

vision *itself* produce the media effect of protrusions and recessions—the optical illusion of bulk and stuff—within his famous lines’ (236). Similarly, Genevieve Lively (Chapter 10) considers Roman elegy’s ‘concerns with its own materiality and mediality’ (239) through Wolfgang Ernst’s media archaeology.

The classical resonance of modern and contemporary art and its mediality, whether visual or textual, occupy the remaining chapters. Karin Harrasser (Chapter 7) expands on the subtle (*subtextilis*) haptics of Diego Velázquez’s *Las hilanderas* (c. 1657) (with brief reference to Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*) to explore the current state of tactility and ‘teletactile technologies’ (178–82) in recent media theory. Ulrich Meurer (Chapter 8) investigates the affinities of traditional and media archaeology through Canadian artist Henry Jesionka’s *Ancient Cinema* (2012) and its collocation of numerous proto-cinematic media such as the slight variations of figures on shards of painted Roman glass found in the Croatian town of Zadar (196–97). Finally, Maria Oikonomou (Chapter 12) outlines the algorithmic decisions in the processes of migration, with Odysseus and his various refractions, including in George Hadjimichalis’ *Crossroad* installation, as elucidative guides. As the first of its kind, this volume is essential reading for students and scholars interested in media with and in Graeco-Roman antiquity.

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MIKALSON (J.D.) **The Essential Isocrates** (Ashley and Peter Larkin series in Greek and Roman culture). Austin: University of Texas Press, 2022. Pp. Xx + 234. \$45.00. 9781477325520.
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Unlike typical introductions, *The Essential Isocrates* aims to present the classical Athenian author Isocrates and his work mainly ‘through his own words’ (1), that is, by assembling and arranging excerpts from the large Isocratean oeuvre. This approach is indeed intriguing as Isocrates discussed certain subjects and ideas repeatedly during the long course of his writing career. Following the preface, the main part of the book is preceded by lists of Isocrates’ discourses and letters, first in numerical and then in chronological order (the latter including information on historical events), as well as useful, but by no means exhaustive lists of Greek terms and persons mentioned. In a short introduction, Jon Mikalson outlines Isocrates’ various but complementary roles as teacher, philosopher and political writer and already presents some of his key views, like the importance of reputation or his goal of a united Greek expedition against Persia.

The main part is comprised of six chapters with subchapters that often lack order. Chapter 1 (‘Isocrates: His life’) is essentially a translation of (Pseudo-)Plutarch’s biography. This is not only unexpected considering the aim of this book to rely primarily on Isocrates’ own words, but also leads to overlaps with the introduction and Chapter 2 (‘Isocrates: On himself’), though the latter primarily gives valuable insight into Isocrates’ self-representation. Chapter 3 treats Isocrates’ views ‘On morality and religion’ (with the latter being Mikalson’s area of expertise). Chapter 4 presents Isocratean quotes ‘On philosophy, education, rhetoric, and poetry’; Chapter 5 those ‘On political theory’, though with a surprising focus on monarchy considering that Isocrates discussed all kinds of constitutions. The sixth and last chapter (‘Isocrates: On Athenian and Greek history’) makes up almost half of the book (115–206) and is perhaps the strongest part: it presents Isocrates’ treatment of

historical times and events in chronological order and somewhat brings the results of the previous chapters together. After a short selected bibliography and further readings, the book is completed by a general index and an *index locorum* both very useful.

In general, this book cites the important passages on every topic Isocrates discussed, but the editing of each section varies heavily. Sometimes, there is a short and helpful introduction to Isocrates' key views on the topic, followed by quotes with contextualizing words from the author (see for example 'On *sōphrosynē*', 47–49). But sometimes there is only a list of quotes without connection, context or order (see for instance 'On education and philosophy', 78–83). Also, Mikalson often takes Isocrates' statements at face value, even to the point of leaving contradictions unaddressed and contexts unmentioned, for example, in (seemingly) believing Isocrates' lamentations that his old age is weakening his writing abilities (33–36) or in putting quotes from different texts (3.21 and 12.143, 151) that criticise and praise democracy for its choice of advisers next to each other (50). It is especially problematic when a quote is shortened beyond recognition or used in the wrong context. In the subchapter 'On good thinking (*Φράσις*)' we find the quote: "Men who think best and are most gentle differ from the beasts that are the most wild and most savage" (12.121) (51). However, this is actually just a picture of comparison, as can even be seen in another section of this book: 'Athenian kings differed from their counterparts elsewhere "as much as the most thoughtful and gentle men differ from the wildest and most savage animals"' (118). At other times, passages are quoted in the wrong chronological context (12.196–97 in 137–38), statements that are specific to a certain encomium are used out of context (11.24–25 in 68 and 10.65 in 88) or a paraphrase from an earlier text is cited as direct speech (15.71 in 105).

The frequent repetition of passages in different sections is noticeable, but unavoidable. Mikalson's translation is altogether good, but not without inaccuracies and other problems. For example, the ambiguous and for Isocrates very important word *λόγος* is sometimes unsuitably translated as 'language' (see for example 83–84, 187) and is never transcribed or in any way discussed. It is a general problem of the book that Isocrates' texts are only presented in English translation, especially as Mikalson does not explain which edition of the Greek text he used and the book is aimed at 'classicists' (xix). In respect of the amount of quotes included, it seems indeed impossible to offer the original text as well. A translation is, however, always an interpretation.

In summary, *The Essential Isocrates* gives a valuable first overview of Isocrates' oeuvre, especially for readers with limited to no knowledge of Greek. But more attention to detail, that is fewer quotes but with the Greek original included, paired with a better structure and more consistent presentation of Isocrates' key positions might have given a less filtered and more useful impression of the essential Isocrates.

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MITCHELL (F.) **Monsters in Greek Literature: Aberrant Bodies in Ancient Greek Cosmogony, Ethnography, and Biology**. Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2021. Pp. 210. \$48.95. 9780367556464. doi:[10.1017/S0075426923000356](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0075426923000356)

Reliably conceptualizing what a 'monster' should be or what it means to be 'monstrous' is a challenge at which even scholars of the topic recoil, a Hydra that itself only sprouts more heads the more one attempts to vanquish it. This becomes an even more Herculean task