

## REVIEWS • RESENSIES

Richard J. Evans, *Syracuse in Antiquity. History and Topography*. Pretoria, UNISA Press 2009. Pp. viii + 169. 32 figures in the text. Numerous colour illustrations, video clips and reconstruction drawings on CD-ROM.

With *Syracuse in Antiquity* Richard J. Evans not only offers his readers a comprehensive account of – as the title announces – the history and topography of this Mediterranean metropolis but also succeeds in painting a vivid picture of the city's monumental townscape as a historical setting. The book's six chapters effectively fall into two parts: chapters one to three ('Urban Space', 'Chore' and 'Temples and Theatres') focus on topography in the wider sense, while chapters four to six ('The Four Great Sieges of Syracuse', 'Imperial Designs' and 'A City in the Roman Empire') deal with the history of events involving the city from the time of the Athenian expedition to the early Imperial period.

The author's choice to devote the book to this particular time-frame betrays a certain degree of text-led bias: despite his detailed discussion of Syracuse's lay-out and architecture, Evans does so primarily from the point of view of the Ancient Historian interested in locating the events described by – in particular – Thucydides and Cicero – or, conversely, in assigning names and functions to excavated or standing structures on the basis of these authors' information. This is not, in itself, a serious criticism, especially since the author sets out to provide just such a topographic companion for the Classicist acquainted with those and other sources, as is implied by Evans's decision to begin his book with a quotation from E.A. Freeman's discussion of where the Athenian camp was located – a question to which the author himself returns in his Appendix 2. Nonetheless, in view of the vibrant debate concerning the archaeology of Archaic Greek colonisation in Sicily and elsewhere, its omission from Evans's account might initially strike some readers (including this reviewer) as odd. If it is recognised as a conscious decision on the author's part, however, it becomes possible to judge the book's merit on its own terms: in this case, *Syracuse in Antiquity* is to be applauded as an important addition to the literature concerned with the history of ancient Sicily in English.

What Evans has especially succeeded in doing in the first three chapters is to enable his readers to visualise the ancient city, and it is here that the

author's enthusiasm for Syracuse as a place comes out most clearly. Whereas most Classicists across the globe would have a relatively clear idea of the principal lay-out and monuments of Athens and Rome, Syracuse – despite her prominence which Evans rightly emphasises – many will not be able to read, say, Thucydides' account of the Athenian expedition with even a vague idea of the main locations that are mentioned in the text. Those readers – but not those readers alone – will find this book to be an extremely useful companion to the text, not least on account of the numerous maps, reconstruction drawings, colour photographs and videos that are supplied on a CD along with the book. But even for the reader who is familiar with Syracuse, Evans has produced a useful guide to the ancient city, the layout of which differed significantly from present Syracuse, especially insofar as the harbours and internal division of the city into distinctive areas – 'cities', in fact – are concerned.

This very engaging discussion of the topography of monuments leads into the chronological narrative of chapters four to six, which – whilst frequently referring to the first part of the book – turns out to be a more conventional account. This is not, of course, to deny its usefulness in drawing together information from a variety of literary sources and thus arriving at a compact local history with a degree of resolution that would be difficult to achieve except for a few ancient cities.

*Syracuse in Antiquity* should be on the shelves of every library, be it as a literary companion, guidebook or an interesting read in its own right. The number and quality of illustrations are impressive and make up a significant part of the book – even though they are mostly on CD-ROM. This, unfortunately, makes it somewhat difficult to read the book outside a library or office. However, this in no way detracts from the author's achievement.

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W.J. Henderson, *Vir Griekse Fluite: Vroeë Griekse Elegiese Poësie vertaal en toegelig*. Pretoria, Protea Boekhuis 2009. Pp. 240. ISBN 978-1-86919-250-1. Prys R250.

Met sy boek, *Vir Griekse Fluite*, stel W.J. Henderson sy navorsing in verband met die vroeg-Griekse liriese poësie wat reeds in 2004 met die publikasie van *Op Griekse Lier* (Protea Boekhuis) begin is, verder bekend. In die boek onder bespreking gaan dit oor die vertaling in Afrikaans en bespreking van 13 oud-Griekse elegiese digters en 'n enkele anonieme

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