



Metafiction in Classical Literature: The Invention of Self-Conscious Fiction (Routledge Monographs in Classical Studies)

Owen Hodkinson

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Metafiction, the practice in fictional texts of displaying an awareness of their fictional status, highlighting it, or even exploring it after the manner of literary criticism, existed in ancient Greek and Roman literature. The significance of metafiction to this field is very great?arguably even more so than within modern literature studies, despite the greater prevalence of metafiction in later texts?because it necessarily implies that a text is fictional, and that its author was aware of it as such. Some have argued that the ancients had no clear concept of 'fiction', nor the literary-critical tools to think about and analyse it. While some other scholars have recently begun to refer to metafiction in studies devoted to individual literary texts, no general study exists of the use of metafiction in ancient literature and the implications of this for our understanding of fiction in antiquity.

This book demonstrates by cumulative weight of examples the existence of metafiction in classical literature, and in so doing constitutes an 'archaeology' of the origins of metafiction in Western literature. Author Owen Hodkinson engages with a wide range of approaches to fiction and metafiction, and explores detailed examples or case studies from ancient texts. This book provides for the first time for classical and modern literature scholars a full definition of metafiction which uses the earliest metafictional texts in western literature as its examples rather than only modern novels, and the first general but detailed and theoretically-grounded discussion and definition of metafiction aimed at scholars and students of classical literature.

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