

experience with understanding. Indeed, towards the end, she quotes the famous Aeschylean phrase *pathei mathos* – learning through suffering (284).

Such high feeling resonates across these publications. Altogether, the works share not only a sophisticated approach to time and place but also a *timeliness*. Each one in its own way speaks with urgency about modern concerns that reverberate into the past, demonstrating the continued vitality of the field.

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### *General*

One of the more salient features of Greek and Roman literature is its archival impulse expressed in the tendency to incorporate lists, enumerations, and catalogues. From Homer's manifold catalogues, via classical historiographers, to Roman poets and beyond, catalogues and lists seem ubiquitous in ancient literature, and ancient authors catalogued all sorts of items: from ships, to war dead, to dog names, to mention but a few. But not only so in literature: in documentary sources with their lists of magistrates, victors, tributes, taxes, and more, we witness the same appetite for creation of order and taxonomy. This is the phenomenon that the edited volume *Lists and Catalogues in Ancient Literature and Beyond* tackles in sixteen chapters, prefaced by a substantial introduction penned by the editors.<sup>1</sup> As they observe, lists are indeed fashionable in literary studies these days, and the volume aims to provide a theoretically informed overview of the variety of lists and catalogues in ancient literature. The first of the four sections consists of two wide-ranging and inspired papers that provide a theoretical background: Mainberger's piece looks for a site of meaning in a list by analysing, no less, the table of contents of the very volume in which the article is printed, while von Contzen tackles ontological problems and establishes a set of criteria for the assessment and description of a list, before turning to the pragmatics and highlighting the effects that lists may have in the moment of reception: 'the list is a narrative *fascinosum*, a literary form that startles and entertains; that attracts and repels at the same time' (51).

The following section includes five essays under the heading 'The Cultural Poetics of Enumeration: Contexts, Materiality, Organisation'. This section takes the reader in a number of interesting directions. Wasserman juxtaposes Mesopotamian literary and documentary lists to explore their organizational principles and the agency of the cultural context in which they were produced, before turning to lists in the poetry of Luis Borges and Ted Hughes. Delattre's sophisticated investigation of lists in the mythographic corpus foregrounds issues of textual materiality, layouts, and cognition, and raises the question of 'textual webs' created between mythographic texts and their

<sup>1</sup> *Lists and Catalogues in Ancient Literature and Beyond. Towards a Poetics of Enumeration*. Edited by Rebecca Laemmlé, Cédric Scheidegger Laemmlé, and Katharina Wesselmann. Berlin, De Gruyter, 2021. Pp. xiii + 437. 3 illustrations, 5 tables. Hardback £100, ISBN: 978-3-11-071219-3.

hypotexts. With Gordon's piece, one of the most methodologically rigorous in the collection, we move from mythography to the realm of curses in the Roman period, and learn about the consequences of the loss of the performative context for the lists attested in curses. Then, from curses to divine *charis*, with Thomas' fine investigation of the lists of attributes in Greek hymns, Homeric, Orphic, magical, and more. Tribulato's piece, the final essay of the section, investigates lists of words on the basis of a case study of the so-called *Antiatticist*, a second-century AD lexicon that includes a significant number of morphological features and meanings attested also in *koine*.

The third section, thematically coherent, addresses issues of catalogues in epic poetry. Visser's piece formally distinguishes between two types of catalogues in early Greek epic: those that consist of proper lists (such as dense lists of names in Homer), and what he calls 'itemization' – that is, lists which provide more detail on the individual elements listed (such as the list of the heroines that Odysseus meets in Hades in *Odyssey* 11). Haubold's chapter investigates catalogues in Greek and Akkadian epic, juxtaposing Hesiod's *Theogony* to *Enūma eliš*, and *Gilgamesh* Tablet IV to *Odyssey* 9–12; the piece is effectively a plaidoyer for a comparatist approach focused on the exploration of 'avenues of reading' (224), rather than an identification of parallels or assertion of interdependencies between the traditions. Next, Reitz paints a broad-brush picture of epic catalogues from Homer to Statius to highlight their evasiveness and unreliability, and, ultimately addresses issues of uncountability, incompleteness, and catalogic failure, in particular in Imperial epic. Kyriakidis' substantial essay is dedicated to genealogical catalogues in Homer, Virgil, and Ovid, and investigates principles of their organization, as well as transformative forces that shaped the development and structure of genealogical catalogues in later periods. With Wesselman's piece we are sent back to early epic to look at the comic potential that catalogues might have, for which Hector's concise CV before the face-off with Ajax from Book 7 of the *Iliad*, and Agamemnon's catalogue of gifts (*Il.* 9.120–57) provide case studies.

The final section with its four papers goes beyond the epic canon. Sammons, whose substantial work on the topic is very well known, now draws attention to the five catalogues of the 'Seven against Thebes' from tragedy, and investigates the ways in which they engage with the epic tradition. With Ruffel's piece we move to Old Comedy and continue where Wesselman broke off – the exploration of the comic and absurd potential of catalogues. Scheidegger Laemmle's piece, penultimate in the collection, is a deep dive into Ovid's *Ex Ponto* 4.16 with its catalogue of notable contemporaries. This is a rewarding investigation of the relationship between poetic catalogue and documentary practices of enumeration and itemization, ultimately raising the question of the role of catalogues in assertions of authority and creation of canon. The collection is rounded off with Höschele's paper, equally rewarding, on Christodorus' *Baths of Zeuxippos*, a poem which provides ecphrases of no fewer than eighty bronze statues from Constantinople. In a nutshell, Höschele demonstrates that the catalogue of ecphrases cumulatively represents a literary genealogy originating with Homer and ending (culminating?) with Christodorus.

I enjoyed many essays in this collection, and found in all of them much of interest, especially so in those essays that explicitly engaged with pragmatic and cognitive issues. The book is very well produced, carefully edited, and equipped with good indices. It

certainly represents a very welcome addition to the growing body of work done on structural features of Greek and Roman literature.

As someone who spends a great deal of time looking at images and squeezes of archaic and classical Greek inscriptions, I regularly profit from the work done by students of Greek alphabet, dialectologists, and linguists. The pioneering work of Lilian Jeffery and Margherita Guarducci laid down the foundations for all investigations of early Greek epigraphic writing, and the arrival of complex databases such as *Poinikastas* ([poinikastas.csad.ox.ac.uk](http://poinikastas.csad.ox.ac.uk)) greatly facilitated efforts in this field.<sup>2</sup> Natalia Elvira Astoreca's short monograph now updates what we know about the advent and the spread of Greek alphabet(s), and grapples with the problems of evidence and methodology one encounters when studying the date, place, and exact fashion in which early Greek alphabets developed.<sup>3</sup>

On the basis of her investigation of inscriptions dated to the period from the eighth to the seventh century BC, in her first chapter Elvira Astoreca analyses issues of the advent and spread of the Greek alphabet (she takes a cautious and somewhat pessimistic stance on the possibility of advancing our knowledge on these issues). The following chapter provides a theoretical framework, with grapholinguistics and comparative graphematics looming large in place of palaeography. These are complex issues, and this chapter was somewhat too dense for my taste. My impression is that it could have profited from additional elaboration, especially if the aim was to reach non-specialist audiences as well.

The following three chapters represent the heart of the book, and provide useful information: a clear and well-illustrated chapter on abecedaria is followed by two chapters on vocalic and consonantal notations in epichoric alphabets respectively. These chapters are particularly helpful because of the clear disposition of material and the high-quality illustrations. Effectively, Elvira Astoreca proposes that we divorce epichoric alphabets from the idea that 'they are just elements of a higher order' (127), by which she means an alphabet or writing system from which epichoric alphabets developed. Instead, we should observe them as autonomous writing systems, and treat them in isolation. There is merit in doing so, and I wish that the book provided more data than it did (and I wish also that it included indices: especially for this kind of book, the lack of indices is an impediment, since certain cognate issues are discussed in different places). The book is well produced, and I can only imagine how difficult it must have been to typeset and proofread this manuscript, given the amount of special letters and unique symbols.

Great care, as usually, has been invested in the production of the new *Inscriptiones Graecae* volumes, the gold standard of editorial work in Greek epigraphy. *IG X 2, 1s*, the supplement volume to *IG X 2, 1*, edited by the late Despoina Papakonstantinou-Diamantourou, Elena Martín González, and Klaus Hallof, updates and expands Edson's edition of inscriptions from Thessaloniki and its vicinity, and features a stellar set of

<sup>2</sup> *Poinikastas. Epigraphic Sources for Early Greek Writing*, <<http://poinikastas.csad.ox.ac.uk>>, accessed 18 November 2021.

<sup>3</sup> *Early Greek Alphabetic Writing. A Linguistic Approach*. By Natalia Elvira Astoreca. Oxford, Oxbow, 2021. Pp. 160. Hardback £38, ISBN: 978-1-78925-743-4.

indices.<sup>4</sup> *IG XV 2, 1*, edited by Maria Kantirea and Daniela Summa, collects 600 inscriptions from the cities located in the eastern part of Cyprus, organized by city (Citium, Golgoi, Tremithus, Idalion, Tamassos, and Ledra), as well as about 300 inscriptions on clay pots from the cave sanctuary dedicated to Nymphs at Kafizin, organized by the type of pot.<sup>5</sup> In urban localities, as is often the case, sepulchral texts represent the most common genre, but there is also a significant number of honorific texts and dedications, as well as Christian inscriptions. The dossier of texts from the Nymphaeum is particularly intriguing since the vast majority of inscriptions bear testimony that the objects were dedicated by a single person, a certain Onesagoras, apparently a barber, who in the late third century BC dedicated them to a Nymph (curiously, at times addressed as ‘Sister’). The sherds from Kafizin therefore represent probably some of our best evidence for the study of individual belief in the Greek world.

This brings us to the next two books, a volume on ostraca, and a book on religion, the rites of passage more specifically. *Using Ostraca in the Ancient World* is a beautifully produced and carefully edited volume of proceedings of a conference organized in Heidelberg in 2017 under the aegis of the collaborative research centre ‘Material Text Cultures’.<sup>6</sup> In *G&R* 68.1 (2021) I covered two volumes from De Gruyter’s book series ‘Materiale Textkulturen’, and this one shares many of the virtues I mentioned then. As the editors highlight, the volume deals with an often sidelined writing source, pottery sherds, and brings together nine contributions by papyrologists, ceramologists, archaeologists, Egyptologists, and more. Truly interdisciplinary in nature, the volume is concerned primarily with the material from Egypt in a vast chronological span from the Pharaonic to the Arabic period, with sporadic consideration of the material found outside Egypt.

Ostraca are fascinating objects, and this volume very successfully conveys all the reasons for scholarly fascination: the papers discuss archaeological contexts, material features of the objects, and the most recent technological advances in recording and reading of texts; some of them also deal with more traditional themes such as documentary and literary genres attested on the sherds. The introduction, written by the editors of the volume, Clementina Caputo and Julia Lougovaya, provides a clear and helpful overview of the field, informs the reader about the current trends in the study of ostraca, and lays down the structure of the volume.

The first section comprises three papers under the heading ‘Documentation and Interpretation of Ostraca as Archaeological Objects’, and it does what it says on the tin. Davoli’s paper, opening the section, looks at the archaeological context of potsherds, explains the ways in which one should understand and study deposits,

<sup>4</sup> *Inscriptiones Thessalonicae et Viciniaie – Supplementum alterum. Addenda, Indices, Tabulae*. Edited by Despoina Papakonstantinou-Diamantourou, Elena Martín González, and Klaus Hallof. Berlin, De Gruyter, 2021. Pp. xiii + 340. Hardback £272, ISBN: 978-3-11-071236-0.

<sup>5</sup> *Inscriptiones Cypri Orientalis. Citium, Golgi, Tremithus, Idalion, Tamassus, Kafizin, Ledra*. Edited by Maria Kantirea and Daniela Summa. Berlin, De Gruyter, 2020. Pp. x + 378. Hardback £ 317.50, ISBN: 978-3-11-069503-8.

<sup>6</sup> *Using Ostraca in the Ancient World. New Discoveries and Methodologies*. Edited by Clementina Caputo and Julia Lougovaya. Materiale Textkulturen 32. Berlin, De Gruyter, 2021. Pp. vi + 245. 26 illustrations. Hardback £72.50, ISBN: 978-3-11-071286-5.

and provides an illuminating case study from Amheida (Trimithis in the Dakhla Oasis) to highlight the need for more intensive interdisciplinary collaboration in the study of these artefacts. This discussion is followed by Caputo's contribution, and I very much wish I had been there when she conducted the experiment that served as the basis for her contribution. The paper studies material properties of potsherds from Egypt dated between the fourth century BC and the seventh century AD to cast light on the technology of the production of ostraca as artefacts. To do so, Caputo conducted a series of experiments on sherds of different fabrics from Amheida, breaking them serially with a small pick, flint, stone, and a pounder in order to examine the properties of the break and the edges. Her findings strongly suggest that one should pay particular attention to the morphology and surface treatment of sherds, especially when they belong to the same corpus. Then, Bülow-Jacobsen's accessible and very helpful paper brings the reader up to speed with modern imaging techniques. While the benefits of reflectance transformation imaging and multispectral imaging may be familiar to those who study epigraphy and papyrology, I was not aware just how useful infrared photography can be – this was a very informative read.

The second section of the volume, 'Cultural Contexts and Practices', consists of two papers. Haring's contribution deals with limestone and ceramic ostraca from the Old Kingdom, investigating the geographical distribution of the artefacts and raising questions about the dynamics of their production in the second half of the second millennium BC. Lougovaya's paper is one of the highlights of the volume, and perhaps of greatest interest for the readers of *G&R*. In a methodologically stimulating, vivid, and occasionally humorous contribution, she takes stock of where we currently stand with research on Greek literary ostraca (and as a bonus she provides an edition of a curious bucolic monologue dated to the third century AD). Having pointed out that the corpus of relevant text is significantly larger than is commonly believed, the paper surveys magical and medical ostraca, ostraca with oracular consultations, and Christian texts, before turning to drafts and preparatory materials. This section contains some of the greatest curiosities found on potsherds: while drafts for inscriptions with their many edits are interesting on their own, one of the highlights that Lougovaya presents here is O.Leid. 1, from the second century BC, a 'prescription for calming a distressed mind', which bears quoting in full:

Whenever you wish to be calmed in spirit and you know what is troubling you, drink before dinner, and when you eat dinner, eat eggs together with your dinner, and vomit up most of your dinner, and on the next day perform an examination.

This is but one of several gems provided in Lougovaya's paper, and I recommend also the erotica, which I won't print here. Particularly informative and insightful are her sections on education and on performance and occasional poetry, which both highlight the problems with the nature of our evidence and inform the reader of the most recent developments in the study of relevant texts.

The final section, 'Ostraca in Context', brings together four case studies: Folmer on Aramaic ostraca from Elephantine; Chaufray and Redon on Greek and Demotic ostraca and *tituli picti* from the Ptolemaic period, found on two sites in the Eastern desert (a gold mine in Samut North and the fortress of Bi'r Samut); Lippert and Schentuleit on Demotic ostraca in Egyptian temples of the Graeco-Roman Period (Soknopaiou

Nesos and Hut-Repit); and Cromwell's exploration of late antique Coptic ostraca from the area of western Thebes. A good set of indices rounds off the volume. Overall, this was a very enjoyable and an exceptionally rewarding read, and the standard of production was very high: excellent editorial work and the quality of illustrations are some of many commendable features of this book.

With this I turn to Bremmer's *Becoming a Man in Ancient Greece and Rome*, a collection of fifteen essays previously published over four decades between the late 1970s and mid-2010s, but presented here in a thoroughly revised form.<sup>7</sup> Effectively, if not in name, this volume represents the third instalment of Bremmer's *Kleine Schriften*, and what I said about Bremmer's excellent *The World of Greek Religion and Mythology. Collected Essays II* in my review published in *G&R* 67.2 (2020) may be reiterated now: this is a terrific collection, beautifully produced and carefully curated, and all those interested in Greek religion will want to have this volume close at hand.

As the title suggests, the papers deal with male initiations, and cover a breathtaking range of material, from Indo-Europeans and Indo-Iranians, via Greeks, to Romans, and including forays very far beyond; consequently, the book encompasses an enormous time span. Rather than providing a synoptic view of the topic that has become increasingly prominent since the 1960s, the papers offer, as the author notes, a kaleidoscopic view of individual pieces of evidence. That said, the volume has a series of connected threads and unifying themes, some of which I highlight here. But first, a word on the preface. As was the case in his *Collected Essays*, here too Bremmer sketches his own intellectual journey to the topic, and situates his interests in it within the larger intellectual and cultural discourses of his own day. The issue at stake for him is not simply to connect the dots between himself and his predecessors and contemporaries, but also to proffer, in an unmistakably Bremmerian fashion, a reflective but clear-cut account of the forces that have been shaping the trajectories of research on the topic: the preface constitutes a veritable crash course, and an ideal starting point for novices.

The collection falls into two parts: the first comprises ten essays under the heading 'Myths'; the second, titled 'Rituals', contains five. In 'Myths', Bremmer deals both with Homer and the epic cycle and with the elusive lore that preceded it. The opening essay discusses heroes of epics as models for initiations and searches for narrative elements of initiatory character: transvestite Achilles, the transformation of Pyrrhos to Neoptolemos, the liminality of Philoctetus, Odysseus as a wandering prince, and much more. This proves to be an excellent starting point for the entire volume, since many of the themes tackled in the first chapter recur in the subsequent essays, which discuss katabatic narratives, transvestism, pederasty, wandering youths (in groups and as couples), the role of initiators, and the role of wilderness. The second section is dedicated to history and ritual. Two chapters deal with initiatory pederasty in early Greece (and its Indo-European background), from Crete and Sparta to Athens, while the following couple of essays tackle the role of family and fosterage in initiation rituals; the collection is rounded off with a discussion of early Roman *sodalitas*, 'companionship'.

<sup>7</sup> *Becoming a Man in Ancient Greece and Rome. Essays on Myths and Rituals of Initiation*. By Jan N. Bremmer. Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2021. Pp. xxviii + 267. Paperback €84, ISBN 978-3-16-159008-5.

Overall, this thoroughly rewarding volume paints a rich, stimulating, and terrifically erudite picture of the male rites of initiation – the author's hope that the essays cumulatively might provide a 'good idea' of the relevant rites (xix) is certainly justified, and more than fulfilled: this collection is destined, I believe, to serve as one of the standard works of reference on initiations. Even if many readers will be familiar with the original papers that form the skeleton of the collection, it is necessary to pick up this volume because of its partial recalibration, refinement, and expansion of the author's original views: to give but a single example, a paper that was first published in 1978 now takes into account literature as recent as 2019, and this is pretty much the norm throughout the book. We should be grateful to Bremmer for bringing together some of his most important work on the topic here, and for providing many fresh insights, both in the heavily revised papers and in the preface.

Next, briefly, two volumes on purity. Christoph Hammann's *Katharsis in Kaiserzeit und Spätantike* investigates the topic of purity and purification in medicine, Platonist philosophy, and Christian theology between the second and fourth century AD.<sup>8</sup> The book has its origin in the author's PhD dissertation, and this is clear also from its organization and structure. But this organization and structure are excellent, and they in no way stand in the way of perusing and profiting from this exceptionally useful, wide-ranging, and learned study that represents a most welcome addition to the study of purity and pollution in the ancient Mediterranean. I regret that I am unable to go into any real detail here about this expansive work, which comprises nearly a thousand pages, but the author should be congratulated for bringing together and competently analysing occasionally very difficult material.

The section on medicine takes Galen's corpus for its focus, and investigates in great detail the objects of and the means for medical katharsis, before turning to (the relative lack of) overlaps with the language of religious purification. The central section is then dedicated to katharsis in early Neoplatonism, focusing on Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus, and discusses, among other things, the issues of purification of the soul from the body, theurgy, and purity and the divine. The final section zeroes in on Nemesius of Emesa and Gregory of Nyssa, with accents on purity of soul, asceticism, sexual abstention, and purity from affects. An excellent appendix, containing semantic analysis of the most important terms related to purification in the six central authors mentioned above, is followed by bibliography and thorough indices. I learned a great deal from this book, and I very much appreciated the clarity of exposition of arguments, as well as the author's sensibility for cultural contexts.

The proceedings of an enjoyable and lively conference on purity and authority that I was privileged to attend in Münster in 2016 have now been published under the title *Reinheit und Autorität in den Kulturen des antiken Mittelmeerraumes*.<sup>9</sup> The conference was interdisciplinary in nature, and this is reflected in the resulting volume: alongside

<sup>8</sup> *Katharsis in Kaiserzeit und Spätantike. Vorstellungen von Reinigung und Reinheit in Medizin, platonischer Philosophie und christlicher Theologie des 2. bis 4. Jahrhunderts n. Chr.* By Christoph Hammann. Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlag, 2020. Pp. 983. Hardback €100, ISBN 978-3-525-31723-5.

<sup>9</sup> *Reinheit und Autorität in den Kulturen des antiken Mittelmeerraumes.* Edited by Benedikt Eckhardt, Clemens Leonhard, and Klaus Zimmermann. Baden-Baden, Ergon, 2020. Pp. 320. Hardback €64, ISBN 978-3-95650-505-8.

papers on relevant issues in Greek and Roman literature, confession inscriptions, and late antique authors, the collection also includes papers on Leviticus, Roman and Hellenistic Jerusalem, Christian baptism, purification at the Byzantine court, and a broad-brush intercultural comparison between the cultures of Asia and Europe. I will abstain from an in-depth evaluation here on account of my partisanship. Many papers in this collection are, I think, rewarding, with the stand-out contributions for me personally being Achenbach on Leviticus 10–15; Huttner on purity regulations among Jews, Christians, and Greeks in the Meander valley; and Leonhard on Justin the Philosopher. This volume is a great indication of the many boons arising from cross-disciplinary dialogues: long may they continue.

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