

Zitierhinweis

Sistakou, Evina: review of: Fabian Horn (ed.), Lykophron, Alexandra. Griechisch - Deutsch, Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2022, in: Exemplaria Classica, 26 (2022), p. 290-292, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33776/ec.v26.7422>, downloaded from Website

exemplaria
C L A S S I C A
Journal of Classical Philology

copyright

Dieser Beitrag kann vom Nutzer zu eigenen nicht-kommerziellen Zwecken heruntergeladen und/oder ausgedruckt werden. Darüber hinausgehende Nutzungen sind ohne weitere Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber nur im Rahmen der gesetzlichen Schrankenbestimmungen (§§ 44a-63a UrhG) zulässig.

FABIAN HORN, *Lycophron. Alexandra, griechisch – deutsch*, Sammlung Tusculum, Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter, 2022, 227 pp., 39.95 €, ISBN 978-3-11-075342-4.

For over a century now the *Tusculum* series, first published by the renowned Teubner editions in Leipzig and currently taken over by the prestigious publishing house of De Gruyter, has provided the German-speaking public with reliable, handy editions of select texts of Greek and Latin literature. The over 270 volumes of the series are available both in print and as e-books, matching in their editorial philosophy and accessibility the Loeb Classical Library of Harvard University Press. According to the publisher's site, this volume offers a new German translation of the *Alexandra*, a poem attributed to the Hellenistic author and scholar Lycophron of Chalcis, since more than 125 years. Indeed, it was back in 1895 when Carl von Holzinger published his own German translation, accompanied by an introduction and exhaustive philological comments, in Teubner. But von Holzinger aimed to write a reference work intended for strictly academic purposes. Fabian Horn, the author of the present edition of the *Alexandra*, aspires to reach a wider audience of first-time readers for this obscure work.

The volume begins with an Introduction (9-41) covering the content and literary genre of the *Alexandra*, the problems of authorship and dating of the work, and the specific criteria used for the making of the current edition. 'Alexandra' is the alternative name of Cassandra, the daughter of Priam endowed with the gift of prophecy; hence, the poem is a narration of her visions about the Trojan war and its aftermath until the poet's own time, delivered in the form of a tragic messenger speech. What is noteworthy in Horn's introduction is that he systematically lists (a) the viewpoints from which the Trojan War myth is retold in the poem (female and Trojan perspectives), (b) the stylistic mannerisms of the poem (animal metaphors, genealogical designations, mythological allusions, use of cult names, word-play), and (c) the riddle-techniques explored by the Hellenistic poet to misguide his readers. In the second part, Horn addresses the complicated question of the authorship/date of the poem; he meticulously discusses the passages that point towards a dating in the second century BCE, when the power of Rome was rising, but leaves the question about the identity of 'Lycophron' undecided. In the last part of the Introduction the author gives an overview of the mythological stories contained in the *Alexandra* with their respective line numbers, a valuable guide for those who want to orient themselves in the plethora of narratives included in the poem.¹ As a whole the introductory pages offer a glimpse into the complex philological issues of the *Alexandra* in a clear and concise manner, although some of its other characteristics, like the generic affiliation with tragedy and the

¹ This is a well-known practice in every scholarly edition of the *Alexandra*, and, as the author acknowledges, an equally detailed table of the poem's contents is found in the latest commentary by Simon Hornblower, Oxford 2015.

reception of the poem in antiquity, get limited attention (other aspects, such as the sources and the modern reception of the poem, are unfortunately absent).

I have left out the criteria of the current bilingual edition (34-8), which are more fittingly discussed in relation to the text and translation at hand (43-135). For the Greek text, Horn uses the Teubner text edited by Lorenzo Mascialino in 1964 as his basis, which, however, he harmonizes with the other standard editions (Scheer 1881, von Holzinger 1895, Hurst-Kolde 2008, Hornblower 2015); he adopts only 10 different readings, all noted in a separate table (p. 35). After giving a brief overview of the numerous translations available in English, French, Italian, Spanish and Modern Greek, the author explains how he deals with the linguistic and interpretive challenges posed by the Greek original. Rather than struggling to echo the poetic vocabulary, he opts for what he calls an ‘analytical’ approach, by reproducing at the same time the paratactic syntax and the word order of the original. In fact, the problem with the compound poetic words in Greek is solved either (a) by building a German equivalent (e.g. 22 παρθενοκτόνον ‘jungfrauenmordende’, 33 τριεσπέρου ‘dreiabendlichen’), or (b) by a periphrasis or a relative clause (e.g. 77 κυνοσφαγοῦς ‘für die Hunde getötet werden’, 175 τῆς ξεινοβάκκης ‘der Rasenden nach der Liebe des Fremden’). However, as Horn admits, the riddling style, as intended by its author who aimed to mystify his contemporary public, is a vital part of this poetic composition and cannot be eliminated from the translation.

Horn maintains that the dense web of mythological, historical and literary allusions requires a ‘slow reading’ (*langsame Lektüre*) by focused, in-depth readers who must resort to the word-to-word explanations given by the commentary. As he clarifies, the commentary is meant to supplement the translation in two ways: (a) to provide the necessary explanations for the understanding of the text, and (b) to reconstruct the literary-historical background and shed light on the mythical versions alluded to by the poet of the *Alexandra*. On the other hand, what Horn’s commentary *is not* is the following: (a) it does not discuss the peculiarities of the Greek poetic vocabulary, and (b) it does not aim to be a ‘complete philological commentary’ (*Gesamtkommentar*) with emphasis on *Realien* in the manner of Simon Hornblower’s commentary, Oxford 2015.² Despite these limitations, the commentary for the 1474 lines of the *Alexandra* covers more than 60 dense pages (139-203), a clear indication of the difficulties involved in the reading of this eccentric poem. The book is fittingly completed with a bibliography (205-10) divided into editions, translations and commentaries on the one hand, and a select secondary bibliography on the other, and a register of personal names and toponyms. It is noteworthy that the author lists, alongside the names explicitly quoted, also those indirectly suggested by the context; therefore, the reader is able

² There are many more *Gesamtkommentare* of the *Alexandra*: apart from the reference commentary by von Holzinger, Leipzig 1895, there are also the Italian commentary by Gigante-Lanzara, Milano 2000, and the French by Hurst-Kolde, Paris 2008.

to locate the passages referring to Cassandra, Achilles, Agamemnon, Odysseus, the Olympian gods and other mythological figures, whose identity is obscured by riddling periphrases and *recherché* epithets in the original text.

Finally, the commentary deserves a closer look, especially in comparison to other small-scale editions of the *Alexandra* addressing the lay reader.³ Apparently the commentary avoids any direct reference to the Greek original, since all the quotations derive exclusively from the German translation (and the transliterated names contained therein).⁴ However, this editorial choice does not mean that the philological commentary consists only of *Realien* or encyclopedic explanations; on the contrary, the commentary is replete with intertextual references to the entire range of Greek and Latin literature, as well as to the ancient scholia. A special mention needs to be made to the systematic recourse to Tzetzes' scholia on Lycophron throughout the commentary. Although the commentary, at first sight, gives the impression of a 'who's who' for figures and stories of Greek mythology, the reader senses that the information provided is methodically selected, whereas some critical, literary-oriented remarks are occasionally made (see e.g. the ironic reading of the story of Mnemon in l. 240 or the hypothesis that the story of Anios is 'Lycophron's' invention in l. 570). In this way, the author strikes a balance between the need for effortless accessibility and the academic documentation necessary for a rewarding, insightful reading of the *Alexandra*.

An *Alexandra* easily accessible to uninitiated readers has always been a desideratum, considering the notorious difficulty of this Hellenistic poem, celebrated already in antiquity as a σκοτεινὸν ποίημα. Fabian Horn, with his modern, pocket edition has achieved exactly this –and it is no simple task.

EVINA SISTAKOU
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
sistakou@lit.auth.gr

KILIAN FLEISCHER, *The original verses of Apollodorus' Chronica: edition, translation and commentary on the first iambic didactic poem in the light of new evidence*, Sozomena 19, Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter, 2020, pp. xi+303, \$137.99, ISBN 978-3-11-070338-2.

Fleischer presenta en este estudio una nueva edición, provista de traducción y comentario, de la crónica del gramático Apolodoro de Atenas (c. 180-100 a.C.), obra notable en su época que sirvió como punto de partida a los cronistas posteriores y que aún era muy popular a principios de la época imperial. El objetivo declarado

³ I refer, in particular, to the French edition by Chauvin and Cusset, Paris 2008, which is comparable in scale and philosophy; to the same category belong the old English bilingual edition by Mooney (London 1921) and the recent Modern Greek by Hurst-Paidi, Athens 2004.

⁴ Two exceptions are the references to the forms Γραῖα in ll. 195-196 and ἀείτα in l. 455.