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**Review of *Greek and Roman Actors: Aspects of an Ancient Profession*, edited by Pat Easterling and Edith Hall.**

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R E V I E W

*Greek and Roman Actors: Aspects of an Ancient Profession*, edited by Pat Easterling and Edith Hall. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Pp. 531. ISBN 0-521-65140-9. \$90.00.

**Contributors:** Peter G. McC. Brown, Eric Csapo, Pat Easterling, Catharine Edwards, Thomas Falkner, Elaine Fantham, Richard Green, Edith Hall, Eric Handley, Richard Hunter, John Jory, Ismene Lada-Richards, Jane L. Lightfoot, Walter Puchner, Charlotte Roueché, Gregory M. Sifakis, Kostas Valakas, Ruth Webb, Peter Wilson.

*Reviewed by* Anne Duncan, Arizona State University

This is an excellent collection of essays, and an important one for anyone interested in performance, theater history, literature, cultural studies, gender, and a host of other fields. Ancient actors, as real individuals who engaged professionally with literary texts, provide a point of interdisciplinary contact between literature and history, as well as novel avenues of approach into archaeology, epigraphy, rhetoric, philosophy, textual criticism, and other subfields of Classics. The twenty essays in this volume stretch from Classical Greece to the Byzantine era and beyond, and cover a wide range of evidence and methodologies. They are divided into three groups: The Art of the Actor (Part I), The Professional World (Part II), and The Idea of the Actor (Part III).

In their Preface, the editors refer to the explosion of performance studies in the past twenty-five years as providing the impetus for this collection. This is a forward-looking collection, and so it is taken for granted that Greek drama after the fifth century is a worthy object of study, that interdisciplinary approaches have much to tell us about ancient performance, and that performed drama did not end with Terence, or (possibly) Seneca -- in other words, that we have moved beyond most of the old orthodoxies and prejudices. Several main questions are raised here which many of the essays attempt to answer: what did ancient acting look like, and sound like? What qualities did audiences (and critics) particularly value in ancient acting? How did acting styles differ from comedy to tragedy, and through time? How did actors function within the societies that fostered them, and how were they regarded by others in society? Of course, not all of these questions are answered definitively here, since that would be impossible given

the state of the evidence. But this collection's greatest strength is its open-minded and inclusive approach to what constitutes evidence.

**Part I: The Art of the Actor**

Edith Hall's essay, "The singing actors of antiquity," leads off the collection. This is essentially an overview of the subfield with some interesting new observations. She emphasizes that the ancient actor was often as much a singer as anything else and that theatrical audiences were just that: audiences, as well as spectators. She discusses the range of musical modes and meters utilized by tragic and comic poets, with the interesting suggestion that Athenian tragedy's appropriation of modes from other parts of the Greek world -- the Lydian, the Dorian, etc. -- is "Athenian cultural imperialism manifested on the level of form" (7). Hall emphasizes tragedy, sketching fifth-century tragic song, the increase in virtuoso passages and expanded opportunities for virtuoso singers after the fifth century, Roman tragedy's apparently extensive use of song, and the phenomenally popular art of pantomime. Her discussion of song in comedy is much briefer, noting that Aristophanic Old Comedy and Roman comedy both make extensive use of song. She does not attempt an answer to why the New Comedy of Menander and his contemporaries is relatively devoid of song, at least song integrated into the plays. She does make the very interesting observation that while Aristophanes presents himself as opposed to the "New Music," he actually increases his solo actors' lyrics and decreases his choral odes as the fifth century wears on. The article closes with a quick survey

of Christian anti-theatrical sources, whose polemics testify to the power of theatrical singing on audiences. This essay reminds us of the importance of music to ancient drama, especially music sung by actors.

Peter Wilson's essay, "The musicians among the actors," takes Hall's emphasis on music further. He attempts a "sociological study" of the musicians who accompanied the chorus of Greek drama and provided much of the music of Roman drama. Wilson manages to do quite a lot with not very much evidence, without straining the limits of credibility. In fact, he turns the lack of evidence for *aulos*-players into evidence: the *aulos*-player was pointedly ignored by the Athenian audience and by the official Athenian victory-inscriptions, he argues, because he was most likely a foreigner, possibly a slave, and because he was engaged in an occupation that had lower-class and banausic associations. These deductions come in part from the inclusion of (lower-class, non-Athenian) names of *aulos*-players on choragic monuments, and in part from the elitist prejudices of Plato and Aristotle against emotional music and banausic labor, which Wilson argues were widespread. He argues persuasively that *aulos*-players developed a high degree of professional self-consciousness. But what he claims as a change in attitudes towards them by the end of the fifth century could also be simply an issue of gaps in the evidence; for example, he argues that tragic *aulos*-players may have attempted to distinguish themselves from their peers in other genres by wearing the fancy robes we see on fifth-century vase paintings, but could this not also suggest that fifth-century *aulos*-players were not as invisible as he originally argued? Wilson notes that the *aulos*-player's liminal status in society is echoed in his liminal physical position in performance. He disputes the "standard view" that New Comedy saw a trailing-off of interest in music; the choral interludes in Menander must have been important, judging from the number of Middle and New Comedies with titles like *Auletes*. Finally, Wilson discusses Roman *tibia*-players briefly. It is a shame this part of his essay is not longer since, as he notes, Roman comedy (especially the comedy of Plautus) was extensively musically accompanied -- but there is even less evidence on the Roman side, and Wilson does as much as he can with what there is.

Along with music, the other component of ancient drama that readers risk under-appreciating is the sheer physical presence of the performers, their gestures and postures. Kostas Valakas' essay, "The use of the body by actors in tragedy and satyr-play," serves as a helpful reminder of the three-dimensionality of ancient performance. Like Hall's essay, it reviews more than breaks new ground. Valakas quickly surveys the debate over

whether fifth century tragic acting style was more "statuesque" or "realistic," and the debate over whether we can read the texts of plays for staging cues. He argues that actors used their bodies and props to aid in characterization; more specifically, and interestingly, that actors used posture and the body's axis as means of characterization, even or especially when the character is immobile (Prometheus, Ixion, Andromeda). In general, Valakas' essay is strongest in its discussion of specific plays or groups of plays from very specific time periods, such as his discussion of "mannerism" in late fifth-century tragic acting: by "mannerism," he means the trend towards making theater seem more theatrical (the rise of virtuosic monodies, parody, and allusion to other tragedies; the use of props as props in, e.g., *Bacchae*; cross-dressing; rehearsal on stage, etc.). The essay is limited by its nearly exclusive focus on tragedy; despite the inclusion of satyr-play in the title, there is very little discussion of acting style in satyr-play, and while Valakas explicitly states that he will exclude comic acting style from consideration, he provides no reasons for this exclusion.

Richard Green's essay, "Towards a reconstruction of performance style," focuses on evidence of performance from vase paintings and terracotta figurines. He also attempts, even more ambitiously, to interpret the material evidence for audience perceptions of performance. He argues that tragic actors (as opposed to characters) appear on vases only in the late fifth century, corresponding to their increasing professionalization. In terms of costume conventions, he notes that tragic actors' costumes in late fifth-century paintings are elaborate and richly detailed, and argues that this is an aesthetic movement, the "Rich Style," which is connected to the New Music of Euripides and Agathon (helpfully, he refers the reader to Valakas' discussion of "mannerism" in acting). Vase paintings from the fourth century show tragic actors more often, and they reveal the changes in tragic costume and mask -- the *onkos*, the elongation of robes and shoes. In keeping with the more overtly theatrical stance of Old Comedy, comic actors show up on vase paintings earlier than tragic actors, and so we can trace the development of "increasing coyness" (104) in comic costume from the fifth to the fourth century. After his discussion of iconography in the vase paintings, he moves on to a discussion of performance style. Classical decorum called for restraint in gesture among the upper classes. Some memorable tragic scenes worked because they violated rules of decorum, like Andromeda tied, hands apart, exposed: "as treatment of a woman, it was shocking" (107). As for performance style in comedy, Green notes a progression from fifth-century depictions of violent and/or exuberant stage action to

fourth-century depictions of more restrained scenes. He analyzes several vases for nuances of physical presentation of actors in comic scenes -- not exactly performance style, but very helpful for ideas about posture, blocking, and use of costume. Finally, he turns to a brief look at the fourth-century terracotta figurines of stock characters from comedy and provides a finely nuanced look at differences in deportment and costume among just two types, the *pseudokorai* and *hetairai*.

Eric Csapo's essay, "Kallipides on the floor-sweepings: the limits of realism in classical acting and performance styles," turns to literary sources. He argues persuasively that acting styles in comedy and tragedy in the late fifth century came closer to resembling real life in terms of the range of characters portrayed, the use of physical and vocal mimicry, and the development of costume. While the old guard (Aristotle, Aristophanes) railed against the new realism in tragic acting, comic acting took full advantage of it, especially in the use of vocal mimicry. Csapo assails the scholarly arguments that ancient actors did not alter their voices to suit the characters they played, citing abundant evidence of vocal mimicry from comedy, which in fact suggests that playwrights were composing in order to showcase actors' ability to imitate a range of voices. Tragedy, in turn, shows an increase in realistic vocabulary and meter towards the end of the fifth century, and an increase as well in the use of language as a means of characterization. Interestingly, each genre displays a blind spot when it comes to linguistic and verbal realism: barbarians in late-fifth century tragedy sound more Athenian than their Aeschylean predecessors, and in both comedy and tragedy at the end of the century, linguistic mimicry was not used to emphasize class distinctions. Csapo suggests the reason for these blind spots is that late fifth-century "realism" was limited in certain ideological ways. This is appealing but not entirely substantiated by Csapo's evidence. The rise of "realism" in ancient dramatic performance, and the opposition voiced to it by people like Aristotle, is evidence of an ideological shift: tragedy came to be more "democratic" in its presentation of all characters as more like average, real people, while New Comedy came to be more elitist in its emphasis on linguistic differences between classes. This is a stimulating essay, and it is regrettable that it does not refer more to the other essays in the collection: for example, Csapo argues that the period of most intense conflict over the new "realism" was approximately 425-405 BCE. Does this correspond to Valakas' idea of increased "mannerism" in the late fifth century (referenced by Green as well)? Is "mannerism" the same as (or related to) "real-

ism"? If so, then this collection as a whole is piecing together an exciting argument.

Gregory Sifakis' essay, "Looking for the actor's art in Aristotle," examines Aristotle's conception of acting in the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric*. Sifakis argues that in the *Poetics*, Aristotle's implicit theory of the delivery of tragic language by tragic actors is that it should vary according to the mode of speech (dialogue, recitative, or song) and according to the character's *ethos* (moral and dramatic character). Sifakis looks at the *Rhetoric* for Aristotle's thoughts on *hypokrisis* (delivery) of oratory, arguing that it also applies to theatrical delivery. This kind of reading requires him to align the logographer with the playwright as someone who writes lines to be delivered in a certain way, which is still at one remove from a discussion of actors delivering lines. Sifakis takes Aristotle's brief discussion of rhetorical devices as a partial list of possible acting techniques. In short, the actor's job was to impersonate a character and to perform poetry in suitable style; impersonating a character meant representing broad social categories and moral choices, not individual personality; the most important component of the actor's art was his voice. Overall, this is an interesting but difficult project that Sifakis has set himself, and it presents a problem: what does Aristotle's theory of acting (as much as we can infer it) tell us about actual acting? This is, of course, the same question faced by those who read the *Poetics* to learn about actual tragedy. Sifakis attempts to deal with this by noting that the *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* are as descriptive as they are proscriptive and that the *Rhetoric* mentions actors frequently (presumably based on observation?). There are several places where he agrees with Csapo's conclusions about language in tragedy without citing him; a little cross-referencing would be helpful to the reader just dipping into this essay.

Eric Handley's essay, "Acting, action, and words in New Comedy," locates one source of Menander's ancient popularity in his writing style. Handley looks at Menander's predilection for a disjointed style of speech characterized by *asyndeton* and demonstrates how this style forces one reading lines aloud to perform them. This stylistic choice meant that Menander's plays were popular as performance pieces well after New Comedy's heyday, whether in sympotic or other settings, whereas someone like Menander's contemporary Philemon, who opted for longer, smoother sentences, was read but not performed. Handley reminds us that sympotic culture included performances of favorite excerpts of drama from memory, although all of the examples he cites are of people singing songs from drama. Recitations or performances of excerpts of Menander were



popular at symposia for hundreds of years; the evidence suggests a range of performance styles, from rather unmimetic reading to full-out acting, and a range of performers, from dinner guests to professional entertainers. In this context, Handley discusses the mosaics from the Menander House, arguing that mosaic artists may have preserved some original gestures from original performances. Handley also discusses implicit staging cues in the text of Menander, whether cues for musical accompaniment or for heightened emotion. He follows this with a detailed examination of passages in Menander in which one character quotes another (or even him- or herself) at length, arguing that this trick is typical of the playwright as well. Handley doesn't exactly argue for how these speeches would have been performed, observing on the one hand that the style calls for a fairly high degree of mimicry, but on the other hand noting Quintilian's famous complaint about actors playing old men who quote female characters in high, tremulous voices (*Inst.* 11.3.91). Finally, he segues into a "Roman Epilogue," in which he observes that it is Terence, not Plautus, who picks up on Menander's distinctive stylistic features of *asyndeton* and characters quoting each others' words. This essay is a superb example of how textual criticism and performance studies can complement each other.

Moving along chronologically, Richard Hunter's essay, "'Acting down': the ideology of Hellenistic performance," examines Hellenistic attitudes toward performance. Hunter argues that beginning with Aristotle, a trend emerged in the Hellenistic period among the Greek cultural elite: they regarded performance in general as vulgar, preferring to read drama than to see it, and they preferred moralizing, "improving" dramatists like Menander to the "subliterary" comic mime. This prejudice against performance in general, and against a certain type of low comic performance in particular, was picked up by the Roman cultural elite and reproduced in texts such as Horace's *Ars Poetica*. Hunter suggests that elite audiences increasingly knew Menander through reading or polite dinner-party recitation, not performance; he acknowledges, however, that the cultural elite still attended and (at Rome) funded full-fledged dramatic performances. The bearing and rhetoric of elite male characters in Hellenistic comedies, contrasted with that of

low-status male characters, suggest that there were two audiences being targeted by comic playwrights: the crowd of average citizens, who would presumably enjoy the farcical aspects, and the small elite who would presumably appreciate the moralizing *sententiae* and agree with the disparagement of the lower-class characters. Hunter argues that comic mime positioned itself as destabilizing elite society from below, even as elites constructed themselves in opposition to vulgar mime and comedy. It is impossible to prove or disprove this idea given the state of the evidence, but it is fascinating. In this context, Hunter's reading of Menander's *Dyskolos* is brilliant, analyzing the play's ending as in fact a "double end" based on "different performance traditions" (201) -- one "high," one "low." Hunter finds a parallel with Menander's technique of parallel "high" and "low" plots in Terence's *Adelphoe*, not coincidentally based on a Menander play of the same title. Significantly, *Dyskolos* and Terence's *Adelphoe* deal with education and socialization as a main theme in both the dominant, "high" plots and the subversive, "low" plots, suggesting these plays were reflecting elite concerns with self-fashioning in complex ways. This essay lays out some very interesting ideas about Menander and mime; I would have liked to see Hunter engage with Handley's argument about Menander's style inducing performance, even in "polite" recitation.

## Part II: The Professional World

Part II of the collection addresses material culture and historical issues most directly. It begins with Jane Lightfoot's essay, "Nothing to do with the *technitai* of Dionysus?" which discusses the actors' union in the Hellenistic world, the Artists of Dionysus.<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot argues that the Artists' self-presentation, as seen in inscriptional records of contracts and victory lists, suggests a very different picture of Hellenistic performance culture than has been widely understood. Opening with what has become a standard dismissal of the dated, handbook view of post-fifth-century Greek drama as "a story of decline" (209), she notes that the inscriptional evidence testifies to vigorous and increased theatrical activity throughout the Hellenistic period. She summarizes the organizational structure of the union, the venues for perfor-

1. Why not call the Artists of Dionysus a union, rather than a guild? The Artists of Dionysus had many branches (locals, if you will); they engaged "en bloc" (211) in negotiating performance contracts, pay, and privileges like safe travel and exemption from taxation and military service for their members (i.e., collective bargaining); they had strict rules about who could become a member (mime-actors, for example, were not allowed -- they formed their own union instead: the Parasites of Apollo); and it is doubtful "whether a performer who did not belong to an organisation would have stood much of a chance of finding work at all" (p.211), i.e., shops were closed and scabs were not tolerated. This sounds like a union.

mance, the rivalries between different branches of the union, and the evidence for prizes, pay, and prestige. Lightfoot notes that “the prominence of piety, *eusebeia*, in the guilds’ self-presentation is especially striking” (217) and argues that there are two reasons for this foregrounding of piety in the inscriptions. First, the practical one: it was needed to bolster the Artists of Dionysus’ claims to safe travel for their members. Second (and this is where her argument really takes off), *eusebeia* was also part of the self-presentation of Hellenistic kings, and the Artists of Dionysus modeled themselves on and provided support for Hellenistic ruler-cult in unique ways among clubs and organizations in this period. It is in this context that we should understand the Artists’ reputation for arrogance, their wearing of purple robes and golden crowns, and their performance in various religious festivals sponsored by Hellenistic monarchs. Each side -- the monarch, the performers -- used the other’s self-presentation to bolster its own standing with the audience: citizens. Lightfoot’s argument about the Artists’ connection to Hellenistic ruler-cult is persuasive; she is also careful to place the Artists of Dionysus in the context of the many other clubs, societies, and associations that sprang up during the Hellenistic period.

The Artists of Dionysus made inroads into the Roman world eventually, but they do not seem to have been a factor during the Republican period. Peter G. McC. Brown’s essay, “Actors and actor-managers at Rome in the time of Plautus and Terence,” provides a quick survey of what little we know, and the many questions we wish we had answers to, about the mechanics of theatrical production and performance in the time of the extant Roman comedies. With virtually no evidence from outside sources for this time period, Brown turns to the texts of Plautus and Terence themselves for references to actors, managers, financiers, producers, and other people involved in the performance of Roman comedy. Brown examines the *Hecyra* prologues in some detail, since these are our best pieces of evidence for the financial arrangements behind Roman dramatic productions in this time, though the prologues are famously unclear. Brown focuses on the self-presentation of the prologue’s speaker, the *actor* (lead actor) Ambivius, who seems to have “acted as middleman, presenting a budget to the aediles that included a fee for himself and his company as well as the playwright” (231). It is unclear, however, who was thought to “own” a script after the original performance and who might pay to put on a second performance; the poet may have been considered the “owner” of the play forever, or only for the initial performance, or somewhere in between. A shadowy picture emerges of Roman theatrical troupes competing with each other

for business, possibly specializing in a certain style of comedy, led by potentially famous *actores* like Pellio in Plautus’ time and Ambivius in Terence’s time. The lead actor may have been the only free member of the troupe, which leads to the interesting possibility that the one free person in the cast may have often played the tricky slave in Roman comedies. Overall, Brown raises a number of very interesting questions, although he suggests answers to very few -- a conservative approach, in keeping with the role of his essay in this collection, which is to remind us of what we still do not know.

John Jory’s essay, “The masks on the propylon of the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias,” focuses on a particular monument to help elucidate a broad question: to what extent could Roman drama be used as a litmus test for “Romanization”? The city of Aphrodisias chose to symbolize its relationship with Augustus, Jory argues, by representing Roman tastes in its new building program. The taste in question was the Roman taste for theater; the city placed theatrical masks on many of its public buildings, including a number on the *propylon* of the Sebasteion, the temple complex dedicated to Aphrodite, the *Theoi Sebastoi*, i.e., “the Julio-Claudian emperors” (244), and the *Demos*. Jory argues that there are a number of masks on the *propylon* which have been incorrectly identified as either belonging to the traditional dramatic genres (tragedy, comedy, satyr play) or evoking a Dionysiac *thiasos* when in fact, if examined carefully, their closed mouths reveal that they represent the new, and Roman, genre of pantomime. If he is correct, these would be the earliest examples of pantomime masks as building decorations in Asia Minor. Aphrodisias chose to represent pantomime among the other dramatic masks, Jory argues, as a means of signaling its Romanized status, its piety in the worship of the Imperial cult, and its loyalty to Augustus, himself an ardent fan of theatrical performance. More discussion of the arrangement or grouping of the masks would be helpful here -- did the sculptors place the masks from different genres in any kind of order? Is there a “hierarchy of the genres” in evidence? Nevertheless, Jory’s detailed discussion of individual masks is plausible, accessible, and convincing.

Continuing to look at neglected evidence of performance from material culture, Charlotte Roueché’s essay, “Images of performance: new evidence from Ephesus,” examines previously unpublished graffiti scratched onto the walls of the theaters at Aphrodisias and Ephesus: drawings of figures, with words inscribed over or around certain figures. The graffiti probably date to the fifth or sixth century CE and most likely depict performers, and perhaps scenes, from mime. Some of the inscribed words are names of mythological characters

(plots?), some appear to be names of contemporary people (performers?), and some, like the enigmatic *lasanos* (chamber-pot) could refer to a prop, or to part of the theater (i.e. the latrines). This brings Roueché to the question of the function of these graffiti, some of which are scratched in plaster (at Aphrodisias, in one of the inside rooms of the stage-building), some of which are inscribed in stone (at Ephesus, on the *scaenae frons* of the theater). The sketches in plaster inside a theater might be something like blocking sketches. But the material from Ephesus is harder to figure out: the sketches are inscribed on the stones of the theater façade, but lightly enough that they would not be visible from any great distance unless they were painted in. Roueché attempts to connect these images, which appear to be of stage performers, with similar images in contemporary mosaics. This allows her to make an interesting possible reading of one graffiti at Aphrodisias depicting what appear to be three seated kings holding orbs with crosses on them; in a similar mosaic at Madaba, the seated figures are labeled -- and they are personifications of cities. Thus the figures in the graffiti might be allegorical figures in a kind of masque. Ultimately, she wants to argue that the mosaics depict theatrical or theatricalized scenes, just as the graffiti do, and that this then gives us a whole new window into late antique theatrical practice. This is an interesting idea, although it presents the risk of circular argument (the graffiti resemble the mosaics because the mosaics resemble the graffiti). Some background information on ancient graffiti in general would be helpful here. Would someone scratching a figure on the wall of a theater expect playgoers to see it? Are the graffiti "official" in any sense (if the *lasanos*-inscription really is pointing the way to the toilet, for example)? Most poignantly, perhaps: is this vandalism of an abandoned theater?

Both Roueché's essay and Ruth Webb's, "Female entertainers in late antiquity," remind us how long performance history extends beyond the textual tradition. Webb's essay presents the world of female entertainers from the second to the sixth centuries CE. She inquires into their identity, the kinds of performance in which they engaged, their organization and pay, and their social and legal status. The sources for this information are abundant and varied, especially from the fourth to the sixth century, but often difficult to interpret because of ideological bent -- for example, the Christian anti-theatricalists, the texts in the Christian conversion genre, and Procopius' lurid *Secret History*. These are the texts that Webb singles out for their bias, although it is arguable that some of the texts she apparently assumes to be neutral, such as funerary inscriptions, also convey ideolog-

ical bias. In this period there is evidence for mime actresses, female singers and dancers who might perform either as the main attraction of a show or in a supporting role, and possibly female pantomimes. Mime actresses are the best-attested female performers, and Webb spends the rest of the article discussing them. Despite Procopius' allegations that Theodora was an untalented, unskilled whore, mime actresses must have had substantial training in singing, delivery, dance, and gesture. Some actresses seem to have been independent contractors, others seem to have had an ongoing connection to a particular troupe, and others were owned by a trainer. Free actresses were *infamis*, just like their male counterparts, and were commonly considered to be prostitutes; John Chrysostom equated theatrical spectatorship of mime actresses with adultery. At the same time, however, Chrysostom did show concern for the souls of the actresses, while the Imperial bureaucracy was content to establish a permanent underclass of *infamis* performers and exploit them for urban entertainment. Laws were passed that removed the stigma of *infamia* from actresses who underwent "genuine" conversions, left the stage, and lived lives of virtue -- though, as Webb points out, how these things were measured is anyone's guess, and there were likely very few actresses who could afford to give up their livelihood.

Turning to the textual tradition in the Byzantine period, Walter Puchner's essay, "Acting in the Byzantine theatre: evidence and problems," provides an overview of what we know about the vestiges of performance and theatricality that survived into the Byzantine era. The only evidence for dramatic performance comes from the early Byzantine period (from somewhere between 330 - 529 CE up to the advent of Iconoclasm), when we still find records of mime actors, musicians, acrobats, and other kinds of performers; after this period, some scholars have argued for the theatricality of various religious spectacles or artwork or literature, but there is no evidence of any theatrical performance per se such as we see in the West. Puchner stakes out some disciplinary turf in the beginning of this essay, tracing the scholarly debate over the very existence of "Byzantine theater" to a conflict between most Byzantinists, who deny that theater proper existed after the early Byzantine period, and some scholars from other disciplines such as theater historians, philologists, musicologists, and cultural historians, who argued that it did, in some form or other. These non-Byzantinists, Puchner suggests, relied on several incorrect assumptions, methodologies, or agendas. We do have evidence for the huge popularity of mime in late antiquity and the early Byzantine period, before Christian strictures halted performance al-

together. After the early Byzantine period, there were no more performances by mime actors, Puchner insists, but there were many quasi-theatrical forms of literature and religious practice that developed. One major reason theater proper never developed in the Byzantine East as it did in the West is the influence of the Iconoclastic movement. Images, representations, were regarded as highly charged, sacred objects, and were thus severely limited; a ban on theatrical performance is not so surprising in this context. Puchner's essay does not seem to break new ground (the theater/theatricality debate seems to have been settled since the 1970's) so much as to introduce the major issues, terms, and debates to an audience of Classicists -- but this is helpful for the primary intended audience of this collection.

### Part III: The Idea of the Actor

Part III of the collection is concerned with the significance of the actor in Greek and Roman culture. Pat Easterling's essay, "Actor as icon," focuses on the emerging star culture of the fourth and third centuries BCE in the Greek world, although she glances at the Republican superstar actor Roscius and at Roman pantomime. Easterling examines vase paintings, inscriptions, and textual evidence for the rise of famous actors like Neoptolemos and Theodoros, who often specialized in a type or types of role. The rise of fabulously well-paid superstars was enabled by several factors: the emerging performance circuit in the Greek world, the development of actors' unions, actors' cultivation of the patronage of Hellenistic monarchs, and the occasional employment of actors as diplomats by city-states. Easterling also takes note of the large body of anecdotal material about actors from later periods of ancient history, which often cluster around certain "paradigmatic figures" (333). Actors were regarded as somewhat uncanny, she argues, and their utterances could be viewed as a *kledon*, a statement that turns out to be significant in a new context in the future -- a sort of unwitting prophecy. The most famous example of this is Neoptolemos' performance of a tragic aria on the eve of Philip's planned invasion of Persia: Neoptolemos sang a song about death curtailing grand ambitions, and the next day Philip was assassinated at his daughter's wedding. At the same time, actors could be viewed as mere deceivers; the associations were polyvalent in a culture that was so soaked in theater. This is a suggestive and interesting essay; some of her claims are speculative, but that is the nature of the evidence for this time period. On that note, it is a shame that Easterling does not extend her discussion to Roman pantomime, since that was a better-documented "star culture."

Another profession which emerged in the Hellenistic period was that of the scholar-editor. Thomas Falkner's essay, "Scholars versus actors: text and performance in the Greek tragic scholia," speculates on the battle for control and authority over the texts of playwrights which must have gone on between actors and editors, the two groups of people who worked with the texts professionally. Falkner reads the scholia on Greek tragedy for evidence of editorial attitudes towards actors and performance, concluding that they tended to fault contemporary (Hellenistic) actors for violating the tragic playwright's authorial intent. These scholia thus reveal the rise of the actor's art in the Hellenistic period, with lead actors reassigning choral lines to themselves and taking all of the good parts in a play. This leads to a discussion of the scholiasts' disapproval of actors' interpolations and alterations to the text, which Falkner equates with Aristotle's complaint that in his day actors are more important than poets. Some discussion of this view as nostalgic, whether deliberately or not, would be interesting. Instead, Falkner seems to share Aristotle's prejudice against "excessive" spectacle and to treat this prejudice as objectively true and unproblematic (353 n.49, 354-55, 359; though perhaps he is merely documenting this prejudice in the scholiasts). The last part of the essay is a case study of Euripides' *Orestes* for what its scholia can tell us about Hellenistic tragic performance conditions. The scholiasts express a consistent preference for "natural" stage action, inferred solely from textual cues, and for the actor's disappearance behind the character he played. Yet as Falkner points out, these preferences were at odds with trends in performance style, which were clearly responding to audience taste for greater virtuosity and spectacle. Ironically, this conclusion leaves us with a different impression of the scholiasts than Falkner strove to give the reader through much of the essay; they wind up sounding like out-of-touch, fussy, conservative academic critics, rather than intellectuals engaged dynamically with their community -- contemporary "ivory tower" professors, rather than public intellectuals.

From Hellenistic Egypt, we move to Rome. Elaine Fantham's essay, "Orator and/et actor," examines the connection between Roman oratory and acting by looking at what Cicero and Quintilian have to say about actors in their treatises on rhetoric (in particular, Cicero's *De Oratore*). The linguistic connections between oratorical and theatrical delivery tended to make the authors of rhetorical treatises uneasy, which is why we see both Cicero and Quintilian at pains to distinguish the orator, who speaks the truth with sincerity and only the slightest touch of artistry, from the actor, who mouths lines



written by someone else in order to work his audience up into an emotional frenzy. Yet because of this uneasiness, both authors cite numerous examples of stage practice (usually tragedy) -- at times as histrionic exaggerations to avoid, but at times as models to follow. Fantham discusses the famous friendship between Cicero and the actor Roscius; Cicero has nothing but praise for Roscius' performance style, which he seems to feel was restrained and sparing in its use of gesture and extremes of pitch -- a model for the orator, in other words. Cicero's setting of the *De Oratore* in the generation before his own is one indication of his nostalgic opinions about appropriate theatrical and oratorical performance styles. Next, Fantham turns to Quintilian. In the first century CE, comic actors continued to perform in privately-owned troupes, and significantly, they also found work as teachers of rhetoric. Quintilian's treatise on rhetoric thus warns his readers against adopting gestures and delivery styles from the comic stage. Quintilian's discussion of which theatrical gestures to avoid suggests a rather "busy" acting style in his period, which Fantham juxtaposes with speeches from Plautus in which one character describes another's gestures. Quintilian proves even more conservative than Cicero on some topics, as when he criticizes Roscius for certain kinds of vocal mimicry -- whereas Cicero only censured orators who imitated him. Quintilian's treatise in general gives the impression that "the delivery of the courtroom was coming closer to that of the stage" (375) in his time, and that he did not approve of this development. At the same time, his treatise and contemporary texts (Persius and Juvenal) suggest, perhaps, that acting style was growing ever more exuberant. Fantham's essay is more a discussion of what we can glean about acting from contemporary rhetorical treatises than a discussion of the vexed relationship between acting and oratory, though she does take up this issue periodically throughout the essay.

Where Fantham examined the interaction between Roman oratory and acting, Catharine Edwards' essay, "Acting and self-actualisation in imperial Rome: some death scenes," examines the interaction between Roman philosophy and acting. The observation that "all the world's a stage" was voiced two millennia before Shakespeare, by Democritus. Many other philosophers expressed some version of this observation, including some among the Cynics and Stoics, as well as Cicero and Seneca. There was, however, a distinctively Roman prejudice against actors, a prejudice which is revealed in other philosophical texts by (e.g.) Cicero and Seneca that use theater as a metaphor for hypocrisy and deceit; the actor is held out as a positive philosophical role model only when he plays one kind of char-

acter well and consistently, one which is suited to his nature. Roman philosophy's ambivalence about acting was complicated by the fact that Roman Stoicism required an audience for an individual's actions to have meaning: the Stoic should be seen to endure suffering bravely and play the part Fate has assigned him well. If the aspiring Stoic is alone, then he should make himself his audience. This is one of Edwards' most interesting ideas, and she develops it with passages from Seneca's letters. If Fate could be seen as a playwright by the Stoics, then suicide was, for them, a way to grasp authorial control. She discusses Cato the Younger's suicide, itself modeled consciously on the death of Socrates, as a model that the Stoics picked up and consciously evoked as representing resistance to tyranny and dignified self-control. Then she discusses the suicides of Helvidius Priscus, Seneca, Thrasea Paetus, Petronius (an ironic parody of typical Stoic suicide), and finally Nero, who failed to achieve a tragic suicide and wound up ironically being true to his character by playing out a farcical suicide instead. Throughout this discussion she interweaves passages from Seneca's tragedies with contemporary historiography and philosophy to analyze the ways in which these men, like the characters in Seneca's extremely self-conscious plays, felt the need to live up to their names, which is to say, to their audience's expectations of them based on their pre-existing characters. She also argues that these suicides became scripts, both metaphorically and literally; the death of Cato was the subject of a play, and Roman schoolboys apparently recited Cato's last speech as a school exercise. This is a stimulating argument and a great read.

While Edwards' essay examines theater as a metaphor for "real life" (and real death), Ismene Lada-Richards' essay, "The subjectivity of Greek performance," investigates the real interior life of theater practitioners, attempting to find ancient evidence for the actor's subjective experience of playing a role. She looks primarily at plays which involve characters disguising themselves, and notes that all these plays show the disguise failing, to some degree. In observing what constitutes failure, she reasons, we can figure out the conventions of success. But while Lada-Richards acknowledges that her conclusions about the actor's experience are really about the tragic actor's experience, she does not address the fact that most of her examples are taken from comedy. How does this extra layer affect our understanding of the tragic actor's subjective experience? Was the comic actor's experience different? Another methodological issue at stake here is her impressive citation of comparanda from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century theater history (and from twentieth-century

theorists of acting, i.e. Stanislavsky and Brecht); this is a logical way to go when ancient evidence is so scarce, but it is still problematic. In short, Lada-Richards tries to overcome the paucity of ancient evidence by two interesting, creative, but risky paths: reading ancient drama as evidence of real life, and reading later material as relevant to the ancient world. She begins her discussion by looking at Dicaeopolis in *Acharnians*, who describes the process of disguising himself as a raggedy tragic-style beggar as an alternation between absorption in the role and remaining distanced from it. This sets the terms of her discussion for the rest of the essay: absorption in the role (Stanislavsky, much of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century theater practice, and ancient tragic actors) vs. remaining distanced from it (Brecht and, at times, ancient comic actors). In general, her discussion of multiple role-playing tends to undercut her earlier claims about absorption as the rule for tragic actors. Lada-Richards' final section investigates the actor's subjective experience of playing emotional roles. In the absence of other evidence, she turns to Plato's *Ion* and to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century actors, and it is here that her methodology becomes particularly problematic; what do we learn by comparing the rhapsode Ion to "let us say, Eliza O'Neill" and Diderot's "'involved' performer" (413) as examples of passionate acting? She concludes that the (tragic) performer's job was to generate and transmit the emotions of his character to his audience. She ends by asserting that the (tragic) actor was an ambivalent figure, akin to both the wizard and the bard, a fitting worshipper of the identity-erasing, boundary-crossing god of the-

ater. Despite the difficulties inherent in using alternate evidence and alternate means of interpretation, Lada-Richards' essay stakes a strong claim for this kind of thoughtful speculative work.

Edith Hall's essay, "The ancient actor's presence since the Renaissance," provides a pleasant and fitting conclusion to the collection. It looks at ways in which the ancient actor, as opposed to ancient dramatic texts, influenced theater, literature, and culture from the Renaissance to the twentieth century (with emphasis on the Renaissance). The most famous anecdotes about actors from antiquity continued to be read during the Renaissance and afterwards and inspired many plays, as well as philosophical and poetic defenses of the theater during times when it was under siege. A special treat is her brief discussion of the other genres inspired by the figure of the ancient actor, from historical fiction to film.

As is evident from the length of this review, the volume is dense, but amply repays careful reading. It is customary in reviews to slight essay collections for their lack of internal cross-referencing, but this collection makes a concerted effort at sustained, detailed internal cross-referencing. There are places where one still wishes for more, but all in all, this collection encourages the reader to sample all of its riches, rather than just dipping in here and there. And each essay (except for those of Puchner, Roueché, and Sifakis) concludes with a brief bibliography of suggested reading. In addition, the book is virtually error-free. This is a well-produced volume of stimulating essays which should draw the attention of more scholars toward ancient performance in general and toward ancient performers in particular.