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SUBJECT REVIEWS

Greek Literature

The Cambridge Grammar of Classical Greek (*CGCG*)[1] arrived just too late for mention in the last batch of reviews, but the wait has turned out to be providential: I've now had time to use *CGCG* as my reference grammar for undergraduate teaching. I must confess that I do not like teaching grammar, and am not very good at it; and, by happy chance, I have not been called upon to teach grammar for a surprisingly large number of years. So being assigned to teach a grammar class at short notice was a mildly traumatic experience. But at least it has made it possible for me to become familiar with *CGCG* in practice. The authors' suggestion that '*CGCG*'s coverage is such. . .that it could be used in the context of undergraduate and graduate language courses' (xxxii) is carefully formulated: it could be. But the undergraduate class that I have been teaching would, I am sure, have been intimidated by the mass of grammatical detail if confronted with *CGCG* in the raw. I can, however, testify that at least one reluctant, out-of-practice language tutor has found the volume amazingly helpful in planning grammar classes. The clarity and logic of its presentation and explanations, its well-chosen examples, and its carefully designed aids to navigation (table of contents, cross-references, index) are virtues that I do not normally associate with texts on grammar: or, at any rate, not in the same degree. *CGCG*'s virtues will make it an invaluable resource for advanced students, and for tutors. For a surprisingly reasonable price, purchasers get 300 pages of phonology and morphology and 350 pages of syntax, plus 90 excellent pages on textual coherence, covering particles, and word order. 'Still', as the authors modestly observe, 'there are many subjects about which we might have said much more and some about which we have said almost nothing' (xxxii).

'Why did it all happen?' The overall theme of Chris Pelling's *Herodotus and the Question Why*[2] is encapsulated in the title of its opening chapter, just as Herodotus' opening sentence raises the question 'why they came to war with one another' (1). But the range of Herodotus' interests is, of course, much wider than that: 'history, ethnography, geography – all come together not just as curiosities that were all fascinating but also as phenomena that repaid investigation along similar lines' (3). Wonder and the drive to understand are mutually reinforcing: 'the *Histories* are saturated in

[1] *The Cambridge Grammar of Classical Greek*. By Evert van Emde Boas, Albert Rijksbaron, Luuk Huitink, and Mathieu de Bakker. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019. Pp. xlii + 811. 5 b/w illustrations, 130 tables. Hardback £99.99, ISBN: 978-0-521-19860-8; paperback £29.99, ISBN: 978-0-521-12729-5.

[2] *Herodotus and the Question Why*. By Christopher Pelling. Fordyce W. Mitchel Memorial Lecture Series. Austin, TX, University of Texas Press, 2019. Pp. xviii + 360. Hardback £45, ISBN: 978-1-4773-1832-4.

explanation, as Herodotus struggles not merely to describe the wondrous things of the world but also to understand them' (5). The same is true of Pelling, who works his way through the Herodotean narrative sedulously and with meticulous attention to detail, highlighting the breadth of Herodotus' interests ('Herodotus presents himself, in more or less subtle ways, as interested in everything and putting questions to everything', 22), demonstrating the diversity of Herodotus' repertoire of explanatory resources ('this narrative is thoroughly engaged with causal explanations, of different sorts and in varied combinations', 12), and anchoring them in larger intellectual and cultural contexts. 'Good questions: good enough, indeed, to keep Herodotus' readers fascinated for a full nine books – and perhaps further still, even after they put aside the final book-roll. And good enough, I hope, to justify a book-length treatment here' (13). That hope is fully justified. In Pelling's analysis, as in Herodotus' narrative, 'bluff generalizations and general impressions are qualified as complexities crowd in' (211). The conclusion of one paragraph ('both on the human and on the divine level, it is very complicated') is immediately escalated in the first words of the paragraph that follows ('It is all the more complicated, because…', 123). Different perspectives are subtly balanced: 'No surprise, either, that he often gives more space to what we might call religious anthropology, how humans think about the gods, than to the gods themselves' (148); but, in the next paragraph: 'It is important, though, to stress that his empiricism leads him to *belief* in gods and in their effect on the world, not to doubt or to skepticism' (149, emphasis in original); and the concluding section of the chapter on the human and the divine is introduced with studied caution: 'Where does this leave the gods in historical explanation? The answer has to be "somewhere," at least some of the time' (156). In a short review it is impossible to illustrate adequately the mass of material in this book, the subtlety of argument and interpretation, and the complex balance of perspectives. So instead I shall end with some random comments. I rejoiced to learn that Pelling has changed his mind about tragedy, and is now in sympathy with Rhodes (among others), who sees tragedy as reflecting the *polis* in general rather than the democratic *polis* in particular (195, 293 n. 25). On the other hand, I was surprised to find that what is introduced as a version of the Gyges story that is 'very likely old' (107) is uniquely attested in Ptolemy Chennos (267 n. 7, citing Phot. *Bibl.* 190, p.150b18–22), whose extravagant powers of invention negate his credibility as a source of authentic ancient tradition. And I was distressed by the underestimation of Ajax: 'the plea that came nearest to making [Achilles] relent was that of Ajax, who *could not understand* why he was letting down his friends and comrades (*Il.* 9.624–642, esp. 630–631)' (202, my emphasis). What Ajax needed was not an explanation of Achilles' stance, but the rhetorical tools to change it; and since he, alone among the envoys, succeeded in getting Achilles to reject the option of returning home (9.649–55), we may assume that Ajax understood his comrade's reaction to Agamemnon's affront perfectly well, and knew exactly how to exert influence on him. (Pelling is, as we shall see shortly, not alone in failing to do justice to Ajax.) I was startled that the distinction between explicability and predictability, an important recurrent theme in this book, leads Pelling to infer (not, I admit, in quite these terms) that omniscience is not omniscient (48). In mitigation, 'this is a book about Herodotus, not a work of philosophy' (49). But that, surely, is too modest. This a book about Herodotus, but not just about Herodotus; and what it deals with is, almost always, dealt with exceptionally well. The book is complex and demanding, but compellingly readable. Pelling deploys an amazingly wide

range of material, ancient and modern, with remarkable lucidity. The high incidence of interrogative sentences and self-qualifications corresponds to the exploratory character of his analysis. The measured, reflective progress of his exposition will be rewarded by slow, reflective reading.

The latest volume in David Stuttard's 'Looking at...' series looks at Sophocles' *Ajax*.[3] Among a number of strong contributions, I would especially commend Hanna Roisman's insightful account of Tecmessa, and Brad Levett on Odysseus. Stuttard himself, venturing beyond his customary roles as editor and translator, contributes an illuminating chapter on Ajax in vase-painting. Emma Cole wins the prize for greatest understatement: 'it is far from a given that ancient theatre was a form of performative therapy for returning soldiers' (154). Laura Swift, on 'Ajax the hero', rightly observes that 'the *Iliad* is a continuous backdrop to Sophocles' play' (30). But what kind of backdrop? I have no problem with one that enables us to compare and contrast two possible worlds. At certain points, though, Swift seems to fuse the *Iliad* and *Ajax* into a single possible world, as if claims made by Sophocles' characters could be falsified by appeal to the Iliadic narrative. And while I agree with Swift that Ajax and Teucer 'oversell' Ajax's importance (31), I do not find that especially noteworthy. Self-promotion is common enough, even in non-heroic circles. Boasting is not a social indiscretion among heroes, but a tactical move in the struggle to establish, maintain, or enhance an individual's status. And *if* it is true that in Sophocles' play, as in the *Iliad*, Ajax's single-handed defence of the ships was not in the end successful (contrary to Teucer's claim in *Aj.* 1280), it is also true that no-one other than Ajax maintained that defence so effectively and for so long: Ajax did have something genuine to boast about. Sophie Mills, in her chapter on Ajax as 'shield of the Achaeans', suggests that Ajax 'seems less intelligent than Odysseus' in the embassy: a strange judgement, since it is Ajax's intelligence, not that of Odysseus or Phoenix, that makes the crucial breach in Achilles' resolve. As evidence of Ajax's 'innate lack of eloquence', Mills appeals to Ajax's silence when he encounters Odysseus in the underworld (44); here, too, the fusion of two different fictions is problematic. And even if it weren't, I would side with Longinus, who considered the hero's underworld silence 'more sublime than any speech' (*Subl.* 9.2). What should, however, be decisive in determining the intelligence of Ajax in Sophocles' play is the judgement of Athene: 'did you ever meet a more far-sighted man, a man who could respond to any situation?' (119–20, tr. Stuttard). That leaves little room for doubting his intelligence. Stuttard's introduction to the volume has much to commend it. Yet here, as in *Looking at Antigone* (*G&R* 65 [2018], 244–5), his inclination is to explain the dramatist's choice of subject matter by reference to a chronologically proximate historical event: 'To me, the prominence of the twin themes of burial and friendship, both of which Sophocles explores with equal zest in *Antigone*, suggests a date shortly after the Samian campaign, when questions of how to treat a traitorous ally exercised the minds of many' (6). I'm not sure how Stuttard is able to quantify the minds so exercised. I am, however, sure that the testimony of Duris of Samos, the sole source for the claim that burial was denied to those executed after the suppression of the Samian revolt, is of very doubtful reliability. The

[3] *Looking at Ajax*. Edited by David Stuttard. London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. Pp. x + 230. 8 b/w illustrations. Hardback £76.50, ISBN: 978-1-3500-7230-5.

end of the Samian revolt was, no doubt, brutal; but grudges fester, and time embellishes the memory of atrocities. The probability of embellishment in a hostile author writing a century and a half after the events is far too high to support any conjecture about the source of Sophocles' inspiration. Stuttard is also mistaken when he assumes that denial of burial is 'part of the punishment of *apotympanismos*' (7), rather than an optional extra.

Ioanna Karamanou similarly seeks to connect play and contemporary politics in the first chapter of her *Refiguring Tragedy*.[4] The play in this instance is Euripides' *Antigone*, and the connection links a one-line fragment, 'The king must please the many' (F171 Kannicht, tr. Cropp), to 'demagogues as usurpers of the people's sovereignty through flattery' and 'the gradual degeneration of democratic politics in post-Periclean Athens' (19). A less arbitrary connection, it seems to me, can be made between two *Antigones*. In Sophocles, the autocratic Creon is at odds with his son, who criticizes him for failing to take account of public opinion (*Ant*. 733–9). In Euripides, according to the hypothesis to Sophocles' play, 'Antigone is detected in company with Haemon': apparently, he is more deeply complicit with Antigone's actions than his Sophoclean counterpart. The conflict between father and son would still provide an appropriate context for Euripides' Haemon to criticize his father's autocratic disregard for the opinions of the many. Another thing we learn from the Sophoclean hypothesis is that Antigone and Haemon marry, and have a child, Maeon; this, presumably, was foretold by a deity who intervenes to resolve the conflict. Admittedly, that reconstruction is conjectural. But it fits so comfortably with Karamanou's programmatic concern with tragic refigurings that her detour into the degeneration of post-Periclean democratic politics leaves me perplexed. I was disappointed, too, that, though she acknowledges what is probably a synopsis of the *Antigone* of Astydamas, which won first prize in 342/1 (7, 17–18), she does nothing much with it. The presumptive source (Hyginus *fab*. 72) begins with a mass of backstory that must have been delivered as a prologue speech: the key point is that Haemon sent Antigone to a place of safety when Creon ordered him to put her to death. When their son arrives in Thebes, Creon deduces the young man's identity and realizes that Haemon has disobeyed him. Heracles intercedes on Haemon's behalf, but Creon is unyielding; Haemon and Antigone commit suicide. It was presumably a god who secured Heracles' marriage to Creon's daughter Megara, and who prophesied their future offspring, Therimachus and Ophites. That synopsis, surely, furnishes a rich opportunity for the study of refigurings. Two other chapters deal more rewardingly with inter-dramatic dialogue: *Alope* tragedies by Choerilus, Euripides, and Carcinus, together with Menander's appropriation of Euripides in the arbitration scene of *Epitrepontes* (26–47); and Menander's appropriation of Euripides' *Alcmaeon in Corinth* in the *Periceiromene* (48–58). Two chapters explore Aristotle's *Poetics* as a source for lost tragedies; the second focuses on his cryptic account of the resolution (*lusis*) of Theodectes' *Lynceus* (73–82). Two chapters deal with Euripides' *Dictys* in south Italian pottery and with the reception of Euripides' *Alexandros* in Etruscan iconography. Karamanou published a justifiably well-received edition and

[4] *Refiguring Tragedy. Studies in Plays Preserved in Fragments and Their Reception*. By Ioanna Karamanou. Trends in Classics Supplementary Volume 80. Berlin, de Gruyter, 2019. Pp. xii + 162. 6 illustrations. Hardback £91, ISBN: 978-3-11-065974-0.

commentary on the fragmentary *Alexandros* in 2017. Her final chapter in this volume gives an engaging account of the play's performance reception, including a performance of David Stuttard's reconstruction.

Fragmentary tragedies have been getting plenty of attention recently, as the contents of the monumental *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* are disseminated in less intimidating formats. All three major tragedians have fragment volumes in the Loeb Classical Library; Sophocles and Euripides both have two Aris & Phillips volumes of selected fragmentary plays with commentary; and Matthew Wright's *The Lost Plays of Greek Tragedy* has examined fragmentary plays of the 'neglected authors', as well as of the big three (*G&R* 64 [2017], 184–5; 66 [2019], 282–3). M. J. Cropp has now given us selected fragments of fifth-century 'minor' Greek tragedians (defined, for this purpose, as tragedians who have not left any complete plays).[5] There is a brief introduction. The format is similar to the earlier Aris & Phillips volumes: each author has an introduction, followed by testimonia and fragments (with facing translation), and finally a commentary ('notes'). Agathon, the least minor of the tragedians assembled here, is allocated thirty-nine pages, within which lurk around forty lines of verse. We know more about Agathon's plays than we do about those of any other tragedian represented in this volume; even so, as Cropp remarks, 'it is frustrating that we know nothing substantial about the content of Agathon's plays' (141). A second volume, with fragments of fourth- and third-century tragedy, is planned.

Paola Bassino's commentary on the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod*[6] situates itself within the now familiar angle of approach to ancient biographies of poets that reads them as a mode of literary reception (2). In Part I she assembles the testimonia for the *Contest* tradition, with texts and translation, beginning with the *Works and Days* (648–52) and [Hesiod] F357 MW. That is followed by Plutarch's *Table Talk* (674f–675a) and *Dinner of the Seven Sages* (153f–154a); Proclus' *Life of Homer* (Bassino defends the attribution of the *Chrestomathy* to the fifth-century Platonist scholarch [22–3]); Dio Chrysostom's second *Kingship Oration* (2.7–12); Philostratus' *Heroicus* (43.7–10); Lucian's *True History* (2.20–2); Themistius (*Or.* 30, 38c–39a); Libanius' *Defence of Socrates* (65–6); and the Byzantine scholars John Tzetzes and Eustathius. Part II provides a comprehensive analysis of the textual tradition (consisting of a single manuscript, newly discovered notes made by the Renaissance scholar Marcus Musurus, and five papyri ranging from the third century BCE to the sixth or seventh century CE). Part III is a critical edition with facing English translation; a detailed and judicious commentary follows in Part IV.

The *Compendium of Greek Theology* compiled by the first-century Stoic Lucius Annaeus Cornutus used to have only a niche readership; and Carl Lang's 1881 Teubner edition was the only place where its devotees could read it. Since Lang's edition has long been the target of justified criticism, that was a deeply unsatisfactory situation. More recently there has been a rapid growth of interest in the *Compendium*, and

[5] *Minor Greek Tragedians. Volume 1. The Fifth Century. Fragments from the Tragedies with Selected Testimonia*. Edited with introduction, translation, and notes by M. J. Cropp. Aris & Phillips Classical Texts. Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2019. Pp. xxiv + 271. Hardback £80, ISBN: 978-1-786-94202-9; paperback £24.95, ISBN: 978-1-786-94203-6.

[6] *The Certamen Homeri et Hesiodi*. By Paola Bassino. Berlin, de Gruyter, 2018. Texte und Kommentare 59. Pp. xiv + 228. Hardback £100, ISBN: 978-3-11-058284-0.

the new millennium has seen the publication of no fewer than three approximate replications of Lang's text with translations and supporting materials: an increase in accessibility, but not in philological rigour. The philological deficit has now been paid down by José Torres' fully critical Teubner edition, based on a wider evidence base and sounder methodological principles.[7]

At about the same time, George Boys-Stones published 'the first complete collection of the surviving evidence for the life of Cornutus and his "many philosophical and rhetorical works"' (1) in the Society of Biblical Literature's series of 'Writings from the Greco-Roman World'.[8] Boys-Stones's text of the *Compendium* is based on Lang, but also draws on Torres' edition, to which he had pre-publication access; he is less interventionist in his judgements than either Torres or Lang. In addition to the *Compendium*, the volume includes Cassiodorus' excerpts from *On Pronunciation or Orthography* and other fragments (including *dubia* and *spuria*). The texts are furnished with a facing English translation and helpful notes. Boys-Stones observes that the 'reevaluation of Roman philosophy in recent decades and a new appreciation of its integrity and originality. . .sets the scene for a reassessment of Cornutus's philosophical achievements – and, with that, a fuller account of his intellectual profile in the round' (1–2). His forty-page introduction, which covers Cornutus' life, the first-century Stoic context of his work, and his philosophical views, is outstanding. Cornutus is seen as 'a cosmopolitan intellectual, more than likely of high social standing, aligned with a vibrant and well-connected international community of like-minded scholars' (13). The introduction to the *Compendium* proposes an innovative explanation of its structure and its relation to the cosmology of the *Timaeus* (42–7). Between them, Torres and Boys-Stones have brought our resources for the study of Cornutus to a new level of sophistication.

And finally... Jeffrey Henderson is a most distinguished scholar, who has served as President of the American Philological Association, is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and is General Editor of the Loeb Classical Library. He is admirable in many other respects, but most of all in his appointment of volume editors. And he is especially to be applauded for the selection of William H. Race as editor and translator of the epideictic treatises attributed to Menander of Laodicea (Menander Rhetor) and Dionysius of Halicarnassus.[9] Race has previously edited Pindar and Apollonius of Rhodes for the Library, proving his intelligence by his meticulous scholarship; his justice by the soundness of his editorial decisions; his moderation by being neither rash nor excessively timid in editing and translating the texts; and his courage by his willingness to compete with Donald Russell and Nigel Wilson, outstanding scholars whose work on Menander is of such high quality that others might have been deterred by the vertiginous prospect of standing on the shoulders of such giants.

[7] *Lucius Annaeus Cornutus. Compendium de Graecae Theologiae Traditionibus*. Edited by José B. Torres. Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana. Berlin, de Gruyter, 2018. Pp. xxxviii + 73. Hardback £54.50, ISBN: 978-3-11-035033-3.

[8] *L. Annaeus Cornutus. Greek Theology, Fragments, and Testimonia*. Translated with an introduction and notes by George Boys-Stones. Writings from the Greco-Roman World. Atlanta, GA, SBL Press, 2018. Pp. xiv + 242. Hardback £32, ISBN: 978-0-88414-293-5; paperback £23.50, ISBN: 978-1-62837-210-6.

[9] *Menander Rhetor. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Ars Rhetorica*. Edited and translated by William H. Race. Loeb Classical Library 539. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2019. Pp. x + 465. Hardback £19.95, ISBN: 978-0-674-99722-6.

With predecessors as eminent as these, it would perhaps be empty flattery to say that Race has outstripped them: but Momus himself cannot deny that in his latest publication Race has given us a new and valuable resource for understanding epideictic oratory. This volume will, without doubt, be acclaimed by reviewers and readers alike. And if you do not understand what I have been doing in this paragraph, you *really* need to read this book.

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Latin Literature

Cicero has a unique place in the history of Latin. A political and intellectual figure elevated to iconic status both by his own efforts and by posterity; author of more extant prose – dozens of speeches, the treatises philosophical and rhetorical, and nearly a thousand letters – than any other pagan Roman; model of good style and set-text author *par excellence*, from antiquity to modernity. So far, so uncontroversial. But when and how did he acquire this place atop the canon? It's a question that Caroline Bishop, Thomas Keeline, and Giuseppe La Bua have each asked, and one to which they offer some interestingly different answers.

Keeline's revised Harvard dissertation is a smart and lively study of Cicero's reception in the early Empire, delimited roughly as 43 BC to AD 117.[1] That has become a crowded field recently, and more is soon to come,[2] but Keeline is the first to devote a book to it. At one level, it's a suite of case studies, moving from Augustan and Tiberian declamation through Seneca the Younger to Tacitus' *Dialogus* and Pliny's *Epistles*, with briefer calls on the likes of Manilius, Pliny the Elder, and Juvenal. A chapter on pseudepigrapha sits in the middle, and there are forays into Greek too: Plutarch, of course, but also, pushing further beyond 117, Arrian and Cassius Dio on the *Philippics*. At another level, it's an argument, that Cicero's reception was formed above all, in fact nigh on exclusively, in the schoolroom. Along the way, Keeline shows (implicitly and incidentally, but amply) that you will make limited progress if you restrict your investigation of Cicero's ancient *Nachleben* to explicit citations: imitation and allusion are an integral, not to say the largest, part of this tale.

Of the individual chapters, the first is an interesting and original outlier, an experimental reconstruction of ancient pedagogy. *Pro Milone* is cited often by Quintilian, and is the only speech treated in the extant parts of both Asconius' historical commentary (mid-first century AD) and the Scholia Bobiensia (probably fourth century, but with

[1] *The Reception of Cicero in the Early Roman Empire. The Rhetorical Schoolroom and the Creation of a Cultural Legend*. By Thomas J. Keeline. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018. Pp. xi + 375. Hardback £90, ISBN: 978-1-108-42623-7; paperback £26.99, ISBN: 978-1-108-44495-8. I had the advantage of reading it before publication, and declare here that Tom has done me the kindness of reading some work of my own. *Sed incorruptam fidem professis*. . .

[2] From Andrew Sillett, who is revising his Oxford DPhil thesis, 'A Learned Man and a Patriot: The Reception of Cicero in the Early Imperial Period' (2015), for publication.