

CHRISTOS TSAGALIS, *Early Greek Epic: Language, Interpretation, Performance*, Trends in Classics – Supplementary Volumes 138, Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter, 2023, xxix+637pp., €144.95, ISBN 978-3-11-099372-1.

This collection of twenty papers published between 2005 and 2020 cannot be taken separately from the books by Professor Tsagalis (henceforth, T.) which appeared in print during the same period: *The Oral Palimpsest: Exploring Intertextuality in the Homeric Epics* (Washington, DC 2008), *From Listeners to Viewers: Space in the Iliad* (Washington, DC 2012), and *Early Greek Epic Fragments* (Berlin-Boston 2017-). Taken together with the collection under review, these publications constitute a remarkable body of scholarship, all of it dedicated to Greek epic tradition.

The author's Introduction starts with an account of the developments that took place in the study of early Greek epic in recent decades, among them the new assessment of the relationship between the two leading trends in the twentieth-century Homeric scholarship, Neoanalysis and Oral Theory; the more systematic approach to the Epic Cycle; the fruitful use of the methods of narratology and cognitive theory; the deeper understanding of performance as the main medium through which epic poetry was communicated to the public. All these developments are not only discussed in the present collection but are also productively applied and taken further. This modern turn, however, is far from replacing the traditional methods of philological analysis: rather, they exist side-by-side, helping to create a more nuanced picture of the field. Such combination of the old and the new is a signal characteristic of the 21st-century Homeric scholarship, of which the author of the book under review is one of the most authentic representatives.

The collection is divided into four thematic sections: Homer (chapters 1-9), Hesiod (chapters 10-11), The Epic Cycle (chapters 12-16), The Performance of Epic (chapters 17-20). Needless to say, rather more often than not the division proves somewhat conventional, for the topics of different sections are often intertwined to create a rich and variegated picture of early Greek epic as a whole. Still, each section has a leitmotif of its own that reflects both the scholarly trends with which its topic is mainly associated in the contemporary scholarship and the author's own research interests. In the case of Homer, such a leitmotif is unquestionably the issue of intertextuality.

"Allusion is not a side-effect or secondary feature of Homeric storytelling," T. writes in the Introduction (p. XXII). "It lies at the heart of Homeric compositional technique and defines it pervasively. It is the trademark of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*." Four of the nine papers constituting the Homer section are dedicated to this topic, which is justly considered by T. as instrumental in superseding the division between Neoanalysis and Oral Theory. Side-by-side with the programmatic "Towards an Oral, Intertextual Neoanalysis" (2012), which opens the collection, I find "De-Authorizing the Epic Cycle: Odysseus' False Tale to Eumaeus (*Od.* 14.199-359)" (2012), especially representative of this approach. The question that T. addresses

in this study is whether the false tales that Odysseus relates in the second half of the poem could be considered as constituting “an extensive epic *Zitat*, pointing to a group of epic versions of Odysseus’ return, which we may designate by the term *alternative Odyssey*” (p. 163). He meticulously examines both the typical, context-free features (“motifs”) of the tales in question and their context-bound elements, and arrives at the conclusion that the Homeric *Odyssey* transcends the real-world boundaries of space and time characteristic of the earlier tradition, thus creating “a Panhellenic master myth for Odysseus’ return” (p. 206).

Closely associated with intertextuality is T.’s systematic application of the models of spatial analysis. It is best represented in “Epic Space Revisited: Narrative and Intertext in the Episode between Diomedes and Glaucus (*Il* 6.119-236)” (2010). By combining cognitive theory and narratology, the author draws a distinction between “story space”, “embedded story space”, and “intertextual space”. The latter is reconstructed “through the possible interconnections between the story and/or embedded story space of a given song-tradition with other song-traditions” (p. 84). Similar “hypertextual links between various oral traditions” (p. 50) are also created by the catalogues which, as is shown in “The Dynamic Hypertext: Lists and Catalogues in the Homeric Epics” (2010), generate a multilayer inter-traditional framework in the minds of the audience.

In approaching Hesiod, T. focuses on the generic identity of the poems of the Hesiodic Corpus as expressed not only in their poetological apparatus but even in their sonic texture. The former comes to the fore in “Poetry and Poetics in the Hesiodic Corpus” (2009). Reading the *Theogony* and *Works and Days* in poetological terms, T. makes the argument for Hesiod’s acute generic awareness. In the second paper of this section, “Soundplay in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*” (2017), he exhibits the poem’s extraordinary richness in sophisticated soundplay, attributing it to the fact that, being a generic fusion of *ehoie*-poetry and catalogue-poetry, the *Catalogue of Women* seeks to find its own style (p. 279).

The section dedicated to the Epic Cycle bring us back to the issue of intertextuality. In “*γυναιῶν ἔνεκα δῶρων*: Interformularity and Intertraditionality in Theban and Homeric Epic” (2014), T. reinstates his main methodological stance that “meaningful allusion of an intertextual nature is possible within the universe of oral poetry” (p. 313), making a case for a quotation from the lost Theban Cycle being made twice in the Homeric *Odyssey*. The next chapter, “*Cypria* fr. 19 (*PEG, GEF*): A Reconsideration’ (2012) deals with the much more uncontentious issue of motif transference. By analysing the extant evidence concerning the episode of Achilles’ hiding at Scyros on the eve of the Trojan War and its reflections in the *Iliad*, T. expertly navigates between the variants of the oral *Cypria* and the way they are exploited in the Homeric *Iliad*. Finally, the two papers that conclude this section, “*Telegony*” (2015) and “Verses attributed to the *Telegony*” (2014), offer a comprehensive reassessment of the evidence relating to this Cyclic poem.

The series of four chapters forming the last section (all of them published in 2018), is dedicated to the performance of epic. The section is nothing less

than a tour de force. Closely monitoring the performance context of epic recitals from Homer's *aoidoi* to the rhapsodes of the Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic, and Imperial periods all over the Greek world, it forms a self-contained study of high scholarly value which will certainly serve as an indispensable source to be consulted by everyone interested in Greek epic poetry and its performance.

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RAFAEL J. GALLÉ CEJUDO, *Elegíacos helenísticos*, Introducción, edición y traducción, Alma Mater, Colección de autores Griegos y Latinos, Madrid: CSIC, 2021, xc+838 pp., ISBN 978-84-00-10890-8.

La presente edición, debida a Rafael J. Gallé Cejudo, catedrático de Filología Griega de la Universidad de Cádiz (España), es el fruto de más de quince años de trabajo dedicados al estudio de la elegía helenística (cf. las referencias a sus trabajos previos recogidas en las pp. L y LXVI-LXVII). Esta aquilatada experiencia se traduce en las diversas virtudes que adornan la obra: una voz autorizada, que domina la bibliografía sobre la elegía helenística y sabe seleccionar la información precisa para que el lector pueda comprender cada testimonio y fragmento; un texto establecido con un criterio editorial coherente, y una traducción precisa.

En la introducción general (pp. XV-XC), el autor ofrece una panorámica clara del género elegíaco en la época helenística. Comienza (pp. XV-XXII) con un rápido repaso de los estudios sobre el tema, prestando la atención debida a los de la tradición hispánica. A continuación resume la diversidad temática y los contextos de presentación de la elegía arcaica, con el fin de ayudar a la adecuada comprensión de la recuperación y adaptación del género en la época helenística. Al respecto, Gallé cuestiona ideas asentadas, como la supuesta ausencia de compromiso de la nueva poesía, que según muchos habría estado alejada de los intereses comunitarios, o aquella otra que defiende que donde hay experimentación literaria y metaliterariedad no existe subjetividad, lo cual ha permitido durante mucho tiempo enfrentar la elegía helenística, pretendidamente objetiva, a la latina, subjetiva. Aborda después (pp. XXII-XXX) el funcionamiento de los mitos en el género, cuyo análisis se ve dificultado por la fragmentariedad del material conservado y los problemas de su interpretación; por ejemplo, un título de tema mitológico no siempre comporta contenidos mitológicos (como pasa con *Musas*, de Alejandro de Etolia), mientras que, como contrapartida, estos contenidos pueden aparecer en obras cuyo título no hace sospechar su presencia, como *Leonción*, de Hermesianacte. En general, se constata en la elegía de la época un gusto por la versión mítica más novedosa y alejada de la tradición, que cumple una función paradigmática y ejemplarizante,