

masterful exploration of her (its) multiplicity of expressions of that crucial ‘relevance’ critics of myth are so fond of seeking.

Temple University

DANIEL W. BERMAN
dwberman@temple.edu

HOMERIC HYMN TO APHRODITE

OLSON (S.D.) (ed., trans.) *The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite and Related Texts. Text, Translation and Commentary.* (Texte und Kommentare 39.) Pp. xiv + 328. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2012. Cased, €109.95, US\$154. ISBN: 978-3-11-026072-4.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X13002126

This commentary on the *Hymn to Aphrodite* follows closely upon A. Faulkner’s (*The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* [2008]). As O. writes in the preface (p. vii), such a pairing can produce a binocular and so more rounded view of a text for future scholars, although it is hard to see how his ‘systematic effort not to argue directly with’ Faulkner (p. viii) contributes to that. In fact, the overlap in the two scholars’ approaches is considerable, though there are certainly areas where they complement each other well.

O.’s introduction is one of the weak parts of his work. The first and fourth sections do contain useful material on mythographical sources about Aeneas and on the presentation of Aphrodite’s power respectively, though in both cases I would have liked greater breadth. The latter does little to contextualise the hymn with other representations of Aphrodite in archaic religion, and does not fully work through the nuanced idea that Aphrodite at the end of the narrative retains theoretical power over the gods, but no longer chooses to use it. In the former section, O. gives up quickly on the hymn’s possible relationship to aristocrats claiming descent from Aeneas, on the abstemious grounds that we do not *know* that they existed at the hymn’s date (pp. 8–9). Section 2 dismisses morphological features as a dating criterion: I would like to see O. (or anyone) argue this important point rigorously, but here in six pages he only takes easy shots at R. Janko’s treatment of the evidence in *Homer, Hesiod and the Hymns* (1982). Surprisingly, Section 5 compiles metrical data about the hymns and at various points (e.g. p. 312) O. tentatively uses metre as a dating criterion, though the figures look no better than those for various morphological criteria, and the shared objection that they are subject to multiple complicating factors is this time breezily acknowledged (p. 34). Section 6 repeats material about the stemma available in F. Càssola, *Inni omerici* (1975) and T.W. Allen’s seminal articles in *JHS* 1895–7 (not mentioned). O.’s interest in the manuscripts extends only to establishing the text, so that (for example) details about scribes are ignored, as are various members of the *p*-family (p. 48); O. seems unaware of Wilson’s demonstration (*Revue d’histoire des textes* 4 [1974], 139–42) that At is a fifteenth-century descendent of D, rather than a (possibly older) sibling. The stemma (p. 49) contains one of the book’s few significant typographical errors: B and Q are swapped.

Section 3, about the ‘poetic affiliations’ of the hymn, raises a more complicated issue: O.’s approach here is to give undigested lists of parallels, dismissing some and endorsing others without explaining his criteria, and so making judgement difficult for readers. Furthermore, the parallels are based on O.’s unusual view of formulaic language: the *Hymn to Aphrodite* can already allude to Homeric and Hesiodic works as to (essentially) fixed texts; the likelihood that many *iterata* are under-represented formulas (when we have

lost such an overwhelming majority of early epic) is rarely considered, nor the possibility that, for example, *Iliad* 14 derives from traditional accounts of Aphrodite's seductions; formulaic epithets are often squeezed for direct semantic relevance, and so on. This approach affects this section of the introduction, the apparatus of intertexts and formulaic parallels, and most pages of the commentary. Of course, O. is welcome to express unusual views about the fluctuating subject of 'traditional poetics', and indeed his commentary is very stimulating on the relevance of formulaic epithets. The problem – particularly for less experienced readers of epic – is rather that O. nowhere acknowledges that his views are unusual, or justifies them. To take some examples from the end of the poem, O. makes a strong argument for connecting *H.Aphr.* 281 to *Od.* 9.502–3; he next notes that 283b = Hes. *Op.* 623b but gives a weak suggestion for why *any* allusion to *Op.* would be effective; he thinks the parallel of 284 to *Il.* 20.206 (which begins φασί) makes φασί 'almost certainly correct' in the hymn, while acknowledging that this makes Anchises' words 'unrealistic', and he does not mention the parallel to *Od.* 11.236 and its implications for the formulaic nature of the line. O.'s intertextual comments vary in plausibility and are stated with deceptive confidence, and I therefore recommend comparing Faulkner's discussion in all such cases.

On the whole, the introduction does not give a sense of what O. thinks is important about the hymn, and only engages briefly with standard scholarly concerns, such as how Aphrodite could be pleased with a hymn whose story she wanted to be kept secret. Fortunately, O.'s text and commentary are far more successful – and since I shall treat them more briefly here, let me state clearly that they easily make up for the defects elsewhere in the book.

O.'s text contains a number of differences from Faulkner's, and more often than not they are minor improvements – though none seriously affects the sense. The facing translation gives a clear overview of the interpretation, and rarely slips in register (e.g. 'hosannahs' is too culturally loaded a choice for ὀλολυγαί in line 19). It is difficult for me to judge O.'s manuscript reports where they differ from Faulkner's; in line 114 he prints ἦ δέ without comment, when the online facsimiles of L, L₂ and L₃ all have ἦ δέ (like Faulkner).

The commentary pays particular attention, besides intertextuality as discussed above, to traditional philological questions such as the metrical effects of digamma and mechanisms of corruption, and to elucidating the logical connections between phrases. While O.'s methods are sometimes oddly documentary (e.g. 157–60n. on whether Anchises made his own bed), there are numerous successful details, such as how line 19 effects a transition between the wilderness of 18 and the cult of 20, or how the order in lines 162–3 matters, as we are voyeuristically invited to visualise the stages of Aphrodite's nudity, only to be denied a description of her body. O. also advertises (p. ix) his attention to focalisation, though the interpretative payoff is not always explained. In general, O.'s commentary will provide a useful source of material from which to construct a reading of the hymn or of issues for which it is consulted as a source. O. himself, however, is chary about pressing this material: a representative example might be how he notes the mix of intellectual organs in line 72, but neither attempts to relate this to archaic epistemology, nor mentions any bibliography on the subject. This reader, at least, was often left wanting more intellectual context for understanding what the hymn says.

Besides the *Hymn to Aphrodite*, O. also provides an edition, translation and commentary on nine shorter hymns (6, 9–12, 24, 27–9) which have some connection to it in terms of subject matter. This is an excellent idea, though in practice it seems to have been a rushed afterthought, since the lack of bibliography now reaches eyebrow-raising depths. Even the most important items of scholarship on the short hymns are not cited (D. Fröhder, *Die dichterische Form der homerischen Hymnen* [1994]; J. Danielewicz,

Symbolae philologorum Posnaniensium 1 [1973], pp. 7–17 is also useful). Fröhder's interpretations can in many places supplement and deepen O.'s, and the neglect is simply startling from such a reputable scholar.

The book ends with a short *index rerum*; an *index locorum* would have been useful. The book's price is offset by good production values, though a small gripe is that De Gruyter's chosen font does not adequately display underline dots or unusual characters (e.g. omicron with circumflex: p. 152).

St John's College, University of Cambridge

OLIVER THOMAS
orht3@cam.ac.uk

GREEK POETICS

HALLIWELL (S.) *Between Ecstasy and Truth. Interpretations of Greek Poetics from Homer to Longinus*. Pp. xii + 419. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. Cased, £75, US\$150. ISBN: 978-0-19-957056-0. doi:10.1017/S0009840X13002138

As H. states in his introductory chapter, the constitutive concepts of the title, *ecstasy* and *truth*, are not meant to mark a firm and permanent polarity but rather the dynamic dialectic between 'intense psychological absorption', on the one hand, and 'lasting cognitive and/or ethical value' on the other. H. sees this dialectic as balanced in Gorgias, Aristotle and Longinus but unsettled in Aristophanes, Plato, Isocrates and Philodemus. The book as a whole provides a minute and comprehensive exploration of the mutual attractions and repulsions between the title's notions within several landmarks of Greek critical thought.

First, the poetics immanent within poetry are explored in Homer and Aristophanes for, as H. observes, 'The poets are their own first interpreters, and some might say their best' (p. 25). Focusing on Achilles and Odysseus in their relationship to song, he traces the underlying mechanics of poetic self-consciousness in the epic narrative in such a way that the reader's answer to the chapter's title question ('Is there a Poetics in Homer?') must clearly be affirmative. Though some of the key moments of powerful auditory engagement displayed by epic characters, especially in the *Odyssey*, may not conform to the notion of 'ecstasy', H.'s detailed observations regarding the multifaceted dynamics of performing and listening to song in the poem offer justification, I believe, for us to refer in these cases to conceptualisations inherent in broader Greek aesthetics. Homer may explicitly be given a prominent position in the chorus of those thinkers for whom 'intense psychological absorption' and 'lasting cognitive or ethical value' (to use H.'s terms) are creatively juxtaposed and successfully negotiated.

The next chapter's extensive reading of Aristophanes' *Frogs* sheds light on what is represented in the play as a case of gridlock in critical judgement. Taking into account its paradoxically exaggerated twists, the impasse could be read as a caustic comment on the status of late fifth-century Athenian criticism which, lost amid diverging attitudes towards tragic art, falters between discourses of formalism or moralism, on the one hand, and a stammering emotionality, on the other.

An open-ended critical debate of a different kind is explored by H. in his chapter on Platonic poetics. Here he discusses the philosopher's views on poetry and philosophy as an almost unresolved tension rather than a definitive rejection of the former by the latter. Under the pointedly aporetic title 'To Banish or Not to Banish?' he performs a detailed reading of relevant passages in early Platonic dialogues, such as the *Apology* and the *Ion*, before