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SUBJECT REVIEWS

Greek Literature

ἄνδρά μοι ἔννεπε. . .: Are you shocked to find a misprint at the very beginning of Martin West's Teubner *Odyssey*?[1] Then you've not been reading the poem in the editions of La Roche (1867–8) or Ludwich (1889–91), and you have not been reading the *Iliad* in West's edition (1998). You will need to consult the latter if you want to gain enlightenment on this and other orthographic niceties: the introduction to West's *Odyssey* is, inconveniently, not a stand-alone resource. Sampling his text alongside Allen's routinely derided OCT rarely revealed differences more substantive than, for example, ἐνὶ *vs* ἐπὶ in 1.211. But confidence in my collation may be undermined when I confess that I almost missed μηδὲ *vs* μέγα δέ in 13.158: West's decision to set aside the entire ancient textual tradition in favour of Aristophanes of Byzantium's conjecture strikes me as reckless. Strongly attested lines have no immunity to West's suspicions (e.g. 1.171–3). Suspect lines are variously queried in the apparatus, or bracketed in the text, or moved from text to apparatus. The last of these options is disruptive to the reading experience, and such a sharply polarized layout can hardly avoid being arbitrary: doubtfulness is a continuum. I, at any rate, was unable to extract a consistent set of criteria underlying West's choices among the three options. But his handling of these difficult decisions is more restrained than I had expected. The apparatus, once its conventions have become familiar, is clear and informative; an unprecedented range of papyri is cited; the testimonia, too, are given in unprecedented abundance. Allen, of course, but also von der Mühll (1946) and Thiel (1991) are put in the shade by West's final scholarly *tour de force*.

In one of his previous editorial engagements with epic, West produced a Loeb edition of *The Battle of Frogs and Mice*. Joel Christensen and Erik Robinson provide a text, translation, and first English commentary, with the needs of students primarily in mind.[2] Having followed with interest the development of its digital *proekdosis*, I looked forward to seeing their work's fulfilment in print. I am disappointed. It is plagued by typos (e.g. 'redunancy', 80; 'scholist', 84), editing errors ('lends some support to the omission of lines 22–3 should be omitted', 79), and a frequent lack of clarity (e.g. 'Lines 22–3 are omitted by some MSS. . .Accepting these lines as interpolations requires a thematic balancing to establish Psicharpax's status among the mice', 77).

[1] *Homerus. Odyssea*. Edited by Martin L. West. Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana. Berlin, de Gruyter, 2017. Pp. lii + 519. Hardback £91, ISBN: 978-3-11-042539-0.

[2] *The Homeric Battle of Frogs and Mice*. Edited by Joel Christensen and Erik Robinson. Greek Texts. London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2018. Pp. xiv + 198. Hardback £76.50, ISBN: 978-1-3500-3594-2.

Making sense of vaguely formulated text-critical comments in the commentary (e.g. 'Variations include σὺν ἔντεσιν/σὺν [metrically problematic] or σὺν ἐκείνῳ…Here the feminine ἐκείναις does not have a clear antecedent', 117) would have been easier if the text had been supplied with even a minimal critical apparatus, and if the line numbers in the commentary corresponded to those in the text – but after line 96 they don't: line 100 in the text is line 98 in the commentary, and by the end of the poem the discrepancy has grown to 13 lines. The note that I quoted just now is numbered 157 but refers to line 161 in the text. The editors declare that 'for readers who are just beginning in Greek… we have tried to maintain correlation between the lines of the translation and the original' (36; since their text includes Byzantine interpolations, 'original' is a problematic choice of word). But they should have tried harder: the line numbers in the (non-facing) translation concur with the commentary, not the text. What conclusions should we draw from this about the publisher's commitment to quality control? It does not seem commensurate with their pricing policy. And did the author of the puff quote that adorns the back cover read the book before declaring it 'a wonderful edition…a marvelous aid to the understanding and appreciation of this too little known work of Greek poetry'?

But, to return to the *Odyssey*: Anthony Verity's translation is now available in Oxford World's Classics, with an introduction by William Allan.[3] Like Verity's *Iliad*, it keeps close to the line numbering of the Greek, does not claim to be 'poetic', and aims at a 'straightforward English register', though the 'greater variation of voices…from the elevated to the everyday' is reflected in shifts 'from current to archaic idiom' which 'some readers…may find awkward' (xxvi). When I reviewed Verity's *Iliad* (*G&R* 59 [2012], 247), I worried that a translation that looked like poetry and read like prose risked putting off every class of reader, but acknowledged that it was accurate, clear, and not dull. Perhaps I missed something: my forays into the *Odyssey* turned up instances of positive eloquence. For example:

> *Do not try to comfort me about death, splendid Odysseus.*
> *I would rather be a land-labourer, bonded to another man,*
> *one who owns no land, and with little enough to keep him*
> *alive, than to be king over all the dead who have passed away.* (11.488–91)

A new translation of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* has appeared in the same series.[4] Robin Waterfield is a prolific translator, with a gift for smooth and readable prose. When working with his translations of Plato, I have often felt that the smoothness has been achieved at the cost of blurring important nuances of the original. I didn't get that feeling from his version of the *Rhetoric*, which is clear, precise, and, if not quite as compressed as the original, still economical, and retains something of the flavour of Aristotle's distinctive brand of pedantry. Harvey Yunis (who Waterfield suggests should

[3] *Homer. The Odyssey*. Translated by Anthony Verity with an introduction and notes by William Allan. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. xxx + 354. 1 map. Hardback £16.99, ISBN: 978-0-19-966910-3; paperback £7.99, ISBN: 978-0-19-873647-9.

[4] *Aristotle. The Art of Rhetoric*. Translated by Robin Waterfield, with an introduction and notes by Harvey Yunis. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. lxxiv + 201. Paperback £9.99, ISBN: 978-0-19-872425-4.

share credit for the translation) contributes an introduction and notes with which Momus himself would be hard-pressed to find fault. But, since I'm here to lend a helping hand: one might object to the slide from 'the sophists (or some of them)' (xiii) to 'the sophists' (xiv): 'some sophists. . .those sophists' would be less easily assimilated to crude and polemical generalizations about 'the' sophists. Yunis also does less than justice to the sophists (or some of them) when he says that 'rhetoric *now* includes private as well public communication' (xxiii, my emphasis): see already Pl. *Soph*. 222c9–d1; *Phdr*. 261a7–9; *Gorg*. 456a7–5b; Alcidamas *Soph*. 9; Isocr. *Antidosis* 204; *Rhet. ad Alex*. 38, 1445b27–29. Such lapses are rare. The translation alone would merit a very strong recommendation; combined with the well-informed and efficiently informative supporting material, I put it well ahead of any of its current competitors.

Wouldn't it be liberating to live in a world in which plays that represent complex webs of human interaction were not reduced to the interplay of abstract categories? Introducing the latest in his *Looking at. . .* series – looking, in this case, at *Antigone* – David Stuttard writes as follows: 'It is the story of the clash of opposites: male *versus* female, age *versus* youth, religion *versus* secularism, to list but a few' (1).[5] I hope I don't need to point out that no character in Sophocles' play is a secularist. More importantly, the clashes that Sophocles does portray are not generic but uniquely individual: not 'male' and 'female', but *this* male and *that* female in *these particular* circumstances. And those circumstances are complex. Alex Garvie and Alan Sommerstein converge on similar conclusions to the question 'Antigone: right or wrong?' She is certainly right to condemn Creon's edict. But suppose she had given way to Ismene in the opening scene: the play would, of course, be much duller, but Thebes would still be polluted by the exposed corpse; Teiresias would have to intervene; Creon, in this scenario not enraged by the defiance of his niece and his son, would surely have been more receptive to the seer's advice. Antigone's judgement is sound, but her actions are catastrophic. So, of course, are Creon's. But Brad Levett's focus on his character (his 'autocratic nature', 40: cf. Robert Garland's 'Creon is the kind of person. . .', 128) is inadequate: an appreciation of the circumstances in which he acts is also necessary. Creon has just moved to fill a dangerous power vacuum in a faction-ridden city, at a moment of crisis, with limited information at his disposal, and with no reason to be complacent about the stability of his position; in such a situation he had good reason to believe that signs of irresolution would be objectively risky. But Helen Foley, who does show awareness of Creon's situational problems (146), misstates his error of judgement: what is 'disruptive' is not 'inflicting punishment on the dead traitor', but the particular punishment inflicted. Other ways of disposing of a corpse without honour were available. Hanna Roisman provides an acute analysis of Antigone's interaction with Ismene, highlighting her opportunistic speech ('reacting to what she hears rather than acting on considered principles', 69). Ruth Scodel applies attribution theory to Antigone's change of heart. Rush Rehm, on *Antigone* and the rights of the earth, is thoughtful, but in need of sharper conceptual articulation (if a victim is denied something that is his by law or established custom, in what way does our term 'right' fail to capture what the victim is deprived of?). Other papers discuss incest, divinity, religion,

[5] *Looking at Antigone*. Edited by David Stuttard. London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2018. Pp. x + 247. Hardback £85, ISBN: 978-1-3500-1711-5.

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Euripides' reception of Sophocles' play, and modern receptions. My disagreements should be taken as an index of the stimulus provided by this volume – one of the strongest in a series of uneven quality. And though at first reading I found Stuttard's translation flat, and the layout of the choral sections in a thin dribble off-putting, it grew on me each time I returned to it.

Since the wholly irrational notion that a play that begins with a plague was probably composed during or just after an actual plague has always annoyed me, I got some personal satisfaction from the evisceration of this theory in the introduction to Patrick Finglass' edition of *Oedipus the King*.[6] But no one who has used his editions of *Electra* (*G&R* 56 [2009], 102) and *Ajax* (*G&R* 59 [2012], 249–50) will suppose that this is the only, or indeed the most important, cause for rejoicing which the volume affords. The introduction covers (in addition to the date of first performance: 430s 'if forced to name a specific date. . .but a date in the 440s or 420s would not surprise', 3) production and staging; myth and originality (bringing out the significance of Sophocles' innovations); what kind of a play it is (an acute analysis of the complex of motifs on which it draws); transmission ('focusing on the first performance to the exclusion of any other is probably contrary to the playwright's own intentions', xii); and text ('after more than two thousand years of scholarship the study of Sophocles' text is still in its infancy', 94). The text and apparatus is followed by 455 pages of commentary, with a complete translation embedded in the lemmas. The bibliography runs to 57 pages. In the preface Finglass lists a selection of passages where his text differs substantively from Lloyd-Jones and Wilson's OCT, of which 'many. . .have major implications for sense and interpretation' (ix n. 2). The list provides a salutary antidote to complacency about the state of the text of Sophocles. Working through this list would be an excellent tutorial in textual criticism.

Anna Lamari offers 'a fresh look on ancient reperformances of tragedy, placing them in the fifth- and fourth-century contexts of cultural travelling' (1).[7] The introduction begins with a helpful reminder of existing scholarship on this topic, and of the Athenocentric, single-performance model that it is superseding. The four main chapters (on travelling poets, political contexts, travelling actors, and vase-painting) are then summarized at excessive length. Lamari's work is complementary to Edmund Stewart's *Greek Tragedy on the Move* (*G&R* 65.1 [2018], 104–5), but more diffuse, less tightly argued, and – crucially – less disciplined in its use of primary evidence. For example, the Aristophanic Dionysus' claim 'that truly talented poets are dead, while those who are alive are bad' is, according to Lamari, 'also maintained by Aristotle' (3). She cites *Poet*. 1450a25, where Aristotle says that tragedies by *most* modern poets lack a *specific* feature. It was a feature which, he also says, was missing from Zeuxis' paintings (1450a26–9): was he thereby condemning Zeuxis as a 'bad' painter? Elsewhere Aristotle refers to deficiencies in Euripides' *oikonomia* (1429b29): did he

[6] *Sophocles. Oedipus the King*. Edited with introduction, translation, and commentary by P. J. Finglass. Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018. Pp. xiv + 708. Hardback £135, ISBN: 978-1-108-41951-2.

[7] *Reperforming Greek Tragedy. Theater, Politics, and Cultural Mobility in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries*. By Anna A. Lamari. Trends in Classics, Supplementary Volume 52. Berlin, de Gruyter, 2017. Pp. x + 198. Hardback £91, ISBN: 978-3-11-055986-6.

think that Euripides was a 'bad' poet? Or was he, perhaps, clever enough to recognize a large middle ground between optimal and bad? (The question is rhetorical but, if you can't work out the answer, have a look at, for example, *Poet.* 1453a7–9.) If 'Aeschylus travelled to Sicily at the beginning of his career in order to direct his *Aetnaeae*' (8), received chronologies of the poet's career need a radical overhaul. The hypothesis that *Frogs* 1029 reflects a version of *Persians* revised for performance in Sicily is, in Lamari's view, 'a plausible scenario: Aeschylus organized a reperformance of the *Persians* in Sicily, using a version changed to be more appropriate for the place and the audience. Aristophanes must have been aware of this version, and this is the one he cites' (33). But why would Aristophanes cite a version optimised for performance in Sicily in a play to be performed in Athens? This version, Lamari suggests, 'could have' been performed in Athens shortly before *Frogs*, and Aristophanes 'could have' attended it (34). So the confident 'must have' needs a pair of *ad hoc* 'could haves' to eliminate its *prima facie* implausibility. As for the treatment of primary evidence, on successive pages Lamari misreports Laches' observation of what does happen (Pl. *Laches* 183a–b) as a prescription ('instructs. . .maintains should be', 102), and the Athenian Stranger's proposed legislation for Magnesia (*Leg.* 817c–d) as a description of what actually happens in Athens (103).

I had not fully appreciated how entertaining Euripides' *Cyclops* is until I read Carl Shaw's contribution to Bloomsbury's Companions to Greek and Roman Tragedy.[8] Chapter 1 introduces satyr drama in general, and *Cyclops* in particular. Chapter 2 skilfully combines analysis of the plot and its performance, giving a strong sense of the play's stage presence. Chapter 3, 'Themes, Issues, and Functions', inevitably gives more scope for disagreement. Shaw is, I think, too hasty in making a philosopher out of Polyphemus (80–1): violent thugs and antinomian philosophers may have some opinions in common, but the former are less likely to be dialectically sophisticated, and the latter are less likely to knock out your brains and eat you. If, as Shaw suggests, Euripides composed *Cyclops* with the Sicilian disaster in mind (84), his audience might have found more satisfaction in Odysseus' stabbing of the Sicilian monster than Shaw, who judges it 'somewhat barbaric' and 'unnecessary' (85). Since he enjoys the luxury of not having a massive reception history to deal with, Shaw sets the play in its literary context in Chapter 4 by engaging at length with connections to earlier literature. Some of what is said here could usefully have been mentioned earlier in the book. Momus has asked me to point out that the exceptionally potent wine described in *Od.* 9.209 is not Cyclopean (133 n. 42), but imported by Odysseus from Ismarus.

And, finally, Duane W. Roller's *Historical and Topographical Guide to the Geography of Strabo*.[9] A non-Classicist friend who noticed it on my dining-room table commented on its imposing bulk, and surreptitiously googled in order to find out where Strabo – an evidently important ancient city of which she'd never heard – was located. Few readers of *Greece & Rome* will fall into that error; those who have confident mastery of all the

[8] *Euripides. Cyclops. A Satyr Play*. By Carl A. Shaw. Companions to Greek and Roman Tragedy. London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2018. Pp. xiv + 158. 3 maps. Hardback £85, ISBN: 978-1-4742-4579-1.

[9] *A Historical and Topographical Guide to the Geography of Strabo*. By Duane W. Roller. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018. Pp. xxii + 1165. Hardback £150, ISBN: 978-1-107-18065-9.

material that Roller covers will also be few. Indeed, not even Roller manages that: he thinks that the phrase 'character, emotion, and actions' (Str. 1.2.3) is 'a direct quotation from the opening of Aristotle's *Poetics*' (16). On the historical and topographical matters to which the book is primarily devoted, however, his relentlessly detailed commentary commands greater confidence. Katherine Clarke, reviewing Roller's English translation of the *Geography* (*CPh* 111 [2016], 185–90), observed that

the reader will have to work hard. The promised commentary is to be awaited with eager anticipation, given R.'s expertise. It is to be hoped that this will provide adequate support to the weary reader so that he or she can relax and enjoy being led on Strabo's fascinating, though challenging, tour of the whole world known to Rome in a work of exceptional historical, literary, and intellectual richness.

I have doubts about 'relax and enjoy': but the support provided by Roller's commentary will certainly make reading Strabo easier and more informative. There is also an accompanying online map, which is well worth a visit.[10]

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Latin Literature

'Statius' *Thebaid*', someone donnishly quipped, 'has no sufficient reason to exist.'[1] Kyle Gervais might beg to differ. Like the *Thebaid* itself, his commentary on Book 2 has grown over many years, and deserves to be taken very seriously.[2] The crisp introduction sets the tone and clearly signals priorities in its four sections, a rising tetracolon for author, problems of editing, intratexts, and intertexts; not a word on style and prosody, and reception is excluded on the ground that Statius' own *imitatio* is quite enough to be getting on with. The text is newly constituted, with ample apparatus and text-critical discussion: Gervais joins Barrie Hall's rebellion against the bifid stemma, but fairly questions his view that the *Thebaid* should be easy reading; he accordingly diverges from his edition nearly a hundred times, and offers a translation which, if less old-falutin' than Shack's Loeb, does an equally good job of disabusing anyone who thought it would be quicker to read Statius in English.[3] The notes are full and rich: words aren't wasted, but both philological graft and literary interpretation amply attest to fine scholarship, good sense, and long thought.

Like most of the Statian *nouvelle vague*, Gervais finds much of the wit and meaning in the imitation, and he abundantly shows why others should too. From the complex brew

[10] <http://awmc.unc.edu/awmc/applications/strabo/>, accessed 25 May 2018.

[1] R. Jenkyns, *Classical Literature* (London, 2015), 269.

[2] *Statius, Thebaid 2. Edited with an Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*. By Kyle Gervais. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. liii + 374. Hardback £100, ISBN 978-0-19-874470-2.

[3] J. B. Hall, A. L. Ritchie, and M. J. Edwards, *P. Papinius Statius. Thebaid and Achilleid*, 3 vols. (Newcastle, 2007–8) (the editing is by Hall); D. R. Shackleton Bailey, *Statius. Thebaid*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA, 2003).