**BOOK REVIEW**

*Literary History in the Parian Marble*. By Andrea Rotstein. Washington, D.C.: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2016. Pp. xvi + 170. Paperback, $22.50. ISBN 978-0-674-41723-6.

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*he Marmor Parium* (MP) is one of those texts almost every Hellenist has come across at some point in her career, as a source of facts—reliable or otherwise—more than as an object of dedicated study. The earliest preserved Greek chronography (though only in fragments, one of which now lost), it consists of a series of entries counting back from a date around 263 BCE and fixed with reference to Athenian archons (“From the time X happened, Y years, when Z was archon in Athens”). Spanning from the sixteenth century bce to the third, it encompasses a quirky selection of religious, political, military, and cultural events.

In recent decades, several of these deceivingly straightforward repositories of material have come under the magnifying glass as texts in their own right (Athenaeus springs to mind; even Pollux). 112 years after its latest book-length treatment (Felix Jacoby’s *Das Marmor Parium*, Berlin 1904) and 61 after its iteration in *FGrHist* 239, it is good to see the MP going the same way, and in such good hands as Andrea Rotstein’s. And in good company, too: the volume under review was published about the same time as James P. Sickinger’s entry in *Brill’s New Jacoby* (*BNJ 239*), which complements it well with its more historical focus.

The title is undeservedly reductive. Although a good quarter of the book does treat “literary history in the Parian Marble” (95–129), the work as a whole is nothing less than an introduction, text, translation, and interpretation of the MP. Rotstein introduces the elusive author (1–3), then details the discovery and subsequent history of the fragments (3–5), modern scholarship on the MP (6–8), and the long-standing debate about its chronographic system (8–11) and original location (11–15). An explanation of Rotstein’s text-critical rationale (17–20) precedes the text (21–38) and the translation (38–51); the footnotes to the Greek obviate the need for an apparatus while those to the English provide a concise but helpful commentary (readers seeking more of the latter have Sickinger to turn to). The bulk of the volume investigates various, equally interesting aspects of the MP as a text. First we encounter the chronicle as a genre—especially the “count-down chronicle”—and the closest parallels for the MP, two of the *Tabulae Iliacae* (53–66). A more miscellaneous section on “The Parian Marble as a literary text” covers the MP’s language, style, contents, characters, (lack of) narrative, and portrayal of space (67–84), while time gets its own chapter (85–93). The last and longest section deals with the MP as a work of literary history (95–129).

Rotstein’s text is more conservative than Jacoby’s, and with good reason (xiv; 17–20). While certain or near-certain restorations find their place in the text, other conjectures are mostly relegated to the footnotes. It is hard to find fault with this approach, but there is a side effect: the bce equivalents of the MP’s dates are lifted straight from Jacoby (20), so when Jacoby emends a date—and naturally gives the bce equivalent of his own emendation—while Rotstein retains the text of the stone, the date in her text and its alleged bce equivalent do not match (A62–63, 46).

Rotstein cautiously agrees with R. A. Hazzard that the MP’s starting date corresponds with the beginning of a Ptolemaic “Soter Era” (Imaginations of a Monarchy, Toronto 2000, 25–7; 161–7) and with Nikolaos Kontoleon that the inscription originally stood in the Archilocheion (AE 1952, 48–9, 52), “a site of literary learning” (15). She taxonomizes the events reported by the MP and interrogates their relation with time and space: while political and historical events branch out geographically following the expansion of the Greek-speaking world and display an “hour-glass effect’ (that is, they are more frequent in early and recent times than in the middle), literary events start in a Panhellenic dimension but then concentrate in fifth- and fourth-century Athens, and poetic victories—which represent an intriguingly large proportion of the total—are exclusive to that city.

It would be futile to try and enumerate the many insights that the volume offers on the MP’s way of thinking about time, the past, the Greek world, literature, and more. With wisdom, constant attention to context, and a firm command of primary sources and secondary literature alike, Rotstein has produced a truly illuminating account of a document which many know but very few know well. Careful readers of her book will be led a long way towards the latter end.

Of course one always finds something to criticize if one looks hard enough. For no apparent reason, the volume uses two different Greek fonts, one matching that used for the English, the other quite alien to it; some passages alternate between the two (12, 59–62, 117, 120). In the text of the Getty Table a misplaced comma alters the sense (IIB.13, p. 61). Paton’s translation of AP 7.410 assumes a different text from the Greek printed before it (120–1). Iota *mutum* is treated inconsistently: adscript in the MP, subscript elsewhere. There are a few inconsequential typos.

That this is all one can complain about only goes to show the overall quality of the volume. Rotstein’s stated aim was to “look at the Parian Marble as a continuous text, with eyes trained for philological and literary criticism” (xiii). She has succeeded admirably. The paperback is relatively cheap and the whole volume, like the others in the series, can be read for free on the CHS website. Scholars and students who need to deal with material transmitted by the MP would do well to avail themselves of Rotstein’s work for context and guidance; those interested in Hellenistic thought about the literary past will find it a very rewarding read.

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