Although one gets the distinct impression that dithyramb – always the protean – has once again resisted being pinned down, the present volume is most welcome both as a sampling of current scholarship and a demonstration of how many varieties of evidence may be adduced to a literary historical question.

Baylor University SIMON P. BURRIS
simon_burris@baylor.edu

MALE PREGNANCY

LEITAO (D.D.) *The Pregnant Male as Myth and Metaphor in Classical Greek Literature*. Pp. xii + 307. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Cased, £62, US$99. ISBN: 978-1-107-01728-3.
doi:10.1017/S0009840X14002121

L. explains that this volume began as an attempt to 'write the prehistory' (p. 1) of the metaphor of male pregnancy and birth so familiar to us from Plato's *Symposium* – initially, it seems, in order better to understand the metaphor in that dialogue. What L. discovered, however, was a prehistory so rich and 'robust', as he says, that Plato recedes a little in importance, though the book ends with two long chapters on the *Symposium* and the *Theaetetus*, offering persuasive new readings of aspects of the metaphor there. L. tracks the development and deployment of male pregnancy myths and metaphors (and, indeed, the transformation of myth into metaphor) in the period 470–350 B.C.E., arguing that they constituted a well-established discourse that was recognisable as such to the authors who employed them and to their audiences. One of the major achievements of the book, then, is a definitive demonstration that, contrary to the claims of some commentators, Plato did not invent the metaphor of male pregnancy and birth, nor did he revive a moribund metaphor; rather, he drew on a substantial literary tradition.

There are three main aspects to the volume: the detailed presentation of the development of the relevant myths and metaphors; interpretations of the role of the myth and the metaphor in specific literary and philosophical texts; and an overarching claim concerning the rhetorical function of their deployment. This last is the claim that, contrary to the assumptions of the majority of the existing literature, the deployment of the male pregnancy metaphor is not necessarily to be understood in terms of what we might now call gender politics. That is, the metaphors are not necessarily deployed 'to gain either some kind of political advantage over women or some kind of psychic advantage in their encounter with the female other' (p. 4). L.'s aim is to understand how the metaphors function in particular texts where, he finds that, 'during the classical period at least, they [often] had more to do with conceptualizing kinship and citizenship than with the intrapsychic conflicts of individual Greek men' (p. 10).

In relation to the first two aspects, the book is outstanding. L. begins what he modestly calls a 'survey' (p. 18) of images of male pregnancy and parturition with a discussion of isomorphic developments in Anaxagoras' embryological theory and cosmology in the middle of the fifth century B.C.E. L. explains Anaxagoras' 'one-seed theory of reproduction', which posits the single male seed as the principle of reproduction, as part of a transformation of the agricultural metaphor of 'seed' into 'a technical philosophical term to describe the potential for any given bit of matter, organic or inorganic, to be transformed into every other form of matter' (p. 31). At the same time, Anaxagoras' larger cosmology attempted to explain the origin of the cosmos and all life within it by way of a single 'masculine

principle with metaphysical powers acting upon feminine matter, father sky impregnating mother earth' (p. 36). Both of these theories were, L. argues, a solution to several scientific and philosophical problems in the later sixth and early fifth centuries, particularly Parmenides' problem of genesis and the problem of how to account for the embryo's acquisition of a soul.

L. then discusses the reception of the new embryology in Athenian tragedy, including its rhetorical deployment in Apollo's famous anti-matrilineal speech in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*. And just as, he argues, the new embryology and cosmology 'appear not to originate as interventions in sociopolitical debates about the gender roles of men and women in Greek society' (p. 18), so too the reception in Athenian tragedy is driven by other concerns – by the need to defend claims to family inheritance and civic status.

In the next chapter, devoted to the myth of Dionysus' birth from the thigh of Zeus, L. similarly argues that the myth 'appears to have had rather little to do with debates about the proper roles of men and women in reproduction or in society more generally' (p. 58). Rather, it is a response to theological debates over the status of demigods (the apparent contradiction of a 'god' with one mortal parent) and political debates over increasingly restrictive definitions of citizenship, especially the Periclean law of citizenship requiring that both one's mother and one's father be Athenians. In the myth of the thigh birth Zeus effectively becomes both mother and father of Dionysus; thus Dionysus' divine status is assured. The invocation of the myth in Euripides' *Bacchae* (which L. discusses in fascinating detail) should then be understood as an attempt to deal with the problem of parentage in the light of the legal–civic problem of citizenship.

L.'s careful readings of the literary texts are insightful and often brilliant, especially concerning the relation of detail to context. But the overarching claim downplaying, and at times even denying, the relevance of gender politics is less convincing. It is hard to see how a cosmology that proposes 'a gendered, hierarchical system' ruled by a masculine principle is not a reflection of gender politics, even if it is *also* a response to scientific and philosophical problems. L. includes a critical discussion of N. Loraux's *The Experiences of Tiresias* in his general account of the limitations of psychoanalytic approaches to the male pregnancy metaphor, but does not explicitly consider her *The Children of Athena*, in which the argument for the inextricability of Athenian ideas of citizenship and gender politics is so convincingly made. (The book is listed in L.'s bibliography.) It seems likely that L.'s argument is an attempt to correct what may be seen as the exclusivity of the gender analysis in the existing literature; but if so it is an equally one-sided response.

In subsequent chapters L. examines the transition from the invocation of the myths of male pregnancy to the full deployment of the metaphor – which saw an 'explosion' (p. 101) in its use from the 420s – notably as a way of claiming authorship of poetry and ideas for their human creators. If it was, as L. argues, commonplace by the time of its appearance in Plato's *Symposium*, this is not to say that Plato made a commonplace use of it. L. argues convincingly that Plato deployed the male pregnancy and birth metaphors in the *Symposium*, especially, as a very precise counter to the pedagogic assumptions of the Sophists. Whereas the Sophistic rhetoric of sowing seeds of virtue in the pupil conceived of the teacher as an impregnator, able to *teach* virtue through this impregnation in the souls of others, Plato's use of the pregnancy metaphor casts the philosopher as himself giving birth to virtue, generating knowledge within himself, albeit (initially at least) in a relation with another. In his final chapter, L. then considers the move from the birth metaphor to the idea of the philosopher as paternal midwife in Plato's *Theaetetus*, interpreting this as a reflection of a new, specifically Platonic (not Socratic) epistemology, involving 'a shift in interest from the source of ideas (especially recollected Forms) to their truth-value' (p. 246), the 'midwife' being metaphorically invested with the power of the father to reject

inferior children/ideas. In these later chapters L.'s claims about the rhetorical function of the deployment of the male pregnancy and birth metaphors do not exclude consideration of gender politics. Plato's *Symposium* is seen as developing a 'paternal metaphysics' which threatens to 'render the mother entirely otiose' (p. 185) and L.'s exceptionally full (and enjoyable) interpretation of all aspects of Blepyrus' 'turd-child' in Aristophanes' *Assemblywomen* foregrounds the need for the deployment of the metaphor to negotiate the negative implications of the penetrated, impregnated male.

In the end, then, the claims made in the introduction denying or downplaying the pertinence of the gender analysis of the male pregnancy metaphors do not quite accurately represent the book's approach throughout, and it does not work as a compelling overarching interpretative strategy. But the great strengths of the book are in the – possibly encyclopedic – mapping of the genealogy and deployment of the male pregnancy and birth metaphors and in the analyses of particular texts. The book is thus indispensable for anyone interested in the topic in this period and required reading on Plato's *Symposium* and *Theaetetus* in particular.

Kingston University STELLA SANDFORD
s.sandford@kingston.ac.uk

LATE LYRIC

LEVEN (P.A.) *The Many-Headed Muse. Tradition and Innovation in Late Classical Greek Lyric Poetry*. Pp. x + 377. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Cased, £65, US$99. ISBN: 978-1-107-01853-2.
doi:10.1017/S0009840X14003059

The scope of this thought-provoking book is indicated by its subtitle, and involves a period of literature (430–323) which L.V. rightly sees as insufficiently studied and inappropriately denigrated. (The period contains poems of [p. 1] 'daunting diversity', hence [cf. p. 330] the book's main title.) The denigration, begun in antiquity itself (pp. 6–7), was exacerbated by more recent oversimplifications about the decline or decadence of lyric after Pindar. These have their counterpart, as L.V. is aware (p. 3), in generalisations about the visual arts of ancient Greece. More might have been made of this: see for example A. Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History* (1994), pp. 27–8 and 50–4 on the alleged pattern of rise and decline. They recall even more, of course, the once prevalent antithesis between 'classic' and 'Hellenistic' literature. L.V. indeed observes (p. 4) that there are features in her authors that anticipate the latter (p. 175 identifies Philoxenus as 'an Alexandrian *avant la lettre*'). She determines, none the less, to study the relevant works in their own right, rather than as merely a 'missing link'.

This last complication might be avoided altogether by K.J. Dover's suggestion (*Theocritus* [1971], p. lxxi) 'that Hellenistic poetry began … with the deaths of Euripides and Sophocles'. However, L.V.'s determination typifies the balance and also the tolerance of complexities ('problematisation': blessed word!) that characterise the book as a whole. In fact, her treatment recalls Dover (pp. lxv–lxvi) on the inadequacy of many traditional criteria for identifying Hellenistic poetic features. Thus she finds (p. 172) accumulated epithets no infallible index of dithyrambic style, since they are anticipated in archaic cletic contexts. (This approach could have been taken further: for instance, Licymnius fr. 769's 'blurring' [p. 174] of 'the boundaries between … physical qualities [of Hygieia] … in anthropomorphic terms and … features that describe her in technical and