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Review

Reviewed Work(s): Literary Responses to Civil Discord by J. H. Molyneux

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J.H. MOLYNEUX (ed.), *Literary Responses to Civil Discord* (Nottingham Classical Literature Studies, 1). Nottingham, The University of Nottingham, 1993. 76 p.

This first volume in a new series of studies contains papers delivered in May 1992 at a symposium in Nottingham. Four main papers dealing with various authors are followed each by a prepared response. A.H. Sommerstein discusses themes in the *Oresteia*, to which P.E. Easterling adds her views. The passage on stasis in book 3 of Thucydides is the subject of A.W. Lintott, with a discussion by R.I. Winton. Menander's *Dyskolos* is analyzed by H.A. Khan, followed by the response of W.G. Arnott. Finally, P.R. Hardie deals with Latin imperial epic, with D.P. Fowler as the reviewer. The volume does not include any additional material, such as a conclusion or an index. On the material side, its form is unpretentious and functional.

All four papers contain interesting observations and stimulating ideas. For example, Mr. Sommerstein points to recurrent themes in Aeschylus' trilogy, such as watchfulness on behalf of sleepers and nocturnal killing, with the Areopagos as 'wakeful sentinel over those who sleep' (*Eum.* 706). Mr. Hardie concentrates on themes of unity and division in Latin epic, reflecting on the function of violence in it. Mirror combats, fighting twins, outstanding leaders:

all of this is given due attention. In particular, he shows how Silver Latin epic shares many of these themes with the *Aeneid* (cf. also his recent: *The epic successors of Virgil* (Cambridge 1993)).

Inevitably, the subjects discussed show wide differences in time and genre. Perhaps less inevitably, they are not equally relevant to the theme. 'Civil discord' is, of course, a rather vague term. But when Mr. Khan discusses the 'social awareness' of the character Sostratos in the play by Menander, it does not seem easy to relate this to the theme, interesting as his discussion is. On the other hand, it is surprising that an essay on Lucan, the ancient poet of civil war *par excellence*, is missing. Simply referring the reader to Jamie Masters' monograph on Lucan is disappointing.

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