

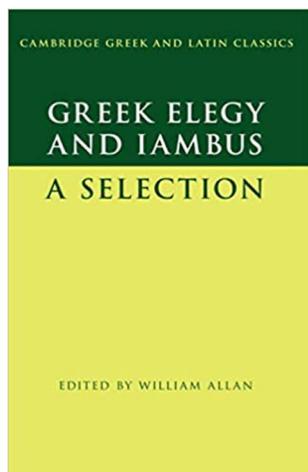
Book Review

Greek Elegy and Iambus. A Selection

Allan (W.) (ed.). Pp. xvi + 254, maps. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

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This Green and Yellow is first rate for a Classicist wanting to start learning about Greek elegy and iambics, but who does not know where to start. A cultural history lacks detail. A Loeb containing everything is a fearsome mountain to climb, especially when the texts lack explanation and analysis. Allan introduces the works of Archilochus, Semonides, Callinus, Tyrtaeus Mimnermus, Solon, Theognis, Xenophanes, Hipponax and Simonides by choosing several of their best and most interesting works. After reading this book,

you do not feel an expert, but far more confident and well-informed. To many of us, these poets are names who occasionally appear in commentaries; it is splendid to be given a working knowledge of them especially as they were so famous and influential.

Most satisfying are the biographies and commentaries. Each poet is introduced and his influence and life considered. The commentaries provide cultural and linguistic detail, allowing someone with a working knowledge of Greek to read and enjoy the poems without a lexicon. Allan has given enough of a thread of language to lead us through the labyrinth. Nonetheless, this is a very scholarly book and highly suitable for top level academic reference. It could, with care, also be used with a strong A Level Greek class. Of particular note would be Archilochus 1 (about war and poetry), 17a (the Telephus myth); 42-3 (obscene poetry); 172-81 (the fox and eagle fable); Semonides 7 (the tirade against women – the commentary could be used for teaching Greek opinions about women); Tyrtaeus 5-7 (Spartan militarism); Mimnermus 2 (brevity of life – N.B. he is the writer of *Smyrneis* mentioned by Callimachus); Solon 4 (the necessity of restraining the wealthy elite – all are useful for teaching *Democracy*); Theognis 53-68 (an aristocratic response to democratic revolution and the nature of homoeroticism); Xenophanes' counter-cultural ideas presented in poetic form in order to reach a wider audience than academic prose – 1 (a self-referential hymn about the symposium), 2 (praise of intellect over athletic prowess), B14 DK (a challenge to the anthropomorphic nature of the gods, a theory

which influenced Plato); Hipponax's street language and choliambics and seduction of a free Greek woman (13-14; 16-17); Simonides 11 (the *Plataea Hymn*) shows Greek confidence following 479 B.C.

There is a good map, bibliography, introduction with notes upon metre and the textual tradition. I really enjoyed reading and engaging with these bawdy, intellectual, amusing, thought-provoking, and now more accessible poems.

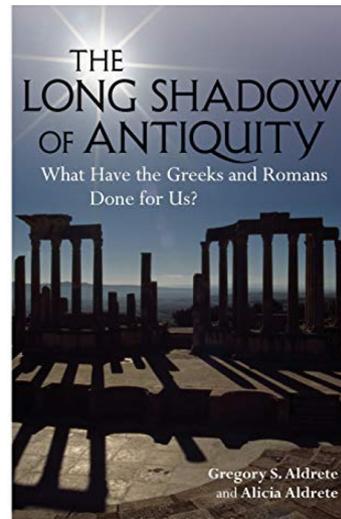
doi:10.1017/S2058631020000148

The Long Shadow of Antiquity. What Have the Greeks and Romans Done for Us?

Aldrete, G. and Aldrete, A. Pp. xii + 411, illus
London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. Paper, £16.99, (Cased, £31.50).
ISBN: 978-1-350-08338-7.

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'Know Yourself', the aphorism supposedly inscribed on the façade of the Temple to Apollo, is taken by Gregory Aldrete and Alicia Aldrete as the underlying rationale of their book, *The Long Shadow of Antiquity. What Have the Greeks and Romans Done for Us?* (p.ix). It is the starting point from which the authors consider the contribution ancient Greece and Rome have made to modern society. The sheer range of topics presented in *The Long Shadow of Antiquity* has the potential to make it a rather weighty tome; however, the authors have

explicitly aimed this book at the general reader and, happily, succeed in taking one on an 'entertaining journey' (p.x) through some of the main structures, ideas and institutions of both civilisations. The book romps from the Greeks to the Romans, and back again, while holding the attention of the reader with interesting anecdotes, well-deployed black and white images to illustrate points, and the occasional cautionary tale. The result is a solid overview of the contribution of the ancient Greeks and Romans to our own world.

The approach taken in this text is well-considered, with nine chapters that reflect the aspects of life as we would define it today. The book begins with chapters on the basics: Food and Shelter, the Jour-