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SUBJECT REVIEWS

Greek Literature

As Aeschines famously said, *phēmē* ('fame') can't be trusted: that's why 'famously' so often prefaces a mistaken report. Karen ní Mheallaigh[1] knows that in Gorgias B23 it is the sophisticated audience which is deceived, and she understands the 'contractual' relationship that Gorgias posits between audience and author (e.g. 30, 32, 78). But, making the fatal mistake of calling it 'Gorgias' famous dictum', she hallucinates a reference to madness and says that 'what is at stake…is the confusion between reality and representation, which is a measure either of the audience's lack of sophistication, or of the artist's supreme skill' (29). Her invitation to 'read with imagination, and with pleasure' (xi) succeeds admirably. Reading her exploration of the self-conscious, extremely sophisticated, and persistently playful fictionality of Lucian (*Toxaris, Philopseudes, True Stories*) and others (Antonius Diogenes, Dictys and Dares, Ptolemy Chennus) was, for me, an intensely stimulating and pleasurable experience. But the Gorgias aberration was not the only thing that also often made it annoying. 'The irony that pervades Lucian's work…is not a symptom of exhaustion but of exuberance' (37): doesn't that state the obvious? 'Having read *Toxaris*, it is difficult to read *Chaereas and Callirhoe* without feeling its improbable storyishness' (49): is that any less difficult for those who haven't read *Toxaris*? 'Is *Toxaris* a dialogue about friendship, or about fiction?' (67): the headline answer ('both: for the theme of friendship is itself entwined with the dynamics of fiction in the dialogue') is undercut by what follows, which reductively treats the friendship theme as a pretext and pretence ('in Lucian's work, fiction is almost invariably enjoyed under the *pretext* of doing or talking about something else, and *Toxaris* is no exception: it is a dialogue about novelistic narrative, *masquerading* as a dialogue about friendship'; my emphasis). A fictional speaker's oath 'compels the *reader* into acquiescence that the story he is listening to is true' (68, original emphasis): how is that possible when (given the existence of perjury) even non-fictional oaths don't have that power? Is it true that a 'constant oscillation between the poles of belief and disbelief…takes place in the reader's mind when (s)he reads fiction' (70)? The *internal* audience may be waveringly doubtful about the status of what they are hearing, but sophisticated *external* audiences of fiction are capable of maintaining a complex attitude free of oscillation. 'The reader must wonder whether (s)he is him or herself contained within that remote specular image on the Moon, a minute mirror image of a reader and a book, within the very book (s)he is now holding' (226): that's not the 'must' of necessity, since I don't wonder that at all. Am I violating some 'must'

[1] *Reading Fiction with Lucian. Fakes, Freaks and Hypereality*. By Karen ní Mheallaigh. Greek Culture in the Roman World. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp. xii + 305. Hardback £65, ISBN: 978-1-107-07933-5.

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of obligation? But why should anyone be obliged to wonder anything so daft? I was not disturbed by 'the disturbing idea that every reality may be a narrative construct, another diegesis in which we are the characters, being surveyed by some remote and unseen reader, perhaps right now' (225; compare 207), nor unsettled by 'the unsettling possibility that the real world outside Lucian's text could be just as fictional, if not more so, than the world inside the book' (230; compare 8). If you are of a nervous disposition, do not read this book: thirty-six occurrences of 'anxiety' and 'anxious' might make you jittery. Otherwise, read it, enjoy it, and (from time to time) shout at it in frustration.

The *Iliad* of Lucian's Tigranes of Babylon, Martin West's P (see *G&R* 59 [2012], 245), and the Homer of some die-hard obscurantists, does not (one might think) need yet another new translation. Peter Green[2] gets top marks for the first word: 'Wrath'. But then: 'goddess, sing of Achilles': sing of Achilles?! The syntactic fog lifts only after we have struggled through a convoluted possessive clause to the next line: 'sing of Achilles Pēleus's son's/calamitous wrath'. An awkward opening. What follows is much better. Green aims to be declaimable, and succeeds. I was amazed by how little effort it took to read long extracts fluently aloud. Occasionally I stumbled at a rhythmic tripwire, or found a choice of register jarring (9.23: 'This…is…Zeus's idea of a joke'). But much is excellent; some is stunningly good. So this was a translation we did need. And yet… At 1.299 Green, like Lattimore (*G&R* 60 [2013], 153), produces a translation that is accurate but damagingly misleading. In English, 'you gave her, you'll take her back' makes it seem that Achilles is making a concession to Agamemnon; in the Greek, the variation of singulars and plurals shows that Achilles' threats are addressed to Agamemnon, his concession to the whole army (compare 1.162). Verity's 'you all' (*G&R* 59 [2012], 247) may have distracting connotations for American readers; Hammond's prose (*G&R* 35 [1988], 202) gives us 'you Argives'.

A love of Bruckner's music is, generally speaking, evidence of profound wisdom and sound judgement. I learned from (alas) an obituary that Martin West's taste in music 'centred on the works of Anton Bruckner', and willingly embrace the *prima facie* implication of that fact: *de mortuis nil nisi bonum. Sed magis amica veritas*: I found West's characteristically provocative brilliance sadly lacking in his *Making of the Odyssey*.[3] His first argument against the identity of P and Q (the artist formerly known as P^{Od}) is that 'it is a different world that he portrays, and he sees it from a different perspective' (1): must storytellers, then, invariably set different stories in the same imagined world? The commentary which makes up more than half the book has a high proportion of mere reportage; analysis is often perfunctory. Those of us to whom Odysseus' tact in 7.302–7 seems self-evident will not be swayed by West's peremptory denial: 'the inaccuracy is not disingenuity on Odysseus' part but negligence on Q's' (190). The inclusion of 8.523–30 in a bunch of similes that 'may be thought to topple over' into 'incongruity' (62–3) seems imperceptive. On the proem, he says: 'It is as if Q is deliberately withholding any clear preview of the story he plans to unfold' (145). In a book which varies between praising Q's 'characteristic artistry' and deploring his shoddiness, negligence,

[2] *Homer. The Iliad*. Translated by Peter Green. Oakland, CA, University of California Press, 2015. Pp. xvi + 592. Hardback £19.95, ISBN: 978-0-520-28141-7; paperback £11.95, ISBN: 978-0-520-28143-1.

[3] *The Making of the Odyssey*. By M. L. West. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. xii + 315. Hardback £70, ISBN: 978-0-19-871836-9.

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and ineptitude, it is not at all clear what conclusion West draws from this. Is it pejorative ('fails to prepare'; 189) or admiring ('veiled in artful obscurity'; 136)? Is it an imitation of P, whose proem likewise fails to prepare for/veils in artful obscurity the deaths of Patroclus and Hector?

But then I read West's contribution to *Stesichorus in Context*:[4] 'the concept of genre...has heuristic value, or as we used to say, is good to think with; and it is also good for the avoidance of thought' (63). Not for the first time, West left me thinking: 'I wish *I* had written that.' There is much else in this important collection that anyone would be proud to have written. Adrian Kelly and Chris Carey say important, though different, things about Stesichorus' relationship to Homer and the epic cycle. Patrick Finglass argues that Stesichorus is a 'master of narrative': his 'controlled speculation' (96) is persuasive, despite its mildly paradoxical reliance on a tacit assumption of predictability. Ewen Bowie's discussion of Stesichorus in Athens is avowedly speculative: 'many questions, and too little evidence to offer answers' (124). But good questions provide a spur to thought, even when we cannot – and provided that we *know* we cannot – answer them. Note, in that context, the exemplary honesty of Finglass's warning that 'Finglass's edition...should be used only with extreme caution' (12).

That, obviously, is not a disparaging judgement but a realistic assessment of what is possible given the state of the evidence. *Stesichorus. The Poems*[5] includes a commentary that is co-authored, in the sense that Finglass drew on Malcolm Davies' 1979 doctoral thesis and 'had the benefit of discussion with Davies throughout' (xi); the substantial introduction, text, and apparatus are the work of Finglass alone. As in his edition of *Ajax* (*G&R* 59 [2012], 249–50), a translation is embedded in the commentary. Renumbering fragments, often an antisocial exercise that adds unnecessary complexity to referencing, is here an essential solution to the numbering nightmare produced by the haphazard accumulation of new papyri. There is a *comparatio* with Davies' *PMGF* ('1 vol. to date [Oxford 1991–]'). The awe-inspiring bibliography fills sixty-eight pages. Though a separate list of editions is understandable, separating 'works cited by date' from 'works cited by author and date' is unhelpful. A reader who scans both of those lists *and* the list of editions in the hope of resolving the reference to 'Marcovigi 1970' (xiii), and who meets with no success, will probably despair: it is barely conceivable that any reader would be so obsessive as to track it down to the list of abbreviations, under *EGe*. Readers deserve to be treated with more consideration. Measured against the scale of this volume's achievement, though, this is a minor complaint.

A book that lived up to the title *Sappho. A New Translation of the Complete Works*[6] would truly be a thing of wonder. Even the more modest claim to include 'every piece of Sappho's songs that survives and fourteen fragments that most likely are

[4] *Stesichorus in Context*. Edited by P. J. Finglass and Adrian Kelly. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015. Pp. xii + 211. Hardback £69.99, ISBN: 978-1-107-06973-2.

[5] *Stesichorus. The Poems*. Edited with introduction and commentary by M. Davies and P. J. Finglass. Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp. xiv + 691. Hardback £120, ISBN: 978-1-107-07834-5.

[6] *Sappho. A New Translation of the Complete Works*. Translated by Diane J. Rayor with an introduction and notes by André Lardinois. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp. x + 173. Hardback £64.99, ISBN: 978-1-107-02359-8.

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Sappho's' (19) is slightly overstated: though it is as up to date as it can be, incorporating material published in 2014, some untranslatable scraps are omitted. But 'washing soda' (F189) is there. Where the translator has more to go on, the translations are graceful and evocative, as well as accurate. Though tending towards minimalism, André Lardinois' introduction and notes are well done: but the aversion to useful referencing (e.g. 'According to another Greek author…'; 100) is regrettable.

I've confessed before that I am not a fan of Apollonius' *Argonautica*. So if I was underwhelmed by Richard Hunter's Green and Yellow edition of Book 4[7] (successor to his Book 3, published in the same series in 1989) that is emphatically not Hunter's fault, but the poet's (or, conceivably, mine). I did enjoy the two pages of bracing uncertainties with which the relatively brief introduction opens; and I admired the effective and informative treatments of Book 4's geography and its relationship with the *Odyssey* and Callimachus. The commentary is thorough and scholarly, if sometimes too cryptic. In the note on line 147, for example, I could not guess what irony it was that Hunter thinks isn't there: and when he adds that 'this is a good example of how poets do not activate all of our knowledge all of the time', I wanted to know how a poet could *prevent* the activation of our knowledge. Elsewhere, Hunter assumes the activation of knowledge only tenuously connected with the text without showing that the poet has had to make an effort to bring that about (for example, on γραπτῦς in 279–81). Is the choice of which knowledge is deemed to be activated opportunistic? And if one were to suggest that Arete has been reading the *Argonautica* (1080–1 n.), what would that actually *mean*? It is, perhaps, a tribute to Hunter's skill that he managed to engage the attention of an (in whichever sense applies) indifferent reader sufficiently to provoke questions.

I picked up Susan Stephens' edition of Callimachus' *Hymns*[8] more eagerly. The lengthy, but economical and elegant, introduction is rich on social-political, literary, and artistic aspects, but also gives detailed attention to language, metre, and the transmission of the text. The prose translations (not on facing pages with the text) 'do no more than aim for clarity and are intended to provide the reader with my understanding of the text' (vii). The commentary does not discuss everything that a new reader might want to know about: the poetry's complexity and sophistication hardly allows that. But it provides an outstanding foundation for understanding the work of an outstanding poet.

It was with still greater eagerness that I picked up Oliver Taplin's translation of four Sophoclean plays.[9] How successfully would a scholar who has done so much to enrich our understanding of tragedy as a performance art rise to the challenge of performable translation? I've just, at this moment, opened the book at random:

[7] *Apollonius of Rhodes. Argonautica Book IV*. Edited by Richard Hunter. Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015. Pp. xii + 339. Hardback £64.99, ISBN: 978-1-107-06351-8; paperback £22.99, ISBN: 978-1-107-63675-0.

[8] *Callimachus. The Hymns*. Edited with introduction, translation, and commentary by Susan A. Stephens. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. xx + 324. 12 maps and illustrations. Hardback £64, ISBN: 978-0-19-978307-6; paperback £18.99, ISBN: 978-0-19-978304-5.

[9] *Sophocles. Four Tragedies. Oedipus the King, Aias, Philoctetes, Oedipus at Colonus*. Translated by Oliver Taplin. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. xl + 341. Hardback £20, ISBN: 978-0-19-928623-2.

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I did. I held him off by casting on his eyes
mistaken fantasies, malignant raptures;
and I diverted him against the flocks of spoils,
not yet shared out, still under herdsmen's watch.
There he attacked the animals,
and, cleaving all around him, butchered them. (*Ajax* 51–6)

That's well-structured, rhythmically effective, lexically inventive, and powerful writing which, while not literal, conveys the thrust of the original with clarity. It outshines all the other versions that I have to hand and (I would guess) those that I don't. This spur-of-the-moment experiment matches the results of more extensive and leisurely soundings. You *must* read the Deception Speech. The lyric parts, 'sometimes, to be frank, closer to doggerel than poetry', as Taplin acknowledges (xxviii), do not work nearly so well off the page. But I can see what Taplin was trying to do, and share his 'hope that these versions of the lyrics might one day be set to music and sung'. Despite that reservation, this is a deeply rewarding version. Its value is enhanced by a thoughtful introduction and sparing but helpful notes.

A reliable translation of pseudo-Plutarch's *Lives of the Attic Orators*,[10] with an informative introduction and commentary, together with lightly annotated extracts from Photius and the *Suda*, and brief supplementary accounts of Apollodorus, Hegesippus, and Demades (not included in the canonical ten) – that is something I would have found very useful twenty years ago. It would be churlish to chide the team for a tardiness that only accentuates my awareness of how valuable a resource they have produced. A philological question: is it Quintilian's practice to 'attach a numeral to a substantive' (8, n. 26) even when the substantive can be supplied from the preceding clause? A rhetorical question: if 'a common characteristic of speeches was an emphasis not so much on content but on persuasion – in other words, the performance of the speaker' (3), how did logographers make a living? What sense does it make to suppose that persuasion is separable from content?

It is less clear to me what use I might ever have for a collection of constellation myths compiled from the epitome of Eratsothenes' *Catasterisms* and Hyginus' *Astronomica*. But if you have felt in need of one, your need has now been met by Robin Hard,[11] a translator of proven quality (see *G&R* 61 [2014], 265), whose Apollodorus is also, like this volume, available at modest cost in Oxford World's Classics. A complete translation of Aratus is also included, along with extracts from Geminus' *Introduction*.

[10] *Lives of the Attic Orators. Texts from Pseudo-Plutarch, Photius, and the Suda*. Introduction and commentary by Joseph Roisman and Ian Worthington. Translation by Robin Waterfield. Clarendon Ancient History Series. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. xx + 381. Hardback £80, ISBN: 978-0-19-968766-4; paperback £30, ISBN: 978-0-19-968767-1.

[11] *Eratosthenes and Hyginus. Constellation Myths with Aratus's Phaenomena*. Translated by Robin Hard. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. xlvi + 210. 2 maps, 1 diagram. Paperback £8.99, ISBN: 978-0-19-871698-3.

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The Romance between Greece and the East[12] is concerned with 'romance' in a sense that is both broad ('a…body of ancient texts, which collectively stretch the definition of "the novelistic", perhaps even to breaking point'; 1) and vaguely defined ('novel-*like* texts – inventive prose narratives'; 2). But the obviously ambiguous term also hints at amorous intercourse between 'Greece' and 'the East': or, if not amorous, at any rate culturally fruitful. The aim is, of course, to pose a challenge to 'Classicists', who are 'used to thinking of "Greek culture" as solid and self-evident' (2). That's not a picture of the contemporary discipline that I recognize: the striking of exaggerated poses may be more prevalent (as is the illusion that putting something into italics makes its meaning clearer: 'Greekness emerges…as a *language* that agglutinates different cultures in all their alterity'; 2). As Tim Whitmarsh says, the volume 'will no doubt strike some readers as just as politically embedded as the accounts of Huet, Rohde *et al.*' (18); his introduction, at least, parades the fact. But I was more struck by the neutrality of 'politically embedded', alongside the pejorative 'mired in' applied to our just-as-politically-embedded predecessors (3, 5). Self-reflexive awareness (5) loses much of its point when it is mired in censoriousness and complacent self-satisfaction. But, to return to the volume's scope, the expansiveness of its body of ancient texts is matched by the expansiveness of its 'East', which covers not only a huge diversity of 'oriental' locations but also Miletus. This double inflation threatens to exacerbate a problem endemic to collective volumes: the tendency to end up as a heap of frustratingly unconnected parts. That was my first impression here: on further reflection, though, I found that the cumulative effect of its disparate contents was to highlight the potential importance of such research, not for deflating caricature 'Classicists', but for enriching our understanding of the cultural complexities of the ancient world. In the end, therefore, I saw the volume's importance. The task towards which it points is, of course, immense, given the huge diversity of material and the many different kinds of expertise that it demands. The same factors make it impossible for me to provide in the few words available any overview of the nineteen substantive papers, ranging across Egyptians, Mesopotamians, Iranians, Jews, and Phoenicians, as well as Ionians. But I will note briefly that here, too, Ewen Bowie revels in the inconclusiveness of his speculations (in this case, about the history of Milesian tales); and Karen ní Mheallaigh's chapter on Dictys did not annoy me in the least.

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Latin Literature

Among a wealth of excellent studies and translations of individual Latin authors (Plautus, Catullus, Lucretius, Cicero, Ovid, Pliny the Elder, Pliny the Younger, Martial, Juvenal, and Statius), I was delighted also to find packed into my crate of

[12] *The Romance Between Greece and the East*. Edited by Tim Whitmarsh and Stuart Thomson. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. xiv + 396. Hardback £74.99, ISBN: 978-1-107-03824-0; paperback £27.99; ISBN: 978-1-107-54300-3.

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