

from Margaret Williamson, 'Eros the Blacksmith: Performing Masculinity in Anakreon's Love Lyrics' (pp. 71-82); three essays on Menander and New Comedy by Alan Sommerstein, 'Rape and Young Manhood in Athenian Comedy' (pp. 100-14), Angela Heap, 'Understanding the Men in Menander' (pp. 115-29), and Karen Pierce, 'Ideals of Masculinity in New Comedy' (pp. 130-47); and one on Juvenal by Jonathan Walters, 'Juvenal *Satire* 2: Putting Male Sexual Deviants on Show' (pp. 148-54). Those who know Williamson's work will not be disappointed here: sensitive, sophisticated readings of poems are coupled with subtle observations upon a culture that places a high premium upon hierarchical status in both sexual and social relations. Of the three essays on New Comedy, Sommerstein and Heap point to the importance of the historical background to Menander, while Pierce sub-categorises masculine ideals in Menander, Plautus and Terence into different, idealised types. It was not, however, always clear to my mind how we are to envisage comedy as a form of social *praxis*: the point is well made in all three essays that the texts intersect with and diverge from real life in important ways, but what accounts for this, and how (beyond fantasy) does theatrical experience of this kind affect communities? Jonathan Walters' study of Juvenal, *Satire* 2, meanwhile, represents (unfortunately) the only contribution that focuses on pagan Rome. Within his brief compass (five pages of main text), Walters ranges far, flitting elegantly from textual analysis of the closeting of male sexual deviancy in the poem to institutional parallels in the Roman spectacles (with their constructions of social norms through the abjection of deviants).

Thinking Men is a bold project that poses big, important questions. Several of the contributions will greatly enrich the debate over gender construction in the ancient world. There are, it must be said, major problems arising from the ambitious aims and scope of a collection that can only ever be the sum of its disparate parts. What is most needed at this juncture, perhaps, is a coherent, systematic approach to the topic: too many of the issues are too complex to be handled in a volume such as this. While the author of that work ruminates, however, *Thinking Men* provides plenty of cud to chew upon, some of it of high quality.

Tim Whitmarsh

St. John's College, Cambridge

Dagmar Neblung, *Die Gestalt der Cassandra in der antiken Literatur*. Stuttgart/Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1997. Pp. 271. ISBN 3-519-07646-2. DM98.00

Is it still possible today to write a scholarly study about a female figure without the slightest touch of feminism? Especially about a character who has been described only recently as 'a sacrificial victim' and 'the ultimate female commodity' in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*?¹ Christa Wolf herself, whose 1983 narrative *Kassandra* is one of the most famous adaptations of the title figure worldwide (besides Marion Zimmer

¹ V. Wohl, *Intimate Commerce: Exchange, Gender and Subjectivity in Greek Tragedy* (Austin 1998) 110f.

Bradley's fantasy novel *Firebrand*), makes the following statement: 'In Cassandra ist eine der ersten Frauengestalten überliefert, deren Schicksal vorformt, was dann, dreitausend Jahre lang, den Frauen geschehen soll: dass sie zum Objekt gemacht werden'.² Neblung undertakes a brave attempt to fulfil her task. As a disciple of the 'Berlin School' she opts for a traditional approach to her topic. In a concise introduction (pp. 1-5), Neblung defines her aims and her position very clearly: she wants 'to investigate the literary development of the Cassandra figure' (p. 4) through the centuries from Homer to Dracontius and Kolluthos, putting special emphasis on a detailed analysis of the relevant texts and their interrelationships. Neblung points out as well that she will include neither the visual arts (although she does speak briefly about vase painting on p. 14) nor religion. She does not apply any other -isms or -ologies but instead concentrates on classical philology. In Neblung's book we encounter good old German philological tradition at its best.³ Her compilation of Greek and Latin sources including fragments, arranged in nine chapters in chronological order, offers an excellent and—to my knowledge—complete overview of the relevant passages in classical literature, which are listed in alphabetical order in a useful index entitled 'Textstellenverzeichnis' (pp. 252-55) at the end of the book. Each chapter is concluded by a convenient summary. The ancient texts are thoroughly researched and carefully analysed; their presentation, however, remains rather descriptive. Interpretation occurs seldom in this book and is in most cases restricted to the passage under consideration itself; its function within the context of the whole work or even the oeuvre of the author is, as Hansjörg Wölke has rightly observed in an earlier review of this book,⁴ only exceptionally discussed. Neblung's style is clear, precise and limpid and offers a pleasant reading. The book ends with a 'Stellenregister', an *index locorum* (pp. 256-71).

The main achievement of this book is undoubtedly the catalogue of motifs, which Neblung extracts from the earliest texts, the Homeric epics, the epic cycle and archaic poetry, which form the main characteristics of the Cassandra figure: 'un noyau constant, résistant, qui semble être l'essence du mythe', as Jean-Louis Backès says.⁵ Neblung follows up their development and variations through the various authors and the various periods and starts off with five (pp. 6-19): (1) Cassandra's beauty ('Schönheit'); (2) Cassandra as a virgin ('Jungfrau'); (3) Cassandra the prophetess ('Seherin'); (4) Cassandra and Aias; and (5) Cassandra, Agamemnon and death ('Tod'). Neblung deals in a persuasive manner with the problems that arise out of the fragmentary condition of these early texts; it is interesting to learn that Pindar is the first to use the term *μάντις* for Cassandra (*Pythian Ode* 11.33; p. 12) that Lycophron

² C. Wolf, *Voraussetzungen einer Erzählung: Cassandra. Frankfurter Poetik-Vorlesungen*³ (Darmstadt 1983) 86.

³ For the difference between 'new' and 'traditional' philology, see M. Gellrich, 'Interpreting Greek Tragedy: History, Theory and the New Philology', in B. Goff (ed.), *History, Tragedy, Theory: Dialogues on Athenian Drama* (Austin 1995) 38-58, esp. 38f.

⁴ H. Wölke, *Forum Classicum* 2 (1998) 117f.

⁵ J.-L. Backès, *Le Mythe d'Helène* (Clermont-Ferrand 1984) 6.

is the first to call Cassandra Alexandra and the first certain source, who calls Aias' crime *expressis verbis* a rape and not only a violation of the right for asylum in Athena's temple (p. 73 n. 2 [cf. also p. 191 and n. 40] and *Alexandra* 357f. pp. 14, 81-84); that the scene between Aias and Cassandra was the favorite illustration among the vase painters, while the poets preferred to depict Cassandra's relationship with Agamemnon (p. 14 n. 33). In her 'Schlussbetrachtung' (pp. 230-36), Neblung substitutes the motif of beauty by the motif of unbelief ('Unglauben'), which she considers to be the principal one. Several times, she stresses the tragic theme of the 'unsuccessful warner' (p. 230), a theme that enables everybody, in her view, to identify himself or herself with Cassandra, since everybody has experienced the feeling of helplessness, of knowing something that others do not and not being able to convince them of it (p. 2), and the desperate desire to avoid an inevitable doom by ignoring and denying it (p. 230). Neblung goes so far as to call these phenomena basic and constant anthropological situations; but since she does not pursue the anthropological issue, this term gives a slightly misleading impression. Last but not least, some of the main characteristics—the gift of prophecy, the crime of Aias, the theme of Agamemnon—are rearranged in a 'Motivindex' (pp. 250f.).

The Cassandra scenes in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (pp. 21-35) and Euripides' *Troades* (pp. 39-57) had great influence on all later adaptations of this figure. Despite some similarities (Cassandra's total isolation on stage, for example), both authors use her for different purposes (pp. 68-71): in Aeschylus, she is totally dependent on the god Apollo, who is made responsible for her death, and she tries in vain to break his influence on her; in Euripides, she sees herself as the avenger of Troy, being the cause for Agamemnon's death, and represents human autonomy against the gods.

One third of the book is dedicated to the depiction of Cassandra in Latin literature, but it seems that most Roman authors preferred rather to 'recycle' the already existing motifs rather than creating new ones. The most important innovations can be found in Seneca's tragedy *Agamemnon*, in which elements of Stoic philosophy, especially the role of destiny, enrich the plot (pp. 155-77, 231), and in the works of the Second Sophistic: for Philostratos, Cassandra has fallen in love with Agamemnon and tries to prevent his death (pp. 186f.); Athenaeus tries to justify Clytemnestra's jealousy out of fear that Agamemnon might introduce 'Asian' polygamy into Greece (p. 193); in Dares Phrygius Cassandra survives the Trojan War and lives afterward happily together with Helenos, Hecabe and Andromache in the Chersonnese (p. 201). The collection of these less famous texts, which rounds off the picture of the ancient Cassandra, must be considered to be a special merit of Neblung's book.

A fundamental shortcoming of this work lies in the bibliography. Instead of a comprehensive list, the bibliographical references are split into two parts: there is one 'Literaturverzeichnis' at the end (pp. 242-49), divided again in two parts, one for primary literature, the other for a selection of secondary literature that 'has been quoted at least three times' (p. 242), the latter categorised according to the chapters in the book. All the other references are scattered in the footnotes of the respective passages. This over-organised system proves to be time-consuming and not really user-friendly, especially for a quick search. Here, some more editorial revision would

have been helpful. A simple alphabetical listing and possibly a smaller, more economical font could have made the bibliography much more handy and rewarding to consult, but there is another more general and more serious problem. It goes without saying that for a book of such a broad range we cannot expect a full bibliography for each topic (an almost impossible task anyway, due to the current flood of publications). Bibliographical references are necessarily selective and subjective. Nevertheless, I was astonished to find in Neblung's book an unfortunate tendency shared with some recent publications. While authors who write in English usually limit themselves to the English literature of the last two decades (so that one gets the impression that classics is a fairly young discipline that has emerged out of nowhere), many German authors phase out their essentially German bibliography at the beginning of the 1980s (so that one gets the impression that classics is an 'endangered species'). This attitude also seems to have left its traces in Neblung's work: except for some monographs on Cassandra (pp. 3f., 242), we find little bibliographical information of the 1980s and almost nothing of the 1990s. Just to take the chapter about Aeschylus as an example: there is no discussion of David Kovacs' hypothesis that Cassandra, who resembles Creusa in Euripides' *Ion*, had already been raped by Apollo (and not only by Aias);⁶ the parallel between Cassandra and Iphigeneia as innocent victims of the Trojan War is not mentioned;⁷ and the commentary of Jean Bollack and Pierre Judet de La Combe was not consulted.⁸ I would have liked to see also the book of Katherina Glau⁹ included in the bibliography, which possibly might have been not yet available at the stage of completion of Neblung's manuscript (April 1997). Her comparative approach, her detailed discussion of the theory of reception could have contributed valuable insights. So Neblung's occasional interpretations, though often subtle and sensitive, hang in the air, lacking a substantial scholarly basis.

This leads us back to the question posed at the beginning of this review: Is it still possible today to write a scholarly study about a female figure without any consideration of feminist theory? The answer is yes it is, but one has to pay the price for it. Instead of a prism with colourful nuances, Neblung's study limits itself to a narrow

⁶ D. Kovacs, 'The Way of a God with a Maid in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, *CPh* 82 (1987) 326-34; cf. G. Doblhofer, *Vergewaltigung in der Antike* (Stuttgart/Leipzig 1994) 90 n. 35; R. Rehm, *Marriage to Death* (Princeton 1994) 172f. n. 12, who both find Kovacs' argument convincing.

⁷ See, for example, G. Holst-Wahrhaft, *Dangerous Voices: Women's Lament and Greek Literature* (London 1992) 140: '[Cassandra] will become a symbolic double of Iphigeneia, an innocent victim going helpless to her death'; Holst-Wahrhaft [above, this note] 141: 'The killing of Cassandra repeats the killing of Iphigeneia'; and Rehm [6] 43-58); now also Wohl [1] 107, 110-17.

⁸ J. Bollack and P. Judet de La Combe, *L'Agamemnon d'Eschyle: Le texte et ses interprétations* (Lille 1981).

⁹ K. Glau, *Christa Wolfs 'Kassandra' und Aischylos 'Orestie': Zur Rezeption der griechischen Tragödie in der deutschen Literatur der Gegenwart* (Heidelberg 1996).

focus and leaves the reader with the uncomfortable feeling that there must be something more. From her summaries of former monographs about Cassandra (pp. 3f.), we can see that Neblung has noticed the 'modern' methods of other scholars, but maintains a quite sceptical and critical position, especially against the more 'feminist' studies of P.-A. Brault and Solvejg Müller.¹⁰ The latter is a good example of unusual methods leading to unusual interpretations in the eyes of classicists. In Müller's (somehow appealing) interpretation of Euripides' *Troades*, Cassandra is unambiguously keen on sexual affair with Agamemnon: '... hier ist Kassandra eindeutig auf ein erotisches Verhältnis mit dem griechischen Fuersten erpicht.'¹¹ *Erpicht oder nicht*—keen or not—to simply reject the results of non-traditional scholarship in this way cannot be the solution. Neblung's book represents a solid philological rock situated in but untouched by the stormy sea of 'gender-babble'. The sequel, however, which deals less with the 'what' and more with the 'why' still waits to be written.

Elke Steinmeyer

University of Natal, Durban

Catherine Connors, *Petronius the Poet: Verse and Literary Tradition in the Satyricon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Pp. ix + 166. ISBN 0-521-59231-3. UK£35.00/US\$54.95.

It is immediately evident from the thinness of her volume that Catherine Connors has produced no *mega biblion*. Rather (and to discover this one needs only to read a few paragraphs) it is as if she had taken the poetics of Callimachus to heart, and so her slender book is dense with critical and philological sophistication, and consequently, one might add, not an easy read. After becoming better acquainted with the argument, one realises further that the almost Alexandrian form of her monograph fits the contents perfectly, because with *Petronius the Poet* Connors attempts to place the author of the novelistic *Satyricon* squarely in the tradition of Roman poetry.¹ Until recently few critics of Petronius have been willing to take him seriously as a poet, despite the uncertainty as to the nature and type of his work. Instead, Petronian scholars have usually reduced the verses, here and there interspersed in the prose of the *Satyricon*, to amusing parodies, often of little artistic merit on their own (though

¹⁰ P.-A. Brault, *Prophetess Doomed: Cassandra and the Representation of Truth* (Diss. New York 1990) and S. Müller, *Kein Brautfest zwischen Menschen und Göttern. Kassandra-Mythologie im Lichte von Sexualität und Wahrheit* (Köln 1994).

¹¹ Müller [10] 54.

¹ In a prefatory note at the very beginning of her text Connors explains her preference for the title *Satyricon*, a Greek genitive plural with *libri* implied, and signals her critical position with a general observation about those who opt for the now more common nominative: 'The form *Satyrice* is preferred by scholars who view it as analogous to the titles of Greek novels such as *Aethiopica*, *Ephesiaca*, *Babyloniaca* and so forth' (p. ix). To avoid confusion I have simply chosen to use the same title as Connors.