

furnishing a reliable *status quaestionis* and adopting the most plausible solutions which had been previously suggested.

The same methodological accuracy lies at the heart of S. Perrone's study, which provides an inventory of the *scholia vetera in Ranas* variously related to religious issues (first of all the figure of Dionysus in all its theological-cultic implications and the Eleusinian Mysteries). The text of the scholia, strictly depending on the Groningen editions, is accompanied by a precise translation and a useful commentary. The Introduction, which mainly gives an account of the thematic criteria adopted in the selection of the scholiastic materials, opens with a section tackling the topic 'Aristophanes and religion' within the framework of the much debated *querelle* about Old Comedy's 'seriousness' (which Perrone reconstructs, however, with a certain amount of conceptual naivety). Rightly aware of the dense cultural stratification which is reflected in each scholiastic notation, Perrone decides wisely not to give an apodeictic and univocal response to the interesting question posed on p. 122 ('How did the first interpreters of Aristophanes react to his disrespectful representation of religion?'), but at the same time she appropriately underlines that among the first and strongest supporters of Aristophanes' seriousness – and of an 'integralist' kind of seriousness – one should include Aristarchus, for many of his textual suggestions and exegetical solutions really seem to aim at rescuing religious 'orthodoxy' from the dangerous transgressions enacted by comic mockery.

Undoubtedly there is still much to be done, from the most diverse points of view, in the investigation of the precious scholiastic materials concerning Aristophanes, but this volume, which besides offering many answers also prompts new and interesting questions, will undoubtedly provide a helpful guide to anyone who wants to explore confidently an area that, though a minefield, is arousing ever-increasing scholarly interest.

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PONTANI (F.) *Sguardi su Ulisse. La tradizione esegetica greca all'Odissea*. (Sussidi eruditi 63). Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2005. Pp. 600, plates. €68. 9788884981929.

This work analyzes the exegesis of the *Odyssey* from antiquity to modern editions of *scholia* and is divided into six chapters. Ch.1 is dedicated to ancient exegesis, providing a good overview of Homeric criticism from Theagenes of Rhegium (sixth century BC) until the erudite collections of the sixth century AD. Ch.2 analyzes papyri containing Odyssean exegesis (marginal annotations, *hypotheses*, glossaries, the so-called *Mythographus Homericus*, commentaries). Byzantine exegesis is analysed in ch.3, which is organized chronologically (sixth to eighth, ninth to tenth, eleventh to

twelfth centuries, thirteenth century, 1261-1350). Within each section Pontani reviews the cultural background, the main scholars dealing with Homer (e.g. Psellus, Tzetzes, Eustathius), the main products (e.g. the *Etymologica*, *Suidas*, the different groups of *scholia*: exegetical, h and V), and the Byzantine manuscripts containing *scholia* on the *Odyssey*. Each manuscript is given a palaeographical and historical description; then examples of its *scholia* are provided to assess its value within the scholiastic tradition.

Ch.4 on humanism is also structured chronologically (1350-1450, 1450-1500, 1500-1550) and geographically, with an obvious focus on Florence. For each section a general introduction on the cultural background of each period is followed by the analysis of contemporary manuscripts, which in the longest section (4.2, on the 'full' Italian humanism) are ordered according to the different scholars ('i maestri', e.g. Theodorus Gaza, Demetrius Chalcondyles, Angelus Politianus, Constantine Lascaris) and scribes ('i copisti', e.g. John Scutariota, Demetrius Moschus) who wrote them, followed by a final group of anonymous manuscripts.

Ch.5 reviews modern editions of the *scholia* on the *Odyssey* (from 1550 to 1890). In ch.6 P. analyzes the relationship between these manuscripts and concludes that they all derive from an archetype not older than the ninth century. Tables of some manuscripts, indices of manuscripts and incunabula, names, *scholia* and Homeric passages and rare Greek terms close the volume.

P.'s work is a thorough piece of philology, scholarship and patience; its main merit is to provide a complete, reliable and clear description of the manuscripts containing *scholia* on the *Odyssey*.

The two chapters dealing with manuscripts (3 and 4) are very aptly preceded by chapters tracing the history of Homeric exegesis back to ancient times. This is important because *scholia*, by default transmitted in 'later' sources like the medieval manuscripts, have a long story behind them. Ancient exegesis is linked to Byzantine and humanistic scholarship in a continuum, which is exactly what makes *scholia* a valuable source for ancient, especially Hellenistic, scholarship. The effort of placing medieval and humanistic manuscripts into a context of exegetical tradition is therefore a very intelligent operation, even though the rather discursive review of ancient exegesis in ch.1 might seem at first unrelated to the following catalogue of Byzantine and humanistic manuscripts.

P.'s work is an excellent study of the manuscripts containing *scholia* on the *Odyssey*; it is not, however, a study of what ancient, medieval and humanistic scholars thought and wrote about the *Odyssey* or Odysseus. Thus the title, *Sguardi su Ulisse* ('Glances upon Odysseus'), may be a bit misleading by suggesting that the book is about the exegesis and the reception of Odysseus through the centuries. P.'s book is not about the content but about the history of ancient exegesis and is thus a counterpart (for the *Odyssey*) of Erbse, *Beiträge zur Überlieferung der Iliasscholien* (1960).

The only limitation of this work is that P. does not discuss the major issue concerning the *Odyssey scholia*: the so-called *Viermännerkommentar* (VMK), the commentary of Didymus, Aristonicus, Herodian and Nicanor, gathering Aristarchean scholarship on Homer. Its existence seems certain for the *Iliad scholia*, and the *communis opinio* is that the same or a very similar work should have also existed for the *Odyssey*. This claim, however, has never been proved and this volume would have been the right place to discuss it. Personally, I have often doubted that a VMK existed for the *Odyssey*: its *scholia* are different in *Wortlaut* from those of the *Iliad* and there are not many overlaps between the *Odyssey scholia* and other works depending on the VMK such as the *Etymologica*. One explanation might be that the scholiastic tradition of the *Odyssey* is more complicated and lacks a manuscript like the *Venetus A*; still, this question, central for preparing an edition of the *Odyssey scholia*, should have been discussed in this volume and not simply hinted at (96-7, 148-50).

These remarks, however, do not diminish the value of this work, which is the best survey of *Odyssey* manuscripts and a thorough and scholarly introduction to the edition of the *Odyssey scholia* by Pontani, whose first volume has just appeared (*Scholia graeca in Odysseam*, vol. I, *Scholia ad libros α-β* (Roma 2007)).

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DICKEY (E.) *Ancient Greek Scholarship. A Guide to Finding, Reading, and Understanding Scholia, Commentaries, Lexica, and Grammatical Treatises; from their Beginnings to the Byzantine Period*. Oxford UP, 2007. Pp. xvii + 345. £45, 9780195312928 (hbk); £14.99, 9780195312935 (pbk).

Everyone working with Greek has at least once experienced the difficulties of interpreting a gloss in Hesychius, knowing where to find scholia and grammatical treatises, and making sense of the succinct style that this kind of literature displays. Eleanor Dickey's book focuses on the less accessible works of ancient scholarship with the aim of making them more user-friendly and available to a wider audience. The book is primarily intended for students, but the amount of useful information it contains renders it a precious aid for all those interested in Greek literature and language.

D.'s aim is two-fold: 'to explain what ancient scholarship exists and where to find it' and 'to help readers to acquire the facility in scholarly Greek necessary to use that material'. In keeping with these goals, the book is divided into two sections. The first part examines scholarly works devoted to ancient authors, as well as general lexica and grammatical treatises. Because D.'s intended readership is students, the works are arranged by thematic areas rather than chronology. Initial scepticism towards this choice will be dispelled by the consid-

eration that this is a *guide* to the meanders of Greek scholarship, rather than a historical account. For those unaccustomed to the topic it makes sense to start from poetry, and first tackle the work of authors who were made the object of particular attention (hence, the poetry section begins with Homer, followed by Aristophanes and Euripides). Here one finds anything of linguistic and philological importance, as well as an essential but in-depth commentary dealing with the typology of the texts and the problems involved in their use. Comprehensive references guide the reader in the pursuit of further resources, which can be found in the annotated bibliography at the end of the volume, a mine of information on authors, abbreviations and useful literature. Given D.'s customary sombre manner, expressions such as 'clear and convincing' or 'important study' are as enthusiastic as the author's style gets; conversely, it is easy to see what one should *not* use ('unreliable' and 'inadequate' being two frequent signals).

The second, more extensive part of the volume consists of an introduction to scholarly Greek. Ch.4 deals with the conventions and characteristics of scholarly writing and addresses questions such as: How are lemmata introduced in scholia? How are definitions given? What are the linguistic peculiarities of the post-classical language employed in these works? A useful part is that tackling the specialist terms and typographical conventions that one encounters in such literature: for instance, τὸ ἐξῆς ('the sequence in which words are to be taken'), ὄτι (used redundantly at the beginning of scholia), or the horizontal bar placed over letters to indicate that they are not to be read as a whole word. After all these stylistic and grammatical points have been outlined, D. invites her readers to test what they have learned with the exercises of Ch.5, by presenting a selection of extracts from a wide range of scholarly literature. The key point here is not only learning how to translate scholarly Greek (and differentiate between Hesychius' almost obscure conciseness and the lengthier style of commentaries), but how to decide what is relevant for the meaning, and how to supply the missing information correctly. The two parts of the book complement each other in providing an accessible initiation to the issues involved with ancient scholarship – especially in an age in which electronic texts and databases contribute to making Classicists increasingly unaware of the textual difficulties that lie behind mainstream editions.

A practical, down-to-earth approach to problems is the hallmark of D.'s style, and a genuine love for Classics and its students permeates every page of this book. After reading it, I both feel more knowledgeable about ancient scholarship and glad that such an intricate subject could be presented in such an interesting way. The book is not just an indispensable tool: it is, above all, a great pleasure to read. I warmly recommend it to both students and experts.

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