

A. Rijksbaron's commentary on the proem of Hesiod's *Theogony* provides the final chapter of this volume. He concentrates on temporal and spatial aspects, paying particular attention to the grammatical and lexical elements that, he argues, lend unity to this otherwise seemingly non-cohesive passage.

The classical passages discussed in each chapter are faithfully recorded in a useful *index locorum*, though the multitude of additional examples listed in footnotes are not included. The volume is well produced with few typographical errors. There are a few infelicities in the translations of some papers into English, for example gendered pronouns being used to denote abstract nouns (pp. 217–18). There is a mismatch between the Greek passage cited and the one translated at p. 53.

This is a very interesting book which should help to ensure that this dynamic area of inquiry does not remain in the province of the specialist.

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THE QUESTION OF AUTHORSHIP

BEECROFT (A.) *Authorship and Cultural Identity in early Greece and China. Patterns of Literary Circulation*. Pp. x + 328. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Cased, £50, US\$85. ISBN: 978-0-521-19431-0.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X11000679

Debates about the role of an author's biography and creative intent in the interpretation of his work take a peculiar form in the context of ancient canonical literature. Its reception by the transmitting communities and the uses to which various social agents put it inescapably mediate our own reception. This literature survived precisely because it was thought worthy of preservation and found 'useful' in some way. Its texts are often shaped by complex and protracted societal processes. This is *a fortiori* so with traditional literature, for which even the notion of an original authorial fountainhead may be problematic.

B.'s sophisticated and elegantly argued monograph studies the ways in which the notion of authorship arises and functions as an index of literary reception. A comparative study of early Greek and Chinese patterns of literary circulation, the book devotes three chapters apiece to exploring the implication of its theses for our understanding of the early Greek and Chinese canon: for Greece, Homer and archaic lyric (specifically, Terpander, Alcman, Sappho and Stesichorus); for China, the *Canon of Songs* (especially the *Airs of the States* and the *Hymns of Zhou*) and the *Zuozhuan*. These partial lists alert the reader to the divergent character of the two records: the Greek focusses attention on authorial figures whom B. sees as largely or wholly constructed, perhaps unselfconsciously, to reflect broadly held assumptions about the production, circulation and value of the poetry severally ascribed to each name; the Chinese downplays questions of origins in favour of fixing a poem's significance through a paradigmatic (re)use of it. In either case, the cultural authority of literature and its socially authorised uses are ultimately in view.

The study of canonical authorship as a constructed category that informs, and is informed by, the works ascribed to it is an old idea whose time has come.

Greek literary history long ago moved away from biographies naïvely assembled from ancient reports and alleged autobiographical references. But we have also come a long way from Lefkowitz's dismissal of ancient biographical material as largely irrelevant to the interpretation of Greek poetry (*The Lives of the Greek Poets*, 1981). Graziosi's *Inventing Homer*, Nagy's 'Hesiod and the Ancient Biographical Traditions' in *Brill's Companion to Hesiod* and his forthcoming Sather Lectures *Homer the Preclassic* (with a thorough analysis of the Homeric *Vitae*), and Kivilo's *Early Greek Poets' Lives* (with its source- and redaction-criticism of biographical traditions) are only a sample of recent studies that prove the enduring relevance of poetic biographical material to our understanding of ancient Greek literature.

B.'s central thesis, often revisited and restated, is that the concept of authorship in ancient Greece and China provides the contextual information once furnished by the occasion of performance. The connection of a given work to its cultural environment – its interpretation and function – must adapt to changing circumstances in order to retain its relevance and survive the process of canonical selection (p. 283). Performance is of capital importance to B. because it speaks to the primordial *Sitz im Leben* and early reception of the works under consideration.

For B. biographical anecdotes often involve formulations of what he calls 'implicit poetics': their narratives make piecemeal and indirect theoretical statements about literature, revealing unspoken assumptions about the source, value and function of a given work, its place within the larger literary environment, and its relationship to the structures of power. B. warns against the 'reverse biographical fallacy', the presumption that *all* biographical material about ancient poets derives from a naïve reading of their poems. For these anecdotes he coins the term 'scene of authorship', which improves on Foucault's 'fonction-auteur' because it emphasises 'the performed and performative dimension of authorship' (p. 18 n. 30). 'Scenes of authorship' stage the 'author' publicly not 'as a narrativized and narrativizable subject' but 'as a dramatization of the social forces concentrated on poetry' (ibid.). Reading these 'scenes' as evidence for poetic ideology, B. brackets questions of origins and focusses on reception and reuse. He has little to say about the actual conditions and agents of production but much to suggest about the interpretation and function of literature. His interest in performance contributes valuable insights into the origins of Greek and Chinese traditional literature.

B.'s comparative and diachronic analysis is carefully structured, moving from the earlier local or 'epichoric' context of literature to the later 'panchoric' reception. The latter features a distillation of local traditions designed to facilitate supra-local diffusion, a distillation still rooted in the historical particularities of a fragmented socio-political environment. It corresponds to the respective stages of Panhellenism and 'Panhuaxia' (B.'s coinage on p. 9). 'Epichoric' and 'panchoric' refer not only to relative diachronic phases but also to synchronic modes of reception. The final stage surveyed is the 'cosmopolitan', which features ideologies of reading that claim universal authority for a literary tradition. The inspiration for B.'s comparative analysis comes from the pioneering work of M. Parry and A.B. Lord on traditional oral literature, refined by G. Nagy's insights into the diachronic development of Homeric poetry and the impact of performance and diffusion on its evolving texts. For this reason, B.'s approach to the *Canon of Songs* is more innovative than his exploration of the Homeric *Vitae*. His focus on performance, his coinage and use of 'Panhuaxia', his recourse to 'centrifugal' and 'centripetal' as spatial metaphors for circulation (p. 10), will all sound familiar or be readily intelligible to Homerists

and informed students of oral traditional poetry. While B.'s suggestions display interpretative acumen and sensitivity to diachronic trends and historical contingencies, for the Hellenist the Chinese *comparanda* break little new theoretical ground. Only 'cosmopolitanism' does not issue from Greek philology. B. has taken it from the Sanskritist Sheldon Pollock and modified it to include the circulation of literary culture in empires that claim the right to universal rule (p. 6). This nicely fits the ideology of the Chinese Han Empire. Its application to classical Greek literature is less neat, and B. must relax it to embrace writings (like those of Plato and, incipiently, of Herodotus) that frame questions of governance in universal terms. The circulation of Greek literature in the Hellenistic and Roman imperial eras more readily fits the category.

The virtue of B.'s comparative exercise is that it offers convincing evidence that the poetics implicit in 'scenes of authorship' complements each culture's manifestos of explicit poetics (Aristotle's recourse to *mimêsis* in the *Poetics* and the 'affective-expressive' reading of the *Canon of Songs* in the Mao Preface). It also deepens our understanding of the value and function of canonical literature in ancient Greece and China. B. may have overstated the case for an explicit Greek poetics that downplays the emotions and the constructive political role of poetry. Aristotle's discussion of *êthos* and *pathos* in his *Poetics*, *Politics* and *Rhetoric* and Plato's concern with the symposium and *choreia* in the *Laws* (cf. Lonsdale's *Dance and Ritual Play in Greek Religion*, pp. 44ff.) articulate an explicit poetics of the political and affective dimensions of *mousikê*.

The book is beautifully edited. B.'s translation of Greek and Latin texts is often unreliable, although this rarely vitiates his discussion. Two representative examples: *ὡς ἄλλης εἶναι Ῥοδώπι* (Hdt. 2.135), which B. renders 'sufficient to be Rhodopis' (p. 130), should read 'so as to be sufficient for a Rhodopis'; and on p. 126 *διὰ [τ]ῆν σοφία[ν]* surely means 'because of his poetic skill' and not 'in their wisdom' (the entire translation is garbled; cf. Alcman T9 in Campbell's Loeb). At pp. 153ff. B. over-reads *ἀρχόμενος τῆς ᾠδῆς* and creates a specious problem. Stesichorus' *Palinode* arguably included the recanted ode before the recantation, as B. acknowledges on p. 154. Isocrates does not claim that blindness afflicted the poet 'as he began to create the *Helen*' (p. 154). Nor is it the case that Plato evades 'questions of orality and performance' (p. 154), since his quoted *οὐτος* strongly suggests the continuous performance sequence of ode and palinode. Here, as with Alcman and Sappho, B.'s discussion is not as convincing as his analysis of the Homeric *Vitae*. This monograph would have profited from a more robust engagement with source-criticism. It is a pity that Kivilo's research was not available to B.

The terms of B.'s comparative study are well chosen. It regards two regions whose political fragmentation was overlaid by a growing cultural unity during roughly contemporaneous periods. I cannot judge the accuracy of B.'s analysis of Chinese literature. His selections seem relevant and appear to substantiate his claims. Because of his lucid argumentation and his evident effort to make the presentation accessible to non-specialists, his book serves as an excellent introduction to early Chinese literature. For the Hellenist, it makes a compelling case for reading biographical material for its implicit poetics. It deserves to be read widely.

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