

WONDER AND THE MARVELLOUS FROM HOMER  
TO THE HELLENISTIC WORLD

Wonder and wonders constituted a central theme in ancient Greek culture. In this book, Jessica Lightfoot provides the first full-length examination of its significance from Homer to the Hellenistic period. She demonstrates that wonder was an important term of aesthetic response and occupied a central position in concepts of what philosophy and literature are and do. She also argues that it became a means of expressing the manner in which the realms of the human and the divine interrelate with one another; and that it was central to the articulation of the ways in which the relationships between self and other, near and far, and familiar and unfamiliar were conceived. The book provides a much-needed starting point for reassessments of the impact of wonder as a literary critical and cultural concept both in antiquity and in later periods.

JESSICA LIGHTFOOT is Junior Research Fellow in Classics at Trinity College, Cambridge and Lecturer in Ancient Greek Literature at the University of Birmingham.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-316-51883-0 — Wonder and the Marvellous from Homer to the Hellenistic World

Jessica Lightfoot

Frontmatter

[More Information](#)

---

CAMBRIDGE CLASSICAL STUDIES

*General editors*

J. P. T. CLACKSON, W. M. BEARD, G. BETEGH, R. L. HUNTER,

M. J. MILLETT,

S. P. OAKLEY, R. G. OSBORNE, T. J. G. WHITMARSH

Cambridge University Press

978-1-316-51883-0 — Wonder and the Marvellous from Homer to the Hellenistic World

Jessica Lightfoot

Frontmatter

[More Information](#)

---

WONDER AND THE MARVELLOUS FROM HOMER TO  
THE HELLENISTIC WORLD

---

JESSICA LIGHTFOOT

*University of Birmingham*



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-1-316-51883-0 — Wonder and the Marvellous from Homer to the Hellenistic World

Jessica Lightfoot

Frontmatter

[More Information](#)CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,  
New Delhi – 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781316518830](http://www.cambridge.org/9781316518830)

DOI: 10.1017/9781009003551

© Faculty of Classics, University of Cambridge 2021

This work is in copyright. It is subject to statutory exceptions and to the provisions of relevant licensing agreements; with the exception of the Creative Commons version the link for which is provided below, no reproduction of any part of this work may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

An online version of this work is published at [doi.org/10.1017/9781009003551](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009003551) under a Creative Commons Open Access license CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0 which permits re-use, distribution and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial purposes providing appropriate credit to the original work is given. You may not distribute derivative works without permission. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0>

All versions of this work may contain content reproduced under license from third parties.

Permission to reproduce this third-party content must be obtained from these third-parties directly.

When citing this work, please include a reference to the DOI 10.1017/9781009003551

First published 2021

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

NAMES: Lightfoot, Jessica, 1991– author.

TITLE: Wonder and the marvellous from Homer to the Hellenistic world / Jessica Lightfoot.

OTHER TITLES: Cambridge classical studies.

DESCRIPTION: New York : Cambridge University Press, 2021. | Series: Cambridge classical studies | Includes bibliographical references and index.

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2021008438 (print) | LCCN 2021008439 (ebook) | ISBN 9781316518830 (hardback) | ISBN 9781009003551 (ebook)

SUBJECTS: LCSH: Greek literature – History and criticism. | Marvelous, The, in literature. | Homer – Criticism and interpretation. | BISAC: HISTORY / Ancient / General | HISTORY / Ancient / General

CLASSIFICATION: LCC PA3015.M37 L54 2021 (print) | LCC PA3015.M37 (ebook) | DDC 880.9/38–dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021008438>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021008439>

ISBN 978-1-316-51883-0 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-009-00914-0 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

## CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	page vii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	ix
1 Beginning with <i>Thauma</i>	I
2 The Art of <i>Thauma</i> : Nature, Artifice and the Marvellous	17
2.1 Wondrous Visions: Charmides as <i>Agalma</i>	19
2.2 Plato's Marvellous Young Men: Theaetetus and Charmides as <i>Thaumata</i>	23
2.3 Critias the Poet, Charmides the Actor	26
2.4 <i>Thauma Idesthai</i> : Wonder, Divine Artworks and the Ekphrastic Tradition	31
3 Reading <i>Thauma</i> : Paradoxography and the Textual Collection of Marvels	42
3.1 Collecting <i>Thaumata</i> : The Emergence of the Paradoxographical Collection	46
3.2 Taming Zoological <i>Thaumata</i> : Archelaus the Egyptian's <i>Peculiar Forms</i> and the Ptolemaic Court	52
3.3 <i>Thaumata</i> and the Ethnographic Tradition: Herodotus and the Edges of the Earth	58
3.4 Reactivating <i>Thauma</i> : Paradoxography and the Aristotelian Tradition	68
3.5 Textual <i>Thaumata</i> : Paradoxography and the Poetics of Hellenistic Literature	78
4 The Sound of <i>Thauma</i> : Music and the Marvellous	80
4.1 Homer the Proto-Paradoxographer: Poetry, Music and Science in Antigonus' <i>Collection of Marvellous Investigations</i>	83
4.2 Giving Voice to the Dead: <i>Thauma</i> and the Lyre in the <i>Homeric Hymn to Hermes</i>	88
4.3 Hermes' Signs and Songs: <i>Thaumata</i> and <i>Semata</i>	92
4.4 Collapsing Boundaries: Epiphanic <i>Thauma</i> , <i>Choreia</i> and Song	98
	v

## Contents

5	The Experience of <i>Thauma</i> : Cognition, Recognition, Wonder and Disbelief	107
5.1	Recognition, Realisation and <i>Thauma</i> : The Meeting of Priam and Achilles	112
5.2	Marvels at the Margins: Geographical and Mythic Innovation in Euripides' <i>Iphigenia among the Taurians</i>	119
5.3	Wonders beyond <i>Mythoi</i> : Recognition and <i>Thauma</i> in Euripides' <i>Iphigenia among the Taurians</i>	127
5.4	Marvels at the Centre: Delphi, Athens and <i>Thauma</i> in Euripides' <i>Ion</i>	132
6	Near and Distant Marvels: Defamiliarising and Refamiliarising <i>Thauma</i>	138
6.1	The Wonder of Nephelococcygia: Aristophanes' <i>Birds</i> and the Edges of the Earth	142
6.2	Familiar <i>Thaumata</i> : The Bird-Chorus' Wondrous Travels	149
6.3	The Wonder of Athens: Thucydides and <i>Thauma</i>	158
7	Making Marvels: <i>Thaumatopoiia</i> and <i>Thaumatourgia</i>	174
7.1	The Meaning of Marvel-Making: Theatrical <i>Thaumatopoiia</i>	176
7.2	Symptotic <i>Thaumatopoiia</i> : Wonder-Working in Xenophon's <i>Symposium</i>	181
7.3	<i>Thaumatopoiia</i> and Perspective in Plato's <i>Republic</i> and <i>Sophist</i>	187
7.4	Socratic Marvel-Making: <i>Thaumatopoiia</i> in the Cave	192
8	Epilogue: <i>Thaumata Polla</i>	199
8.1	<i>Thauma</i> as the Beginning of Philosophy – or <i>Nil Admirari</i> ?	200
8.2	Mediating between Gods and Men, Nature and Artifice: Automata and <i>Thauma</i> in Hero of Alexandria's Mechanical Treatises	208
8.3	<i>Mera Miracula: Thauma</i> , Textuality and the Marvels of Aulus Gellius' <i>Noctes Atticae</i>	215
	<i>Bibliography</i>	228
	<i>Subject Index</i>	250
	<i>Index Locorum</i>	253

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is a revised version of my doctoral thesis, submitted in Oxford in the summer of 2018. It is a pleasure to acknowledge and thank the many people and institutions who have helped me along the way at every stage. I am very grateful to the Arts and Humanities Research Council for funding my doctoral work and to St John's College, Oxford for further financial support over the course of my graduate studies. My election to a Junior Research Fellowship at Trinity College, Cambridge in 2018 made the transformation from thesis to book possible. I am grateful to both the College and the Faculty of Classics at Cambridge for providing me with such an enjoyable and stimulating intellectual environment over the last few years. I am also grateful to the Department of Classics, Ancient History and Archaeology at the University of Birmingham for allowing me to take leave to complete the final stages of this book. I thank all of these institutions for their generous and sustained support.

I was extremely lucky to benefit from the insight of two wonderful supervisors and many other marvellous interlocutors over the course of my time in Oxford. Chris Pelling went above and beyond the call of duty while helping me to navigate the difficult early stages of this project and has always been on hand with kind and wise guidance. Felix Budelmann has been a constant source of encouragement and has been ever generous with his time and sage advice. I am very thankful to both for their continued support. I would also particularly like to thank Gregory Hutchinson and Richard Rutherford for offering kind and useful feedback over the course of the early stages of the thesis; Oliver Thomas for sharing his then unpublished work on the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* with me; and my examiners, Tim Whitmarsh and Tim Rood, for their thoughtful advice.

## Acknowledgements

Over the last few years I have been incredibly fortunate in having the opportunity to teach so many wonderful students, many of whom allowed me to first try out and discuss – perhaps without quite realising it at the time – so many of the ideas in this book. My time as a Lecturer at Magdalen College, Oxford in 2015–17 during my doctoral studies was particularly formative. I thank all those students who patiently put up with my thaumastic thoughts in this period, and after.

I owe an especial debt of thanks to Richard Hunter, who first encouraged me while I was completing my MPhil in Cambridge in 2014 and has been a tremendous source of support ever since. A better mentor is impossible to imagine. As well as helping me sharpen my thoughts on many points, Rebecca Lämmle has done much to keep my chin up with an incredible mixture of both humour and erudition over the last few years. During this same period I have also been extremely fortunate to benefit from Renaud Gagné's wise discussions and advice. At a crucial stage on this book's route to publication, Armand D'Angour was incredibly generous with his time and – most crucially – encouragement. I will be forever grateful for James Clackson's advice and kindness. I thank them all.

I would also like to thank Michael Sharp and his team at Cambridge University Press, and the two anonymous readers, whose comments very much improved the final product.

Last, but not least, I am very grateful to my family and Peter Agócs for their unfailing love and support.



## ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations of ancient authors and titles follow the conventions of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (4th edition).

AB	Austin, C. and Bastianini, G. (2002) <i>Posidippi Pellaei quae supersunt omnia</i> . Milan.
CVA Australia I	Cambitoglou, A. and Turner, M. (eds.) (2008) <i>Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum: Australia [Fasc. 1]. The Nicholson Museum, The University of Sydney: The Red Figure Pottery of Apulia</i> . Sydney.
CVA British Museum 2	Smith, A. H. and Pryce, F. N. (eds.) (1926) <i>Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum: Great Britain. British Museum 2</i> . London.
CVA Naples III	Rocco, A. (1954) <i>Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum. Italia 24. Napoli, Museo Nazionale 3</i> . Rome.
DK	Diels, H. and Kranz, W. (1951–2) <i>Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker</i> (6th ed.). 3 vols. Berlin.
FGE	Page, D. L. (1981) <i>Further Greek Epigrams</i> . Cambridge.
LCS I	Trendall, A. D. (1967) <i>The Red-Figured Vases of Lucania, Campania and Sicily, Vol. 1</i> . Oxford.
LCS II	Trendall, A. D. (1967) <i>The Red-Figured Vases of Lucania, Campania and Sicily, Vol. 2</i> . Oxford.

## List of Abbreviations

LM	Laks, A. and Most, G. W. (eds.) (2016) <i>Early Greek Philosophy</i> . 9 vols. Cambridge, MA.
Pf.	Pfeiffer, R. (1949) <i>Callimachus, Vol. I: Fragmenta</i> . Oxford.
PGR	Giannini, A. (1966) <i>Paradoxographorum Graecorum reliquiae</i> . Milan.
PhV <sup>2</sup>	Trendall A. D. (1967) <i>Phlyax Vases</i> (2nd ed.). London.
P. Oxy.	Grenfell, B. P. and Hunt, A. S. (1898–) <i>The Oxyrhynchus Papyri</i> . London.
PPSupp.	Trendall A. D. (1952) ‘Paestan Pottery: A Revision and a Supplement’. <i>PBSR</i> 10: 1–53.
RVP	Trendall, A. D. (1987) <i>The Red-Figured Vases of Paestum</i> . London.
Sb.	Sbardella, L. (2000) <i>Filita: Testimonianze e frammenti poetici</i> . Rome.
SH	Lloyd-Jones, H. and Parsons, P. (eds.) (1983) <i>Supplementum Hellenisticum</i> . Berlin.
TrGF Kannicht	Kannicht, R. (2004) <i>Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta, Vol. 5.1: Euripides</i> . Göttingen.
TrGF Radt	Radt, S. (1999) <i>Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta, Vol. 4: Sophocles</i> . Göttingen.