

I. de JONG, R. NÜNLIST, A. BOWIE (eds.): *Narrators, Narratees, and Narratives in Ancient Greek Literature*.
Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative. Volume One.
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This 583-page Mnemosyne Supplement is, as the title suggests, an extensive collection of essays on narrators, narratees and narratives in ancient Greek literature covering a wide range of literary genres, authors and periods: from epic poetry to the novels, from Homer to Heliodorus, from the Archaic Period to the Graeco-Roman world. It offers a very welcome treatment of narratological issues in Greek literature and has come to fill a long-standing gap in the study of Greek literary production.

I will first look at the volume as a whole before focusing my attention on the section that deals with the novels.

After a brief general introduction outlining its content, aims and *raison d' être* (xi–xiii), the volume begins with a short glossary of basic narratological terms employed (some of them more frequently than others) throughout the book such as “embedded narrative”, “narratees”, “paralepsis” and “story” (xv–xviii). Following this there is a longer, ten-page introduction by de Jong on narratological theory, which further defines the meaning of four fundamental terms that are central both to narratology in general and to the present volume in particular: “narrators”, “narratees”, “narratives”, and “embedded narratives”. De Jong helpfully illustrates the different types of narrators, narratees and narratives with examples from well-known works of modern literature, such as Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, Charles Dickens’ *Great Expectations* and Marcel Proust’s *A la recherche du temps perdu* (pp. 1–10).

The material in the main section of the volume is arranged by genre. There are nine parts, each devoted to a different genre. Within each part ancient authors are dealt with in separate chapters (except for part three, see below) and in chronological order within their respective genre. Part one, entitled “Epic and Elegiac Poetry”, includes chapters on Homer, Hesiod, The Homeric Hymns, Apollonius of Rhodes, Callimachus, Theocritus and Mo-

schus; part two is concerned with Historiography and deals with Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Polybius, Arrian, Appian, Cassius Dio, and Herodian; Choral Lyric is the focus of part three, the sole chapter of which focuses on two authors, Pindar and Bacchylides; part four concentrates on Drama and, in addition to the more obvious ancient exponents of this genre (Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes and Menander), Lycophron's narrative technique also comes under scrutiny (see below). Part five, which is on Oratory, consists of essays on Antiphon, Andocides, Lysias, Isocrates, Demosthenes and Aeschines. Part six treats Philosophy and consists of two chapters, one on Plato and one on Xenophon. The ensuing part is on Biography and includes essays on Xenophon, Plutarch, Philostratus and Aelius Aristides. Dio Chrysostom and Lucian are dealt with in part eight, entitled "Between Philosophy and Rhetoric". The final part is on the five complete-surviving Greek novels of Chariton, Xenophon of Ephesus, Achilles Tatius, Longus and Heliodorus. Remarkably, and perhaps justifiably given the diversity of his work, Xenophon of Athens is examined in three different parts: Historiography, Philosophy and Biography.

After the main section of the book there is an epilogue by de Jong and Nünlist, in which the editors give an overview of the nine main parts and draw together some common themes (pp. 545–553). The bibliography of works cited is extensive (although by no means exhaustive, but I imagine that providing a full bibliography of narratological studies in ancient Greek literature was not the primary aim of this book) and comprises both specialist discussions on Greek narratology and more general works on the ancient authors examined (pp. 555–578). Completing the volume is a thematic index which lists the narratological terms employed in this volume with references to page numbers from the individual chapters (pp. 579–583).

The volume itself is nicely produced, maintaining the high standard of Brill Mnemosyne supplements. As for the contributors' papers, they all make for exciting reading. Some of them are particularly insightful and perhaps slightly more adventurous in their approach to the topic and presentation of material than others, but all are stimulating and carefully written.

Each chapter is divided into subsections. Alongside the standard sub-headings, which almost all chapters include ("narrator", "narratees" and "conclusion"), there are also specialised sections, reflecting the individuality of each ancient author and his work. It is appropriate, therefore, that, in addition to the more general sections on the narrator and his narratees, Gray's

chapter on Xenophon the historian (pp. 129–146) should also contain two sections on explicit narratorial interventions (which, she argues, have important implications for Xenophon’s narrative as a whole): one on Teleutias the Spartan and one on Iphicrates the Athenian in the *Hellenica*, as well as a section on “Implicit forms of evaluation” employed by secondary narrators; likewise, it is fitting that de Jong’s chapter on Herodotus (pp. 101–114) should have a separate section devoted to ethnographical/geographical and historical digressions which are at the heart of Herodotus’ *Histories*; and an analysis of Philostratus’ remarkable degree of self-consciousness and literary sophistication, evident in his claims about the accuracy of his sources and the credibility of the primary narrative, is justly granted two separate sections (entitled “The narrator and his sources” and “Issues of credibility” respectively) in Whitmarsh’s captivating chapter (pp. 423–439). In a volume examining so many authors and such a variety of genres as this one, paying special attention to the individual issues arising from each work is essential. While an obvious effort has been made on the editors’ part to maintain a degree of uniformity throughout, with almost all contributors addressing a set of standard narratological questions, it is good to see that, at the same time, the individuality of ancient authors has not been sacrificed for the benefit of producing a rigidly systematic book on Greek narratology.

It is particularly difficult to maintain a uniform style and approach in a large volume with contributions from an international team of experts, and the editors of this book are to be commended on achieving a high degree of consistency throughout. One area which appears to be somewhat less balanced, however, is the length of essays. Authors with relatively little to write on, such as Appian (by Hidber, pp. 175–185), have been given almost equal attention as prolific authors like Plutarch (by Pelling, pp. 403–421). There is no doubt that the work of Xenophon of Athens is so diverse and rich in narratological material that dealing with it in three separate chapters (by Gray, under Historiography, pp. 129–146; Philosophy, pp. 377–388; and Biography, pp. 391–401) is a good idea. However, is Xenophon the Athenian the only author in the history of Greek literature who deserves this kind of preferential treatment? Lysias’ narrative technique, on the other hand, closely linked to his simple style of composition that is so frequently praised in ancient rhetorical theory, has been showcased by Edwards in the space of merely four pages (pp. 333–336) looking almost exclusively at Lysias 1 and containing only passing references to Lysias 8 and Lysias 12. In fact, the

entire section on Oratory (pp. 317–353), however engaging, is not much longer than some of the most extensive chapters focusing on a single author.

In an extensive collection of essays such as this, where the same general approach is applied to a variety of authors and texts, an efficient cross-referencing that will invite a comparative study of issues encountered in more than one ancient work is vital. While cross-references do exist in this volume, the system of cross-referencing employed throughout, whereby an arrow symbol (→) followed merely by the name of the ancient author (without a reference to a specific work or passage) suggests to the reader which other ancient author s/he should consider, useful though it may be, does not allow for great precision. It seems that it is generally at the discretion of contributors to give a fuller reference to ancient authors outside of the chapter(s) each has produced. Consequently, unless the point of comparison is extremely obvious to the reader and relatively easy to locate in this book, the cross-referencing system adopted does not always facilitate the correlation and comparison of authors, narrative techniques and themes across the volume. The thematic index at the back can certainly be of great help in cases where readers are invited to consider more than one chapter, but the fact that narratological themes in the index are only linked to page numbers and not to names of ancient authors does not make any easier the comparison of ancient narratological practices by author. This is particularly true of sections where there is explicit comparison between ancient authors, for example Nünlist's interesting chapter on Hesiod (pp. 25–34), which largely centres upon the narratological differences between Hesiod and Homer. An index of complete cross-references to authors would have improved significantly the value of this volume.

One of the primary concerns for the editors of any such project is the arrangement of material. In this case, there were at least two obvious possible arrangements: one by author in chronological order and one by genre. The use of the term "*history* of ancient narrative" in the prologue (xi–xiii) could have implied a chronological arrangement throughout, which would have been most suitable had we been dealing with a unified history of ancient Greek narrative. However, the editors' conclusion in the epilogue that it is impossible to trace a development in Greek narrative and therefore talk about a unified history, and that one can only discern "certain trends in the course of the centuries" (p. 552), is perfectly consistent with the chosen arrangement of material by genre, which works rather well.

One point which deserves special mention here is the inclusion in this volume of authors who had previously received little scholarly attention, notably Lycophron, on whom we are fortunate to have Lowe's fascinating chapter (pp. 307–314). Lowe draws attention to the uniqueness of Lycophron's *Alexandra*, which lies not only in its numerous intertextual associations with epic, tragedy and Plato, but also in its narrative complexity, manifest in a multi-leveled narrative that is characterised by a plurality of narratorial voices, and ambiguous narratorial identities and voice changeovers resulting in what is correctly described as “narrative nesting”.

A genre which might also have merited some attention is (early) Christian narrative. There has been no lack in narratological studies on early Christian texts, especially in the last two decades or so, and the narrative devices employed by the authors of the Gospels, in particular, have received a fair amount of attention. A comparison of the narrative technique of the Gospels to that of other contemporary genres, especially the Greek novel, would have been most interesting.

A section that will certainly not disappoint those with a particular interest in the study of ancient narrative is part nine by J. Morgan (JM) on the Greek novels. Each of the five complete-surviving novels is dealt with in a separate chapter. The chapters on the more voluminous works of Achilles Tatius, Longus and Heliodorus, which, according to JM, present the reader with more “complex narrative situations” (p. 492), are longer than those on Chariton and Xenophon of Ephesus.

In the chapter on Chariton (pp. 479–487), JM shows how the narrator constructs his *persona* as fictitiously contemporary to the events he narrates, and explores the implications that this has for the telling of the story. Looking at the communication between narrator and narratee (notably the narrator's direct addresses to the narratee and the absolute omniscience of the narrator who likes to keep his narratees perfectly informed at all times), JM explores the ways in which the narrator guides his narratees and occasionally pre-empts their response to the developments in the story; this is mainly achieved through the effective use of embedded narratives and is reinforced by the narrator's strong presence as well as by his habit of commenting on events and passing judgment.

In the chapter on Xenophon of Ephesus (pp. 489–492), JM helpfully highlights not only the similarities to Chariton's narrator, namely his omniscience and sententiousness, but also certain striking differences. One impor-

tant difference between Xenophon and Chariton lies in the function of Xenophon's embedded narratives, which, far from being mere digressions, as JM rightly points out, frequently find themselves in an analogous relationship to the main narrative, while also serving the additional purposes of filling gaps in the story and generating dramatic irony.

In the third chapter of this part, on Achilles Tatius (pp. 493–506), JM's narratological analysis is centred on the distinction between Clitophon the narrator and Clitophon the character¹ – an approach that Conte has applied to his reading of Petronius' *Satyricon*, which advocates a distinction between Encolpius the narrator and Encolpius the character.² After explaining Achilles Tatius' complex narrative framework, JM suggests that Clitophon the narrator is unreliable and lacking the omniscience and access to the character's thoughts that both Chariton's and Xenophon's narrator have. Therefore, Achilles' narrative is inevitably subjective – which the narrator himself would seem to admit when he confesses that his version of events is based on his personal interpretation. Turning to a discussion of tertiary narratives embedded in Clitophon's secondary narrative, which constitutes more or less the entire novel, JM demonstrates their function, which varies from advancing the story, to bearing directly on the plot, to serving additional effects such as enhancing suspense through the selective narration of events.

In his chapter on Longus (pp. 507–522), JM pays special attention to the novel's narrator as a fictional creation, a topic which he approaches on two levels: firstly, by taking the narrator at face value and examining how he relates the story and, secondly, by looking at the narrator as a literary device of the author.³ Following on from that, JM also distinguishes the two corresponding types of narratee and looks more closely at various aspects of communication between narrator and narratee. JM plausibly suggests that the narrator's evaluative or ironical stance towards the characters and their actions is part of the general attitude of superiority that he displays towards his characters; this attitude pervades the narrative and serves to distance the narrator from the author. Exploring the effects that this distancing has for our reading of the novel, JM argues that the author's text at times suggests that there are aspects to the story which have eluded the narrator and thus marks

¹ A narratological approach applied to Achilles Tatius by Morgan (1997) 179-80 and further explored by Whitmarsh (2003).

² Conte (1996).

³ An idea developed more fully in Morgan (2004) 17-20.

the narrator's role as the role of someone who turns the story into a less profound one than it really is. The story itself, however, is designed in such a way as to resist the narrator's simplification, and the "ideal reader" is expected to form an individual response to the text instead of adopting the narrator's point of view. Concluding this chapter is an interesting analysis of embedded tertiary narratives, which brings out the relation of these narratives to Longus' novel as a whole.

JM's chapter on Heliodorus (pp. 523–543) is no less insightful than that on Longus. Following a quick explanation of the novel's complex narrative framework, JM establishes a distinction between the primary and secondary narrators and discusses briefly the four different levels of secondary narratee, before devoting a separate section to each one of these. The element which sets Heliodorus' primary narrator apart from the primary narrator of Chariton, Xenophon and Longus, according to JM, is the skill with which the narrator in Heliodorus exploits his omniscience to play a game with his narratees, sometimes withholding information that is necessary for the full understanding of the story, sometimes offering multiple explanations for events which have taken place and other times offering no explanation at all but reporting instead the characters' own interpretation of events. In the section on Heliodorus' secondary narrators (pp. 533–542), JM throws fresh light on Calasiris' unreliable narration and Cnemon's story-telling. After drawing a comparison between the narratorial role of Cnemon in Heliodorus and of Clitophon in Achilles Tatius, JM concludes that the two bear a striking similarity in that they are both "an internal narrator whom the primary narrator must learn to interpret" (p. 540).

I would argue that, as in the novels of Achilles Tatius and Longus, in Chariton too we find an author-narrator distinction. The presence of Chariton the narrator is made known right from the start as a distinct and obtrusive one. Chariton himself restricts his role merely to "telling the love story of Chaereas and Callirhoe" (Char. 1.1.1), but does not present himself as the writing force behind the story. In fact, the ultimate responsibility for the plot is explicitly placed on Fortune, Eros and Aphrodite, all of whom are consistently presented as shaping powers in Chariton's novel. Thus, the strong presence of the narratorial voice (which takes the form of explicit comments and questions at 3.2.17, 5.4.4, 5.8.2, 5.8.3, and 6.9.4) serves to underline Chariton's role as the teller of a story narrated to an audience, at least until the end of the novel, where the story is referred to as a written one and Cha-

riton the author finally emerges. Hiding behind such fictional “authorial” powers as the gods for almost the entirety of the novel conveniently allows Chariton the *auctor* to engage in a subtle interplay with his characters and even to play on his readers’ expectations of the plot, “intervening” where necessary in order to thwart events that pose a threat to the almost obligatory happy ending.⁴

Either way, it is sufficiently clear that the distinction between the narrator, the teller of the story, who may be one of the characters (e.g. Clitophon in Achilles) or a third person observing the story from outside (e.g. in Longus), and the ‘concealed’ author, the intelligence behind each novel and responsible for its existence, is central to JM’s analysis in this volume. This enlightening and rather exciting narratological approach to ancient narrative, which, as has been mentioned above, has been applied also to the Roman novel, has changed considerably our understanding of ancient narrative and, as such, deserved a special mention in this volume’s general introduction.

Overall, then, this book is a very useful collection of stimulating papers, which will help to attract attention to the study of the ancient Greek literary production from a narratological angle. It will obviously be of interest to scholars and students working in the area of ancient Greek literature in general or on specific Greek authors, and it is likely to be especially appealing to those keen on narratology. At the same time, its across-the-board overview of narratological issues in ancient Greek literature and its illustration of narratological practices with examples from the primary texts in a language that is specialised yet accessible to the non-expert would not alienate the editors’ third target readership, identified as “a wider audience” (xiii). I am sure that most of the issues raised in this volume will provide food for thought and the stimulus for further, more specialised narratological studies on individual authors.

Meanwhile, the second volume in this new series of narratological studies in Greek literature is eagerly anticipated.

⁴ This idea has already been presented at the Annual Meeting of the Classical Association at Reading in 2005, and is fully developed and exemplified in my “Storytelling, predictive devices and the voice of the author in Chariton’s *Callirhoe*” (forthcoming).

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