ASPECTS OF ANCIENT ETYMOLOGY

ZUCKER (A.), LE FEUVRE (C.) (edd.) *Ancient and Medieval Greek Etymology. Theory and Practice I.* (*Trends in Classics* Supplementary Volume 111.) Pp. x + 341. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2021. Cased, £109, €119.95, US$137.99. ISBN: 978-3-11-071485-2.

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This book gathers the proceedings from a conference held in Beaulieu-sur-Mer (France) in 2016 about ancient and medieval Greek etymology. It comprises an introduction and ten papers grouped in four sections, and forms part of a wider project, ETYGRAM, the aim of which is to 'produce an online dictionary of etymologies proposed or suggested by ancient and medieval Greek texts for Greek words … and to develop … tools on ancient and medieval Greek etymology' (http://appsweb-cepam.unice.fr/etygram/node/24).

In the introduction the editors make it clear that there is no continuity between modern etymological endeavours and etymology in the ancient world, which can be defined as ἡ ἀνάπτυξις τῶν λέξεων, δι᾽ ἧς τὸ ἀληθὲς σαφηνίζεται 'the unfolding of lexemes, by which truth is made clear' (Dionysius the Thracian, quoted on p. 4). As is now well established (e.g. I. Sluiter, 'Ancient Etymology: a Tool for Thinking', in F. Montanari, S. Matthaios and A. Rengakos [edd.], *Brill's Companion to Ancient Greek Scholarship* [2015]), it is primarily a synchronic process, where 'the meaning is more important than the form or phonic material' (p. 4). Accordingly, 'each word hides other words which are matrices that once served to create it and that enclose and express part of its meaning' (p. 2), and it is normal for a word to have several etymologies, which account for the different contexts where it is used. Thus, ancient etymologies should not be approached with modern requirements such as phonetic laws or arbitrariness of language; however, a better understanding of these practices can shed light on many aspects of ancient Greek literature and culture.

Part 1 is dedicated to 'Etymological Practices and Philosophical Issues'. M. Romani Mistretta, in 'Naming the Art, or the Art of Naming: the Etymology of τέχνη (*technē*) in Plato's *Cratylus*', comments on the etymology of τέχνη as ἕξις νοῦ 'holding on to intelligence' provided by Socrates, which is central for assessing whether names are 'conventional' or 'natural'. In a dialogue that aims to investigate 'the relationship between linguistic inquiry … and philosophy' (p. 23), this etymology has a prescriptive value. The use of an abstract noun, ἕξις, embodies stability, which contrasts with the name-givers' faith in flux. Drawing a parallel between the status of τέχνη in the *Cratylus* and its use in the *Republic* in relation to the distinction between the producer's craft and the user's craft, Romani Mistretta concludes that, for language too, 'the user's τέχνη is conceptually and hierarchically superior to the corresponding producer's craft' (p. 31). Therefore, this etymology entails that the name-giver's activity 'must be subjected to the oversight of philosophy' (p. 31) in order to provide 'natural' names in accordance with the model of the forms, and it can be seen as 'serious irony' since it offers an 'etymological analysis of the word τέχνη which itself refutes the etymologist's ambition to possess a τέχνη' (p. 32).

M. Chriti, in 'Etymological Proximities and *Onomastics*: from Aristotle to Ammonius of Hermeias', focuses on the Neoplatonist Ammonius of Hermeias' considerations on Aristotle's choices in name-giving, which are also related to the debate whether language is natural or conventional. Although Aristotle explicitly takes the second stance, he practises etymology (e.g. ἀϊθήρ < ἀϊεί θεῖ, as in *Cratylus*, p. 40), and he invents names

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that are not totally arbitrary (e.g. ἐντελέχεια < ἐν, τέλος, ἔχω). In a Neoplatonic attempt to reconcile Plato and Aristotle, Ammonius states that Aristotle's new names are 'compatible with things' (p. 44) in that they are 'based upon widely accepted etymological/semantic contents', thus avoiding total arbitrariness.

Part 2, 'Linguistic Issues', contains three very different papers, which are among the longest in the volume. Le Feuvre's paper, 'Implicit Elements in Scholiasts' Etymological Analyses', should prove interesting for all readers interested in Homer and is a valuable addition to the chapter on Homeric scholia in E. Dickey's *Ancient Greek Scholarship* (2007). Le Feuvre tackles the difficult problem of implicitness in the scholia, be it that they were elliptic from the start, be it that some elements have been omitted in the transmission process. She provides a typology of etymological explanations in the scholia, which can comprise the following elements: (1) etymon(s) of the word; (2) technical explanation (formal or semantic operations); (3) parallel (ὥσπερ) justifying 2; (4) contextual justification. Five types of redactions are distinguished according to the combination of those elements. Most of the time, scholia only contain an etymon and/or a translation of the Homeric form into Attic Greek; but a convincing examination of some examples of scholia for which we preserve several types of redactions suggests a way to understand the implicit line of thought leading the scholiast from the Homeric word to its etymon.

D. Petit, in 'On Enantiosemy and its Modern Outcomes', provides an introduction to the practice of explaining a word by its antonym (*lucus a non lucendo* 'a grove is so called from not being bright'). Whereas the word *enantiosemy* is probably an innovation of J.A. Kanne (1773–1824), the idea had already been developed by Augustine in *De dialectica*, and although enantiosemy does not seem to have been a frequent explanation among Greek grammarians, Petit shows, using data from the ETYGRAM project, that traces of it can be found in the scholia. Numerous Greek, Latin and medieval examples are provided, mostly coming from literary texts. Greek instances of enantiosemy are relatively few and almost confined to proper names. Interestingly, and contrasting with other types of ancient etymological explanations, enantiosemy was still considered a serious etymological practice by some nineteenth-century linguists (e.g. Ludwig Tobler and Carl Abel) to account for the development of vocabulary in cultures that they viewed as primitive.

Galen's approach to etymology as described by N. Rousseau, in 'Ὅτι ἀλαζών ἐστι μάρτυς ἡ ἐτυμολογία: Galen on Etymology, Theory and Practice', contrasts with most cases studied in this collection, as Galen explicitly criticises etymology as an ἀλαζὼν μάρτυς 'an impostor'. Rousseau attempts to reconcile this statement with the fact that numerous explanations of words can be found in the writings of Galen. A careful examination of evocations of etymology in different contexts shows that Galen probably had a relatively strict definition of ἐτυμολογία, as the 'practice of addition, subtraction, transposition and substitution of letters or syllables' (p. 170). With the exception of φλέγμα explained by means of φλέγω/πεφλέχθαι, it does not include 'connections involving derivational patterns between motivated terms sharing the same root' (p. 170), which are found in his works, at least for teaching purposes. Moreover, Galen rejects 'the inappropriate use of [etymology] as a premise (λῆμμα) within scientific research' (p. 171).

Part 3, 'Poetical Practices of Etymology', focuses on poets from the Hellenistic and imperial periods; and two of the three authors show how, in agreement with a tradition founded by Hesiod, etymological explanations function as a stylistic device in poetry. A. Vergados, in 'Etymological Explanations of Fish-names in Oppian's *Halieutica*: between Poetry, Philology, and Scholarship', examines some etymologies of fish-names based upon different principles (appearance, behaviour etc.) and suggests that this poetic device can only work with readers well acquainted with other texts and authors as well

as the scientific material. In addition, etymological explanations are essential to establish the authority of the poet and contribute to the 'anthropomorphization of the fish' (p. 209).

C. Cusset, in 'Etymology as a Poetic Resource among the Poets of Alexandria', examines the function of etymologies characteristic of Callimachus and Apollonius of Rhodes: seemingly digressive, they are actually narratives with an 'explanatory and programmatic' function (p. 228).

A. Filoni's remarkable paper, 'The Use of Etymology in Apollodorus' ΠΕΡΙ ΘΕΩΝ and in its Reader Porphyry: Scientific or Ideological', shows how a precise investigation of the etymological techniques in the different testimonies of Apollodorus' lost treatise Περὶ θεῶν can help distinguish between what comes originally from Apollodorus and the successive additions of others. The first section describes the transmission of the fragments of Apollodorus' treatise by Macrobius' 'solar theology', which in turn is a shortened form of Porphyry of Tyre's *On the Divine Names*, a work largely inspired by Apollodorus, probably through an intermediate Latin version by Porphyry's disciple Cornelius Labeo. A meticulous comparison between what remains of Aristarchus, of whom Apollodorus was a disciple, Macrobius–Porphyry and Cornutus, who also used the Περὶ θεῶν as a source, leads Filoni to conclude that Apollodorus had a 'scientific' (p. 272) etymological method, which obeyed precise rules, such as explaining Homer by Homer, or rejecting purely geographical explanations. This, together with Porphyry's tendency to identify as many pagan gods as possible with the sun, in an attempt to prove that the Sun is the only god, allows Filoni to attempt a distinction between Apollodorian material and later additions or transformations.

V. Decloquement, in the first paper of the last section on 'Etymology and Word-Plays', in 'Fallacious Etymology and Puns: Ptolemy Chennus' Sham *Homeric Questions*', argues convincingly that the *Original Inquiry*, a treatise by Ptolemy Chennus only known by a summary in Codex 190 of Photius' *Bibliotheca*, is a playful text typical of the Second Sophistic, where Ptolemy uses all the patterns characteristic of Homeric questions in Hellenistic scholarship in order to parody them. Thus, although the typical structure of the ζήτημα ('problem') and its λύσις ('solution') can be encountered in Ptolemy's work, correspondences between these problems and other sources are scarce. A comparison with contemporary technical texts shows that Ptolemy redefines or completely makes up Homeric questions and solves them, denying the obvious etymologies for words such as ποδάρκης or Odysseus' name Οὖτις and replacing them by absurd propositions.

Finally, S. Beta, in 'To Play (and to Have Fun) with Literature: Comic Wordplay in Greek Poetry', provides a few examples of wordplays and riddles in Greek poetry, one of them coming from a collection of Byzantine riddles published for the first time by the same author (*Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 68 [2014]). Some of them seem to have been exploited for teaching purposes.

The volume is edited with great care, and four indexes (*notionum*, *nominum*, *verborum* and *locorum*) will be of great use to readers. The diversity of approaches reflects the ever-increasing interest in ancient scholarship among researchers coming from different fields since the second half of the twentieth century as well as the efforts of specialists to provide a wider audience with better access to ancient scholarship. Conversely, some of the essays of this collection show how much ancient scholarship can contribute to the interpretation of literary and philosophical texts, and to a better understanding or even the reconstruction of texts whose transmission is problematic.

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