

Paul Murgatroyd, *Mythical Monsters in Classical Literature*. London: Duckworth, 2007. Pp. 222. ISBN 978-0-7156-3625-5. Paperback. US\$31.00, UK£16.99.

Paul Murgatroyd's book evolved out of his course work on mythology at MacMasters University. It reads as a sourcebook and functions as a useful reference work. Each chapter concentrates on an aspect of mythical monsters, based on a primary text or texts, which the author then translates and discusses. It is aimed at both the layman and the classical scholar and thus reads extremely well. Murgatroyd focusses exclusively on the literary aspects of the primary texts and does not seek to interpret the nature of the beasts from the levels of the symbolic or psychoanalytic. Thus, meaning is not sought in the Monsters or their slayers themselves, but in how the ancient authors depict them. The author has identified the need for this approach, complementing the abundant body of literature that does deal with myth on the levels of the psychoanalytic, the anthropological and the symbolic.

The book contains twelve chapters, each dealing with various categories of Monster (1. Vampires, Werewolves and the Living Dead; 2. Impact; 3. Laocoon and the Sea-Snakes; 4. Sirens; 5. Other Winged Monsters; 6. A Monster Slayer; 7. A Good Monster: Chiron; 8. Metamorphosed Monsters; 9. Jason and the Argonauts; 10. Fighting with Monsters (1); 11. Fighting with Monsters (2); 12. Polyphemus).

I shall not attempt to summarise all twelve but will offer a summary of a selection.

Chapter 1, 'Vampires, Werewolves and the Living Dead', establishes these creatures in their Greek and Roman context. The Furies and Keres are briefly discussed as 'vampiresque' as they appear in Aeschylus's *Eumenides* and Pseudo-Hesiod's *Shield of Heracles*, while the story of an Empusa (also known as Lamia and Mormolyca) is discussed in greater detail using Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius* 4.25 and his narrative techniques of story telling. The creature known as the *Strix*, a nocturnal, ill-omened vampire bird, is introduced through Ovid's *Fasti* (6.131ff). Ancient werewolves are introduced through the stories of Herodotus, Aesop and Petronius. Petronius's *Satyricon* contains the most famous ancient werewolf story and so receives the most comment. The living dead are discussed in the context of those ancient literary episodes where corpses come back to life. Apuleius's 2nd century AD novel *Metamorphoses* (1.5ff) is cited for its melodramatic account of the tale of Socrates and his enslavement by the witch Meroe. This chapter ends with an appendix on non-mythical monsters in which the author briefly treats those monsters mentioned in the adventures of Alexander the Great, such as *The Alexander Romance* (pseudo-Callisthenes), or

those recounted in the tales of ancient travellers and scholars who wrote on natural history as well as those introduced into historical epic poems.

Chapter 2, 'Impact', offers in-depth analyses of how writers achieve impact in their depiction of monsters. Here Murgatroyd aims at increasing enjoyment and critical appreciation of monsters in literature. Examples are taken from Hesiod's *Cerberus*, *Echidna* and *Chimaera* as they appear in the *Theogony*. He also refers to descriptions of monsters from Homer's *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, skilfully pointing out how the effects of vividness, excitement, terror and suspense are created by the various authors. Chapter 4, on 'Sirens', examines the enigma of the Sirens and delves into their murky origins by tracing evidence of these mysterious beings from Classical times to their appearance in the poetry and prose of modern times. Chapter 6, 'A Monster Slayer', focusses on Theseus and his encounter with monsters, most notably the Minotaur. Murgatroyd looks at three depictions of Theseus by ancient authors: Bacchylides's *Poems* 17 and 18, Catullus's *Poem* 64 and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 7. He demonstrates how these authors offer conflicting depictions of the great Athenian hero, thus providing an excellent example of the protean nature of Greek myth.

Chapter 7, 'A Good Monster: Chiron', provides a selection of monsters which are good and provide help to the gods and mortals alike. The chapter focusses on four portrayals of Chiron the famous Centaur. Murgatroyd begins with Pindar's *Pythian Ode* 9, discussing the section in which Apollo asks Chiron for advice regarding his intended female conquest, the Nymph Cyrene. He dwells on the gentle humour of the scene as well as the portrayal of Chiron as a wise, civilised and gentle beast who urges Apollo not to rape Cyrene, but to persuade her and treat her like a queen. Next he looks at Horace's *Epode* 13, which contains the prophecy of the Centaur to his pupil Achilles of his death on the plains of Troy. The next two texts Murgatroyd discusses are both by Ovid: *Metamorphoses* 2 and *Fasti* 5. *Metamorphoses* 2 (633ff.) contains the story of Chiron's daughter Ocyrhoe and her prophecies regarding Asclepius, the infant son of Apollo, whom Chiron reared, and the fate of Chiron himself. Murgatroyd points out the melancholy tone in the passage and the pity the poet evokes for Ocyrhoe as she is metamorphosed into a mare after daring to prophesy the death of her own father by the poison of the Hydra. He examines the complexity of Ovid's writing and the irony of Ocyrhoe's treatment, contextualising her story of change in relation to the other tales which are concerned with the dangers of talking too much. Ovid's *Fasti* 5 (381ff.) contains the tale of the death of Chiron. Murgatroyd highlights the pathos and tragedy of the account in which Ovid has the boy Achilles witness the dreadful accident and lament tearfully the death of his surrogate father.

Each chapter in this book is a delight to read and can quite easily be approached on its own. Through his use of texts, Murgatroyd is able to introduce students to some of the less well-known ancient authors such as Manilius, Valerius Flaccus, Quintus Smyrnaeus, Statius and Philostratus, whose works are analysed alongside those giants of ancient literature such as Homer, Pindar, Vergil and Ovid. He does not discuss the changes in literary style over the course of the Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic and Roman periods, nor does he discuss the merits or popularity (both ancient and modern) of the many authors whose works he refers to. His focus on the monsters and their literary appearances is exclusive and highly successful in its aim to enhance literary enjoyment and awareness of narrative technique. All the translations are the author's own and his enjoyment of his subject shines through in them. The inclusion of illustrations of works of art from ancient times to the Neo-Classical period enhances the pleasure of the reader immensely. I would highly recommend it both as textbook and an enlightening read.

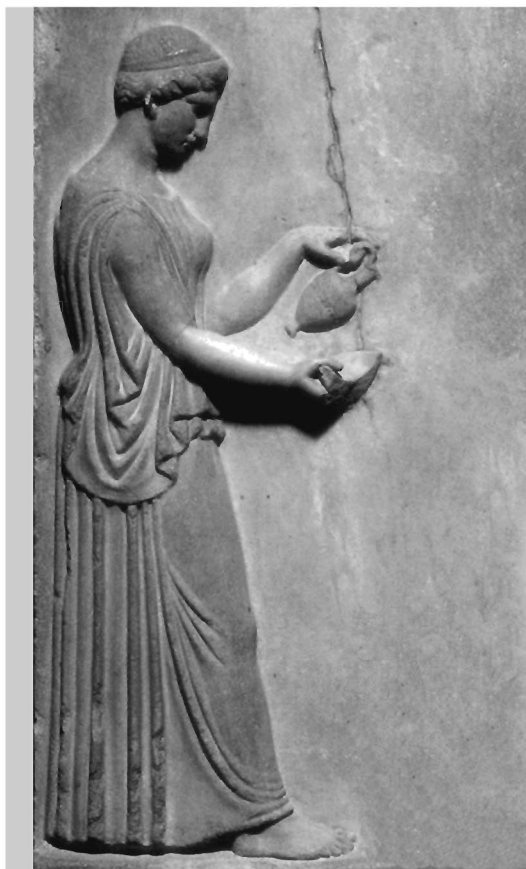
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Marilyn B. Skinner (ed.), *A Companion to Catullus*. Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World. Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 2007. ISBN-13: 978-1-4051-3533-7. Pp. xxvi, 590. US\$150.

This volume forms part of Blackwell's very successful Companions to the Ancient World series with the aim to provide 'sophisticated and authoritative overviews' of a period, topic, genre or author. According to its editor this companion to Catullus was intended as a reference work, but also for 'original insights' into the subject matter. The volume does indeed give an excellent overview of the state of Catullan scholarship reflecting the quality of work being done on this difficult author. Individual chapters have an own bibliography. A useful consolidated bibliography appears at the end of the volume, as well as an extended general index and a comprehensive index *locorum*.

The volume is divided into eight parts, covering aspects such as 'Text and the Collection' (Part 1), 'Contexts of Production' (Part 2), 'Influences' (Part 3), 'Stylistics' (Part 4), 'Poems and Groups of Poems' (Part 5), 'Reception' (Part 6), 'Pedagogy' (Part 7) and 'Translation' (Part 8). All sections start out with a thorough overview or explanation of the topic, before engaging with specific aspects of the subject matter. The section on 'Pedagogy' consists of chapters on Catullus in the secondary school curriculum written by Ronnie

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