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A second major thesis stresses the importance of NVB in Homer's development and presentation of character. Telemakhos, Odysseus, and Penelope are shown to be especially rewarding subjects for examination because they are so adept at such behavior in their presentations of self.

The principal propositions of the book are supported by thousands of discrete, careful, acute analyses. For each topic, Lateiner provides nearly line-by-line critiques of salient material; taken as a whole, these constitute an invaluable specialized commentary. Such thoroughness makes for dense reading, but also for incontrovertible documentation of a "central channel of (underappreciated) meaning" in Homer. And, too, the author's vivacious prose style has a leavening effect throughout.

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CW 90.6 (1997)

JAMES P. HOLOKA

Charles Penglase. *Greek Myths and Mesopotamia: Parallels and Influence in the Homeric Hymns and Hesiod*. London: Routledge, 1994. Pp. ix, 278, plus 2 b/w maps, 1 chronological chart. \$69.95. ISBN 0-415-08371-0.

Penglase has written a persuasive brief for the presence of Mesopotamian mythological themes in the literature of archaic Greece. Though Near Eastern inspiration for various elements in the works of Homer, Hesiod, and the *Hymns* is nowadays commonly maintained, the author is commendably cautious in setting his criteria for influence. The Mesopotamian literary materials must have existed at times of actual historical contact with Greece, whether commercial, cultural, or other (in Penglase's opinion, 850–600). The proposed parallels must be "numerous, complex, and detailed," and exhibit similar underlying ideas and conceptual usage. Their examination must proceed uncontaminated by favored interpretive or "philosophical" approaches—anthropological, sociological, psychoanalytic, or whatever.

Penglase selects for particular comparison a nexus of myths dealing with a "journey for power" by some deity. Major subsets include the goddess-and-consort strand and the heroic strand. Later in the book, there is also a consideration of creation myths. The author begins with a clear synopsis of the Mesopotamian myths of Inanna's/Ishtar's Descent to (and Return from) the Netherworld; he then turns to the myths of journeys and conquests by Ninurta and gods identified with him (e.g., Marduk). These summaries are based on a meticulous canvass of Sumerian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Hittite, and other sources. Throughout, the author highlights persistent, meaningful details and patterns.

The Greek works next scrutinized for parallels to the Mesopotamian myths include Hesiod's poems and the long *Homeric Hymns* to Apollo, Demeter, Aphrodite, and Hermes. Penglase makes impressive cases in each instance, proving that correspondences are extensive and very close indeed, and even that gaps in our knowledge of the background of some Greek myths can sometimes be filled by reference to Mesopotamian analogues.

It is hard to imagine more cogent documentation of parallels in the two mythic traditions than Penglase has furnished. The fact that evidence of parallels does not conclusively verify directions of influence or resolve questions of possible common sources or rule out spontaneous independent creation is no disparagement of Penglase's contribution. Both for subject matter and

for caliber of argument, this book merits a place beside the works of Walter Burkert and Martin West.

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Richard Green and Eric Handley. *Images of the Greek Theater*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995. Pp. 127, incl. 20 color photos, 61 b/w photos. \$19.95 (pb.). ISBN 0-292-72782-8.

This small volume is aptly named: it is a brief compendium of visual images of the Greek theater: vase paintings, figurines, theater sites, papyri, sculptures, etc. As such, it provides a useful introduction into the historiographical and methodological strategies by which we have come to know much of what we do about classical and Hellenistic Greek theater.

The range of material photographed, largely from the collection of the British Museum (whose trustees hold the copyright on the book), is impressive, and the quality of the photographs is excellent. But a book this short, devoted primarily to visual images, must necessarily sacrifice on critical analysis, and indeed the text here is not terribly useful. Generalizations about the Greek theater are the norm rather than the exception, and the authors often present without question ideas which at the very least have been called into question by recent scholarship: the orchestra as the sole domain of the chorus, for example. The authors are also rather too quick to assign visual depictions of mythological stories not only to tragedy but to specific, extant tragedies. This is not to say that such arguments cannot be made, but that the authors do not provide those arguments. The constraints of time and space are a partial, but only a partial, justification of this phenomenon: especially since there is a fair amount of space taken up by Roman rather than Greek images, and even, completely incongruously, a portrait of the eighteenth-century classicist Richard Porson.

The idea of bringing together into a single small, relatively inexpensive volume a collection of photographs representing the range of visual images relating to the Greek theater is an excellent one. But despite its attributes, this book does not seem to be the answer. Still, we can look forward with some anticipation to the "more comprehensive study" promised by the authors in their introductory chapter.

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RICHARD JONES

Gareth D. Williams. *Banished Voices: Readings in Ovid's Exile Poetry*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995. Pp. ix, 234. \$54.95. ISBN 0-521-45136-1.

Williams' revised doctoral thesis (Cambridge, 1990) argues that Ovid, estranged by decree, constructs an unreal image of terminal decline which is belied by his "latent artistry." The nasty world of Romanian relegation, the critic argues, is just a pose, another literary artifice (as are the addressees, more types than persons, and indeed the reality of exile itself is left