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Review

Reviewed Work(s): *The Emperor in the Roman World (31 BC-AD 337)* by Fergus Millar

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ment, “. . . through which Pandora, as difference, is rejected as evil but is simultaneously accepted as the property and imitation of man. The movement parallels that of the *imitation* which opens false and crooked discourse, but which, when perfect (i.e. without difference) can also open the discourse of truth” (p. 113). We have come full circle: the bringing of a bride into the house by a man is seen to be analogous to Hesiod’s original assertion of the possibility of the Muses speaking the truth “as it is.”

In a brief concluding chapter P. attempts, on the whole successfully, to pull together the material presented in the previous chapters, adding to it an analysis of the two kinds of *Eris*. The discussion centers on the aspects of imitation which have been exemplified in the preceding discussion. It is suggested that the paradoxes inherent in the *logos* of the Muses, in Pandora, and in the figure of *Eris* tend to dissolve the polarities around which Hesiod orders his text. These three narratives “. . . concern three forms of strategies of imitation: language as imitation of things as they are, culture as imitation of nature, and competition as imitation of the other. . . .” (p. 134). According to P., it is the nature of imitation itself which causes the blurring of polarities and Hesiod’s attempt to control this phenomenon is crucial to his “metaphysics of poetry.” A brief appendix follows in which P. offers some tentative suggestions about the nature of the composition of the Hesiodic poems.

I have given a rather full summary of Professor Pucci’s book because the close argumentation and lengthy concatenations of thought which characterize his presentation cannot be briefly paraphrased. In fact, though these qualities are the result of an admirably rigorous approach to the poems, they also make very slow reading and at times lead to obscurity. Likewise, the prominence of P.’s theoretical model occasionally results in jargon which is not defined as clearly as it might be for the uninitiated (e.g., “polysemies,” p. 2; “deturning,” p. 67). But these are really problems of presentation: a more serious flaw in the book is P.’s failure to define adequately the nature and purpose of his analysis. Hesiod’s poems are not approached from a literary point of view, as P. himself states (albeit implicitly; see pp. 103-4); rather, it is suggested that “. . . the reader may recognize the more precise arguments for a theory of languages and text as being derived from the work of Jacques Derrida” (p. 4). Does this mean that Hesiod’s poems will be made the basis for the exposition of such a theory? If so, then one misses in P.’s conclusion some kind of summary of the theory as illustrated from the text. If, on the other hand (and this seems closer to what the arguments actually produce), the theoretical model is the basis for an explication of Hesiod’s poetry from some point of view which is not strictly literary, then a clearer statement of that point of view is necessary.

These reservations notwithstanding, there is much to admire in Professor Pucci’s work. The paradoxes which he sees are real and worthy of close attention, and the conclusions which he reaches about the role of imitation in Hesiod’s poems contribute to our knowledge of a central preoccupation of later Greek thought.

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*The Emperor in the Roman World (31 BC - AD 337)*. By FERGUS MILLAR. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977. Pp. xvi + 656, plus 1 fold-out chart.

Millar’s massive book has a dual purpose: (1) to define, describe and exemplify a certain type of imperial activity, and (2) to argue that this type of activity is so important in understanding the nature of the emperor’s role in the empire that it virtually defines

the emperor. The activity in question may be broadly defined as responding to inquiries and requests—petitions, embassies, letters and so forth—coming from every conceivable type of ‘constituent’: it is a passive role, with the initiative in the hands of the subjects. In my judgment, the first of these aims is successfully realized, the second not.

The bulk of the work is in fact descriptive, if that is the right word for what is mostly an accumulation. Millar discusses the emperor’s resources and physical setting (Chapter II), the people who surrounded him (Chapter III), the imperial wealth (Chapter IV), the actual working of the emperor and his circle (Chapter V) and the relationship of the emperor to various groups in the empire: the senatorial and equestrian orders (Chapter VI), cities and other collective bodies (Chapter VII), private persons in general (Chapter VIII), and the Christian church (Chapter IX). Millar describes the personal character of the giving of justice, of the ‘administration’, of the emperor’s finances, and of the whole network of relationships within the ruling classes of Roman society. There is a wealth of material drawn from every sort of source—historians, orators, philosophers, church fathers, inscriptions, papyri and much more. No review can hope to do justice to the prodigious learning displayed here or to the range of questions treated. The emperor’s relationships to his subjects in this sort of direct contact are convincingly characterized and extensively illustrated.

The accumulative method, however, is numbing. The reader has no sense that the material is so ordered as to lead him from ignorance to an ordered understanding; and brief dips into the book are more rewarding than continuous reading. Millar’s method is anecdotal rather than analytic, and though he pays lip service to the unequal value of different sources, he rarely allows it to interfere with his using sources as though all were created equal. Much more damaging, though, is the avoidance of any inquiry into the possible limits of the significance of the patterns exemplified in all these stories. The sources are mostly from the Greek part of the empire (as Millar points out)—so much so, that the title might well have been *The Emperor in the Greek World*. Since Millar has in practice if not theory elevated the principle of sticking to the evidence into a dogma that whatever is not explicitly attested did not exist, one might be led to wonder if the pattern of relations described was not limited to the Greek part of the empire.

That would not be the right conclusion, I think. But it is very likely that the character of the Greek sources blows this kind of thing all out of proportion from Hellenistic habit and from self-interest. It was unmistakably in the interests of subjects—the wealthier ones at least—that the emperor Millar describes be the reality. In other words, what Millar gives us is not a picture of the emperor but rather of the ideal image of the emperor as the ruling groups wanted him (and, to a degree, actually saw him): an image of an image, in sum. This image is a very important one, of course, for the expectations of the circles closest to him certainly affected how the emperor behaved to them.

The logical conclusion of reading Millar, however, would be to be led to believe that those who did not get personal access to the emperor in one of the ways described must perforce not have been governed. And indeed Millar writes (p. 271), “there is not the slightest evidence to suggest that he left behind him in the city [i.e. Rome] any central administration of his own with which he could maintain contact.” From the viewpoint of the aristocracy this may well have been true in practice; but is one really to suppose that the entire well-attested administration of the provinces, the accounting division in particular, was headless in this way? Naphtali Lewis (*BASP* 13 [1976] 161-63) has adduced good reasons to consider Millar’s position erroneous and to think that a largely unseen (to us) staff did most of the work of governing, no matter what the emperor’s character. To think otherwise is to suppose Byzantine bureaucracy to have come from nothing. This kind of problem arises constantly in this book but is never squarely addressed.

Fergus Millar has given us a comprehensive portrait of the ideal emperor as dispenser of justice and largesse to the ruling classes; this ideal reflects certain aspects of reality. But the claim that this fragment of the whole is its principal part seems to me based on uncritical method and a failure to ask the right questions. Every student of the ancient world will need to read this book, think about it and learn from it; but every reader must also be wary of what the author does with his learning.

ROGER S. BAGNALL

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*A Field Guide to Greek Metre*. By CARLO CARLUCCI. Privately printed: available on application from the Department of Classics, Dwinelle Hall, University of California at Berkeley.

It has long been obvious that the study of Greek metre urgently needed a radically new approach. In this book Carlucci provides it. He has abandoned the pretentious dogma built up over the nomenclature of the longer cola, and returned again to simple fundamentals, to the individual metra and the separate ethos that each possesses. Indeed the reviewer can honestly say that this is one of the most simple and most fundamental books he has ever read. Carlucci's treatment of the so-called irrational spondee places this annoying phenomenon firmly where it belongs. There is a brief but memorable depiction of marching anapaests, and late in the book there is to be found an illuminating insight into the origins of the trochaic trimeter. Carlucci's starkly graphic account of aeolic cola is a fine example of his ability to encapsulate in a single page everything essential that needs to be said about the various metrical forms from which lines and stanzas are built up. Further detailed discussion in a review of this length is hardly possible in a field where professional disagreements are rife.

If there are criticisms to be made, they would be these: Carlucci completely ignores the status differences between the choriambic dimeters type A and type B, and he never touches on the deep emotional impact that ancient poets could produce by the affecting spectacle of an ionic suffering anacalasis, i.e. the so-called anacreontic, itself hardly more, as the Oxford school of metricians have speculated, than an acephalous choriamb + iamb. + anceps. All in all however this book fully justifies the author's claim to be sweeping away the outmoded approach of Wilamowitz's *Griechische Verskunst* and its modern derivatives, and indeed one may feel that the endorsement of Carlucci's work by the Chairman of his Department at Berkeley, printed on the cover, errs if anything by expressing enthusiasm in too muted a form.

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*Tibull und Delia. Erster Teil. Tibulls Elegie 1,1*. By WALTER WIMMEL. Hermes Einzelschriften 37 (Wiesbaden, 1976).

Wimmel's monograph consists of a 4-page preface, a 113-page analysis of Tibullus 1.1, and 7 pages of indices (names and passages cited). The author states at the outset (p. ix) that he is giving special consideration to Tibullus's first elegy because he could not fit it in where it belonged, with the plan of his earlier book *Der frühe Tibull*. He also