Roman Literature

All seven of these works on Roman Literature are about authors who were born in the first century B.C. Brian Krostenko's B★★*Cicero, Catullus and the Language of Social Performance*[1] advances the fundamental thesis that Latin words, particularly those that involve moral or aesthetic judgements, were constantly changing in sense, and that it is fatal for critics to ignore this obvious truth. There is no suggestion, of course, that this phenomenon is confined to Latin; indeed examples from English and other languages are also adduced. Also, Krostenko is hardly claiming to be the first to recognize that language develops. What is special about his treatment is the claim to have detected some pattern in the way words develop and to be able to show, for example, that Fordyce (on 43.8) and his followers are unjustified in assuming that certain Latin words (*facetus, salsus, uenustus, elegans, urbanus*) were used by Catullus and his circle as an irrecoverable private language. The truth, in Krostenko's opinion, is that Catullus was using the words not only in ways that could have been predicted, but also in ways that can readily be found in Cicero. Krostenko concedes that those words had become a group frequently found together, as they had not been at the time of Plautus; but he attributes that change to a novel need in Roman society to develop a vocabulary suited to an age more competitive in sophistication. Armed with this strategy, Krostenko examines Catullus' poetry and Cicero's rhetoric and the controversies they have provoked from a fresh and very thoroughly documented perspective. Richard F. Thomas's B★★*Virgil and the Augustan Reception*[2] and the very different collection of essays on Virgil edited by Sarah Spence and entitled ★★*Poets and Critics Read Vergil*[3] continue the flood of books on Virgil. Thomas begins with a long and detailed account of his theoretical position which is, briefly, a full acceptance of ambiguity and ambivalence in Virgil. There follow essays on 'Virgil and Augustus', 'Virgil and the poets: Horace, Ovid and Lucan', 'Other voices in Servius: schooldust of the ages', 'Dryden's Virgil and the politics of translation', 'Dido and her translators', 'Philology and textual cleansing', 'Virgil in a cold climate: fascist reception', 'Beyond the borders of Eboli: anti-fascist reception', and 'Critical end games'. Throughout, there is a harsh polemical tone, but the writing is clear and persuasive as Thomas relentlessly pursues his central preoccupation with the tendentious assumptions of predecessors and contemporaries (though there are writers he admires). His confidence in his own judgement seems, however, to sit uneasily with the lessons of his survey of the history of Virgilian reception. Spence's collection of essays and discussions, drawn from no fewer than nineteen contributors, is also full of considerations on how Virgilian interpretation and translation are necessarily trapped by the assumptions of their own time. Indeed, these two books, published in the same year, are themselves powerful examples of that point. Spence's book arises from a conference held in the University of Georgia in 1995 which brought together scholars, including Gian Biagio Conte, W. R. Johnson, Glen Most and Michael C. J. Putnam, and poets, including the late Joseph Brodsky, and Robert Fagles, Karl Kirchwey and Mark Strand. There are genuinely thought-provoking passages but they are not all properly developed, nor, understandably,

[1] *Cicero, Catullus and the Language of Social Performance*. By Brian A. Krostenko. University of Chicago Press, 2001. Pp. xvi + 360. Paper £25.00.

[2] *Virgil and the Augustan Reception*. By Richard F. Thomas, Cambridge U.P., 2001. Pp. xx + 324. £40.00.

[3] *Poets and Critics Read Virgil*. Edited by Sarah Spence. Yale U.P., New Haven, 2001. Pp. xx + 216. Cloth £22.50.

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/49.1.114 Published online by Cambridge University Press

is the collection fully focussed. There is also a peculiar confusion between two perfectly legitimate occupations, translating and creating. It will not do, as occurs more than once in this book, to describe Virgil as a translator of Homer. Michael Putnam is not only an important contributor to Spence's volume but he also is responsible for a book of his own, B★★*Horace's Carmen Saeculare*,[4] which is claimed to be the first book ever devoted to this one poem. Putnam is an unapologetic admirer of the poem which, he suggests, has suffered critical neglect because of its overt association with the Augustan state. After a brief first chapter which sets out to justify the poem and the project, Putnam proceeds to look at it from a wide range of perspectives in six further chapters on 'The Horatian Background', 'The *Carmen Saeculare*', a detailed line by line analysis of the poem, 'Horatian Hymn and the *Carmen Saeculare*', 'Horace and the Hellenic Heritage', 'The *Carmen Saeculare* and Latin Poetry', and finally 'The *Carmen Saeculare* and *Carmina*'. Propertius is represented by two books, neither of which is new. Margaret Hubbard's B★*Propertius*[5] is unchanged from the 1976 edition apart from the addition of six items to the bibliography. It was reviewed very favourably in this journal by A. C. F. Verity (*G&R* 22 [1975], 197); both the book and the review seem to have stood the test of time. Robert J. Baker's B★*Propertius I*[6] was originally published by the University of New England in 1990 but has now been re-published in the Aris & Phillips series with corrections of original misprints, improvements to the translation, revisions to the commentary, and additions to the bibliography, to take account of recent work. The first edition was not noticed by *G&R* and, since I have been unable to secure a copy of it, I cannot comment on the 'improvements'. It is fundamentally a sober account of what we know about Propertius and his poetic context with a translation and notes that will assist its target audience, 'students without knowledge of Latin' (15), to a basic understanding. Such readers are, however, very vulnerable and I should like to explore a single example taken from the very first line but not, I fear, unrepresentative. *cepit* is rendered 'took . . . captive'. The note suggests that this is 'the first statement of the comparison, often to be repeated throughout the book, of Propertius' status as a lover with that of a slave.' But, while it is perfectly true that that is how Propertius will be seen, and though *cepit* is consistent with that image, it does not require it and cannot, by itself, evoke it. The reader of Propertius' text will discover what is meant only later; and Propertius' artful delaying of the full image is here lost. A very brave attempt is made to catch Propertius' metre. In the hexameters, English word stress is used to bring out the final two feet, e.g. 'pride so unbending' or 'girls uncompliant' (1.3, 5), and this is surely right given the overwhelming preponderance of Propertius' hexameters which do indeed have that stress pattern, e.g. *lumina fastus* or *odisse puellas*. The Propertian pentameter, however, is so crafted that its natural word stress almost never coincides with the verse ictus, e.g. *cupidinibus, Amor pedibus*, *uiuere consilio* (1.2, 4, 6) whereas Baker's translation, by stressing the final dactyl and its following long syllable, produces a constant rhythmical repetition of stress pattern entirely foreign to the original, e.g. 'darts until them', 'stamp of his feet', 'reason or rhyme' which, incidentally, can hardly do for *consilio*. But I freely

[4] *Horace's Carmen Saeculare*. Ritual Magic and the Poet's Art. By Michael C. J. Putnam. Yale U.P., New Haven, 2000. Pp. x + 182. $30.00.

[5] *Propertius*. By Margaret Hubbard. Bristol Classical Paperbacks, 2001. Pp. x + 182. Paper £14.99.

[6] *Propertius I*. With an Introduction, Translation and Commentary by Robert J. Baker. Aris & Phillips, Warminster, 2000. Cloth £35, limp £16.50.

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/49.1.114 Published online by Cambridge University Press

concede that it is easier to pontificate on what should not have been done than to declare what should. John Henderson's B★*Telling Tales on Caesar*[7] offers a text, translation and very extensive commentary on that much neglected writer, Gaius Julius Phaedrus. Henderson's inimitable and indescribable style (perhaps a little toned down in this book) will entertain or exasperate according to taste. However, if there is an ancient writer suited to Henderson's style it may well be Phaedrus. Certainly, this book leaves the reader in no doubt about its author's enthusiasm for his subject nor, of course, about his learning. I am left with a particular worry; in Henderson's translation, Phaedrus' style seems to be little different from Henderson's. Do all translators render their authors in their own style, and is it more obvious with Henderson only because his style is so very idiosyncratic?

D. E. HILL

[7] *Telling Tales on Caesar*. Roman stories from Phaedrus. By John Henderson. Oxford U.P., 2001. £40.00.

Greek History

Pick up a copy of B★★*Spartan Reflections*[1] and you will find yourself gazing at a cover illustration of a bronze mirror so badly tarnished that its surface reflects nothing at all. A metaphor, surely, to remind us that our sources will never yield a clear picture of Sparta, that a mirage has no reflection, and that, even if we were to polish the bronze to a high shine, we would not discover Sparta, but only a mirror image of ourselves. As if to counteract this subliminal message, however, Paul Cartledge introduces his collection of essays by stressing the limitations of a 'po-mo perspective' and confessing to 'an ineradicable if sneaking desire' to uncover the real Sparta as well as 'the unquenchable hope that I will persuade others to share my point of view' (5). He has of course had more success than most on that score: his interpretation of Spartan history has over the last 25 years established itself as the closest thing we have to an orthodoxy. In publishing ten of his most influential papers in revised and updated form, accompanied by new prefaces and two previously unpublished lectures, Cartledge, with undiminished enthusiasm and accustomed fluency defends many of his views, above all the contention that Spartan society was shaped by the helot threat from the seventh century onwards. Criticism of this position is implicitly answered by reprints of 'The peculiar position of Sparta' (1980), 'A Spartan education' (1992, previously only available in a privately printed *Festschrift*), 'Comparatively equal' (1996), and 'Rebels and sambos' (1985); it is also explicitly addressed in the introduction to the latter, the longest of the prefaces (127–30). A new paper concludes that Spartan-helot relations further deteriorated *c.*500 B.C. as a result of shrinking Spartiate manpower (182–4), leading to increased militarization, as reflected in the decline of artistic production. The role of the hoplite reform in all this is reaffirmed with a defiant 'if I seem merely reactionary . . ., then so it must be' (153) in a paper previously published only in Italian which supersedes Cartledge's better-known article on the subject in *JHS* 97 (1977), not reprinted here. Three other famous early papers, on Spartan literacy (1978), pederasty (1981) and women (1981) do feature, alongside a recent piece on Sparta's demarcation of territory by religious means and a new piece on the 'doubly odd' kingship, which interestingly

[1] *Spartan Reflections*. By Paul Cartledge. Duckworth, London, 2001. Pp. xii + 276, with 10 plates. Paper £14.99.

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/49.1.114 Published online by Cambridge University Press