

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.<sup>1</sup> 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).<sup>2</sup> 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’ poetries (Richard Martin, 80-1), the former implying long-term

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> A. Cameron, ‘Wandering Poets: A Literary Movement in Byzantine Egypt’, *Historia* 14 (1965), 470-509.

residency, the latter a short-term encounter; and between travelling professionals and travelling non-professionals (e.g. Ewen Bowie, 106). When one reflects further on the different nature of poetic commissions (formal or semi-formal? public or private?) and on the different agendas (sacred or secular?) of itinerant poets, it becomes evident that we are dealing with a loose set, rather than a strictly definable group.

For some periods, the material of the 'itinerants' is the material which has survived (especially Pindar). In other cases, it has not, or at least has not been preserved in the manuscript tradition. The question here for the literary historian is, therefore, how material for which the evidence is epigraphic relates to 'high' poetry, to the poets who became canonical and whose works were taught, re-copied and eventually preserved in manuscript form. Given that Guarducci's 'poeti vaganti' were Hellenistic, the question is a particularly acute one for Hellenistic poetics, and Alan Cameron's *Callimachus and His Critics* (Princeton, 1995), was a pioneering attempt to throw a bridge between the poets of high Hellenistic culture and the 'popular' poets of the epigraphic record, who circulated outside the ivory towers and the royal libraries. One senses a certain amount of shock from the lack of immediate critical reaction to some of Cameron's central theses, but *Wandering Poets* has, to some extent, taken up the gauntlet, and tries to bring the fields of the itinerants and of the scholar poets closer together. In addition to the remarks on Hellenistic poetry in the introduction (5-6), Ian Rutherford's piece closes with some interesting reflections on Nicander: he argues that it makes most sense to ascribe the poetry with an Aetolian theme to the period of the league's heyday, and hence to attribute it to the earlier of the two Nicanders ('Aristodama and the Aetolians: an itinerant poetess and her agenda', 237-48). He could thus be responding to the same political environment as the 'wandering' poetess Aristodama of Smyrna, who praised 'the race of the Aetolians' in a performance which secured for her a grant of citizenship from the Aetolians of Lamia. The sheer rarity, at this date, of such a grant for a woman, could suggest that her performance was of more than usual significance.

The organisation of the volume itself is diachronic. However, its wide chronological sweep should caution against reading into its title any implication that we are dealing with an institution which remains unchanging across the ages — that what is found in the Hellenistic period is to be found in recognisable form at earlier or later dates as well. The adaptation to circumstances that is documented in individual pieces is still more evident across the collection as a whole.

The collection opens with a piece by Mary Bachvarova ('Hittite and Greek perspectives on travelling poets, texts and festivals', 23-45) comparing Greek and Hittite poetics. I found it most informative in content and admirably cautious in approach, since we have no direct evidence whatsoever from Hittite sources for wandering poets as such. Rather, such activity is to be inferred from indirect evidence, principally of two kinds: (i) the transference of poetic techniques, especially of phraseological correspondences, which imply that poets *listened* to one another, even across language-barriers; and (ii) evidence for the transference of cults from one place to another, since the specialisation of divine ritual implies that cult personnel were often transferred along with the rest of the paraphernalia. Bachvarova includes various forward projections to archaic and classical Greek evidence, especially for the introduction of foreign cults or cults from one region of Greece to another. The next chapter is Peter Wilson's study of Thamyris, who may himself be connected with religious innovation if, as Wilson argues, he is to be linked with the local mystery cult in Andania in Messenia ('Thamyris the Thracian: the archetypal wandering poet?', 46-79). In this case he would belong in a broad category of hierophants and teachers of holy rites including other 'wandering' poets such as Orpheus and Epimenides. Ewen Bowie's study of the seventh- and sixth-century iambic, elegiac, and lyric poets takes us into a very different world again: such figures are neither hierophants nor (usually) paid poets and performers, but members of local élites who are highly mobile through their involvement in colonisation, trade, and associated travel ('Wandering poets, archaic style', 105-36). Extant fragments of these poets show scant trace of the self-projection of the praise-poet more familiar from Pindar and Bacchylides, and instead of

encomiastic reference to place, we find allusions whose interpretation is very much complicated by the poet's personality, the circumstances of his wanderings, and the identity of his addressee. Bowie is naturally followed by Giambattista d'Alessio's 'Defining local identities in Greek lyric poetry' (137-67) which would in turn have been followed in chronological order more naturally by Richard Martin's 'Read on arrival' (80-104), discussing the praise-poet in Aristophanes' *Birds*. Again d'Alessio presents us with a series of case-studies, directed to the question of the representation of civic identity: this is secondarily an investigation into wandering poets, since it is so often the case that local identity is articulated by foreign poets (a repeated theme in this volume).

We are finally on Guarducci territory. Ian Rutherford's piece takes on Aristodama of Smyrna, a poetess commemorated in inscriptions from Lamia (Malis) and Khalaion (western Locri), and uses her to remark on (i) female poets and performers in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, and (ii) the political context for Aristodama's performance. Sophia Aneziri deals with the well-known institution of actors' and artists' guilds, demonstrating how they reflect their political environment, both under the Hellenistic kingdoms and under the changed circumstances of the Roman Empire ('World travellers: the associations of Artists of Dionysus', 217-36). And much of the material in Andrej Petrovic's contribution, 'Epigrammatic contests, *poeti vaganti* and local history' (217-26), is also Hellenistic: in an essay devoted to commemorative epigrams on public monuments, he argues that the poets who composed them may have achieved success in competitions, rather than having been commissioned by the community in the first place. Unusually in this volume I was left wondering about the wider implications of this essay. Why should it matter whether competitions were held for epigrammatists or not? What would follow from that?

Ultimately, this volume poses equally important questions on both the diachronic and the synchronic axes. Diachronically, one asks about continuity and change. Synchronically, however, one asks how distinctive the phenomena analysed in this book really are. So it is not only a question whether 'wandering poets' are an institution which we can trace through time, but also whether there is any point in trying to separate them from other mobile carriers of culture within their society. As the editors say in their introduction (3), 'It would be misleading to try to draw firm and persistent distinctions between "wandering poets" and other kinds of "wanderers", whether they be "wizards" ... or "historians" or doctors; "wandering poets" are in fact just one facet of a much broader phenomenon of Greek culture.' In this perspective, wandering poets are just one of many items in the history of the dissemination of ideas. The last essay in this volume, Angelos Chaniotis' 'Travelling memories in the Hellenistic World' (249-69), is an acknowledgement of this — a contribution to the synchronic axis rather than the diachronic one. It is a study of mythopoiesis or (to use his coinage) *mnemopoiesis*, the creation (as well as the artistic representation) of memory, to which poets contribute along with many others — travelling lecturers, historians, diplomats and various kinds of cultural envoys, who are concerned in various ways with the re-creation of the present through the manipulation of the image of the past. Chaniotis' distinction between different types of memory ('cultural' and 'collective') is fruitful, and I was interested in their possible extension, say, to various works of historiography and geography.

An ambitious volume and a broad church are bound to have a few slightly loosely-related outliers. Some of the essays in this connection deal with itinerancy more directly than others. Peter Wilson's piece on Thamyris the Thracian wanderer, who entered into competition with the Muses and was deprived of his eyesight, wrests the maximum (along with a certain amount of speculation) from slight evidence, though the most substantial part of the essay is devoted to a close reading of the fragments of Sophocles' play *Thamyras* — in which the hero, so far from wandering, stays at home in Thrace and the Muses come to visit him there. And Lucia Prauscello's 'Wandering poetry, "travelling" music: Timotheus' muse and some case-studies of

shifting cultural identities' (168-94) is another case-study whose focus is not the wanderings of Timotheus *per se*, but the use of his image in the archaizing culture of imperial Sparta (specifically, the manipulation of an anecdote about his unfavourable reception by the musically-conservative ephors).

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Roger S. Bagnall, *Hellenistic and Roman Egypt. Sources and Approaches (Variorum Collected Studies Series)*, Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2006. xii + 336 pp. ISBN: 978-0-7546-5906-8.

This volume is the second of Bagnall's (henceforth B.) collected papers in the Variorum series. The papers in the first volume<sup>1</sup> related to Egypt in Late Antiquity, B.'s main field of study. The present volume assembles works that deal with earlier periods, as well as papers that were published after the first volume had appeared. Eight of the papers (IV to XI) deal with Ptolemaic Egypt, seven (XII to XVIII) with Roman Egypt and six (XIX to XXIV) with Late Antiquity. The three chronological sections are preceded by three papers (I to III) dedicated to 'Questions of method'. As usual in the Variorum series, the papers are presented in their original format and pagination, in order to facilitate cross-reference with the original publications. A misprint is found in the table of contents (Panapolis for Panopolis, XIX). More regrettably, the bibliography of paper III has been omitted (a wide-ranging bibliographical survey!).

A Variorum volume offers an opportunity to assess a scholar's career. B. is one of the scholars who contributed mostly to bridge the gap between papyrological studies and the wider field of ancient history, and 'questions of method' definitely recur throughout the collected papers, and not only in the first section of the volume: the interplay between the provenance of the papyri and the historical conclusions which may be drawn from them is a recurrent theme. Thus while the Panopolis documentation does not allow a comprehensive study of the local economic and social life, it may allow the identification of specifically local administrative features, provided one asks the right questions (XIX). Likewise, the changing nature and context of production of the documentation from early Hellenistic times to Late Antiquity affects the proportion of private letters written by women (XXI) as well as that of legal petitions submitted by women (XXIII) in various periods. These observations about the methodological implications deriving from the provenance and context of production of the papyri complement B.'s reflective questions about the methodological implications deriving from the scholarly practice of textual restorations (II).

The collected papers illustrate the impressive range of issues that B. encompasses. This indeed is the fortune that awaits papyrologists who have to deal with one thousand years of Greek papyri. However, the need to cope with multifaceted *realia* in editing papyri, results too often in limiting comments to philological and technical issues, asking 'no [historical] questions at all', as B. laments (III.190). In contrast, the added value of B.'s method derives from his concern not only to ask historical questions, but also to draw upon theoretical literature to tackle them. At the same time, B. is a papyrologist. His historical enquiries are always conducted empirically, proceeding from the documents to theoretical literature, and back again.

Some of the studies included in the volume are either technical or deal with topics of limited scope. Their inclusion in the volume is nevertheless justified because they bear on issues of a wider range. Most of them deal with issues which B. also tackled in his books. An archaeological note (X) should be read together with B.'s broader paper on the Library of Alexandria (IX). Another, on the rebellion of 131 BCE, refines the chronology of the Ptolemaic re-conquest of

<sup>1</sup> R.S. Bagnall, *Later Roman Egypt: Society, Religion, Economy and Administration* (Variorum Collected Studies Series), Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2003.