Latin Literature

James Uden's impressive new study of Juvenal's *Satires* opens up our understanding not only of the poetry itself but also of the world in which it was written, the confusing cosmopolitan world of the Roman Empire under Trajan and Hadrian, with its flourishing of Greek intellectualism, and its dissolution of old certainties about identity and values.[1] Juvenal is revealed as very much a poet of his day, and while Uden is alert to the 'affected timelessness' and 'ambiguous referentiality' (203) of the *Satires*, he also shows how Juvenal's poetry resonates with the historical and cultural context of the second century AD, inhabiting different areas of contemporary anxiety at different stages of his career. The first book, for instance, engages with the issues surrounding free speech and punishment in the Trajanic period, as Rome recovers from the recent trauma of Domitian's reign and the devastation wrought by the informers, while satires written under Hadrian move beyond the urban melting pot of Rome into a decentralized empire, and respond to a world in which what it means to be Roman is less and less clear, boundaries and distinctions dissolve, and certainties about Roman superiority, virtue, hierarchies, and centrality are shaken from their anchorage. These later *Satires* are about the failure of boundaries (social, cultural, ethnic), as the final discussion of *Satires* 15 demonstrates. For Uden, Juvenal's satirical project lies not so much in asserting distinctions and critiquing those who are different, as in demonstrating over and again how impossible it is to draw such distinctions effectively in the context of second-century Rome, where 'Romanness' and 'Greekness' are revealed as rhetorical constructions, generated by performance rather than tied to origin: 'the ties that once bound Romans and Rome have now irreparably dissolved' (105). Looking beyond the literary space of this allegedly most Roman of genres, and alongside his acute discussions of Juvenal's own poetry, Uden reads Juvenal against his contemporaries – especially prose writers, Greek as well as Roman. Tacitus' *Dialogus* is brought in to elucidate the first satire, and the complex bind in which Romans found themselves in a post-Domitianic world: yearning to denounce crime, fearing to be seen as informers, needing neither to allow wrongdoing to go unpunished nor to attract critical attention to themselves. The *Letters* of Pliny the Younger articulate the tensions within Roman society aroused by the competition between the new excitement of Greek sophistic performance and the waning tradition of Roman recitation. The self-fashioned 'Greeks' arriving in Rome from every corner of the empire are admired for their cultural prestige, but are also met by a Roman need to put them in their place, to assert political, administrative, and moral dominance. This picture help us to understand the subtleties of Juvenal's depiction of the literary scene at Rome; when the poet's satiric persona moans about the ubiquitous tedium of *recitationes*, this constitutes a nostalgic and defensive construction of the dying practice of *recitatio* as a Roman space from which to critique Greek 'outsiders', as much as an attack on the *recitatio* itself. Close analysis of Dio Chrysostom's orations helps Uden to explore themes of disguise, performance, and the construction of invisibility. Greek intellectual arguments about the universality of virtue are shown to challenge traditional Roman ideas about the moral prestige of the Roman nobility, a challenge to which Juvenal responds in

[1] *The Invisible Satirist. Juvenal and Second-century Rome*. By James Uden. New York, Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. xii + 260. Hardback £47.99, ISBN: 978-0-19-938727-4.

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Satires 8. Throughout his study, Uden's nuanced approach shows how the *Satires* work on several levels simultaneously. Thus *Satires* 8, in this compelling analysis, is not merely an attack on elite hypocrisy but itself enacts the problem facing the Roman elite: how to keep the values of the past alive without indulging in empty imitation. The Roman nobility boast about their lineage and cram their halls with ancestral busts, but this is very different from reproducing what is really valuable about their ancestors and cultivating real nobility – namely virtue. In addition, Uden shows how Juvenal teases readers with the possibility that this poem itself mirrors this elite hollowness, as it parades its own indebtedness to moralists of old such as Sallust, Cicero, and Seneca, without ever exposing its own moral centre. In this satire, Uden suggests, Juvenal explores 'the notion that the link between a Roman present and a Roman past may be merely "irony" or "fiction"' (120). *Satires* 3's xenophobic attack on Greeks can also be read as a more subtle critique of the erudite philhellenism of the Roman elite; furthermore, Umbricius' Romanness is revealed in the poem to be as constructed and elusive as the Greekness against which he pits himself. *Satires* 10 is a Cynic attack upon Roman vice, but hard-line Cynicism itself is a target, as the satire reveals the harsh implications of its philosophical approach, so incompatible with Roman values and conventions, so that the poem can also be read as mocking the popularity of the softer form of Cynicism peddled in Hadrianic Rome by the likes of Epictetus and Dio Chrysostom (169). Both Juvenal's invisibility and the multiplicity of competing voices found in every poem are thematized as their own interpretative provocation that invites readers to question their own positions and self-identification. Ultimately Juvenal the satirist remains elusive, but Uden's sensitive, contextualized reading of the poems not only generates specific new insights but makes sense of Juvenal's whole satirical project, and of this very slipperiness.

It is testament to the healthy state of scholarship on Lucan's *Civil War* these days that Jonathan Tracy does not feel any need to set the scene for his study with a general introduction to the poem and its themes.[2] Rather he is able to plunge straight into his chosen theme of Egypt, in full confidence that he will find an audience already familiar enough with the poem and its scholarly interpretation to appreciate the significance of his approach. Indeed, his monograph begins with Herodotus and opens out into a survey of the two-pronged representation of Egypt in ancient Greek and Roman tradition, a country always characterized first and foremost as remote and isolated. On the one hand, Egypt is revered for its wealth, hospitality, and venerable antiquity, and as a refuge and a source of wisdom – religious, medical, astronomical. On the other hand, Egyptians are stereotyped negatively (especially in Rome) as dishonest, politically corrupt, decadent, and mercenary. Against this background, Lucan is introduced to us as the only Roman author to attempt to reconcile these opposing models and to make something of their contradiction, especially in Books 8–10, which are the focus of this study (Tracy is of the school of thought which believes that the poem as we have it is complete and that Lucan intended these to be the final books of the poem). The monograph makes an excellent case for Egypt's thematic significance in the poem, and hence the importance of these later books for the work, and he delivers a detailed

[2] *Lucan's Egyptian Civil War*. By Jonathan Tracy. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp. viii + 296. Hardback £65, ISBN: 978-1-107-07207-7.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383515000091 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and persuasive analysis of Lucan's innovative deployment of Egypt as a way of modelling ideas about imperial Rome, especially through the themes of luxury and despotism. The book falls into two sections, 'Pompey in Egypt' and 'Caesar in Egypt'. In Part 1 we see how the choice of the Roman Lentulus as the advisor who persuades Pompey to make his fatal trip to Egypt enables Lucan to draw an analogy between Egypt and Rome; Lentulus' naïve, utopian vision of Egypt reflects his naïve confidence in the enduring moral values of the old Republic, which will turn out to be equally misplaced. Meanwhile, the dark side of Egypt – its commercialization, corruption, and luxury – is directly linked to Pompey's subsequent murder. For Tracy, the debate between Acoreus and Pothinus about how to respond to Pompey's arrival is not just a clash between the ancient Pharaonic and new Hellenistic–Ptolemaic cultures, but is also a reflection of Roman politics – the clash mirroring the internal political struggles in Rome that preceded the emergence of the imperial regime. In Part 2 we are shown how Lucan exposes the 'violent tensions between the twin identities of Egypt' in Book 10's 'battle for Caesar's soul' (99), and how the after-dinner conversation between Caesar and the Egyptian sage Acoreus about the geography of the Nile helps to characterize Caesar through his ultimate failure to learn from Acoreus' attempt to deflect him from the path of tyranny. Comparison with the account of Egypt in the *Natural Questions* of Lucan's uncle Seneca is revealing; Caesar's own scientific enquiries about Egypt are not entwined with moral sensibility, and will not set him on the path to virtue, and the distinct differences from Seneca's approach only serve to further highlight Caesar's vice and tyrannical disposition. Tracy makes good use of an extensive knowledge about ancient attitudes towards Egypt so as to bring out what is new and original about Lucan's treatment of the subject, and his discussion is extremely careful, thorough, and well plotted, with a wealth of connections and information. Approaching Lucan through his creative deployment of the motif of Egypt undoubtedly brings us to a new appreciation of these latter books and their relation to earlier parts of the poem.

Another work that approaches a familiar body of work from an oblique angle is Thea S. Thorsen's study of Ovid's early poetry, whose distinctive focus is *Heroides* 15 – the letter written as if from Sappho to her lover Phaon – whose authenticity is in dispute.[3] Thorsen adopts this controversial poem as a 'key' to a deeper understanding of the whole corpus of poems (*as* corpus) that Ovid is thought to have published in the first stage of his career: that is to say, the single *Heroides*, the *Amores*, the *Ars amatoria*, the *Remedia amoris*, and the *Medicamina faciei femineae*. It is evident that the project began life with a narrower focus as a study of this individual poem (*Her.* 15), and has subsequently been expanded to articulate a more far-reaching argument about Ovid's early writing in general; opinions will differ about how successful this venture has been. Thorsen's position (established in the early chapters of the book, and especially Chapter 4) is that *Heroides* 15 is authentic, was written by Ovid, and represents the final poem in the collection of single *Heroides*. She makes an intriguing suggestion that the poem may have been deliberately censored in the middle ages because of its representation (however delicately rendered) in lines 131–4 of Sappho masturbating to orgasm as she thinks of her beloved. This apparently open

[3] *Ovid's Early Poetry. From His Single Heroides to his Remedia amoris*. By Thea S. Thorsen. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp. xii + 223. Hardback £60, ISBN: 978-1-107-04041-0.

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depiction of female sexuality is one of several unusual features of the poem that have been considered indications that it was not written by Ovid. Thorsen turns this on its head; taking sexual explicitness as a key theme of the poem, and the poem as especially Ovidian (with Sappho as Ovid's transgender alter ego), she then develops (in Chapter 5) the thesis that this poem can help us to understand sexual explicitness as an important running theme throughout the earlier *Heroides* as well. Moreover, while other scholars have read the many striking correspondences and echoes between *Heroides* 15 and other, securely Ovidian, poems, as indications that this Sapphic letter was created by a later hand, drawing liberally on Ovidian phrase and imagery, Thorsen takes them as an evidence that the poem plays a particularly important role in relation to the rest of his poetry. Indeed, her argument is that this 'final' poem elaborates and draws together the themes of the corpus: Ovid's self-fashioning as a poet, his self-positioning in the literary tradition, female sexuality, change and metamorphosis, and the characterization of elegiac poetry as both light and mournful. Much of this thematic discussion is interesting and thought-provoking, though interpretations of particular details can seem forced or misguided. For instance, Thorsen's proposal that the phrase *vitiati ventris* at Ovid *Her.* 11.37 (which she translates as 'violated womb'; 140) implies that Canace is the innocent victim of her brother's sexual assault is a misunderstanding of Roman sexual ideology; she is 'violated' in the Roman sense that she has damaged her own status through sexual misconduct, not in the modern sense that she has been the victim of rape, and there are no grounds for reading against the rest of the poem, where she is described as in love and aware of her guilt, to call her 'the most passive and blameless of Ovid's heroines' (140). Elsewhere the logic of Thorsen's argument is faulty: Oenone's differentiation between herself and Helen when it comes to their experience of 'rape' need not reveal 'double standards' (138); the rhetorical convolutions of the *Remedia amoris* are not 'literal contradictions' (192). Thorsen tends to read Ovid as a consistent figure standing behind his texts, rather than showing awareness of the teasing variety of rhetorical positions that he takes up at different places in the corpus. Her understanding of the didactic works, in particular, seems insufficiently nuanced and rather prone to take the poet's words at face value. Her argument (in Chapter 1) that we can find 'gender equality' when we take an overview of Ovid's early work is unconvincing; indeed she misapplies this modern phrase, and there is little awareness of gender or feminist theory in her approach. However, even if we take her to mean merely that men and women play an equally large role in the poems, there are problems with the argument. I am sceptical, for example, of the claim that the *Remedia amoris* can be said to be addressed to men and women equally (31); whatever Ovid's claim in lines 49–52 it is clear as the poem progresses that much of the advice he is doling out for the unrequited lover just would not work if the genders were reversed. The book emerges as a bold experiment, exploring what happens if one places *Heroides* 15 at the centre of Ovidian interpretation, rather than at the margins. In the end, however, it may not be sufficiently well executed to be convincing either as an argument about the authenticity of the poem or to yield new insights about the thematic unity of Ovid's early work.

In his study of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, Stefan Tilg also takes a clear position on a scholarly controversy that establishes a particular framework for interpretation.[4] Here

[4] *Apuleius' Metamorphoses. A Study in Roman Fiction*. By Stefan Tilg. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. xii + 190. Hardback £45, ISBN: 978-0-19-870683-0.

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the working hypothesis is that the striking ending of the novel, apparently so different in tone from the earlier books, where Lucius is rescued by the goddess Isis and becomes an initiate of her cult, is not an Apuleian invention but is modelled on the lost Greek work from which the Latin novel is adapted. This is rather a liberating hypothesis, that allows us to concentrate on *how* Apuleius delivers this ending to his novel, rather than getting stuck on the question of *why* (indeed, I would have liked to have seen Tilg be less cautious about exploring its wider implications). Tilg's analysis is most successful when he is working away at the edges of the novel, as he does in Chapters 1–2 and 6–7, reading first the prologue and then the 'epilogue' of 11.26–30 as metaliterary reflections on the process of 'Romanizing' one of the most successful Greek novels of the age. He shows how the prologue skilfully takes us through the process of transforming the Greek author Loukios into the Latin protagonist Lucius, working with the audience's familiarity with the famous Greek original. After a novelful of Lucius' adventures, the epilogue takes up this thread again, bringing Lucius finally to the city of Rome itself, just as Apuleius, following in the footsteps of many Latin authors before him, has brought a Greek literary genre into Roman literature. The close analysis of these framing passages and consideration of their wider significance is nicely done, and will be of interest to students of the novel as well as to those interested in exploring metaliterary and paratextual issues in ancient literature of the period. The central chapters (3–5) seem to me less successful in advancing our understanding of the *Metamorphoses*, perhaps precisely because they strive to delineate an overarching interpretative approach that glosses over so much of the novel's content. There is certainly no denying the presence of Milesian elements in the novel, nor the importance of the seductive charm of storytelling, nor the Platonic elements and the philosophical significance of the Cupid and Psyche episode, nor the apparent tensions between these aspects of the novel; none of this is new. Tilg attempts to explain how these elements fit together by arguing that the *Metamorphoses* is best approached as a work of 'playful seriousness' (87), a philosophical novel in a modern sense, infused by the Platonic themes of curiosity, transmigration of the soul, the two types of love, the afterlife, and Platonic daemons, but treating them with a lightness of touch. This move to synthesize, rather than choose between, serious and comic readings is fine in itself, but these chapters also present a sanitized version of the *Metamorphoses*, and this perhaps implies that their argument may work only by excluding from consideration a great deal of the novel's more challenging material. Tilg explicitly dismisses the dark and dirty stories that make up so much of the earlier books as 'sheer entertainment', 'a welcome and cheerful distraction for the reader' with no further moral significance (55), which feels to me to be throwing the baby out with the bathwater, and to leave too much unexplained.

While most of the books reviewed above take new runs at some enduring and much-debated mysteries of Latin literature, Aaron Pelttari brings scholarly attention to the much less well-trodden field of the Latin poetry of late antiquity.[5] The lyrical title of his study – *The Space that Remains* – refers to the new literary aesthetic that Pelttari argues is in play in the long fourth century, which places the emphasis on the role of

[5] *The Space that Remains. Reading Latin Poetry in Late Antiquity.* By Aaron Pelttari. Ithaca, NY, and London, Cornell University Press, 2014. Pp. xi + 190. 1 illustration, 1 figure. Hardback £30.95, ISBN: 978-0-8014-5276-5.

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the active reader in making sense of poetry; his 'space' describes the deliberate gap constructed by late antique poets such as Ausonius, Claudian, and Prudentius between their poetry and the act of reading, which invites the reader take up a strong interpretative role. Chapter 1 provides a useful introduction to the ways in which late antique writers theorized the strong role of the reader in activating the meaning of texts. Next, after a brief, workmanlike summary of the use of prefaces in classical literature, Chapter 2 outlines the innovation of Claudian and Prudentius in developing the preface as a separate paratext, controlling the reader's access to their poetry. Post-classical literature is shown to be distinctive in the way that it calls attention to the circumstances of its own writing; in their prefaces, authors often figure themselves as primary readers of their own works, but also call upon addressees to help establish the significance of their writings. Classical scholars may be surprised – even disappointed – by how literal this transfer of responsibility from author to reader is; for instance, Ausonius claims in prefaces that he has rediscovered work composed in the past and, unsure whether they are any good, he is sending them to friends to make the judgement and mediate their wider reception (64–72). Indeed, after the Introduction's exciting establishment of theoretical approaches, the discussion feels unexpectedly *un*literary and *un*theoretical throughout Chapters 2 and 3, where the focus is on composition rather than content, the practicalities of reading rather than deeper meaning, Ausonius' clever word games rather than thematic intensity. When Pelttari talks about 'Open Text and Layers of Meaning' (the title of Chapter 3) he is not referring to the kind of complex, polyphonic ambiguity that Uden finds in Juvenal's *Satires*; he means something more concrete and less subtle: in late antique poetry the different routes of interpretation are formal and distinct and the reader makes conscious decisions about which to take. In Optatian's figural poetry, for instance, one can choose whether to read the words from left to right to make the poetry, or whether to find other reading pathways by tracing particular patterns through the written text. In Prudentius' *Psychomachia* a reader makes a decision about whether to read at the allegorical or the narrative level. It is when we reach the excellent discussion of allusion in Chapter 4 that the value of these earlier chapters becomes evident; here Pelttari takes us carefully through the last decades of scholarship on the rich subject of allusion and intertextuality, illuminating the distinction between emulation and repetition of the sources, before demonstrating how late antique poets move away from the referential allusion favoured by classical texts towards the practice of non-referential repetition. Rather than creating new meaning through interaction with a venerated original in the classical, emulative mode, late antique poets practise the 'centonic technique' of reusing lines from earlier poets without regard (necessarily) for their original context or meaning, establishing a different kind of relation between hypertext and hypotext. The discussion of Paulinus' repetition of lines from Virgil in his description of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (134–7) – speaking eloquently through the disciples in languages they themselves do not understand – is a wonderful illustration of the potential poetic resonance of non-referential allusion of this kind. Through such techniques of juxtaposed and apposed fragments, late antique poetry emphasizes the distance between past and present, and positions itself outside the classical tradition, communicating its own presentness rather than integrating itself within a literary tradition. Returning to the central argument of the book, the meaning of these fragments is not shaped by the meaning of the original to which they are alluding, but needs to be actualized by the reader (138). In making clear how late antique

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practice of allusion differs from classical practices, Pelttari also sharpens our understanding of classical allusion and this chapter is a valuable contribution to the subject, while the book as a whole provides an important new orientation to the study of late antique poetry.

Since I myself am among the contributors it might seem inappropriate to mention here *Suetonius the Biographer* – a new collection of essays on the author edited by Tristan Power and Roy Gibson.[6] I hope I can be forgiven for doing so briefly for the sake of the other scholars who worked on the volume, since it constitutes an important contribution to the study of an author who is very widely read and cited as one of our most engaging reporters on imperial Rome, but far less often understood as a literary author in control of his own material and project. All the essays here treat Suetonius with deserved respect, examining his compositional methods, his treatment of themes within and across individual biographies, the significance of his lost work, and his later influence.

Finally, we welcome two new commentaries from experienced hands: François Spaltenstein's is the first substantial commentary on the dramatic fragments of the third-century BC playwright Naevius, and a very useful resource.[7] Following the approach of his previous commentaries, the focus is for the most part on stylistic and linguistic explication of the fragments, and there is no attempt to establish a new text (although corrections are made as necessary to the edition found in Warmington's *Remains of Old Latin*).

Meanwhile, A. J. Woodman's commentaries on Books 3 and 4 of Tacitus *Annals*, written with R. H. Martin, have long been admired as models of the genre, as engaging works of erudition and explication (and sometimes speculation) that have seen many students through their first encounters with Tacitus, yet remain indispensable for established scholars. The publication of Woodman's new Green and Yellow commentary on another Tacitean work, the *Agricola*, is therefore cause for celebration.[8] This is the first English commentary on Tacitus' fascinating biography of his father-in-law since 1967 and there is certainly plenty to it; readers are not short changed when it comes to learned, up-to-date commentary and interpretation of the work's literary and historical aspects. Indeed, a mere twenty pages of Latin text are accompanied by nearly three hundred dense pages of line-by-line commentary. This includes lengthy passages of explication that in themselves constitute useful interpretative essays on the work. The lively dialogue between commentators that was a notable feature of Woodman's earlier collaborative commentary work is missing here (sadly, in the end, the contribution of his collaborator C. S. Kraus was mainly limited to discussion of sections 10–12), but the commentary nevertheless does justice to interpretative ambiguities and scholarly debates. Much of the material contained here will go over the heads of undergraduates

[6] *Suetonius the Biographer. Studies in Roman Lives*. Edited by Tristan Power and Roy Gibson. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. xii + 338. Hardback £70, ISBN: 978-0-19-969710-6.

[7] *Commentaire des fragments dramatiques de Naevius*. By François Spaltenstein. Bruxelles, Éditions Latomus, 2014. Pp. 707. Paperback €99, ISBN: 978-2-87031-291-9.

[8] *Tacitus. Agricola*. Edited by A. J. Woodman with C. S. Kraus. Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp. xiii + 358. Hardback £55, ISBN: 978-0-521-87687-2; paperback £23.99, ISBN: 978-0-521-70029-0.

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grappling with Tacitus' prose, of course, but the volume will be a wonderful companion for serious students of the work as well.

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Greek History

Four volumes in this review constitute important contributions to the study of ancient documents and their employment in antiquity, as well as their value for modern historical research. Paola Ceccarelli has written a monumental study of letter-writing and the use of writing for long-distance communication in Ancient Greece; Karen Radner has edited a volume on state correspondence in ancient empires; Christopher Eyre's book concerns documents in Pharaonic Egypt; and Peter Liddel and Polly Low have edited a brilliant collection on the uses of inscriptions in Greek and Latin literature. The first three volumes have major consequences for the study of the workings of ancient state systems, while those by Ceccarelli, Eyre, and Liddel and Low open new avenues into the study of the interrelationship between written documents and literature.

Ceccarelli offers a comprehensive account of Greek letters, that ranges from the archaic to the Hellenistic period, and which covers, with equal attention, both the epigraphic findings of letters and epistolary communication recorded on inscriptions, and the role and representation of letters in ancient Greek literature.[1] She focuses extensively on two major themes: the first is the way in which a letter establishes a communication between addressor and addressee, and the ways in which this mode can be employed to circulate ideas or to frame diplomatic relationships; the second is the secrecy enabled by communication through letter-writing, and the dangers and possibilities generated by this feature. A major advantage of the book is its attention to issues of development and change: the emergence of and change in the format of letter-writing, the emergence of epistolary treatises, the changes in the employment and representation of letters in historiography or public inscriptions. The book includes two invaluable catalogues of surviving private and official letters.

Ceccarelli's wide-ranging cultural history of letter-writing can be profitably read alongside the volume on state correspondence edited by Radner.[2] The latter includes chapters on New Kingdom Egypt (Mynářová) and the Hittite (Weeden) empires from the second millennium BC, as well as contributions on the Neo-Assyrian (Radner), Babylonian (Jursa), Persian (Kuhrt), Hellenistic (Bencivenni), and Roman (Corcoran) empires from the first millennium onwards. While Ceccarelli focuses largely on written communication within and between city-states, this volume concentrates on correspondence as a significant aspect of the internal working and external

[1] *Ancient Greek Letter Writing. A Cultural History (600 BC–150 BC)*. By Paola Ceccarelli. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. xx + 435. 1 map. Hardback £95, ISBN: 978-0-19-967559-3.

[2] *State Correspondence in the Ancient World. From New Kingdom Egypt to the Roman Empire*. Edited by Karen Radner. Oxford Studies in Early Empires. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. xv + 306. 53 illustrations. Hardback £48, ISBN: 978-0-19-935477-1.

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