

Zitierhinweis

Skempis, Marios: Rezension über: Athanassios Vergados, The Homeric Hymn to Hermes. Introduction, Text and Commentary, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013, in: Museum Helveticum, 73(2016), 2, S. 223, DOI: 10.21245/rec.ant.87657064



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Athanasios Vergados: The Homeric Hymn to Hermes. Introduction, Text and Commentary. Texte und Kommentare 41. De Gruyter, Berlin/Boston 2012. XIII, 717 p.

Athanasios Vergados (V.) sets high standards with a much anticipated and magisterial piece of work on an archaic Greek narrative as diverse as *h. Herm.* The main virtue of this voluminous yet handy commentary is that it spans as it should from lexical matters treated with philological sovereignty and intellectual vividness to the pitfalls of intra-/intertextual contextualization and textual criticism. The introductory section (p. 1–159) consists in eight comprehensively structured parts: a. a two-page précis of the poem's plot that lays emphasis on nodal points of the narrative; b. the kitharodic attributes assigned to H(ermes)' double performance and the way this shapes itself as *mise en abyme*, the semiotics of poetry and its relation to divination, the ambiguity of rhetorics linked with H.; c. the humorous tone pervading the narrative; d. the particularity and formulaicity of the poem's language, its prosodic style, and its thematic points of intersection with narrative traditions hosted in Homer's *Odyssey*, in Hesiod, and in *h. Apol.*; e. the story's *Vor-* and *Nachleben*, from Alcaeus down to Nonnus, and pinpointed allusions to the particular treatment of the story in *h. Herm.*; f. the structural organization of the plot by aid of the principle of ring-composition; g. chronology and location of original performance; h. history of the text's transmission. This is a kaleidoscopic examination of aspects innately or remotely connected to the poem designed to serve a variety of purposes. The following section (p. 161–212) presents the Greek text without English translation. V.'s text relies on the edition of Càssola. V. integrates three apparatuses: the first documents the degree of *h. Herm.*'s connection to other texts from the epic tradition in terms of formulaic language; the second indexes parallels from later literature, thus giving a sense of *h. Herm.*'s poetic impact; the third is a traditional critical apparatus, which, apart from designated cases, again follows Càssola's edition. The next section (p. 213–586) is covered by the commentary proper that pays so close attention to detail as to discuss the poem's title. V. leaves literally nothing out of heed and treats his material with due caution. To take one example out of many: at l. 250, Apollo enters the cave where H. dwells, takes a quick scan, and spots Maia's abundant storage in purple and white garments. V.'s starting comment centers on the epithet *φοινικίοντα* whose differentiated function in Homeric poetry he properly justifies. Not only does he point out the epithet's close semasiological affinity to *ἀλιπόρφυρα*, again in Homeric context, but he provides an explanation for the particular choice in *h. Herm.* over the Homeric norm of *σιγαλόοντα* when it comes to *εἴματα*. In what follows, V. focuses on the second epithet *ἄργυρα* and notes the junction's innovative character against the Homeric and Hesiodic backdrop where *ἄργυρεος*, rather than *ἄργυρος*, is used with respect to garments. V.'s comments demonstrate in splendid manner how the dictional stylization of *h. Herm.* marks off the small yet significant distance it takes from the established order that the Homeric and Hesiodic language represent. Diligent, apposite comments such as these that bear out V.'s sense of awareness of what is pertinent when discussing the diction of a *Homeric Hymn* abound in the commentary section. Criticism is indeed exhaustive, though it never crosses the line over to the unnecessary and tantalizingly digressive. The book ends with an extensive bibliography (p. 587–645), which is a token of V.'s toil and profound acquaintance with every aspect, both crucial and lateral, of his subject matter, and a set of illustrations whose aim lies in mapping out spatial shifts of H. and Apollo, on the one hand, and setting forth visual evidence for the central themes of the narrative, on the other (p. 647–455). Two carefully compiled indexes, an index rerum and an index locorum (p. 657–717), round off the work. Book projects such as this ought to be congratulated and set an example for respective undertakings; *h. Apol.* is the first case that pops in mind, as it is in need of a full-scale commentary in English.

Marios Skempis

Marco Fantuzzi/Christos Tsagalis (eds): **The Greek Epic Cycle and its Ancient Reception: A Companion.** Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2015. XII, 678 p.

This is a much awaited book; especially for those who have a shared interest in collecting and interpreting fragmentary poetry and in redeeming a major chapter in the literary history of early Gr(eek) epic. The volume comprises three sections, one on approaches to the E(pic) C(ycle), one on present-