Latin Literature

Among this latest batch of books to review are a number whose endeavour, very much to my own taste, is intellectual and cultural history through the study of Latin literature. Cream of the crop is Craig Williams' study of Roman friendship.[1] Admirers of Williams' excellent *Roman Homosexuality*, recently reissued in second edition,[2] will recognize the approach; this is a theoretically informed and meticulously argued work of cultural history that also shows fine appreciation of philological, linguistic, and literary issues. In Chapter 1 (Men and Women), Williams has a simple and compelling point to make: basing their idealization of friendship on our male-authored ancient literary texts (Cicero's *De amicitia*, Seneca's *Letters*), the great thinkers of Western civilization have asserted that ideal friendship is a man's game, and even that women are by and large incapable of real friendship, at the very least being excluded from the most interesting parts of friendship's history. As Williams shows, the epigraphic evidence tells a different story; here we can gain a new appreciation of friendships between women, and indeed between men and women. In its divergence from the well-trodden literary tradition, the epigraphic material opens up new ways of understanding the ancient world, but it can also be used to bring a fresh perspective to familiar literary texts, especially when one is as open-minded and attentive to linguistic nuance as Williams. Chapter 2 explores some of the key conceptual issues and themes related to the (vexed) distinction between *amor* and *amicitia*, and then in Chapter 3 Williams turns to the close reading of particular Latin texts, bringing his new interpretative framework to Catullus, Horace, Virgil, and Propertius, Petronius' *Satyricon*, and the letters of Cicero and of Fronto. The fourth and final chapter, 'Friendship and the Grave', turns again to the epigraphic evidence, and funerary inscriptions in particular, where friends are shown to play an important role in the commemoration of the dead, usually associated in the Western tradition with close family. Williams' work showcases Classics as a vitally and productively interdisciplinary academic subject, where significant new readings can be achieved with the right methodologies and approach. He has some big claims to make about Roman society, of which ancient historians will certainly want to take note, but his fresh analysis of familiar literary texts is also highly illuminating and the book has many smaller-scale insights to offer as well.

Roberta Stewart's study of Roman slavery through the plays of Plautus is even more overtly a work of cultural history – indeed she is primarily an ancient historian by training – though here too there is much for the literary critic.[3] Her book is inspired and informed by studies of the more recent slave phenomenon in the American South, valuable, among other reasons, for the existence of first-person slave testimonies. Her emphasis is on what can be learned from ancient sources about the subjectivity of the ancient Roman slave, especially in the various relationships depicted within Plautus' plays (and there is also substantial analysis of other ancient sources such as Cato's *De agricultura* and legal texts). This might seem rather a tall order, but

[1] *Reading Roman Friendship*. By Craig A. Williams. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. x + 378. Hardback. 978-1-107-00365-1.

[2] Craig A. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality* (second edition, Oxford, 2010).

[3] *Plautus and Roman Slavery*. By Roberta L. Stewart. Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. Pp. ix + 229. Hardback £55, ISBN: 978-1-4052-9628-4.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383513000132 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Stewart's methodology is sound and the findings of her analysis convincing. She explores in turn various aspects of the Roman slave system: in the first chapter, 'Human Property', the implications – social, psychological, personal – of one person being the legal possession of another, a 'chattel'; in the second chapter the process of enslavement – the chillingly labelled 'seasoning' of slaves – through which one learns to repress one's own autonomy and subjectivity and subordinate it to the will of one's master; in further chapters the role of violence in establishing and maintaining the relationship, and then the fascinating phenomenon of manumission, by which a slave became free through the generosity of a master. Throughout Stewart is interested in the tensions between the chattel status of the slave and the independent autonomous subjectivity that a slave nevertheless inevitably retains, despite the 'seasoning'. The final chapter, 'The Problem of Action', explores attempts by slaves to act independently as subjects (such as the Sicilian slave rebellion of *c.*136–132 BC) within a cultural context where autonomous action by slaves is virtually unthinkable. A fascinating modern parallel brought to bear here is Michel-Rolf Trouillot's analysis of Haiti's successful slave rebellion of the late eighteenth century – which not only later historians but even contemporary observers and participants were unable to conceive of as a slave rebellion within the parameters of colonial ideology. In an analysis of *Pseudolus*, Stewart then shows that Plautus' trickster slave devises a response in turn to each of the central problems that slavery poses for the Roman slave (as identified in her previous chapters): commodification, the need to be loyal and obedient to one's master and to subject one's own needs to his, the master's control of violence, and freedom and the identity of the manumitted slave. There are moments in the work where claims smack of the projection of modern ideology rather than the rigorous examination of evidence: for instance, it is unclear what evidence led to the conclusion that

> Plautus shows freeborn males desiring and buying the beautiful slave woman to fulfil images of themselves as sexually virile men, free from the constraints of marriage and wife. Plautus seems to know that men instrumentalize slave women for fantasies of their own sense of self. (35)

Overall, however, the argument of the book is very well drawn – clear, engaging, and persuasive. Indeed, the work provides, to my mind, an excellent introduction more generally to the thorny concept of 'subjectivity', and makes a very good case for why and how an understanding of 'the subject', variously shaped and repressed, is important both in historical studies and in everyday life. This book is a serious contribution to the study of slavery, both ancient and modern, and offers a fresh and illuminating perspective on Plautus. It treats an important subject with considerable contemporary relevance; it is also a good read. One of the things that is striking and uplifting about the two works by Williams and Stewart is that they confidently allow women to take a central position alongside men in history and in the intellectual tradition. It is a simple enough idea, and hardly a new one – that one should read, analyse, and interpret the ancient sources with as much attention to the female perspective as to the male. This is especially important when one is studying ancient thinkers on subjects that have had a perennial place in Western philosophical thinking (such as, in these cases, friendship and slavery); the concepts seem to have universal significance and when the ancient writers whom we admire write such brilliant insights about them it is

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383513000132 Published online by Cambridge University Press

easy not to appreciate – and tacitly to perpetuate – the misogynistic assumptions that are contained within these insights. To challenge such assumptions (or readings) effectively – by, for instance, demonstrating that *amicitia* could flourish between women in ancient Rome, or that slavery had particularly grim implications for the autonomy and selfhood of attractive women – is an important achievement. These scholars quietly take as a given principle that women's experience and subjectivity matter fundamentally in the intellectual tradition as well as in everyday life, and they allow the principle to underpin substantial scholarship, opening up new and important ways of viewing the evidence and understanding the past. I think that what is so gratifying about these two books is that they are feminist (and equally appreciative of the alternatives to other dominant positions such as heteronormativity and freedom) in such a way as to suggest that no other way of being makes sense – they are thus deeply humane as well as intellectually compelling.

Ruth Rothaus Caston's study of jealousy in Roman elegy (or jealousy and Roman elegy) is another work that takes a fresh and interdisciplinary approach to familiar texts.[4] She approaches love elegy from a philosophical perspective, and her overarching thesis is a stimulating one: that jealousy is a fundamental structuring element of Roman elegy that explains some of the key characteristics of the genre and relates to wider issues of trust and reciprocity in Roman culture, and that Roman elegy really develops the full 'structure' of jealousy that is latent in other literary genres. Interesting and productive though this approach is (and it is endorsed by some eminent scholars on the book jacket), the book does rather suffer by comparison with the careful and sensitive methodology of *Reading Roman Friendship*. A number of times I found myself disappointed by the lack of thorough evidential foundation; argumentation felt delicate rather than robust, woven from intriguing wisps of interpretation rather than a systematic exploration of the corpus. The 'rivalry' between elegy and philosophy in the cure for love set out in Chapter 1 turned out to be subtle rather than full-blooded, and the argument about the gendering of jealousy – that women in the poems are portrayed as more reluctant to infer infidelity than precipitous men – to be based on analysis of the *Heroides*, not necessarily representative of the genre. Nevertheless, Caston's final chapter, 'What is Jealousy About?', in which she explores its relation to *fides*, is especially interesting, and it is here that her study comes very close to that of Williams, exploring the application of the terminology of *amicitia* to marriage and love affairs and the difficulty of distinguishing definitively between these different kinds of relationship.

Even the more conventionally literary studies considered in this review have an eye to philosophy and to intellectual and cultural history. Silvia Montiglio's *Love and Providence* explores the motif of recognition in ancient novels, situating its deployment there within a long tradition of Western literature.[5] Much of the book focuses on Greek novels, but chapters are also devoted to Latin, Jewish, and Christian writings. Montiglio shows that recognition is an important theme among the corpus of ancient novels, and that there are certain features of its deployment that are characteristic of these works (and influential on later literature). She first establishes that novels made use of

[4] *The Elegiac Passion. Jealousy in Roman Love Elegy*. By Ruth Rothaus Caston. Oxford, Oxford University Press. Pp. xi + 176. Hardback £45, ISBN: 978-0-19-992590-2.

[5] *Love and Providence. Recognition in the Ancient Novel*. By Silvia Montiglio. Oxford, Oxford University Press. Pp. xi + 256. Hardback £45, ISBN: 978-0-19-991604-7.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383513000132 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Aristotle's influential theory of *anagnorisis*, and then shows how the novelistic usage of recognition differs from and engages with the Greek literary tradition that precedes it; especially important predecessors are of course the *Odyssey*, Greek tragedy, and New Comedy. For instance, Montiglio argues that, while in New Comedy recognition scenes usually involve revelations of blood ties between protagonists, those in the 'ideal' novels usually take place between lovers. In Chariton, for instance, recognition is mutual and immediate and associated with true love; indeed, falling in love is itself a form of recognition, of the other as a soul mate. Achilles Tatius, meanwhile, plays with this idealized view of love through what Montiglio describes as an 'iconoclastic' treatment of recognition, where men consistently misidentify their lovers. Other non-ideal novels play with the established motif in a way that signifies their departure from the ideal. In the Latin novels, the deployment of the recognition motif reflects the dark and cynical outlook of these works. Here recognition is sordid (Eumolpus recognizes Encolpius by having a good feel of his genitals) and rather than resolving the plot or presaging the happy ending it is a bad thing for the protagonists; recognition by their enemies is what prevents the characters from escaping misfortune, when their cover is blown. By and large the monograph takes the shape of a series of close readings of individual passages that feature recognition, novel by novel, spiralling out from these to rich discussion of the novels more broadly. However, there is such diversity among these treatments of recognition that it was not always clear to me what it was that tied all these passages together. The volume comprises a series of discrete, though compelling, interpretations of individual scenes from a range of different works. I have no doubt that for specialists in the ancient novel Montiglio's interpretation of the texts will be stimulating and valuable in itself, but for others it may be that on occasion it feels a little difficult to see the wood for all the trees; sometimes the detail and complexity obscure the broader point being made. The framework and argument that link these individual analyses is fairly loose and to be inferred from reading each section in turn rather than being made explicit. It is only in the epilogue that we get a bit more sense of direction, as Montiglio suggests that three of the features that she has identified as characteristic of recognition in the novel – all of which, as she notes, are more naturalistic aspects of recognition than those found elsewhere in the ancient tradition – have an important afterlife in Western literature, such as French tragedy: recognition through autobiography; the 'blood call' – the instinctive sense that someone is a blood relation; and recognition of someone by their voice.

A new study of Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica* participates in the (by now well-established) recent tradition of reading post-Virgilian epic with renewed seriousness and, in particular, of reading such poetry as a political endeavour that engages both with the contemporary political situation and with the political aspects of literary predecessors.[6] In this case, the political situation is Vespasian's rule as emperor and re-establishment of peace and order in Rome; Stover starts by arguing for a date of composition that falls within Vespasian's reign, and then reads the poem against this socio-historical context. He also reads the poem as a response to Lucan's *Bellum*

[6] *Epic and Empire in Vespasianic Rome. A New Reading of Valerius Flaccus' Argonautica*. By Tim Stover. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. xi + 244. Hardback £58, ISBN: 978-0-19-964408-7.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383513000132 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Civile, suggesting that the civil war that preceded Vespasian's rule would have rendered Lucan's poem newly poignant, and that the *Argonautica* represents Valerius Flaccus' engagement with the pessimistic picture painted there. In this context, Stover produces in Chapters 2–4 rich readings of key passages: the establishment of what he calls the 'Jovinian programme' in Jupiter's prophecy early in Book 1, which makes deliberate contrast with Lucan's godless universe; the sea storm in Book 1; the battle of Cyzicus in Book 3. Then in Chapters 5 and 6 he goes on to discuss the role of Vespasian as *vates* and the nature of Jason as epic hero.

Finally, a delightful and new kind of book, William Fitzgerald's *How to Read a Latin Poem If You Can't Read Latin Yet* – a book which is vital in both senses of the word.[7] The aim is to entice the Latinless reader and the Latin student into the world of linguistic and literary appreciation by demonstrating the rewards of reading the poetry of ancient Rome *in the original language*. To this end, Fitzgerald has a double strategy: first he emphasizes and evokes the vibrancy and immediacy of the poems themselves and the world in which they were produced; second he aims to equip the reader with an appreciation what is going on at the linguistic level in selected passages, through detailed discussion of the significance of vocabulary, word order, metre, and so on. This is a book for a new world in which the benefits of a Classical education are by no means self-evident and indeed, simply by virtue of being classical, Latin poetry can appear dull, difficult, and irrelevant. Fitzgerald addresses this head-on in his introduction – 'My aim is to give the reader a glimpse of the brilliant colours beneath the brown, faded patina that has accumulated over the words "Latin poetry" in the minds of many' (4–5) – before embarking on discussion of passages from a wide range of poets, including Sulpicia, Ovid, Catullus, Martial, Juvenal, Persius, Horace, Virgil, Lucretius, Lucan, and Seneca. There is emphatically no dumbing down in this reaching out; readers are faced with substantial extracts in the Latin that they are invited to unpick even without knowledge of the language, but with the aid of patient and encouraging commentary. There is no shying away from the difficult stuff – fifteen pages are devoted to Persius! – and this is also a very adult book, not only in its unabashed discussion of Latin literature's obscenity and violence, but also in its insistence that the reader engage seriously with ideas and the intellectual tradition. The book requires intelligent effort and engagement of the kind demanded by the best teachers, while the contextual information and explanation is consistently engaging and helpful. As one would expect from one of our leading Latinists, the interpretation is spot on and most stimulating, and importantly it conveys an excellent sense of the productive ambiguity of the Latin language and the way in which this is exploited by the poets. The book is endorsed on the cover by Katharina Volk, of whose recent book on Ovid[8] I was reminded when reading Fitzgerald's since they share a freshness of perspective on classical literature and a joyous evangelism, committed to bringing the secrets of our wonderful subject to new audiences. I would be inclined to recommend Fitzgerald's book to all Classics, Classical Studies, and Ancient History students arriving at university, at any level of language attainment. This is a book that could be read

[7] *How to Read a Latin Poem If You Can't Read Latin Yet*. By William Fitzgerald. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. ix + 278. Hardback £20, 978-0-19-965786-5.

[8] Katharina Volk, *Ovid* (Chichester and Malden, MA, 2010), reviewed *G&R* 59 (2012), 254.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383513000132 Published online by Cambridge University Press

from cover to cover with profit and entertainment by all those grappling with the Latin language or reliant on translation of classical texts, as well as by interested laypeople; they will come away challenged, intrigued, and very much the wiser. It should make many who have not quite seen the point of it before keen to learn the language, brush up their skills, or apply them more assiduously to the interpretation of Latin literature. It might also be a useful book to read *with* students on specific poems and topics, as a starting point for discussion; there are stimulating pages here for every Latin literature course I teach. I wish there was a prose version too; if sales rocket as a result of my enthusiastic recommendation perhaps Professor Fitzgerald might be persuaded to write a sequel, *How to Read Latin Prose...*

REBECCA LANGLANDS
r.langlands@exeter.ac.uk
doi:10.1017/S0017383513000132

Greek History

The study of ethnicity and the interaction between cultures has been a popular topic with ancient historians recently, and this trend continues. While the interconnection between Greek identity and culture and Roman power during the Second Sophistic has attracted significant attention in the last few decades, the earlier periods have remained relatively unexamined. This is now nicely redressed by an important collection of essays edited by Thomas Schmitz and Nicolas Wiater, which focuses on the first century BCE.[1] One main theme of the volume concerns the interaction between Greek and Roman identities, and the ways in which authors reinterpret and destabilize them: the interaction between Rome and Greek classicism (Dihle), the rethinking of Greek and Roman cultures and identities in Dionysius (Wiater), the impact of Rome on its resident Greek authors (Hibder), the *interpretatio graeca* of Augustus by Nicolaus of Damascus (Pausch), the Roman context of Mytilenean intellectuals and their self-fashioning (Bowie), and Greek poets and their Roman patrons (Whitmarsh). A second main theme concerns the interaction with the Greek past and its classics, and the extent to which the classicist approaches of the Second Sophistic are already present in the first century. This is variously explored, from Dionysius' exploration of stylistic models (Fox), Diodorus' image of Athens (Schmitz), the tendency to systematization in various intellectual fields on the basis of the classics (Most), the grammarians' attitude to Greek dialect (Hintzen), and the Homeric quotations in Chariton (Baumbach), to the (re) building projects in Athens (Borg).

For ancient historians wishing to expand the established framework of approaches in their field, comparative history and theoretical approaches inspired by the social sciences are becoming prominent sources of inspiration and debate. John Bodel and Saul Olyan contribute a new volume on household and family religion to the

[1] *The Struggle for Identity. Greeks and Their Past in the First Century BCE*. Edited by Thomas A. Schmitz and Nicolas Wiater. Stuttgart, Franz Steiner, 2011. Pp. 305. 4 illustrations. Paperback €54, ISBN: 978-3-515-09671-3.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383513000132 Published online by Cambridge University Press