Greece & Rome, Vol. 52, No. 1 © *The Classical Association, 2005. All rights reserved*

SUBJECT REVIEWS

(⋆ denotes that a book is specially recommended for school libraries.)

Greek Literature

If Hesiod, as an ancient legend had it, once defeated Homer in competition, he has found it difficult holding his own in the posthumous reputation stakes. Compared to the ceaseless flow of publications on Homer, books about Hesiod are rarities. Yet, lo and behold, here come two of them together. They are very dissimilar. Jenny Strauss Clay's *Hesiod's Cosmos*[1] offers juxtaposed readings of the *Theogony* and *Works & Days*, which she takes as contrasting but complementary perspectives (from Olympus, and from the ground, as it were) on the world. After providing full, illuminating summaries of each work, with particular emphasis on their 'organizing principles', Clay undertakes close readings of the two poems' prologues, their views of human origins, their different versions of the Prometheus story, the reverse sides of their world-views (i.e., humans in *Theogony* and gods in *Works and Days*), and their depictions of monsters and heroes. The book amounts to a sort of discursive running commentary in thematic sections. It is written with admirable clarity and unpretentiousness; I also applaud its determination to treat Hesiod (in the way antiquity did) not as a figure of 'primitive simplicity' but as a master-poet with a deep vision of the painful gap between a divine world of permanent order (though superimposed upon violent conflict) and a human realm permanently subject to harsh contingency and incapable of recovering its lost golden age. One can quibble over details: *homoios* can hardly include the sense 'identical' in the Muses' famous words at *Theogony* 27, and it is misplaced literalism to infer from the references to human sufferings at *Theogony* 211 ff. that human beings 'must pre-date the genesis of the children of Night'. Such things do not, however, reduce this book's value. It is the best available introduction to Hesiod, and could be read profitably by those who already know the poems well.

In a very different vein, Anthony Edwards' *Hesiod's Ascra*[2] strives 'to squeeze history out of a poem'. Contrary to the consensus that the *Works & Days* depicts a community of small cultivators subservient to the 'kings' or aristocratic élite of the city, and must thus be read in relation to the early-archaic rise of the polis, Edwards contends that its world is that of a more 'primitive', largely autonomous, late Dark Age village. On this view, Hesiod is less concerned with the city/village distinction than with the division between prosperous and poor *within* the village; he is no 'peasant', if the model of peasantry entails dependence on a dominant urban culture; and his poem is a testimony less to the evolution of the polis than to the values of an older form of life – one resistant to new polis-based hierarchies – that

[1] *Hesiod's Cosmos*. By Jenny Strauss Clay. Cambridge, U.P. 2003. Pp. xii + 202. Hardback £45.

[2] *Hesiod's Ascra*. By Anthony T. Edwards. University of California Press, Berkeley, 2004. Pp. xii + 208. Hardback £29.95.

https://doi.org/10.1093/gromej/cxi011 Published online by Cambridge University Press

survived in some areas of Greece well into the archaic period. At the core of Edwards' book is an attempt to reconstruct Ascra's milieu as a small-scale, egalitarian rural society that has 'informal' interaction with, but is fundamentally independent of, the nearest town (Thespiae). The thesis is developed with reference, for instance, to the nature of trade, the relation between the village and the urban 'kings' (a possible but voluntary source of arbitration, it is surmised, not an established judicial authority), and patterns of agriculture. Aware of the risks of translating highly stylized poetry into social history, Edwards insists that even when convention and fiction are factored in, Hesiod still works with images (and a psychology) that are stamped with historical verisimilitude. This part of his case has a suspicion of circularity about it, and a flimsy skirmish with the relationship between language and reality is rather pointless in this context. But that does not prevent the book as a whole from accomplishing an elegant reassessment of the social world imagined in *Works & Days*. Historians will want to argue over models and their implications, but Edwards certainly has worthwhile things to say about the 'pre-polis' mentality he detects in the poem. One blemish is the misprinting of all macrons on transliterated Greek in the index. Anyone wanting to reenact Hesiod's contest with Homer can now conveniently do so with the help of Martin West's new Loeb edition of the **Homeric Hymns*.[3] Here readers will find, in addition to the hymns themselves, the fictitious and anonymous *Certamen* (originally by the sophist Alcidamas) alongside the other ancient Lives of Homer; sandwiched between hymns and lives are the *Battle of Frogs and Mice*, and fragments of *Margites* and three other burlesque epics sometimes ascribed to Homer in antiquity, among them the *Battle of the Weasel and Mice*, first published in 1983 and translated here for the first time. So this is a variegated and very useful Loeb, all the more so for the predictably sure touch and expertise of the editor. The introductions are concise but informative, the prose translations accurate and sober (well, except for the mock-epic Puffjawes, Lickplatters, Pastrygobbles, and the like). The Homeric Hymn that has received far more attention than any other in modern times, principally because of its supposed relevance to the early history of the Eleusinian Mysteries, is the (longer) one to Demeter. Ann Suter's *The Narcissus and the Pomegranate*[4] employs a panoply of narrative, historical, archaeological, linguistic, anthropological, and even psychoanalytical methods to contend that the mother/daughter pairing of Demeter and Persephone was a relatively recent (Dark Age) confluence of two originally separate, rival goddesses and their stories. The deepest level of the hymn's meaning, she claims, concerns Demeter's partial displacement of an older fertility goddess (later named Persephone) at Eleusis. That meaning is partly coded into a story of an ageing mother's response to her daughter's 'coming of age', though at the same time Suter rejects the standard view of Persephone's abduction as related to female initiation ritual and sees it as a form of 'sacred marriage' (*hieros gamos*) between a fertility goddess and her consort. Suter follows a recent trend, moreover, in taking the Demophon episode of the hymn as an aetiology for the Thesmophoria, not the Eleusinian cult. This is a bracingly bold book, unafraid to accumulate speculations and use them to decipher multiple

[3] *Homeric Hymns, Homeric Apocrypha, Lives of Homer*. Edited and translated by Martin L. West. Loeb Classical Library 496. Harvard U.P., Cambridge Mass., 2003. Pp. xii + 467. Hardback £14.50.

[4] *The Narcissus and the Pomegranate*. An Archaeology of the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*. By Ann Suter. University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 2002. Pp. xi + 268. Hardback £42.50.

https://doi.org/10.1093/gromej/cxi011 Published online by Cambridge University Press

layers of significance in the hymn's narratives. It contains a wealth of documentation about competing theories of early Greek religion. Unfortunately its scepticism about many orthodoxies is coupled with a tendency to overstate the credentials of its own frequently conjectural ideas. And the fundamental aim of interpreting the hymn in terms of 'what it tells us about itself' strikes me as hermeneutically naïve. Approaches to Greek tragedy have been widened and enriched in recent years not only by close attention to the staging protocols of antiquity but also by interest in the genre's performance history from the Renaissance to the present. Work of that second kind has been greatly promoted by Oxford's 'Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama', under whose auspices now appears *Dionysus Since 69*,[5] an eclectic set of essays on the conspicuous and increasingly experimental place of Greek tragedy in contemporary theatre, cinema, and opera. The project takes its bearings from a remarkable range of productions: more than 360 twentieth-century items are helpfully catalogued at the end of the book; the fact that some four-fifths are post-69 (and include works from every continent) bears out the book's claim to be addressing a mushrooming, global phenomenon. Contributors – theatrical specialists among them – trace the multiple ways in which the reworking of Greek tragic materials has proved an incisive means of exposing central issues in late-twentieth-century culture (including questions of gender, race, class, religion, violence, and post-colonialism) as well as serving as an arena of experiment for radical theatre-practice (the use of masks, choruses, ritualistic stylization). Despite an occasional element of breathless overstatement, and a few passages which are little more than sketchy production reviews, this is an impressively ambitious, innovative, and informative volume (with a good selection of more than thirty photographs). It sets high standards for what will surely be a fertile field of study in the coming years. The series of Duckworth Companions to Greek and Roman Tragedy (see *G&R* 50 [2003], 244, for the first two Greek volumes) continues with Jon Hesk's **Sophocles: Ajax*.[6] Here I must disclose an interest (ah, if only all reviewers were so candid): Hesk is a colleague of mine. Do I, then, pursue the ethic of 'helping friends', or show my independence by fearless censure? (I exclude the 'deception speech' option...) Happily, the dilemma resolves itself. Hesk is a lucid, subtle, and alert guide to the many-sided interest of the play: its complex relationship to both Homeric epics, its prominent tensions (between madness and civilization, individual heroism and collective interests, pity and hatred), the enigmas of the 'deception speech', and, not least, the use of brutal rhetorical duelling (in which Hesk successfully finds Teucer a more effective combatant than most scholars have done) as a substitute for fighting. An adroit sifting of existing critical views (on the putative phenomenon of Sophoclean 'heroism', for example) is combined with fresh thoughts and formulations. Overall, Hesk cogently treats the tragedy as a dramatization of intractable conflicts of value, rather than a one-sided expression of admiration or blame. In keeping with the series aims, the book also includes some material on the play's later influence, from classical Athens to twentieth-century America. Another welcome Sophoclean addition to a developing series, 'Cambridge Translations from Greek Drama' (see *G&R* 48 [2001], 93; 49 [2002], 112), is Ian McAuslan and Judith Affleck's **Oedipus*

[5] *Dionysus Since 69*. Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millennium. Edited by Edith Hall, Fiona Macintosh, and Amanda Wrigley. Oxford U.P., 2004. Pp. xix + 480. Hardback £65.

[6] *Sophocles: Ajax*. By Jon Hesk. Duckworth, London, 2003. Pp. 208. Paperback £10.99.

https://doi.org/10.1093/gromej/cxi011 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Tyrannus.[7] The book exploits the compact but practical format to good effect. The translation is clean and compelling (ideal for acting or reading in class); the necessarily clipped notes and suggestions for discussion touch on a stimulating range of points, from wordplay to religion; there are eight photographs from modern productions (and two of Greek vases). At the bargain price, this is an ideal means to draw sixth-formers into Greek tragedy. Aristophanes is, among much else, one of the most linguistically multifarious of all ancient authors. The plural in the title of Andreas Willi's *The Languages of Aristophanes*[8] is not, however, a simple acknowledgement of the poet's own heterogeneity. It signals the book's goal of using the comedies to gain access to some 'fine-grained linguistic varieties' of classical Attic. So the project is not primarily literary but sociolinguistic. Willi is well aware of the Aristophanic tendency to distort and parody, but he uses sophisticated comparative techniques (stylistic, statistical, and cross-linguistic) to give historical grounding to his scrutiny of six main areas: religious registers (relatively plain prayers, elaborate hymnic conventions, etc.); technical languages such as law or medicine (which Willi argues were less highly developed in fifth-century Greek than often thought); 'scientific discourse' in *Clouds*, especially its quasi-Empedoclean strands; sophistic innovations in *Clouds* (and their connection to a shift from oral to literate culture); female speech (making an intriguing case for women as 'politer' than men); and 'foreigner talk' in the Scythian scene of *Thesmophoriazusae* (which Willi treats as a simplified idiolect, not evidence for 'lower class' Attic). This is a meticulously organized piece of work which puts the technical study of Aristophanic language on a new footing. Still with Aristophanes, here is a conundrum for connoisseurs of Classics publishing. Why is it that Germany and Italy can sustain genuinely cheap paperback series of annotated bilingual editions of ancient authors, something the UK has never produced? Do they really have bigger readerships, or do their publishers just have wider vision and more enterprise? The Italian series 'BUR Classici Greci e Latini' is an outstanding case in point; its three hundred titles can stretch, for instance, to a 'complete' two-volume Callimachus for only some £13. One of its latest additions is Guido Paduano's *Aristofane: la Pace*,[9] which supplies Greek text, Italian translation, three hundred foot-of-the-page notes, an eight-page chronology of Aristophanes' lifetime, a fifty-page introduction, and a substantial bibliography – all for nine Euros. If you suspect some compromise on quality, think again: the text is photographically reproduced (with a handful of changes), at a smaller size but very crisply, from Olson's Oxford edition of 1998 (see *G&R* 46 [1999], 235–6). But would OUP allow such a reprinting, in such an inexpensive format, to a *British* publisher? If you comprehend such things, do let me know. Meanwhile, use this handy edition and enjoy (or teach your students) two languages at once. These are good times not only for Aristophanes but for Old Comedy more generally. Recent years have seen fruitful work on the fragments of other poets of the genre (see *G&R* 48 [2001], 230), a trend now crowned with distinction by the

[7] *Sophocles Oedipus Tyrannus*. A New Translation and Commentary by Ian McAuslan and Judith Affleck. Cambridge U.P., 2003. Pp. viii + 120. Paperback £4.95.

[8] *The Languages of Aristophanes*. Aspects of Linguistic Variation in Classical Attic Greek. By Andreas Willi. Oxford U.P., 2003. Pp. xiii + 361. Hardback £55.

[9] *Aristofane: la Pace*. Edited by Guido Paduano. Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, Milan, 2002. Pp. 173. Paperback €9.

https://doi.org/10.1093/gromej/cxi011 Published online by Cambridge University Press

appearance of Ian Storey's *Eupolis*,[10] the largest work ever produced on one of Aristophanes' rivals. Although by definition a book primarily for specialists, Storey has done his best to make it at least accessible to other adventurous readers: he includes a translation of all the fragments from Kassel-Austin *Poetae Comici Graeci*, and attempts, in a series of chapters, to reconstruct the shape of Eupolis' career (as well as his later reputation in antiquity) and his profile as a comic dramatist, including what seems to have been an odd theatrical symbiosis with Aristophanes. But the core of the book (more than 250 pages) is an indefatigable, play-by-play investigation of the fragments; no stone is left unturned to try to establish matters of chronology, dramatic structure, and the comic thematics of social life, sex, politics, and the rest. If the extent of the modern doxography of the subject is sometimes tiring, that is not entirely Storey's fault. He has produced a superbly well-organized and exhaustively documented enquiry into a largely vanished poet: it is a triumph to be able to conjure up so many possibilities out of such limited material. Thucydides makes rare appearances in this section of reviews. He pays a visit on this occasion because H. D. Cameron's **Thucydides Book 1*[11] is a linguistic commentary designed for first-time readers of the Greek text. There is a brief historical introduction but the commentary itself is entirely grammatical, explaining every construction, idiom, and stylistic feature that might cause problems. This is a commendable enterprise, all the more so for being unfashionable. It brings a difficult text within the range of students aspiring to climb, with serious effort, to a more advanced level of reading fluency: everything is backed up with references to LSJ, grammars like Smyth's and Goodwin's, and other reference works. Regrettably the book is marred by a profusion of accentual (and a few other Greek) misprints: ten, for example, on pp. 13–14 alone. To end, two books that range across a plurality of texts in order to chart broader Greek interests and mentalities. Deborah Gera's *Ancient Greek Ideas on Speech, Language and Civilization*[12] is a study in linguistic anthropology. Starting from Odysseus's encounter with Polyphemus, where sophisticated verbal trickery is opposed to the Cyclops' linguistic limitations and primitivism (but also his pathetic readiness to talk to his animals), Gera establishes two underlying, contrasting patterns of Greek thinking about language: one, the paradigm of a lost golden age when gods, humans, and animals could communicate harmoniously; the other, the notion of a primeval language state from which humans only gradually progressed with the development of civilization as a whole. Gera pursues variations and modifications of these patterns in a series of wide-ranging chapters: on the famous experiment of Psammetichus at the start of Herodotus 2 (and its impact on various later speculations about the 'first' language); on the 'invention' of language (by gods, a special individual, or a group?); and on Greek images of exotic or abnormal figures (non-speaking 'savages', for instance, or Philomela after her tongue has been torn out by Tereus) whose linguistic peculiarities shed light on attitudes to the nature of language. This is a fascinating, attractively written book. Language, or more specifically metaphor, is also at the heart of Mary Ebbott's *Imagining Illegitimacy in Classical Greek Literature*.[13]

[10] *Eupolis*. Poet of Old Comedy. By Ian C. Storey. Oxford U.P., New York, 2003. Pp. xii + 441. Hardback £75.

[11] *Thucydides Book I*. A Students' Grammatical Commentary. By H. D. Cameron. University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 2003. Pp. xi + 145. Paperback £14.50.

[12] *Ancient Greek Ideas on Speech, Language and Civilization*. By Deborah Levine Gera. Oxford U.P., 2003. Pp. xiii + 252. Hardback £53.

https://doi.org/10.1093/gromej/cxi011 Published online by Cambridge University Press

This *libellus*, in origin a Harvard Ph.D., probes Greek thoughts and feelings about illegitimacy (a nodal point in ideas about reproduction, marriage, and citizenship) by inspecting the imagery and narratives in which it figures. In each of four chapters Ebbott tries to unpick some of the metaphors and associations of the *nothos*. The idea of bastards as 'belonging to darkness' (*skotios*) and 'maiden-like' (*parthenios*) is read alongside/through images of the seclusion of unmarried girls (including Danaë) and indeed even of married women in the oikos; bastards are 'conceptually affiliated' with females. Teucer, Ajax's half-brother (in Homer, Sophocles, and Euripides), allows consideration of the alignment of illegitimacy with evasive archers, slaves, and foreigners; Teucer's identity is originally secondary to that of Ajax, yet the latter's death allows him to come out of the shadows (cf. above on Hesk). Chapter 3 discusses the paradoxical link of bastards with both 'hyperfertility' and sterility, while the final chapter sets the Euripidean Hippolytos in relation to the concept of counterfeit coinage. The book offers perhaps too much of a cross-section of texts to be wholly satisfying, but its close focus on metaphor justifies itself by revealing something of the burden of anxiety carried by illegitimacy in Greek literature and culture.

doi:10.1093/gromej/cxi011 STEPHEN HALLIWELL

[13] *Imagining Illegitimacy in Classical Greek Literature*. By Mary Ebbott. Lexington Books, Lanham, 2003. Pp. xi + 121. Paperback £17.95.

Latin Literature

This collection, like its immediate predecessor, starts with two popular editions of Plautine comedies with text and facing Italian translation, one on the *Mercator*,[1] the other on the *Persa*.[2] Contrary to what is claimed on the title pages, there is nothing called *Prefazione* in either book. However, the first 60 pages of the *Introduzione* are identical in both books and are, presumably, Cesare Questa's *Prefazione*. The remaining 26 pages of the *Introduzione* to the *Mercator* are specifically attributed to Guido Paduano, and we must conclude that the remaining 27 pages of the *Introduzione* to the *Persa* are to be attributed to Elena Rossi. Both editions have substantial bibliographies including many works published in the last fifty years and, accordingly, compiled after the first editions, both of which are about fifty years old. The editions also include two pages of significant dates quite distinctively organized so as to meet the specific needs of each play. Once again, it is impossible not to be impressed by the apparent demand in Italy for such popular editions of the classics. Scholars have for many years shamefully neglected Cicero's philosophical and rhetorical works. There has been an unspoken, but not always unspoken, assumption that Cicero's philosophical works are entirely derivative and that his rhetoric is better studied by reading his practice than by delving into his theory. Happily, such neglect has been vigorously corrected in recent years. The texts are in many cases notoriously flawed but the work of Winterbottom, Powell, and Di Maria have gone far towards establishing a reliable

[1] *Tito Maccio Plauto* Mercator. Prefazione di Cesare Questa, Introduzione di Guido Paduano, Traduzione di Mario Scàndola. Testo latino a fronte. Classici Greci e Latini, Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli. 2nd edition, 2004. Pp. 203. Paperback €8.

[2] *Plauto* Il Persiano. Prefazione di Cesare Questa, Introduzione di Elena Rossi, Traduzione di Mario Scàndola. Testo latino a fronte. Classici Greci e Latini, Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli. 2nd edition, 2003. Pp. 208. Paperback €9.

https://doi.org/10.1093/gromej/cxi011 Published online by Cambridge University Press