

BOOK REVIEW

Aristotle Poetics: Editio maior of the Greek text with historical introduction and philological commentaries. By LEONARDO TARÁN and DIMITRI GUTAS. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012. Pp. viii + 538. Hardcover, €162.00/US\$226.00. ISBN 978-90-04-21740-9.

This *editio maior* of the *Poetics* gives a moderately different text from that in Rudolph Kassel's widely used 1965 OCT (reprinted in D. W. Lucas' 1968 commentary) together with a fuller apparatus and a vastly fuller picture of the work's complex tradition. Tarán, author of numerous studies of Aristotle and the Greek philosophical tradition, has teamed up with Gutas, a specialist in medieval Arabic, so as to be able to give a thorough account, in the case of each variant, of the evidence of the four primary witnesses (i.e., witnesses that do not depend on any other extant source). These are assessed in Tarán's "Prolegomena to the Edition of the Text" (pp. 129–58): the two oldest Greek MSS (A and B), the lost exemplar of William of Moerbeke's 1278 Latin translation (Φ), and a Syro-Arabic transmission (Σ), known to us through a tenth-century Arabic translation and a tiny bit of its Syriac original. It has been known since the 19th century that the Syro-Arabic tradition can be right against the unanimous testimony of our Greco-Latin sources (e.g., 1447b16).

Tarán's text and critical apparatus is accordingly accompanied by two commentaries: he provides extensive notes on the transmission of the text in the Greek and Latin sources (pp. 221–306) and Gutas a "Greco-Arabic Critical Apparatus and Commentary" (pp. 307–474) which patiently shows how the lost Greek hyparchtypes (plural: pp. 144–8) of Σ might be reconstructed. Gutas quotes and translates Arabic liberally and labors to make the bases of his judgment clear (e.g., noting when a given Greek word is regularly translated by an Arabic one). His substantial contributions must be evaluated by specialists in the relevant languages, but this reviewer can attest that a classicist will find here much that is new and significantly different from what can be extracted from Margoliouth or Tkatsch (e.g., pp. 334–6 on the mangled names Epicharmus and Phormis at 1449b6) or from Kassel's report of them (e.g., pp. 331–3, 351–2).

Tarán acknowledges Kassel's reports of the Greek MSS as "the most complete and accurate so far" but has additional material (and a few corrections) to add. He is more consistent in reporting B (which is deteriorating alarmingly: pp. 154–5), lest readers infer from Kassel's silence that it supports A when it doesn't. He also lets us know when the Latin or Arabic translations cannot contribute to a question with the sigla [Φ] and [Σ]. Among *recentiores*, *Parisinus* 2038 is given special attention: not a simple offshoot of B as Lobel and Kassel thought, but reflecting both A and B (pp. 149–50), its right readings in agreement with the Syro-Ar. tradition (e.g., 1454b25) deserve mention as conjectures collected by Andronicos Callistos that importantly influenced the Aldine edition (pp. 44–7).

Tarán rightly esteems Kassel's edition (pp. 152–5), and often follows him in the conjectures he accepts, though he will use Σ to support a different text (e.g., 1454b37) and is more likely to cite Bywater's conjectures and commentary (pronounced "the best so far," p. 66). Modern emendations that are not adopted are not recorded in the apparatus, though they may be discussed in the commentary. On the other hand, Tarán does register, with the note "ci.," conjectures of scholars of the 15th and 16th centuries when they were subsequently confirmed by better knowledge of the primary witnesses (pp. 58, 156). He admits two emendations of his own: at 1455b22, he plausibly suggests Aristotle wrote ἀναγνωρίσας εἰς τινᾶς (i.e., εἰς τινᾶς) to say Odysseus "made himself known to some people" upon his return; at 1449b10, to express the idea that tragedy and epic both use metrical speech, his μετὰ μέτρου καὶ λόγου is closer to the (confused) paradosis, but the instrumental dative in Kassel's μετὰ μέτρον λόγῳ fits better with Aristotle's usual way of referring to the media of imitation (e.g., 1449b25).

The most obvious improvement of his text over Kassel's is in the discussion of the "nameless art" at 1447a28-b9 (pp. 226–31, 312–4). Bernays' insertion of "nameless" (confirmed by Σ) is kept in the singular, and getting rid of Lobel's emendations allows a correct appreciation of Aristotle's complex division of mimetic arts (cf. *CP* 105 [2010] 222–4). In another substantial difference from Kassel, Aristotle no longer says at 1455a32-3 that "poetry is the art of a man of genius or [ἦ] one with a touch of madness" (tr. Hutton); Tarán inserts μάλλον from Σ (as Gudeman had) to say poetry requires genius *rather than* madness, pointing out that the (Platonic) idea of poetic inspiration is absent from the *Poetics*.

Tarán may be called conservative insofar as he resists emendations that might smooth out the text but are not necessary (e.g., 1447b14). On the whole,

he is sparing with brackets and *obeli*, even though he is able to show that his archetype Ω (= Kassel's Λ) was imperfect and interpolated (pp. 148–9) and that readers' notes crept into the text at times (e.g., 1450b9–10, 15). Where Kassel has brackets or *obeli*, Tarán may read through (e.g., 1450a17–20), repunctuate (1450a1-2) or emend (1452a35); he is content to retain a phrase that is “not necessary but not illogical” (p. 258 on 1451b32). The overall impression is of a treatise that is occasionally rather loose in syntax (e.g., staying with the nominative participle at 1449a9) and train of thought (keeping the otiose *melos* at 1449b29), but also one that is less shot through with interpolations and glosses than one sees in Kassel (to say nothing of Gerald Else).

Two general essays open the volume: Tarán's “History of the Text of the *Poetics*” lays down his editorial principles and tracks the history of the text and its editions from Aristotle's library to the present. Gutas' “The *Poetics* in Syriac and Arabic Translations” shows this tradition to be far more complicated than Kassel's *stemma* (p. xii of his edition) may lead one to suppose (contrast p. 110). These lengthy chapters may go beyond what is strictly necessary for an edition, but they provide a wealth of fine-grained information about how pre- and early-modern scribes and scholars worked.

Although Tarán's commentary focuses on the evidence for the text and not on explicating Aristotle's theory (we are referred to a forthcoming work on the question of whether catharsis should be understood as involving moral learning, for example: p. 58), the commentary inevitably deals with interpretative issues, often illuminatingly (e.g., on 1447a22, 1449b3). His exegesis of poetry's two natural causes (1448b4–19), however, raises objections. For Tarán, these are: “1) our congenital power to imitate since childhood and to learn from these first imitations; 2) the fact that all men rejoice in seeing imitations” (p. 239). He comments on the first cause that Aristotle offers no argument to support his claim, but this is because Tarán conflates the actual cause—imitating is natural to us—with one of the signs pointing to its truth: the fact that we get our first lessons through imitation shows that imitating is instinctive, not something learned. So to gloss this cause as “our instinct to imitate and thus to learn” goes well beyond Aristotle and will be weak support for attempts to convert tragic pleasure into moral learning (cf. p. 240).

Because the *Poetics* has so many passages in which a great deal hangs on the choice between variants, it is impossible to do justice to an edition in limited space and short time. But there is no doubt that this is a work all scholars of the

Poetics will want at hand and all research libraries must have. An obligatory port of call for textual questions, it provides a fresh approach to numerous passages and offers all students of the *Poetics* a treasury of information about the reception—eastern and western—of that profound work. Helpful indices of Greek words, names, subjects, and of Greek, Latin, Arabic and Syriac manuscripts conclude the book.

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