

BOOK REVIEW

Authorship and Greek Song: Authority, Authenticity, and Performance. By EGBERT J. BAKKER, ed. Boston: Brill Publishing, 2017. Pp. x + 295. Hardcover, \$132.00. ISBN 978-90-04-33969-9.

A friend stands at a symposium and recites verses punctuated by hiccups and knowing winks. A chorus dances and chants an Epinician ode as a lyre-player accompanies their words. An Alexandrian poet writes verse while the light from his oil lamp flickers and makes shadow puppets on the wall. A reader unrolls his scroll of Pindar and smiles at the opening gnome. Who controls the meaning of these words and whose authority matters in the interpretation of song or poetry? These are some of the questions that this collection of essays aims to illuminate and interrogate. This volume originates from a conference held at Yale University in 2011 as part of the larger vision of the Network for the Study of Archaic and Classical Greek Song (<http://www.ru.nl/greeksong/>). The quality of the contributions is notably high throughout and will be valuable for scholars and graduate students studying Greek poetry from Archilochus to Callimachus, but especially Pindar.

Egbert Bakker starts the collection with a useful introduction, sketching briefly recent movements in the criticism of archaic Greek poetry with the line between “orality” and “literacy” now blurred and performance (with historicity, societal implications, and speech-act theory in tow) one of the primary lenses for interpretation and contextualization. The “song culture” of ancient Greece is particularly fertile and Bakker indicates how the various contributions engage with different settings (the symposium, the panhellenic festival), ideas of authorship, and modes of authority.

Eva Stehle offers a novel reading of Pindar’s *Isthmian 2* that stresses its initial performance setting and the interaction between the performers and audience as a way of understanding the sexual/financial contrast found in that ode. Stehle wants to keep the presence of the choral dancers central to her interpretation, “Beyond enjoying the sensuous interaction of sight and sound, the spectators’ bodily impulse to pick up the choral dancers’ motions in their own muscles (kinesthesia) would draw them in and make assent to the celebration of Xenokrates more experiential than intellectual” (24). In doing so, Stehle emphasizes that the first- and

second-person interaction must be between chorus and audience, and that the major concern for its original performance was to justify such praise in the current, local political circumstances.

In “Voice and Worship”, Christopher Carey meditates on the self-representation of the speaker in religious hymns, revealing how individual vs. collective worship influences such self-representation. Civic songs highlight their diachronic continuity (representing this instance as a re-enactment of a previous song) to validate their content. Such continuity can be the occasion (site, festival) or an appeal to their predecessors’ narratives or song. The *Paeans* of Pindar provide the best examples of such sophisticated self-representation and Carey’s readings of Paean 4 and *Paean 2* show how the speaker emerges as “the collective voice of the citizens” (45). The voice of the speaker, however, is negotiable and responds to differing circumstances: a panhellenic festival encourages a quasi-rhapsodic persona (e.g. *Paean 6*) whereas Alcman’s chorus of maidens have an apologetic aspect to their message (fr. 3), an element that Corinna’s song contrasts (*PMG 655*).

Richard Martin’s chapter about the performance and poetics of *skolia* utilizes a comparative approach to accentuate that these poems are part of a larger social event in which competition and creative “commentary” abound (i.e. their self-reflection on poetic creativity and originality). Cretan *mandinadhes*, short two-line poems, offer the most fruitful comparative material and Martin skillfully (and entertainingly) shows how their *indirection* or ability to speak “slantwise” aids in their effectiveness. *Skolia* have this same quality of socially embedded and allusive paradiscourse, which Martin illustrates in Aristophanes’ *Wasps* 1219–1250 and Pindar (fr. 122). Martin provocatively reckons, “there was never a genre of *skolia*, there was only a rhetorical strategy of indirection, for which any verbal art piece was fair game” (77).

Nicholas Boterf focuses on the way in which authors identify themselves in poetic texts and how such self-naming tends to feature the city of origin rather than patronymics. Forays into Hecataeus and Herodotus do not add much to the argument, whereas Thucydides’ distinction between author/agent is strongly observed (Thuc. 1.1 vs. Thuc. 4.104). Boterf assembles the evidence but does not spend enough time on the “So what?” question, concluding “the place-name heightens the poet’s claims to traditionality and suggests that his poetry has a specific, epichoric vantage point” (96) without really giving the reader a good sense of what it means to be from Thebes or Halicarnassus. To get at this sense, one should turn to Jacqueline Klooster’s contribution, which examines the connections between place and the authenticity of a literary experience in Hellenistic poetry. Even

here, however, the scholasticism, generic variety, and sheer cleverness of Hellenistic poets such as Theocritus, Nossis, and Callimachus make claims for geographically localized authenticity difficult. After all, Callimachus can write different forms of poetry from the comfort of the Alexandrian Library – the ghost of Hipponax comes to him (fr. 191 Pf.) and he does not need to travel to Ephesus, where Iambic poetry was created. Poetic “travel” through metaphors or imagery, in Klooster’s view, take over any authentic autochthonous traditions, so you aspiring Epinician poets need not book that flight to Thebes!

Foucault’s seminal essay “What is an author?” lurks behind many of the contributions, and Bakker wrestles with its implications for archaic and classical Greek poetry, which, in many ways, challenges tenets of Foucault’s theory. The corpus of “Theognis” offers a rich test-case since the songs abound in “projected indexicality” (104) and only are realized in performance during a symposium. Bakker’s reading of the “seal” (*sphrēgís*) is particularly convincing, a subtle blend of speech-act theory and (re)performance theory that brings to light the double *entendre* involved in the seal poem.

When Epinician poets provide an embedded song in their frame narrative (Pindar N. 5 and Bacchylides 13), there could be the possibility for contradiction and discord, but Sarah Harden argues that this “is a major means by which both poets create a sense of their own authority” (140). *Nemean 5* features the first-person poet questioning the proper subjects for song, while the inset song seems rather inappropriate and details how a young Peleus is sexually propositioned by the wife of Acastus. The Muses act to verify and validate Pindar’s mythological variant and Pindar subsequently blurs his narrative voice with that of the Muses to increase his own poetic authority. Bacchylides features similar self-referentiality to Pindar. For Harden, the scholarly stress on the gender of the chorus has reduced these poems “to a mere mating cry” (156) and her paper underscores how these embedded songs ultimately reflect the poetics of Bacchylides and Pindar and their self-conscious positioning within the poetic tradition.

If the Muses can be used to evoke higher poetic authority, they can also be parodied and abused by poets such as Archilochus in an attempt to assert their own individual poetics. Laura Swift’s piece begins by showing how Archilochus comically debunks higher poetic forms before turning to the “Telephus poem” (P. Oxy. LXIX 4708) to demonstrate how Archilochean misdirection can also be used in a more serious vein. Archilochus manipulates the valence of *gnōmai* in his poetry

to frustrate audience expectations. Such a tendency “in deconstructing or reworking conventional poetic tropes” (174) can be found elsewhere in Archilochus and ultimately causes Swift to reconsider the audience of these poems who must have sophisticated enough to note the perversion of poetic conventions.

Jesús Carruesco stresses that Stesichorus relates himself to the choral medium through his name and investigates what his *Palinode* denotes in terms of his poetic voice “and the kind of relationship it meant to establish with other poetic traditions” (183). By examining aspects of Helen’s character that were accentuated in the *Palinode*, Carruesco finds the poem to be a programmatic statement that exposes his ability to marshal panhellenic epic material in different ways for different performances. Helen’s power over Stesichorus can be paralleled by other stories in which the Muses punish or are antagonistic towards human singers. Vayos Liapis explores this complex relationship between Muses and human performers by analyzing the stories of the Muses versus Thamyris (Il. 2.594-600), Homer versus the fisher-boys (*Certamen* 18), and certain Homeric hymns (especially in the active performance of those hymns). The section dealing with Thamyris is the most persuasive, as Liapis teases out how the position of this story in the *Iliad* responds to Homer’s re-invocation of the Muses before the Catalogue of Ships and evidence for statues and the reception of Thamyris at the Heliconian festival.

Irene Peirano Garrison inspects those epigrams of the *Greek Anthology* attributed to authors of the Archaic and Classical period with an eye to exploring how these pseudepigraphic compositions interacted with Hellenistic poetry and the surrounding poems of collections (whether the *Greek Anthology* or Meleager’s *Garland*). Anthologizing can alter interpretations of these poems, editors can utilize them to highlight thematic unity, and the distinctions between “fake”, “pseudo-fake”, and original may be unhelpful. Garrison’s close reading of the poetics of Meleager’s prefatory poem as well as the self-conscious metapoetic statements on originality and authority found in the epigrams makes this one of the most intriguing contributions in this volume. In the same vein, Leanna Boychenko moves beyond traditional philological questions in her consideration of a controversial fragment (Alcaeus 304 = Sappho 44a), and comes to the conclusion that it should be attributed to Alcaeus. By placing it in the context of a narrative hymn of the sort traditionally assigned to Alcaeus and teasing out connections between it and other hymns, Boychenko convincingly argues for Alcaeus to be the author of this fragment.

The final essay of the collection concerns the Cologne Papyrus and how it relates to Sappho's oeuvre. Elisabetta Pitotto and Amedeo Raschieri's contribution is a bit of an outlier, dealing much more with the specific nitty-gritty of papyrology in comparing the Cologne Papyrus with P.Oxy. 1787. However, their insightful analysis of the proems and the way the "Unknown Song" of the Cologne papyrus in tandem with the proem and "Song on old age" evokes "the traces of a thematically homogenous relay performance" (281) fits in well with the collection's strong performative angle and reveals a more fluid sense of authority and authenticity. As such it is a worthy final paper of an absorbing and accomplished volume of essays.

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