General

Recent months have witnessed a proliferation of publications on the theme of spectacle, theatre, and drama, many of which combine the best traditions of classical scholarship with a much broader appeal to the wider readership. Two books on Greek drama offer very different approaches to this challenge. M. Stagman's *Guide to Greek Drama* declares itself an ⋆*Introduction to all 44 surviving Tragedies and Comedies of Classical Athens, 5th century B.C.*[1] The format of the book is simple: a chronological survey of the extant works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes, giving for each author a brief biography and for each work an introductory quotation, list of characters, plot summary, and concluding comment. Stagman is not primarily a classicist, and his book does not set out to provide sophisticated or original analysis of the plays concerned. There are inevitably some severe over-simplifications, but the work remains a compilation which may prove useful to anyone looking for quick access to a plot-line. Stagman's work will appeal primarily to non-classicists or to those just beginning to find their way through classical literature. His book is suffused with missionary zeal, to transmit his own enthusiasm for the Classics to another generation and to a broader reading public. As he states in his conclusion: 'We need to return Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes to our educational systems and to our personal reading experiences' (319). The tone of his moralizing vision of the spread of classical drama for the good of society may not suit all tastes, but its underlying sentiment seems genuine nevertheless. A very different bridge between Greek tragedy and the modern world is built by the excellent volume edited by E. Hall, F. Macintosh, and O. Taplin, [B]⋆*Medea in Performance 1500–2000*.[2] In keeping with the aims of the European Humanities Research Centre, under whose aegis the book was published, it represents the results of a conference which brought together academics from a range of different disciplines: Classics, Film, Theatre Studies, and English Literature, to name but a few. The spread of interdisciplinary contributions is matched by a time-span which reaches from the fifth century B.C. to the present day, and a geographical range from Europe to Japan. This vast scope is effectively rendered homogeneous by the focus on a single Greek tragedy, the *Medea*, and the theme of its reception, continual reinterpretation, and, as the title suggests, performance. The whole enterprise is founded on the work of the Oxford-based Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama, and illustrates the great value of such a research project, both in its own right, and even more so as the basis for imaginative and vibrant developments in the subject. This is not the appropriate forum for an analysis of the individual contributions, but even a cursory glance through the names of those involved will testify to the intellectual power of the volume. The combination of rigorous scholarship on ancient texts with the immensely popular realm of recent and contemporary theatre demonstrates precisely the ongoing appeal of the classical tradition in the modern world, and furthermore reveals through its theme the ever-increasing richness of that tradition as each performance in its own temporal and geographical context adds new layers of interpretation. This is a volume which will greatly enliven the reading of a play which is

[1] *Guide to Greek Drama*. Introduction to all 44 Surviving Tragedies and Comedies of Classical Athens, 5th century B.C. By Myron Stagman. City-State Press, Chicago, 2001. Pp. 328. Paper $29.95.

[2] *Medea in Performance 1500–2000*. Legenda: European Humanities Research Centre and the University of Oxford. Edited by Edith Hall, Fiona Macintosh, and Oliver Taplin. Oxford U.P., 2000. Pp. xv + 304, with 19 illustrations. Paper.

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often the first classical drama encountered in schools, while at the same time offering a whole range of new and unusual insights and parallels to the expert in the field. A second pair of publications highlights yet another medium through which the phenomena of spectacle and performance suggest continuity and interplay between the ancient and modern worlds, in this case the cinema. M. M. Winkler (ed.), *Classical Myth and Culture in the Cinema*[3] provides a collection of essays by a mixture of classicists and scholars of film, theatre, and the reception of classical literature. The essays are diverse, some adopting a thematic approach, but most focusing on a single ancient text or modern film in order to illustrate a particular link between the classical world and modern cinematic representation. Some essays, such as Mench's on 'Film Sense in the *Aeneid*', find cinematic features in ancient texts; others in this volume reverse the perspective and examine the use of antiquity and its literature in modern film. Both directions produce illuminating and thought-provoking readings, making the potential readership of this book large and wide-ranging. A different approach to a similar theme is adopted by J. Solomon [B]*The Ancient World in the Cinema*,[4] now republished in a revised and expanded edition more than twenty years after its first appearance. Solomon covers over four hundred films, arranged according to predominant genre – dealing separately with films which incorporate ancient comedy, historical themes, and so on. Copious photographic illustrations bring the analysis visually to life, and two appendices neatly and evocatively summarize precisely which episodes of Greco-Roman history and of the Old Testament have attracted cinematic treatment. The world of film recalls that we live in an age in which classical antiquity still provides the fertile breeding ground for cinematic productions. The success of the box-office hit *Gladiator* reminds us that the real phenomenon of spectacles in the ancient world can itself turn into the subject of a modern spectacle, and one, appropriately enough, of mass appeal. It is good to see that here, as elsewhere, classical scholars have been well ahead of the game. The timely arrival of a paperback version of A. Futrell's [B]★*Blood in the Arena: The Spectacle of Roman Power*[5] nicely illustrates the point. A book which starts with the history of Campanian and Etruscan gladiators and finishes by placing the spectacle of the Roman arena in the context of anthropological discussion of human sacrifice attempts to marry a more traditional history of institutions with modern interdisciplinarity. The intervening pages cover different aspects of amphitheatrical activity both in Rome and around the empire, combining the practicalities of construction with the symbolism of imperial display, the power relations of the *principes*, and the creation of cult figures as symbols of allegiance. The wide-ranging nature of this book results at times in a sometimes disparate ensemble, but there is much here to interest those whom the cinematic spectacle of the ancient gladiatorial performance has lured into the world of Rome and its empire. We turn now to two short monographs which exemplify the virtues of that genre, albeit in very different styles. Lionel Casson's ★*Libraries in the Ancient World*[6] tells a story from

[3] *Classical Myth and Culture in the Cinema.* Edited by Martin M. Winkler. Oxford U.P., 2001. Pp. ix + 350. £35.00.

[4] *The Ancient World in the Cinema.* Revised and Expanded Edition. By Jon Solomon. Yale U.P., New Haven, 2001. Pp. xix + 364, with 205 illustrations. Paper.

[5] *Blood in the Arena.* The Spectacle of Roman Power. By Alison Futrell. University of Texas Press, Texas, Reprint 2000. Pp. xii + 338. Paper £17.95.

[6] *Libraries in the Ancient World.* By Lionel Casson. Yale U.P., New Haven, 2001. Pp. xii + 177, with two maps. £18.95.

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Mesopotamia in the third millennium B.C. through to the early Byzantine period. It is a story assembled from a wide range of sources: archaeological remains, epigraphic documents, and the literary tradition. The famous elements are here, the library of Alexandria, the resources to which Cicero had access, and Trajan's library, but Casson sets these tableaux in the context of a wider history from the development of book collections in Greece, through the libraries across the kingdoms of the Hellenistic world to the picture which emerges in the Roman empire. Libraries continue to flourish in the East, but we know of evidence for only two in the West outside Italy, at Timgad and Carthage. Similarly, he sets the story of library development within the further contexts of the spread of literacy, book technology, and general history, and there is much of interest here, particularly the use of papyrus and, later on, the shift from roll to codex. Even the discussion of the libraries themselves offers more than a treatment of architectural plan, cataloguing, benefactors, and usage. Most interesting (particularly perhaps for modern librarians) are the problems faced by ancient libraries. Has a better solution ever been found than the curse on a tablet from Ashur (p. 14)? For those who damage or steal the tablet 'may the gods of heaven and earth . . . curse him with a curse which cannot be relieved, terrible and merciless, as long as he lives, may they let his name, his seed, be carried off from this land, may they put his flesh in a dog's mouth!' *The Craft of Zeus. Myths of Weaving and Fabric*[7] is a book of similar brevity and likewise written around a single theme – that of weaving metaphors in Ancient Greece and Rome – but very different in tone from Casson. Fluently translated form the original French by Carl Volk, it discusses in succession three different applications of the weaving metaphor, treated separately for each culture: its force as political imagery, the representation of love in weaving, and its use for literary 'text'. The six resulting chapters make for a disparate book, but one which is fascinating and stimulating in a wide variety of different directions. As the authors say, it is 'a relatively concise essay', rather than 'an erudite tome', but it is none the worse for that. The diversity of sources and periods discussed itself makes for a book which represents the very metaphor it is treating, a finely crafted web of scholarship. In politics the ritual of the sixteen women of Elis weaving a fabric for unity, and the weaving imagery contained within Augustus' *lusus Troiae* are particularly suggestive. In the second pair of chapters, the treatment of Catullus 64 is excellent for the richness of its readings, and in the Greek chapter, the reinterpretation of *poikilothronos* as 'with decorated cloak' is a significant one. The final section draws an important contrast between Greek and Roman with its argument that in the former case the metaphor is often used of oral or performed literature, while in the latter it is largely confined to the written word. This book is not a perfect fabric and there are some missed stitches (are we really to believe that *textus* caught on rather than *huphos* because the *x* as an idiogram represents the weaving involved in the word, p. 155?), but it makes a very welcome contribution to the 'reading' of several ancient rituals and texts. Meanwhile, various specialist fields which hold some interest also for a non-classical readership have been represented in recent publications. Classical law continues to attract attention, both within its ancient context and as the obvious starting point for a consideration of later development. The former approach is

[7] *The Craft of Zeus*. Myths of Weaving and Fabric. By John Scheid and Jesper Svenbro. Translated by Carol Volk. Harvard U.P., Reprint 2001. Pp. viii + 226. Paper £13.95.

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interestingly applied in D. J. Bederman's B★★*International Law in Antiquity*,[8] in which various types of interstate contact among ancient societies – religious, diplomatic, military, and so on – are discussed as the basis for an international legal code. A Watson, ★★*The Evolution of Western Private Law*,[9] in a new and considerably expanded edition, replaces Bederman's geographical breadth with a much longer chronological sweep, through which he traces the development of private law in a variety of systems. Both books will have something to offer those interested in ancient law in its own right, but both will also provide an important historical context for students of modern law, raising fundamental issues about the basis of legal theory and practice, and highlighting the time- and place-specific nature of our own legal system. A quite different specialism gives rise to M. J. T. Lewis' book, B*Surveying Instruments of Greece and Rome*,[10] which enchantingly leads its readers through the world of the dioptra and the groma, via tunnels and canals, to culminate in the U-tube level. This is a wonderful book for the technically minded, but it could also prove a revelation to the technophobe, since its clarity of presentation and plentiful illustrations make for a fascinating read. Another book which might at first appear to be directed at the would-be scientist is M. M. Sassi's B*The Science of Man in Ancient Greece*[11] (now in English translation with an introduction by G. E. R. Lloyd). In fact, of course, this is a work in search of a notion of anthropology among the Greeks. The quest leads through ancient medicine, geography, and astronomy, considering various ways in which categories were constructed to distinguish men from women, Greeks from barbarians, and so give some shape, however imperfectly and provisionally, to the world of the Greek male citizen. The questions raised by this book are so diverse and engaging that they offer interest to a broad readership at all levels. Finally, deserving of note are two German volumes of collected essays. First, a volume which has emerged from a symposium of the prestigious Humboldt-Stiftung. B★★*Gab es das Griechische Wunder?*[12] focuses on the theme of the huge leap in cultural development, which it supposes to have happened uniquely in Greece at the end of the sixth century B.C., and which is discussed in relation to various media by the dazzling array of international scholars who contributed to the colloquium and thereby to this enormous volume. Secondly, a collection devoted to a central figure of classical scholarship: W. Burkert's B★★*Kleine Schriften I Homerica*,[13] edited by C. Riedweg, offers a fine collection of pieces in an array of languages and covering a vast range of Homeric themes. This is the first in a

[8] *International Law in Antiquity*. Cambridge Studies in International and Comparative Law. By David J. Bederman. Cambridge U.P., 2001. Pp. xix + 322, with 3 maps. £45.00.

[9] *The Evolution of Western Private Law*. Expanded Edition. By Alan Watson. John Hopkins U.P., Baltimore, 2001. Pp. xv + 320. £42.50.

[10] *Surveying Instruments of Greece and Rome*. By M. J. T. Lewis. Cambridge U.P., 2001. Pp. xx + 389, with 69 figures. £55.00.

[11] *The Science of Man in Ancient Greece*. By Maria Michela Sassi. Translated by Paul Tucker with a foreword by Sir Geoffrey Lloyd. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2001. Pp. xxx + 224, with 22 illustrations.

[12] *Gab es das Griechische Wunder?* Griechenland zwischen dem Ende des 6. und der Mitte des 5. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. Tagungsbeiträge des 16. Fachsymposiums der Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung veranstaltet vom 5. bis 9. April 1999 in Freiburg im Breisgau. Edited by Dietrich Papenfuß and Volker Michael Strocka. Philipp von Zabern, Mainz, 2001. Pp. xx + 438, with 51 plates. DM 158,00.

[13] *Kleine Schriften I.* Homerica. By Walter Burkert. Edited by Christoph Riedweg. Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 2001. Pp. ix + 281. DM 98,00.

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series of published papers by Burkert undertaken to mark his 70th birthday. Other volumes promise to deal with the full scope of his research in Orientalia, Myth, Ritual, Religion, Tragedy, History, and Philosophy – a treasure-trove of shorter publications which will be of immense value to scholars and a fitting tribute to a classicist of such stature.

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