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Marco Fantuzzi and Richard Hunter  
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## TRADITION AND INNOVATION IN HELLENISTIC POETRY

Hellenistic poets of the third and second centuries BC were concerned with the need both to mark their continuity with the classical past and to demonstrate their independence from it. In this revised and expanded translation of *Muse e modelli: la poesia ellenistica da Alessandro Magno ad Augusto*, Greek poetry of the third and second centuries BC and its reception and influence at Rome are explored, allowing both sides of this literary practice to be appreciated. Genres as diverse as epic and epigram are considered from a historical perspective, in the full range of their deep-level structures, shedding brilliant new light on the poetry and its influence at Rome. Some of the most famous poetry of the age such as Callimachus' *Aitia* and Apollonius' *Argonautica* is examined. In addition, full attention is paid to the poetry of encomium, in particular the newly published epigrams of Posidippus, and Hellenistic literary criticism, notably Philodemus.

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## *Preface*

This book is a revised and augmented version of *Muse e modelli: la poesia ellenistica da Alessandro Magno ad Augusto* (Rome–Bari 2002). In the Preface of the Italian book we drew attention to the sympathy which one might expect the modern age to have for a literature which was self-consciously belated, in which meaning was created by a confrontation, both direct and oblique, with the classical works of the past. It is perhaps no great surprise that some critics have even seen in Hellenistic poetry a ludic ‘post-modern’ enterprise. ‘Modernity’, however, has its own history, particularly in the poetry of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and it is against that background that poets such as Callimachus and Theocritus first came to be seen as ‘modernists’ *avant la lettre*, practitioners of an experimental and virtuoso art for art’s sake. The catalyst for such views came, often enough, from the emphasis in Wilhelm Kroll’s seminal studies on ‘Kreuzung der Gattungen’ and effects of surprise in Hellenistic and Roman poetry. The phenomena to which Kroll pointed are real enough, and are given deserved prominence in this book, but his insights – and particularly his most famous catch-phrase – have too often been used as a substitute for serious analysis and hard thinking about the complexity of the Hellenistic engagement with the past.

The principal purpose of this book is to set Hellenistic poetry within its own intellectual and cultural context, which will in fact appear very different from that which gave rise to the modernist movements to which it is most often compared. The use of and allusion to the poetry of the past was for ancient poets part of the tools of the trade, a mark of their professional *techné*; paying homage to their great ancestors was not (necessarily) a sign of ‘anxiety’. With some marginal exceptions, ancient poetry emphasises tradition and continuity with the past, rather than modernist rupture, even when it is at its most innovative (as, for example, in Callimachus’ *Aitia*). With changes of taste and conditions of performance come, of course, changes in style, in poetic canons, and in generic preferences, but the past

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was never abandoned, even rhetorically; the most audaciously ‘modern’ texts continue to use the ‘*langue*’ of the traditional genres, as well as the ‘*parole*’ of the great poetry of the past and of the institutions through which it flourished and which it itself sustained. The manner in which Hellenistic poetry and the Roman poetry which was influenced by it embrace the past without either epigonal nostalgia or classicising enthusiasm and use it in what were, in reality, quite new cultural and political contexts is perhaps their most powerful attraction; the paradigms of the past are neither rejected nor slavishly followed – this, of itself, is not the least marker of continuity with the poetic practice of the archaic and classical ages. The persistent historical and archaeological concerns of Hellenistic poets in exploring, reconstructing, and preserving the poetic past will, we hope, emerge very clearly from this book.

It will be immediately obvious that this book makes no claims to comprehensiveness or to being a ‘handbook’ of Hellenistic poetry, and there is a good reason for this choice. Probably more than any other period of Greek poetry, Hellenistic poetry has suffered from lazy, (un)critical generalisations; mud sticks, even today when the number of those interested in Hellenistic poetry, and the quality of the work they are producing, is very high. Generalisations have their uses, and we have not avoided them, but one must begin with the particularity of each poet and each poetic mode; the very rich diversity of what survives of the Greek poetry of the last three centuries before Christ deserves its own celebration.

Each chapter or section is essentially the work of one author, though we have both lived with the whole book (and each other) for many years: MF is responsible for Chapters 1, 4, 6, 7, 8.3, and 10.2; RH for the rest. MF’s chapters have been translated by Ron Packham and RH. We hope that it is unnecessary to state that neither of us swears that he believes every word which the other has written.

We wish here to repeat the thanks to friends and colleagues expressed in the Italian version, particularly to Alessandro Laterza for his continuing support; we are now very pleased to be able to add our gratitude to Michael Sharp of CUP for his encouragement and patience, and to the Faculty of Classics of the University of Cambridge for its liberal hospitality to MF and for its generosity, which has made this book possible.

MF

RH

## Abbreviations

Standard abbreviations for collections and editions of texts and for works of reference are used; Callimachus is cited from Pfeiffer's edition, unless otherwise indicated. The following may also be noted:

CA	J. U. Powell, <i>Collectanea Alexandrina</i> (Oxford 1925)
CEG	P. A. Hansen, <i>Carmina epigraphica Graeca</i> (Berlin–New York 1983, 1989)
EG	G. Kaibel, <i>Epigrammata Graeca</i> (Berlin 1878)
EGF	M. Davies, <i>Epicorum Graecorum fragmenta</i> (Göttingen 1988)
FGE	D. L. Page, <i>Further Greek Epigrams</i> (Cambridge 1981)
FGrHist	F. Jacoby, <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> (Berlin 1923–1930; Leiden 1940–1958 and 1994–)
GESA	J. Ebert, <i>Griechische Epigramme auf Sieger an gymnischen und hippischen Agonen</i> (Berlin 1972).
GG	W. Peek, <i>Griechische Grabgedichte</i> (Berlin 1960)
GPh	A. S. F. Gow–D. L. Page, <i>The Greek Anthology. The Garland of Philip</i> , I–II (Cambridge 1968).
GVI	W. Peek, <i>Griechische Vers-Inschriften</i> , I (Berlin 1955)
HE	A. S. F. Gow–D. L. Page, <i>The Greek Anthology. Hellenistic Epigrams</i> , I–II (Cambridge 1965)
IAG	L. Moretti, <i>Iscrizioni agonistiche greche</i> (Rome 1953)
IEG	M. L. West, <i>Iambi et elegi Graeci ante Alexandrum cantati</i> , I–II (2 <sup>nd</sup> ed., Oxford 1989–92)
IG	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i> (Berlin 1873–)
IMEGR	E. Bernand, <i>Inscriptions métriques de l'Égypte gréco-romaine</i> (Paris 1949)
LfrE	<i>Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos</i> (Göttingen 1955–)
LGPN	P. M. Fraser, E. Matthews et al., <i>A Lexicon of Greek Personal Names</i> (Oxford 1987–)



*List of abbreviations*

- LIMC* *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae* (Zurich–Munich 1981–1997)
- LSJ* H. G., Liddell–R. Scott–H. Stuart Jones–R. McKenzie–P. G. W. Glare, *Greek–English Lexicon, with a revised Supplement* (9th ed., Oxford 1996)
- PCG* R. Kassel–C. Austin, *Poetae comici Graeci* (Berlin–New York 1983–)
- PEG* A. Bernabé, *Poetarum epicorum Graecorum testimonia et fragmenta* I (Leipzig 1987)
- PMG* D. L. Page, *Poetae melici Graeci* (Oxford 1962)
- PMGF* M. Davies, *Poetarum melicorum Graecorum fragmenta*, I (Oxford 1991)
- RE* A. Pauly–G. Wissowa–W. Kroll, et al. (eds.), *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (Stuttgart–Munich 1893–1980)
- SGO* R. Merkelbach–J. Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten* (Stuttgart–Leipzig 1998–)
- SH* H. Lloyd-Jones–P. Parsons, *Supplementum Hellenisticum* (Berlin–New York 1983)
- SVF* H. F. A. von Arnim, *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*, I–IV (Leipzig 1903–24)
- TGF* A. Nauck, *Tragicorum Graecorum fragmenta* (2nd ed., Leipzig 1889)
- TrGF* B. Snell–R. Kannicht–S. Radt, *Tragicorum Graecorum fragmenta* (Göttingen 1971–)
- VS* H. Diels–W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (6th ed., Berlin 1951–52)

All dates are BC, unless otherwise indicated.