



---

Review: [untitled]

Author(s): James P. Holoka

Source: *The Classical World*, Vol. 86, No. 1 (Sep. - Oct., 1992), pp. 58-59

Published by: [Classical Association of the Atlantic States](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4351230>

Accessed: 15/01/2011 23:15

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=classaas>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).



*Classical Association of the Atlantic States* is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Classical World*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

explain his allusions with clarity. A glossary defines numerous technical terms, and the bibliography stands as a nigh thorough record of the *Quellenforschung* of the last one hundred years.

Obstructing this work's value is its price. A book's worth is whether those who need to read it can do so at meditative leisure. Close to sixty dollars is beyond the budget of many students and soldiers. Eternally-springing hope holds that the next edition will redress errors and exorbitance.

*Mechanicsburg, PA*  
CW 86.1 (1992)

DANIEL J. HEISEY

Marcel Jousse. *The Oral Style*. New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990. Pp. xxviii, 266. \$40.00. ISBN 0-8240-6892-0.

Orig. pub. in 1981. Translated from French by E. Sienaert and R. Whitaker.

This is a translation of a slightly revised second edition of a work Jousse first published under the formidable title "Le style oral rythmique et mnémotechnique chez les verbo-moteurs" in *Archives de Philosophie* 2.4 (1924) 1-240. The date is significant, because Jousse's work exerted a crucial influence on the thought of Milman Parry. In particular, along with Matija Murko's field studies in Yugoslavia, it led Parry to think that the highly formulaic Homeric *Kunstsprache* studied in his 1928 University of Paris theses was not simply traditional but more precisely *oral* in character. The results for our understanding of Homeric artistry have of course been momentous.

*The Oral Style* is a vast collage of quotations from 500 volumes (of some 5000 Jousse claimed to have read), representing the thought of (mainly) French savants of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries on such topics as folk poetry, rhetoric and prosody, metrics, linguistic psychology, biblical text history, Islamic studies, and cultural anthropology. The concatenation of materials quoted *in extenso* is so arranged as to verify Jousse's idiosyncratic general notions of "The Anthropological Foundations of Oral Style" (Part One) and his assertions about the nature of "The Oral Style" (Part Two).

While the first part of the book is of interest chiefly as a special exhibit in the museum of intellectual history, the second contains many observations and arguments that have continued to animate students of Homer and literary historians and theorists since Milman Parry. Once again, one sees that Parry's work was synthetic rather than creative. Jousse anticipates (or quotes those who anticipate) such now familiar doctrines as the great divide between works of oral and literate provenance, the distinctive place of formulas in oral composition, the importance of rhythm and meter to the creativity of the improvising composer, and the need to leave behind literate preconceptions if we are to grasp the nature of oral artistry. "We bookish types must try to avoid 'seeing things from our . . . point of view,' 'filtered through our own mentality.'" To this end, Jousse provides many useful comparisons of features of orally evolved works from various literary and religious traditions. Classicists interested in tracing the roots of the oral theory of Homeric

composition will find this sometimes quaint book both fascinating and clairvoyant.

*Eastern Michigan University*  
CW 86.1 (1992)

JAMES P. HOLOKA

R. J. A. Wilson. *Sicily Under the Roman Empire: The Archaeology of a Roman Province, 36 BC-AD 535*. Warminster, Wilts (ENG): Aris & Phillips, 1991. Pp. ix, 452, incl. 12 color plates, 290 b/w plates/figs. £ 120 (hb.), £ 65 (pb.). ISBN 0-85668-552-6; 0-85668-160-1.

Those who knew that Wilson was writing this book have awaited its appearance with great anticipation, for his encyclopedic knowledge of Roman Sicily and his previous publications (especially *Piazza Armerina* [1983] and *A Guide to the Roman Remains in Britain* [3d ed., 1988]) ensured that this would be a comprehensive, well-informed and thorough survey of the evidence and modern interpretations. Nobody will have cause to be disappointed, for virtually every page contains a wealth of information clearly described and organized.

Inevitably, one would wish that some topic or another would have been treated in more detail or from a somewhat different perspective. One must often understand, as the author certainly does, that archaeology in Sicily has not advanced as far as it has in many other parts of the Roman Empire (e.g., "Again discussion is hampered by the lack of adequately excavated and published examples" and "Making coherent sense out of this mass of raw data. . . is at present virtually impossible in view of the inadequacy of the available documentation") and that the author seems perhaps too traditional in his approach to the evidence that does exist. For example, Wilson's discussion of Romanization does not compare well with Edith Wightman's in *Gallia Belgica* (1985): not only did she have more and better material to work with, but she was also much more concerned with social history than Wilson appears to be. Nor is it enough to say of African Red Slip Ware that it "banish(ed) serious competition" and that it "completely saturat(ed) the Sicilian market": statistics are not especially numerous, but they do exist (E. Fentress and Philip Perkins, "Counting African Red Slip Ware," *L'Africa Romana* 5 [1987], 205-214, include data from the Monreale survey).

Perhaps the best book ever written about Roman Imperial Sicily, this will remain indispensable for at least a generation.

*Loyola University of New Orleans*  
CW 86.1 (1992)

ROBERT J. ROWLAND, JR.

Bernard Frischer. *Shifting Paradigms: New Approaches to Horace's Ars Poetica*. American Classical Studies, 27. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991. Pp. xiii, 158, incl. 44 b/w tables and graphs, plus 3 b/w plates. \$24.95 (\$16.95 mem.) (hb.), \$16.95 (\$11.95 mem.) (pb.). ISBN 1-55540-619-X; 1-55540-620-3.

Should Roman authors be read "straight," or should we look for ironies created by context, *persona*, or inconsistency of detail? Are Catullus and the