BOOK REVIEWS

Ivan Matijašić, *Shaping the Canons of Greek Historiography: Imitation, Classicism, and Literary Criticism*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018. 293 pp. ISBN 978-3-11-047627-9.

In this revised doctoral dissertation, which bears clear signs of its origin, Ivan Matijašić offers a remarkably erudite, discursive, alternately engaging and tedious treatment of the origins, forms and reasons for the "canons of Greek historiography" from the Hellenistic period to the end of antiquity. The plural "canons" is used because the surviving lists of recommended historians, while sharing certain names and characteristics (the appearance of Herodotus and Thucydides on every list will not surprise), varied from author to author and period to period. Canons of literary genres did not have the same authority or importance as religious canons and thus were different and even competitive (see M. Finkelberg and G. Stroumsa, eds., *Homer, the Bible and Beyond: Literary and Religious Canons in the Ancient World*, Jerusalem 2003 — a work oddly absent from Matijašić's far-reaching bibliography). The thesis of the book is less than the sum of its parts. That is, demonstrating that different authors over a period of many centuries contributed each in his individual way to the shaping of recommended lists of historians, that the lists of great historians were all headed by Herodotus and Thucydides, and that these choices influenced the survival of ancient historical texts overall, is neither revelatory nor synthetic, and does not really require the kind of elaboration that Matijašić offers. Yet his mini-investigations into a wide range of topics, including "classicism" in antiquity, the history of "canon", historiography as elements of ancient educational programs and rhetorical training, principles of literary criticism as applied to historians, and much more, make the book worthwhile reading. A similarly comprehensive book awaits to be written about the far more devastating history of Latin historiography, about which one can hardly speak of a "canon".

Chapter 1 opens with one of the most interesting discussions in the book, the desperation felt already in antiquity about the impossibility of reading everything. Cicero famously remarked that two lifetimes would not be sufficient to read even just the lyric poets. Similar statements by authors from Pliny and Seneca to Martin Luther demonstrate the need for a principle of selection. The word — but not the concept — "canon" in a non-religious context is usually traced back to the eighteenth century Dutch philologist David Ruhnke, but here, in one of several scholastic supersessions, Matijašić finds the word used in this sense ten years earlier by the Venetian dramatist Gasparo Gozzi. On the basis of Quintilian's reading lists by literary genre in Book 10 of *Institutio Oratoria*, Ruhnke proposed that selective lists of literary works had been made first by Alexandrian scholars. There follows a discursive survey of the learned controversy engendered by Ruhnke's hypothesis, a debate which slipped from the hands of classical philologists and morphed into a no-less-vociferous controversy over the definition and canon of World Literature, reflecting and fueling the culture wars of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. "Canons" or lists of recommended works are formed for different reasons: imitative, educative, polemical and partisan, aridly scholastic. Thus already in the first chapter, the reader is carried far away from the main topic of investigation, but the point is to establish that canon in its modern meaning is "a flexible, open, and ever-changing cultural process" (p. 38); ancients had the idea of privileged, best works in a given genre, but did not use the word "canon" or an equivalent. Matijašić does not always succeed in keeping the ancient concept of canonical authors — lists assembled by and large for rhetorical instruction and moral edification — distinct from this modern fluid definition.

The next three chapters comprise a diachronic account of the idea of canonical Greek historians in Rome of the Late Republic and Early Empire, primarily in Cicero, Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Quintilian. The reason is simple: these three authors offer the first surviving examples of a kind of *catalogue raisonée* of Greek historians. The question is whether these lists derive from firsthand reading and original thinking, or inherited tradition (over the course of the chapters, Matijašić opts for the latter). Behind this discussion lurks the (contestable) assertion by Wilamowitz-Moellendorff that the first canonical lists, composed in the 3-2cc BCE, did not determine what would survive and be read, but reflected what had survived to that time.

In Chapter 2, Matijašić finds in *De Oratore, Orator, Brutus* and *Hortensius*, lists of recommended historians as the earliest evidence for a canon. The assumption is naturally that Cicero himself is working with inherited tradition, and Matijašić thinks that Cicero didn't even read most of the historians on his list, the longest version of which, in *De Oratore*, includes Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Philistus, Theopompus, Ephorus, Callisthenes and Timaeus. Cicero's purpose with historians, whom he has chosen because of their notable rhetorical styles, is both to explore the relation between rhetorical techniques and truth, and to determine the use of historical knowledge in building and reinforcing rhetorical arguments. Rhetorical excellence as a prerequisite explains the exclusion of Polybius from all of Cicero's lists of historians recommended to read; and Xenophon's irregular appearance matches the widespread opinion in antiquity that he should be categorized as a philosopher. Matijašić's assumption that any list like Cicero's "entails the presence of a literary canon" is not unimpeachable, but necessary for his own investigation, for he will use Cicero's "canon" as a jumping platform backwards to Classical Greece and Hellenistic Alexandria in search of the source.

Dionysius is the subject of Chapter 3. Actually, if all Matijašić was interested in was extracting a canonical list of historians from Dionysius' surviving writings, the chapter could have been much shorter, concluding with a condensed list of the first five on Cicero's list (Herodotus through Theopompus), as the best models for imitation; but he found it advisable to offer some explication of Dionysius' method and choice (which is reasonable), as well as follow the by-ways of his own erudite interests. Thus we read a detailed examination of the relative chronology of the relevant essays, extended analyses of the *Letter to Pompeius* and *On Thucydides* and an account of the responses to Dionysius' critique of Thucydides, from Josephus to Thomas Hobbes. Along this learned way Matijašić discloses many things of peripheral relevance to his declared purpose, but we see — with complete lack of surprise — that Dionysius' evaluation of historians was primarily rhetorical (weighing matters of both content and style), and that Herodotus was judged a better model than Thucydides, Xenophon mediocre, Philistus inferior, Ephorus not worthy of mention, and Theopompus best of all. It should be said that after finishing Chapter 3, the reader, impressed by Dionysius' independence of judgment and wide reading and knowledge, wonders whether his list of five historians was not entirely his own choosing — or if received, confirmed by his own broad knowledge and long thinking about it; in other words, he does not seem to have had the need to "receive" any wisdom from his predecessors, for he was trying to establish himself as the new arbiter of style and taste.

Chapter 4 looks at Dionysius in a different way, in a discussion of the idea of classicism in Dionysius' thought and in first-century Rome. This chapter makes one question, neither for the first time nor the last in this book, whether the considerable effort and library spadework Matijašić invested in it justifies the fairly evident conclusion. Dionysius defined classicism in his own but unoriginal way, elevated it to the supreme form and style of writing, revealed its moral and political virtues and used it to shape his short list of historians worthy of imitation, all of whom

fell within the brief chronological range from the fifth century to the death of Alexander. Dionysius presented himself as the savior of Greek historiography by re-instilling "classical" standards. Theopompus, again, meets Dionysius' criteria for the ideal historian. Yes. But it is still unproven that Dionysius' list could be considered a "canon". To repeat this point: Dionysius' list, while similar but (significantly) not identical to those of Cicero and Quintilian of recommended reading for students of rhetoric, reflects highly personal taste and discrimination, independent judgment based on extensive reading in historiography from the first logographers to his day.

The similar lists of recommended historians in the Roman authors lead Matijašić to search for "canons before the canon" in Classical Athens and Hellenistic Alexandria. The treatment of this question, in Chapter 5, is one of the most engaging parts of the entire investigation. One important factor in determining a list of important historians was the "historical cycle", i.e., historians who continued each other to create a kind of multi-handed continuous narrative: Thucydides started where Herodotus left off, many writers continued Thucydides, other historians picked up the narrative from the ending points of Callisthenes, Ephorus, Timaeus, and so forth. Thus the combination of "style and content … influenced the formation of both canons and the historical cycle" from a very early stage (127). This is followed by lengthy and somewhat tortured discussions of the influence of Isocrates and Aristotle on the selection of worthwhile historians to read. Isocrates mentions neither Herodotus nor Thucydides but seems to include them in his educational program. Aristotle famously dismisses historical narrative as inferior to poetry, but his students (Theophrastus) praised Herodotus and Thucydides as worthy of imitation. A lost Hellenistic source for the Roman lists is then hypothesized and sought, but not found. Next, a search for Alexandrian scholarship on historians by scouring papyri and scholia; this quest is slightly more fruitful, yielding a far-from-surprising conclusion: Herodotus and Thucydides were the main objects of interest.

The next two chapters, which may be summarized together, look for the historians' canon after Cicero, Dionysius and Quintilian. This investigation leads the reader through a remarkable body of sources and scholarly controversy. Chapter 6 wades through literary criticism and *progymnasmata* of the first through fifth centuries, while Chapter 7 considers every sort of literature in a larger time frame, from Dio Chrysostom through fourth-century imperially sponsored educational programs, Jerome and Ausonius, papyri from Late Antique Egypt and Byzantine lists of ancient authors. The primary illumination provided by these two heavy chapters is the real influence that the second-century rhetorician Hermogenes had in "shaping the canon" by making very specific recommendations on what and what not to read: while the positive list contained the usual suspects, the negative list included Theopompus, Ephorus, Hellanicus and Philistus, none of whose writings (consequently?) has survived beyond fragments.

Hermogenes was influential but not decisive: contrary recommendations appear in later authors, so that Matijašić must conclude that while certain figures like Hermogenes (and reading back: Isocrates, Cicero, Dionysius, etc.) did influence what historical texts were read by others, they did not determine a closed canon; rather, the author of each list must be considered in his own context, with his own tastes and personal considerations. It is true that successive canonical or semi-canonical lists of historians impacted on the texts that were copied and preserved over time according to varying generational tastes — and this is important to remember — but Matijašić's main conclusion is almost tautological: influential authors influenced subsequent reading. "Any comprehensive study of the tradition of Greek historiographical texts should take the history of canons into consideration, but at the same time bear in mind that each Greek historian has a tradition of its own" (p. 229, in "Conclusions"). This is the useful if limp result of the

investigation. Matijašić explains in great detail that the limited list of Greek historians we are able to read today has to do with idiosyncratic personal tastes of influential authors as well as vicissitudes in education and cultural requirements in antiquity and beyond (not to mention floods and fires and other natural and man-made disasters). Matijašić's book is valuable less for this conclusion, which will leave the earth calm and unshaken, than for the immensely learned path, strewn with insightful mini-investigations, that he takes to get there.

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Antti Arjava, Jaakko Frösén, and Jorma Kaimio, eds. *The Petra Papyri V*. 2018. 338 pp., 160 black and white plates. Amman: American Society of Oriental Research. ISBN: 978-9957-8543-7-9.

This volume is the culmination of the publication of Petra papyri, with Volumes I (2002), III (2007), IV (2011), and II (2013) having been published previously. This is significant because this fifth volume contains a list of selected articles written about the Petra papyri, a cumulative bibliography, corrigenda to previous volumes, a table of concordance, a detailed introduction to the papyri, a list of Semitic toponyms and oikonyms, an updated synoptic chronological table, re-edited versions of the papyri (nos. 48-87) with an English translation, a cumulative index, and clear black and white plates of the published papyri. In addition, the usual professionalism of this series is evident with the physical presence of the book. It has been meticulously made, with high-quality paper and first-rate plates produced by Maija Holappa. In summary, it is an exquisite book.

As is well-known, around 140 rolls of carbonized papyri were found in 1993 by archaeologist Zbigniew Fiema in a storage room of the fifth/sixth-century CE church of the bishop of Petra during excavation of that church. The papyri were private papers assembled by at least two generations of a family in the sixth century, including the archdeacon Theodoros son of Obodianos, and presumably his heir, plus documents that were probably kept by Theodoros on behalf of the church. The private documents include tax receipts, accounts, settlements of disputes, property divisions and other important documents for the family, dating between around 528/529 and the 590s. These documents are significant for many reasons. They provide information about Petra, an important trade city between Palestine and Arabia, at a critical time just before the rise of Islam when there are few other sources of information. In addition, they provide *comparanda* for the much more plentiful Egyptian documentary papyri, permitting analysis of the legal, social and scribal practices in the sixth century in the greater Eastern Mediterranean area.

The volume starts with a Preface that acknowledges the many people who worked on the Petra papyri. Contributors to this volume, in addition to the editors, include Matias Buchholz, Traianos Gagos (now deceased), Ahmad M. Al-Jallad, Maarit Kaimio, Ludwig Koenen, Marjo Lehtinen (now deceased), Tiina Purola, and Marja Vierros, plus Maija Holappa, who produced the plates, and Antti Nurminen, Jouni Pekkanen, Jan Vilhonen, R. Henry Cowherd, and Matti Mustonen, who contributed photographs. The work in preparing and transcribing the Petra papyri has been a joint effort of the Universities of Michigan and Helsinki. This volume was completed by the Finnish scholars, with the support of the American Center of Oriental Research, numerous funding organizations and the Department of Antiquities of Jordan.

Following the Preface and various tables, there is a substantial Introduction, which is divided into several sections. The first section discusses what is known about the archdeacon Theodoros