

theory prior to Plato. The timeframe is 470–350 BC and he manages to deliver an engaging, thoroughly-researched account of the metaphor, starting with Anaxagoras and the Pre-Socratics, through tragedy, comedy and the sophists, and ending, appropriately, with Plato.

In the ‘Introduction’, Leitao places himself within the scholarly discussion of the subject. He distances himself both from psychoanalytical discourse and feminist theory, stating that his intention is to focus on rhetoric and the discourse within which these texts exist, rather than on attempting to reconstruct intent or limit his analysis in discussions of sex and gender and the idea of sexual conflict within the metaphor.

Chapter 2 looks at the development of Anaxagoras’ ‘masculinist embryology’ or one-seed theory. Through his analysis of Archaic notions of reproduction as well as Anaxagoras’ theory, and its reception and development by his three successors, he convincingly argues that the theory is mainly metaphysical rather than a tool to promote gender discourse and male over female domination, although he is careful to admit that it eventually came to be linked to the latter as well. The chapter ends with three examples taken from Attic tragedy, showing the possible influence of the new embryological theory emerging in the fifth century.

Chapter 3 focuses on the miraculous thigh birth of Dionysus. Leitao makes a close connection to Pericles’ citizenship law and discussions of legitimacy in the fifth century. His perspective from the point of view of cultural history offers a plausible explanation to the relatively late emergence of details of Dionysus’ birth by linking it primarily with socio-political discussions of the time.

In chapter 4 Leitao moves on to the issue of male pregnancy as a metaphor for poetic/intellectual creation first emerging in the early years of the Peloponnesian War. He examines cosmogonic theories relating to creation through thought and then turns to the way the sophists made use of the pregnancy metaphor as a teaching tool for virtue and knowledge, to finally concentrate on the employment of the metaphor in dramatic texts. Once more, Leitao points out that issues of gender struggle are not in play here, but rather, it is a tool to establish full ownership of the authors’ poetic creations, especially when in doubt.

The importance of the pedagogical function of the metaphor as a central reason for its survival is underlined in chapter 5 and Blepyrus’ turd-child in *Ecclesiazusae*. Interestingly, here the author is more willing to allow gender power-games to

enter the discussion alongside rhetoric than in previous chapters, linking Blepyrus’ scene with the birth of Athena from Zeus’ head and discerning in those two scenes the struggle between matriarchy and patriarchal values as well as the effort to establish the boundaries of masculinity.

Chapter 6 is dedicated to the *Symposium* and offers an insightful analysis of the paradox in Platonic thought that every philosopher should become – and remain – pregnant with his own virtue without being impregnated by a sophist.

Finally, chapter 7 offers an analysis of the metaphor as it evolved in the *Theaetetus*, where the Socratic method is explicitly compared to the work of a midwife, thus marking the shift in Platonic thought from the pregnant philosopher to the philosopher as a midwife.

The book ends with two appendices. The first examines the idea of female seed before Democritus, only to conclude – and rightly so – that the relevant passages in Parmenides, Empedocles and Alcmaeon are problematic at best. Appendix II offers an insightful analysis on the gender-specific use of the verb *τίκτω* in the *Symposium*: employed primarily by women, it becomes an appropriate term for men only in passages where the discussion becomes more abstract.

One could argue that Leitao’s refutation of gender nuance is sometimes difficult to accept, given the prominence of male versus female elements in literature. Overall, however, the contribution of Leitao’s book to the discussion of the male pregnancy metaphor is indubitable; it adds a new perspective to existing scholarship and makes for a compelling, thought-provoking monograph.

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DOVA (S.) Greek Heroes in and out of Hades.

Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2012, Pp. 242.
\$70. 9780739144978.

doi:10.1017/S0075426914001657

This intriguingly-titled book discusses how the heroic legacy and status of mythic figures were developed through encounters with the afterlife. In the ‘Preface’, Dova describes her initial interest as ‘heroism and “death in transition”’, which led her to a group of texts from epic, lyric and tragic poetry that have characters who experience ‘*katabasis* (“descent to the underworld”), foreknowledge of death and self-sacrifice’ (xi).

By examining the diachronic representations of certain mythic heroes who appear in or near death, Dova discovers intertextual connections that show an evolving definition of Greek heroism. Although the title might suggest that the book discusses heroic journeys to the Underworld, the book mainly focuses on the idea of mortality that such a setting might provide. The book's chief concern is the ancient Greek concept of the hero and how each work redefines heroism for its own context and protagonist. Each of the major heroes Dova considers (Odysseus, Heracles, Achilles, Meleager and Alcestis) visits the Underworld under unusual circumstances. Heracles is the primary unifying figure in all the examples (with Achilles a close second), as he appears to some degree in almost all the texts under consideration. The book has 30 distinct essays, which are grouped loosely into three major sections.

Part 1, 'Odysseus and the poetics of *katábasis*', focuses on how Homer uses the ghost of Achilles to recall and reformulate heroism in the First and Second *Nekyia* (*Odyssey* 11 and 24, respectively). In a close reading of *Odyssey* 11.482b–86a (16–28), Dova performs a masterful analysis over several essays on the concept of *makarismos* ('ritual act of calling one blessed', 222) as an aspect of a hero's *kleos*, making much of Odysseus' description of Achilles as *makartatos* ('most blessed of men') and the latter's subsequent rejection of the title. She convincingly argues that Odysseus subtly changes the qualifications for the title of *makartatos* to include *nostos*, thereby taking on the designation for himself and replacing the Iliadic requirements of *kleos* to fit the *Odyssey*'s poetics (28). Particular strengths of this section are its deft argumentation around possible textual issues (such as interpolations and scribal errors) as well as its detailed consideration of seemingly minor characters of the *Nekyia* – Elpenor, Aias and Odysseus' female helpmates (Anticleia, Circe, Nausicaa, etc.) – to show how the *Odyssey* differs from the *Iliad* in its treatment of *kleos*.

Part 2, 'Hades (and heroism) revisited', uses Heracles' ghostly appearance in the *Nekyia* (*Odyssey* 11.601–26) to lead into a larger discussion of Heracles' *katabasis* and how the lyric poet Bacchylides uses the hero's necromantic conversation with the ghost of Meleager in an epinician ode to glorify and console his ailing patron Hieron by 'connecting [Hieron] to a long line of heroes who earned *kléos* through suffering' (93). Dova's close-reading of Bacchylides' fifth ode is highly productive, especially in leading to a

reconsideration of Meleager's heroism and how his situation parallels Achilles' in the *Iliad* – both have powerful mothers and loyal partners who beg them to enter battle. The description of Achilles as undergoing an 'inverted *katábasis*' (103) because he has foreknowledge of his death, however, is a bit perplexing as is the statement that 'the hero of a descent to the underworld knows that he will come back alive' (104), since much of the angst for such a hero (and the audience) is the idea that there might not be a safe return.

The discussion surrounding Achilles at the end of part 2 continues into part 3, 'Achilles, Alcestis, and the poetics of non-*katábasis*'. In this last section, Dova focuses on the myth of Alcestis, as it appears in Euripides' *Alcestis* and Plato's *Symposium*. At this point, the work moves rather far from the idea of heroism in relation to Hades to focus more generically on heroism in the face of mortality, and often the connections between the essays in this section and other parts of the book are tenuous. Of course, Heracles does appear in Euripides' *Alcestis* as well as the *Odyssey* and Bacchylides' fifth epinician ode, but his presence does not seem quite enough at times to link the heroism of Alcestis to that of the other heroes associated with a katabatic Heracles (namely, Odysseus and Meleager). Despite this occasional disorientation, Dova analyses intertextual echoes between the various sources of the Alcestis myth with remarkable precision and sophistication. Especially interesting are her essays about Plato's comparison of Achilles to Alcestis, both of whom die for loved ones (Patroclus and Admetus, respectively).

As a whole, this book is a thought-provoking study using intertextual analysis to further our understanding of how Greeks developed and applied the concept of heroism over time.

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DE JONG (I.J.F.) *Ed. Space in Ancient Greek Literature: Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative 3* (Mnemosyne Supplements 339). Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012. Pp. xiv + 610. €184/\$252. 9789004222571.

doi:10.1017/S0075426914001669

This book completes a massive three-volume study of Greek literature from a narratological perspective under the editorship of de Jong and