I read the volume carefully enough to smile at a Hellenistic court astronomer barbarized as 'Conan' (508), I lack the space for a detailed assessment and the expertise for an informed one. I will say, though, that the excellent team assembled by Domenico Accorinti made me wish that I had time to read Nonnus; the paraphrase of John's Gospel, in particular, seemed likely to be more rewarding than Lycophron.

The last of the blockbusters is James Porter's *The Sublime in Antiquity*.[13] Though in this case I can claim to have some relevant expertise, here too space constrains me to be brief. In short, then: this is an important and original book. It gets many things right, offers many subtle, probing interpretations, and documents with unprecedented thoroughness an ancient tradition of things that could be designated as 'sublime', in one sense or another. But that qualifying phrase is crucial. The pluriformity of the sublime defeats Porter, who produces a clutter of definitions that don't define it, and formulations of the essence that it may or may not have that are vacuously broad. The thought that 'perhaps it is best to jettison the language of the sublime altogether' (619) would have been useful at the beginning of the book; so close to the end it is too late – and it is, in any case, only briefly entertained. The closing paragraph retreats to an unsubstantiated assertion of singularity: 'the sublime is *one*. . .category and concept. . .the sublime is *a* concept' (622, my emphasis). Readers who are disappointed that I have said so little should not despair: I will say more in *Classical Review*.

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Latin Literature

My appreciation of textual criticism – a nowadays somewhat marginalized subdiscipline that continues nevertheless to provide the foundation of our subject – has been vastly enhanced by Richard Tarrant's new book on the subject.[1] I read it from cover to cover with great pleasure and satisfaction (several times laughing out loud, which doesn't happen often with works of scholarship), with great interest, and with dismay at my own ignorance, and I came away determined to be a better Classicist. This little volume is the fourteenth 'suggestive essay' published in CUP's Roman Literature and its Contexts series (established in 1990 by Denis Feeney and Stephen Hinds), but it does not – sadly – mark a revival of this excellent series, but rather a late addition. (There cannot be many Latinists of my generation who did not, as young scholars, aspire one day to be the author of one of these elegantly concise yet ground-breaking volumes.) On the face of it this volume is rather different from its predecessors, which usually engaged with cutting-edge theory from a Classical perspective; instead, *Texts, Editors and Readers* opens up to non-initiates such as myself a whole world of

[13] *The Sublime in Antiquity*. By James I. Porter. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016. Pp. xxii + 690. 8 b/w illustrations, 2 tables. Hardback £99.99, ISBN: 978-1-107-03747-2.

[1] *Texts, Editors and Readers. Methods and Problems in Latin Textual Criticism*. By Richard Tarrant. Roman Literature and its Contexts. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016. Pp. xii + 192. Hardback £59.99, ISBN: 978-0-521-76657-9; paperback £18.99, ISBN: 978-0-521-15899-2.

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existing scholarship into which many literary scholars seldom venture, inhabited not only by the towering 'heroic editors' of the past (Chapter 1) but also by colourful characters such as 'interpolation hunters' (86), freewheeling neo-sceptics (77), elegant minimalists, and unrestrained maximalists. With a combination of vivid characterization, lucid explanation, and delicious detail, Tarrant outlines the challenges of establishing a decent text, and the techniques involved; in Chapters 3 to 5 we learn about recension, conjecture, interpolation, collaboration, and intertextuality. He also makes exceptionally clear the issues that are at stake in editing a text, and the tensions with which the discipline is charged. At every stage of the process, from the selection of manuscripts for scrutiny to the display of information in the final edition, choices need to be made that are bound to provoke dissent. The twin aims of providing a legible text and legible apparatus are often in conflict with one another. Eventually, to establish a readable text, an editor needs to choose a single solution and put all alternatives in the apparatus, which must then record the evidence and the decision process as far as possible. Done well, it allows us to understand the process by which the text of the edition has been established, and the contributions made by scholars over the years. But within Classics there is no agreement about precisely how this should be achieved, as Tarrant points out. As he makes clear with his comparison of two reviews of the same edition, one reviewer's 'accuracy' and 'methodological rigor' is another's 'frivolous superfluities' (25–6). Tarrant comments that one would hardly believe these evaluations pertained to the same edition of Lucan, but in fact the picture is consistent and the divergence of opinion is telling; what comes across strongly is that these two reviewers want something very different from their editions. The disagreement here is between a scholar who wants progress towards a better text, amending scribal errors and providing confident, robust conjectures, and another who is glad to find a text relatively untouched, but in the apparatus all the material that enables a reader to come to their own decisions about the variants to be preferred. The merits of both are clear; the tensions are between the aspiration for a readable, usable text and the desire to be transparent about the difficulties involved in establishing that text. A decisive reading may obscure ambiguities; excessive hedging muddies the reading. Every choice involves compromise: minimalists may omit important information that might allow the reader to draw different conclusions; maximalists risk cluttering up the page and seeming undiscriminating. Tarrant (a self-confessed minimalist) alarms us on pages 130–1 with the sight of the monstrous apparatus produced by an unrestrained maximalist. Meanwhile, while conservative critics are averse to new conjectures and stick as close to the manuscript reading as possible, conjecture emerges as a creative art form, where natural talent is enhanced by intimate appreciation of Latin literature and style (73); it can attract great admiration. I now aspire to be able someday to compile, as Tarrant does, my own list of favourite conjectures – a bit like a montage of favourite sporting moments, as one revels in the pleasure of seeing the execution of skilful manoeuvres. Chapter 6 brings our attention to a representative case where textual tradition and literary interpretation cannot be disentangled: is Propertius a 'difficult' poet, prone to elliptical writing, or is he an elegant writer whose text has been unfortunately mangled in transmission? In other words, where the text is hard to understand, do we spend our energies reading his poetry as if he were a modernist poet, teasing out cryptic meaning, or do we channel our energies into amending the text to something more easily comprehensible? One's prejudice about the nature of Propertius' poetry

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inevitably shapes one's approach to editing the text. The question is insoluble, but the debates thereby evoked are illuminating. As Chapter 2 makes clear, this is a discipline that relies on persuasion and is characterized by strong rhetoric; the contempt and disgust that are directed at fellow scholars and inferior manuscripts are remarkable. Language is often emotive and moralizing; the bracketing of problematic lines described as 'a coward's remedy' (86, n. 2). Tarrant himself, who takes a light and genial tone throughout, doesn't shy away from describing a certain practice of citing scholars in the apparatus criticus as 'an abomination' (161). One of many evocative details is the idea of Housman storing up denunciations of editorial vices without a particular target yet in mind (68). Traditionally, self-belief and decisive authority have been the hallmarks of the 'heroic' style of editing, and these qualities are especially unfashionable in our own era, which prizes the acknowledgement of ambiguity and hermeneutic openness. Tarrant encourages us to accept that the notions of the 'recoverable original' or the 'definitive edition' are myths, but at the same time to acknowledge that they are necessary myths (40) for this 'doomed yet noble' endeavour (156). A critical edition is no more nor less than a provisional 'working hypothesis' which invites continued and continual engagement. As Tarrant puts it: 'any edition, to the degree that it stimulates thinking about the text, begins the process that will lead to its being succeeded by another edition' (147). Textual criticism should be, therefore, a collaborative endeavour to be marked by humility and an acceptance of the open-endedness of interpretation, of the hermeneutic work that an editor needs to undertake, and also of the overlap between the roles of editor and reader. It is easy to perceive textual criticism – with its heyday in the nineteenth century – as constituting the dry and dusty past of Classics, and indeed Tarrant treats us to a most entertaining account of its Heroic Age, when Housman *et al.* lashed one another with cruel wit and erudite put-downs. However, Tarrant also makes an irrefutable case for the continued relevance, and indeed the exciting future, of textual criticism – despite the fact that it has lost its position at the centre of our discipline, and so many of us are untrained and unable to appreciate its value. Tarrant's depiction of the discipline brings home the lesson – which we already knew, but now really *get* – that all classical scholars ought accordingly to be aware of these general issues and to have some grasp of the specific routes by which the text they are reading has been reached, the problematic aspects of that text, and the issues involved in attempting to resolve its problems. Such is the information that an apparatus criticus attempts to convey, and it may therefore be judged on how effectively and efficiently it does so. Having made all of this so clear and in such an engaging fashion, Tarrant concludes by providing as an appendix a helpful guide for the inexperienced to reading a critical apparatus. The final chapters explore two questions in particular: what can technological advances contribute (for instance in access to and presentation of manuscripts), and is the current model of the apparatus criticus fit for purpose? On the latter issue, Tarrant would like to see, at the very least, more scope for providing in the notes nuanced indication of the editor's feelings about the choices he or she has made. He proposes the wider use of phrases that allude to the internal struggles behind a rejected variant, for instance (such as *utinam recte* or *aegre reieco*) or the introduction of new symbols for the apparatus that would signal degrees of suspicion – although he doesn't go quite so far as to second Donaldson's suggestion for a pictorial symbol of 'a small ostrich, with head in the sand' to denote occasions where an editor follows a manuscript out of despair of making actual sense of the text (58, n. 25).

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Early in his essay, Tarrant expresses regret that new editions are less likely to be reviewed than other forms of scholarship, and, with the decline in the requisite editorial knowhow, it easy to see why: reviewing a new edition of a text is not a job that can be undertaken with confidence by most scholars of Latin literature. How can one pass judgement on an editor's decisions without a very sound knowledge not only of the work but also of the manuscripts available, of the relationships between them, and of the subsequent critical tradition? How can one comment on individual amendments or conjectures without an understanding of the entire interpretative framework which the critic has brought to bear? One of the many valuable things I have learned from Tarrant's book is that it not always necessary to comment on individual cruces; equally useful can be an evaluation of the general approach and principles upon which an edition is both established and communicated.

At once chastened and galvanized by Tarrant's essay, I must attempt, then, to do justice to the new Oxford Classical Text version of Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, edited by Robert A. Kaster, which I am prepared to judge an exemplar of the genre.[2] There are many elements of which Tarrant should approve: the preface (in English) which clearly explains the principles upon which the texts are based; Kaster's very clear explanation of how his apparatus is set out and of the significance of the symbols he uses ('if a Bentley or a Madvig each perceived the same problem and arrived at the same solution, it should make any editor or reader pause for thought' [xlvii]); the evident sense of respect for other scholars, and spirit of collaboration and humility – Kaster attributes his improvements to the text primarily to the possibility that has been afforded him of undertaking a more comprehensive study of the manuscript tradition, rather than to any editorial superiority; and the simultaneous publication of a companion volume (also in my crate of books), *Studies on the Text of Suetonius' De vita Caesarum,* a practice commended by Tarrant.[3]

This latter work starts with an account of the manuscripts and the establishment of a new stemma on which Kaster's edition of the *Vita Caesarum* is based. Newly equipped with my fledgling understanding of recension, I found this a rewarding read, with some enjoyable moments (such as the lively discussion of the 'extraordinary' ancestor to manuscripts C and H on pages 19–22). Kaster's edition is based on full collations of the manuscripts written between the ninth and thirteenth centuries (with one exception). As a resource for scholars attempting to establish where more recent manuscripts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries – which are still to be systematically studied – fit into the tradition, he helpfully lists the particular 'uncorrected and uncorrectable' errors of each manuscript, and at the end of the book there are five appendices providing further useful resources for study of the manuscript tradition. In the bulk of the book Kaster discusses some of the three hundred places where he feels he has something new to contribute to our understanding of the text, taking us through the *Lives* in order. This section required harder work on my part, as each problematic passage

[2] *C. Suetoni Tranquilli, De vita Caesarum libros VIII et De grammaticis et rhetoribus librum*. Edited by Robert A. Kaster. Oxford Classical Texts. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. lxxx + 487. Hardback £40, ISBN: 978-0-19-871379-1.

[3] *Studies on the Text of Suetonius' De uita Caesarum*. By Robert A. Kaster. Oxford Classical Texts. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. x + 332. Hardback £74, ISBN: 978-0-19-875847-1.

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is presented without preamble, with no translation or explanation of the Latin or of the wider context in the work (although the troubling phrase is shown in the context of surrounding Latin text, and interpretation is sometimes provided in discussion), and all the editorial information – naturally – is communicated in the ultra-concise form of apparatus criticus. Tarrant's appendix came in very helpful here, but there is no doubt that fluent reading (which I am now resolved to achieve) will only come with practice, as in the learning of any new language. Returning to the OCT itself, printed between the text and the apparatus are a list of references to other relevant passages from classical literature or scholarship which might enhance our understanding of the work: where Suetonius cites a line from Pacuvius, or a popular obscene ditty, or a witticism of an orator such as Licinius Calvus, we are referred to the relevant modern editions of these fragments; elsewhere we are sent to texts that corroborate the information with which Suetonius provides us, so this feature functions like a mini-commentary in shorthand.

Peter Barrios-Lech's *Linguistic Interaction in Roman Comedy* will also be eye-opening for many of us; like textual criticism, this kind of linguistic study represents a rather different kind of scrutiny of the text from that typically undertaken by a literary Latinist, and it similarly yields a very different perspective on Latin literature – a bit like looking at a familiar object such as a leaf under the microscope – which allow us to return to our holistic vision with new understanding.[4] This book applies techniques of pragmatics and sociolinguistics to a systematic reading of extant Roman comedy – not just the surviving plays of Plautus and Terence but also the fragments that have come down to us from all the other genres of Roman comedy – in order to explore how speakers in these plays use language to negotiate relationships, and how the actual and relative statuses of the participants in a conversation affect the way in which they address one another. Slaves use different linguistic strategies from citizens, women from men, but their choices also reflect the relationship with their addressees. Slaves, for example, generally do not initiate conversations, and are more likely to soften requests that they make of their superiors, so as to avoid offence, but they tend to do so by using 'negative' politeness – an indication that they would prefer not to make the request, but are compelled to – rather than the more intimate positive politeness, which might use flattery, for instance. Friends are more likely to use positive politeness with one another than siblings, who can perhaps take their bonds for granted. Overall Barrios-Lech's thesis is that these playwrights were reflecting – perhaps largely unconsciously – the speech patterns and social assumptions of their own day. A clear and helpful introduction, set out in numbered paragraphs, outlines the methodology, previous research on language variation in antiquity, and also the various tools which will prove useful for analysis, from stock characters to statistical analysis and the z-calculation to determine statistical significance. The explanation of all the subsequent analysis is exceptionally lucid, with frequent use of modern parallels to explain nuances of language, and careful explanation of the linguistic theory that is informing analysis. Use is made throughout of easily readable tables to set out statistical data – such as patterns of usage by authors, or by

[4] *Linguistic Interaction in Roman Comedy*. By Peter Barrios-Lech. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016. Pp. xxiii + 381. 10 b/w illustrations, 32 tables. Hardback £74.99, ISBN: 978-1-107-12982-5.

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different types of character. The book has a pleasing forward momentum, building argument progressively and guiding us with illumination so that we do not become lost in (for example) the 'forest of Latin directives' (27). Each chapter and section sets out questions (e.g. 'Are women more polite than men?' [41]) and then sets out to answer them, with useful summaries of the story so far included at the end of Part I (110–11) and Part III (194–5). Part I (Chapters 2–8) considers commands and requests, Part II – 'How to Say "Please" in Early Latin' – the use of imperative 'softeners' and 'strengtheners'; Part III – 'How to Greet and Gain Attention' – explores expressions that are intended to grab the interlocutor's attention, and ways of beginning, concluding, and interrupting conversations. Part IV considers how Latin speakers constructed relationships with equals and with subordinates, and finally Part V looks at places where characters swap roles or take on a new identity within the play – as when a citizen disguised as a slave changes his speech pattern to reflect the part he is acting – and examines Plautus' *Captivi* and Terence's *Eunuch* and *Adelphoe* as case studies. Helpful summaries of the data with which the author is working are provided in three appendices, which show in turn: the distribution of speech among different types of characters, comparing male and female, slave and free, high and low status; the categories of directives that are used (threats, injunctions, entreaties, curses, etc.); and the different modes of politeness identified in Roman comedy. The book is intended not only for linguists but also for a broader audience, and the transparency and accessibility of its argument throughout will ensure that non-linguists are able to make the most of its numerous insights, in order to reach an enhanced understanding of characterization and dialogue in the Roman comedy, as well as of many aspects of linguistic and social interaction in spoken Latin of this period.

In his preface Barrios-Lech announces that he (like many others) was originally inspired by Eleanor Dickey's work on the Latin vocative, and subsequently benefited from the guidance of the scholar herself; Dickey's new book, *Learning Latin the Ancient Way*, combines her two great passions of scholarship and language teaching (to which, as a former colleague of the author, I can attest).[5] This textbook presents in accessible and usable fashion fascinating material – ancient language-learning resources – not otherwise readily available to the modern reader, and it does so in such a way as to provide an innovative and engaging new resource for learners of the Latin language today. It includes a range of different materials that were produced in antiquity for students of Latin as a second language: bilingual dialogues and stories (*colloquia*) with their entertaining vignettes of everyday life: episodes from the school day ('no running in the corridor!'), visits to the baths, a dinner party, a visit to a sick friend in a huge apartment building; phrasebook sections on insults and excuses; versions of Aesop's Fables; annotated passages from classical authors such as Sallust; a treatise on the freeing of slaves; extracts from ancient grammatical works and glossaries; and transliterations into the Greek alphabet of Latin words. Presented with great clarity and helpful explanation, this material offers invaluable insights into conversational Latin and the ways in which everyday usage differs from the written classical mode with

[5] *Learning Latin the Ancient Way. Latin Textbooks from the Ancient World*. By Eleanor Dickey. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016. Pp. xii + 187. 4 b/w illustrations. Hardback £49.99, ISBN: 978-1-107-09360-7; paperback £17.99, ISBN: 978-1-107-47457-4.

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which we tend to be more familiar, as well as insights into ancient techniques of language learning and everyday life in antiquity. At the end of the book there is a comprehensive list of all surviving Latin learning materials, with information about where to go for further study. A brief section on prose composition (116–18) offers the intriguing suggestion that when it came to translation and composition the ancients may have tended to treat the paragraph as the smallest sense unit, rather than the sentence as we do today. Dickey intends this book to be usable by Latin teachers today, as indeed it should be – I have already discussed with colleagues at Exeter how we might integrate its materials into our Latin teaching.

For intermediate readers of Latin (with at least a year of language learning under their belt) we also have a new volume in the Bolchazy-Carducci series of Latin texts, a selection of Pliny the Younger's letters by Jo-Ann Shelton.[6] While less arcane, this material is similarly full of historical interest, which makes this an excellent resource for language learning, as the rewards of getting to grips with the Latin are immediately apparent. This series adopts the format of a same-page commentary, where the Latin text is in larger font, with sometimes no more than a handful of Latin lines per double page, and surrounded by a linguistic commentary that provides vocabulary as well as explanation of the grammar and syntax, and also every now and then further clarification of the content. This makes for quite a crowded text, and perhaps – if one were to criticize – there is a risk of overload, as students are confronted with a detailed explanation of every line even as they read, rather than being able to search for support in the back as and when they need it. On the other hand, this prevents constant flipping backwards and forwards, and Shelton's volume is also rich with the resources needed to make sense of these letters as informative documents from an alien culture, and could easily be used as the basis for a historical study. There are maps, timelines, genealogical charts, a glossary of names, a subject index; best of all, also included are texts and translations of inscriptions relating to Pliny's life and career – a wonderful resource to be made available to students at this early stage of language learning.

Time prevents me from a detailed discussion of two new companion volumes in the Oxford Readings in Classical Studies series, one devoted to Pliny's Letters[7] and the other to Flavian epic,[8] but I hope this will not be taken as sign that I do not think highly of both.

Finally, as the allusive title suggests, the volume *Roman Literary Cultures* is a (sadly posthumous) tribute to a great Latinist and colleague whose recent loss has been deeply felt across the globe.[9] Elaine Fantham's energy, expertise, generosity, and warmth were legendary, and this volume goes some way to expressing the multiple ways in which her influence has been felt across the decades on so many aspects of Latin literature and

[6] *Pliny the Younger. Selected Letters*. By Jo-Ann Shelton. Mundelein, IL, Bolchazy-Carducci, 2016. Pp. xxx + 264. Paperback $29, ISBN: 978-0-86516-840-4.

[7] *The Epistles of Pliny*. Edited by Roy Gibson and Christopher Whitton. Oxford Readings in Classical Studies. Oxford. Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. xii + 532. Hardback £90, ISBN: 978-0-19-954594-0.

[8] *Flavian Epic*. Edited by Antony Augoustakis. Oxford Readings in Classical Studies. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. xiv + 538. Hardback £90, ISBN: 978-0-19-965066-8.

[9] *Roman Literary Cultures. Domestic Politics, Revolutionary Poetics, Civic Spectacle*. Edited by Alison Keith and Jonathan Edmondson. Toronto, Buffalo, and London, University of Toronto Press, 2016. Pp. xxiv + 340. 7 illustrations. Hardback £41.95, ISBN 978-1-4426-2967-7.

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Roman history and culture. A brief introduction by the editors conveys a sense of the changing academic context in which Fantham's scholarship developed, and of her own contribution to the study of Roman literary culture. Each of the thirteen papers collected here includes an initial footnote expressing admiration and gratitude; the volume as a whole is dedicated with love. However this is significantly more than a Festschrift; as the introduction makes clear, this collection represents a new contribution to the study of the sociocultural contexts of Roman literature and their significance, with an independent intellectual rationale that takes its inspiration from Fantham's scholarship but proceeds in new directions. The book falls into three parts, reflected in the volume's subtitle. The first section, 'Domestic Politics', probes the boundaries between literary and historical approaches to Latin texts, by using non-literary evidence such as archaeological remains, legal texts, and inscriptions to enhance understanding of Latin literature. The essays of the second section, 'Revolutionary Poetics', take a more conventionally literary approach, exploring genre and intertexuality in Latin poetry. The third section, 'Civic Spectacle', investigates the role of public ceremony in the ancient Roman world from a variety of perspectives, and – as a complement to Part I, perhaps – is especially engaged in the question of how literature can enhance our historical understanding. The papers range widely in subject matter and in approach, from philology to cultural history, reflecting the breadth of Fantham's own scholarship, but the editors have done a good job of bringing all this into a coherent whole. This worthy tribute is very much a Canadian and North American production, reflecting a career spent primarily at the universities of Toronto and Princeton, and it has its roots in the 2010 Annual Meeting of the Classical Association of Canada, at which Fantham was honoured as a former honorary president. However, I am sure one could fill such a volume several times over with the contributions of scholars from all over the world grateful for her scholarship and for her support. Long may her influence continue to be felt.

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Greek History

Mediterranean islands and their adjacent coastlands have long been the subject of a wide range of disciplines and discourses; from prehistory to late antiquity and beyond, the processes of imperial expansion, economic interconnectedness and cultural change have had a deep impact on their history. In recent decades the conceptual apparatus through which we study those processes has started to shift significantly. Earlier approaches influenced by nationalism and colonialism tended to adopt totalizing, top-down, and centre–periphery perspectives. The three volumes examined in this review are evidence that things are changing radically; but they also demonstrate the need for particular disciplines and subdisciplines to pay attention to each other. Though all three volumes focus on, or give major attention to, archaeological evidence, it is quite evident that prehistoric, classical, and late antique scholars follow distinctive scholarly traditions that could all benefit from more cross-fertilization.

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