the front line of reception. Deborah Roberts contributes a thoughtful essay on translation, and there are chapters on an impressively multinational collection of productions and adaptations. In the earlier parts, Judith Fletcher and Isabelle Torrance (who made me want to read Rotrou) furnish oases in an otherwise arid Lacanian and post-Lacanian wasteland ('rather than capitulating to the logic of the fetish, *Antigone* can be read as exposing the logic of abjection', 39). Liz Appel remarks that 'of course, Antigone has parents. She is perhaps the most (in)famous daughter in the history of the theatre as the result of the incestuous union between Oedipus and his own mother Jocasta' (233). How odd, then, that Ismene, who has the very same parents, should fall so far short of her sister in fame or infamy. Ahuvia Kahane shares Lacan's enthusiasm for Moebius strips (citing Granon-Lafont but not Bricmont and Sokal) and for Russell's Paradox (is the set of all sets that are not members of themselves a member of itself or not?). The latter is invoked to 'challenge the idea of determinate positive representation'. But, in trying to show that 'we cannot reduce any object to a closed set of descriptions' (150), Kahane illegitimately extends this set-theoretical paradox beyond set theory, ignores all the more recent formulations of set theory devised to avoid paradox, and perpetrates an elementary logical error in jumping from the negation of a universal ('not…every') to a universal negation ('not…any'). This fiasco was unnecessary, since the impossibility of a closed set of descriptions is easily established. If an object satisfies description *d*, it also satisfies an infinite number of descriptions that can be generated by recursive embedding ('an object that satisfies description *d*'; 'an object that satisfies the description "an object that satisfies description *d*"'; and so on). Taking this route would, of course, have revealed that the thesis is utterly trivial and poses no interesting challenge. Yet the book is not without moments of comic relief. Terry Eagleton tells us that, for Aristotle, 'morality is primarily about enjoying oneself' (106). Luce Irigaray postures grotesquely: 'I have shared Antigone's tragic fate' (198). Surely it's not so hard to tell the difference between being invited to give a keynote lecture at an international conference in Dublin and being walled up in a cave?

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Latin Literature

The emphasis of much recent scholarship on Latin literature is on questions about how it was composed, how it was consumed in its ancient context, and how the answers to such questions might affect our own reading of ancient texts. One recurrent theme is that a real appreciation of ancient literary works is only reached by looking beyond the words themselves, to the overarching structures of composition that give them meaning and nuance; another is that it is equally important to understand the specific features of the literary culture that generated them, and to consider such questions as how texts were circulated. One text that will now be indispensable for the pursuit of such lines of enquiry is William A. Johnson's brilliant account of what it meant to read in antiquity, *Readers and Reading Culture in the High Roman*

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Empire,[17] a book that also enhances with its glow our appreciation of many other studies of Latin literature that have been published in recent months. Johnson draws on linguistics and anthropology to approach reading in antiquity as a sociological system belonging to a specific cultural milieu and differing in significant ways from the modern reading systems with which we are familiar today. His book then combines study of the physical remains of papyri with insightful analysis of ancient texts to elucidate both the practicalities of reading for the ancient Romans and its social and cultural significance – for instance, he concludes that the book roll was an 'icon of elitism', designed as an aesthetic object and status symbol, rather than for utility – in a way that cannot fail to make us rethink our own reading of ancient literature. The case studies of Chapters 3–8, where he discusses a variety of ancient 'reading communities', are all drawn from the period of the High Empire (AD 70–190). However, it is clear that his broad approach could profitably be applied to any era of Roman history, and no doubt many scholars will wish to take up that challenge. One of the many virtues of Johnson's book is its accessibility and lucidity. It expertly conveys the essence of the sociolinguistic studies and theories that inform his own approach, and vividly evokes the various ancient literary scenarios that are the focus of his study: Galen skulking among the book stalls to eavesdrop on an altercation among the customers about the authenticity of a book claiming to be by him; Pliny's exclusive coterie of super-writers; the shallow intellectual circles derided by Lucian. As Johnson himself remarks of a passage in Galen, 'we can almost hear the papyrus crinkle'. What should make Johnson's thesis especially appealing to modern literary critics of classical texts is that it offers compelling justification for our own close scrutiny of ancient works. To the student's complaint that our intricate analysis is 'reading too much into' a text, we can now retort that it is precisely this kind of thorough, analytical reading and re-reading, informed by a hyperawareness of underpinning structures and literary strategies, for which ancient literature seems to have been composed in the first place. Reading in antiquity was (meant to be) a difficult, intellectually demanding process involving rigorous exegesis. The reading methods in which we moderns tend to be trained are by ancient standards facile and elementary: we require a whole apparatus of paralinguistic information about structure and emphasis to make sense of words on the page – spaces between words, punctuation, chapter headings, indices, and typographical signals such as italicization. By contrast, for ancient readers it was features embedded in the language itself, such as writing style, rhythm, and composition, that conveyed this information about structure and inflection. At least, this was how it worked for the initiated; the concept of Galen's 'invited reader' is a useful one here. Johnson has a talent for conveying the bigger picture, within which more narrowly focused specialisms and studies are shown to matter in profound and exciting ways. For instance, his book brings out the close relation between the composition techniques that create an ancient text and the reading system in which it was produced, and one consequence of this is to bring fully to life technical studies of ancient literature produced by other scholars, by highlighting quite how impoverished one's reading is by ignorance of ancient writing

[17] *Readers and Reading Culture in the High Roman Empire. A Study of Elite Communities*. By William A. Johnson. Classical Culture and Society. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010. Pp. x + 227. 5 halftones. Hardback £40, ISBN: 978-0-19-517640-7.

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techniques. Lest this should leave us all of a sudden feeling rather ill-equipped to do justice to ancient literature, Llewellyn Morgan's new study of Latin metre grants us the possibility of acquiring at least some of the necessary skills and knowledge relating to metrical forms with the greatest of pleasure.[18] *Musa Pedestris* is a very different kind of work, packed with a passionate Classicist's close dissections of poetry, and it complements beautifully Johnson's ideas about the heightened awareness of literary techniques that ancient readers brought to their reading. Morgan's thesis is a simple one: Roman poets and their readers were highly attuned to the nuances of metrical form, and we ought to be too. Latin poets did not just *write* in metre (a tall enough order); they *used* metre to enhance the meaning of their words, and poets played in erudite fashion with the associations and allusions evoked by particular metrical forms, in which they expected their readership to be well versed. Poetic composition was in many ways an academic and theorized process, which involved a high level of technical sophistication and knowledge about metrical forms and their histories. Each metre has its own 'ethos', drawing on its literary history and associations; the ethos of the hendecasyllable, for instance, is that of the casting aside of restrictions and taboos, and of leisure in contrast to toil, in opposition to the dactylic hexameter, which is a kind of staid 'establishment' metre against which the other metres define themselves as to some extent rebellious and free-spirited. As in the case of genre, with which Morgan sees parallels, it is when conventions are flouted and expectations are messed about with that the results are most interesting. In consequence, in order to appreciate the richness of Latin poetry, a modern reader needs to be highly metrically literate: to catch, for instance, the significance of the 'misplaced caesura' (stumbling on the Via Domitiana in Statius *Silvae* 4.3) or to feel the frisson of Horace's 'scandalous' use of Sapphics in Odes 3.14. To disregard metre when reading Roman poetry, then, is to ignore a whole dimension of expression and meaning, comparable to the dimensions of genre and of the words themselves; Morgan makes this closing case eloquently and persuasively in his conclusion, but I had been persuaded long before that I must begin to remedy my own inadequacies in this area without delay. As soon as Morgan embarked on his first case studies in the introduction, I began to feel excited about the prospect of teaching Latin metre to my undergraduate students – not a sentiment one often hears expressed. Indeed, with this book as a companion, my feeling is that studying the technical aspects of Latin metre, far from being a turn-off, actually represents a way of *engaging* students in reading Latin poetry; it becomes a kind of erudite code-breaking exercise, where those in the know (just like Galen's 'invited reader') can penetrate the deeper secrets of ancient poetry. Moreover, in case this should sound rather distant from the Muse, although there is plenty of detailed technical analysis here, it is all related to the poetry in such a way as to render it meaningful and useful even to those reading the poems in translation. And this book is excellent company, beginning with an engaging anecdote about A. E. Housman, breezing along with wit and style, and exuding a ludic delight in its subject that is infectious. (Returning for a moment to the old subject of 'reading too much' into ancient texts, Morgan makes a characteristically sly and ridiculous joke alerting one to the dangers of doing so, when he finds German and Swedish cars on

[18] *Musa Pedestris. Metre and Meaning in Roman Verse*. By Llewellyn Morgan. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010. Pp. vi + 412. Hardback £70, ISBN: 978-0-19-955418-8.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383511000076 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the Domitian road – dig on page 55 for the punch line.) Peter White's approach to reading Cicero's letters[19] shares many similarities with Johnson's approach to Roman reading cultures; his book, too, synthesizes more traditional Classical approaches such as prosopography and papyrology with ideas from sociolinguistics. White's study falls into two parts. The first, 'Reading letters from the outside in', examines the wider cultural context in which Cicero's correspondence was written and includes consideration of how letters were transported from writer to recipient and the significance of their physical form, as a means to better understanding the nature of their written content. The second part, 'Epistolary preoccupations', examines three central themes found in Cicero's correspondence: the discussion of literature, giving and receiving of advice, and leadership. White's overarching thesis is that letters exchanged between Cicero and his contemporaries were above all a strategy for managing their relationships in a perilous political climate and for coping with the political crisis of the Late Republic. Within this framework, even the discussion of quotations from the *Iliad* can be seen as tokens of social exchange that bind individuals together in this fraught enterprise; White's discussion in Chapter 4 of the deployment of literary allusion as a social and political tactic fits particularly nicely with Johnson's project, and a detailed comparison with Johnson's study of Pliny's correspondence in his Chapter 3 would be really interesting. The book as a whole advances our understanding of literary culture in the Late Republic in just the way that Johnson has called for, and Johnson's work has shown us just how important it is that such advances are made. The collection of essays found in *Colloquial and Literary Latin*, edited by Eleanor Dickey and Anna Chahoud,[20] is also deeply pertinent to the themes of Johnson's *Reading and Reading Cultures*. This volume is published in honour of J. N. Adams, 'one of the best and most important students of the Latin language who has ever lived' (xiii), as David Langslow puts it in a foreword full of both personal and intellectual warmth. As befits such an influential and widely appreciated honorand, this is far from an ordinary Festschrift, and represents a clearly delineated and sustained enquiry into the nature of colloquial Latin that makes a substantial contribution to scholarship, with a series of incisive studies of Latin style that partly break down previous easy assumptions and misleading claims about the distinctions between 'colloquial' and 'literary' as different registers of the Latin language. The purposeful coherence of the book is evident from the first section, in which five chapters make up the 'Theoretical framework'. In Chapter 1, Eleanor Dickey welcomes philologists and non-specialists alike with a clear and concise discussion of these problematic central terms 'colloquial' and 'literary', which are defined in opposition to one another and hard to pin down with any precision. Her discussion is broadly conceived and illustrated with accessible references to modern examples, and it flows seamlessly into the next chapter, by James Clackson, which explores the significance of the concept of the 'colloquial' in contemporary linguistics. In Chapter 3 we move into a consideration by Rolando Ferri and Philomen Probert of what Latin authors themselves say about colloquial language – especially in relation to the 'simple style' in rhetoric – with a brief appendix of Latin terms used in such discussions.

[19] *Cicero in Letters. Epistolary Relations of the Late Republic*. By Peter White. Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2010. Pp. xii + 235. Hardback £40, ISBN: 978-0-19-538851-0.

[20] *Colloquial and Literary Latin*. Edited by Eleanor Dickey and Anna Chahoud. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010. Pp. xviii + 515. Hardback £65, ISBN: 978-0-521-51395-1.

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Identifying elements of spoken language in literary texts in a language for which have only written remains is inevitably a vexed enterprise; in Chapter 4, Anna Chahoud gives an overview of the way in which the idea of the colloquial has been deployed in literary criticism, beginning with an instructive example of the difficulties of interpreting the nuances of linguistic register from ancient literary texts: the little word *da* in Virgil *Eclogues* 1.18, was thought by Robert Coleman to be a 'colloquial' usage, while W. V. Clausen described it as 'mock-solemn'. Finally, this section is rounded off with another brief chapter by Dickey offering some preliminary conclusions on the matter. The whole section is as satisfyingly coherent as if it were written by a single author. The volume then moves in chronological order through a series of case studies, which apply to a variety of texts and linguistic features the question of what criteria might be found for establishing which aspects of a text are features of ordinary conversation. Many, if not most, of the papers end by ruling out a linguistic feature that had previously been considered definitively colloquial. However, even if the nature of the 'colloquial' remains elusive by the end of the volume, one nevertheless comes away with a much sharper understanding of stylistic variation in Latin literature, and the collection should be of as much interest to literary critics (we need to sit up and take notice!) as to philologists. Anyone whose thirst for imbibing typologies of ancient literary structures is yet unquenched can turn to *Form and Function in Roman Oratory*, a volume edited by Dominic Berry and Andrew Erskine and arising from a conference they hosted in Edinburgh in 2007.[21] This is a diverse collection of papers, in which the central theme of the relationship between form and function is broadly and variously interpreted; nevertheless, the juxtaposition of the eighteen concise studies from a fine array of scholars is at times thought-provoking. The editors could perhaps have made more in their introduction of the rich resources that they have gathered in this volume, by drawing together the themes that emerged from the papers as a whole with more analysis and synthesis. About half the papers focus on Cicero in one way or another, but there are also papers on panegyric and the speeches of Apuleius, as well as literary speeches depicted in the works of Seneca the Younger, Caesar, Livy, and Tacitus. The first part, 'The orator and his setting', focuses on external factors that shaped the form that ancient speeches took, such as court procedure, the status of the tribunes as untouchable, and the visual representation of orators. Parts III–V are divided into sections on 'Texts in speeches', 'Speeches in philosophy', and 'Speeches in historiography'. In the light of Johnson's *Reading and Reading Cultures*, the section that most sparked my interest was Part II, 'Rhetorical strategies', where the papers explore the way that orators harness the technical 'handbook knowledge' of their highly trained audiences to enhance their rhetorical effect. For instance, Christopher Craig gives a lucid case study of Cicero's deployment, in his defence of Sextus Roscius, of features of the rhetorical *topos* of *indignatio*. This *topos* is usually found in a prosecutor's peroration, and his pervasive use of it here, in Craig's analysis, consequently has the effect of partly transforming a defence speech into an attack against the prosecution team, at least for the super-literate ancient Romans who could

[21] *Form and Function in Roman Oratory*. Edited by D. H. Berry and Andrew Erskine. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010. Pp. xiv + 343. Hardback £60, ISBN: 978-0-521-76895-5.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383511000076 Published online by Cambridge University Press

pick up on such rhetorical nuances. This Ciceronian strategy of turning defence into attack is familiar from later, more famous speeches such as *pro Caelio* and *pro Milone*. However, *Pro Sexto Roscio* was Cicero's first defence case, the murder trial where he made his big splash on the Roman scene and, as such, it affords us a fascinating glimpse of Cicero the young unknown, barely embarking on his extraordinary career, testing out the rhetorical techniques that were to make his name. There is enough scholarly controversy about the historical facts of the case (did the young Sextus actually kill his father, despite being acquitted?), and about how far the extant text corresponds with the speech delivered on the day, to make this a rich case study for students investigating Ciceronian speeches both as historical evidence and as persuasive argument. Now students of this text will be greatly aided by the new commentary in the Cambridge Green and Yellow series, by that master of Ciceronian commentary Andrew Dyck (this must be at least his fifth commentary on a work of Cicero, following those on *de Legibus*, *de Natura Deorum*, *de Officiis*, and the Catilinarians).[22] Dyck's introduction to the work is concise but highly informative about the historical background to the speech, interesting points of style, and its later influence; however, aside from a very brief appendix on prose rhythm, most of the meat is in the commentary itself. This is divided clearly and accessibly, with several schematic diagrams to bring out the patterns in the text's composition. It pays detailed attention to the way in which the speech is structured and how this reflects the rhetorical aims, strategies, and skills of Cicero. It constitutes, in other words, a most useful extended case study of the relationship between form and function to accompany Berry and Erskine's collection. Dyck's is by no means the only publication in recent months of an important commentary by a leading Latinist with a track record in commentaries. For instance, with his new Seneca's *Oedipus* (which includes introduction, commentary, critical edition, and verse translation), Anthony J. Boyle continues to build on his substantial contribution to scholarship on Roman tragedy.[23] This is a subject that he himself has done much to establish as a vibrant area of study, and his oeuvre already includes commentaries on *Phaedra* and the Pseudo-Senecan *Octavia* (whose format this present volume follows), while his current project is the *Medea*. In contrast to Dyck, Boyle provides a very lengthy introduction, of 125 pages; this includes a brief biography of Seneca, an account of Julian–Claudian Rome, an introduction to Roman theatre, a short section on the declamatory style, and another on the earlier ancient treatment of the Oedipus myth, together with an overview of the play and the way that it handles its themes of guilt, power, and tragic fate. There is also a relatively long section on the later reception of the play from antiquity to the present, with special reference to the pivotal role of Freud, and the introduction ends with a consideration of metre and a note on the translation. Despite the length of this introduction, it is clear that Boyle has striven for concision throughout, and that he has much more to say on every topic (and indeed he often has said much more about it elsewhere; the footnotes indicate where to look). He also

[22] *Cicero. Pro Sexto Roscio*. Edited by Andrew Dyck. Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010. Pp. xv + 242. Hardback £45, ISBN: 978-0-521-88224-8; paperback £17.99, ISBN: 978-0-521-70886-9.

[23] *Seneca. Oedipus*. Edited with introduction, translation, and commentary by A. J. Boyle. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. cxxv + 437. Hardback £85, ISBN: 978-0-19-954771-5.

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provides an English translation parallel to the Latin text, and a substantial commentary, a particular strength of which is Boyle's ability to contextualize the *Oedipus* within Seneca's tragic oeuvre as a whole. Boyle intends his translation and supporting material to be of use to those staging the play. I think theatrical practitioners may wish to skip the commentary itself, which is crammed full of intertextual references for the serious Classicist, but may find themselves inspired by the passionate case he makes in the introduction that what makes Seneca's plays especially interesting is their powerful influence on the European dramatic tradition. Matthew Robinson's work on Book 2 of Ovid's *Fasti* is another weighty tome and also provides much more than merely a line-by-line commentary, although a reader seeking such a commentary as aid for translation and interpretation will find their needs met.[24] The *Fasti* is a dense, allusive, and technical poem that demands profound exegesis, and this commentary is extensive because it provides so much of what is required: references to contemporary events or religious practices, explanation of myth and literary tradition, accounts of relevant scholarly debates. The interpretative and linguistic support for individual verses is regularly interspersed with mini-essays on particular myths, or topics such as 'Generic anxiety' or 'Augustus and the lares'. There is also an Appendix, where the smaller typeface gives the impression of the whole discussion being somewhat clandestine and *sotto voce*, in which Robinson considers the thorny debates about the extent to which the *Fasti* may have been revised after exile and after the death of Augustus; Robinson remains judiciously uncommitted, except to rich readings of Ovid's poetry. The volume represents a substantial contribution to the understanding of a fascinating and complex poem. Meanwhile, old hands Stephen Heyworth and James Morwood have collaborated on a new commentary on Propertius Book 3.[25] This is, as the authors say in their Preface, a rather demanding text for less experienced students of Latin language and literature, engaging as it does with so many aspects of both ancient literary tradition and Roman culture. Nevertheless, convinced that it is 'rich in educational potential', they set out to provide the kind of support and background information that will render this a rewarding read even for those less well equipped to make out Propertius' layers of allusion. Their introduction starts with Cynthia, echoing Propertius' own opening to his first book of elegies, and leads into a summary of the key themes of that book. The authors make it clear that their approach to the poetry will be traditional and positivist; they will not be following Maria Wyke in prioritizing a reading of Cynthia as a 'written woman', but rather will see her as a real participant of a real-life love affair on which these poems are at least partly based. They provide a substantial introduction to the historical context that is necessary for appreciation of many of the poems in Book 3, including an account of the years that had passed since the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 BC. A brief section discussing the relationship between Book 2 and the Augustan regime then provides the segue into discussion of Book 3 itself, where we find general comments on style and structure, as well as a detailed look at metre and

[24] *A Commentary on Ovid's Fasti, Book 2*. Edited with introduction and commentary by Matthew Robinson. Oxford Classical Monographs. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. xii + 572. Hardback £95, ISBN: 978-0-19-958939-5.

[25] *A Commentary on Propertius, Book 3*. By Stephen J. Heyworth and J. H. W. Morwood. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. xi + 377. 5 maps. Hardback £75, ISBN: 978-0-19-957148-1; paperback £29.50, ISBN: 978-0-19-957149-9.

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versification. (A description of the style of this book as 'conversational' had me reaching again for Dickey and Chahoud's *Colloquial and Literary Latin*.) There are many useful features in this book, including maps and an 'Appendix of significant intertexts' that reproduces eighteen passages from Hesiod, Callimachus, Lucretius, Gallus, Horace, Virgil, and Propertius himself that can be productively read beside poems from Propertius Book 3. Incidentally, it took me a while to work out why the title of the Appendix was followed by an asterisk – leafing through the pages searching for a corresponding note – before I realized that 'intertext' was one of the asterisked terms, highlighted throughout, that are explicated in the glossary of technical terms that appears at the end of the introduction; the authors have pretty much thought of everything. On another note, a useful companion to Boyle's weighty volume on Seneca's *Oedipus*, especially for the newcomer to Roman drama, would be Gesine Manuwald's excellent textbook and reader on the subject.[26] This provides a clear-thinking and comprehensive general introduction, whose stated intention is to place the most familiar dramatic works of Plautus, Terence, and Seneca into a context in which they can be fully appreciated, by drawing on, among other things, a range of much less well-known, often fragmentary material, including selected passages from the various Roman dramatic genres such as *fabula crepidata*, *fabula palliata*, *fabula praetexta*, *fabula togata*, and mime, and also a selection of key passages from other authors that provide evidence about ancient drama, especially in the Republican period. The book is mostly made up of these extracts from the ancient works, provided both in the Latin and in English translation; they are set out as parallel texts on facing pages, but with the introduction to each passage running across both pages – a slightly distracting format, although I can see why it is adopted, since most of the passages are substantial. The bibliography is arranged thematically, with a view to pointing the reader in the direction of reading that will enable them to explore specific areas of interest further (including the influence of Roman drama on post-classical theatre). As her section entitled 'Notes for the reader' indicates, Manuwald has given considerable thought to the best way of organizing her material and communicating the information that she has gathered, and the result is an extremely useful guide to the subject. Two further companions join the excellent series of Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World. The first is a *Companion to Horace*, edited by Gregson Davis, an overview in nineteen papers of a versatile poet who left behind a diverse and influential body of work.[27] Part I explores Horace's cultural background as context for his writing: his equestrian status, his relationship with Maecenas' inner circle and with imperial patronage, and the size of his villa. Important stuff, but it could perhaps do with a touch of Johnson's *Reading and Reading Cultures*. Part II moves to a discussion of the *Odes* and the *Epodes*, and especially to their relationship with their Greek precedents. Part III discusses the *Satires* and the *Epistles* and focuses primarily on the theme of *persona* and the self. In a final Part IV, 'Reception of Horace's poetry', three papers summarize in turn the influence of Horace's *Odes*, of his *Satire* and *Epistles*, and of his *Ars Poetica*. *A Companion to Vergil's Aeneid and its Tradition*, edited by Joseph Farrell and Michael Putnam, offers something slightly

[26] *Roman Drama. A Reader*. By Gesine Manuwald. London. Duckworth, 2010. Pp. x + 220. Paperback £16.99, ISBN: 978-0-7156-3869-9.

[27] *A Companion to Horace*. Edited by Gregson Davis. Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World. Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. Pp. xii + 464. Hardback £125, ISBN: 978-1-4051-5540-3.

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different, but extremely valuable and genuinely new.[28] In my last review, I discussed the growing sense within Latin scholarship that something that is indispensable to our modern interpretation of the text is a grasp of the way in which an ancient work has been read and understood in the centuries that have passed between its composition and our own day. This volume makes just this connection – as the editors tell us explicitly in their incisive and helpful introduction – between a text's interpretative tradition and its modern interpretation; the main focus of its thirty-two chapters is the reception of Virgil's *Aeneid* from antiquity to the present day, but it intends, by exploring the many different (and sometimes surprising) ways that the poem and its subject matter has been interpreted and valued over the centuries, to open us up to fresh interpretations of the poem in the here and now. Hence the title: this offers itself as a companion to Virgil's *Aeneid* as well as to the poem's later tradition. Its first section, '*Aeneid* in antiquity', contains eight papers concerned with setting the poem its ancient context, in terms of both composition and reception, and discussing the fluidity of the tradition – mythical and literary – with which Virgil himself was engaging. In Section II, the nine papers deal with medieval and Renaissance receptions but, once again, offer new approaches to what might have been a well-worn subject by following up new leads. For instance, an examination of vernacular treatments of the Aeneas legend demonstrates that Virgil's version was by no means considered authoritative in the Middle Ages, challenging the *Aeneid*'s status as an eternal classic. The volume does not attempt to trace a narrative of Virgilian tradition, but rather to provide a series of revealing snapshots, often of underexplored corners of that tradition, proceeding through Section III, six papers on 'The *Aeneid* in music and the visual arts'; Section IV, five papers on 'The American *Aeneid*'; and Section V, four closing papers on 'Modern reactions to the *Aeneid*'. Especially interesting here are the first two papers in the section, where the focus returns with renewed vigour and precision to twentieth-century scholarship on the *Aeneid* and shows how the history of its reception can, as Farrell puts it, 'overwhelm a reader's response to a poem' (447) if one is not careful – that is, if one is not keenly aware of the significance of that history. Best of all, the theoretical and thematic interconnections between all the papers are very nicely brought out in the introduction, which itself constitutes a valuable guide to the field. If the first sentence of R. Alden Smith's introduction to Virgil –'Virgil wrote in code' – is slightly alarming, smacking as it does of Knights Templar and conspiracy theories, it soon becomes clear what his project is.[29] The book has a very ambitious remit: to provide a concise introduction to Virgil, to all his written works, to the Virgilian manuscript tradition and to Virgil's legacy, and all this in barely two hundred pages. The concept of 'code' is introduced to communicate the idea that, in order to appreciate Virgil's poetry, one needs to be an initiate in several overlapping circles of knowledge: knowledge about, for instance, metre, genre, language, literary tradition, and ancient Roman culture. The challenge is similar, in other words, to the one that Heyworth and Morwood felt themselves to face as they embarked on their commentary on Propertius Book 3: so much information and

[28] *A Companion to Vergil's Aeneid and its Tradition*. Edited by Joseph Farrell and Michael C. J. Putnam. Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World. Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. Pp. xvii + 584. Hardback £125, ISBN: 978-1-4051-7577-7.

[29] *Virgil*. By R. Alden Smith. Blackwell Introductions to the Classical World. Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pp. x + 210. Hardback £65, ISBN: 978-1-4051-5949-4.

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background is needed for a newcomer to make sense of this material that it is hard to know where to begin. This book is packed with interesting titbits, it draws on the latest interpretative scholarship, it is knowledgeable and interesting on palaeography; it is undoubtedly an achievement and has much of value in it, but I am not convinced that it would really work as an introduction to Virgil. My sense is that it begins from the wrong end, and that true newcomers to Virgil might prefer to start with the last chapter, about the enduring influence of his work up to the present day, where they are most likely to gain a sense of why it might be worthwhile concentrating hard on the rest of it.

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Greek History

When Hans van Wees reviewed the first edition of Terry Buckley's *Aspects of Greek History 750–323* BC in this journal, he warned that 'students will be sorely tempted to look and think no further but simply paraphrase and memorize the lot' (*G&R* 44.1 [1997], 93).[30] He was right: some of the worst first-year undergraduate essays these reviewers have marked over the past ten years have done just that. We have sometimes concealed the book from our first-year undergraduates (by omitting it from our reading lists, and other ruses…). Our efforts were often in vain: this book is widely recommended by teachers at A-level and (in Dublin and Manchester, at least) is stocked by major booksellers regardless of academics' recommendations. The book will be, on the other hand, an important acquisition for school and college libraries, as it covers all of the sections of Ancient History AS and A2 that focus upon military and political history (one anticipates that Buckley's relative neglect of social and cultural history won't deter centres from offering *The Culture of Athens 449–399* at A2), and it also has much of relevance to the specifications of the Ancient History GCSE. There are clear improvements to the first edition: a new section on the sources for Sparta reflects the recent emphasis on the Spartan mirage; an expanded discussion on the Delian League introduces the debate over the significance of the three-barred sigma; there is a new chapter on Sparta and the Peloponnese, 421–413 BC; references are made to the latest *Athenian Empire* LACTOR (fourth edition, edited by R. Osborne); and the index is improved. However, the enormous breadth of coverage means that there is no room to address the problems raised by van Wees's review (fourth-century Athens is still a blank) and the qualms of H. Sidebottom (*CR* 50 [2000], 340). The current reviewers' main reservation is that, while Buckley warns his readers about the controversial nature of the sources, when it comes to the crunch he still uses them as straightforward repositories of factual information: there is no attempt to introduce the idea that inscriptions and historians writing in antiquity had their own narratological and rhetorical intentions, which often colour what they say.

[30] *Aspects of Greek History 750–323* BC. *A Source-based Approach*. By Terry Buckley. Second edition. London, Routledge, 2010. Pp. xvii + 526. 13 maps. Hardback £70, ISBN: 978-0-415-54976-9; paperback £21.99, ISBN: 978-0-415-54977-6.

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