

Zitierhinweis

Novokhatko, Anna A.: Rezension über: Amy Lather, *Materiality and Aesthetics in Archaic and Classical Greek Poetry*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021, in: *Museum Helveticum*, 79(2022), 2, S. 330-331, DOI: 10.21245/rec.ant.1567491850



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.

daran gemessen wird, wie sie den Glauben an Götter und Helden herstellen und festigen können und wie sie dies in der Antike getan hätten – obwohl Paul Veynes einschlägige Analyse in die Bibliographie Eingang fand. Die *Poetik* des Aristoteles findet in Johnstons Buch trotz aller Berührungspunkte keine Berücksichtigung.

Michael Groneberg, Lausanne

Amy Lather: Materiality and Aesthetics in Archaic and Classical Greek Poetry. Ancient Cultures, New Materialisms. Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 2021. X, 266 p.

Amy Lather's study is part of a growing trend in Classics that has become increasingly evident in recent years – the interaction between cognitive studies and the material of Greco-Roman antiquity. In particular, it builds on the so-called “new materialisms” and rethinks the ontology of objects, a force, vitality, relationality that renders matter active, self-creative and productive. Lather explores the material and cognitive dimensions of the quality *poikilia* and how “the entities marked in terms of *poikilia* participate in a fluid economy of exchange between minds, bodies and things” (p. 3).

The monograph contains an introduction, six chapters, and a conclusion. Chapters 1 and 2 consider the perception and production of *poikilia* in fabrics and metalworking respectively. L. argues that *poikilia* is an enactive process in which mind, body and material things play equally important roles in the construction of the *poikilia* experience. The decoration of the Acropolis Korai and garments rendered in black-figure vase painting, the visual details that complicate and prolong the viewing experience, shape the way they are perceived. The dynamic mode of perception that comes into play here is consistent with archaic descriptions of superior female beauty and reflects the interactivity between the sculptor/painter and the materials of his craft. Finally, literary representations of women's weaving (Helen in *Il.* 3.125–128 and Andromache in *Il.* 22.440–441) are analysed, which construe *poikilia* and visualise “material engagement” as interaction between human and material in the sense of Lambros Malafouris. Weaving is seen as an embodied cognitive process and textiles are imagined as extensions of the minds and bodies of those who weave them. In the same vein, sensory effects result from the combination of armour and the body of its wearer. Homeric passages involving interaction between the warrior's body, emotions and armour (e.g. *Il.* 13.130–135 and *Il.* 18.599–601), as well as the dynamic aspect of imagery in Alcaeus' characterisation of the helmets (140.3–10), show that the coupling of armour with the body creates a form of artefact, something distinct from either the body or the armour.

Chapter 3 deals with phenomena and “intelligent objects”, the means and mechanisms by which material objects function as extensions of the human mind. The *poikilia* of the Egyptian labyrinth (Hdt. 2.148), of Odysseus' brooch (*Od.* 19.227–231), of Hephaestus' tripods and golden handmaids (*Il.* 18.372–380; 416–421; 469–473) and of the ships of Phaeacians (*Od.* 8.555–559) is treated as tangible proof of its wondrousness as well as the cause of it. The figure of Pandora (Hes. *Theog.* 570–590), deliberately designed to be both a miracle and a trap, offers an insight into the process of making lifelike objects. Humans grappling with confusing and paradoxical phenomena and trying to make sense of them are juxtaposed with the circumstances and mechanisms that allow non-human substances to come alive and resemble humans.

It is an excellent book to which I have very few objections in general, one of which should be mentioned here. At the end of chapter 3, L. derives another “meaning” for *poi-*

kilos, namely “enigmatic”. For some of her examples this interpretation (and not the translation!) may work, but “multifaceted, intricate, motley” is broad enough to explain the “enigmatic” connotations of the individual passages. This leads to a mistranslation of Ar. *Eq.* 196 on the style of an oracle: καὶ ποικίλως πως καὶ σοφῶς ἦνιγμένως (“it is spoken in an intricate way, cleverly, in riddles”). The “enigmatic” word here is αἰνίσσομαι, while ποικίλως refers to “complexity/variety” of the language. If L. explicitly emphasises that ποικίλως here means “enigmatically” (p. 123), it is because she wants to add this meaning to the range of *poikilia* in general (pp. 122–126), and this is rather misleading.

Chapter 4 turns to lyric poetry and discusses the complexity of meaning of the term *poikilia*. Whereas in Sappho, Alcman and Anacreon a correspondence between the mutability of the term’s meaning and the dazzling materials it describes, in a form of perceptual mimesis, illustrates the glamorous, elusive appeal of the figures depicted, in Pindar a bidirectional mode of perception is emphasised in which both the phenomenon described and the process of imagining it are made vivid.

Chapters 5 and 6 explore “the mechanics of the mind” in male and female characters respectively. The qualities of *metis*, captured in its epithet *poikilometis*, suggest that it could not exist as such without the presence and support of things outside the brain. The cunning of each character (Prometheus, Odysseus, Hermes) works through their particular material practices, which actively shape, enhance and ultimately constrain thought. The women, however, rely more on the capacity for objects to effect their own entanglements and enact each woman’s deceptive plots. The *poikilia* of Hera, Aphrodite and Pandora has the power to stop spectators in their tracks, whilst Clytemnestra and Medea employ the *poikilia* for deadly purposes, emphasising an intimate knowledge of the power of objects and their ability to lead people to certain actions.

L. convincingly proposes that *poikilia* as a property brings mind, body and things together in a variety of ways, e.g. through textiles, metals, automata, music, poetry, tricks and traps, where sensory and cognitive experiences are crucial to also grasp the complexity of aesthetic criteria. This study is more than welcome and will be of great use to all who study archaic and classical poetry and aesthetics.

Anna A. Novokhatko, *Thessaloniki*

Elodie Paillard/Silvia Milanezi (eds): **Theatre and Metatheatre. Definitions, Problems, Limits.** MythosEikonPoiesis 11. De Gruyter, Berlin/Boston 2021. XI, 308 p.

«The world is a stage, life is a dream»: queste parole evocative di Lionel Abel – che nel 1963 coniava il termine *metateatro* (*Metatheatre: a new view of dramatic form* [New York 1963] 83) – valgono a delineare i principali tornanti di senso intorno a cui si sviluppa la raccolta di saggi in oggetto, cioè un’indagine di secondo grado sulla complessità del fenomeno teatrale greco.

Con questo spirito, i contributi raccolti nel volume affrontano aspetti meno indagati nell’ambito del teatro antico come – nello studio di Elodie Paillard (63–86) – il rapporto che la drammaturgia romana potrebbe aver sortito su quella greca: invertendo la più consueta direzione di influenza, questo approccio permette di istruire i fondamenti per riconsiderare, *inter alia*, la perdita di importanza della maschera in drammi greci già durante la stagione altoimperiale in conseguenza della contaminazione con la pantomima (una forma mimetica, questa, per solito ritenuta specifica del mondo latino), senza dimenticare l’incremento della teatralizzazione della vita reale nella Roma imperiale,