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## E. Fantham, Lucan. De Bello Civili (Cambridge 1992)

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and cavils do not diminish the significance of this accomplishment and the essential role that this translation will play in stimulating and facilitating studies in Petrarch and Renaissance cultural history.

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Rosalind Thomas. **Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece.** Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1992. (*Key Themes in Ancient History*, Paul Cartledge and Peter Garnsey, eds.).

*Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* is the second volume in what promises to be a very important series, *Key Themes in Ancient History*. Thomas applies contemporary oral theory to an analysis of the nature of written and oral transmission of literature, in its broadest sense, in ancient Greece. She does not limit herself to such traditional problems as the orality of Homer, or the date in which Homeric Epic was first put into writing. And likewise, she does not limit her scholarship to the specifically classically oriented works of Parry and/or Lord in which modern orality is used as a paradigm for that of Greek Epic. Rather Thomas applies a substantial range of methodologies ranging from those in such disciplines as anthropology, literary studies (including the history of the Greek alphabet), *Religionsgeschichte*, etc., to the more traditional Homeric scholarship.

*Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* contains seven chapters inclusive of the introduction, in addition to an epilogue, a bibliographic essay, an extremely thorough bibliography, and an index. After the brief, but well presented and significant introduction, Thomas deals with the basic contrasts between literacy and orality (Chapter 2). She then gives a thorough analysis of the various matters pertinent to oral poetry, including the Parry-Lord thesis, methods of composition, the role of the formula, etc. (Chapter 3). Thomas' treatment of the beginning of literacy *vis à vis* oral communication in the Archaic period in Greece is masterful (Chapter 4). And she shows the influence of the anthropologists most clearly in her attempt to go "Beyond the rationalist view of writing" in what this reviewer finds to be the most interesting chapter, (Chapter 5), in

this very interesting work. Thomas' discussion of the relationship of orality to performance (Chapter 6) and her discussion of the relationship of literacy to power (Chapter 7) should be required reading for everybody interested in the fluidity of texts in the oral tradition, and the role of literacy in the employment of political power.

*Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* is a work of major importance. It belongs in the library of every classicist, and of every scholar who works in the theory of oral transmission and/or the development of literacy. It is clearly written. The data and their analysis are well presented and Thomas' hypotheses are well developed. Thomas brings the traditional Greek problems of orality versus literacy into the broader range of scholarship pertaining to orality/aurality. She shows that in Greece, as we know to be the case elsewhere, the transition from an oral/aural to a literate culture was not a simple straightforward progression, but rather one in which literacy became concomitant with rather than a replacement for oral/aural remembering.

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Elaine Fantham (ed.). **Lucan: De Bello Civili, II.** Cambridge Greek and Latin Press, 1992. Pp. x + 244, incl. 2 b/w maps. \$59.95 (hardbound), \$22.95 (paper). ISBN 0 521 41010 X; 42241 8.

The need for commentaries on the individual books of Lucan is gradually being met. We have seen in the last ten years a number of commentaries of varying scope and for different intended audiences, Getty on Book 1, Dilke on 7, Mayer on 8, and Kubiak on 9. Now here is Fantham's edition of Book 2, which, as the cover announces is "the first full-scale commentary on the neglected second book of Lucan's epic poem". This is good news both for the newcomer to Lucan who might want a sample of Neronian epic and also for the scholar of Lucan. In accord with the format of the series by Cambridge University Press the edition contains the standard introduction that takes up biography, sources, diction, and meter. The introduction is a model of concision, conveying all the expected information but also offering keen literary and aesthetic observations. Both the professional scholar

and the novice will profit from reading the section on Lucan's poetic interpretation of the civil war. Fantham is often very good at close reading of the text, and her discussion of style and syntax provide a good introduction to the aesthetics of Lucan's verse. The commentary is, as noted above, "full-scale". On the one hand, it offers the philological help that a student new to Lucan might need in construing, say, lines 119-122, with their tortured syntax and textual uncertainty. On the other, being a very, very learned commentary, it at times tells us more than one might want to know on the disposition of the many rivers in Lucan's geography or about linguistic parallels in his literary predecessors.

Fantham's discussion of thematic and interpretative questions is even-handed and sensible, illuminating, for example, the characterizations of Cato and Pompey as well as Lucan's treatment of Marius and Sulla. One omission in the discussion is an evaluation of the Corfinium passage. For, while Fantham is more than generous with the military and strategic details informing the scene, she does not address the widely discussed question of whether or not Lucan is through his characterization of Domitius making a statement on Domitius' descendant and Lucan's emperor, Nero.

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**Plutarch. The Malice of Herodotus.** With an introduction, translation, and commentary by A.J. Bowen. Warminster: Aris and Phillips Ltd., 1992. Pp. vi + 153. \$49.95.

This is a very welcome book that introduces for the first time with an English commentary one of the most significant works of ancient historiography. Previous editions are still available: Pearson's Loeb (1965) gives a reasonable translation, Häslér's Teubner (1978) and Hansen's edition published by Hakkert (1979) both produce an improved text, and Lachenaud's Budé (1981) offers a serviceable commentary in French. Bowen's edition builds and improves upon his predecessors, providing an accessible yet scholarly work that will foster classroom discussion about the methods of ancient historiography. It complements other works in the Aris and Phillips series of commentaries that

include two other volumes on Plutarch: the *Lives of Aristeides and Cato* (edited by D. Sansone) and the *Life of Cicero* (edited by J.L. Moles).

Bowen's edition of the *de Herodoti malignitate* consists of thirteen introductory pages (with enumerated paragraphs), three pages of bibliography, seventy-nine pages of text with facing translation (both in readable sized type), an apparatus criticus of four pages, forty-two pages of commentary, and finally three short indices (citations from Herodotus, citations to other authors, and capitalized words in the Greek text). Unfortunately missing in the latter category is an index of subjects in English.

Bowen employs historical criticism in his approach to explaining both Plutarch and Herodotus. As far as this historical method goes, he is well informed and thorough. His style is consistently clear and easily understood, a rarity in many books that attempt to bridge the gap between the scholarly and the pedagogical. His analysis of chapter 22 in the introduction (pp. 10-12) is exemplary for its clarity and illumination. The translation is not as literal as Pearson's (*de gustibus non disputandum est*), but it is smooth and for the most part reflects an accurate sense of Plutarch's Greek.

There is one problem. Historical interpretation of this work, however sound, leads to misinterpretation when not tempered by an awareness of rhetorical and generic demands. The point is not unlike that of English professors who must somehow explain to enraged freshmen that Jonathan Swift's *Modest Proposal* does not really encourage child abuse and murder. They must make it clear that satire, generically speaking, demands an entirely different perspective from the reader than, say, historical narrative. Ignore the generic demand, and you miss the essay's rhetorical power.

Likewise, Plutarch's essay ought not be considered historiographic or philosophic as we normally understand those genres; rather it is forensic, and it must be allowed the license of ancient judicial oratory and permitted greater latitude with respect to misrepresentation and use of evidence. Its goal is persuasion, and that is the criteria by which the work must be judged, not deductively correct historical or factual accuracy.<sup>1</sup> Bowen reveals in his preface: "I have had in mind chiefly its use to students of the Persian Wars." In that goal Bowen has scored points—it is a fine historical commentary. But Plutarch really deserves to be judged on his own merits, by the standards of the genre in which he writes. Bowen comes *so* close to recognizing the