to deny the existence of two separate poems. After all, both titles are well attested. Their conclusion is rather: 'Quoi qu'il en soit de la relation entre les deux titres, Empédocle n'a développé qu'une doctrine, dont le papyrus, par une rencontre heureuse avec la recherche récente, concourt à restituer à la fois la diversité et la cohérence' (119). However one judges the specifics of their case, students of the Presocratics will appreciate the clarity and thoroughness of this valuable edition.

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N. Dunbar ed., *Aristophanes: Birds*, with introduction and commentary, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995. xvii + 782 pp. (in paperback 1997).

In these days, when scholarly enquiry would seem to be endangered by the pressure to manufacture an increasing number of ephemeral studies, there is something almost unique about Dunbar's large-scale, immensely informative edition of Aristophanes' masterpiece *Birds*, which relies so scrupulously on the cumulative efforts of generations of scholars and is in itself the result of nearly forty years of relentless search and enquiry. Indeed, Dunbar has provided us with the fullest and best critical account so far of the play under consideration. One could have wished for a deeper study of the literary aspects of this play's action in terms of the dramatic expression of thought and character, and for a more penetrating account of Aristophanes' comic technique, artistic aims and preferences; but given this limitation in Dunbar's approach to her subject, the present volume, judged by purely philological standards, should be welcomed as a major contribution to Aristophanic studies, as also to our understanding of the particular comedy it discusses.

Dunbar's commentary constantly reflects her special interest in matters concerning textual criticism, Greek idiom, stylistic nuances, metrical analysis, and — in accordance with the play's main theme — ornithology.

Her erudite introductory account of the history of the text offers a systematic attempt at reassessing and re-evaluating the manuscript evidence in full, including an unpublished Oxyrhynchus papyrus of 1661-76 (pp. 19-31). Conceived against the background of Aristophanic scholarship from Aristotle to the end of the eighteenth century (pp. 31-51), it is exemplary for its clarity and puts into its proper perspective the textual contribution to *Birds* of the Scholia, the Suda, Tzetzes and Triklinius, respectively. Dunbar has also done much in the area of line-attribution. Of special interest is her present substantial attempt to redefine the spoken parts commonly attributed to Peisetairos (Dunbar's preferable version of this character's name) and Euelpides, respectively, in the preliminary stages of the play's action (see esp. pp. 132f., 228; n. ad 13-22a; n. ad 128-34; n. ad 155-6a; n. ad 638-40; n. ad 667-74; in fact, the two Athenians are not named until 644-5). This attempt, instigated by a close consideration of Aristophanes' differentiated characterization of the two friends, should assist us in rectifying certain inconsistencies concerning the nature and the extent of the protagonists' initial reactions, verbal or otherwise, to the dramatic situation concerned.

Dunbar's extensive, at times apparently over-balanced and indecisive treatment of points of textual criticism (note the lengthy chains of arguments produced on pp. 187-9 [n. ad 166-70], 193-4 [n. ad 181], 224-7 [n. ad 265-6], 270-2 [n. ad 352-85], 291-3 [n. ad 403-5], 374-7 [n. ad 553], 445-6 [n. ad 700-2], 451-4 [n. ad 712], 601-5 [n. ad 1148-51]) is evidently intended for specialists in classical drama with a distinct taste for traditional philological methods. Of different nature and purpose, but perhaps somewhat too technical for some readers, is Dunbar's admirable achievement in fulfilling her promise in the Preface to provide 'more help with understanding Greek idiom and appreciating stylistic nuances than has hitherto been thought necessary in most Oxford commentaries on dramatic texts' (p. v). The obvious advantage of Dunbar's uncompromising approach to questions of language and style lies in filling a gap in existing literature by concentrating on what one might look for in attempting to reconstruct a meaningful picture of Aristophanes' verbal comedy in *Birds*, both in its complexity and in its intimate relation to contemporary literature and life. To give a few typical examples: Dunbar's penetrating remarks on the confrontation between Peisetairos and the poor 'Pindaric poet' looking for patronage (ll. 903-57: pp. 521ff.) and that between him and Kinesias the dithyrambic poet (ll. 1372-1409: pp. 660ff.).

Yet another important area in which Dunbar's commentary has proved itself particularly helpful is that of analysing and defining the relation between metre and content where choral and non-choral odes in *Birds* are concerned (see esp. pp. 209ff., 261ff., 293ff., 504ff., 523ff., 576ff., 660ff., 688ff.). Placing each ode in its dramatic context, and focusing on bringing out its intrinsic value in terms of sound, music and exploitation of literary reference, Dunbar's present account has rendered more intelligible the extent to which the centrality to this play of the lyrical element would have contributed to the ancient spectator's enjoyment of it.

Dunbar's comments on ornithology (see esp. nn. ad 297-304; Index III: Ornithology, pp. 776-7) will be best judged by specialists in natural sciences. It is left to the reader to decide to what extent, if any, his or her understanding of the play has gained in depth by Dunbar's evident preoccupation with this field. Surely the average Athenian spectator would have been less attentive to the identity, the manner of behaviour and vocalized imitation by the actors of the bird specimens presented in this play than is here assumed by Dunbar. Dunbar's tendency to dwell on the 'bird-aspect' of the situation may sometimes be taken *ad absurdum*, as in the case of the various bird exclamations: see e.g. nn. ad 227-8, 242, 243-9, 260-2, 267, 305-7, 310-12, 737-9, 741, 747, 752, 1122.

Most of the observations Dunbar makes on the stage circumstances under which *Birds* would have been produced in fifth-century Athens seem to me to be the right ones, and her concentration on scenery, stage action and costume (see e.g. nn. ad 94, 103 on Tereus' appearance; n. ad 1203 on Iris' appearance) should stimulate undergraduates and more advanced students to think about the relation between production and imagination in this play. Her attempted reconstruction of the stage movements of the two attendants accompanying Peisetairos and Euelpides (pp.131f.; nn. ad 60, 463-4, 656-7, 850) provides a plausible solution to a long-debated problem. Where dramatization of Cloudcuckootown is concerned, I tend to agree with Dunbar's suggestion (n. ad 1167) that 'Aristophanes is playing with his audience and their

awareness of dramatic make-believe, and half-admitting that his magnificent Cloud-cuckootown consists only of words'; also n. ad 1208-16: 'This attempt to establish how Iris has succeeded in entering the city, with the apparent revelation that she encountered no obstacles at all, was perhaps intended to confirm to the audience ... that the great bird-wall is not actually there ...'. On the other hand, Dunbar's ascription to Aristophanes of extensive exploitation of painted screens, rocks and branches, real or painted, in his presentation of the Hoopoe's nest and its surroundings should be treated with a measure of scepticism in the context of the symbolic stage of fifth-century Athens (p. 130; also n. ad 20); the same applies to Dunbar's realistic conception of the κορώνη and the κολοιός exploited by Aristophanes in the opening scene of his play: 'These are more probably real birds attached to strings than dummies perched on arm or shoulder' (p. 130; cf. n. ad 60: 'The crow and jackdaw, their cords released in the confusion, make their escape (see 86-90) — probably real birds which, if sufficient yells were uttered, could be depended on to fly off at this point'; n. ad 49-50: 'ἄνω may indicate, not that Peis. and Eu. go up only now on the acting area (p. 16; cf. 20n), but that there are now birds overhead, i.e. in the skene building'; see also n. ad 202-4 where she claims that 'the preceding ἐμβὰς strongly suggests that he [i.e. the Hoopoe, N.Z.] sings realistically "*up* in the thicket", i.e. on the roof, probably in full view of the audience' (cf. p. 17).

Aristophanes' application of Athenian law and custom to the utopian circumstances of *Birds*' plot and action receives due attention in the present volume. Situations and plot movements involving a reversal of or a deviation from social and legal norms and order are carefully selected for special treatment (see e.g. nn. ad 132, 134, 137-42), as are Athenian social institutions like that of the συκοφάντης (pp. 673ff.), the χρησμολόγος (pp. 540ff.), the ἐπίσκοπος (pp. 562ff.) and many others. The significance of this for the understanding of Aristophanic comic technique, especially in a play based on the tension between human aspiration and real life, need not be emphasised.

In terms of literary criticism and interpretation Dunbar's commentary is surprisingly economical. Of 51 pages in the introduction only 14 are devoted to a general appreciation of the play's plot and structure (pp. 1-14); this is done from the narrow angle of its relation to contemporary events, or alternatively, by giving prominence to questions related to the mythological sources of the plot, its tendency towards inconsistency, and the ambivalent relation between Peisetairos and the Olympians. Indeed, Dunbar's appreciation of the character of the plot does not seem to say much that is new. *Birds*, in her view, is a Utopian Comedy, a clear representative of the long-established literary traditions of the so-called Golden Age, here confronted with current 'discussions of the relevance of animal behaviour to questions of human ethical norms' (p. 6). Most of her discussion is taken up by criticism of current attempts to define the implications for Aristophanes' audience of this Utopian Comedy in terms of a political allegory or merely of escapist aspirations. Her own approach to the matter is not made sufficiently clear, but her appreciation of Aristophanes' political comment in the humoristic twist of bringing out the undesirable aspects of Utopian existence is most welcome in this context (p. 4). On the other hand, I find it difficult to accept that Aristophanes' inconsistency in presenting the position of

Peisetairos vis-à-vis the Olympians may serve as an indication of his attempt to counterbalance the impiety underlying the basic assumptions of his present plot (pp. 11-14). Dunbar's failure to include in her discussion a long list of recently published literary studies of *Birds* (see e.g. Storey's surveys in *EMC* 1987, 1-30; *Antichthon* 1992, 1-29) is puzzling, especially in a book which is so markedly consistent elsewhere in providing the reader with as much information as possible on any other given issue emerging from the text.

These reservations by no means detract from the overall significance of this most valuable edition of *Birds*. There is no doubt that it will remain the standard commentary on this play for many years to come.

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Christopher Carey, *Trials from Classical Athens*, London and New York: Routledge, 1997. viii + 247 pp. ISBN 0-415-107-601 (hbk); 0-415-10761-X (pbk).

This volume is a collection of seventeen freshly translated Athenian law-court speeches. Christopher Carey (hereafter C.) justifies its publication on the grounds that there is a growing general interest in four subjects about which these speeches are indeed a mine of information. These are Athenian law, the art of persuasion, the interaction between Athenian drama and the social and political values of the city, and the social and economic history of the ancient world. The volume's declared aim being 'to bring together a number of the most interesting and informative texts in a single volume' (vii), C. presents the reader with a selection of cases ranging from 'homicide' and 'assault and wounding' through 'property', 'commerce' and 'citizenship' to 'slander'. He appends to each speech brief but reliable comments on legal issues and rhetorical strategy. His translations, intended to remain close to the original Greek, are accurate if uninspired. A discussion of the technicalities of forensic rhetoric and Athenian legal process, brief bibliographical references to the authors represented and an introduction to the Athenian calendar and currency help the uninitiated reader to find his or her way round the intricacies of Athenian life in the late fifth and fourth centuries BC.

This is a welcome addition to the constantly growing list of Athenian oratory in translation. C.'s collection is a considerable improvement upon Kathleen Freeman's *The Murder of Herodes and other Trials,* 1963. (The two works overlap to some extent: eight of the 16 speeches included in C.'s collection were also dealt with by Freeman). Unlike Freeman, C. does not strive to impress upon the reader how 'unlike us' the Athenians were. Nor does he resort to those outdated equations (three talents = 3600 pounds sterling) that have long marred modern conceptions of ancient society. He would have done even better had he provided a glossary explaining certain terms that are hard to translate. That, however, is not the reason why I think his book could mislead a non-professional public.

My concern is that when confronted with the workings of the ancient economy C. adopts the modernist position without warning the reader that he has done so. In