

Neil Hopkinson, ed., *Lucian: A Selection*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. PP. ix+239. ISBN 978-0-521-60304-1. US \$36.65/ £20.99

The scope of Lucian of Samosata's 71 works means both that the prospective editor has a wealth of choices to draw upon and also that there is plenty of opportunity for original research, given the level of analysis on these texts, leaving aside such perennial favourites such as the *Verae Historiae*, *Alexander*, *Piscator*, *Demonax*, *Nigrinus*, *Cataplus* or *Juppiter Confutatus*. It is perhaps a reflection of the scope of the volume that Hopkinson has chosen some familiar favourites such as the *Prometheus*, *Timon* and *Somnus*, as well as some less familiar texts such as the *Iudicium Vocalium*, *Dialogi Marini*, *Adversus Indoctum* and *Muscae Encomium*, striking an effective balance of the familiar and the novel for most readers. The fact that this is a collection, rather than an edition of a single longer work means that the introduction focuses on Lucian's background and the intellectual atmosphere in which he wrote, rather than on the details of the texts, which are considered in their individual commentaries. Similarly, the history of the manuscripts is considered quite briefly in the Introduction. While Hopkinson has generally balanced out the differences between the editions of MacLeod and, where available, Bompaire quite sensitively, he has largely overlooked the many emendations made to MacLeod's text by Nesselrath in "Review: *Luciani Opera Recognovit brevis adnotatione critica instruxit, M.D. Macleod*" in *Gnomon*, vol. 56, Heft 7, 1984, 577-609, which is unfortunate. The edition of Hemsterhuis has, however, been critically consulted, which leads to a number of useful observations in the brief apparatus.

The texts themselves are presented in a suitably clear and attractive manner. The apparatus criticus is, by Hopkinson's own admission, slight. The observations are sound, but some of the confusions of classical and later forms that have emerged in the text and were not well addressed in MacLeod's edition remain ineffectively resolved. As an example, the verb *διακορεύω*, meaning 'to deflower', appears three times in the *Dialogi Marini* and three times further in other works of Lucian, and can apparently trace its inspiration to Greek Comedy, appearing as it does once in the extant works of Aristophanes, as well as one use by the medical writer Soranus and the minor historian Ephorus. The variant reading *διακοπέω*, which reflects a sound shift common in post-Classical Greek, appears first as a variant in the γ family of manuscripts of Lucian's works, and is accepted without comment by both MacLeod and Hopkinson. This is unfortunate, as Hopkinson notes himself at page 7 of his Introduction that "His vocabulary is chiefly derived from Plato, Xenophon, Old and New Comedy". If Lucian had such a strong familiarity with the comic playwrights and minor technical writers as to make repeated allusive use of a term found only rarely in their vocabulary, why should we then suppose that he would adopt a form that reflects contemporary linguistic sound shifts? Surely the *lectio difficilior* must stand in such an instance. Clearly an attempt has been made to balance the various manuscript traditions and modern editions of the text. It is a pity, given the small number of texts presented here, that this has not been taken somewhat further.

The commentary itself is helpful to the somewhat advanced learner of Greek, making clear difficult points of grammar and drawing the reader's attention usefully

to points where Lucian deviates from the norms of his apparent models, such as the Attic prose of the 5th and 4th centuries BC. The commentary also includes frequent reference to passages that are likely influences or useful comparisons, often from sources outside traditional literary canon, which add considerably to the reader's understanding both of the text and the literary context of the 2nd century AD, which is often unfamiliar to undergraduate and many graduate readers.

Issues of influence from philosophical and rhetorical writings are addressed effectively and with sensitivity both in the Introduction and the commentary itself, and it is on this note that the work has the most to offer. For example Hopkinson discusses the balance between self-satire and earnest address of the tradition of literary inspiration in his commentary to *The Dream*, while accepting that the two modes of expression can co-exist quite happily. Similarly, the blend of the genres of philosophical dialogue, comic dialogue and the novel in the *Timon*, as well as the tradition of dedication to Timon in epigramme, is well observed and described in lively and helpful detail.

An unfortunate omission in the discussions of *The Dream*, Lucian's Cynic background in the *Timon* or the mythological themes of the *Dialogues of the Sea Gods* is that Lucian's identity as a Syrian is, for the most part, overlooked. The use of the prose comic dialogue form, which Menippus and Oenomaus of Gadara developed before him, a focus on Cynic philosophy, description of cults in Paphlagonia in the *Alexander* and a choice of mythological topics reflecting an outsider's view of the Greek world, such as the rape of Europa, Io's travels to Egypt, the battle of the river Xanthus and Hephaestus and Perseus' rescue of Andromeda, all display a view of the Greek world which is able to look far beyond Athens and its cultural contributions. The combination of a strong immersion in the Classical Greek world and a world-view that far exceeds those limits gives us a unique view of the Near East in the Imperial period. It is unfortunate, then, that when opportunities to expand our knowledge come up, they are not capitalized on. Hopkinson notes that Lucian "...has been portrayed as a facile journalist and as a serious critic of morals; as a writer closely tied to his own times, and as a practitioner of literary *mimesis* more concerned with the revivification of Greek literature than with morality." What is missing from this work is any clear sense of what Hopkinson himself makes of these issues.

This is, then, a useful work for the senior undergraduate or graduate reader, presenting an interesting range of texts in an approachable and thought-provoking manner. It is perhaps the desire to stick to this brief that has led the author to shy away from some topics that deserve further attention, given the relative lack of scholarly attention shown to them in comparison with many of the 'classics'.

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