

prominent position of mythography in education and on the demythologising tendencies of medieval allegorical and Neoplatonic interpretations of the ancient myths.

Notwithstanding the overall good quality of the individual articles, the volume misses both inner coherence and a solid methodological framework. The lack of inner coherence, on the one hand, is exemplified by the virtual absence of cross-references (except in the papers by N. and by Ziolkowski) and the editorial decision not to group the papers in distinct content-related clusters, even though there was plenty of opportunity to do so (e.g. Graeco-Roman, Celtic, Scandinavian and Eastern mythography). The absence of a solid methodological framework, on the other hand, is most tangible in the editor's preface, where one should expect a more in-depth scholarly discussion of various hotly debated issues, such as the definition of myth and the rather fluent concept of the mythographical genre. Unfortunately, this lack of an introductory state of the art likewise affects various papers. S.W. Jamison, for example, opens her paper by explicitly admitting that she is struggling to understand the term 'mythography' (p. 265), before she sets off to demonstrate the non-compliance of Indian mythology to the Western model of mythography. Similarly, Martin and Krasne simply assume that ancient mythography was a prose genre (p. 55 and p. 67 respectively). However, if one assumes, together with for example R. Fletcher (in *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women. Constructions and Reconstructions* [2005], p. 301), that the core characteristic of mythography is not its prosaic form, but its systematic exposition, then the origins of the genre may well be in archaic *poetic* catalogues, such as Homer's *Catalogue of Ships* and Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women*.

The book is attractively printed and well edited, though a few typographical errors have crept into the text, especially in the footnotes. The volume closes with a very usable general index.

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## FALSE CLOSURE

GREWING (F.F.), ACOSTA-HUGHES (B.), KIRICHENKO (A.) (edd.) *The Door Ajar. False Closure in Greek and Roman Literature and Art*. (Bibliothek der Klassischen Altertumswissenschaften 132.) Pp. xviii + 367, ills. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2013. Cased, €66. ISBN: 978-3-8253-5697-2.

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Whether from an aesthetic or thematic perspective a work is 'closed', 'open' or both, and whether from an audience viewpoint its end is satisfying, frustrating or even deceitful are questions that have preoccupied classicists for a while now. The matter of closure, especially as an idiom with which to interpret the structural and affective aspects of the end in literary texts, became a pressing issue in post-structural criticism. F. Kermodé's 1967 *The Sense of an Ending*, H. Smith's 1968 *Poetic Closure: a Study of How Poems End* and M. Torgovnick's 1981 *Closure in the Novel* served to set new critical agenda and create a vocabulary for subsequent research of the topic in the Humanities. Within Classics, D. Fowler's work is an established point of reference. In an interdisciplinary dialogue with studies in English in particular, Fowler sought to problematise the question of the end in classical texts, while envisaging the prospects that the concept would open up

for our understanding of the literature (1989). The issue that preoccupied him the most was the transient quality of closure. His most persistent thesis was that no ending is 'hermetically closed', but always open to a variety of perspectives and circumstances, and thus that 'any closure is of necessity a false closure'. The latter claim was the theme of his second essay on the subject, published in *Classical Closure* (1997), which he co-edited with D.H. Roberts and F.H. Dunn and which also became an authoritative reference both for Classics and other disciplines. With a focus on Graeco-Roman literary and visual artefacts, *The Door Ajar* openly presents itself as a continuation of Fowler's thinking. The volume deals with questions old and new: where and how might it be said that a classical work closes? In what ways is a work's end dependent on where it begins? Is the end always necessarily 'inside' the work? Is form the only factor determining a work's closure? Did Graeco-Roman authors and artists conceive of closure in a manner similar to ours? Is scholarly criticism always ultimately a form of false closure? How useful is false closure as a critical idiom after all? The collection is the product of a conference held in Vienna in 2009, which marked the twentieth anniversary of Fowler's first publication on the topic in *Materiali e discussioni* 22. The exclusive affinity with Fowler's work might strike potential readers, perhaps paradoxically given the book's topic, as a form of critical closure itself. Indeed the volume's intimate dialogue with this scholar tends to occlude research on (classical) closure carried out in the 2000s, of which there has been too much to cite here. This notwithstanding, the collection successfully manages to situate itself within an ongoing debate, while also suggesting a way forward.

The contributions examine false closure from five perspectives: (1) 'Questioning Closure'; (2) 'Time, Space, and Closure'; (3) 'Looking at Closure'; (4) 'Performing/Reading Closure'; (5) 'Beyond Closure'. As a whole, the sections seek to reflect on the elusive nature of the end, the interplay between continuity and boundedness, and the notion that all closures are ultimately transient, even disruptive, phenomena. Most of the discussions are of a high quality and intellectual ambition. Yet the most stimulating pieces arguably are those engaging with Fowler while taking stock of more recent thinking on closure. Section 1 bravely questions the critical validity of false closure and, by implication, of the volume's initiative. F. Dunn ponders on the usefulness of the concept as a tool for reading the end in Sophocles' *Oedipus The King*. While the play's end features several examples of false closure, Dunn argues that its closing is best understood by reference to the characters' ethical relations with society, which include the contemporary audience, rather than by the considerations brought to bear by aesthetic form. C. Whitton explores the 'falsity' of closure in Pliny's *Epistles*. While epistle 9.40 is typically read as the closing letter in the collection, Whitton contends that the end can be located at other rival points in Books 9 and 10. He concludes that closure in the collection is at best always necessarily false and, ultimately, either a matter of authorial intention or the figment of each reader's imagination. Graeco-Roman texts also use closure to signal tensions, especially of time and space, both of which serve as platforms to comment on aesthetic and ideological concerns (Section 2). M. Asper is particularly effective at highlighting this issue in aetiological accounts. Local aetiologies seek to construct a foundational past that explains the state of the present for the audience, while the aetiologies of Hellenistic poetry (Eratosthenes, Callimachus and Apollonius) work towards providing an aesthetic result and effect; as opposed to the 'embedded' narratives of local aetiology, which provide an ideology of past and present, 'detached' aetiological narratives can only offer ends that satisfy the need for aesthetic form. It is thus the task of the audience of detached versions to seek an ideological closure for themselves. G. Ferrari's study of the Nile Mosaic at Praeneste (second century B.C.E.) is arguably the most stimulating paper in Section 3, if not in the entire volume. This illustrated map of the course of the Nile, describing the history of

mankind and the succession of world empires, is a feast for the analysis of false closure in a visual text. Closure in this artefact is always in the eye of the beholder. The river narrative begins at its source and ends in the Delta, where the Ptolemaic rulers, the successors of Alexander the Great, are celebrating a local festival. The image tells us that closure is to be found in the establishment of this empire but, for the intended viewer of the Middle Roman Republic, aware of the fortunes of the Ptolemies, the end of this image is historically false. The pictorial narrative may also suggest false closure on other levels, especially as viewers reflect on the cyclical character of empire as an enterprise *sine fine*. The impression of endlessness is also central to the narrative strategies of Greek hymns (e.g. the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, Hesiod's *Theogony* and the refrains of choral hymns), as I. Petrovic shows in Section 4. As gifts for the gods, the immateriality of hymns suggested ideas of longevity and durability. Furthermore, hymns could be endlessly re-performed. Yet the most convincing aspect of their false closure was their etymological connection with the verb *hypomenein* (to remain). The volume (falsely?) closes with an essay on *fama* by P. Hardie in Section 5. Hardie analyses contrasting meanings of *fama* as closure and false closure from Virgil and Horace to Petrarch and Vida. While the goal of *fama* in a literary life aims to convey a final image of achievement and recognition, its meaning of 'story' or 'rumour' denotes the constant circulation of words. Hardie explores how Petrarch, Chaucer, Milton and Vida attempt to transcend the mutable aspects of *fama* by associating their literary lives with Christian texts and God.

The jacket blurb informs the reader that the volume seeks 'to frame a future discourse on false closure in particular as an artistic phenomenon'. I would suggest that this collection already serves as such, and that subsequent research might result in (overly) refined versions of a fully occupied area. I suspect that the success of future research in the topic will also depend on what happens within and outside of Classics. As with the post-structural works that first informed Fowler, it is worth considering further interdisciplinary conversation. A dialogue with disciplines which characteristically confront notions of closure, such as the Performing Arts, Film Studies, Translation Studies and Classical Reception in its most recent configurations, may be profitable. As for the current state of play, this volume amounts to the first full work devoted to exploring how Fowler's sophisticated formulations can be elaborated further into exciting topics of discussion.

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## LATIN SYNTAX

DANCKAERT (L.) *Latin Embedded Clauses. The Left Periphery*. (Linguistics Today 184.) Pp. xviii + 368, figs. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2012. Cased, €105, US\$158. ISBN: 978-90-272-5567-9.

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This impressive volume is innovative in two complementary respects. From the theoretical perspective, it represents a sustained application to an aspect of Latin syntax of the concepts of the current Chomskyan framework, in particular within its so-called 'cartographic' variant. Empirically, by contrast, it is distinguished by a reliance for the most part on a computationally searchable corpus of texts, thereby allowing for quantitative evidence to be adduced in support of the analysis of those Latin constructions which constitute the