

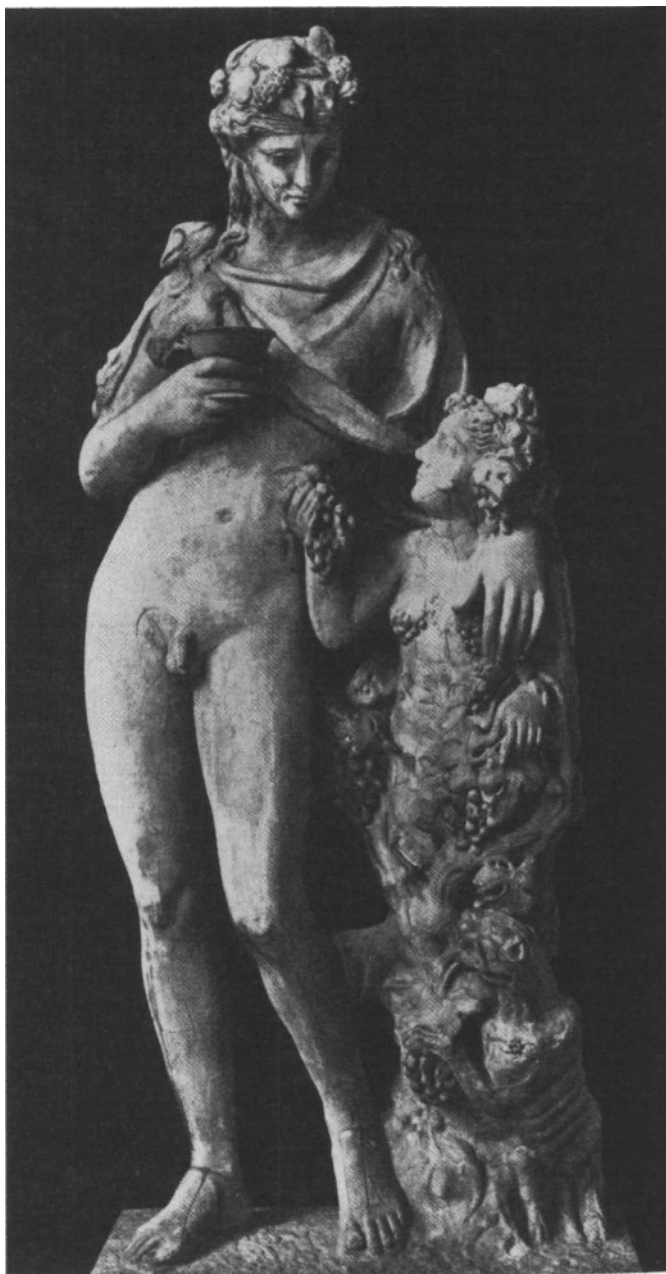
PREFACE

In this monograph, I have tried to solve many textual and interpretative problems presented by late epic poets such as Oppian, Quintus Smyrnaeus and Nonnus. The solutions which I offer, have been arrived at by applying the historical method, i.e. by examining the relevant passages in the light of their historical background. Very many passages of late epic poetry which had hitherto puzzled the critics reveal themselves, when examined within the framework of epic literary conventions as developed by Hellenistic poets and as adhered to by post-Hellenistic epic writers, to be perfectly sound, indeed elegant examples of late epic literary technique.

The canons governing such technique (*Sprachgebrauch, topoi*) are not familiar to many classical scholars: a *Select Index* will, I hope, enable the reader to familiarize himself with them, thereby acquiring the expertness necessary to a proper understanding of Greek epic poetry.

I am greatly indebted to Professor Giuseppe Giangrande for placing at my disposal the treasures of his unrivalled research library, and to the publisher, Mr. J.C. Gieben, for producing this book with the elegance and efficiency which have caused his *Verlag* to be universally admired.

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