

predominance and high esteem of the written word in our modern societies has undoubtedly been a conditioning factor. As to the correct assessment of orality, the 'Parry-Lord oral formulaic theory' on the Homeric epics in the 1930's, was pioneering. However, it is only in the past ten years that books and articles connected with questions concerning orality and literacy and the consequences of the coming of the alphabet into ancient Greece have begun to abound. The discussion has opened also wider perspectives with regard to the character of Greek literature since ever more importance is laid on the performing conditions of, say, archaic poetry or drama.

The book by Rosalind Thomas is an excellent introduction to all the basic issues of literacy and orality in ancient Greece. Individual chapters deal with (among other things) the Homeric orality, the use of writing in archaic *poiesis*, the adoption of the alphabet and earliest uses of writing, the symbolic and magical uses of writing, the orality of the poetic performance, the nature and function of written documents. There is also an appendix on the Roman world, a 'Bibliographical essay' and a comprehensive bibliography of 22 pages. We do not do full justice to the work if we define it only as an introduction. Thomas also asks many new questions and with an admirable methodological rigour modifies old formulations. Also the very terms 'literacy' and 'orality' are discussed in a novel way. Here for instance the different degrees of literate skills are postulated. On the whole, it becomes clear that oral and written communication do not exclude each other but interact in various ways in their specific social and historical contexts.

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*Author & Audience in Latin Literature*, eds. Tony Woodman & Jonathan Powell. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1992. xiv, 276 p. ISBN 0-521-38307-2. GBP 35.00.

This volume is the fourth in the "occasional series" created by Tony Woodman and David West, the previous ones being *Quality and Pleasure in Latin Poetry* (1974), *Creative Imitation and Latin Literature* (1979) and *Poetry and Politics in the Age of Augustus* (1984); it is also a homage to David West who retired from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne in 1992. Accordingly, the theme chosen is close to his particular scholarly interests, although the approaches adopted are not always necessarily those preferred by West. The twelve contributors cover aspects of Cicero (R.G.M. Nisbet, 'The orator and the reader: manipulation and response in Cicero's *Fifth Verrine*', 1-17; Niall Rudd, 'Stratagems of vanity: Cicero, *Ad familiares* 5.12 and Pliny's letters', 18-32),

Catullus (D.C. Feeney, 'Shall I compare thee...?: Catullus 68B and the limits of analogy', 33-44), Lucretius (T.P. Wiseman, 'Atoms and elephants: Lucretius 2.522-40', 45-51), Propertius (Ian M. Le M. Duquesnay, '*In memoriam Galli*: Propertius 1.21', 52-83), Horace (Francis Cairns, 'The power of implication: Horace's invitation to Maecenas (*Odes* 1.20)', 84-109), Virgil (G.P. Goold, 'The voice of Virgil: The pageant of Rome in *Aeneid* 6', 110-123), Ovid (D.E. Hill, 'From Orpheus to ass's ears: Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.1-11.193', 124-137), Seneca (Gordon Williams, 'Poet and audience in Senecan tragedy: *Phaedra* 358-430', 138-149), Persius (J.G.F. Powell, 'Persius' first satire: A re-examination', 150-172), Tacitus (Tony Woodman, 'Nero's alien capital: Tacitus as paradoxographer (*Annals* 15.36-7)', 173-188), and the anonymous poet of the *si linguis angelicis* (P.G. Walsh, '*Amor clericalis*', 189-203). The conclusion stresses the importance of the knowledge of the specific context of a text of the past without devaluing the impact of a literary work on each individual reader.

*Outi Merisalo*

MAGNUS WISTRAND: *Entertainment and Violence in Ancient Rome. The attitudes of Roman writers of first century A.D.* Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensia LVI. Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, Göteborg 1992. 133 p. SEK 150.

This study on Roman entertainment and violence in light of the texts of some Latin writers of first century A.D. (Juvenal, Martial, Petronius, Pliny the Younger, Seneca the Younger, Suetonius, Tacitus, Valerius Maximus and Velleius Paterculus) is intended not only for classicists but for other scholars as well: all passages are translated and Latin expressions are explained.

The first century A.D. offers material for such a study as during the regime of Augustus the number of performances increased and also simply because many texts of this period survive.

Each chapter has a summary, which makes the book easy to use also for rapid consultation. The clarity of the book is particularly emphasized in the penultimate and final chapters in which the main results of the study are discussed in their social context. The author also provides the reader with indices (topical, names, Latin words, *locorum*) and a fresh bibliography (containing many sociological studies!). The author stresses the fact that the primary sources have been generously quoted from, while references to contemporary and secondary literature have been kept to a minimum.

In general entertainment is not seen as a worthy subject for literature (except Martial). However, it is possible to gather some information on the attitudes of the Latin