As Payne aptly remarks, Aristotle would have had little time for such literary genres as the ancient novel with its 'contingent detail, chance events, and perfect heroes and heroines who make no mistakes we would learn from' (7). The same would be true of the pastoral or bucolic fiction, another literary genre for which Aristotle's *Poetics* would have hardly made any provision. The reason is clear: as Payne emphasises over and over again, this is a genre whose characters are self-conscious enough to be 'fully in command of their mimetic choices' and whose *sine qua non* is 'the freedom to have whatever kind of imaginative life one desires' (112, 158). In other words, unlike the characters in Attic tragedy, Theocritus' herdsmen are not locked up in the illusionary world they inhabit but, rather, merely play with this world, always keeping their options open and being free to leave it whenever they wish. Nothing could take us farther away from Aristotle's model of a real-world verisimilitude as manifested above all in his principles of probability and necessity, the cornerstones of the *Poetics*.

The 'mimetic' fiction as envisaged by Aristotle and the 'fully fictional' fiction as exemplified by Theocritus' *Idylls* and other bucolic poetry thus offer two mutually incompatible models of literary representation. It is not difficult to discern which one of the models in question is regarded by Payne as the embodiment of fiction in the true sense of the word. The problem however is that if, as Payne's book seems to propose, we place the mimetic variety outside the field of fiction proper, this would create a methodological difficulty in that the mimetic fiction would be denied a semiotic status of its own and thereby pushed into the same ontological realm as the real world. It is not only that such merging of fiction with 'truth' is untenable: in fact, it is rather the non-mimetic variety, conscious as it is of its being a conventionalised role play and consistently avoiding being fully committed to the world of illusion, that would more properly belong there.

It seems at the same time that in so far as both the mimetic and the non-mimetic fiction are firmly embedded within the same cultural space of literary production, the question which of the two should be labelled as fiction in the proper sense of the word is hardly one of great consequence. In the last analysis, one's answer to this question would depend on one's methodological preferences, literary taste, and personal predilections. An additional *caveat* stems from the fact that "fiction" is a highly conventional term not available in languages other than English. All in all, however, it is rather comforting to learn that postmodern fiction is yet another thing that has been invented by the Greeks.

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Nina Otto, *Enargeia. Untersuchung zur charakteristik alexandrinischer Dichtung,* Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2009. 254 pp. ISBN 10: 3515093354.

One of the welcome recent developments in the study of Hellenistic poetry is a willingness to explore possible links between poetry and Hellenistic philosophy and literary and rhetorical criticism, beyond some of the more obvious uses of 'scholarship' by the great poets of the third century. The pursuit is a difficult one and there is a particular danger of building great edifices from very fragile straws (in the wind), but there are also real potential gains; the more we learn, for example, about the poetics of Philodemus and those he criticises, the greater the temptation to test these ideas against the poetry which survives, and of course the greater too the hazards and dangers.

Otto (henceforth O.) has, though not I think consciously, set herself within this developing trend, but has opted for the less novel end of the market. Her book, a revised version of a Münster thesis, considers the theme of *enargeia* in philosophy and rhetoric alongside the 'realism' of Hellenistic poetry. These subjects have aroused a great deal of interest in the last few decades: book length studies include Alessandra Manieri's *L'immagine poetica nella teoria degli antichi:*

phantasia ed enargeia (1998) and Ruth Webb's, *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice* (2009), which obviously appeared too late for O. This scholarly energy is in part a sign of the importance of the subject. It would be a real gain to be able to show that the 'realism' and 'pictorialism' which does indeed characterise some of what survives of Hellenistic poetry reflects developments in philosophical epistemology and in rhetorical criticism, just as links between, at least, the terminology of philosophy and rhetoric have long been acknowledged; the process of transmission remains, however, very murky indeed (talk of 'Stoic influence' trips easily off the tongue, but what it actually means within late Hellenistic literary culture can be much harder to say), and O. does not tread down that particularly slippery path. Genesis and causality are very difficult to prove in literary criticism, but it turns out that this is not in fact what O. is about. Rather, she is concerned to show that the three areas of philosophy, rhetoric and poetry all exhibit an interest in *enargeia*, thus reflecting a shared *Zeitgeist* ('eine Art geistiger Unterströmung', 29), though she makes no real claims concerning the origins of the poetic style. In one sense, this caution is admirable and wise, in another it makes for a rather disappointing book. Readers should moreover be aware that, despite its sub-title, only the last third of this book is concerned with Hellenistic (or Alexandrian) poetry; the first two thirds survey the ideas of Hellenistic philosophy and rhetoric with no consistent interest in associating them with poetry, despite some helpful remarks on, e.g., the rhetorical tradition's interest in the *euidentia* of, for example, Virgil's similes and the boxing-match in *Aeneid* 5.

Two further features of the book lessen, in my view, the significance of its contribution. First, when O. finally turns to poetry, she restricts herself to two 'exemplary' case studies: the relation between the stories of baby Heracles and the snakes in Theocritus 24 and Pindar, *Nemean* 1, and that between Jason's cloak in the first book of the *Argonautica* and the Homeric Shield of Achilles. These are among the most studied pieces of Hellenistic poetry, and one reader at least wished she had spread her net into less familiar areas, where there might have been more to say which would advance debate. Moreover, although O. will probably not meet much resistance in claiming that 'lebensweltliche Detail' played a greater role in Hellenistic poetry than 'ever before' (135), some will wonder why there is no account of, above all, the Ithacan scenes of the *Odyssey* (cf. 'Longinus', *On the Sublime* 9.15), which are barely mentioned, and archaic *iambos* which is not mentioned at all. Secondly, despite the sophistication of the surveys of philosophy and rhetoric, when it comes to the realism of poetry, O. too often falls back on a rather simplistic appeal to the 'lebensnah', to what we (allegedly) all know — such as how mothers put their babies to bed (Theocritus 24, where bed happens to be a shield …) — as though this would explain everything. It does not. Thus, for example, the fact that the infant Heracles is 'always without tears' is taken as a sign that he is 'ein liebes kind, das nie weint' (155); it is less important that I, for one, have never known such a child, than that this detail clearly appeals to another aspect of Heracles at the very moment when he foreshadows his greatest achievements and sufferings. O. herself recognises this, with a footnote reference to Sophocles, *Trachiniae* 1074, but apparently does not see how this complicates, perhaps indeed undermines, her appeal to the 'lebensnah'. So too, the fact that this 'nearness to life' is importantly built from literary models, such as the domestic scenes of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (strangely ignored by O.), demands a complex response to a complex form of 'realism'. In the last part of the book, despite the repeated and justified claims of the very close linkage between 'realism' and *enargeia*, it is as though the earlier sections had not been written, and this is an opportunity missed.

The principal thrust of O.'s two poetic case studies is that, whereas we can easily visualise what happens in Theocritus, we cannot in Pindar, and whereas Jason's cloak could indeed be created by a skilled weaver, no shield-maker could make the Shield of Achilles; Homer's interests were poetic, not artisanal. In broad terms, there is little here with which to disagree; O. is thorough and engaged in accounting for the detail of the text. There are, however, also some interesting questions not asked. What verbal starting-points does 'visualisation' need? When we are told that

we cannot visualise the Pindaric Heracles, we may well retort 'why not?'; this is not to deny the differences between Pindar and Theocritus to which O. points, but it is to suggest that the matter may be rather more complex than she suggests. What is at stake is *the kind of* 'visualisation' involved: detail can of course be *enarges*, but there are other sorts of mental *phantasia*, which may make no less of an appeal to our mental faculties. O. vividly dwells on Theocritus' wonderful description of Hera's snakes ('malt Theokrit ihr Bild mit ins Schreckliche übersteigertem Realismus', p. 153), but this description in fact closes down, rather than opens up, possibilities.

It must, finally, also be said, though it is not easy to find the right way of doing so, that there is a rather parochial air about this book. The study of both Pindar and Hellenistic poetry has made huge strides of late, but O. gives too much of her attention to debates which now seem badly dated and/or of only local interest (Effe v Zanker, for example); the apparent feeling that she has to grapple with such shadows of the past leads O. herself into occasional silliness (e.g. 199, on Lawall's 1966 essay on Jason). On the other hand, unless I have missed something, O. apparently does not use or refer to Heather White's still helpful commentary of thirty years ago on Theocritus 24, despite the importance of this poem for her study, and this is decidedly odd. Nevertheless, O. is a sensible reader of texts, and she carries out the job she sets herself to do with careful diligence; the book will reward those who read it with a safe and largely accurate account. The limited nature of the task which O. has set herself, however, and the familiarity of the material with which she deals, mean — I suspect — that the impact of her study will be similarly restricted.

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Richard Hunter and Ian Rutherford (eds.), *Wandering Poets in Ancient Greek Culture: Travel, Locality and Pan-Hellenism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 328 pp. ISBN 13: 9780521898782.

To make clear straightaway: this volume certainly opens up areas of great interest. The title, of course, derives from Margherita Guarducci's well-known collection of honorific decrees for 'poeti vaganti' from the third and second centuries BC.[1] So what the title immediately conjures up are the itinerant performers on Hellenistic inscriptions, who celebrate the antiquities of a city or prominent sanctuary and are rewarded with *proxenia*, *ateleia*, grants of land and so on, before betaking themselves and their services elsewhere. However, this volume has a much wider chronological sweep. It runs from the Hittites to the high empire — though not as far as Alan Cameron's 1965 article on the wandering poets of Late Antique Egypt (another illustrious early contribution to the subject).[2] Of course, Guarducci's small epigraphical corpus has been significantly augmented since its publication over eighty years ago, and several contributions to this volume take account of new inscriptional material. But one of this volume's real strengths is that it is now juxtaposed with (Greek) literary evidence, including case-studies and close readings of particular passages in ancient sources.

But, given this expansion of Guarducci's original concept, do 'wandering poets' remain a meaningful category? Does it denote a real species of poet, or is it the case that poets happened to travel, like so many others? Are poets who travel qualitatively different from poets who do not travel? The editors and contributors are entirely aware of these issues. Distinctions are drawn between 'metanastic' and 'planetic' poetics (Richard Martin, 80-1), the former implying long-term

1 M. Guarducci, 'Poeti vaganti e conferenzieri dell' età ellenistica: ricerche di epigrafia greca nel campo della letteratura e del costume'. *Atti della R. Accademia nazionale dei Lincei*. Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche, serie 6: vol. 2, 9 (Rome 1929), 629–65.

2 A. Cameron, 'Wandering Poets: A Literary Movement in Byzantine Egypt', *Historia* 14 (1965), 470-509.