

BOOK REVIEW

The Cup of Song: Studies on Poetry and the Symposion. Edited by VANESSA CAZZATO, DIRK OBBINK, and ENRICO EMANUELE PRODI. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. xvii + 329. Hardcover, \$125.00. ISBN 978-0-19-968768-8.

This volume, which collects twelve papers originally presented at an Oxford conference in 2011, explores the “symbiotic connection of poetry and symposion” (1). While some contributions consider the history of the symposion and the features of the poetry that was performed in this context, many press further and consider sympotic thought, rhetoric and imagery even in literature not composed specifically for sympotic performance.

The introduction provides a wide-ranging primer on sympotic discourse and its development, beginning in the 8th century with Nestor’s Cup, and running to the Hellenistic period. In the first chapter, Oswyn Murray argues that the symposion originated in Phoenician and Greek trading settlements in Italy, based on ceramic evidence for the wine trade, depictions of banqueting in visual art, and, most originally, a seal from the Lyre-Player group found at Monte Vetrano that potentially confirms the Greeks’ awareness of Near Eastern drinking customs.

Ewen Bowie surveys the melic, elegiac and iambic poetry of the Archaic and Classical periods, as well as Plato’s *Symposium*, to determine how long sympotic songs were. Despite the fragmentary state of this corpus, he does show that the length of sympotic songs varied considerably, and that certain longer compositions by Archilochus, Tyrtaeus and Alcman, as well as many dithyrambs and epinicians by Pindar and Bacchylides, could have been performed at symposia. In a chapter on “unifying links” in sympotic poetry, Gauthier Liberman studies the meaning of the term *aisakos*, challenges the traditional understanding that the term *skolion* refers to the genre’s zigzag order of performance, and considers the possibility that the sympotic *catena* informed the organization of Alexandrian editions of Alcaeus and Sappho.

Chapters by Giovan Battista D’Alessio and Lucia Athanassaki address the sympotic poetry of Bacchylides and Pindar. D’Alessio evaluates the papyrological evidence for a book of Bacchylidean *skolia* or *paroinia*. The evidence, once again,

is quite fragmentary, but D'Alessio convincingly argues that Bacchylidean banquet poetry shows considerable variety, encompassing encomia, mockery, erotic poetry, a woman's lament, and poems that included substantial mythological narratives. He also proposes, notably, that Bacchylides composed some banquet songs with an Atticizing dialectical veneer specifically for Athenian symposia. Athanassaki reviews the various sympotic metaphors and images scattered throughout Pindar's epinicia, and argues that references to the symposium as a performance venue, which she astutely observes occur only in odes for Sicilian and Cyrenean monarchs, serve to soften the public image of these often embattled figures by depicting them as members of peaceful, egalitarian symposia.

The volume makes a foray into art history with a chapter by Guy Hedreen, who argues that the painter Smikros, a figure traditionally credited with the earliest self-portrait in European art, was not, in fact, a real person, but a persona assumed by the painter Euphronios. For Hedreen, Euphronios' play with identity has a parallel in the iambic poetry of Archilochus, who also uses fictional personae to "showcase his originality through humour of an often self-mocking nature" (114).

The symposium's influence on Attic comedy and tragedy is the subject of chapters by Ralph Rosen and Deborah Steiner. Rosen offers an insightful reading of Aristophanes' *Wasps* that illustrates how the symposium was a testing ground for the satirical discourse that was essential to Old Comedy. In a chapter on Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Steiner draws from depictions of the symposium in Greek visual art to show how Clytemnestra uses literary imagery to depict Agamemnon and herself as participants in a perverted, metaphorical symposium.

Chapters by Vanessa Cazzato, Renaud Gagné and Alexander Sens address the sympotic imagination and metasympotic discourse. Cazzato treats the predilection of sympotic literature, and Alcaeus especially, for superimposing imaginative scenarios like the 'symposium at sea' and the outdoor symposium on the *hic et nunc* of the sympotic environment. Gagné surveys various metaphors of wine-containing vessels, the "degree-zero symbol of the symposium" (208), in Greek poetry, and studies how these metaphors are used, for instance, in depictions of the world outside the *andron* as a macrocosm of the symposium. Sens demonstrates the plasticity and persistence of sympotic rhetoric by tracing the lyric exhortation that one should drink because life is brief as it is reinvented in the post-Classical epigrams of Callimachus, Hedyllus, Asclepiades, Antipater of Thessalonica, and in fictional epitaphs for Anacreon.

In the final chapter, G. O. Hutchinson complicates the common understanding of the symposion as an egalitarian space by cataloguing various hierarchical relationships depicted in lyric poetry. Of special interest are the hierarchies between symposiasts, and between participants in the symposion and their attendants, that arise from practices intrinsic to the symposion, such as wine-pouring and poetic performance.

The editors should be commended for bringing together a volume that successfully “reaches beyond the historical symposion” (2) and shows that sympotic discourse not only pervades the lyric poetry that was performed in sympotic settings and the philosophical dialogues and historical narratives that are set in symposia, but that it also informed the civic literature of Athenian drama and even the Hellenistic poetry composed after the obsolescence of the symposion itself. Moreover, especially in the two chapters by Cazzato and Gagné, and in the excellent introduction, which all draw attention to the tendency of sympotic literature to reimagine the sympotic environment, it profitably moves beyond the question of how the symposion influenced Greek poetry to consider how poetry, in a way, created the symposion.

HANSJORGEN HANSEN

Radbound University, H.Hanse,n@let.ru.nl