

WILLIAM HUTTON: *Describing Greece. Landscape and Literature in the Periegesis of Pausanias*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2005. XIII, 372 pp. ISBN 0-521-84720-6. GBP 65.

Molto è stato scritto, negli ultimi decenni, sulla *Periegesi* di Pausania (si noti del resto che l'autore stesso mai riferisce alla sua opera con tale nome), soprattutto dal punto di vista storico-letterario, valutando quindi il trattato come un prodotto ben radicato nella cultura letteraria contemporanea e realizzato con determinati scopi e metodi propri del mondo in cui visse il suo autore. Il libro di Hutton s'inserisce nello stesso filone di ricerca, e lo fa con ottimi risultati, essendo il testo chiaro, ben documentato e adeguatamente corredato da ampie informazioni bibliografiche. Fra gli otto capitoli, mi è piaciuto, in particolare, il sesto, intitolato "The landscape of language", in cui si analizzano le quasi ineguagliabili caratteristiche della *Periegesi* nella trasmissione letteraria greca (linguaggio, stile, ecc.). Complessivamente, le strategie e tecniche di Pausania vengono discusse con autorità e competenza. C'è poco da criticare; qua e là, forse, alcuni argomenti potevano essere sottolineati più marcatamente, quali, per esempio, la questione circa l'esperienza religiosa di Pausania (cap. 8), oppure quella della descrizione ed eventuale valutazione da parte di Pausania, di territori senza monumenti (cap. 4). Riguardo al culto degli imperatori romani, fortemente condannato da Pausania nel libro VIII (Arcadia), una maggiore attenzione si poteva indirizzare sulla ovvia critica nei suoi confronti anche negli altri libri, in cui i monumenti del culto imperiale vengono manifestamente trascurati.

Un'ottima lettura e una pregevole aggiunta agli studi su Pausania.

Mika Kajava

VASSILIKI PANOUSI: *Greek Tragedy in Vergil's "Aeneid". Ritual, Empire, and Intertext*. Cambridge University Press, New York 2009. ISBN 978-0-521-89522-4. XIII, 257 pp. GBP 45, USD 80.

Vassiliki Panoussi aims to "demonstrate the importance of Greek tragedy both as a literary source for the *Aeneid* and as a site onto which ideological negotiations of acquiescence and opposition are mapped" and to "develop a theoretical mechanism for reading intertextuality with attention to the workings of ideology" (p. 5). P. also pays significant attention to Homer, but not much to Roman tragedy, a decision which can be questioned.

The book is divided into two unequal parts (170 pages and 50 pages) called "Ritual" and "Empire" respectively. The first part consists of three sections that combine to make five chapters; the second part comprises two chapters of which the latter is conclusive. In the first chapter ("Ritual Violence and Failure of Sacrifice"), P. weighs in on the ongoing scholarly discussion on the role of sacrifice in the *Aeneid*. P. brilliantly analyses the results of perverted rites in the *Aeneid*. In the following "Suicide, Devotio, and Ritual Closure", P. focuses on the deaths of Dido and Turnus in connection with Roman *devotio*. In the third chapter ("The Fragility of Reconciliation: Ritual Restoration and the Divine"), the role of the divine action in reconciliation is analyzed. Juno and Pallas are treated laudably. The comparison of Vergil's Harpyes and Aeschylus' Erinyes is also of interest. In "Maenad Brides and the Destruction of the City" (an earlier version of which was published in M. Parca, A. Tzanetou, eds.: *Finding Persephone: Women's Rituals in the Ancient Mediterranean*, Bloomington 2002), P. discusses how the ritual

acts of Bacchus worship performed by women describe the role of women in the *Aeneid*. P. argues convincingly that Dido's connection with maenadism is related to the Euripidean portrayal of bacchic frenzy as opposed to being simply a metaphor. In the fifth chapter ("Mourning Glory: Ritual Lament and Roman Civic Identity"), P. turns to the role of women's ritual acts in establishing a civic identity for Aeneas and his people. Nevertheless, she takes some interpretational opinions for facts, for example, "the two dead children of Hecuba act as catalysts for the unleashing of her powerful vengeance" (p. 149) although it has been a topic of a major discussion in Hecuba scholarship what really causes Hecuba's actions towards Polymestor.

In the sixth chapter (an updated version of P.'s 2002 article "Vergil's Ajax: Allusion, Tragedy and Heroic Identity in Vergil's *Aeneid*"), P. impressively examines the reliance of the identity of Ajax in Vergil's epic on Sophocles' tragic Ajax. P. also commendably studies the identities of Dido and Turnus in connection with the tragic subtext. In the final chapter ("Contesting Ideologies: Ritual and Empire"), P. discusses the epic and tragic intertexts in the *Aeneid* and how they shape the poem's relationship with Augustus' ideological programme. In general, the argument that Greek tragedy is a key to understanding the *Aeneid's* portrayals of rites and ritual action is impressively examined by P. As P.'s study is only the first book-length study on the topic, it is likely that it will be followed by many future studies.

Kalle Knaapi

LAUREL FULKERSON: *The Ovidian Heroine as Author: Reading, Writing, and Community in the Heroides*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York 2005. ISBN 978-0-521-84672-2. XI, 187 pp. GBP 50, USD 88.

Ovid's *Heroides*, the collection of letters by mythological women to their lovers, is one of the most ambiguous works in the Roman literature and it has evoked intense discussion, even criticism, among modern scholars. The letters it consists of have been condemned as monotonous, repetitive and naïve, and sometimes the whole corpus has been considered little more than a poorly-articulated manifestation of lament. In her monograph, Laurel Fulkerson attempts to question the traditional conception of the *Heroides* as an expression of poor rhetoric and sappy sensitivity. Instead of the heroines' inability to have an effect on their lovers, and the unfortunate outcome of their letters, Fulkerson focuses on the struggle itself – the process of writing and reading the women are involved in, and the way they reform their traditional stories.

The concept of community is essential to Fulkerson's approach. She looks at Ovid's heroines as forming a metaphorical community and studies their letters in continuous relation to each other. Fulkerson's quintessential idea is to look beyond the similarities in the letters and see them, not as formal and repetitive singular works, but rather as an ongoing discussion between fictitious women who read and write, and inspire and affect each other. She argues that the heroines' letters are in fact not ineffective at all, for even though the women fail to persuade their lovers to return, they do have a very powerful impact on each others' writing – and on the way the reader interprets their stories. Fulkerson criticizes previous studies for concentrating merely on certain individual letters of the corpus and for failing to see Ovid's oeuvre as a balanced whole. This is a fresh viewpoint, since so far there has been little comprehensive treat-