BOOK REVIEW

L. O. (Line Overmark) Juul, *Oracular Tales in Pausanias.* Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2010. Pp. 278. DKK 348.00. ISBN 978-87-7674-483-0.

Note: Table of Contents of this book appears at the end of the review.

The Danish version of this book was completed in early 2007; three years later, a very well-produced English translation was published. However the bibliographical gap has not been filled in, and the precise context of elaboration of this work is not entirely clear. But whether or not it is a re-worked PhD, this scholarly investigation by Juul (hereafter J.) is rooted in a strong line of research supporting a precise argument. The aim of the author is twofold: to examine the form of the oracular tales as an orally transmitted literary genre on the basis of Pausanias's *Periegesis*, on the one hand; and, on the other, to analyze the function of these oracular tales within the *Periegesis*. These two topics are respectively addressed in Chapters Three and Four. Chapter One is a brief introduction to J.'s aims and methods, the second chapter is a basic survey of scholarly literature on Pausanias and his work, as well as on oracular responses and the consultation process at Delphi. The fifth chapter looks briefly at the genre of oracular tales and at Pausanias's work in the context of the Second Sophistic. The last chapter is a short conclusion. This is the end of the first half of the book (pp. 9–134). The second half (pp. 135–278) successively provides:

- a short bibliography;
- the *corpus oraculorum*, i.e. 173 passages of Pausanias's work referring to an oracular consultation (Greek text only);
- the catalogue of these 'oracular tales', i.e. the analysis of content in a table taking into account the aspects explained in Chapter Three (discussed below);
- a concordance of responses from the Delphic oracle;
- statistics on the distribution of oracular tales in Pausanias's ten books;
- a map of oracle sites;
- the notes (which are therefore relegated at the very end of the book).

The approach focusing on the entire oracle consultation as a narrative is very interesting and innovative, insofar as Pausanias is concerned. For J., 'narrative' goes hand in hand with 'oral composition'. Accordingly, all the oracular tales taken into account are considered to have been orally composed but this composition is impossible to date. Even in the most favourable cases—and these are few in number—only the writing down of the oral tradition can be dated. For the Delphic responses, the catalogues of Parke & Wormell, and Fontenrose are used as references, even though the author's view on the sources for the oracular tales departs from these canonical books on the topic, especially regarding the issue of the 'authenticity' of the oracles (an aspect which is disregarded by J.). The method of investigation is designated as 'structuralist' and the catalogue of the oracular texts is based on Roman Jakobson's communication model. When poetry is concerned, *formula* as defined by Milman Parry is used to address the way in which questions and answers are formulated. The other scholars to which the author is referring on different levels are Propp for his fairy-tale analysis, Greimas for further developments in other types of literature, and Eliade for the history of religion. The last-named represents a strange option as far as ancient Greek religion is concerned: thus, on p. 60, the oracle of Trophonios would have been more competently addressed with reference to P. Bonnechere (*Trophonios de Lébadée*, Brill, 2003) than by an adaptation of Eliade's vision of initiation; on p. 91: 'to be—or, rather, to become—a man signifies being 'religious'' is a quotation from Eliade that no historian of Greek religion would now accept. Eliade is indeed an important scholar, but he is representative of the 1970s, marked by phenomenology, and his conceptions of 'initiation' and 'shamanism' are completely outdated.

Chapters Three and Four are the core of the work. The third explains the structure and application of the catalogue. The categories are: the context, the source, the occasion, the oracle questioner, the question, the responder, the response, the code (mainly indirect prose, sometimes direct poetry), and the type. These various points are briefly presented in turn, with a few examples. According to J., the oracular tales transmitted by Pausanias follow more or less the same narrative scheme (even though all the tabulated aspects are not completed for each one) with six thematic compositional models (the 'types'): Model A: *Expiation of man's wrongdoing*; Model B: *Extraordinary events*; Model C1: *Military matters* and C2: *Political matters*; Model D: *Colonisation*; Model E: *Private consultation*. Three main conclusions are derived from this, and are clearly presented, even though the first of them is based more on the author's 'conviction' (p. 102) than on demonstration: (1) that when Pausanias refers to an oral source, we must often trust him (however ἤκουσα, for example, can refer to written evidence, and λέγουσι or φασί is not necessarily pointing out an oral reference); (2) that the communication in

an oracle consultation is based on standard formulations in questions and responses (but then the author's focus is blurred: Pausanias's text is put aside in favour of the supposed 'real' consultations); (3) that the thematic models are all concerned with a threat and the necessity felt by a community or an individual to get a god's advice; they illustrate the features that shape the oracular tales as a genre.

The end of this chapter correctly states that oracular tales have been constantly adapted and reinterpreted, until the origin of each was gradually eradicated in transmission. They became anonymous or predominantly Delphic. But what about their origin? The argument fluctuates between the conception of a specific literary genre (which is surely correct) and a 'real' oracular performance progressively (orally?) readapted (p. 102: 'This structure with formulae and homogeneous narrative patterns demonstrates quite clearly that in the first place the responses are formulated via an oral communication practice at the oracle sites…' developing afterwards in a literary genre). Some recent research, not published yet (P. Bonnechere, R. Gagné), is addressing this topic: the interesting hypothesis of a literary genre could explain why the Pythia no longer composes poetry in Plutarch's times, insofar as she never did. Delphic hexametric oracles would be literary pieces attributed to the Pythia, as well as other poems such as those attributed, for example, to Orpheus or Musaios. The fact that the Delphic oracle became prominent in the sources reflects the formation of the corpus as well as a general trend because Delphi had the longest oral tradition. The question of what kind of evidence was at hand in Pausanias's time is very difficult to address, and oral transmission is probably not the major part of it. Even the 'real' oracular origin is often questionable.

The fourth chapter tackles the function of the oracular tales in Pausanias's *Periegesis*. 71 oracular tales are connected with λόγοι and 106 with monuments or concrete parts of the landscape he is passing through. Such a division in λόγοι and θεωρήματα is rooted in Pausanias's text itself and characterise his way of dealing with 'all that is Greece' (πάντα τὰ Ἑλληνικά, 1.26.4). The compositional models A and B (expiation and extraordinary events) are closely related to θεωρήματα, while the C1 (wars) and D (colonisation) schemes are connected with λόγοι. The primary function of these last oracular tales is the creation of a political identity. Regarding the θεωρήματα, aetiology is often the purpose of tales in general, and oracular tales are no exception to this rule. Their primary function seems to be ritual, but a secondary function can be an identity-creating one also (which is seen as a 'political identity', but 'self-definition' is not necessarily 'political'). The end of the chapter addresses Pausanias's well-known great interest in religious matters and the question of the reliability of 'myths' in comparison with the credibility of the oracular tales.

The final catalogue of 188 oracular tales and the method of addressing them will certainly be a source of inspiration (be it positive or negative) for scholars working on oracles and oral transmission. Scholars working on Pausanias will probably not be surprised by the conclusions, while the historians of Greek religion will be left rather puzzled by some bibliographical options or omissions (even of works published before 2007).

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