scholarly apparatus. There might not have been an entire book in it, but perhaps rather wider appeal.

Christ Church, Oxford IAN RUFFELL

X. Riu: *Dionysism and Comedy.* Pp. X + 293. Lanham, Boulder, New York, and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999. Paper, £19.95. ISBN: 0-847-69442-9.

This book argues that Old Comedy enacts a Dionysiac mythic/ritual pattern whereby the comic hero(ine)—who is partly identified with Dionysos and with the poet—subverts one or more of the central norms of *polis* society, often negating civilization itself and regressing to a primitive stage of human existence. In comedy this 'disfoundation of the city' normally leads to bliss; in reality it could not. Comedy thus presents an inverted world which confirms and valorizes by contrast the norms of the actual world. Accordingly, values and causes supported by the comic hero would in real life, in all probability, be condemned by him and his audience; while policies and persons whom the hero and his/her allies oppose (e.g. war, Kleon, the Proboulos in *Lysistrata*) are likely to have the approval of the poet.

These surprising propositions are not logically untenable. As R. rightly argues (pp. 237–42), there are in many societies some contexts, not necessarily ritual, in which words, gestures, etc. that *prima facie* are highly insulting are not regarded as 'real' insults but as part of a game with well-understood rules or even as evidence of a friendly attitude; and such contexts certainly existed in ancient Greek society too. To show, however, that comedy was one of them, one needs to establish (i) that the Dionysiac story-pattern R. posits was a cultural reality; (ii) that Old Comedy reflects it in a way that 'serious' poetic genres do not; and (iii) that Athenians of Aristophanes' time, far from regarding comic satire as damaging, positively welcomed it as evidence of popular favour. R. gets nowhere near doing this. Given the space available, I shall focus on (iii).

R.'s approach to the evidence regarding the contemporary reception of comic satire is simple: he disregards it, every bit. All evidence of Hellenistic and later date, notably that of scholia, is rejected on the ground that it includes some demonstrable falsehoods and that we can never know when it is true (pp. 24, 34); no reason is given why we cannot follow the normal rules of historical inquiry and examine the sources and credentials of each statement separately. Statements or allusions in comic texts themselves are excluded as evidence because we have even less reason to be confident of their veracity (as against this simplistic approach, see now the masterly discussion of comedy as a historical source by C. B. R. Pelling, *Literary Texts and the Greek Historian* [London, 2000]). The evidence of the 'Old Oligarch' (2.18) and of Plato (*Apol.* 18b–19d?—no references are given) is reserved for later treatment (p. 4), with no hint offered of how R. would reconcile it with his thesis. Other evidence (e.g. Aischines 1.157) is simply not noticed. And thus R. can presume that we know nothing whatever of how contemporaries viewed comic satire, and can spin elegant inferences undisturbed by obstinate fact.

I cannot here catalogue all the liberties R. takes with evidence and logic, so I will concentrate on one. Maintaining that *Lysistrata* affirms 'that war is the proper state of things, in accordance with the will of god' (p. 184), R. adds that this is 'in complete agreement with Hesiod (*Op.* 229) when he says that it is Zeus who decrees war to {the} humans'. What Hesiod actually says is that Zeus never brings war on a city that respects justice, that famine and disaster are unknown to such a city, and that it prospers in every way (225–37). If this is evidence that Hesiod believed war to be 'the proper state of things', it is also evidence that he thought that famine and misery were the proper state of things. Or does R. suppose that that was what Hesiod, and fifth-century Athenians, believed?

And yet this book is not without its usefulness. Far better scholars than R. have argued that the causes espoused by comic heroes are to a considerable extent invalidated by these heroes' opposition to *polis* norms, which often extends to serious crime (treason, impiety, hubris, etc.). R., by taking this position seriously and following out its implications as no one else has done, has tested it literally to destruction; or at least he has set its proponents the challenge of showing why it does not follow from their arguments that Aristophanes believed, and expected his audiences to believe, (for example) that *ceteris paribus* it was better to be at war than at peace, better for the virtuous to be poor and the wicked rich than vice versa, and better to seek enjoyment in condemning the innocent than in alcoholic conviviality.

R. is under no illusions about the quality of his English (p. viii, 239), but his editor and

publishers have let him down disgracefully by shirking any serious attempt to make his text consistently intelligible.

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W. Steinbichler: *Die Epigramme des Dichters Straton von Sardes. Ein Beitrag zum griechischen paiderotischen Epigramm.* Pp. 261. Berlin, etc.: Peter Lang, 1998. Paper, DM 31. ISBN: 3-631-329245.

Strato is gradually emerging from obscurity. Several articles in the 1970s and 1980s, and now two editions in the 1990s (the other being that of Rincón, published in 1996), point to increasing scholarly interest both in the Hellenistic erotic epigram and in the institution of Greek paederasty. The latter, of course, is the more difficult to describe and assess. Beginning, in all likelihood, as a ritual means of preparing boys for manhood and initiating them into the psychological ambience of the warrior-citizen, its later history is not easily followed or understood. Changes in its physical practices, from intercrural to anal sex, for example, need further investigation or discussion with the help of anthropology. But any such investigation or discussion needs to be based firmly upon a reliable text and a sophisticated understanding of the language of sex which the relevant literature deploys, whether that language be technical or metaphoric, and this latest edition of Strato's work will go a long way to providing subsequent commentators with the foundation they require.

Steinbichler begins his edition with some brief remarks on Strato's origin and date. W. M. Clarke argued that Strato must be located 'well before the second century AD and probably before the birth of Christ' (*CPh* 79 [1984], 220); Rincón concluded that one cannot be more specific than first century B.C.–first century A.D. S., however, brings us back to the more conventional dating of the second century A.D., and the reign of Hadrian in particular. He then goes on to review the observations of a number of scholars who have discussed Strato so far, and thus proceeds to the body of his work.

Abandoning the order of Strato's epigrams in Books 11 and 12 of *the Anthologia Palatina*, S. presents them according to a variety of themes he quite reasonably discerns in them: age; the transitoriness of love and good looks; the price for love which may be purchased; objects or conditions directly related to the sex act, such as the penis, impotence, or podagra; the golden mean; encounters; the games played by jealousy; and variations on the theme of 'Ganymede'. Inevitably some epigrams will not fit easily into categories, and these appear at the end as 'Varia'. Each section gives the Greek text with apparatus, a German translation, and a largely linguistic commentary, with frequent excursus which compare and contrast the theme of the epigram under discussion with those of other poets such as Meleager, Martial, or Rufinus, or which bear upon an element of Strato's vocabulary.

Reading the epigrams arranged in this thematic fashion leaves one wondering how far they are *jeux d'esprit* between intellectuals, and how far they may be reflectors of a personal or a shared experience. S. is not happy with approaches which try to enter the latter discussion, especially when these make use of Freudian psychology, but to be fair, the task he set himself was to bring readers a reliable version of the text with such comments as might be rooted in linguistic sensitivity and *gesunder Menschenverstand*, and this he has done admirably.

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M. D. Usher (ed.): *Homerocentones Eudociae Augustae* (Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana). Pp. xii + 115. Stuttgart and Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1999. Cased. ISBN: 3-519-01318-5.

U.'s title is also a mission statement. The conviction that he has identified the work of the Empress Eudocia (died 460) underpins his studies, 'Prolegomenon to the Homeric Centos', *AJPh* 118 (1997), 305–21 and *Homeric Stitchings* (Lanham, 1998: see *CR* 50 [2000], 275f.), which now culminate in an edition. This Teubner supersedes Ludwich's (1897) and shares with

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