
Muir's (M) edition of Alcidamas (A) has its limitations — most of them self-imposed — but it has certainly exceeded his modest aim of making 'more easily available two short texts' which are, as he quietly puts it 'not without interest'. Before M there was Radermacher (*Artium scriptores* 1951) in Latin and Avezzù (*Alcidamante: Orazioni e frammenti* 1982) in Italian; this new edition will not replace either of those, but it will be in several senses much more accessible to many potential readers. At the same time, M has added his own interpretation of A and his place in the history of rhetoric and has made some telling observations; all students of fourth century Greek are in his debt. But his real contribution is very much to the two complete texts attributed to A, and the treatment of fragments is unfortunately deficient in important respects; indeed it is hard not to think that M should perhaps have concentrated on his main aim and simply published the two complete speeches.

M's introduction (v–xxix) gives a handy overview of A and his works. v–vi give a judicious summary of what little is known, or can be reasonably inferred, about the rhetor's life; vii–xiii paint a traditional picture of the development of rhetoric in the fifth century as a background for A's emergence from it, while acknowledging some of the recent challenges to this picture. M then moves on to discuss the literary remains of A, with xiii–xv offering a brief description of *On the Sophists* (*On those who write written speeches*). M discusses its genre, and is sensibly sceptical about determining the chronological relationship with Isocrates' speeches, but he simply assumes priority of Plato's work, when in reality the priority is as unclear as in the case of Isocrates. The comparatively neglected *Odysseus* is discussed on xv–xviii. M outlines its contents
and claims that it is better than is usually thought, being written at least partly as a model speech, and containing ‘a fair sample of desirable ingredients for a successful character-assassination’. On the question of this work’s authenticity, M’s arguments are largely tralatitious, and he seems unaware of the damage Dušanić did the most significant of them in CQ 1992. xviii–xx discuss A’s ‘other works’. As already indicated, the handling of the fragments is the biggest disappointment in this edition. A number of fragments from Radermacher and Avezzù are omitted from M’s edition, being relegated to passing references in the introduction (Frr. 6, 8 and 15 Avezzù—this last M wrongly seems to think is a paraphrase of his own Fr. 5), or disappearing without trace (Fr. 14). Far from explaining why this has been done, M does not even acknowledge that he has made these omissions (the book has a ‘General index’ and an ‘Index of Greek words’, but no table showing comparative numbering of fragments). Finally, xxi-xxii discuss the well-worn topic of A’s style, going over points noted since Aristotle, although M is less harsh than other critics.

M finally presents his text of A, basing it on that of Avezzù, and this new editor is modestly cautious: he suggests only one conjecture of his own (the plausible ἄποκρούσας at Soph. 30, still printing the transmitted ἄποκρύψας), and he judges the different readings soberly, although some of the discussion seemed out of place (and difficult to follow) in an edition which does not have an apparatus criticus. M also offers a useful facing translation, but does not seem to know the earlier English translations of both speeches in Gagarin & Woodruff (eds.), *Early Greek Political Thought from Homer to the Sophists* (1995). The Greek is not free from misprints, but the translation is generally accurate, although a few points mystify: the rendering of ποιητής as ‘script-writer’ in Soph. 2 seems to miss out on the contemporary debate (eventually reflected in Aristotle’s criticism) about poetry versus prose, and I can make no sense of the apologetic metaphor in 12 μάλλον ποιήματιν ἦ λόγοις ἐοικότες if we interpret ποιήματα as ‘scripts’ (which
is exactly what written speeches are). ἀγώνες (10 et passim) are rendered ‘law-suits’ aut sim: that seems unnecessarily narrow, and probably reflects M’s view of A as very much concerned only with practicalities (see below). A couple of apparent misunderstandings from Od: at 4 ὥς αν εἴδητε must mean ‘so that you may know’, not ‘as you may be aware’, and at 8 κρίνειν means ‘accuse’ (see MacDowell, CQ 1961 115, cf LSJ sv III 2), not ‘judge’.

The commentary is rather stronger on Soph, where M sharply picks out some of the extremely practical aspects of A as shown in the speech: on 5 ‘the logic is elementary and directed at an ordinary rather than an intellectual audience’; on 16 ‘A is only saying what would readily be recognized by many court-room lawyers and politicians today’; on 31 ‘an interesting hint that rhetors may have used hand-outs or perhaps texts to buy at demonstrations’. Occasionally Od. lends itself to similar observations: on 19 ‘much more appropriate to the kind of domestic incident with which ... logographers were customarily concerned’, but generally much less attention has been paid to the second speech, and M also has less to say about it. For both speeches more linguistic help would have been welcomed, both by less advanced readers who will use this book rather than Avezzù, and by the more experienced who will be intrigued by some of the oddities of the texts (the quite alarming ἵνα with future optative in Od. 18, for instance, may have implications for the authenticity of the speech but passes without comment). On the other hand, all commentators must make their own decisions about what their potential readers will want most. (By the way, we can now, for Soph. at least, make use of the much fuller commentary by Mariss [2002].)

The incompleteness of the collection of fragments is the biggest problem with the final section of the texts, and nowhere more so than in the case of the Mouseion, A’s most mysterious and (since Nietzsche) celebrated work. The relationship between that work and the Contest of Homer and Hesiod is admittedly controversial,
and M adopts a radically sceptical view, not regarding it as established that A even wrote any sort of version of the Contest at all. Unfortunately, M fails to present a crucial part of the evidence. The Contest as it exists explicitly quotes with approval A's Mouseion for a detail of the aftermath of Hesiod's death (240 Allen). M simply omits this, one of only two certain fragments of the Mouseion, and crucial for determining its contents; from his passing references to that citation (vi, xix–xx) it appears that he has not noticed that A's work is cited by the author of the Contest, as well as his name. Thus this edition is quite misleading on the evidence for the contents of the Mouseion, and its relationship with the Contest; further relevant evidence passed over in silence is the new papyrus fragment (c. 100 BC) of the Contest published by Mandilaras (Platon 1990).

It is a pity to end on a negative note, but potential users of this edition need to be told what M has not volunteered. The book could have been much more, but let us end by affirming again that M has achieved his main goal, and by gladly noting that this will undoubtedly result in more students reading A.

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