

the impact of antiquity on modernity in a sophisticated enough or rich enough fashion. In the end, to this professional and unsuitable reader, it rather short sells what the Greeks actually did do for us.

SIMON GOLDHILL

King's College, Cambridge

Email: [sdg1001@cam.ac.uk](mailto:sdg1001@cam.ac.uk)

THALMANN (W.G.) **Theocritus: Space, Absence, and Desire**. New York: Oxford University Press, 2023. Pp. xxii + 232. £54. 9780197636558.

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William Thalmann has already enriched classical scholarship with a study of space in Apollonius (see T. Kenny, *JHS* 133 (2013), 192–93); the idle would be tempted to think of this book as the sequel. They would be wrong: this is a book informed by Thalmann's work on space, but has a good deal more to offer. Were I teaching a course on Theocritus, I would set this as a 'short introduction' to the poet's work; it will be required reading for scholars of Hellenistic poetry. It charts a course through the subgenres of the Theocritean corpus (mime, encomium, bucolic proper, 'epyllion' (but see below), etc.) in courteous conversations with Thalmann's colleagues and (usually immediate) predecessors; Thalmann characteristically refers to his work as 'adding' to existing scholarship. The result is a compact, rich book which models a number of different ways to read Theocritus; this review aims to follow Thalmann's lead by continuing the process of addition.

Thalmann's view of space, divided into two chapters, strikes a good balance between empiricism and theoretical information: various spatial theories are canvassed and used where relevant, but we get masses of textual detail as well (sometimes conveniently tabulated). The notion of a 'separate world' constructed by bucolic, but which bears some relationship to reality, is teased out, poem by poem, with a good deal of finesse. Endless references to *Eclogues* might have been out of place, but some contrasts with Virgil could have been brought out. I was struck by Thalmann's discussion of mountains (13–16), for example, which, while present (if distant, cf. *Ecl.* 1.83) in Virgil, are replaced by *silvae* as the main stage of bucolic performance (cf. M. Lipka, *Language in Vergil's Eclogues* (Berlin 2001), 30ff.). Thalmann does not shy away from technical details: 36 n.95 gives us a full account of the poetic stakes of textual intervention (very valuable for students; it would be churlish to mind that a conclusion is not reached). But Theocritus' dialect is rather neglected (38 n.103 argues with Hinge, 'Language and Race: Theocritus and the Koine Identity of Ptolemaic Egypt', in G. Hinge and J. Krasilnikoff (eds), *Alexandria: A Cultural and Religious Melting Pot* (Aarhus 2009), 66–79; the literature on the question is extensive). One wonders if dialect, too, bears some sort of relationship to spaces in the poetry, given the corpus' varied dialectal affiliations; Thalmann might also have integrated the 'dialect problem' into his reflections on identity in the conclusions (194).

The second chapter deals with 'mythological space' (covering what is usually termed 'epyllion', a term which Thalmann, perhaps wisely, avoids) and encomium. The analysis of *Idyll* 16 (73–85) is perhaps unsurprisingly the most 'intertextual' section of the book. Thalmann considers, in addition to the well-documented Hesiodic intertext (*Op.* 225–37), *Od.* 19.87–114 as a model for 16.88–97. Oddly, he remarks that poetry, unlike in Theocritus, is missing from the *Odyssey's* view of the 'ideal city'; but κλέος οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἰκάνει ('your reputation reaches the broad heaven', *Od.* 19.108) surely refers to

poetry (cf. *Od.* 8.74, 9.20). By contrast, poetry *does* seem to be missing from Hesiod's just city, presumably because *Hesiodic* poetry is not needed in a world where justice already reigns. This consideration might, weakly, argue in favour of the Homeric, over the Hesiodic, intertext.

The discussion of space is complemented by a powerfully integrated chapter on desire and absence: absence is absence from a space, and desire, like song, is consequent on that absence. Perhaps the overarching outcome of Thalmann's analysis is that the purely literary motivations of Theocritus, so often emphasized, are subordinated to wider aspects of experience in both the political and social arenas; the link is not a mimetic one, naturally, but a provision of paradigms for understanding life. Theocritus constructs both the poet (83) and the herdsman (99) as types; comedy's 'stock characters' are not so distant. Thalmann's account of *Idyll* 7 in this framework is particularly convincing, but all work on Theocritus' erotics will need this chapter.

The final chapter is a slightly mixed bag, unified by the examination of 'non-bucolic' poems (Gifford's 'anti-pastoral' and 'post-pastoral' might have been stimulating ideas to bring in here, as theoretical conceptions of the 'boundaries' of pastoral; see T. Gifford, *Pastoral* (London 1999)). Thalmann refers briefly to the issue of Theocritus' 'original poetry book' (154); we might have been treated to reflections on how different orderings of poems in our manuscripts result in different connections between poems becoming more salient for the reader. The conclusion sets Thalmann's study against earlier monographs on Theocritus.

To end with a personal reflection: Thalmann's preface refers to his first (not entirely happy) encounter with Theocritus in a university course. I encountered the poet after my formal studies were ended; I am a self-taught Theocritean. For those in this situation, this volume will be invaluable; it will also stimulate reflection in students and scholars.

BEN CARTLIDGE 

University of Liverpool

Email: [benjamin.cartlidge@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:benjamin.cartlidge@liverpool.ac.uk)

THOMSEN (C.A.) **The Politics of Association in Hellenistic Rhodes**. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020. Pp. xi + 178, illus, maps. £85. 9781474452557.  
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With this short, crisply argued book, Christian Thomsen seeks to intervene in recent discussions around Hellenistic democracy and its institutional foundations. Unconvinced by approaches that equate the continued existence of democratic institutions with continuity in democratic practice (5), he uses the rich epigraphic material from Rhodes to show how social relations and their strategic manipulation determined the outcome of politics, with the result that a relatively small group of wealthy men could monopolize political office despite an institutional setup seemingly designed to prevent this outcome.

After an overview of Rhodian democratic institutions that establishes the existence of a small elite (18–48), chapter 3 is dedicated to the *oikos* and shows how marriage and adoption could be used by elite families to maintain or regain status (49–64). But the core interest of the book lies in associations of various kinds. Chapter 4 discusses public associations such as demes and 'clans' (*patrai*), which competed with each other but were also targeted by benefactors to shore up political support beyond ancestral subdivisions (65–88). Chapter 5 introduces the many private associations attested on Rhodes, demonstrating that these associations were all democratically organized but nevertheless developed their own magisterial elite that partially overlapped with the elite that dominated