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Both the books under review here are aimed at a wide audience. Calame aims his volume on Greek myth through ancient texts specifically at (presumably undergraduate) students (2009, p.ix), while the *Cambridge Companion*, according to its back-cover blurb, should appeal to everyone from those with a non-professional interest in Greek myth to professional scholars – a group in which undergraduate students sit comfortably in the middle. Both books, then, are designed to provide a guide to Greek mythology that is rigorously academic but, at the same time, reasonably accessible to those with only basic prior knowledge of the subject.

Approaching the subject of Greek myth for a new audience is a difficult task. Should we start by describing the myths themselves, and the texts and contexts in which they are found? Or should we jump straight in with a history of mythographical theory in all its myriad forms? Should we examine the socio-historical contexts of myth, or the supposed meaning of myth, or the reception of myth? Should we privilege certain theories of myth over others or should we skim over myth theory all together, and relegate it to a different project?

The two books under review tackle the approach in very different ways. The *Cambridge Companion* is divided into three parts, encompassing three of the possible approaches outlined above. Part One focuses on texts and contexts. This is by far the biggest section in the book and focuses on the major Greek sources for myth (that is, source for myth written in Greek, rather than sources

for Greek myth; from Latin authors, only Ovid is examined in detail, and he is placed in Part Two). The texts explored here include the expected giants – Homer, Hesiod, the tragedians, the Hellenistic mythographers - but there are also some unexpected inclusions. Clay's article on Platonic myth, though dealing with a very different sort of 'myth' to the others, is an important contribution, and it is refreshing to see Bowie's overview of mythical allusions in Aristophanes included as well. The choice to open the section, not with Homer or Hesiod, but with Nagy's article on lyric poetry is perhaps a little jarring, considering the rest of the section proceeds in chronological order from Homer to the Hellenistic age; the reader feels a little like they have been thrown backwards in time upon arriving at Nagy's chapter on Homer, though it is justified by the development of Nagy's argument across the two chapters.

Part Two of the *Cambridge Companion*, entitled 'Response, Integration, Representation', is less clearly defined, but broadly looks at the relationship between myth and other essential aspects of ancient Greek life; religion, art, landscape and politics (thus fitting loosely into the category of 'socio-historical contexts' of myth). Boyle's otherwise excellent article on Ovid at the end of this section seems a little out of place, dealing as it does with a Latin author living in the Roman empire, rather than with a specifically Greek social context of myth, but it does share certain themes with Hall's preceding article on Greek myth and Greek politics. Part Three concerns reception. Following Zajko's initial overview of the reception of women in Greek myth, this section traces a brief history of classical reception from medieval literature to current cinema.

The *Cambridge Companion*, then, divides itself clearly into three sections focussing broadly on texts and contexts, socio-historical context, and reception. The most significant omission from this broad overview is mythographical theory. Theories of myth are certainly drawn upon occasionally throughout the book, by Woodard and Calame in particular, but there is no section, nor even an article, explaining the major schools of thought to a novice reader.

In his own overview of Greek mythology, Calame takes a very different approach, though related distantly to Part One of the *Companion*. Calame makes a passionate argument for the study of 'myth' (a concept he is not entirely happy with: 2009, pp.2-8) in its specific textual context. He singles out anthropological structuralism, especially the theories of Claude Lévi-Strauss, for particular attention and argues against the reduction of myth to a basic narrative, preferring to focus on each individual retelling for its own sake (2009, pp.5-8).

In order to introduce the reader to the various theories of mythology, Calame proceeds to summarise a selection of interpretations of the myth of Demeter and Persephone from Diodorus Siculus to Helene Foley. His technique in this section is simple and is one that we at Birmingham have sometimes adopted in our undergraduate course on myth; take one story and explore the different ways in which the different theorists interpret it, thus demonstrating the basic principles of each theory. This technique has some great advantages. It familiarises the student/reader with one myth in great detail, and each theory becomes clearer when applied to the same example as was the previous theory; this emphasises the similarities and differences between them. There is, however, one flaw with this method; not all theorists have chosen the same myths to demonstrate their theories, and without a genuine piece by the theorist in question, we are forced either to invent something ourselves, or leave them out. In Calame's case, he has chosen his mythic example well; the only major group he is forced to leave out are the structuralists, towards whom he has already expressed some antipathy, pp.7-8.

For the students who are his target audience, this short section (2009, pp.8-37) is the most valuable of Calame's book, for it successfully introduces myth theory in an immediately comprehensible way. The rest of his book is concerned with beautifully detailed explorations of a selection of particular characters in particular contexts; Bellerophon in *Iliad* 6, Clytemnestra in *Pythian* 11, the Danaids in *Suppliant Women*, Io in *Prometheus Bound*, Helen in Herodotus, Tiresias in Callimachus' *Bath of Pallas* and the account of Troezen by Pausanias. The wide range of texts studied provides a suitable

introduction to the various contexts in which we find Greek myth, and the focus on the unique qualities of each text is very welcome, especially in a work aimed at students. Calame's own theoretical preference for looking for connections between myth and ritual is clear, but his arguments are, within that context, well-developed.

The biggest problem with Calame's volume, however, especially for the undergraduate student, is the complexity of his language. His work is filled with technical terms which are not always explained (for example, in addition to various technical literary terms, he introduces the Greek word *palaia* without explaining its meaning for a reader with no Greek: 2009, p.2). His sentences are long and sometimes meandering, and the book is peppered with unnecessary exclamation marks. How much of this is carried over from the French original and how much is characteristic of Lloyd's English translation is hard to say (though one suspects much of it has its roots in the French version), but the book proves to be dense reading, especially for a student unfamiliar with the subject.

Aside from Calame's own contribution (and the problem is not quite so acute in this English article), the various contributors to the *Cambridge Companion* tend to write in clearer and more accessible English, and the book is easy to navigate. The content of the articles varies a little. Most provide a basic overview of their particular subject, illustrated where appropriate with case-studies, and do so very successfully. I particularly enjoyed Buxton's succinct article on myth in Greek tragedy, Zajko's thought-provoking analysis of the study and reception of women in Greek myth and Boyle's introduction to Ovid and his use of Greek myth. Brown's contribution on Greek myth in English – by which she means British – and American literature is, unfortunately, marred by some ill-chosen metaphors which attempt to boil down subjects as complex as the schism between the Catholic and Protestant churches and the debate concerning whether to return the Elgin marbles to Greece to a simple dichotomy in order to illustrate a rather basic point (2007, pp.426, 432). A few articles include a greater proportion of the author's own analysis, particularly Nagy's interrelated articles on lyric and Homer and general editor Woodard's

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own article on Hesiod. Woodard's article, which takes up 83 pages of the 479-page main text, goes into rather too much detail concerning his own theories of Indo-European myth and Hesiod for a contribution to a broad overview (and his argument, though it discusses a wide range of evidence and is well put, is a little over-reliant on Dumézil's hypothesized three functions of Indo-European society).

For a reader, especially an undergraduate student, looking for a general introduction to the academic study of myth, I would have to recommend the *Cambridge Companion*. It is clearer, easier to read, and covers a much wider spectrum of approaches to Greek myth. However, for any reader who desires an introduction to myth theory or who wants to explore particular texts in more depth, Calame's *Greek Mythology* provides an excellent place to start.