B. does not show any tendency to imitate Isocrates, but allows the myths and the works she analyses to remain contradictory and dense, at the same time as her thoughtful readings offer useful questions and clearly articulated readings of each writer's interpretation. I missed only a focused discussion of how the treatments she finds in the ancient authors so often complicate the generalised prejudice against women she describes in her first chapter. This quibble notwithstanding, B. has achieved a miracle of lucid, useful and responsible accessibility. This jargon and footnote free volume will benefit scholars and students in classics, the humanities and beyond.

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EPYLLION

BAUMBACH (M.), BÄR (S.) (edd.) *Brill's Companion to Greek and Latin Epyllion and its Reception*. Pp. xxvi + 640, ills. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012. Cased, €188, US$258. ISBN: 978-90-04-21432-3.
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It may seem tendentious to devote an entire companion to the ancient epyllion, a genre generally believed to be a modern construct. Yet this volume offers much food for thought. The editors have marshalled together many papers that explore the concept of epyllion through both penetrating readings of Greek and Latin texts and reception studies focused on later periods. After a methodological introduction, the volume is divided into six sections. The first, 'The History and Development of the Term and Concept of the Epyllion', lays the groundwork for the diachronic focus of the next five ('The Archaic and Pre-Hellenistic Period'; 'The Hellenistic Period'; 'The Late Roman Republic and the Augustan Period'; 'The Imperial Period'; and 'The Middle Ages and Beyond'). In general, this companion fulfils its stated goal of exploring the generic aspects of the epyllion (p. x). And, in the end, we are offered a much more expansive notion of epyllion than has been advocated before, which is welcome. But it is puzzling that the editors attempt to circumscribe the genre in their introduction, when their volume consistently shows how many fruitful interpretative avenues may be closed off when we operate with a notion of epyllion that is excessively narrow.

The editors, following ancient classifications of *epos*, define epyllion as short narrative hexameter poetry, avoiding issues of content. They place no absolute limit on shortness, but define it in contrast to the longest epics that we posses. As a result, the editors claim that epyllion can be traced back to the beginning of heroic poetry in Ancient Greece, inasmuch as the dichotomy between short epics (among which the editors count some of the poems in the Epic Cycle, none of which was shorter than two books) versus long ones (the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*) obtains even at this earliest phase. Moreover, they accuse of circular reasoning those who would define epyllion on the grounds of content (e.g. M. Crump, *The Epyllion from Theocritus to Ovid* [1931]; K. Gutzwiller, *Studies in Hellenistic Epyllion* [1981]; C. Merriam, *The Development of the Epyllion Genre Through the Hellenistic and Roman Periods* [2001]; S. Koster, 'Epos-Kleinepos-Epyllion? Zu Formen und Leitbildern spätantiker Epik', in J. Dummer and M. Vielberg [edd.], *Studien zur Literatur der Spätantike* [2002], pp. 91–137). Yet the editors themselves remove from consideration poetry that aims to instruct its audience, i.e. didactic and hymnic epic (although it is not clear to me that the major aim of the *Homeric*

Hymns was to educate the audience about religious knowledge, as the editors imply). Although the editors base this restriction of epyllion on discursive grounds (they assert that it 'seems reasonable' [p. xiii] to focus on narrative epic of the 'Homeric type'), they nevertheless seem already to have decided what texts should belong in their definition of epyllion as they are in the process of defining the genre. More unfortunate perhaps is the inconsistency that thus obtains, given that the papers that follow (including those written by the editors themselves) reflect a more spacious conception of the genre.

The papers that form the first section cumulatively offer a pre-emptive word of caution. The valences of the term 'epyllion' in modern scholarship are manifold; we would therefore do well, they argue, to expand our conception of this genre. Thus V. Masciadri shows that the idea of 'short epic' was forged through the importation onto the ancient material of contemporaneous literary discussions in the eighteenth century. Similarly, S. Tilg uses the increasing amount of digitised material from the Renaissance to show that the term 'epyllion' occurs earlier than Wolf's famous intervention in his edition of the *Scutum* and is used to describe the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* and the *Batrachomyomachia*. G. Trimble argues that our modern definition of epyllion is actually 'a poem that reminds us of Catullus 64', but that nevertheless, owing to the singularly complex nature of 64, we remain unable to write a conclusive account of the genre that can accommodate Catullus' short epic.

While many scholars accept the idea that the epyllion received its most characteristic form in the hands of Hellenistic poets like Callimachus and Catullus, Section 2 investigates earlier traces of the genre in the Archaic period. If this material is viewed in the right way, they suggest, we have substantial evidence for 'proto-epyllion' in this earlier literature. Of particular note in this section are the papers of R. Hunter, A. Bierl and P. Bing. Hunter analyses the Songs of Demodocus for signs of narrative compression and extension, both productive phenomena for later small-scale epic narratives. Bierl offers a neo-analytical reading of the Second Song of Demodocus, concluding that the short 'comic-subversive' epic poem evolved contemporaneously with the long 'lofty-heroic' epic. Bierl thus encourages us to recognise the epyllion's antiquity, even in antiquity itself. Finally, Bing argues that the digressive qualities of the Pseudo-Hesiodic *Scutum* were influential for the quality of narrative disproportion that writers of Hellenistic epyllion found productive.

The third and fourth sections focus on Hellenistic and Latin epyllion, and oddly here we have the most disjointed part of the volume. The individual papers are mostly cogent analyses of the major epyllia that we know from this period. Some papers, like those of C. Luz, K. Gutzwiller and M. Fantuzzi, push the boundaries of what has been said before. But the reader is left without an explicit statement about how this pivotal period contributes to our conception of the epyllion as a genre. Luz looks specifically at Theocritus' mythical poems to argue that he found in Pindar's epinicians the ability to treat extensive myth within a compressed narrative space by combining detailed narration of shorter episodes with allusions to a broader mythological context. Gutzwiller effectively juxtaposes the aesthetics of Callimachus' *Hecale* with ideas found in Philodemus' *On Poems*, arguing that it is just as likely that Hellenistic literary theory influenced Callimachean practice as the other way around. Fantuzzi investigates the generic background of the fragmentary *Epithalamium of Achilles and Deidameia* (*Buc. Gr.* 157–8 Gow), concluding that this poem must have been a *tour de force* that incorporated bucolic, martial epic and erotic lyric. Fantuzzi's arguments offer the most intricate discussion of the epyllion's boundaries during this period, yet he does not explicitly theorise the genre, perhaps because he has done so elsewhere (M. Fantuzzi, 'Epyllion', *DNP* 4 [1998], 31–3 and, less forcefully, M. Fantuzzi and R. Hunter, *Tradition and Innovation in Hellenistic Poetry* [2004], pp. 190–6, esp. 191–2).

The last two sections focus on the later history of the epyllion, surveying the period from the third-century C.E. *Capture of Troy* by Triphiodorus to the eighteenth-century Scottish poem *Tam O'Shanter* by Robert Burns. These seven papers all, in one way or another, suggest that, if there existed an ancient genre of epyllion that was defined as a short narrative epic, such a genre was discarded by the Middle Ages at the latest. This is important because the rejection of a literary tradition is just as illuminating as its continuity. But it also serves as a concluding note of caution to echo the one voiced in the first section of the volume: if the short narrative hexametric poem is not a productive generic category in this later period, perhaps we should re-evaluate our conception of epyllion *tout court*. This volume consistently emphasises how productive such a reconceptualisation can be.

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ESSAYS ON EARLY GREEK POETRY

ROBBINS (E.I.) *Thalia Delighting in Song. Essays on Ancient Greek Poetry*. Edited by Bonnie MacLachlan. (*Phoenix* Supplementary Volume 53.) Pp. xxiv + 324, ills. Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2013. Paper, CAD$32.95. ISBN: 978-1-4426-1343-0.

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This volume is a collection of nineteen book chapters and articles (primarily the latter) published by R. between 1975 and 1997. Most chapters focus on a single topic or text of Greek poetry of the archaic period: various of Pindar's epinicia receive the lion's share of attention, with eight chapters, though Homer, Alcman, Sappho and Sophocles also feature prominently. Each chapter begins with a note giving details of its original publication, and besides cross-references to other chapters within the volume (and one interesting editorial postscript, discussed below) each is reprinted without substantial alterations.

It is natural to ask, when considering a volume of previously published work, and all the more so with one like this, in which most of the chapters first appeared in widely available journals: what is gained by consulting the work as a whole rather than its discrete parts? The answer in this case is a great deal indeed. For those who are interested not only in the specific topics at issue in each chapter but also in early Greek poetry in general, this book is a rich source of both background information and analytical insight. R.'s attention to detail in his analyses is such that he often provides a level of information on texts and previous scholarship which rivals even scholarly commentaries. To give just one example: the first of two chapters on Sappho 94 begins with a full description of the provenance of the fragment and a brief history of its publication, an account that is both relevant to the argument of the chapter and useful to anyone with an interest in the poem.

In a similar way, we find scattered throughout opinions and analyses relevant not only to the topic at hand, but also to broader concerns in classical scholarship. For instance, buried in a footnote in Chapter 4 (on the relationship of Achilles and Thetis in the *Iliad*) we read, 'The tendency to quarry the *Iliad* for lost pre-Iliadic sources is less fashionable today than it was a generation ago and it seems, certainly, unnecessary in this case: what is