

M. PAPATHOMOPOULOS, *Oppianus Apameensis: Cynegetica, Eutecnius Sophistes: Paraphrasis Metro Soluta*, München-Leipzig: Bibliotheca Teubneriana, K.G. Saur Verlag, 2003, 225 pp., ISBN 3-598-71256-1.

The *Cynegetica*, a didactic epic on hunting in four books of about 600 lines each, has undergone considerable reverses of fortune in the years since it was composed, sometime between 215 and 217 AD – the period after the Imperial tour of the province of Syria by the Emperor Caracalla, to whom it is dedicated, and before his assassination. Together with the *Halieutica*, a didactic epic on salt-water fishing in five books of some 700 lines each composed between 176 and 181 AD by the poet Oppian of Cilicia, it enjoyed considerable popularity in the Byzantine period, as attested by the large number of extant manuscripts for both of these works, 58 in the case of the *Halieutica* and 17 for the *Cynegetica*. Neither work has, however, enjoyed much popularity in the modern period. The *Cynegetica* is characterised by vivid descriptions of hunting techniques, dangerous animals, unusual animal behaviour, and frequent digressions on a wide range of themes including mythology, philosophy and natural science. Although the grammar is comparatively straightforward, the frequent use of rhetorical forms of expression and the use of rare and novel language which is reminiscent of the didactic epics of Nicander can make the *Cynegetica* a challenging read.

Modern editions of the *Cynegetica* include the 1813 edition by J.G Schneider, that by F. S. Lehrs from 1846, an edition by Max Miller from 1891 and, most importantly, that of Pierre Boudreaux published in 1908 and A.W. Mair's edition in the Loeb Classical Text series from 1928. The most recent genuine critical edition was that of Boudreaux¹⁷, since Mair published his work without

¹⁷ Pierre Boudreaux, *Oppian d'Apamée, La chasse*, Paris 1908.

an apparatus criticus. This is unfortunate, since Mair has made a number of changes to the text of Boudreaux which have merit, but has done so silently. This new edition by Papathomopoulos represents a genuine step forward for this work, which has been critically overlooked for close to a century.

Papathomopoulos has undertaken a fresh collation of the manuscripts, introducing codices that Boudreaux had not considered, while largely maintaining the stemma that Boudreaux produced. The resulting stemma is, as may be imagined, comparatively complex, though not so much so as to lose meaning. The manuscripts have been resolved into two classes with the sigla x and z, with class z being influenced by, but not dependent on, class x. It is worth noting that in his recent edition of the *Halieutica*¹⁸ Fajen avoided building a stemma entirely, producing families of related manuscripts of varying degrees of merit. The number of extant manuscripts is much greater in the case of the *Halieutica* than the *Cynegetica*, but, when presented with influence from the class x manuscripts on the class z manuscripts and subsequent influence from two representatives of z, namely M and L, on two subclasses of x, it is easy to imagine that it was tempting to favour the approach of Fajen. Nevertheless, the resulting text makes very good use of this stemma in its apparatus criticus, while resolving many of the inconsistencies and variant readings.

The edition of Boudreaux, while a landmark work, left behind a number of difficult issues and readings that are, with the benefit of further scholarship, hard to accept out of hand. Papathomopoulos has resolved many of these in his edition, in part by his decision to include a number of manuscripts which had not been recognised by Boudreaux, following the work of Tomás Silva Sánchez in *Sobre el texto de Opiano de Apamea*, Cádiz 2002, 29-58. A summary of the most routine mistakes resulting from systematic typographical errors found in each of the classes of text is provided in the introduction to the book,

¹⁸ Fritz Fajen, *Oppian, Haleutica: Der Fischfang*, Stuttgart 1999.

which allows the reader to quickly become acquainted with the quality and nature of the classes of manuscripts. The consistent nature of these errors justifies, in places, the decision to keep and expand upon the complex stemma and makes the apparatus criticus more meaningful to use as a result. This frees up the apparatus criticus to concern itself with the issues that pertain specifically to individual places in the text.

The text itself is clearly laid out. Despite the necessarily encyclopedic apparatus criticus, each page covers 20–25 lines of text, avoiding the situation of the page containing less text than apparatus. The sigla are clear and meaningful, and conjectures by authors are well documented. There is an index of names which, given the wealth of historic and mythological figures who are mentioned in this work, is a welcome addition, as well as an index of all the words, excluding δέ, καί and τε.

Another very useful inclusion by Papathomopoulos is the text of the prose paraphrase of the *Cynegetica* by the sophist Eutecnius, an author who had already been the subject of research by Papathomopulos¹⁹. Some of the more difficult and, in cases, possibly corrupt text can be more readily understood with recourse to this work. It is worthwhile to provide an example of this approach here: at *Cyn.* 1.253, in a description of how a horse is mated with its dam by concealing the smell of its own mother from it, the manuscripts read ὀδμήν ἡγήτειραν ἀμαλδῦναι φιλότητος “to conceal the smell that is a guide of love (i.e. for its dam)”. Mair correctly adopts this reading, but does so without comment. In contrast, Boudreaux adopts the conjecture of De Puy, who changes ἀμαλδῦναι, meaning ‘to conceal’, to ἀναλδῆναι, meaning ‘to encourage’, which means that we would understand ὀδμήν ἡγήτειραν to mean a smell which guides the stallion to the mare. While DePuy’s conjecture at first glance makes better sense in the context, as the reader already knows that the heads of the horses have been covered to

¹⁹ Manolis A. Papathomopoulos, *Anónymou Parafrasis eis ta Oppianou Halieutika*, Ioannina 1976.

mask their identity, and the scent plays an important part in the encouragement of a stallion to breed with a mare, the paraphrase shows us at 1.252-3 that in the time of Eutecnios the smell that is referred to was understood to conceal the identity of the horses and that the reading of the manuscript should therefore stand. As a result, the inclusion of the paraphrase in the same volume, of which the most recent critical edition was that by O. Tüselmann, *Die Paraphrase des Eutecnios zu Oppians Kynegetika*, Berlin 1900, is a welcome addition. It is unfortunate, though, that an index of words, such as the well laid-out one provided for the *Cynegetica*, is not also available for this work. As the language of the *Cynegetica* is rich in what are, apparently, novel expressions which an informed reader may wish to quickly reference, a similar index for the paraphrase would be a useful tool and, given the scope of the work in question, fairly brief in scope. That said, the numbering in the right-hand column which approximately reflects that of the *Cynegetica* itself, assists greatly in its use as a guide to deciphering any apparent inconsistencies in the text of that work.

The above mentioned textual question also provides an illustrative example of the quality of the apparatus criticus, as Papathomopoulos states that the reading appears in both classes of codex, cites and quotes the paraphrase and directs the reader to the relevant part of Boudreaux's work.

Papathomopoulos has provided us with an attractive new edition of a work that has fallen out of favour in recent years but was once, obviously, more commonly read. This is a particularly praiseworthy achievement, given the age and quality of the critical edition that was previously available for the potential reader or researcher. Hopefully this will act as a starting point for further research into this work which provides such an important link between the Epic literature of the classical period and the Greek of the post-Imperial period.

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