Thomas BLANK, *Logos und Praxis: Sparta als politisches Exemplum in den Schriften des Isokrates*. Berlin, De Gruyter, 2014. 1 vol. 24,5 x 18 cm, XII-692 p. (KLIO BEIHEFTE. NEUE FOLGE, Bd 23). Prix : 99,95 €. ISBN 978-3-11-034200-0.

This monograph arises from a dissertation completed at Tübingen in 2012. The combination of the subtitle, which seems to portend a relatively narrow subject, and the sheer size of the volume might cause alarm at first sight, but any concerns are amply laid to rest in what emerges as a refreshing and imaginative contribution to Isocratean scholarship (and not just the study of his *exempla*). Blank integrates his treatment into the landscape of current debates about Isocrates, in particular the aims he had in mind for his major works, his compositional practice, and (to a lesser extent) the nature and significance of his chosen modes of self-presentation, not least his creation of personal didactic authority. The organization of the book is straightforward: a careful, full, and detailed introduction to the recent course of scholarship on Isocrates and his *exempla*, and to the methodology and content of the present work (A: p. 3-74) is followed by a sequence of close analyses of individual speeches (B: p. 77-587), in which particular space is (as one might expect) devoted to the *Panegyricus* (p. 157-241), the *Archidamus* (p. 287-377) – a section where Blank realizes that he must be particularly on his interpretative mettle, resulting in probably the most interesting of these individual readings – and the *Panathenaicus* (p. 497-587). The conclusion (C: p. 591-618) features a concise survey of the results of the individual speech analyses (p. 591-598). Blank's principal set of arguments is as follows: the *exemplum* of Sparta does not shift according to Isocrates' rhetorical needs or historical circumstances in each speech in the way that has previously been assumed, but functions across the corpus as a foil with whose help Isocrates invites attentive elite readers to consider Athens past and (especially) present and future: its character and behaviour, and the nature of rhetorical instruction in the contemporary civic context. He uses the instances of his image of Sparta as means of advertising to an alert and critical readership a set of moral principles which he regards as fundamental for the proper functioning of a *polis* community. Sparta therefore has a double resonance: as a traditionally "well-governed" *polis*, above all in the Archaic period (comparisons with the visions of an admirable olden-days Sparta presented by Aeschines and Lycurgus would have helped inflect the argument here), and as a city whose geopolitical vicissitudes in the late fifth and early-mid fourth century can be mapped productively by Isocrates onto those of Athens itself – all at a safe distance. In an appendix (p. 623-624), Blank makes an embryonic cognate claim for the figure of Euagoras in *Or*. 9 as an "ideal" mirror for Athens. Isocrates consequently emerges from all this less as a teacher of rhetoric and more as a committed would-be moral instructor. A key compositional means by which Blank sees Isocrates pushing this project forward is properly introduced in the first part of Section B, devoted to the *Helen* and *Busiris* (p. 79-155). Blank argues from here onwards that in order to sharpen his readers' critical faculties and train them to think independently about moral issues, Isocrates deliberately inserts contradictory or otherwise unreliable or untenable arguments into superficially sound and trustworthy communicative contexts; the cognoscenti pick up on these bad arguments because they have been taught to do so by the argumentative models set up in the *Helen* and especially the

first example of this behaviour, the *Busiris* (all this having been forecast by Blank in *Rhetorica* 31 [2013], p. 1-33). In the case of the *Archidamus*, the effect is such as to disqualify the speaker from attracting the reader's credibility. This plotting of a prevailing subversive discourse in Isocrates' works may be the most intriguing wider contribution that Blank's study makes, because it impacts directly not only on how we are to understand the detail of how rhetorical education worked in practice in fourth-century Athens, but it also raises questions about how we might interpret the works both of the contemporary political orators, a number of whom the biographical tradition identifies (in some cases convincingly) as pupils of Isocrates, and of other intellectual figures like Ephorus, Theopompus, and Androtion. Can we see any signs in the works of other "rhetorical" authors (broadly conceived) that they have benefited from this challenging intellectual training? Either way, the kind of problematizing reading that Blank undertakes of an orator who is still too often taken at face value (despite the work of scholars specifically attuned to the construction of personal identity in Isocrates like Yun Lee Too, Terry Papillon, and Jeffrey Walker) is welcome and deserves serious attention as, at the very least, an indication of the possibilities which reading his "non-public" works against the grain can yield. Furthermore, any study which seeks to construct a large-scale characterization of a particular ancient orator or rhetorician's intellectual programme on the basis of their *exempla* must confront the practical point that even in Isocrates *exempla* do not (with some exceptions) dominate individual speeches' airtime: to build an overall interpretation on them, the scholar must delineate precisely what elements of overall significance the author crystallizes in them, and Blank does this (first at p. 15-21, but throughout), giving a clear sense of why *exempla* are a valuable way in to talking about intellectual methods and priorities at a much broader level. Certain criticisms could be made. The relevance of Plato and Thucydides to stages of the argument (e.g. to Isocrates' use of Thucydides' Archidamus II as foil in his portrayal of "Archidamus III", p. 305-315) is appropriately handled; but as far as (other) rhetorical practitioners go, the reader is largely left to view Isocrates in something of a vacuum. Nor is the working out in practice of his educational aims and methods really tackled head-on. Given the difficulty Isocrates seems to have had in distinguishing himself from other educators (as *Against the Sophists* suggests; indeed contemporaries seem to have thought of Isocrates' schooling as distinguished more for the social profile of its clientele than for the intellectual distinctiveness of its methods: cf. [Dem.] 35.15, 40), we might want to know whether Blank thinks the self-reflexive modes argued for were peculiar to Isocrates. On a similar note, the major political orators and logographers make very few appearances in this book. The richness of Demosthenes', Aeschines', and above all Lycurgus' use of *exempla*, including images of Sparta, is well-known, and a testing or comparison of Isocrates' hypothesized practice with the reality of the deployment of *exempla* in practical contexts (speeches which were, after all, also disseminated for a reading audience which must have overlapped with the kind of readership Isocrates' works could expect) might have helped to situate Isocrates' behaviour more concretely in the intellectual world of fourth-century Athens. The length of Blank's book is offset by clear exposition and structure. Sections are on the whole concise and digestible. Production quality is also high, with few notable errors. Most of these fall in section D.2 of the bibliography, where the

decision to print scholars' first names (though not consistently) yields the usual mixed results. Not everyone will be satisfied by all Blank's individual readings in this monograph, or convinced that they add up to the compositional programme that he claims they advance, but that does not diminish his achievement in developing a stimulating new approach which explores areas of cardinal importance for the understanding of Isocrates' work. His interpretations invite committed engagement by Isocrateans and by others interested in the intellectual culture of late fifth to late fourth-century Athens. Guy WESTWOOD

Sandrine DUBEL, Anne-Marie FAVREAU-LINDER et Estelle OUDOT (Éd.), *À l'école d'Homère. La culture des orateurs et des sophistes*. Paris, Éditions Rue d'Ulm, 2015. 1 vol. 24 x 16 cm, 295 p. (ÉTUDES DE LITTÉRATURE ANCIENNE, 24). Prix : 19 €. ISBN 978-2-7288-0526-6.

This volume, part of the proceedings of the international colloquium *Homère rhétorique. Études de réception antique* (Clermont-Ferrand and Dijon, 2010) is devoted to conceptualizations and deployments of the Homeric model in ancient rhetorical texts (broadly conceived) and their associated cultural contexts. After the introduction (by the three editors, summarizing the scope and contents of the volume), it contains eighteen contributions, sixteen in French and two in English. Papers in the first section (*Grecs et Romains à l'école d'Homère*) assess Homer's impact on various genres of rhetorical exercise, while those in the other three each examine a single author's encounter(s) with the Homeric model, looking, respectively, at authors' creative deployment of Homer, mostly in polemical or competitive situations (*Stratégies rhétoriques : modèles et détournements*), Homer's importance as a cultural referent in individual social contexts (*Enjeux critiques*), and the forms taken by literary and cultural responses to Homer in late antiquity and beyond (*Héritages*). The more successful papers typically address the stated themes of the volume head-on, combining careful analysis of how – and, crucially, *why* – their chosen authors engage with the texts and legacy of Homer with alertness to the contexts in which they are doing so. The quality of the numerous papers which do not stop at exposition, but seek to address the rubric of the volume in its full sense, provides a counterbalance to the effect of other contributions which privilege the big picture at the expense of the small (in which cases the Homeric poems themselves tend to be fairly absent), or vice versa (in which cases the context in which the chosen author is operating tends to be sidelined). This is not to say that the papers in this second category are inadequate as individual pieces of scholarship, but they do introduce a certain unevenness of purpose and execution into the collection. Less uneven is the coverage of authors and genres, which strikes a good balance between work on texts and genres whose responses to Homer have (for one reason or another) so far been under-treated in scholarship, and new contributions to areas which are already busy. I now attempt to give an idea of the volume's content; space does not permit extended comment. The authors in the first section take up the task of surveying material from whole genres, and not all contributors avoid the potential danger of privileging description over argument which survey work brings with it. They are preceded by a framing essay by