SOME RECENT BOOKS

depend heavily on inscriptions and papyri; but writing history mainly from these sources has its drawbacks. Such odd factors determine the material left to us. So the author has to exclude a large area of the empire. Yet what remains may not be truly representative, e.g. how would the ‘open-air life’ of the Mediterranean city (p.66) fit the British climate? Inscriptions have further limitations: they only record what was thought worth recording. So one has the impression of numerous clubs formed mainly for conviviality. But might not the simple act of neighbours raising their glasses in a pub go unrecorded? (p.82). And what, as MacMullen remarks, of the people too poor to leave trace of their existence by an inscription? (p.93). Nonetheless this is a stimulating book, drawing on a range of sources, well printed and almost free from misprints.

Anne R. Priestley


Isidoro Muñoz Valle, lecturer in Greek at Valladolid University, has produced several books and many articles on classical subjects and these three are a synthesis of his findings. His work has been stimulated and aided by other Spanish classical scholars, namely, Dr S. Lasso de la Vega, head of the department of Greek Philology in Madrid, R. Adrados, and E. Hernández Vista of the University of Granada. All three publications reflect the exhaustive and lucid methodological approach introduced into Spanish scholarship by the Romance philologist Don Ramón Menéndez Pidal; they are very readable, as the stages in the arguments are indicated by sub-headings, and they are all charted in the index.

The first work can be translated as ‘Attitudes towards classical culture throughout history’. As the title indicates, it is a panoramic view bringing together present thinking on classical subjects and documenting past study of them. The book follows a chronological order from Antiquity through the Renaissance, Neo-humanism versus ‘science of antiquity’ in the 19th century, up to present-day attitudes. The author shows how until last century classicism was held as an immutable model, a supreme norm of perfection. Study was confined to those authors considered models of perennial beauty or of didactic importance. The 19th century historicist view of all cultures as equal is, to the author, an untenable position, as he feels the Greek culture must be of
SOME RECENT BOOKS

outstanding significance to the Western world since it contains all the possibilities and potentialities for what we are today. The emergence of the critical spirit and liberation of the individual in classical Greece lies at the base of our Western culture. The structural basis (with analysis of style as in Russian formalism and the idea that literature and language cannot be separated) is more vital than the historical basis now. Today's type of investigation, the 'Third Humanism', seeks to go beyond pure aestheticism or pure historicism in a desire to offer a total view: it comprehends many aspects — literary, historical, sociological, and cultural in general, showing cultural evolution as a whole, mutual interaction of diverse partial aspects.

In the second work, roughly translated as 'How Western Man was born (with the dawning of Greece)', Munoz Valle examines the ancient, pre-classical period of Greek history and myth in order to see how Greek culture and eventually Western culture originated. In Chapter 1 he looks at the cultural background — history and society — which gave rise to the poetry of Homer. This he sums up in a chronological chart covering three pages. Chapter 2 deals with what he calls the 'cosmovision of the nobility' and the appearance of rationalism. (In his comments on the supreme Greek discovery of the value of the human person, one can detect an anti-socialist stance in the tradition of Ortega y Gasset and in keeping with the recent political regime of Spain.) Chapter 3 is literary, examining the first literary monuments — the early epic cycles and pre-Homeric poetry. References are made to study on Oriental elements in the Mycenaean epic and to the passage from oral to written epic (after due reference to Lord, Parry and Bowra, the author has little of originality to add on this). The author dwells at length on Homer — the world he presents; his style; particularities of the Iliad (the controversy of its unity, the 'humanization' of the epic, the theme of 'the anger of Achilles', possible models), peculiarities of the Odyssey (how suspense and drama are created, 'a tragedy without a tragic hero?'). A fourth chapter looks at Greek art, sculpture and architecture, in a summary way, to see how it expresses the Greek soul.

Munoz Valle's point of departure appears to have been Toynbee's recognition in his Study of History that Western culture has its origin in the Hellenic. But in particular, he is relying upon Spanish research such as that of Lasso de la Vega and Zubiri's Nature, History, God (trans.). He concludes that the exaltation of the human being is the defining note of the Greek soul. He detects an 'ascending process of humanization' (in heavy type) — Hector and Ulysses of the Odyssey are 'one of us'. In art, from the geometric painting of the 8th century B.C., man is a major theme. These concerns in particular are seen to contain the potential for Western Man.

The third work, 'Investigations into the formulaic epic style and the language of Homer' (trans.), represents the assembling of a series of research studies, most
of which have already been published in reviews of Classical Philology and Linguistics since 1971. In Part 1 Chapter 1, the author examines a formulaic series covering presentiment of or foresight into the future; he also shows how Sophocles imitates this scheme in Ajax, Electra and Oedipus Rex. This study is intended to complete and at times rectify the findings of P. Mazón. Chapter 2 looks at motivation behind the use of hyperbaton in Homer’s poetry. In particular, the author has looked at the ornamental epithet and the formula of repetition. The 3rd Chapter is the study of a formula of speech introduction which appears in the Iliad and the Odyssey 42 times. Like the 4th Chapter, which is on a similar topic, it has rather negative results. The 2nd and 4th Chapters of this 1st Part are connected in that they are fruits of stimulation by such works as J.B. Hainsworth’s ‘The Homeric formula and the problem of its transmission’, Bull. of the Inst. of Class. St. of the Univ. of London, 1962, 57.

Part 2 contains two studies, the first on three passages from the Odyssey where the author feels a series of indicative tenses have frequently been erroneously interpreted, and the second and final one on certain apparent synonyms where there has been semantic neutralization under metrical-formulaic pressure. The readability of this book is considerably marred by a series of complementary notes appearing as an afterthought to Part 1 Chapter 2, 3 appendices at the end, followed by a complementary note to the third, and notes to each chapter and to each appendix all at the end.

Although the author makes reference to foreign publications, he is not always accurate in representing their titles and in making quotations. Taking only a few examples from La cultura clásica . . ., Spanish and French influences are at work in such words as ‘posible’ and ‘origines’ (English!) ‘communiquer’ and ‘dáilleyrs’ (French) and the German word for ‘literature’ appears with two t’s on p.104 and one on the next page; the author of the book Russian Formulism is given as ‘Erlich’ on p.20 and ‘Ehrlic’ on p.124 n.11. The famous historian appears on p.45 of Así nació . . . as ‘A. Tonybee’. There is constant inaccuracy in the capitalization of titles of English books referred to, for example, ‘E.A. Havelock, The liberal Temper in greek Politics’ (La cultura clásica . . . p.89 n.6) or ‘Burn, The lyric Age of Grèce’ (sic) (p.132).

In spite of these minor errors, the three books are generally well documented and presented, and it seems likely that the first two would be useful reading to Spanish Classics undergraduates and the third to research scholars.

Celia M.W. Munuera