

↪ | Introduction to Volume II: Comedy, Herodotus,  
Hellenistic and Imperial Greek Poetry, the  
Novels

## 1 Fifth-Century Literature

Like many chapters in Volume 1, the original publications of the first nine in Volume 2 evolved directly or indirectly from my Oxford teaching. The first six chapters discuss issues arising from Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, *Wasps* and *Clouds*. I gave tutorials to pupils from Corpus Christi College on the first two plays which (together with *Lysistrata*) were studied for a 'Political Comedy' paper in Honour Moderations from 1968; and for some years I also gave University lectures on *Wasps*, though the publication of MacDowell's excellent Oxford commentary in 1971 rendered these lectures much less important.

Chapter 1, 'Who is Dicaeopolis?' (1988), sets out briefly the case for seeing in the character Dicaeopolis in *Acharnians* not (as often proposed) an *alter ego* of Aristophanes, but his competitor Eupolis, from whose political stance in his comedies Aristophanes circumspectly distances his own.

Chapter 2, '*Marginalia Obsceniora*: Some Problems in Aristophanes' *Wasps*' (1990c), examines passages where I argue that obscene language or sexual elements in the dramatic action have been missed – a subject I thought would be of interest to the honorand of the volume in which it first appeared, Sir Kenneth Dover.

Chapter 3, on the other hand, 'Wine in Old Comedy' (1995a), was catalysed not by my teaching but by a conference in Rome organised by Oswyn Murray that became the volume entitled *In Vino Veritas*. It thus related to my interest in sympotic behaviour that lay behind some chapters in Volume 1, and attempted to document Old Comedy's presentation of alcoholic consumption, both in and outside a sympotic context, and to bring out how different was the perception of the consumption of wine by discerning citizens in a symposium, mixed with water and in moderation, from that by women or slaves, typically neat, indiscriminately, and to deplorable excess.

Chapter 4, 'Ionian *Iambus* and Attic *Komoidia*: Father and Daughter, or Just Cousins?' (2002c), also relates to parts of Volume 1, addressing as it

does the question of whether Attic comedy is a direct descendant of Ionian *iambus*. It owes its existence to a Corpus seminar on the language of Attic comedy organised in 2000 by Andreas Willi, and revisits the old problem of its relation to iambic poetry. Comparing three possible hypotheses of dependence, I set out objections to the view of Rosen 1988 according to which Cratinus introduced into Attic comedy certain iambic features which remained characteristic of the genre throughout Old Comedy. Before entering a detailed discussion of several lexical points of contact between *iambus* and comedy, I stressed the substantial differences between the two genres in the matter of length, audience, performers and mode of performance, and in the narrative form of much *iambus*. I argued that these differences counted against a close affiliation of *iambus* and comedy, so that little weight should be given to their superficial lexical overlap, especially prominent in the field of obscenity or *aischrologia*. I also emphasised that in his *Poetics* Aristotle does not suggest any genetic link between *iambus* and comedy. We should rather see such similarities as there are as products of the two independently developed genres in which abuse had a social or political function.

Aristophanes' *Clouds* was one of the half-dozen texts prescribed for a paper on fifth-century Greek literature in the new form of 'Greats', first examined in 1972. From the start, therefore, pupils had the advantage of access to Kenneth Dover's excellent 1968 commentary, and some issues I asked them to consider were ones where I thought it misleading. The question of how close to the 'real' Socrates Aristophanes' 'Socrates' stood is one that I debated with many generations of pupils. When in 1995 a two-centre conference on *Le rire des anciens* was organised in Paris and Rouen, chiefly by Monique Trédé, I took the opportunity to put my thoughts in order in a French version of Chapter 5, stressing the evidence of Aristophanes' *Birds* and of Plato's *Phaedo* that Socrates could plausibly be represented as having Pythagorean connections, and of *Phaedo* that he admitted at some point to having an interest in natural science. These interests may no longer have been important for him in 424/3 BC, but they could well have remained part of his public image. I argued that it was unlikely that an Attic theatre audience, many of whom will have studied with a sophist, could not tell the difference between Socrates and a sophistic teacher of rhetoric, and that it was significant that it was only well into the play, when Aristophanes had established his 'Socrates' as like the 'real' Socrates in several respects, that he started to bring out the role of his stage-figure in teaching rhetoric – a role he gave him because his purpose in *Clouds* was to κωμωιδεῖν, 'make fun of in a comedy', both Socrates and sophists. The French version was

published as 'Le portrait de Socrate dans les *Nuées* d'Aristophane' (1998a) in the conference volume *Le rire des anciens*, edited by Monique Trédé and Philippe Hoffmann. I reworked it in an English version (Chapter 5, 'Socrates in Aristophanes' *Clouds* and the Audience of Attic Comedy', 2007f) given at a series of seminars for teachers of classics in British schools that I helped my wife Lucia Athanassaki to organise in the summer of 2007 at the European Cultural Centre of Delphi. My argument hung to some extent on the socio-economic distribution of spectators in the theatre of Dionysus in Athens, and on that theatre's size: I argued that the costs of theatre-going are likely to have reduced the number of poorer Athenians in a theatre whose capacity was more probably around 11,000 than the 15,000 to 17,000 often suggested, and that a high proportion of these spectators would be from the upper ranges of the zeugite class and above, familiar with sophists, and in many cases actually their pupils.

The last chapter on comedy (Chapter 6, 'Aristophanes *Clouds*: An Agonistic Note', 2015b, wrongly dated to 2016 in Volume 1, 790) was offered to a volume honouring Ana María González de Tobia edited by Claudia Fernández, Juan Tobias Nápoli and Graciela Zecchin. In it I returned to a question I had often discussed with pupils: was Dover right to insist that anachronisms and a change of speaker impossible to stage demonstrated the text of the (second) *Clouds* that we have to be an incomplete revision that was intended as a text only for reading, not for performance? On both counts I argued that Dover's case is not proven.

Chapter 7, 'The Lesson of Book 2' (2018a), is the last in this volume on fifth-century literature. In it I explored one of many questions that fascinated me in reading and – again for a paper on fifth-century literature – teaching Herodotus: is the authorial *persona* of Book 2 radically different from that of his other books, marking it to some extent as a survival from an earlier stage in his development? Jacoby's developmental model was endorsed by Charles Fornara in 1971, and a conference at Columbia, NY, organised by Liz Irwin and Tom Harrison to revisit that book's impact, gave me the incentive to construct an argument for seeing Book 2's authorial *persona* as much closer to that of the rest of his work, and to suggest that Herodotus' use of speeches in historical narrative was not, as Fornara suggested, a momentous innovation, but a technique he owed to narrative elegy, some of it presenting as early as the seventh century an account of conflict between Greeks and non-Greeks in western Asia Minor, and its most recent manifestation a long poem composed by a relative of Herodotus, Panyassis, encompassing a narrative relating not to one but to many Greek cities.

## 2 Hellenistic Poetry

Chapters 8 to 11 are devoted to Hellenistic poetry. Here too my teaching – tutorials given for Corpus Christi College, first on Theocritus, and later on a Hellenistic poetry paper, and lectures on Theocritus given for the University – was an important stimulus. It was in tutorials that in the late 1970s I developed arguments based on resemblances I saw between Lycidas in *Idyll* 7 and Philetas in Book 2 of Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe*, arguments which led me to propose (Chapter 8, ‘Theocritus’ Seventh *Idyll*, Philetas and Longus’, 1985a) that Lycidas fell into none of the categories listed by Dover in his 1971 commentary – ostensibly a comprehensive list – but into a category he had overlooked: a fictional character from another poet’s work. That other poet, I suggested, was Philitas of Cos, whose very influential early Hellenistic poetry is known only from a few fragments and from later allusions and references. Among the many phenomena explained by this hypothesis – and it remains only a hypothesis – are the Coan setting of *Idyll* 7’s narrative and the erotodidactic function of Philetas in Longus. The ‘Cydonia’ given as Lycidas’ origin becomes a Cydonia some kilometres north of Mytilene on Lesbos, arguably located in the hill-flanked coastal plain where Longus asks us to imagine the estates on which Daphnis and Chloe pastured their wealthy masters’ goats and sheep.

Chapters 9 and 10 owe their existence more to the very congenial workshops on Hellenistic poetry that were organised at Groningen in alternate years from 1992 by Annette Harder, Remco Regtuit and Gerry Wakker. Their friendly atmosphere encouraged frank discussion but discouraged polemic, and many participants continued debate in the nearby tavern *Het paard van Troje* (*The Trojan Horse*: now, alas, demolished). In Chapter 9 (‘Frame and Framed in Theocritus Poems 6 and 7’, 1996a) I returned to *Idyll* 7, proposing that the change from the unqualified name Amyntas at line 2 to ὁ καλὸς Ἀμύντιχος, ‘the lovely dear Amyntas’, at line 132 signals a development in the narrator’s feelings for Amyntas from friendship to sexual desire. Concerning *Idyll* 6, I suggested that the roles assumed by Daphnis and Damoetas in their quasi-competitive songs – of an unidentified *praeceptor amoris* addressing Polyphemus and of Polyphemus replying – are used by them to disclose to each other their mutual desire, confirmed for the reader by their kiss (line 42) and by their ensuing miniature *fête champêtre*. I noted too that the poem’s address to Aratus left it open to him to interpret its exploration of hitherto unconfessed desire as bearing on his own relationship with the poet.

Chapter 10 ('The Reception of Apollonius Rhodius in Imperial Greek Literature', 2000) charted prose writers' references to Apollonius – fewer than might be expected for so prominent a poet – and the extensive exploitation of his language by hexameter poets, above all Dionysius Periegetes.

A different genre, that of the hymn, is explored in Chapter 11 ('Time and Place, Narrative and Speech in Philicus, Philodamus and Limenius', 2015d). In it I compared Philicus' *Demeter* of ca. 275 BC, a poem which, at the time I was writing, I followed all other scholars since its first editor Medea Norsa in classifying as a hymn,<sup>1</sup> with the Delphic paeans of Philodamus (340/339 BC) and Limenius (between 138 and 106/5 BC). I argued that Philicus' poem locates the exchange between Iambē and the inconsolable Demeter not at Eleusis but at Prospalta, where Pausanias attests a cult of Demeter and Persephone, and that it may have proposed a role for that cult in the development of ritual αἰσχρολογία in Attica (cf. Eupolis' chorus in his *Prospaltians*). The interest in Attic cults shown by a Corcyrean domiciled in Alexandria matches Callimachus' decision about the same time to compose his very Attic *Hecalē*. By contrast the Delphic paean of Philodamus is focused chiefly on its place of performance and monumental inscription, albeit setting the arrival of Dionysus at Delphi, where he must be honoured alongside Apollo with cyclic choruses, in a wider geographical frame. Geography is important for the paean of Limenius too, offering as it does a very Athenian version of Apollo's arrival in mainland Greece and his journey to Delphi, a version appropriate for the *Pythais* from Athens by which we know it to have been performed.

### 3 Imperial Greek Poetry

Chapters 12 to 18 discuss Greek poetry in the Roman imperial period down to the middle of the third century AD. This is a subject that had very little to do with my teaching, and even the Oxford doctoral theses I supervised on imperial Greek literature were focused on prose authors, not poetry. But writing a chapter on later Greek literature for a volume edited and partly written by Kenneth Dover drew my attention to poetry's continuing importance in the period,<sup>2</sup> and I explored different but (inevitably) related aspects of that poetry in three articles whose composition was spread over more years than their publication in 1989 and

<sup>1</sup> I argue against this classification in Bowie forthcoming.

<sup>2</sup> Dover, West, Griffin, and Bowie 1980.

1990 might suggest. Chapter 12 ('Greek Sophists and Greek Poetry in the Second Sophistic', 1989a) aimed at the sort of overview that the editors of *ANRW* encouraged, and brought together the place of poetry in sophists' education; an account of the various poetic genres in which sophists composed, with citation of what we have from the only one of these genres to have survived, epigram; and epigrams on sophists by others. Chapter 13 ('Poetry and Poets in Asia and Achaëa', 1989b) resulted from an invitation to contribute to a British Museum Classical Colloquium, *The Greek Renaissance in the Roman Empire*, organised by Susan Walker and Averil Cameron in December 1986. It offered a short sketch of poetic output with special reference to the Roman provinces Achaëa and Asia, and with an eye on how far we can differentiate 'professional' poets from virtuoso amateurs. Chapter 14 ('Greek Poetry in the Antonine Age', 1990b), first written for an Oxford seminar organised in Hilary Term 1988 by Donald Russell, attempted a fuller survey of poetry in the reigns of Hadrian, Pius and Marcus. For epigram it drew on both the Greek Anthology (Pollianus and Ammianus for scoptic poems; Rufinus and Strato for erotic) and epigraphy (with examples of Iulia Balbilla's *faux*-Aeolic elegiacs on one of the Memnon colossi). The section on hexameter poetry highlights the poems of Marcellus of Side (again epigraphic texts play an important role) and of Dionysius Periegetes, with some discussion of Pancrates and only a mention of Oppian's *Halieutica*. The final section, on melic poetry, has Mesomedes as its chief exhibit.

Chapter 14 could in principle have discussed Hadrian's own poetry alongside that of his wife's friend Balbilla and of his favourite citharode Mesomedes, but it would then have become too long. Accordingly I devoted another paper (Chapter 15, 'Hadrian and Greek Poetry', 2002e), initially delivered to a conference in Lund on 'Greek Romans, Roman Greeks' organised by Jerker and Karin Blomqvist, entirely to Hadrian and poetry. I discussed his tastes in poetry – a preference for Ennius over Vergil and for Antimachus over Homer; his own surviving poems, with discussion of some dedicatory and sepulchral epigrams, and with a proposal about the nature of the possibly polymetric *Catachannae* mentioned by the *Augustan History*; and poetry composed by people near to him with an eye to his approval, like the *Altar* of the high equestrian official L. Iulius Vestinus (perhaps dateable precisely to 24 January AD 132) and the mysterious inscribed elegiacs from Cordoba in Baetica, signed by 'Arrian the proconsul', pronouncing on the greater appropriateness of the 'gifts of the Muses' to Artemis than of (seemingly) 'the heads of enemies'. This chapter had initially been conceived as part of a projected book on Hadrian's dealings

with the Greek world; but the publication in 1997 of Tony Birley's excellent *Hadrian: The Restless Emperor* joined other considerations in leading me to abandon that project.

Scholarly interest in Dionysius Periegetes had been growing since I first mentioned him briefly in the 1980 Dover volume and then wrote my longer account in 1990 – for both of which the most recent text in which his poem could be read was Müller's 1861 *Geographi Graeci Minores*. A conference on him organised by Patrick Counillon in Bordeaux in 2002 was responsible for Chapter 16 ('Denys d'Alexandrie: un poète grec dans l'empire romain', 2004a). Here I argued that Dionysius' poem is not, as sometimes suggested, timeless, but very alert to the impact of Rome and its emperor on peoples it has incorporated into its empire and proud of the Hellenic culture that has spread even beyond that empire's frontiers.

A conference in June 2007 on 'Greek poets in Italy', organised by Josiah Osgood and Alex Sens in Georgetown's *Villa Le Balze* near Fiesole, drew me into a deeper engagement than hitherto with the *Garland of Philip*. The paper I gave there benefited further from close readings of many of the *Garland's* poets in a graduate seminar I taught in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in the wintry early months of 2010: I am grateful to Silvia Barbantani for then offering it a home in *Aevum Antiquum* (Chapter 17, 'Luxury Cruisers? Philip's Epigrammatists between Greece and Rome', 2012e). I pointed out that Philip's poets share predominantly North Aegean origins, and argued that their mentions of Romans and of visits to Rome should be taken as evidence of these Romans being their 'patrons' much less often than they were by Gow and Page: rather, some at least of these poets were more probably from the propertied Greek elite (as Crinagoras certainly was) and made short visits to Rome either as envoys on behalf of their cities or as tourists, picking out in their poetry its monuments that had Hellenic connections. Only Philodemus seems certainly to have become a long-term resident of Italy, and his contrast of his simple abode with Piso's mansion does not demonstrate him to be financially dependent on him.

The last of the chapters on imperial Greek poetry, Chapter 18 ('Doing Doric', 2016f), was presented to a conference on dialect, diction and style in Greek epigram in Thessaloniki in May 2015, organised by Evina Sistakou and Antonios Rengakos. I argued that, whereas many poets in the *Garland of Philip* never use Doric, several do so to evoke either a Leonidean or Theocritean pastoral world, and sometimes because their subject has a Dorian connection – so Myrinus, Adaeus, Thallus, Erucius of Cyzicus, and Antiphilus of Byzantium. That Cyzicus was originally a colony of Corinth and Byzantium of Megara seems not to be relevant, since Doric appears

only rarely in these cities' inscribed poetry. Finally I examined the puzzling case of the five epigrams on Sacerdos of Nicaea preserved in the *Palatine Anthology* (15.4–8), of which three use Doric, two do not. I suggested that more than one poet may have been chosen to compose sepulchral epigrams for this grandiose obelisk-monument of around AD 130, and that the composer of the Doric poems might have been Philostratus' heritage-conscious sophist Memmius Marcus of Byzantium.

#### 4 The Greek Novel

My remaining twenty-eight chapters concern the Greek novel. At an early point in my work on the Greek culture of the Roman Empire I realised the importance of the novels from both a literary and a historical perspective. Already in spring 1965 I gave a talk at Bristol Grammar School in which I enthused about the cinematic technique of the opening of Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*, and I have pleasant memories of reading sceptically Merkelbach's *Roman und Mysterium* in the summer of that year in the garden of St John's College (where I was a Woodhouse Junior Fellow). My interest in the novels was further stimulated (as doubtless was that of many scholars) by the publication in 1967 of B. E. Perry's 1951 Sather lectures, *The Ancient Romances*, and by a sabbatical visit to Oxford in the winter of 1971/2 by Bryan Reardon, whose important 1971 book *Courants littéraires grecs des iième et iiième siècles après J.-C.* rightly gave prominence to the novels. I participated in a small and lively discussion group he established during his visit. Bryan was also the *πρῶτος εὔρετής* of the International Conference on the Ancient Novel (ICAN), the first of which he organised in Bangor, North Wales, in the hot summer of 1976, with assistance from Gareth Schmeling. Its participants were few enough to be offered generous hospitality in their home by Bryan and his wife Janette. My paper 'The Novels and the Real World' (Chapter 19, 1977) argued that historians of Greek civic culture in the Roman Empire should draw on the novels for details of Greek city life, of the behaviour of its elites, and of the relation between city and country – something Fergus Millar did, quite independently (as far as I know) and very effectively, in March 1981 in his UCL inaugural lecture 'The World of the *Golden Ass*,'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Concerning the Greek novels Millar 1981 referred (75 n.59) only to Scarcella 1977 on Xenophon; given its limited circulation the *ICAN Acta* (Reardon (ed.) 1977) are unlikely to have come to his attention.



and that had already to some extent been attempted for Lesbos by Scarcella 1968.<sup>4</sup> My paper was never developed into a full-length article, and this volume reprints it much as it was delivered.

Scholarly interest in the novels was further kindled by the publication in 1983 of Tomas Hägg's *The Novel in Antiquity*,<sup>5</sup> and by the 'Groningen Colloquia on the Novel', organised by Heinz Hofmann, Ben Hijmans and Maaïke Zimmerman: they ran from 1986 to the later 1990s, and resulted in nine volumes published between 1988 and 1998. Meanwhile I too had given substantial space to the novels in my portion of the chapter on Greek literature of the Empire in the *Cambridge History of Classical Literature*, written in 1977/8. Its Greek volume, edited by Pat Easterling and Bernard Knox, had gathered many of its contributions by 1980, but was published only in 1985. By then preparations for ICAN 2 were under way, organised by James Tatum at Dartmouth College, NH, in 1989, again a very hot summer – a conference that felicitously coincided with the publication of *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*, edited by Bryan Reardon. This made available in the same volume English translations of the famous five, of novels transmitted in epitomes, and of the major fragments. Its availability further boosted the study of the novels in Anglo-Saxon universities, and in Oxford Stephen Harrison and I were at last able to convince our colleagues in the languages and literature sub-faculty (hitherto cowed by Jasper Griffin's insistence that it would be better for pupils to read Demosthenes) to allow us to construct an ancient novel paper in the Final Honour School – a paper that was very popular from its first examination in 1995 to its last in 2008.

My Dartmouth conference paper (Chapter 20, 'The Readership of Greek Novels in the Ancient World', 1994a) argued against the view of Perry 1967 (to some extent endorsed by Reardon 1971) that the novels were popular literature, written for a 'juvenile' readership and 'for the edification of children and the poor-in-spirit'.<sup>6</sup> Rather, the intertextuality with high literature of the classical period and the level of education it implied pointed to an elite readership, among whom some of the few women to receive such an education were doubtless numbered. I was glad that my arguments were complemented by those of Susan Stephens (1994) based on the high quality of many of the papyri on which fragments of the period's varied and numerous novels are preserved.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Scarcella 1977, 1981.

<sup>5</sup> An English version of Hägg 1980: it had more impact than the nevertheless important Hägg 1971.

<sup>6</sup> Perry 1967, 5 and 98.

I investigated the problems of the novels' readership more systematically in a 1996 volume edited by Gareth Schmeling (whose insistence that I should write it I should perhaps have resisted more firmly): my Chapter 23 ('The Ancient Readers of the Greek Novels', 1996c) inevitably had some overlap with Chapter 20, but, unlike it, introduced the important distinction between intended and actual readership, and between the early, the 'sophistic', and other known novels. I concluded that the intended and actual readers of 'sophistic' novels were from the educated elite, and that Chariton probably envisaged such readers too, while perhaps writing in such a way that readers might be found further down the social scale: readers of this sort may also have been intended by Xenophon and the other writers of fiction, but in no case *much* further down.

In the 1990s I made five other contributions to understanding the novels. Together with Stephen Harrison, by then himself engaged with the Latin novels, especially that of Apuleius, and invited by Simon Price, I wrote for the *Journal of Roman Studies* a survey article on novel-studies in recent decades, inevitably a topic with a limited shelf-life.<sup>7</sup>

For a collection entitled *Greek Fiction* edited by Richard Stoneman and John Morgan I explored the modes of fictionality in Philostratus' *Heroicus* and *In Honour of Apollonius* (Chapter 21, 'Philostratus: Writer of Fiction', 1994b).

For a volume edited by Doreen Innes, Harry Hine and Christopher Pelling to mark the seventy-fifth birthday of Donald Russell, the distinguished scholar who had done so much to promote the study of imperial Greek literature in Oxford (above all, of course, Longinus, Dio of Prusa, Plutarch and Menander *rhetor*) and who had been crucial in fostering my own interest in it, I wrote a piece on Heliodorus (Chapter 22, 'Names and a Gem: Aspects of Allusion in the *Aethiopica* of Heliodorus', 1995b). The first part explored the effects achieved by Heliodorus in his naming of his characters – among them the unusual name Cnemon from Menander's *Dyscolus* chosen to underline the features of his story that related closely to New Comedy, and the philosophically resonant name Aristippus for his pleasure-seeking father. The second part argued that Heliodorus' detailed description (5.14) of the pastoral 'theatre' represented on the amethyst given to the merchant Nausicles in exchange for Charicleia was calculated to remind readers of Longus, in particular of the scene where Dionysophanes, Cleariste and their retinue seated 'as a theatre' spectate Daphnis' goats responding obediently to his panpipe's commands (4.15.2–4). Heliodorus

<sup>7</sup> Bowie and Harrison 1993, not printed in this volume.