

CRATINUS

BAKOLA (E.) *Cratinus and the Art of Comedy*. Pp. xiv + 380. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. Cased, £65. ISBN: 978-0-19-956935-9. doi:10.1017/S0009840X11000862

This is a book about which all students of ancient comedy should be excited. B. has given us the first volume dedicated to Cratinus since J.T.M.F. Pieters's *Cratinus* (1946), and in ushering Cratinus into the twenty-first century she admirably brings out Cratinus' individuality against the more familiar Aristophanic background. What emerges is an image of the artist working within a recognisable comic idiom while putting a distinctive twist on that conventionality, much as Aeschylus stands in relation to Sophocles. B.'s book will inevitably be paired with I.C. Storey's *Eupolis Poet of Old Comedy* (2003), and although the two are very different in scope and intention, they combine to give us a much clearer vision of Old Comedy beyond Aristophanes.

B. does not attempt to deal with all Cratinus' fragments, nor does she spend much time reconstructing plots. Rather, her thematic approach keeps her returning to the best preserved and attested plays, especially the *Dionysalexandros*, in order to ferret out different aspects of Cratinus' style. While some of the topics she traces are predictable, such as Cratinus' persona (frequently discussed in recent work on his *Pytine*) and his relationship to tragedy, others come as welcome surprises, such as an entire chapter on Cratinus and satyr drama.

After a brief introduction, the opening chapter deals with Cratinus' persona and artistic voice. B. is particularly deft at bringing out ways in which Cratinus speaks through individual elements of his comedies, such as the parodos, parabasis and exodos. She shows how the image of the Dionysiac, inebriated, free-flowing and inspired poet pervades more of Cratinus' surviving corpus than we might have suspected. An important result of this is that the competitive business of Athenian comedy seems to have encouraged the major players to adopt authorial postures in order to claim and defend oppositional poetic turf: the familiar image of Aristophanes as sophisticated craftsman needs to be understood less as biographical reality or as the result of historical pressures than as a calculated response to Cratinus' Dionysiac-Archilochean-Aeschylean voice and Eupolis' posturing as teacher of the *polis*. (These competitive strategies are the central topic of B.'s recent article 'The Drunk, the Reformer and the Teacher', *CCJ* 54 [2008], 1–29.) Even though B. makes this point convincingly, some may still find it difficult to accept her more daring argument that *Frogs* represents a 'radical redefinition' of Aristophanes' stance and an adoption of some of the Dionysiac and Aeschylean aspects of Cratinus' stage persona (p. 70).

In the second chapter, which deals with Cratinus' relationship to satyr drama and focusses on *Dionysalexandros*, B. shows how many features must have looked and felt like elements of a satyr play (chorus of satyrs, the satyrs' estrangement from Dionysus, etc.) and goes on to discuss the relationship between the two genres. Given the formal structure of the dramatic festivals, no one in the audience would have thought that this play *was* a satyr drama, but B. provides many helpful comments on how creatively Cratinus played around the fault line between comedy and satyr drama. Although she does mention such connections in other plays by Cratinus as well as in a few passages from Aristophanes, B. concludes '*Dionysalexandros* is unique, as it contains the most sustained engagement with satyr play in surviving comedy' (p. 102). Such exceptionalism simultaneously

underlines the importance of this play and circumscribes the implications of its generic encroachment.

The third chapter treats Cratinus' relationship to tragedy and is something of a mixed bag. Most positively, B. takes the truism about Cratinus' interest in Aeschylean tragedy and convincingly demonstrates how Cratinus draws upon Aeschylus in a variety of plays and dramatic contexts. Throughout she presents keen observations about Cratinus' use of metre and stylistic register, and her discussion of what Cratinus did with the suppliant motif as a plot template and the impact such a typically tragic scenario might have had on the comic stage is particularly enjoyable. With certain aspects of *Drapetides*, however, B.'s analysis stumbles, especially in her decision not to discuss fr. 62 K–A (aside from p. 147 n. 93 about the dating of the play), which mentions Lampon and thus provides a critical titbit of social contextualisation. Cratinus' teasing of Pericles' close associate does not necessarily unlock the mysteries of this play, nor does it necessarily undermine any of B.'s arguments; it would have been enlightening, nevertheless, to hear how she would respond to the long-standing interpretation that the most likely context for mocking Lampon was Pericles' plan for the foundation of Thurii. Such a line would fit well with B.'s discussion of *Dionysalexandros* in the following chapter, since it would provide an obvious set of political associations for a mythical tale about Theseus. Pieters treated both plays in a chapter devoted to Cratinus and Pericles, stating that *Drapetides*' chorus of Runaways 'semblent avoir représenté les compagnons de Lampon, partisans de Périclès, désertés de l'expédition à cause de la situation politique d'Athènes' (op. cit. p. 208). Perhaps this view lies behind B.'s argument that because fr. 68 K–A refers to a military bed (*stibas*) the titular Runaways were probably 'a group of Athenians who did not want to go to battle' (p. 156). B.'s final thoughts on *Drapetides* are bold too in concluding that the play 'may have invited the Athenians to see what they normally perceived as patriotic self-eulogy in an entirely new light, and eventually laugh at their own pretensions' (p. 157).

With the fourth chapter, 'Myth, Politics, and Drama', B. is back on track and delivers a convincing and tightly-argued analysis of Cratinus' use of political allegory. She shows that *Dionysalexandros* was no simple *roman-à-clef* in which Dionysus always and everywhere stands in for Pericles. Rather, the mythical burlesque holds together on its own and the political dimension is activated at various points. This is a very important argument for our understanding of Cratinus, since it keeps him squarely in the camp of the dramatic artists rather than letting him slip into the role of a political commentator who happened to use a theatrical medium. Although most space is given to *Dionysalexandros*, B. draws several other plays into her analysis of Cratinus' penchant for 'multi-layered composition'.

Chapter 5 is a miscellaneous discussion of various aspects of production and staging. B. manages to collect and analyse an impressive number of clues about how Cratinus used and created dramatic space, manipulated props, scenery and costumes, and brought on stage personified ideas and themes (such as 'drunkenness' in *Pytine*). While few will be convinced by her evaluation of Dionysus in *Dionysalexandros* as combining aspects of Van Gennep's model of initiation, the *pharmakos* and the purificatory *Dios kôidion* (pp. 261–72), there is much of great value in this chapter.

While Cratinus is well worth studying on his own, many will want to know how he compares with Aristophanes. Although this is not a major preoccupation of the present volume, since B. prefers to dwell on 'the cultural phenomenon that was Cratinus' (p. 10), it can be deduced that B.'s Cratinus is no 'Aristophanes

dimidiatus’, as Storey described Eupolis (op. cit., p. 376), and is therefore more than a typical representative of Old Comedy. That is to say, while B.’s Cratinus was indeed a product of a particular pre-Aristophanic era within the Athenian theatrical tradition, he also managed, at least at times, to set himself above his rivals.

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ANCIENT HISTORIOGRAPHY

PITCHER (L.) *Writing Ancient History. An Introduction to Classical Historiography.* (Library of Classical Studies 1.) Pp. x + 275. London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2009. Paper, £15.99 (Cased, £45). ISBN: 978-1-84511-958-4 (978-1-84511-957-7 hbk).

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Designed as an introduction to Greco-Roman historiography for undergraduate students, this book aims to highlight the specific conditions that influence our understanding of ancient historical works. As such, P. eschews a chronological approach to historiography and concentrates on discrete issues concerning the production, transmission and interpretation of historical texts. Not only does the book thoroughly succeed in its goal, but it does so with an engaging prose style. Even the most jaded undergraduate reader would have a hard time finding this lively text dull. For example, P. describes the elder Seneca as ‘surprised by death with his historiographic breeches unfastened’ because his untimely demise left his historical writings incomplete (p. 33). While such vivid phrases appear throughout the book, P. does not overuse them or become flip; indeed he strikes the perfect balance in keeping his work both enjoyable and serious. The book’s accessibility is further enhanced by English translations of all selections from Classical texts.

P. follows several themes throughout his work, giving particular attention to the decisions not only of ancient historical authors, but also of generations of scribes, editors and publishers, which have shaped modern perceptions of classical antiquity. While our knowledge of the past is clearly influenced by what ancient authors chose to include and exclude, P. also insists on how modern readers are affected by less evident decisions. For example, while all modern editions of ancient histories have a title, such titles often represent only a guess at how the works were known in antiquity. Titles may seem trivial, but they can strongly influence our view of a text’s contents. Is Sallust’s monograph on the uprising by Catiline the *Coniuratio Catilinae* (‘Catiline’s Conspiracy’) or the *Bellum Catilinae* (‘The War of Catiline’)? The second title strongly implies that the insurrection was serious enough to be considered a ‘war’, as opposed to a vague (and perhaps minor) ‘conspiracy’. P.’s book abounds in such detailed analysis of subtle yet important points that influence modern interpretations of ancient works.

P. offers a running comparison of the methods of modern history-writing with those of Greco-Roman antiquity. Here his analysis is especially stimulating, as he avoids over-reaching generalisations and meets the difficulties inherent in such comparisons head on. He rightly stresses that both ancient and modern historians engage in a spectrum of practices that do not conform to any single standard. P. convincingly finds modern parallels for many of the practices of ancient history-writing without glossing over the real differences. The book highlights what P. colourfully calls ‘the action

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