

SUBJECT REVIEWS

Greek literature

Stephen Halliwell has, at last, completed his three-volume verse translation of Aristophanes.¹ The first instalment, published in 1997, covered Aristophanes' 'longest play, *Birds*, his sexiest play, *Lysistrata*, and two works from very near the end of his career, *Assembly-Women* and *Wealth*'. Geoffrey Arnott's review² of that first volume was positive: 'H.'s style is lively, modern, and generally effective, closer perhaps in its presentation of the complexities of Aristophanic detail and reference than most of his rivals. .He is virtually always accurate without being over-literal, and far more often graphically idiomatic than flat.' Arnott's assessment was generally favourable, although he did identify some imperfections: 'errors in detail are few and far between (*Birds* 244, "marshy greens", not "rolling hills"; 266, "like a stone curlew", not "with a waterfall of sound"; *Eccl.* 1092, βολβοί not "onions"; *Plut.* 192, μάζα not "bread")', and Halliwell 'would have benefited from having his translation of *Birds* vetted by an ornithologist, who would have removed the phantasmagorical blue thrush (979), and turned the moorhen (304), siskins (1079), and curlews (1140) into gallinule, chaffinches, and stone curlews'. I confess that I could not possibly have managed that menagerie myself; Arnott, of course, was an accomplished ornithologist. Halliwell's original plan was to deal with 'the "political" plays from the 420s, *Acharnians*, *Knights*, *Wasps*, and *Peace*' in the second instalment, and 'the comedies on more "cultural" themes, *Clouds*, *Women at the Thesmophoria*, and *Frogs*' in the third. In the event, the sequence of 'cultural' and 'political' volumes was recast in biblical form: 'the last shall be first and the first shall be last' (*Matthew* 20.16). Or, perhaps, vice versa. The format for each volume is, at any rate, consistent: each volume has a substantial introduction, with a bibliography and brief chronology; and each play has its own introduction, together with fourteen or so pages of explanatory notes. As a sample of Halliwell's translation, consider (for example) this taster from *Peace* (996–1,014):

*Blend all us Greeks,
As we once used to be,
In an essence of friendship, and mix our minds
In a milder spirit of sympathy.
Allow our market to teem with goods:
From Megara bring us heads of garlic,*

¹ *Aristophanes. Acharnians, Knights, Wasps, Peace. A Verse Translation with Introduction and Notes.* By Stephen Halliwell. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2022. Pp. civ + 359. Hardback £90, ISBN: 978-0-19-814995-8.

² G. Arnott, *G&R* 45 (1998), 226–7.

*Early cucumbers, apples, pomegranates,
 Fancy cloaks for slaves to wear.
 From Boiotian traders we'd like to see
 Geese, ducks, wood-pigeons, and wrens,
 As well as baskets of Kopaic eels.
 Then may we all crowd round these baskets
 And buying our food get into a jostle
 With Morychos, Teleas, Glauketes,
 And numerous other gluttons. And next
 May Melanthios come to the market too late,
 When the eels are all sold: let him ululate,
 Then sing a solo from his Medea,
 'I'm doomed, I'm doomed, now quite bereft
 Of a female embedded in beetroot'.*

The play's twelve pages of endnotes will provide users with concise but useful guidance on such matters as (for example) the culinary significance of a female embedded in beetroot.

There is, of course, more to Halliwell's scholarship than Aristophanes, and there is no denying that his new edition of pseudo-Longinus *On the Sublime* is an achievement on a truly monumental scale.³ The introduction runs to fifty-three pages covering: authorship and date; the structure and design of *On the Sublime*; the author as a critic and as a rival of Caecilius of Caleacte; the sublime and its sources; the psychology of creative inspiration; an overview ranging from *On the Sublime* to the modern sublime; and the text, with its regrettable incompleteness.⁴ What follows is fifty-nine pages of bibliographical abbreviations, sixty-two pages of text and facing translation, and 375 pages of commentary. I am particularly pleased to see that Halliwell has, so far as is feasible, done justice to the virtuoso sophistication of pseudo-Longinus' prose. To take the most immediately obvious example, the complex opening period (131 words in Greek, 156 words in Halliwell's translation) merits careful analysis:

When we were studying Caecilius' work on sublimity together, my dearest friend Postumius Florus Terentianus, it struck us, as you know, as falling well below its entire theme and utterly failing to grasp the crucial points, as well as providing readers with little benefit, which ought to be a writer's chief aim, since while there are two requirements of every technical work, the first to expound the nature of the subject, the second but more important to show how and by what means we ourselves might acquire the quality in question, Caecilius nevertheless tries to demonstrate by innumerable examples what sort of thing the sublime is, as if we did not know this, but somehow overlooked as unnecessary the question of how we might find the strength

³ *Pseudo-Longinus. On the Sublime*. Edited with an Introduction, Translation, and Commentary by Stephen Halliwell. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2022. Pp. cxxxii + 466. Hardback £175, ISBN: 978-0-19-289420-5.

⁴ For the emergent awareness and appreciation of *On Sublimity*, see M. Heath, 'Dionysius Longinus, *On Sublimity*', in S. Papaioannou, A. Serafim, and M. Edwards (eds.), *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Ancient Rhetoric*. Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2022.

to develop our own natures to a certain pitch of greatness, though perhaps we should praise him for his seriousness of purpose rather than blame him for his omissions.

Attentive readers will find many other examples of exquisitely crafted prose meriting close appreciation, but no one has yet persuaded me that Longinus deserves to be burdened with the ‘pseudo-’ prefix. Benjamin Weiske, in the preface to his ramshackle commentary, maintained that the author of *On Sublimity* was not Longinus, ‘but another man of superior genius and learning, who lived about the age of Augustus’ (1809, xxiv: *sed alium excellentioris ingenii et doctrinae hominem, qui Augusti fere vixerit aetate*)—an arbitrary postulate, since there is no evident reason to suppose that Weiske’s imaginary man of superior genius and learning belonged to the Augustan age.⁵ Friedrich Wolf, a far more distinguished and substantial scholar, recognized that ‘in his very diction and in the whole art of writing and philosophizing we see many traces of the age of Longinus, none of Augustus’ (1820, 526: *adeo in ipsa eius dictione totaque arte scribendi et philosophandi plura Longiniani aevi vestigia videre, nulla Augustet*).⁶ Wolf’s recognition of the difference between late antique and Augustan culture was well-grounded; Weiske’s imaginary genius was not. But these are matters to which I shall return at a later date.

The introduction to Seth Schein’s edition of *Iliad* Book 1 in the *Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics*⁷ series presents the reader with a mass of material to digest: (i) contexts, divided between poetic and historical contexts, and marked by a challenging density in the footnotes; (ii) the structure of the *Iliad* (observing, for example, that ‘the polar or reverse symmetry in Books 1–3 and 22–4 is analogous to the symmetrical geometric painted pottery of the eighth century’, p.11); (iii) Book 1 of the *Iliad*, covering the plan of Zeus, and Achilles’ mortality and honour; and (iv) the Olympian gods, and interactions between gods and humans. The longest section (v) covers meter (heavy and light syllables, the dactylic hexameter, prosodic freedom, and scansion), the Homeric language (literary language and the mixture of dialects; the evolution of the literary language; ‘some morphological features’ of Homeric Greek; and ‘notes on syntax’), and style (formulas, narrative, speeches, mythological allusion, and parataxis). In section (vi) there is the transmission of the text (manuscripts, scholia, and papyri), the proem, and book divisions and titles. There is a separate, very brief note on the text and apparatus. Finally, there are nineteen pages of Greek text and 118 pages of commentary. There is much to learn from Schein’s introduction and commentary, and much to admire, but it would do no harm to spend some less intensive time with Simon Pulleyn’s edition of *Iliad* Book 1, and to reflect on other possible angles of approach.⁸

⁵ Benjamin Weiske. *Dionysii Longini de Sublimitate Graece et Latine denuo recensuit et animadversionibus virorum doctorum aliisque subsidiis instruxit*. Lipsiae Sumtibus, Ioa. Aug. Glo. (Weigel, 1809), xxiv.

⁶ Friedrich August Wolf, ‘De Davidis Ruhnkenii celebri quodam reperto litterario’, in *Litterarische Analekten, vorzüglich für alte Literatur und Kunst, deren Geschichte und Methodik* (Berlin, bei G. C. Nauck, 1820), 515–26.

⁷ *Homer. Iliad Book 1*. By Seth L. Schein. Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2022. Pp. xiv + 242. Hardback £75, ISBN: 978-1-108-42008-2; paperback £19.99, ISBN: 978-1-10-841296-4.

⁸ *Homer. Iliad Book 1*. Edited with an introduction, translation, and commentary by Simon Pulleyn. Oxford University Press, 2000. Pp. xi + 304. Hardback, ISBN: 978-0-198-72186-2; paperback £40, ISBN: 978-0-198-72186-4.

David Whitehead gives us ‘six early compositions from an Athenian orator of pivotal importance. They deserve close attention, collectively as well as severally. To that end I provide here: a new translation (facing a new text) and a commentary on all matters that I feel competent to treat—vocabulary, idiom, rhetoric, law, history, *Realien*’ (vii).⁹ The orator in question is, of course, Isokrates (a.k.a. Isocrates), and Whitehead argues convincingly in the General Introduction that the compositions in question are genuine forensic speeches (and therefore surely *not* the product of an entirely ‘accidental *dikographos*’): ‘in sum: Isok. 16–21 are what they purport to be. They are all speeches written for, and delivered in, true-life forensic circumstances during the period of the Peloponnesian War and the signing of the King’s Peace. That... is the only view of them that makes sense’ (20). To pursue the matter further would require: three more prefatory pages; nine pages of conventions and abbreviations; fifty-four pages of general introduction to the first speech; a five-page preamble to the text; thirty-seven further pages of introduction to the first speech, with a meagre five pages of Greek text and facing English translation; and a forty-five-page commentary in fairly small print. This pattern will be repeated in the other five speeches. Aside from the 904 pages, there are two appendices (905–19); a thirty-three-page bibliography; a seventy-five-page index of passages cited; a select index of Greek (1,128–30); and a general index (1,131–42). Whitehead outstrips Halliwell’s monumentality.

A *Festschrift* may be a bundle of disparate contributions, or it may be a bundle of more-or-less cohesive contributions relevant to the academic honorand’s concerns. In this case the honorand is Anastasios Nikolaidis, and the theme of the *Festschrift* is *Plutarch’s Cities*.¹⁰ The *Festschrift* is introduced by the co-editors, Lucia Athanassaki and Francis B. Titchener; but is a sixteen-page introduction by the co-editors the most effective way to deliver eighteen disparate contributions? Are lengthy editorial summaries needed? Or would it not be more effective to allow each contributor to introduce his or her contribution, rather than leaving it to be pre-empted by the editors? Part I (‘Contemporary Cities: Travel, Sojourn, Autopsy, and Inspiration’) is the longest and most coherent section: the cities are Chaeronea (Ewen Bowie); Delphi (Philip Stadter); Rome (Paolo Desideri); sanctuaries (Joseph Geiger); and Athenian architecture, iconography, and topography in Plutarch’s *De Gloria Atheniensium* (Lucia Athanassaki). Part II (‘Cities of the Past: History, Politics, and Society’) begins with the stereotyping of Sparta and Athens in Herodotus, Thucydides, and Plutarch (Christopher Pelling), followed by ritual politics in Plutarch’s *Alcibiades* and other Athenian *Lives* (Athena Kavoulaki), the tensions between Alcibiades and the city (Timothy E. Duff), Phocion and Demetrius of Phalerum (Delfim Leão), Thebes (John Marincola), northern Greek cities (Katerina Panagopoulou), and Troy (Judith Mossman). Part III (‘Cities to Think With’) leads with city and self (Alexei V. Zadorojnyi) and with the use of a metaphor in Plutarch’s *Parallel Lives* (Aurelio Pérez Jiménez), followed by the place of the *polis* in Plutarch’s political thought (Geert Roskam), the ideal city, situated not on earth but in heaven (Luc Van der

⁹ *Isokrates. The Forensic Speeches (Nos. 16–21)*. Introduction, Text, Translation, and Commentary. By David Whitehead. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2022. Pp. xviii + 1142 (2 volume set). Hardback £150, ISBN: 978-1-009-21450-6.

¹⁰ *Plutarch’s Cities*. Edited by Lucia Athanassaki and Frances B. Titchener. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2022. Pp. xx + 378. Hardback £90, ISBN: 978-0-19-285991-4.

Stockt), and superstition, atheism, and the city (Tim Whitmarsh). Finally, in Part IV, Lucia Athanassaki's afterword foreshadows the future prospects of Plutarch's cities.

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Latin literature

As always, it is hard to do justice to the many intriguing books that came out over the past months. I will try to give an overview of at least a few of them, from Republican literature over two imperial 'Classics', the *Aeneid* and the *Fasti*, over Ps.-Quintilian's *Declamations* and Apuleius, fourth and fifth-century commentaries, all the way to a lesser-known work from the fifteenth century. Let us start, however, with an exciting volume on 'Roman Law and Latin Literature', edited by Ioannis Ziogas and Erica Bexley.¹ In their introduction, the two editors sketch out the relationship between law and literature, emphasizing the points of contact and the intricate relationship between the two. While the Law and Humanities movement, they argue, has been so far strongly focused on law, with literature playing an ancillary role, Ziogas and Bexley aim to redress that balance 'by showing how literature anticipates, imitates, supplants or complements law's role in constituting rules and norms' (3). The contributions in the volume cover a wide range of authors, from Naeivus, Plautus, and Terence to Cicero, Ovid, Seneca, and Lucan. With her discussion of the role Latin literature played in shaping Roman concepts of legality, in the absence of a codified constitution, Michèle Lowrie provides a very good starting point to the volume, one that a couple of other contributors keep referring back to. There is a chapter on the jurist Marcus Antistius Labeo by Mathijs Wibier, Nora Goldschmidt traces the emergence of the Foucauldian author function in the interaction between law and literature in third-century BC Rome, and John Oksanish argues that Cicero, in *De oratore* ('On the Orator'), adopts the theoretical and terminological frameworks of Roman property law to authorize the orator's power over various domains, a strategy also adopted by Vitruvius, to mention just a few of the topics covered. The concluding paper is a thought-provoking piece by Nandini Pandey, comparing Roman and American legal and literary practices around freedom, opportunity, and (in)equality.

The volume more than accomplishes its goals: all of the contributions make it very clear that a lot is to be gained from reading Latin texts with attention to their dialogue with law and legal vocabulary (as Ziogas himself has already demonstrated for Ovidian love poetry).² In particular, Erica Bexley shows for Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* ('Pumpkinification' of Claudius) and Thomas Biggs for Lucan's *Bellum Civile* ('The Civil War') that legal concepts – such as the emperor's judicial accountability for

¹ *Roman Law and Latin Literature*. By Ioannis Ziogas and Erica Bexley. London, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022. Pp. x + 308. 10 b/w illus. Hardback £95.00, ISBN: 978-1-35-027663-5.

² I. Ziogas, *Law and Love in Ovid. Courting Justice in the Age of Augustus* (Oxford, 2021).