

Henderson, W.J. 2018. *Die Geleerde Digter: Antieke Griekse Pastorale en Epigrammatiese Poësie*. 3 vols. Pretoria: Imprimatur. Pp. 179, 226, 239. ISBN 978-0-6399219-0-7, 978-0-6399219-1-4, 978-0-6399219-2-1. ZAR600 ea.

Professor Bill Henderson is a well-known Classicist who has established an international reputation over many years for his work on ancient Greek poetry. Noteworthy in the present context, however, is the fact that he has made an exceptional contribution over several decades to the study of these poems in Afrikaans. Important book publications in this regard are *Kalliope I* (1986) and *Kalliope II* (1988), both in collaboration with J.H. Barkhuizen and C.A. van Rooy; *Op Griekse Lier* (2004); *Vir Griekse Fluite* (2009); and *Die Berispende Stem* (2011).<sup>1</sup>

In the present publication Henderson continues this outstanding tradition. The three-volume book functions as the next instalment in his series on Greek poetry. His previous publications focus on lyric, elegiac, and iambic poetry of the Classical period, while this volume deals with pastoral poetry and epigrams from the Hellenistic Age.

The book is divided into three separate volumes, each with its own pagination. This division is probably due to the limitations of a paperback binding (the three volumes taken together contain almost 650 pages), but each volume has its own bibliography and glossary and thus functions more or less independently.

The first volume begins with a general introduction to the culture and poetics of the Hellenistic period. It continues with an introduction to pastoral poetry, followed by an introduction to selected pastoral poems of the poets Theocritus of Syracuse, Moschus of Syracuse, and Bion of Smyrna, each with an Afrikaans translation and commentary. The second volume contains an introduction to Greek epigram from the Archaic to the Hellenistic period, again followed by introductions, a selection of poems in translation, and discussion, of works by Simonides of Ceos, Erinna of Telos, Anyte of Tegea, Nossis of Locri, Leonidas of Tarentum, Hedulus of Samos, Asclepiades of Samos, and Posidippus of Pella. The third volume contains selections and discussion of epigrammatic poems by Callimachus of Cyrene,

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<sup>1</sup> W.J. Henderson (tr.) 1986. *Kalliope I: Griekse Jambiese en Elegiese Poësie van Archilochos tot Theognis*. Pretoria; idem (tr.) 1988, *Kalliope II: 'n Bloemlesing van Griekse Liriese Poësie van Alkman tot Pindaros*. Pretoria; idem (tr.) 2004. *Op Griekse Lier: Vroeë Griekse Liriese Poësie*. Pretoria; idem (tr.) 2009. *Vir Griekse Fluite: Vroeë Griekse Elegiese Poësie*. Pretoria; and idem (tr.) 2011. *Die Berispende Stem: Vroeë Griekse Jambiese Poësie Vertaal en Toegelig*. Johannesburg.

Theocritus of Syracuse, Rhianus of Biene, Theodoridas of Syracuse, Dioscorides of Nicopolis, Alcaeus of Messene, Antipater of Sidon, and Meleager of Gadara.

The introductory chapters and sections of the work aim to orientate the general educated reader in the cultural and literary history and background of the poets and their poems, and of the genres concerned. These include brief summaries of the life and works of each of the poets. The introductions do indeed provide lucid, succinct, and informative discussions, well worth reading on their own. The selection of poets and poems included in this publication has been carefully made to be most representative of the genres on which the book focuses.

As indicated by the title of this work (which can be translated into English as ‘The Learned Poet’) the poetics of the Hellenistic period was characterized by a conscious and sophisticated use of ‘literary’ language and intertextual allusions. This ‘literariness’ can make these poems daunting for the non-specialist reader and poses exceptional challenges to the translator. Henderson succeeds in providing lucid translations that are nevertheless faithful renderings of the Greek. To achieve this, he frequently makes use of the ability of Afrikaans to create new compounds to emulate the Greek: see, for example, ‘liefdeliewende rose’, ‘soetlokkige Heliodora’, ‘welgevlegte hare’ (vol. 3, p. 163), all from Meleager’s *Epigram* 46 G-P. Most of his discussions of the poems are brief and to the point, focusing on providing the reader with just enough information to appreciate the poetry. More technical information is relegated to endnotes. In the case of the longer pastoral poems in the first volume he does, however, devote several pages of interpretation to each poem.

In addition to the introductions, translations, and interpretations, the volumes contain other useful information to guide the non-specialist reader. Henderson gives very extensive references to the most important modern publications on the respective poets and poems that encourage further study. Each volume contains a glossary of the various Greek proper names occurring in the poems and discussion, each name with an indication of its pronunciation, the Latinized form of the name, and a brief identification of the person concerned. The first volume also contains a helpful genealogical table setting out the rather complicated family relationships of the dynasty of the Ptolemies, the rulers of Egypt during the period in which most of the poems were composed.

Although these volumes will probably have a limited readership, they nonetheless make an immense contribution to the expansion and continuation of the classical tradition in Afrikaans. Advanced Afrikaans Greek students will benefit most from this publication, but it will also be accessible and

of great value to educated readers in general who can read the language. It is warmly recommended.

Johan Thom  
Stellenbosch University