

## BOOK REVIEW

*Greek Lyric: A Selection*. By FELIX BUDELMANN. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018. Pp. xvii + 321. Paperback, \$33.03. ISBN 978-0-521-63387-1.

It is always a good time to be reading Greek lyric” (Budelmann 2018, vii.). So Felix Budelmann opens his *Greek Lyric: A Selection*. This statement is undeniably true, but when the paltry remains we possess of the once expansive lyric corpus are badly mutilated, linguistically complicated or profoundly difficult to interpret (and sometimes all three), it can be a remarkably difficult case to make to young readers. To make matters worse, for instructors looking to introduce students to the pleasure of reading Greek lyric, the most recent English commentary on the subject aimed at readers with an undergraduate-level proficiency, David Campbell’s *Greek Lyric Poetry: A Selection*, is now over 50 years old.<sup>1</sup> For these reasons Budelmann’s *Selection* is valuable and important.

To begin, Budelmann has curated an exemplary collection of surviving lyric. Purple passages from the canonical lyric poets Alcman (1, 89 *PMG*), Alcaeus (42, 129, 130B, 140, 347 Voigt), Sappho (1, 2, 16, 31, 44, 58B Voigt), Stesichorus (8A, 15, 17, 18, 19 Finglass), Ibycus (282A, 286, 287, 288 *PMG*), Anacreon (348, 358, 388, 395, 417 *PMG*), Simonides (511, 531, 542, 543, 582 *PMG*) are included (with only Pindar and Bacchylides omitted because they enjoy individual commentaries in the series), but Budelmann also offers lesser known compositions like Timotheus’ *Persians*, as well as selections from the *Carmina Popularia* (848, 853, 869 *PMG*) and *Carmina Convivialia* (892, 893, 894, 895, 896 *PMG*). The choice is praiseworthy, offering readers a synoptic view of lyric in the late archaic and classical periods.

In his general introduction, Budelmann presents an up-to-date survey of the longest standing debates in the study of Greek lyric, touching on definitions, the

<sup>1</sup> I omit Gregory Hutchinson’s commentary (Hutchinson, G. 2001. *Greek Lyric Poetry: A Commentary on Selected Larger Pieces*. Oxford: OUP) because the content is generally aimed at a more proficient reader of Greek than Campbell’s.

corpus, genres, poetic personae, lyric's relation to epic, dissemination and textual transmission, meter and dialect. Individual sections are impressively thorough, extensively sourced and astonishingly lucid—an ideal resource for first time readers. Additionally, brief introductions to authors and, for longer compositions, the individual poems themselves, provide the relevant information on the period and condition of the text, the author's relation to other poets and encourage further reading through ample bibliographic citation.

The commentary's presentation of the texts is clear. The critical apparatus is contained to the most important variants, which often receive comment in the notes. Where possible, Budelmann has chosen excerpts from each author which demand the least supplementation to render an intelligible reading—removing yet another obstacle for younger readers. When lacunae are inevitable, the notes cogently explain the textual issues, possible readings and offer general approaches to confronting the consequent challenges. Dialect, another traditional challenge for young readers of lyric, is also extensively treated in the commentary's ample notes.

Perhaps naturally, the literary aspects of the collected poetry receive the greatest attention. So, for example, the significant intertexts between Alcaeus 347 (Voigt) and Hesiod's *Works and Days* (582–96) are set out with the echoes clearly underlined (Budelmann 2018:110). Literary problems with Sappho's poetic persona are thoroughly explored and receive ample comment. And Simonides' apparently fractious relationship to his poetic predecessors and contemporaries is dealt with at length. These are just a few of the many highlights in the notes' abundant and illuminating discussions of individual texts.

A few minor quibbles can be found. Among the most noticeable is the adoption of multiple numeration systems for several authors in the main body of the text. So, for instance, Alcman is listed by both *PMG* and Calame's numeration scheme, Sappho and Alcaeus by Voigt, Stesichorus by Finglass and *SLG* and Simonides by *PMG* and Poltera. While competing numerations schemes are an inevitable challenge to presenting lyric texts—and are essential to include—I fear the alternation between competing systems in textual numeration could be unnecessarily confusing in a commentary directed at orienting students to the corpus of surviving lyric. This, however, is a minor observation and certainly not unprecedented in commentaries on Greek lyric.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Hutchinson, G. 2001. *Greek Lyric Poetry: A Commentary on Selected Larger Pieces*. Oxford: OUP.

Additionally, Budelmann's choice to omit Pindar and Bacchylides feels like a missed opportunity. While longer selections from Pindar are well covered by Malcolm Wilcock's *CGLC* volume (Wilcock, M. 1995. *Pindar: A Selection*. Cambridge: CUP) and Bacchylides by Herdwig Maehler's contribution to the series (Maehler, H. 2004. *Bacchylides: A Selection*. Cambridge: CUP), there are considerable shorter fragments of both authors from non-epinician poems that would serve as excellent comparanda to the selection Budelmann has assembled. The practical benefit of their inclusion is that these fragments could serve to familiarize students with Pindar and Bacchylides as lyric poets rather than framing them through the narrower lens of epinician poets—as many students learn and some forever see them. However, since the commentary already fills out 321 pages, the decision to include fewer texts is understandable and entirely reasonable.

Overall, as he did with his *Cambridge Companion to Greek Lyric* (Budelmann, F. 2009. *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Lyric*. Cambridge and New York: CUP), Budelmann has opened the door to new readers of Greek lyric with his *Selection*. It is, indeed, an exciting time to be working on Greek lyric, and this is due in no small part to the author's efforts to bring more readers into the fold and his willingness to challenge the expectations of those already there.

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