

their critics rather than firm textual evidence. These instances do not only rectify gender and ethnic biases exemplified by Bisset's 1971 article and still alive today, they also present moments of particular intellectual productivity, yielding new and fascinating insights into epics that have been the subject of extensive study for centuries. These passages are exemplary for demonstrating the productive potential of combining Gender Studies and the Classics to interrogate ossified conclusions and offer fresh perspectives to the field.

Considering the strength of her arguments, B. could have dedicated more space to the consequences of discovering the Amazons as a structural unit of the heroic epics and conceiving of warriorhood as transgendered as well as ethnically diverse. It strikes a sympathetic reader that her conclusions could have been more ambitious, foregrounding the vitality of her approach. It also seems remiss not to mention the curious absence of Amazons in the public reception of classical literature in the twenty-first century. Instead, B. focuses on the depiction of Amazons in the medieval era as a further avenue of research.

These are quibbles, however. B.'s book is a clear, precise and careful study that demonstrates the productive relationship between Classics and Gender Studies; with *Penthesilea und ihre Schwestern* B. has laid the groundwork for and made a valuable contribution to a reappraisal of the literary and social significance of Amazons in heroic epic and argues convincingly that heroism should be understood as both transgendered and ethnically diverse. It only remains to be hoped that colleagues and students will share her intrigue and continue her efforts, keeping the Classics open to new developments and fresh perspectives.

The University of Manchester

CHRISTINE LEHNEN
christine.lehnen@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

DESCRIPTIONS OF CATABASIS

HERRERO DE JÁUREGUI (M.) *Catábasis: El viaje infernal en la Antigüedad*. Pp. 503, ills. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2023. Paper, €17.50. ISBN: 978-84-1148-208-0.

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If it is difficult to write a book on a subject as complex as catabasis, it is even more so if you aim to present scholarly research of more than two decades for a wide audience. Nevertheless, H.d.J. succeeds in this task. As announced in the preface, H.d.J.'s aim is to present a comprehensive study of the myth of the journey to the underworld that deals with the tradition from the Homeric poems to Christian literature. Catabasis is found as a recurring central topic in texts from different literary genres and historical periods; its interest lies mainly in the fact that it always involves an enquiry into a person's position in relation to the cosmos and nature.

In the first chapter, 'Preparativos', H.d.J. proposes a non-teleological and non-genealogical examination of the topic by analysing each literary source in itself, and not as an antecedent or reflection of another. He also includes a brief and clear *status quaestionis* of the bibliography on catabasis and the main lines of scholarly enquiry.

Chapter 2, 'Donde viven los muertos', highlights some constant ideas throughout the tradition of catabasis, such as the cult of the dead, the idea of immortal post-mortem glory and the notion of death as a journey. It also deals with the description of Hades in terms of space – its main features (its darkness, its subterranean location), the rivers that flow there, and the creatures and characters that inhabit it.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5, 'El héroe caído', 'El anciano valeroso' and 'La voz de los difuntos', deal with the topic as it appears in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* by examining the episodes of (a) Hector's fainting by the river Xanthus in *Il.* 14 and 15, in which fainting and death are closely related; (b) Priam's journey to Achilles' tent in *Il.* 24, which is seen in terms of a catabatic journey; and (c) the *Nekyia* in *Od.* 11, where souls are evoked by Odysseus and reveal their knowledge. From the Homeric texts we turn in Chapter 6, 'La épica del alma', to the analysis of fourth-century BCE Orphic tablets, which describe the soul's journey to Hades, its supplications to Persephone and the description of the soul's genealogy. Chapter 7, 'Experiencias y doctrinas', deals with the tension between the emotional and the intellectual spheres in the journey to the underworld since *pathein* and *mathein* are presented as two intrinsically connected experiences in the catabasis stories. While in many cults there is an inclination towards the *pathein* pole (the ritual as something ineffable, as an emotional experience in which an individual participates, with no possibility of rational explanation), H.d.J. points out that doctrine was not completely relegated – in fact, not a few philosophers used catabasis narratives to explain and support their ideas and theories. Chapters 8 and 9, 'El viaje de los poetas' and 'Mitos platónicos', are thus devoted to the examination of this topic in philosophical texts such as the *Orphicorum Fragmenta* and the works of Parmenides, Empedocles and Plato. The depiction of Hades in Plato's *Phaedo*, *Gorgias* and the *Republic* is analysed to show the particular way in which the fate of the soul, reincarnation and the final judgement are described. Chapter 10, 'La esposa rescatada', examines the myth of the rescued wife, focusing on the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, but including also references to the catabases in Euripides' *Herakles* and *Alcestis* and in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*. The rich reworking of the Eurydice story is examined throughout the tradition, considering not only literary texts but also modern opera representations.

Up to this point H.d.J. has dealt with serious versions of the catabasis stories found in epic poetry, tragedy, philosophy and initiation rituals. In Chapter 11, 'Bromas y veras', he considers texts in which, through irony, parody or satire, the topic is subverted to achieve a distancing effect, usually humorous. He also examines texts in which, from a sceptical viewpoint, the mythical conceptual framework of the catabasis is denied, or those in which the distancing effect is used for metapoetic purposes, the supreme example being Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

Chapter 12, 'Políticas del Hades', examines texts in which Hades is depicted as a source of political knowledge, such as Aristophanes' *Frogs*, Plato's *Republic* and Vergil's *Aeneid*. Monarchical, aristocratic and democratic features in representations of Hades are also examined in different literary and philosophical texts. Chapter 13, 'Recuerda, romano', is devoted to the consideration of the political catabasis par excellence, Book 6 of the *Aeneid*. H.d.J. analyses literary motifs, philosophical doctrines and rituals represented in the episode of Aeneas' descent. The examination of *Aeneid* 6 continues in Chapter 14, 'Pasos en la sombra', but the focus changes: here H.d.J. is interested in the metaphor of the catabasis as a path, and he therefore analyses the different words and expressions used by the Mantuan poet to describe how Aeneas and the Sibyl march through the underworld, as well as the movements of the souls that inhabit it. The final chapter, 'Infiernos desde el cielo', is devoted to eschatology as a central dimension of Christian doctrine and experience. The novelty here lies in the fact that the afterlife is conditioned

by and related to the resurrection of Christ. He is the protagonist of the journey to the underworld – a journey that involves triumph over death and redemption of the souls.

The volume closes with a section of notes to every chapter, bibliographical references – H.d.J. points out that he has chosen to include only the essential scholarship on the subject –, a subject index and an *index locorum*, both of which prove to be very useful for finding references to specific texts and characters mentioned throughout the book.

H.d.J.'s greatest achievement is to examine a noteworthy amount of textual evidence from different ages and authors in order to develop an encompassing and exhaustive analysis of the topic of the journey to the underworld. In every chapter readers can find quotations from classical texts in Spanish translation, which H.d.J. addresses in detail in order to reach general conclusions. The result is a volume that originates from vast and exhaustive scholarly research but is presented as an enjoyable book, guiding us through the dark paths of Hades with the light of its clarity.

Universidad Nacional de La Plata – Conicet

MARÍA EMILIA CAIRO
emiliacairo@conicet.gov.ar

SOME GREEK PHILOSOPHICAL POPYRI

*Corpus dei papiri filosofici Greci e Latini (CPF). Testi e lessico nei papiri di cultura greca e latina. Parte II.1***: Frammenti Adespota. Pp. xxviii + 238, colour pls. Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2021. Paper, €70. ISBN: 978-88-222-6810-5.

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This is the second volume of II.1 (*adespota*) of the Corpus of Latin and Greek Philosophical Papyri (and ostraca); it contains ten editions, one of which (4) is quite extensive (almost half the volume) and another of which (2) does not actually include an edition. One papyrus (5) appears complete here for the first time. These texts are somehow connected to philosophy, but their exact status is not clear: five (4, 5, 7, 8, and 10) allow fairly certain attribution to schools. The other papyri treat rhetoric, music, errors in the exercise of *technai* and Plato.

1. O. Berol. inv. 12318 (edited by G. Bastianini and R.M. Piccione, excavated at Philadelphia in 1909). This ostrakon is part of the so-called ‘archive of Kleitorios’, which could consist of school texts. Its text – complete – has connections to *progymnasmata* (very interesting for such an early composition) and ‘mirror of princes’ literature and treats the difference between nobility of birth and that of actions, which is interesting given its early date (late third century BCE).

2. P. Berol. inv. 9908 (= BKT II, pp. 52–3; credited to the redaction as a whole, excavated at Theadelphia in 1902). The text is not actually published here; it is some kind of philosophical treatise with extensive citations from Plato, so extensive that there is no text apart from them that is worth commenting on. A complete text can be found at Plato (author #80) T110 in CPF I.1*** vol 2. pp. 508–12, edited by M.W. Haslam (with plate; this vol. too contains a plate).

3. P. Berol. inv. 21213 (=BKT IX 117, edd. Bastianini and D. Sedley, purchased or excavated in 1910). A Hellenistic Platonist arguing that Plato’s dialogues are the best