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 unadressed 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 (Φρά½¹νησις)' 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 λά½¹γος 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' œuvre, 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.
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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

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when considering monstrosity in the ancient Greek world, which is markedly different from the (post-)Christianized ideas of monsters that pervade modern European culture. Appropriately, then, Fiona Mitchell's book opens with a thorough discussion of previous scholarly assessments of monstrosity, crucially decentring ancient monsters from their most famous role as beasts-to-be-slain by heroic protagonists in myths like that of Heracles and the Hydra (2). Laying aside other potential approaches, such as defining monsters based on human emotive reactions, she focusses on monstrosity as the physically anomalous (6). Her study is an examination of creatures and bodies deemed monstrous, specifically with regard to three genres of ancient Greek literature: cosmogony (chapters 1 and 2), ethnography (chapters 3 and 4), and biology (Chapter 5).

Chapter 1 concerns Hesiod's *Theogony*, a text that contains obvious examples of physically abnormal monsters (for instance, the Hundred-Handers), discussions of which are well-worn ground among studies of ancient monstrosity. The most useful section of this chapter highlights the associations of Hesiodic monsters with peripheral spaces (37–45), a feature more apparent in ethnography. Chapter 2 then concerns less well-trodden ground for monster studies: the extant fragments of Orphic cosmogonies, and primarily the depiction of the gods Chronos and Phanes. While the Hesiod chapter does not significantly deviate from the standard assessment of the text's monsters in other scholarship, the inclusion of this Orphic material and general comparison between the two cosmogonies is instructive. These Orphic gods, though physically monstrous, are never opponents of the Olympians, as was the case for many Hesiodic monsters. Thus, with these monstrous gods free of antagonistic associations, Mitchell puts forth the intriguing argument that physical abnormality in this case is 'an external manifestation of their creative power' (67–68).

Chapter 3 focusses on Herodotus. This opens with a strong critique of scholarly attempts to rationalize the seemingly fantastical parts of the *Histories*, most famously the giant gold-digging ants and winged snakes, as a means of 'rescuing' the text's historical content (79–81). Mitchell, by contrast, explores throughout how monsters are intimately related to Herodotus' project of describing the world. Chapter 4, meanwhile, concerns the works of Ctesias and Megasthenes. As with Part 1, though to a lesser degree, Mitchell's discussion of these three texts individually occasionally makes noteworthy comparisons between them. She highlights, for instance, the tendency of Megasthenes' monsters, in comparison to those of Ctesias, to be even more peripheral within India and less connected with human populations (144).

Chapter 5 on Aristotle is the most impressive chapter for its originality and expert handling of Aristotle's complex terminology and his departures from cosmogonic and ethnographic notions of monstrosity. It is unfortunate that Part 3 does not contain an additional chapter on another work of ancient biology, but this is no fault of the author. As she correctly explains (155–56), other Greek works that might fit this genre (for example, those of Hippocrates and Galen) rarely touch upon monstrosity. Nevertheless, even without intra-genre comparison, this chapter's analysis is especially insightful, providing nuance to the overall topic, such as the fact that monstrosity, for Aristotle, seems to have been understood as existing on a spectrum (160–63).

Mitchell's monograph is a welcome addition to the study of classical monsters. It provides thoughtful discussion on these texts, consistently maintaining focus on the issue of understanding differences within ancient conceptions of monstrosity. She effectively combines conventional material for the subject (Hesiod, Herodotus, Ctesias and Megasthenes) with lesser-studied material (the Orphic fragments and Aristotle). While by no means being an exhaustive study of Greek monstrosity, it does furnish helpful insights, primarily on aspects of monstrosity and its causes between genres, but also an assortment of minor features throughout that are not often commented on (for example, colouration, abnormal consumptive patterns, generational deviations, misplaced internal organs, connections to divinity and possession/absence of human-like

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intelligence). The book does contain a higher-than-average number of typographical errors, usually as omitted/misplaced articles or prepositions, and there are occasionally more significant, though understandable, slips (for instance, 'it is *usurping* that Ctesias' should be 'unsurprising' on page 121). Generally, these do not impact comprehension. The Hydra of fully understanding ancient monstrosity still persists (as it likely always will). Yet scholars of the subject will find Mitchell's adept and thorough study, containing much original and meaningful analysis, to be a valuable resource in combating the many heads of ancient Greek monstrosity.

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MITSIS (P.) (ed.) **The Oxford Handbook of Epicurus and Epicureanism**. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. Pp. 848. $150. 9780199744213.
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It is rare that I find myself amused by the introduction to a handbook of ancient philosophy, but chuckle I certainly did at Phillip Mitsis' description of his tome as 'a volume that is not particularly distinguished by its slenderness' (4). Topping out at 848 pages, the work is indeed rotund, but it manages to be thoroughly comprehensive without bloat, covering not only the fundamentals of Epicurean philosophy but also several topics that are less well trod, particularly the reception of Epicureanism from the Renaissance to Postmodernity.

The volume boasts 31 chapters, nearly all by senior scholars, situated mainly in the United States and Europe (Italy is particularly well represented). As Mitsis notes in his introduction (2), many of the contributors were pioneers of Epicurean scholarship well before it became 'hot' among academics and before Epicureanism gained popular appeal. (What immediately comes to mind is Daniel Klein's 2012 bestseller, *Travels with Epicurus: A Journey to a Greek Island in Search of a Fulfilled Life* (London).) Epicurean scholarship has advanced since the heyday of the scholarly pioneers – owing notably to the ongoing rehabilitation of ancient Epicurean texts discovered in the mid-18th century amid the ashes of a villa near Pompeii – so these scholars have the gift of hindsight, offering interpretations of Epicurean philosophy that reflect the progress in the field over the last several decades, progress that was kick-started by their own work.

The volume is divided into three parts, the first of which, 'Epicurus', is the largest (containing 14 of the 31 chapters). Here one finds standard Epicurean fare: biographical information regarding Epicurus and his school as well as broad treatments of the main areas of Epicurean philosophy, for example, epistemology (Gisela Striker), hedonism (Voula Tsouna), atomism (David Konstan), psychology (Elizabeth Asmis), politics (Geert Roskam) and language (Enrico Piergiacomi). But Part I does not stop there: it also offers chapters on individual subtopics of the broader themes – such as friendship (Phillip Mitsis), voluntary action (Walter Englert), rhetoric (Clive Chandler), poetics (Michael McOsker) and death (Stephen Rosenbaum) – without being repetitive. Mitsis opted against long chapters that attempt to cover every aspect of a single topic – a single chapter on justice and all its subtopics, for example – in favour of spreading a single topic across several chapters. In my view, the volume greatly benefitted from Mitsis' editorial choice: comprehensive chapters would have been excessively large, and any related chapters would very likely have covered much of the same ground.

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