letters—that Cicero's letters are primarily of interest because they allow us to track Cicero's life and times. But with letters so varied in tone—brilliantly captured in this translation—and in recipient and apparent purpose, there needs to be much more flexibility in how and why we read them. Besides, as S.B. demonstrated in the introduction to the Cambridge commentary (vol. I, pp. 20–3), and as Beard explored recently ('Ciceronian Correspondences: Making a Book out of Letters', in T. P. Wiseman [ed.], *Classics in Progress: Essays on Ancient Greece and Rome* [Oxford, 2002], pp. 103–44), the manuscript order of the letters to friends is not entirely arbitrary, and the division into books is evidence for a particular, not uninteresting, ancient interpretation of Cicero and his relationships with others.

But it would be wrong to end with dissent. All these volumes fulfil the aims of the Loeb series with flair and panache, and the new material in the volume of letters to Quintus and Brutus is a delight.

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CICERO AND THE WRITTEN WORD

S. BUTLER: *The Hand of Cicero*. Pp. ix + 165. London and New York: Routledge, 2002. Cased. ISBN: 0-415-25149-4.

In this engaging and original book, Shane Butler sets out to challenge the view of ancient Rome as essentially an oral society. His investigation is structured around the career of Cicero, starting from the question of why Antony ordered the amputation of Cicero's hand as well as his head. The choice of focus is successful in two ways. First, it grounds B.'s rethinking of Roman documentary culture in a specific period (the merits of this are manifest in the first chapter). Secondly, it allows B. to demonstrate how his picture of Roman society results in new interpretations of Cicero's writing. For this is also a book about Cicero, examining his career, his self-representation poised, sometimes precariously, between equestrian and senatorial, his literary output, and, of course, his murder and mutilation. B. moves smoothly from the broadly historical to biography and philology, offering numerous insights in all areas. The endnotes offer comments of a more specialized nature, including B.'s engagement with other Ciceronian scholars. All passages from ancient texts are translated and Latin technical terms are glossed upon their first appearance; there remains, however, a sense that the reader is assumed to be conversant with Latin. Nevertheless, the average British ancient history student, even without Latin, will gain much from this book.

There are seven chapters, ordered chronologically. The first chapter concentrates on the most notorious written texts of the late Republic, the proscription lists. B. effortlessly combines scholarship and evocative description in painting the scene of Romans reading these lists. Pursuing the conflation of writing and violence, he examines two early speeches (*pro Quinctio* and *pro Roscio Amerino*) in which Cicero's citation of written evidence tellingly plays on the memory of the proscriptions.

Chapters 2–5 are concerned with various aspects of the Verrine orations, moving from the preliminaries of the trial (including a fascinating account of Cicero's hunt for evidence at Syracuse, pp. 29–34), through an exhaustive list of the documentary evidence and an examination of how Cicero presented that evidence, to a final reconsideration of the *Verrines* as published works, in which Cicero substitutes 'a

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reading public for a live audience' (p. 76). B. concludes that the publication of these undelivered speeches allowed Cicero to renegotiate his image in this trial, from the extraordinarily efficient investigator of account books (a somewhat equestrian skill) to the eloquent senator. The sixth chapter turns to the Catilinarian conspiracy, and especially to the scene of Cicero confronting the conspirators with their own letters, a scene recounted to the Roman people in the third *Catilinarian*. B. argues in this chapter for the status of documents in the eyes even of the illiterate populace, evidence for a world in which 'written texts, previously subject only to . . . rigorous linguistic analysis . . . make themselves available to a more general discourse of signs' (p. 101). The final chapter is devoted to Cicero's writing after the Ides of March, the anxieties surrounding Antony's possession of Caesar's *commentarii*, and, finally, to the *Second Philippic*. B. here reads across the letters and philosophical works to illuminate his image of Cicero drafting 'a reflection of the man he had not yet quite become' (p. 117). Within the ever-proliferating copies of Cicero's speeches, already in use as school texts, B. sees Antony 'trapped by Cicero's words' (p. 122). The force of B.'s final reading returns us to Cicero's disembodied hand as if we were seeing it for the first time: 'a bloody pictogram for a life inseparable from the written word' (p. 123).

This is simply the best book on classics I have read in a long time. It is compellingly written, and repopulates the city of Rome with much of its lost paperwork. Unlike so many studies which seek to relate the literature of antiquity to its everyday material culture, B.'s work offers original interpretations of the texts he examines. This is a fine example of how historicism can illuminate, indeed transform, literary analysis. In showing how Cicero's literary output itself effected changes within the documentary culture of Rome, he also provides the reader with a dynamic interaction of text and context. I would recommend this book to students and colleagues for many reasons, but not least because B. conveys so vividly why Cicero matters. His readings bring out all the wit of Ciceronian invective, persuasion, and self-deprecation, and sympathetically point to the hard work behind the wit. In efficient (albeit equestrian) grasp of detail and elegant command of narrative, B. does Cicero ample justice.

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DE CONSOLATIONE

F. Lillo Redonet: *Palabras contra el dolor. La consolación filosófica latina de Cicerón a Frontón*. Pp. 383. Madrid: Ediciones Clásicas, 2001. Paper. ISBN: 84-7882-423-5.

This study, a revised version of a doctoral dissertation written at the University of Salamanca under the direction of Carmen Codoñer Merino, seeks to define the Latin philosophical consolation as a separate genre of Latin literature, and provide an account of its history and development, with particular attention to the rhetorical tropes it uses to create its effects. The study is, therefore, an entry into a field hitherto dominated by studies devoted to individual authors (especially Seneca); consolations in both Greek and Latin (R. Kassel, *Untersuchungen zur griechischen und römischen Konsolationsliteratur* [Munich, 1958]); and consolations in Latin literature defined

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