

philosophical works and principally in his rhetorical treatises (*On the Orator, Brutus and Orator*). Although Cicero never wrote history, his deference to historiography is clear as he called it *magistra vitae*. On the top of Cicero's list, unsurprisingly, are the two authors IM calls hyper-canonical, Herodotus and Thucydides, but Cicero also refers to Philistus, Ephorus and Theopompus, his judgement being inspired by their 'excellence in style'. A notable absence is Xenophon, seen more as a *princeps philosophorum* than a historian by both Cicero and Quintilian.

Chapters 3 and 4 are dedicated to the canonical lists of Dionysus of Halicarnassus (with a detour to Isocrates in the fourth century BC, justified by his presence in the works of Dionysus as one of the first to attempt to write a canon), which are the same as Cicero's except for two details – Dionysus does include Xenophon in the canons but is, a fact that might be astonishing to ancient and modern historiographers alike, very critical of Thucydides whom he considers inferior to Herodotus in choice of subject matter, style and narrative. Thucydides' style obfuscates and his narrative requires an interpreter, says Dionysus. IM cites Thomas Hobbes in his dismantling of Dionysus' conclusions – Dionysus was being patriotic, having come from Halicarnassus, birthplace of Herodotus; but most importantly, Dionysus was trying to establish his own authority and to promote his own work. In this, for those of us who have studied Herodotus, he is very similar to his Halicarnassian predecessor who famously set out to establish his *Histories* over the works of Homer.

Chapter 5 is where IM struggles in sustaining an argument the most, due to a lack of Hellenistic sources. The only conclusion to be drawn from this chapter is the unquestionable supremacy of Herodotus and Thucydides. Chapter 6 is an extension of the former chapter, but more interesting and fruitful as IM analyses the Greek historiographical canons from lesser known rhetorical treatises and the *progymnasmata* (school texts, which served as rhetorical exercises). These literary and papyrological sources from the Roman Imperial Age have contributed decisively to the shaping of the canons of Greek historiography, most authoritatively via Hermogenes' *On the Categories of Style*, in which the second century AD rhetorician endorsed the imitation of Herodotus' 'fabulous narrative' and 'use of poetic language', Thucydides' 'powerful and solemn style' and Hecataeus of Miletus' 'plain, yet genuine and sweet style' and the avoidance of Theopompus, Ephorus, Hellanicus and Philistus.

Chapter 7 discusses how diverse authors reacted to the canons of previous ages, and how each canon influenced the next only to a certain extent, each new list having its own purposes and objectives and, in this way, shaping the canons themselves. IM considers Dio Chrysostom, Roman emperors of the fourth century AD, such as Julian the Apostate, and important literary figures such as the eminent *grammaticus* and *rhetor* Ausonius and Saint Jerome. IM also analyses papyrological documents from Imperial Egypt and lists of authors preserved in a small number of Byzantine manuscripts. This period is crucial as the move from papyrus rolls to manuscripts in the Christian Era doomed many texts to forgetfulness. Religious zeal led Ammianus Marcellinus to say that imperial libraries were 'being shut like tombs'. The library of Alexandria was perhaps the most illustrious victim of that age, but texts had to contend with natural disasters, predators like rats and bookworms, continued use and lack of interest and investment. Preservation was costly, requiring the services of a scribe, materials and storage space. This range of factors is perhaps why even canonical texts have not stood the test of time or survived only in fragments.

The conclusions are much more tentative than the meticulous treatment IM has given to his sources, but I would disagree with other reviewers in that I do not find IM's research at any point

tedious, as IM acknowledges he 'does not aspire to completeness' but to stimulate 'further research' (p.6). This book is quite academic, and is therefore more informative to teachers of Ancient Greek and scholars interested in Greek historiography than secondary school students. The thoroughness and span of IM's research was valuable reading, particularly in contextualising the different canons. In the end, what is constant in the Ancient Greek Historiographical canons in this book and elsewhere is the supremacy of Herodotus and Thucydides, embodied in the janiform (looking both ways) herm now in the Naples Archaeological Museum, but originally discovered in Hadrian's villa. These two historians are not just the two authors that have survived to represent historians in Ancient Greek literature, but they are themselves part of the Western literary canon at large.

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## Time Travel Diaries: Adventures in Athens

Lawrence, C. Piccadilly Press, pp.288, paperback £6.99 ISBN 978-1848128477

Cressida Ryan



In this, the second in Caroline Lawrence's Time Travel Diaries series, we move from London to Athens, and to the middle of the Peloponnesian War (precise time to be revealed, no spoilers here).

In the first Time Travel Diary adventure, schoolboy Alex was convinced to return to Roman London by the slightly sinister Solomon Daisy, in a quest to find a girl. His enemy Dinu followed him, but the experience brought them together. They returned to the present day safely, and now find themselves unexpectedly cool at school, having become

famous in popular culture thanks to Daisy's interference. The superficiality of celebrity life brings benefits, but things don't settle for the boys. They're whisked off to Athens for a mystery holiday, and foolishly fail to realise that Solomon Daisy has escaped prison and is setting them up. The lure of fame and fortune convinces them to take on the next quest, which is a simple journey to spend time with Socrates and find out what he was 'really like'. The plot moves quickly as the teenagers face challenge after challenge. If the first Time Travel book established and tested the concept, the second pushes it to see what happens if the author and concept grow with the characters and become ever more daring.

Lawrence is the queen of the 'what-if' scenario, and is masterly in combining this with a quest to understand Socrates. From teenagers driving chariots, to girls shaking off the shackles of their gender, there are escapes and japes galore. The time travellers break the rules, which she of course invented, and have to work out how

to suffer the consequences. Handling bodily functions is one (and Lawrence is of course well-known for her familiarity with the Roman sponge on a stick), but events move from the scatological to the ontological. The book handles themes of growing up (physically, emotionally, intellectually, in relationship terms), where to find courage, who a good mentor might be, mixing the pain of personal situations at an individual level with their global impact.

The writing remains as vivid as ever. She invokes all our senses, asking us to enter Athens with the child's curiosity and a teenager's disdain. Sights, smells, sounds and tastes are all brought out, along with the bodily sensations of bouncing in a chariot or even squelching through something unmentionable. Archaeological sites are brought to life and put to good use, with real and imagined episodes coinciding. The author's research is thorough, and is made exciting through the time travel conceit's ability to present us with 'as it happened' views of familiar people and events. The boys meet 'kid Plato' and get a lesson in life from a snotty-nosed geek. Alcibiades imposes his presence on Athens and on the boys, and we reel from seeing him as villain and hero in quick succession, much, one feels, like many of his contemporaries must have done. Short chapters hurry us along as a simple plot gains twists and turns. The adventure lasts only a few days, but they are full of excitement.

Real life impinges in such a way as to draw in Classicists across the world, as well as general readers (children and adults alike). The Latin teacher is one Miss Forte (minus the mouse), and alongside Professor Armand D'Angour (whose *Socrates in Love* clearly influences the book), the boundary between real and imagined characters is truly blurred. Lawrence plays with this when she sees echoes of her fictional ancient characters in the other academic in the final chapters, one Dr Fotini Charis. The involvement of big corporations and big governments in the story leaves clear space for a further adventure, if both the children and the author are brave enough to take it on!

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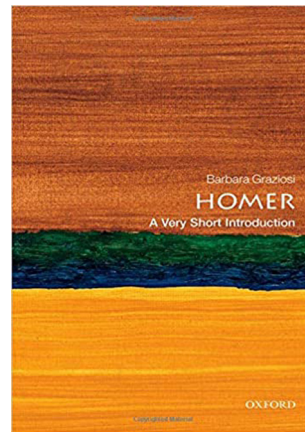
## Homer: A Very Short Introduction

Graziosi (B.). Pp. xviii + 122, ill. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. Paper, £8.99, US\$11.95. ISBN: 978-0-19-958994-4

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I possess a relatively large number of this series of books; some are excellent and some I find rather more challenging; this one most definitely fell into the excellent category. Graziosi has a knack of speaking directly to readers and drawing them in with her passion (this is a word I generally discourage as it appears far too often in personal statements, but here it is correct). This book would be an invaluable addition to any school or department library. Beginning with a brief survey of the arguments surrounded the authorship of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, Graziosi carefully traces the academic work that has been done on oral poetry and clearly explains Milman Parry's work on oral poetry and metrical analysis as relating to epithets i.e. that 'if a Greek singer had two measures to fill, he would always say 'luminous Achilles' since there was no other formula that would fit'. Some might say that research



such as this tarnishes the beauty of the poetry and makes it seem over-formulaic, but that can be easily countered with the argument that it demonstrates the poet's skill in having the flexibility and tools to produce vast quantities of poetry in a particular style for live performance. The poetry itself is infinitely flexible and allows for insights into the human (or semi-divine in Achilles' case) condition as when Achilles finds himself unable to catch Apollo (*Il* 22 8-20) and bemoans his powerlessness against a god. From the *Odyssey* too she uses the example of Odysseus' dilemma when woken by Nausicaa and her slave-girls playing ball (*Odyssey* 6 119) and the internal dialogue about how he should proceed. Such insights into human character are what make these poems still relevant to us today. Moving from the linguistic to the material Graziosi explains how Schliemann's drive to prove the reality of Homer led him to Mycenae and Hissarlik. This is not the place to discuss Schliemann's rather questionable methods, but it is an important part of the after-life of the Homeric epics and any book on Homer needs to mention him. More interesting perhaps are the passages on Linear B and evidence directly from the text about agriculture and food as seen in the similes. Fishing for instance provide several striking similes – Scylla grabbing Odysseus' men off their ship (*Od* 12 251-255) or the suitors lying like fish pulled out of the sea by fisherman to lie on the sand (*Od* 22 384-388) – but eating fish is never done in the *Iliad* and only once in the *Odyssey* (*Od* 12 331) and the technology used to fish effectively is well described as are building processes whether divine or mortal (*Od* 7 81-94) and the descriptions of drinking vessels that are scattered throughout both poems. The skill of ordinary people is contrasted implicitly by the comparison of heroes with wild animals – lions, boar – that threaten the settled farmer. Such subtleties are commonplace within this rich poetry. There is discussion of the poet's voice and the way that he can focus in on the minutiae but then pan out to take a panorama of the battlefield, or perhaps an aside to a specific character as he does on two occasions to Eumaeus in the *Odyssey*. Graziosi's account of Homer's description of the shield of Achilles is an excellent survey and gives us a beautiful and varied account of agricultural work, dancing and city life as in people shouting at each other in a court case – all told in an almost cinematic way. There are wonderful touches too, and my personal favourites are the two occasions where eyebrows are used to signal – Odysseus tries to order his men to set him free as the Sirens work their musical magic on him, and again in book 16 when Athene summons Odysseus from Eumaeus' hut by gesturing with her eyebrows – and the meeting with Argus the dog in Book 17 which never fails to bring a tear to the eye even of the most hardened 6<sup>th</sup> formers. Homer, whoever he (or they) was certainly knew how to touch a nerve. It is only once the more general topics have been covered that Graziosi moves on to the two most famous works of Homer, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and each has three chapters devoted to it. These chapters pick out key scenes to illustrate the topic of the chapter e.g. the wrath of Achilles discusses Achilles' behaviour following the initial quarrel with Agamemnon and how that wrath becomes less like that of a god and more like that of a mortal since Achilles can die, continuing the representation of the human condition. There is also a typically well-argued discussion of the role of Hector and his part in the narrative as the major protagonist on the Trojan side. Odysseus, 'the man of many turns' is shown to be described