

times the analyses may be too overwhelming for beginners, and the grammatical glosses and mythological references too basic for scholars. But both groups will appreciate B.'s efforts to explain just about everything.

Throughout, B. takes as given that the *Hercules* was composed for formal staging in a theatre. He provides helpful *didaskalia* which are always explained in the Commentary. I may disagree with some of his choices, such as the exit of Theseus after line 917; but all are based on the text and B.'s sense of Roman stagecraft. Indeed, he gives his rationale for all his interpretations, be they dramaturgical, textual or interpretive. He also includes enough material for the reader to question his conclusions and investigate further. I would certainly recommend this edition for readers at all levels, especially those interested in investigating further.

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MICHAEL D. REEVE, *THE TRANSMISSION OF PLINY'S NATURAL HISTORY* (Sussidi eruditi 101). Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2021. Pp. xiii + 409. ISBN 9788893595582. €65.00.

The volume under review offers the most extensive analysis of the transmission of Pliny's thirty-seven-book *Natural History* to date. It is based on research on several manuscripts — portions of which Reeve collated — conducted over nearly twenty years, and it provides current and future editors of Pliny (more on this below) with a solid basis for understanding the authority of the witnesses of the *Natural History*.

As explained in the preface, R. does not aim to produce a new edition of Pliny, whose style he openly dislikes. Had that not been the case, it would still have been impossible to find fault with his refusal to embark on such a monumental task, which is more suited to a whole team of editors. After the preface, the first chapter offers a survey of the editorial work and interest in Pliny's manuscripts from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries onwards, paying particular attention to the activity of nineteenth-century German scholars, which led to the Teubner edition. From ch. 2 the book meticulously explores the relationships between the earliest manuscripts that transmit most of the *Natural History* (they date to the eighth and ninth centuries), before considering their descendants. To these known early witnesses, R. adds a set of ninth-century fragments — possibly from a lost codex — which transmit portions of *HN* 21–22 and 25, now Düsseldorf, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, fr. K 06 009. Earlier fragments in uncial that had no influence on the medieval transmission of Pliny are examined at the end, in ch. 16. Ch. 6 gives a new edition of the *Vita Plinii*, preceded by a translation into English, which is transmitted at the start of several manuscripts of the *Natural History* and is believed to be taken from Suetonius. Chs 8 and 13 are devoted to excerpts of the *Natural History*, including specific discussion of the *scholia Stroziana*, extracts from Book 18. Here attention could have been paid to a fourteenth-century Italian manuscript, now Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS latin 7418. This miscellany was the probable exemplar of Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Strozzii 46; see P. Meyvaert, *AB* 84 (1966), 354 n. 2, and E.S. Lott, *RHT* 11 (1981), 147–58, both cited by R. Some quires are lost and the aforementioned studies primarily pay attention to the lost portion with Germanicus' translation of Aratus. However, in the table of contents at the end of the Paris manuscript, Germanicus is followed by *item quaedam capitula ex Plinio Secundo de signis tempestatum*. If this information is reliable, these were probably passages from Book 18.

The volume ends with four appendices, followed by an index of the manuscripts, an index of the passages of the *Natural History* discussed for non-stemmatic purposes, and a detailed general index. Given the wealth of information in the book, from Late Antiquity well into the early modern period, this last index will be helpful to scholars whose interests lie outside the *Natural History*. Indeed, this book will only be accessible to a scholarly readership (a few Latin passages and citations in other languages are translated into English, but most of them are not). In the epilogue, R. hopes that others may continue to study the transmission of the *Natural History*. Undoubtedly for such scholars this

book will be a treasure trove. In a paper published almost twenty-five years ago (*JRS* 90 (2000), 196–206, reprinted in M.D. Reeve, *Manuscripts and Methods* (2011), 339–59), R. considered the state of textual criticism for Latin and suggested that ‘arms need twisting’ to prod scholars, if the situation was as worrying as M. Winterbottom sketched it, when he said that these ‘may be the last decades of the systematic editing of classical texts’ (*CR* 43 (1993), 431). Whether arm-twisting is indeed a productive approach, it proved to be unnecessary in this case. R. could not have known that a critical edition of the *Natural History* — with introduction, translation and commentary — was being prepared by a team of Russian scholars. M. Shumilin, who is a member of the editorial team, kindly informed me (*per litteras*) that they had not been able to make use of R.’s book for their first volume (on *HN* 1–2), which was also published in 2021, but have done so since then for their second volume and especially the third one, which came out in 2023 and cover Books 3–4 and 5–6, respectively.

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ANNA ANGISSOLA, *PLINY THE ELDER AND THE MATTER OF MEMORY: AN ENCYCLOPAEDIC WORKSHOP*. London and New York: Routledge, 2022. Pp. xv + 138, illus. ISBN 9780367349882 (hbk). £48.99. 9781032056227 (pbk). 9780429329159 (ebook).

The ‘Young Feltrinelli Prize in the Moral Sciences’ rewards young Italian researchers (under 40 years old) and offers them the opportunity to make their work known through publication in the collection dedicated to this prize, published by Routledge. It is for winning this prize in 2018 that Anna Anguissola, professor of classical archeology at the University of Pisa, in 2022 published this small work (138 pages) dedicated to Pliny the Elder. Let us say straight away that this book, written for a wide audience according to the rules of the collection, will also interest specialists in the different disciplines relating to classical antiquity. Moreover, it has all the qualities of a scientific publication: notes, a rich bibliography (111–30) and several indexes (index of passages from *Natural History*; index of Greek and Latin sources; general index). Around fifteen black-and-white illustrations complete the subject.

A. had already in 2020 produced, with Andreas Grüner, a large and luxurious work on a related theme, *The Nature of Art: Pliny the Elder on Materials* (Brepols), which focused on the testimony of Pliny the Elder on art based on materiality, the metals, stones and soils (components for colours) used by artists, and the processes of making works of art. In this new book, it is also on the basis of materials that she reflects on various questions related to the definition and production of art and to the conservation and transmission of knowledge. Pliny’s *Natural History* is a vast investigation of nature and a receptacle of knowledge, hence the title and subtitle of the work. And it is once again the domain of art which provides the framework for reflection, as shown by the plan of the book, divided into two parts of three chapters each, with brief and clear titles: I. The nature of art (1. Art and material, 2. Art and ethics, 3. Art and language) and II. The process of art (4. Discovering art, 5. Making art, 6. Looking at art). Significantly, the titles of the parts do not include the name of Pliny the Elder, because this constitutes the starting point of a broader reflection, touching on the definition and materiality of art. It is therefore books 33 to 37 of Pliny’s work which constitute the centre of the discussion, even if A. also usefully refers to other books. Thus, to deal with the nature of art, the author recalls the foundations of nature according to Pliny, referring to book II, which deals with the *mundus*: an active, divine breath (*pneuma*) fills every material object to give it a form and properties, according to a materialist cosmology close to stoicism. In this world assimilated to nature, Rome fulfilled its destiny through the conquest and accumulation of resources and knowledge.

The encyclopaedic work of Pliny thus participates in a project whose limits are set by nature. A. is particularly attached to precious stones (book 37), because for Pliny they embody