossman. Aris & Phillips Classical Texts. Oxford, Aris & Phillips, 2011. Pp. viii + 392. Hardback £50, ISBN: 978-0-8566-8783-9; paperback £24.99, ISBN: 978-0-8566-8788-4.

[4] *Looking at Medea. Essays and a Translation of Euripides' Tragedy*. Edited by David Stuttard. London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2014. Pp. xii + 219. Hardback £60, ISBN: 978-1-4725-2772-1; paperback £18.99, ISBN: 978-1-4725-3051-6.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S001738351500008X Published online by Cambridge University Press

Athens'; 8) carries no conviction, and not only because it requires Euripides and/or his audience to be prescient of something that (on Stuttard's own admission) was unforeseeable. Between introduction and translation twelve scholars contribute essays on aspects of the play. These vary greatly in length (*c.*2,500–*c.*8,000 words) and level of annotation; one has a profusion of exclamation marks which, though perhaps meant to engage non-specialist readers, seems patronizing. Ian Ruffell and Sophie Mills achieve interesting angles by focusing on the nurse and choral collusion respectively; Richard Rutherford is excellent on the play's ending. But Ioanna Karamanou's argument that the plays of Euripides' 431 production are 'conceptually related' by 'key notions of otherness and exile' prompts the question: with the help of concepts so vague, could not the same be said of any arbitrary set of three tragedies? (Mossman addresses this question much more persuasively.) Hannah Roisman's claim that 'Euripides. . .takes the logic of revenge to its extremity, forcing the audience to see the full implications of their conviction that revenge is the right response to an affront' (116) is wildly unrealistic (how could Euripides 'force' his audience to draw any conclusion?) and shows a weak grasp of logic: the implicit assumption that approving *any* instance of X logically entails the approval of *all* instances of X is absurd (meat-eaters are not logically committed to endorsing cannibalism). Not for the first time (see *G&R* 54 [2007], 256; *G&R* 58 [2011], 110), nonchalant fact-checking leads Edith Hall into error: 'the realm of the unseen and the divine which the Greeks called "beyond the physical"' (140) gives a false impression both of the currency of the phrase *meta ta phusika* and of what the small number of Greeks who did use the phrase meant by it.

Not before time, *Hecabe* has taken its place in Bloomsbury's Companions to Greek and Roman Tragedy.[5] An admirable economy of style enables Helene Foley to be very informative about the play itself, and still have room for two chapters on reception – a huge improvement on the perfunctory or overcrowded treatments of reception in many volumes of this series. The first of these chapters provides a high-level overview of the history of the play's interpretation, demonstrating its hermeneutical significance; the other focuses on the play's more recent performance history. Even the opening chapter, on 'the play and its context', embraces both its fifth-century context and its modern significance. I do have some reservations. A paragraph on 'the problem of unity' (29–30) should have made it clear that Aristotle *commends* plots in which events, though causally related, are not predictable (*Poet.* 9, 1452a3–4). Important text-critical issues are mentioned, if at all, in passing (37). The segregation of the chorus into its own (very brief) chapter is disappointing. A promised discussion of the return of the winds (36) turns out to consist of two unanswered questions (58). That is a major lacuna: the answers to those questions are crucial for how one understands the structure of the plot and the meaning of the events that unfold. This evasion, and the failure to highlight the series of reflections on the gods which runs through the play (*Hec.* 488–91, 798–805, 957–60), perhaps show the limits of Foley's ethico-political emphasis. Even so, this is a book that I shall strongly recommend to my students when I next teach this play.

[5] *Euripides. Hecuba*. By Helene P. Foley. Companions to Greek and Roman Tragedy. London, Bloomsbury, 2015. Pp. xiv + 146. 5 b/w illustrations. Hardback £50, ISBN: 978-1-4725-6907-3; paperback £16.99; ISBN: 978-1-4725-6906-6.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S001738351500008X Published online by Cambridge University Press

There are, as Agnieszka Kotlinska-Toma observes, two main reasons for writing a book on Hellenistic tragedy:[6] the subject is 'exceptionally interesting' (xii), and there is a 'gap in the history of ancient drama' that needs to be filled (xiii). The formulation of these reasons comes after two-and-a-half laboured pages on Hellenistic tragedy's neglect and disrepute; in Chapter 1, eight-and-a-half pages precede the introduction of 'the first important issue to be examined' (9). The prolix and poorly structured presentation is one thing that makes this book frustrating; the other (due to inadequate evidence, rather than any failure on the author's part) is the scarcity of interesting answers to the questions asked. The initial chapter of 'general observations' is followed by a catalogue of Hellenistic tragedians and tragedies, and chapters on tragedies with biblical themes and the staging of Hellenistic tragedy. The catalogue includes a text (without apparatus) and translation of the testimonia and fragments. Signs of carelessness range from *peripatheia* (17; presumably for *peripeteia*) to a mix-up between *Bacchae* and *Suppliants* (232). This gap-filling book cannot be ignored; its shortcomings are therefore all the more regrettable.

Alan Sommerstein makes a second appearance, dressed this time in green and yellow, with an edition of Menander's *Samia*:[7] 'the first full-scale edition with English commentary', according to the blurb. A characteristic combination of precise, lucid thought with orderly exposition makes Sommerstein an ideal guide to the dramatic, social, and textual questions to which this text gives rise. I am coming (gradually, I confess) to admire and enjoy Menander. Working through this commentary has given me a much sharper appreciation of the play's linguistic subtlety and ingenuity of construction (the contrived complication in Act 5 aside).

As an aid to close philological study, therefore, despite false breathings in lines 47 and 302, Sommerstein's commentary has the edge over Douglass Parker's translation.[8] On the other hand, Parker's exuberance helped me to convert the sobriety of Sommerstein's exposition into a lively sense of the play's potential as a comic performance on stage. But Aristophanes' *Peace* and *Plutus* still came out on top in Parker's consistently clever, inventive, and witty renderings. And the appended lecture on translating Aristophanes is not to be missed.

Gilbert West's eighteenth-century translation of *Olympian* 14 provides a striking gateway to Richard Stoneman's informative, and often vividly evocative, book on Pindar.[9] Stoneman provides an overview of some of the issues that arise in studying Pindar; accounts of the poet's career and the range of his poetic production; and explanations of the cultural significance of athletes and heroes, the practice of praise, and

[6] *Hellenistic Tragedy. Texts, Translations and a Critical Survey*. By Agnieszka Kotlinska-Toma. London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2015. Pp. xvi + 322. 10 figures. Hardback £70, ISBN: 978-1-4725-2421-8.

[7] *Menander. Samia*. Edited with a commentary by Alan H. Sommerstein. Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. xii + 367. Paperback £22.99, ISBN: 978-0-521-73542-1.

[8] *Aristophanes & Menander. Three Comedies. Peace. Money, the God. Samia*. Translated by Douglass Parker. Edited, with introduction and notes, by Timothy J. More. Indianapolis, IN, Hackett, 2014. Pp. xiv + 230. Hardback £40, ISBN: 978-1-62466-186-0; paperback £13.50, ISBN: 978-1-62466-185-3.

[9] *Pindar*. By Richard Stoneman. London, I.B. Tauris, 2014. Pp. xvi + 232. 10 figures, 2 maps. Hardback £39.50, ISBN: 978-1-78076-184-8; paperback £12.99, ISBN: 978-1-78076-185-5.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S001738351500008X Published online by Cambridge University Press

Pindar's narrative techniques. The final chapter is devoted to reception. Erasmus Schmid is treated with more respect than he is often accorded, though less than he deserves. Stoneman criticizes him for speaking of 'digressions', 'as if the poet were unable to control his material' (137; see also 106). But Schmid said nothing of 'digressions': he used the Latin *digressio*, a technical term of ancient rhetoric unencumbered by the baggage that has been piled on its English derivative. It is worth mentioning, too, that even if you believe in Peisistratus' 'codification' of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and imagine that it made those poems 'a kind of Athenian intellectual property', you still have no reason to suppose that the Homeric poems were 'anathema' to Pindar (155): Pindar's tendency to follow cyclic rather than Homeric versions, which Stoneman is trying to explain, is also found in Athenian tragedy. In general, though, this stimulating and readable introduction can be recommended.

Jessica Priestley investigates responses to Herodotus in the Hellenistic period,[10] from the late fourth century to the middle of the second century BC. She covers competing biographical traditions, Herodotus' importance as a source for paradoxography and geography, the impact of his account of the Persian Wars, and his status as a 'prose Homer' (this last chapter dealing mainly with sources outside the book's stated chronological scope). There is much here that I found interesting and instructive. I was worried, though, by the apparent superficiality of Priestley's acquaintance with some of the many authors she discusses. Turning to Hermogenes to understand what aspects of Herodotus' style gave rise to his categorization as 'sweet', and noting that Hermogenes' analysis of sweetness starts with thoughts, she remarks: 'it was Herodotus' subject matter, then, rather than his writing style, which is in the first instance highlighted by Hermogenes as contributing to his cisweetness"' (201). In fact, Hermogenes begins his analysis of *every* type of style with thoughts – not because he prioritizes subject matter over 'writing style' but because subject matter is an intrinsic *part* of any style of writing. When Hermogenes comments directly on Herodotus' sweetness (336.2–9 Rabe), he gives no priority to thought. Aristotle is misrepresented, too. It makes no sense to attribute an 'introspective' approach (106) to a philosopher so dedicated to empirical research in zoology. The inference which Priestley draws from her reading of the 'opening chapters' of the *Metaphysics*, that Aristotelian philosophizing 'need not involve engagement. . .with any individual apart from the individual philosophizing' (106), is refuted by the extensive engagement with the arguments of other individuals to which Aristotle devotes the rest of *Metaphysics* 1. Nor is it true to say that he takes a 'negative view' of wonder (72). Certainly, Aristotle applies *thauma* and its cognates most often to the uncomprehending amazement that is superseded when understanding is achieved. But he takes a very positive view of the joyful contemplation which understanding makes possible (*PA* 1.5, 645a4–23); and that response, even if Aristotle does not apply *his* term *thauma* to it (though note 645a17), surely falls within the scope of *our* term 'wonder'.

Koen De Temmerman's *Crafting Characters*[11] examines the techniques by which character traits are attributed to the protagonists of the five Greek novels commonly known as

[10] *Herodotus and Hellenistic Culture. Literary Studies in the Reception of the Histories*. By Jessica Priestley. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. xii + 274. Hardback £55, ISBN: 978-0-19-965309-6.

[11] *Crafting Characters. Heroes and Heroines in the Ancient Greek Novel*. By Koen De Temmerman. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. xxii + 395. Hardback £75, ISBN: 978-0-19-968614-8.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S001738351500008X Published online by Cambridge University Press

'ideal' (a designation he questions), and the effects achieved by means of those techniques. The analysis is structured around (but does not straightforwardly endorse) three polarities: typical–individuated, ideal–lifelike, and static–changing. These concepts, and other aspects of the book's theoretical stance and methodology, are presented in an opening chapter that is impressively reflective and well informed, though overburdened by explicit self-positioning in relation to a huge secondary literature: De Temmerman's own views would have emerged with greater clarity and force if stated more directly. In all other respects, however, these prolegomena are a model of reasonableness and balance. The body of the book consists of close readings of the five novels, informed by ancient rhetoric and modern narratology. These readings, exhausting in their density, are exceptionally rich, subtle, and rewarding, and demonstrate clearly how diverse the novels are in their techniques of characterization. The learning, attention to detail, and acuity of observation that underlie this success only occasionally falter. When he says that a speech is 'directly drawn' from Menander Rhetor, De Temmerman commits himself (unintentionally, I suspect) to an unusually late dating of Achilles Tatius (184; Helen Morales, whom he cites, writes of an *echo* in Menander). Far more startling is a reference to 'the depiction of Odysseus when he sees his father in Hades' (286). If so knowledgeable and careful a scholar can make such a glaring error, is not the hyper-attentive reader which this book assumes too artificial and unrealistic a construct to be interesting? Or, to use characteristically De Temmermanian locutions: this destabilizes any reliance on the minute details of intra- and intertextual connections, and exposes it as problematic.

It may seem odd that a volume of annotated translations of Galen's shorter ethical and psychological writings[12] appears under the heading of Greek literature. But 'literature' is a capacious rubric, and character – an important concept in literary studies, as we have just seen – is connected with psychology. Moreover, Galen is a major cultural and intellectual figure in a period currently of great interest to literary scholars (the 'Second Sophistic'); and he has much to say about book culture and libraries – not least in his *Avoiding Distress*, a text discovered in 2005, which here has its first full English translation and commentary. The other works included are *Character Traits*, *Affections and Errors*, and *Capacities of the Soul*, in substantially revised versions of existing translations. Each is preceded by an extensive introduction, accompanied by generous annotation, and followed (where appropriate) by textual notes. So even those who are confident in their command of Greek and (in the case of *Character Traits*) Arabic will find something of value in this volume. Peter Singer contributes a general introduction on Galen's life, thought, and works, and on their intellectual and cultural context.

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doi:10.1017/S001738351500008X

[12] *Galen. Psychological Writings*. Edited by P. N. Singer, with contributions by Daniel Davies and Vivian Nutton. Cambridge Galen Translations. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. xviii + 539. 1 map, 1 diagram. Hardback £90, ISBN: 978-0-521-76517-8.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S001738351500008X Published online by Cambridge University Press