

MARTIN M. WINKLER: *Cinema and Classical Texts. Apollo's New Light*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York 2009. ISBN 978-0-521-51860-4. XIII, 347 pp. 46 ill. GBP 55, USD 99.

First society listened, then it read, and now it views – movies and television, to be exact (see Winkler, p. 11). The almost three thousand years of reading, further re-readings, interpretations, adaptations and scholarship have not diminished the interest in ancient mythology and literature, which continue to maintain their vitality and influence even today, at the dawn of the information age. Within past few decades, reception studies have become an inseparable part of classical studies, whether they are of history, arts, or philology. This strand of scholarship is especially significant in the studies of classical drama: examining the influence and reception of modern productions of ancient drama is in a key position in the field of classical studies, for it is a viewpoint that connects the ancient world with the present and advocates classical studies as a dynamic and living strand of scholarship, one that is of interest to a wider audience than just the experts of ancient Greek language and culture. However, during the twentieth century, the importance of cinematic art has become the venue of drama that is open to distinctly wider audience than traditional, realist theatre. Yet although this art form is now over a hundred years old, and although the attention to classical themes has been deep-seated in it right from the beginning, there still appears among classicists a deep-rooted doubt of its artistic quality. As Winkler points out, "for better or worse, society's viewing now seems to edge out society's reading" (p. 11), and thus, whatever feelings a scholar might have about this transfer, it should be self-evident that a scholar of the reception of ancient culture should engage in the discussion of reception of antiquity in cinema.

Martin M. Winkler has written widely on (the relation of) classics and cinema, but it is in this book that he develops – the first – theoretic foundation for studies of ancient influence in cinema. Winkler calls his method "classical film philology" (p. 13), and indeed it is a most interesting and exciting perspective. Winkler has "set himself a task to develop... a system that combines a reaffirmation of classical philology and the study of ancient literature, culture, and history for their own sake and in their own right with an exhortation to integrate film into such a work" (p. 13–4). The writer interprets films as visual texts, applying to them the method of close analysis that classical philologists carry in their work. Winkler points out, that although ancient people did not have the technique to record pictures into film, they nevertheless were acquainted with the idea of progressive storytelling, even if it were in static images, in painting and sculpture, as well as with "real" movies – their dreams (p. 5–6). Furthermore, ancient people were as capable as modern people are to see the affinity of picture with words that tell the same story, as Winkler attests in his analysis on the prologue of Longos' romance *Daphnis and Chloe* (p. 23–4).

Winkler's book is divided into an introduction, six chapters, and an epilogue. The book considers the affinities between classical and cinematic narratives. In the introduction the writer introduces to the reader the idea of cinema as an art of light: while a painter works with colours, or a writer with written words, an artist of cinema works with light; through the lens of the camera, the artist "paints" her/his interpretation of the story into film. The camera is like an omniscient narrator in a film, and as such, it can choose whichever perspective is suitable for the purpose. These approaches Winkler illuminates with theories of such renowned artists of cinema as Dziga Vertov and his concept of the "kino-eye" (p. 9–10). In the first main

chapter Winkler presents his theory of classical film philology. First he introduces the idea of film as visual narrative, then moves on to discuss the concepts of ancient author and cinematic auteur. While literary works are usually a product of one person, a production of a movie can involve hundreds or even thousands of people, which is why classicists have expressed doubt whether true authorship can be found in them. Winkler, however, shows that it is the director of the movie that is the auteur of it, for it is she/he who holds the artistic view of the production, and hence makes all the final decisions concerning the filming. The most fascinating part of Winkler's theory is the idea of classical philologist as a trained expert of analysing, reading and interpreting of any kind of text. Being one myself, I concur in Winkler's view – it is not just the Greek and Latin works of literature that classicists are capable to analyse.

In the following chapters Winkler applies his theories on analyses of various films that coalesce in various ways with the ancient world and culture. The chapters of the book are separated thematically: in chapter two the writer discusses ancient gods; in chapter three readings of Oedipus are the focus; chapter four discusses war and nationalism; while chapters five and six concentrate on women, and particularly women in love in films influenced somehow by ancient world. The films discussed in the examples, though they differ greatly in artistic quality, present each the continuing influence of the ancient culture in today's world. Winkler's analyses are interesting and indeed very gripping for a scholar of the reception of ancient drama. Very convenient for a scholar of the information age is the Internet that provides one with very handy clips of the films and scenes that Winkler discusses. This book is intended for classicists, but also for "those who work in film studies, comparative literature, cultural studies, European and American history and culture, and related fields in the humanities and social sciences" (p. 18). With its extensive bibliography and detailed indices, I recommend this book to all those interested in classical reception studies. I found only two errors in this book. First, Winkler refers to Hall and Macintosh's book *Greek Tragedy and the British Theatre 1660–1914* with the publication year 1995, when in truth the book came out in 2005; and second, he should have acknowledged that the movie *300* was based on Frank Miller's comic – a fact which might have had some influence on Winkler's view (bias?) on the movie.

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PINDAR'S *Nemeans. A Selection*. Edition and commentary by W. B. HENRY. K. G. Saur Verlag, München – Leipzig 2005. XII, 133 pp. ISBN 3-598-73028-4. EUR 74.

Il presente libro, una versione aggiornata e rivista della dissertazione di W. B. Henry (Oxford 2001), offre una discussione di cinque *epinikia* di Pindaro, cioè le Nemee 4, 6, 8, 10 e 11. Le odi, stampate con apparati critici, sono seguite, rispettivamente, da una breve introduzione, un'analisi metrica e un commento. Il volume, meneggevole e nitidamente stampato, purtroppo non è corredato da un indice analitico.

La motivazione della scelta dei cinque *epinikia* non appare del tutto chiara, e infatti l'autore afferma nella Prefazione che potevano essere trattate tutte le Nemee ("If I were starting afresh, I might well have preferred to include all the Nemeans, but the addition of the remaining odes at this stage would have entailed a considerable delay, and I have preferred to publish what is ready. There is at any rate nothing unusual in a work of this kind"). E non solo: