

the commentaries on Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica* Books 3 and 4 by R. Hunter (1989) and E. Livrea (1973) are not mentioned; in the chapter on the possible audience T. should have referred to A. Cameron's *Callimachus and his Critics* (1995) about the performance culture in the Hellenistic period.

Some questions remain that could have been discussed with profit. For example, in Chapter 8 T. briefly mentions the similarity between Heracles' plight in Alcmena's dream and the episode of Achilles and Scamander in the *Iliad*: it could have been worth investigating this issue further (elaborating on the useful remarks in the commentary on 94–5). In connection with this, it could also have been useful to collect the many allusions to the *Iliad* in the *Megara* and discuss them in connection with each other (for instance, several allusions seem to draw attention to the fate of parents; see e.g. the commentary on 82 about Niobe, recalling *Il.* 24.602 and the fate of Priam; on 89b–90, where *δυσάμμορος* refers readers to the women of the *Iliad*, Thetis, Hecuba and Andromache). On a larger scale it would also be interesting to add further discussion of the women's perspective in connection with later works such as Ovid's *Heroides*. One may wonder whether the *Megara* was among the texts that inspired Ovid to his approach.

However, in spite of these critical remarks and suggestions, this book is a valuable addition to the existing range of commentaries on Hellenistic poetry. It certainly helps to understand this intriguing poem much better and may well trigger further interest in it.

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HELLENISTIC AND IMPERIAL DIALOGUES

KÖNIG (J.), WIATER (N.) (edd.) *Late Hellenistic Greek Literature in Dialogue*. Pp. xiv + 416, ill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. Cased, £90, US\$120. ISBN: 978-1-316-51668-3.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X23000252

The title of this volume invites a dialogic response. What counts as '(late) Hellenistic', as 'literature' and 'in dialogue' with what or whom? The volume offers a robust set of possibilities. The introduction highlights the relative inattention to late Hellenistic and Augustan Greek literature, long overshadowed by third-century Alexandrian poets (p. 2). The 'plurality' (p. 4) of a 'dynamic, constantly shifting' (p. 4) sense of Hellenistic material deserves fresh attention. Yet this summons offers more than a familiar strain of 'worthy-because-less-studied': the volume aims ambitiously at reading the comparatively marginal adjacent to the more prominent. Dialogue, then, encompasses both 'interrelations' (p. 12) among late Hellenistic texts (composed in the second and/or first centuries BCE) and imperial works, read side-by-side to reveal continuity and difference, including on Rome's perceived (un)importance, ideas of classicism and senses of generic innovation (pp. 19–30). In some of the most satisfying chapters, we find civic decrees read alongside Diodorus Siculus (B. Gray); Strabo in dialogue with philosophy (M. Hatzimichali); the Sibyl in contest with Homer (E. Greensmith). At other times the notion of 'dialogue' is less textually bounded but no less enriching, as when notions of space and scale both inscribe and are re-digested by works vast (Polybius) and small (epigram).

The questioning of unity itself constitutes a unifying through-line. The editors declare that ‘we ought to think of Hellenistic “literatures” in the plural’ (p. 6). The volume thus includes Jewish, Roman and ‘non-literary’ texts, though perhaps not enough. Still, to moot so large a range need not entail commensurate coverage; the editors stress that chapters ‘are intended as samples and stimuli’ (p. 6), inviting us to imagine alternative possible configurations. No “‘essentialist” meaning’ (p. 10) should be ascribed to the umbrella ‘late Hellenistic’ (p. 10), though the term is seemingly delimited by Polybius’ own ‘organising principle’ (p. 11): the ‘perception of Rome as the upcoming new centre of power of the Mediterranean’ (p. 11).

Polybius inaugurates the volume, in Wiater’s richly textured ‘The Empire Becomes a Body’. Wiater holds that Polybius is the first writer to use the body metaphor to ‘conceptualise the effect of Roman power on the structure and order of the inhabited world’ (p. 68) and to accentuate the ‘functional interrelation’ (p. 39) of ‘limbs’ that compose Rome’s *oikoumene* (an image doubling as a metaphor for narrative connectivity [p. 47]). In line with the introduction’s declared interpretative strategies, Polybius’ body (1.4.6–7) is read with ‘dialogue partners’ (p. 67) both predictable (classical precursors, later Roman literary incarnations) and unexpected (the monumental built environment, milestone markers and, in a bravura close reading, the ‘spatial reality’ of Hannibal’s long march, cast onto the ‘imaginary map of the [Roman] *oikoumene*’ [p. 60]). Polybius thus ties the body image to geographic spread, though one wonders why this ‘body’, unlike those of the more detailed Ovid or Appian (p. 47), is left ‘geographically rather imprecise’ (p. 47). Polybius perhaps indicates a sense of Rome’s continued growth and the consequent need to avoid ‘bodily’ measurements.

T.A. Schmitz’s ‘Pyrenaean Mountains and Deep-Valleyed Alps’ provides a splendid reading of polyvalent geographic possibilities in the *Garland of Philip*. Alongside a melancholy sense of the world turned upside-down (e.g. Δῆλον ἐρημοτέρην: p. 74) through ‘fundamental change that the Roman conquest of the east had brought about’ (p. 75), together with journeys of new-fangled distance, sits the acceptance of Italy as the new centre (p. 80). Imperial favour can now rival natural beneficence (e.g. Nero and the sun equated as salvific benefactors of Rhodes [p. 79]). Schmitz elegantly demonstrates how various epigrams pursue a ‘reduction of complexity . . . us[ing] the structure provided by their Greek *paideia* to appropriate geography and make this world their own’ (p. 83).

M. Baumann’s ‘Sailing the Sea, Sailing an Image’ continues the spatial theme with a surprising comparison between two *periploi*, Diodorus’ description of the Red Sea (3.38–48) and an imagined voyage in Philostratus’ *Imagines* (2.17). Both passages mark interesting narrative shifts within their respective texts, but the further attempt to read their ‘divergent strategies of mediality’ (pp. 117–18) as representative of broader cultural phenomena seems over-generalised.

König’s ‘Ecocritical Readings in Late Hellenistic Literature’ continues his pioneering work of bringing classical literature into dialogue with critical discourses on landscape. Readings of Strabo and Diodorus Siculus show their reworking of an already complex Herodotus (generally negative about human attempts to alter landscape: pp. 124–8). While Strabo proves consistently sanguine about landscape alteration (p. 133), Diodorus emerges as more elusive, exhibiting ‘elements of equivocation and ambiguity’ (p. 135). König’s close reading of Diodorus both ‘in dialogue’ with himself (Books 1–5 are compared with later parts of the *Library*) and with Herodotus yields an engagingly ambivalent result, in which attitudes towards large-scale projects become ‘far from clear-cut’ (p. 145).

Diodorus and Strabo remain central in Gray’s excellent ‘Civic and Counter-Civic Cosmopolitanism’, in which their texts are integrated with epigraphic evidence to trace

tensions and mutual co-optations between local/civic and 'global'/cosmopolitan ideals. Gray shows the different polemical sides to which Strabo played (pp. 175–6): at once sensitive to Stoic models but alive also to the realities of local power, from which ethereal cosmopolitanism could prove a distraction.

Greensmith's vibrant 'The Wrath of the Sibyl' treats the reception of Homer in the third book of Sibylline Oracles, revealing a self-conscious Sybil who 'construct[s] herself as a rival (not just a parallel) literary authority to Homer' (p. 181). The Sybil anticipates, too, the 'mischievousness and wit' of Imperial instantiations, but with the polemical advantage of doing so in the mode of poetic composition. Greensmith offers several brilliant close readings, mapping the contest for 'cultural priority' and the 'origins of knowledge' (p. 205) onto broader exegetical and religious frameworks.

J. Connolly's 'Imagining Belonging' moves swiftly through rich passages of Cicero's *De finibus*, quoted at length but deprived of close analysis, while also suggesting some contemporary frameworks (e.g. 'fanon': 'fan knowledge of the canon' [p. 223]) for tracing 'Roman habits of identification with and attachment to Greek culture' (p. 218). A sturdy roster of big thinkers (Bhabha, Fanon, Berlant, Arendt, Appiah) is adduced, yet the treatment of the relatively familiar notion of intellectual or 'communal identification that transcends legal definitions of citizenship' (p. 212) remains speedy. The chapter's interesting reflections on Roman 'aggression and co-optation' (p. 218) might have been expanded by way of more focused dialogue with the sense of melancholy in *De finibus* and the related 'fantasy of transportation out of oneself' (p. 225).

Hatzimichali's 'Philosophical Self-Definition in Strabo's *Geography*' probes conceptualisations of philosophy in the *Geography* as part of Strabo's self-alignment with Greek intellectual traditions, showing how Strabo's 'negotiating [of] Greek identity in terms of intellectual excellence' (p. 237) mobilises recourse to philosophy, even if a somewhat 'diluted' (p. 243) version. The ultimate recuperation of Stoic doctrinal divergences under the 'internal priorities of his geographical project' (p. 249) is less surprising, but the chapter manages to paint a complex picture in which various matters are held in tension: geography bound up with intellectual virtuosity and political practicality; Strabo as managing to depart from Stoic orthodoxy while propping up philosophy's *polymatheia* (p. 250).

F.K. Maier's 'Narrating "the Swarm of Possibilities"' treats representations of contingency in Plutarch as influenced by Polybius. Use of 'historical entropy' (p. 258) – multiple protagonists or perspectives – 'increases the number of different paths which history could have taken' (p. 258). Plutarch and Polybius allude to what *might* have happened, albeit by different means: Polybius by explicit remarks, Plutarch by (among other techniques) the comparative rendering of parallel biographies (p. 268). Maier thus identifies a difference but stops shy of venturing to explain why it exists. More attention to the concept of *ethos* might have helped: Plutarchan ideas about character and agency likely contribute to the diminished role he accords to *tyche* (p. 269).

L. Kim's "'Asianist" Style in Hellenistic Oratory and Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists*' offers an impressively meticulous study of prose rhythm that manages to survey classical and Hellenistic prose writers and inscriptions as well as sophists' speeches (as presented in Philostratus). Kim shows through punctilious analysis that, while continuity exists between Hellenistic and imperial rhythmic choices (inasmuch as both reject classical models), their own respective clausulae preferences differ: '[R]hythm is one of the stylistic elements that sets Hellenistic and imperial authors apart, not only from Gorgias and the sophists of the classical period but also from each other' (p. 305). This chapter shows the granular level at which continuity and rupture can be observed; speech's rhythms helped to cluster cultural affiliations largely lost on us silent readers.

C. de Jonge's 'Greek Reading Lists from Dionysius to Dio' offers a suggestive comparison of two ancient syllabi in Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Dio Chrysostom. De Jonge notes the flawed tendency to assume that such lists are basically the same: subtle differences (regarding, e.g., the role of poetry and the amount of labour readers should expect to do) prompt questions about the purposes of such lists and the understanding of canonicity they imply. De Jonge points to different generic contexts, for instance, but this still leaves open various questions about why those differences exist and for whom they proved useful. A sharp reading draws attention to Dio, *Or.* 18.16–17, where Xenophon's *Anabasis* is elevated because it helps in navigating imperial relations (p. 329), nicely demonstrating Dio's 'more practical perspective' (p. 336) as he reorganises the canon to prioritise 'useful' literature – not least for himself as an urbane grandee.

S. Goldhill closes the volume with a performatively dialogic *envoi*, staging contingent dialogic partners not included here – the *Septuagint* and Philo – to 'emphasise how different a picture of Hellenistic literature could have been produced' (p. 361), in a call for 'a more networked, more rhizomatic model' (p. 364) of dialogue.

In light of the intended focus on 'plurality' (p. 4), is it reductive to ask how it all hangs together? The banner of 'dialogue' risks looseness, since all reading is necessarily dialogic, impossible in a vacuum. Certainly, many of the chapters are conceivable under different thematic guises, and one can imagine many of their intra- and intertextual interpretative manoeuvres being made elsewhere. Innovation, then, inheres in the unexpected and frequently illuminating collation of materials and sources, and in the attendant destabilising of what counts as a relevant *comparandum*. Given various continuities established between Hellenistic and imperial texts, the volume, at its best, flusters operative assumptions about periodisation and its putative idiosyncrasies (cf. T. Whitmarsh, 'Greece: Hellenistic and Early Imperial Continuities', in: D.S. Richter and W.A. Johnson [edd.], *The Oxford Handbook of the Second Sophistic* [2017], pp. 11–24, cited in the introduction; and [uncited] J. Porter, 'Against *leptotes*: Rethinking Hellenistic Aesthetics', in: A. Erskine and L. Llewellyn-Jones [edd.], *Creating a Hellenistic World* [2011], pp. 271–312). Perhaps a less trite facet of the truism of reading-is-always-dialogue lies in the difficulty of setting limits on any act of reading. Texts are sometimes said to 'stay with us': lived situations, not to mention other texts, are subsequently '(re)read' through previous textual encounters. This volume succeeds in showing something of that kaleidoscopic process and in introducing what for many will be new texts, while familiar ones are approached from lively dialogic angles.

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PHILODEMUS AND POETRY

MCO SKER (M.) *The Good Poem According to Philodemus*. Pp. xvi + 307. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021. Cased, £64, US\$99. ISBN: 978-0-19-091281-9.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X23000057

This is the first monograph on the poetics of Philodemus, an Epicurean acquaintance of Horace and Virgil, since the pioneering Harvard thesis of N. Greenberg in 1955 (belatedly published in 1990). Over the intervening decades understanding of the Herculaneum