

Sullivan has produced an excellent critical edition of two texts previously found only with difficulty in older editions by scholars such as Wescher. As noted already, the critical and extensive line commentary is particularly valuable. The translation is clear and accurate, a real achievement in view of the often highly technical discussion and vocabulary. In short, an excellent volume which makes a real contribution to the study and understanding of this period, not only in respect of military treatises or practice, but also in respect of the literary activities of the period.

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From this brief history of these curious treatises, we can begin to appreciate Denis F. Sullivan's painstaking erudition in editing these texts with English translations and commentaries—the first critical editions and translations based on the Vaticanus, the manuscript tradition's archetype.

Sullivan's detailed analysis of the author's method of reworking Apollodorus's text astutely discerns Neoplatonic influence in conceptualizing the material and providing realistic illustrations for constructing the machines, as opposed to the drawings in manuscripts of other poliorcetic works, which confusingly combined ground plans with elevation.

These highly technical treatises, tough going even in English, justify applause for Sullivan's philological skills with Greek texts comprehensible only to a few experts

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Sullivan's previous scholarship has been dedicated to tenth- and eleventh-century Byzantine hagiographical texts. In this volume he again proves his adroitness with Greek from this 'middle Byzantine' period. The texts themselves are presented clearly. The translation is extremely accessible. Detailed indexes in Greek and English, and plates of the medieval illustrations, are also provided. A short but informative introduction moves swiftly through all the crucial issues: manuscript traditions; dates of composition; biographical details concerning the anonymous author; sources; methods of compilation; prose style; errors in transmission of ancient material; authorial purpose; potential audience. All these subjects are followed up at great length in an admirable commentary. Here Sullivan records with

precision the relationship between text and underlying source material. He identifies episodes from classical and Byzantine history where such siege machines and poliorcetic practices appear to have been used. He notes parallel examples in contemporary Byzantine encyclopaedias and administrative documents.

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