

L. Delatte - S. Govaerts - J. Denooz: Index du Corpus Hermeticum.
 Lessico Intellettuale Europeo XIII. Edizioni dell'Ateneo &
 Bizzarri, Roma 1977. XXI, 359 p. Lit. 15.000.

This computer-based Index is a product of the activities of the 'Laboratoire d'Analyse statistique des Langues anciennes' in Brussels. The technical principles followed seem sound, though the casual user may find the coding system somewhat complicated. Of particular interest is the inclusion of a frequency list (p. 209-266 for the Greek words, p. 351-359 for the Latin ones). Obviously, however, there are a great number of ancient texts for which this kind of Index is much more urgently needed; the reasons given by the editors (p. VII f.) for choosing the Corpus Hermeticum are far from satisfactory.

H. Thesleff

Bonifatii (Vynfretth) Ars grammatica (Accedit Ars metrica). Ediderunt
George John Gebauer - Bengt Löfstedt. Corpus Christianorum,
 Series Latina CXXXIII B. Typographi Brepols Editores Pontificii,
 Turnholti 1980. VIII, 140 p. FB 1150.-.

The volume comprises those Latin writings of Boniface (published on an earlier occasion, but separately and in different places) which are related to each other: the ars grammatica, its dedicatory poem and epistle, and the ars metrica. Work on the edition has been carried out with great care and thoroughness.

The edited Latin pieces represent unimportant works by an important man ("the Apostle of Germany"). They excellently exemplify, however, the activities and duties of the English missionaries on the European Continent of the eighth century. The propagation of the papal faith involved the teaching of the language of the Church.

Boniface's Latin, which is of course also known from his epistles and poems published elsewhere, demonstrates the fact that there was indeed a great need for instruction in Latin grammar; it also shows that compilations like his *ars* were not sufficient to keep the teaching of Latin alive, and therefore that the grammatical reform which followed about three centuries later was necessary.

Toivo Viljamaa

Minna Skafte Jensen: The Homeric Question and the Oral-formulaic Theory. Opuscula Graecolatina, vol. 20. Museum Tusulanum Press, Copenhagen 1980. 226 p. Dkr. 48.10.

The cover of this book, showing Athena as depicted by the Andocides painter, symbolizes the argument of the author: the text of the Iliad and the Odyssey was born from an oral composition dictated to a scribe, the plan being originated and carried out by Pisistratus in the 6th century Athens to the greater glory of Athena and Athens. The first part of the book (Chapters I-VI) discusses the oral nature of Homeric tradition and composition, using for the purposes of comparison the material of oral composition collected in modern times - not only the Yugoslav singers studied by Parry and Lord, but also

and especially oral composition in Africa and the author's own experiences with Albanian oral poetry. I find this part a very informative and convincing, as well as lucid and concise exposition of the nature and context of oral tradition. The peculiar character of oral composition, the "poetics" of such composition, where the prime virtue is the "truthfulness" of the song, i.e. the exact correctness of the tradition in spite of the modifications actually made by the singers; the novelty and boldness to which the writing down of oral works of the magnitude of the Iliad and the Odyssey testifies; the special problems posed by the process of dictating an oral composition, problems which have as yet not been sufficiently studied on the basis of modern experiences - these are some of the themes discussed in order to elucidate the problem of the composition of the Homeric epics. The chapters serve as a good introduction to the modern view of the Homeric epics as oral composition, although they presuppose that the reader is already familiar with, for instance, the main points of the theories of Parry and Lord.

The second part of the book (Chapters VII-X) deals more specifically with the question of the part played by Athens and Pisistratus in the formation of the Iliad and the Odyssey, expounding the view that Pisistratus wanted to record the Homeric poems in writing for the first time as a part of his cultural policy, and for this task engaged the best talent available in the tradition of oral poetry (perhaps Cynaethus) to dictate to a scribe (perhaps Onomacritus with a secretarial staff). Thus, the only written text of the Homeric epics was made in 6th century Athens, while there naturally existed before, at the same time, and long afterwards a broad flow of other oral poetry. The discussion does not, of course, offer any decisive "proof" for this thesis, although it contains much that is worth serious consideration. The sources containing the Pisistratean recension and the cultural policy of Pisistratus are fully discussed, but other important aspects of the problem are treated in a very summary fashion, for instance the value as evidence of the so-called citations of the epics in archaic authors and of the so-called illustrations of the epics in archaic vases, and the inference stated on p. 164 that the Iliad and the Odyssey "must be interpreted as expressive of ideas and morals of Athens in the second half of the sixth century" would require a great deal more discussion. There is a good modern bibliography, which is used as the basis of discussion in the text in a very readable form, although one cannot but deplore the minimal state to which the notes - for practical reasons, I imagine - are reduced.

Maarit Kaimio

Das griechische Drama. Hrsg. von *Gustav Adolf Seeck.* Grundriss der Literaturgeschichte nach Gattungen. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 1979. XVIII, 549 S. DM 102.-.

In diesem Buch wird eine Gesamtübersicht über das griechische Drama gegeben. Die zwölf Kapitel stammen alle von verschiedenen Autoren. Als Benutzer dieses Buches wird man wohl an den Studenten der Altertumswissenschaft oder der allgemeinen Literatur- und Theater-