# GLOBAL STUDIES IN CLASSICAL RECEPTION

BAKOGIANNI, Anastasia / UNCETA GÓMEZ, Luis (edd.), *Classical Reception. New Challenges in a Changing World*. (Trends in Classics – Pathways of Reception 9.) Pp. xiv + 419, b/w & colour ills. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2024. Cased, £134.50, €149.95, US$170.99. ISBN: 978-3-11-077338-5.

DONIZEAU, Pauline / KHAJEHI, Yassaman / POTENZA, Daniela (edd.), *Greek Tragedy and the Middle East. Chasing the Myth*. Pp. xiv + 225, ills. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2024. Cased, £95 (Paper, £28.99). ISBN: 978-1-350-35569-9 (978-1-350-35573-6 pbk).

KENAAN, Vered Lev / ROSENMEYER, Patricia A. (edd.), *Classics Transformed in Jewish, Israeli, and Palestinian Receptions*. Pp. xvi + 423, b/w & colour ills. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2025. Cased, £119, US$155. ISBN: 978-0-19-887896-4.

TAMBAKAKI, Polina (ed.), *Brill's Companion to Classical Reception and Modern World Poetry*. (Brill's Companions to Classical Reception 26.) Pp. x + 442. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2023. Cased, €165. ISBN: 978-90-04-52925-0.

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In what has been called 'the global turn' in classical reception studies, increasing attention is being paid to engagements with Graeco-Roman antiquity outside of the Western world. These four edited volumes attest to exciting new developments in the field. Two collections, those edited by Bakogianni and Unceta Gómez and by Tambakaki, present readers with a survey of various receptions across the globe, and two further volumes, edited by Donizeau, Khajehi and Potenza and by Kenaan and Rosenmeyer, offer significant contributions to the understudied realm of reception in the Islamic and the Jewish worlds. All respond critically and conscientiously to current debates, sensitively attuned to issues of global conflict, decolonisation, social justice, technological advancements, climate change and worldwide political, economic and health crises that influence contemporary receptions of Graeco-Roman antiquity.

*Classical Reception: New Challenges in a Changing World*, edited by Bakogianni and Unceta Gómez, is the most wide-ranging volume, with case studies from across the world and across subdisciplines. It places the international crises of the early 2020s, above all COVID-19, at the centre of inquiry, questioning what concerns classical reception should be addressing in times of unprecedented catastrophe. The volume is structured in two parts with three sections each, with Part 1 foregrounding concepts, methods and intersections in classical reception and Part 2 turning to receptions responding to societal challenges. The chapters are impressively diverse in content, and while they present varying degrees of

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reflection upon reception as a discipline (as opposed to case studies of reception), cumulatively, they offer a thorough overview of the current state of the field, with an avowedly progressive orientation.

The first three chapters examine unconventional methods of classical reception. J. Weiner introduces two instances of 'palimpsestic' reception to exemplify the radical potential of adapting ancient literature from the margins. He illustrates how Hélisenne de Crenne's sixteenth-century proto-feminist translation of the *Aeneid* and the 2005 hip-hop song 'True' by Chamillionaire, featuring Paul Wall and Lil' Flip, 'stage interventions' (p. 36) to subversively overwrite the politics of their sources, demonstrating reception's potential to 'undermine and challenge Western imperialism, racism, misogyny, and classism' (p. 23). Unceta Gómez revisits C. Martindale's theory of the 'chain of receptions' (C. Martindale, *Redeeming the Text* [1993], p. 7). Examining examples from popular culture – the 2000 film *Gladiator* and *Wonder Woman* comics – he challenges the notion of linear transmission, rejecting an 'original core' of the classical (p. 41) and advocates making the audience the 'point of reception' (p. 50) in a dynamic and reciprocal model. Bakogianni's chapter maintains the focus on celluloid Classics, turning to *film noir* as a modern incarnation of Greek tragedy. Reversing the directionality of reception, she takes Clytemnestra as a 'critical lens' (p. 67) for examining the representation of women in Theo Angelopoulos's *Reconstruction* (1970) and Nicolas Winding Refn's *Only God Forgives* (2013). All three chapters advance radical new models for thinking not only of, but *with*, reception as a methodology.

The second group of chapters centralises the value of physical and digital archives for the scholar of reception. A. Sarkissian considers how archival resources shape our reconstruction of performances, focusing on Karel Dostal's Czech *Oresteia* (1947). She offers an interesting case study on the ideological mechanisms that influenced the play's production and audience reception in a communist and Christian context. While National Theatre funding dictated the shaping of Dostal's *Oresteia*, G. Van Steen illustrates in the following chapter how Karolos Koun defied the politics of Greek dictatorship to prioritise leftist artistic integrity. She explores Koun's notorious 1959 production of *Birds* and his controversial choice to accept funding from the American Ford Foundation, arguing, similarly to Sarkissian, that the logistics of staging ancient drama, derived from in-depth archival study, are necessary for gaining a full picture of productions. M. Williams's chapter shifts from stage to page to consider the appropriation of Narcissus, Adonis and Medusa as negative exempla in film trade papers and fan magazines. Drawing upon materials collated from physical and digital archives, Williams tracks the trends in invoking mythical figures in the media's fixation on normative beauty standards and underscores the impossibility of such a project without access to archival resources.

Picking up on the prominence of Hollywood in digital receptions, K.P. Nikoloutsos introduces two parodies from Latin American cinema, the Mexican *La vida íntima de Marco Antonio y Cleopatra* (1947) and Brazilian *Carnaval Atlântida* (1952), which satirise the veneration of the ancient world in 'sword and sandal' epic cinema. Nikoloutsos's study offers insight into 'the industrial mechanisms whereby the classical past is extracted from a hegemonic cinematic account' and becomes a 'mockable subject appropriate for a second feature' (p. 171). Continuing the reflection on intercultural translatability, Z. Giannopoulou explores Anne Carson's foreignising and domesticating translation strategies for presenting Cassandra in her 2009 *Agamemnon*. Offering a close reading of the metre, diction and form of Cassandra's speech, Giannopoulou takes Carson's Trojan prophetess as a liminal figure who 'reflects the translator's role as conduit of texts, languages, and cultures' (p. 195). The final chapter of Part 1, by A. Potter and G.D.M. Taietti, examines the role of classical objects in four Japanese manga, Hoshino Yukinobu's *The Legendary Musings of Professor*

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*Munakata* and *Professor Munakata's British Museum Adventure*, Jiro Taniguchi's *Guardians of the Louvre* and Hirohiko Araki's *Rohan at the Louvre*. They suggest that these manga, which highlight questions of repatriation, encourage reflection on 'the problematic appropriation of antiquity and ancient objects by modern states' (p. 232).

Part 2 begins with three chapters on re-negotiating identities. A. Kubic examines 'crip' receptions of the iconically damaged Venus de Milo statue in the photographs and documentary of disabled activist Mary Duffy, Marc Quinn's sculpture *Alison Lapper Pregnant* and the #BodyCan'tWait campaign. She discusses questions of fragmentation and wholeness and suggests that 'cripping' Venus 'allows us to challenge our assumptions about the form and value of the idealized "classical body" and to open up new discourses of disability' (p. 239). Social justice-driven scholarship continues in T.H.M. Gellar-Goad and C. Hines's chapter, one of several on pedagogical approaches to reception. The authors describe their 'Classics Beyond Whiteness' course at Wake Forest University, North Carolina, introduced in response to increased racial conflict in the USA. They offer a valuable example of successful integration of critical race theory and intersectional feminism in the teaching of the ancient world. M. Treu's following chapter introduces how the conservative approach to teaching ancient plays in Italian schools, as well as historical fascism and the influence of the Catholic Church, has led to the downplaying of salacious and political elements in productions of Aristophanes. While she proposes to examine recent treatments of Aristophanic choruses, they receive surprisingly little discussion in the chapter, leaving the author's concluding claim that choruses are 'one of the main reasons why ancient comedies are now staged more frequently, and often more successfully than the tragedies' (pp. 296–7), somewhat under-exemplified.

Two chapters are dedicated to Greek tragedy during the pandemic, with M. Deniz analysing two Theatre of War productions of *Antigone*. She shows how *Antigone in Ferguson* (2016–) powerfully evokes the Black Lives Matter movement in Antigone's outrage over the treatment of a dead body and how choruses of real nurses in *The Nurse Antigone* (2022–2023) facilitate community appreciation of healthcare workers. Bakogianni and D. Patrick's chapter recentres pedagogy in their discussion of a student production of *Iphigenia in Aulis* at the University of Waikato, New Zealand, amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The chapter brings together an academic and a creative practitioner's approaches to adapting Greek tragedy, addressing the challenges of making the story resonate in a cultural context far removed from ancient Athens.

The final chapters consider digital Classics for the wider public. H. Cameron explores adaptations of myth in the 2020 videogame *Hades*, demonstrating how freely reshaped classical myths allow players to 'create new cultural narratives' with the source texts (p. 357). He offers an interesting analysis of the developers' challenge of balancing mythic authenticity with sensitivity towards the taboos of Greek myth. The final chapter brings together animation and pedagogy with S. Nevin's overview of the Panoply Vase Animation Project's *Our Mythical Childhood* and *Locus Ludi*. Nevin discusses the development of animations based on ancient artefacts, combining scholarship with artistry to bring the ancient world to life for young learners. By animating the illustrations on ancient vases, she argues, the stories depicted are made more accessible and engaging for non-specialist viewers.

This volume is wide-ranging and forward-thinking, offering an exciting glimpse into the present and future of classical receptions studies. It embraces the digital age and encourages interdisciplinarity and conscientious scholarship underpinned by social justice and is undoubtedly a valuable resource for those seeking to keep pace with new developments in the field.

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*Brill's Companion to Classical Reception and Modern World Poetry*, edited by Tambakaki, presents more traditional studies. While similarly bringing together essays from different cultural contexts, it focuses on engagements with Graeco-Roman antiquity in twentieth-century poetry, occasionally dipping into the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries. It combines classical reception with world literature, foregrounding notions of identity, specificity and universalism and rejecting Eurocentrism and Anglocentrism. This collection, too, situates itself amid global crises of war and pandemic. Curiously, it is not organised thematically or geographically, but alphabetically according to language, although recurrent themes do emerge. While the collection has, as Tambakaki acknowledges, 'infinite absences' (p. 35) – notably and admittedly regrettably, any case studies from Africa or South America – the book provides 'polyphonic and kaleidoscopic' snapshots from across the world (p. 2).

The first chapter, by T.L. DeYoung, surveys Arabic receptions of Graeco-Roman antiquity. Following a concise overview of engagements with Greek poetry in the pre-modern period, it focuses on allusions to Greek and Roman icons, including Nero, Apollo, Orpheus, Odysseus, Venus and Adonis. While the case studies are not dealt with in close detail, they offer a useful introduction for students and researchers to influential poets like Sulaymān al-Bustānī and major poetic movements like the Diwan School and Apollo Group. A similar overview is offered by G. Ticotsky, whose Chapter 8 focuses on Graeco-Roman material imported into Hebrew poetry. Ticotsky examines 'the polarized relations between the two cultures' (p. 297) that Kenaan and Rosenmeyer centralise in their volume. Ticotsky discusses the politics of idolatry in Shaul Tchernichovsky's 'Before the Statue of Apollo' as a pivotal moment in Hebrew reception, followed by the Homeric echoes of Jacob Fichman, Lea Goldberg and Haim Gouri, arguing that Graeco-Roman elements have undergone a 'neutralization process' in their modernisation of Hebrew literature (p. 323), no longer signifying heresy. The following chapter by N. Gardini is the third study surveying poetic reception in a particular linguistic context, focusing on Italian lyric poetry. Gardini discusses the entanglement of the classical legacy with nationalism, modernism and tradition, from foundational scholarly poets like Giosuè Carducci through to the radical anti-Fascist 'Hermeticists' and the post-World War II 'anti-lyrical antidote' (p. 357) of Pier Paolo Pasolini, Edoardo Sanguineti and Andrea Zanzotto. He ends with a glance towards Giovanna Bemporad's translation of the *Odyssey*, and it is a pity that more space is not allocated to analysing her work in a chapter dominated, as the author notes, by male poets.

Three chapters focus on groups of poets working with a shared interest or characteristic. P. Rankine (Chapter 3) examines the 'often ambivalent relationship' (p. 113) between Black Anglophone writers of the US and Caribbean and the classical form. He examines short poems from the Black Atlantic that make direct references to classical texts, ideas and figures, carefully reflecting on what constitutes 'Blackness' for the poets discussed, beginning with Phillis Wheatley and moving through the 'New Negro' era and Black Arts Movement. This chapter offers an excellent introduction to the stakes of classicism for Black poets, demonstrating how Graeco-Roman antiquity is used as 'a way to challenge the status quo and to question expectations' (p. 138). Remaining with Anglophone poets, E. Vandiver (Chapter 4) discusses the Imagists of the early twentieth century with a rather more niche focus: their (mis)understanding of Greek lyric metre. Her chapter centralises Ezra Pound, Richard Aldington and F.S. Flint and their scorn for scholarly approaches to classical poetry. She shows that their claims of basing their free verse on Greek metre reveal they 'profoundly misunderstood the basic principles of Greek meter' (p. 143), and discusses how the nebulous concept of 'cadence' characterised their understanding of poetic rhythm. In the following chapter A. James turns to French poets with an interest in the Presocratics,

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examining the post-war writings of René Char, Paul Valéry, Yves Bonnefoy and Philippe Jaccottet. She discusses the importance of Heraclitus and Parmenides as 'philosopher[s] of the human condition' and 'poetic model[s]' (p. 185), whose debates shaped their understanding of poetry's relation to thought. Unlike most of the contributions in this volume, James's chapter is less focused on analysing poems than on the philosophical thought of poets, expressed in their prose writing.

Five chapters are dedicated to individual poets. In one of the volume's highlights M. Yeh discusses Graeco-Roman allusions in the writing of renowned Taiwanese poet and scholar Yang Mu (Wang Ching-hsien). Her chapter demonstrates Yang Mu's deep engagement with world literature, including Greek and Roman antiquity, exposing the 'cross-cultural intertextuality, creative rewriting, and cultural translation' (p. 83) he used in blending classical imagery with Chinese mythology and modernist aesthetics. Chapter 6, by C. Louth, focuses on Rainer Maria Rilke, discussing the Austrian poet's responses to classical artefacts from *New Poems* (1907–1908) to *Sonnets to Orpheus* (1922). Louth traces the influence of Friedrich Hölderlin and Friedrich Nietzsche on Rilke, particularly the distinction between the Apollonian and the Dionysian, and argues that 'concrete vestiges of ancient life' (p. 232) provided Rilke with inspiration for connecting the past to the present. In Chapter 11 F. Bonaddio discusses Federico García Lorca's engagement with classical culture in conjunction with Spanish folklore and the trends of the *Modernismo* movement. He argues that Graeco-Roman poetry, especially Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, had a 'mythic universality' (p. 396) that Lorca could mobilise in the creation of hybrid Andalusian poetry. The remaining two chapters zoom in to tracing specific influences on individual poets. Tambakaki (Chapter 7) explores the impact of John Keats's Hellenism on George Seferis, arguing that, while Seferis – generally averse to Romanticism – never explicitly referred to Keats's 'Grecian' poems, they nevertheless exerted a perceptible influence on the modern Greek poet. Working with essays, letters and diaries from the Seferis Archive, Tambakaki infers that Seferis saw Keats as 'a sort of English Romantic brother-poet', whose sensibilities to nature and language, art and life, caused 'a feeling of strong affinity and, at the same time, foreignness' in Seferis (p. 290). Finally, A.V. Yatsuhashi's Chapter 10 discusses the Japanese modernist poet Nishiwaki Junzaburō's fascinating use of Catullus. Through a close reading of 'Catullus' in Nishiwaki's collection *Ambarvalia*, Yatsuhashi proves that, far from rendering a straightforward translation, Nishiwaki collaged, edited, adapted, paraphrased and changed the tone of numerous Catullan poems in a strikingly experimental act of reception, suggesting that Catullus offered Nishiwaki a means of articulating a new kind of Japanese poetry.

The essays in this volume are, as A.E. Stallings summarises in the afterword, expansive, if somewhat disparate, and demonstrate how Graeco-Roman antiquity has provided fresh perspectives on poetry in diverse cultural contexts. While some chapters offer a deep dive into rather niche areas of inquiry, others provide a thorough orientation in a cultural or linguistic reception history. The collection has something for both specialists and general readers with an interest in poetry and classical reception.

Two new volumes address uses of the classical in the politically charged contexts of the Muslim and Jewish worlds. *Greek Tragedy and the Middle East: Chasing the Myth*, edited by Donizeau, Khajehi and Potenza, is a major contribution to an under-studied area of classical reception, dealing sensitively with contemporary socio-political crises across the Arabic, Persian and Turkish world. As F. Macintosh notes in the foreword, being the first volume to focus exclusively on the reception of Greek tragedy in South West Asia and North Africa (SWANA), it establishes the groundwork for significant developments in the field. Following an introduction that sets the reception of tragedy in the context of war, social transformation, migration, imperialism, ethnic conflict, religion, tradition and

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censorship, the book is divided into three parts spanning the colonial, independence and contemporary periods. Part 1 contains three contributions on translation and adaptation during the Nahḍa (cultural 'renaissance') of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; Part 2 includes four essays on twenty-first-century stagings that address pressing political issues through the lens of Greek tragedy; and Part 3 features four contributions that discuss the complex relations between the Arab world and Europe (particularly France), centralising questions of power dynamics and interculturality.

The first three chapters are concerned with how present Greek tragedy has been across the Arab world since the Nahḍa (1870–1950) and how its presence has been mediated through European translations and adaptations. R. Salazar surveys key issues of transcultural translation in Egypt, with brief but insightful case studies on *Oedipus Tyrannus*. He considers the challenges of translocating literature from Western antiquity into an Islamic cultural landscape with an established literary system. Referring to the translations of Ṭāhā Ḥusayn and Luwīs 'Awaḍ, he argues that by hybridising and 'grafting' tragedy into an Egyptian context translation becomes a means of cultural reclamation (p. 32). M. Carlson's chapter picks up on the reception history of *Oedipus Tyrannus* in the Levant, Egypt and the Arabic diaspora. While offering a helpful overview of major receptions of Sophocles (often mediated through French adaptations), the chapter suffers from several issues, most notably a muddled production timeline, such as the impossible suggestion that Alī Aḥmad Bākathīr's *Tragedy of Oedipus* (1949) was created 'in the wake of the 1967 defeat' (p. 49) and that Walīd Ikhlāṣī's *Oedipus Tyrannus* (1978) was produced 'just a year before' Bākathīr's (p. 45) and a 'full generation' before 'Alī Sālim's *The Comedy of Oedipus* (1970) (pp. 46–7), whose date is incorrectly given as 1979. Surprisingly, the chapter does not engage with any scholarship on Arabic receptions of *Oedipus* published since 2012, such as Raphael Cormack's *Oedipus on the Nile* (2017); and, just like for several chapters in the volume (5, 10, 11), the bibliography is a little sparse. The third chapter turns to Türkiye, where E. Letailleur traces the influence of ancient Greek theatre since 1942, bringing in archaeological as well as textual traditions, including recent excavations of an ancient theatre in İzmir. Drawing upon important archival work in Türkiye's National Theatre and the Istanbul Municipal Theatre, Letailleur provides a catalogue of plays based on Greek myth and discusses how they are transposed into the socio-cultural reality of Anatolia through politicisation and incorporation of folklore.

Part 2 focuses on how Greek tragedy has been deployed in twenty-first-century Islamic contexts to examine socio-political issues, centralising women's experiences. Potenza analyses 'Umar Abū Sa'ada's 2017 drama therapy workshop *Iphigenia*, Ḥanān al-Ḥājj 'Alī's Medean *Jogging: Theatre in Progress* (2012–) and Sulaymān al-Bassām's *IMedea* (2021–2022) in light of G. Agamben's biopolitical theory of the 'state of exception' (G. Agamben, *Homo Sacer* [1998], *State of Exception* [2005]). In these plays Euripides' tragedies work as a palimpsest over which refugee actresses inscribe their own experiences of being subject to the 'extra-legal authority' of Agamemnon- and Creon-like authorities (p. 77). The following chapter by Khajehi builds on the analysis of *Medea*'s role in shedding light on women's oppression, contrasting the tragedy's appropriation in Iran since the Islamic Revolution of 1979 with its performance history in Lebanon, both set against the background of revolutionary protest, the criminalisation of abortion and stigmatisation. Khajehi draws upon interviews with theatre artists, offering valuable insight into the creators' perspectives, although paraphrasis of these interviews occasionally dominates to the extent that the argument loses clarity. R. Zandieh continues the examination of gendered oppression in Iranian adaptations, turning to reworkings of Sophocles' *Antigone*. Like Potenza, Zandieh draws subtly upon Agamben's biopolitics, discussing Antigones who 'politically subjectivize' themselves in the face of totalitarian power (p. 111) in Popak

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Hidji's *Antigone in Wonderland* (2010), Homayoun Ghani-Zadeh's *Antigone* (2011) and Ali Razi's *Antigone* (2018). Zandieh argues that *Antigone* provides an aesthetic through which, due to the 'apparent political neutrality of the tragic material, Iranian artists find a way to circumvent censorship and express criticism of the totalitarian power of the state' (p. 123). In the final chapter of this section A. Pacifico turns to Haytam 'Abd al-Razzāq and Célie Pauthe's Iraqi-French collaboration, *Looking for Oresteia* (2018). Thoroughly contextualised amidst Iraq's political history, he offers a compelling analysis of the directors' clash over the politicisation of their trilogy, including Pauthe's controversial proposal to draw upon Shiite rituals in *Libation Bearers* and the explicit analogy between the trial of Orestes in *Eumenides* and the 2018 Iraqi legislative elections. Pacifico reflects upon the differing approaches of political specificity and universality in adapting Greek tragedy as well as the complexities of Arab-European collaboration.

In Part 3 E. Thiébot introduces an Israeli case study, focusing on Hanoch Levin's satirical use of Greek tragedy in his politically charged *The Lost Women of Troy* (1982, drawing on *Trojan Women*), *The Lamenters* (2000, reworking *Agamemnon*) and *Murder* (1997, loosely emulating tragic conventions), which unapologetically critique Israel's violence against Lebanon and Palestine. Thiébot argues that, while the plays were politically impactful when performed in Israel, the political dimension was 'neutralized' when staged in France (p. 159). The conversation about staging Greek tragedy surrounding the Palestine–Israel conflict in France continues in A. Chabrat-Kajdan's chapter on the Palestinian National Theatre and Théâtre des Quartiers d'Ivry's *Antigone* (2011). She analyses the subtle 'palestinazation' of *Antigone* (p. 172), directed by Adel Hakim, where one Sophoclean ode is replaced with Mahmoud Darwish's poem, 'On This Earth', exchanging Thebes for Palestine. The chapter offers an important discussion of how European creative partnerships with Palestine, by announcing a political stance on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, inevitably politicise tragic performances. Donizeau extends the focus on European adaptations that centralise Middle Eastern concerns, examining Milo Rau's *Orestes in Mosul* (2019) and returning to *Looking for Oresteia*. Donizeau interrogates the complicated presupposition of classical 'universalism', especially when made by European artists looking to formerly colonised regions, where using Greek tragedy may become a '*mise en abyme* of the Western gaze' (p. 183). This thought-provoking chapter prompts readers to reconsider the position of Europe on the international stage, demonstrating how '[i]nterculturality does not neutralize the conflict, but displaces it' (p. 195). The final chapter by O. Fertat shifts attention to the Maghreb, analysing Zoubeir Ben Bouchta's Moroccan tragedy *Tingitanos* (2015), which unites Greek and Berber mythology around the legendary confrontation between Heracles and Antaeus. Fertat situates the discussion against Morocco's forgotten Roman past and illustrates how Ben Bouchta challenges the colonial dynamic by placing Maghrebi figures on a par with the Greek hero. *Tingitanos* freely reworks Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* (which is, curiously, never named as a source by Fertat) and, in Ben Bouchta's hands, becomes an examination of 'various modern avatars of Hercules: dictatorships, multinationals, unbridled capitalism, merchants of war' (p. 205).

The volume, which ends with a brief afterword reflecting on the necessary selectivity of the case studies presented and further areas for investigation, is a welcome contribution to reception studies. Even if some entries could be a touch more polished, the volume undoubtedly lays the groundwork for much-needed research on engagements with Classics in SWANA.

The final book reviewed, *Classics Transformed in Jewish, Israeli, and Palestinian Receptions*, is predominantly focused on Jewish case studies, although the volume recognises the importance of situating Israeli receptions in conversation with those of Palestine. While *Greek Tragedy and the Middle East* is an accessible entry-level collection

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for readers new to the SWANA context, Kenaan and Rosenmeyer's collection expects a higher level of pre-existing knowledge. It has the advantage of drawing upon a wealth of extant scholarship, with more widely available sources. It addresses major themes that have captivated Jews and Palestinians engaging with Graeco-Roman classics, such as wandering and exile, the search for homecoming, conflict and empire, as well as factors that have shaped this reception, including historical tensions between Hellenism and Hebraism, the impact of the Holocaust, the development of Jewish nationalism, and the Haskalah ('enlightenment') and its urges towards European assimilation. The volume focuses on twentieth-century receptions, and it is as much a study of Jewish scholars working on the Classics as it is of Hebrew, Yiddish and Palestinian Arabic translations and adaptations of classical literature.

Kenaan and Rosenmeyer's introduction outlines the aim of examining antiquity 'through the prism of the Jewish question' (p. 1). They delineate the complex identity politics intertwined in the reception of Graeco-Roman antiquity, especially the simultaneous developments of the diasporic use of classical ideals to 'gain cultural access to modern Europe' and the Zionist appropriation to formulate 'a unique modern Jewish identity in opposition to other nations' (p. 4). The first six chapters centralise Jewish identity, exploring how scholars' heritage has impacted their approaches to the classical. Rosenmeyer opens the volume with a study of two German students, her father Thomas G. Rosenmeyer and Martin Ostwald, in a Canadian internment camp. Drawing on letters, memoirs, diaries and a Latin elegy composed by the men while interned, Rosenmeyer considers how their imprisonment might have shaped their later scholarly approaches to Classics and reflects on Classics' role 'as a path to humaneness' in times of crisis (p. 51). This is followed by Kenaan's chapter on Shlomo Dykman's Hebrew translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* as a rewriting of his own journey between two homelands, Poland and Israel. Kenaan highlights how Dykman encodes the flight from Troy with his own experiences fleeing Nazi-occupied Poland, drawing attention to translational strategies that align Virgil's Trojans with Holocaust survivors (*she'erit hapleta*), ideologically transforming the *Aeneid* into a 'Judaeo-Roman text' (p. 66). In a densely allusive chapter, which may pose a challenge to non-specialist readers, S. Goldhill offers a sweeping tour of how rabbinical tradition took shape in and against Hellenism from Greek antiquity through to the twentieth century. Goldhill ends by contrasting P. Vidal-Naquet's and M. Finley's writings on Josephus to exemplify how the 'shifting dynamics of institutional anti-Semitism significantly frame twentieth-century academic Jewish response to classical antiquity' (p. 91).

The following three chapters focus on scholars whose classical engagements intersect with philosophy. J.I. Porter analyses French intellectual Rachel Bespaloff's essay *De l'Iliade*, considering how her staunch Zionism influenced her reading of Homer, and endeavours to prove that Bespaloff was not responding to Simone Weil's essay, *L'Iliad ou la poème de la force,* despite remarkable similarities in their comparisons of Homer and the Hebrew Bible. G. Shahar turns to Odyssean receptions, arguing that the Homeric epic became a touchstone for the trope of the 'wandering Jew'. He focuses on receptions of Odysseus' encounter with the sirens in the writings of Franz Kafka, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, then analyses Erich Auerbach's and Emmanuel Levinas' approaches to Odysseus' homecoming, which they compare with the biblical journeys of Abraham. Shahar concludes that these writers' interpretations were influenced by their personal experiences of 'a journey without return' (p. 150). Finally, M. Leonard examines how H. Arendt's controversial Hellenism was 'profoundly marked by the experience of the Shoah' (Holocaust) (p. 164). She analyses a famous passage in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, where Arendt analogises the experience of Jews in concentration camps to that of ancient slaves, reevaluating Arendt's attempt to find a 'Greek solution' to the

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problems of Jewish modernity (p. 163). These chapters demonstrate how Jewish heritage and traumatic experience are inextricably intertwined with scholars' thinking about Graeco-Roman antiquity.

Part 3 examines translations into Yiddish, Ladino and Arabic. D. Shalev considers the shifting perceptions of Yiddish as a 'sub-language' for philosophy and literature (p. 196) through a study of two early twentieth-century Polish translators of Plato, Yankev Milkh and N. Shaynberg. Providing a close reading of their translations, she demonstrates the 'intellectual tug of war' between Shaynberg's 'Old World' rejection of idolatry and Milkh's 'exilic but liberating New World' approach that accepted polytheistic ancient cultures (p. 187). R.H. Armstrong contrasts the Ashkenazi experience of the Freud family (drawing on 'A Disturbance of Memory on the Acropolis') and the Sephardic experience of Moshe Ha-Elion (gesturing, briefly, towards Ha-Elion's Ladino translation of Homer). Armstrong offers a counterfactual re-imagining of encounters with the 'Shabatopolis' (Jewish Salonica), but in his deliberately anachronistic and creative approach it becomes unclear what is factual and what is counterfactual. Kenaan and A. Nubani's more grounded chapter offers the book's first detailed study of Palestinian reception. They discuss 1948 as marking the end of 'Jewish homelessness' but the beginning of the Nakba (p. 237) and explore how the destruction of the Palestinian homeland is grafted onto Virgil's memorialisation of an exilic past in Maḥmūd al-Ghūl's 'Arabisation' (*ta'rīb*) of the *Aeneid*. This thoughtful chapter exemplifies the editors' aim of bringing together Jewish and Palestinian perspectives.

Part 4 considers secularisation and cultural assimilation in Hebrew literature. Y. Cohen examines the Europeanising of Jewish literature in the Haskalah movement, focusing on the role of Hebrew periodicals in publishing translations of Graeco-Roman literature 'to elevate and universalize their own national artistic output' (p. 270). He argues that the introduction of a classical legacy into Hebrew culture was part of the Zionist effort to create a modern Jewish state, exemplified by the translation of 57 books of classical authors between 1920 and 1948. Similar themes are identified in the following chapter by the late A. Dykman, who surveys the reception of classical literature in Hebrew since the eighteenth century. Dykman offers a helpful overview of growing openness towards Graeco-Roman literature, which would serve as an accessible introduction for new students of Hebrew reception. T. Sebba-Elran shifts the focus away from translation to Jewish folktales about Alexander the Great, examining two corpora of materials, namely nineteenth- and twentieth-century anthologies and holdings of the Israel Folktale Archives. She analyses the variations in these intercultural legends to question what Alexander represented for Jewish audiences, noting the influences of Zionism and Islamic tales in shaping folktale ideology.

The final three chapters compare Israeli and Palestinian poetry through a Mediterranean framework. G. Loi reads two sets of Israeli poems reflecting on archaeological ruins, by Dan Pagis and Haim Gouri, against the ideological background of IDF-backed excavations at the Bar Kochba Caves (1960–1961). Loi argues that both poets treat ruination as 'an admonitory, universal symbol of decline' (p. 327) and observes that allusions to the Arab past of Israel serve as a sombre warning against cyclical oppression and ruination. K. Aslah and H. Dorchin return to Homeric receptions with a juxtaposition of the Iliadic and Odyssean poems by Mahmoud Darwish, the self-proclaimed 'Trojan poet' of Palestine, and Israeli poet Meir Wieseltier, who mobilises Homer as 'a living repository of memory' (p. 372) in a radical critique of Israeli nationalism. Aslah and Dorchin show how Darwish and Wieseltier 'establish a poetics of the defeated that confronts modern crisis' (p. 376) by harnessing the poetics and politics of the epic tradition. Closing the volume, D. Behar examines the poetry of Israel Pincas and Walid Khazendar, arguing that both draw on the classical to situate Israeli and Palestinian politics within 'transhistorical horizons' that resonate across the Mediterranean (p. 380). The chapters in this section all draw attention to

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the intertwined *nostos* and exile in the violent history and present of Israel and Palestine, which poets have endeavoured to make sense of through the lens of antiquity.

While predominantly focused on receptions in Hebraic Israel and the Jewish diaspora, the most thought-provoking chapters in the volume bring together Jewish and Palestinian works and viewpoints. The contributions are thoroughly situated in their historical and literary contexts and are admirably attuned to political sensitivities.

All four volumes reviewed offer scholars of classical reception important thinking points for the future of the discipline amidst the challenges of our globalising world. Against the background of ongoing international crises, the contributors remind us not only of how Classics has been appropriated in national ideological projects, but of how artists have drawn upon the classical to speak out against political violence and to the lessons that can be learned from antiquity. In sum, I recommend these books to all readers interested in the intersection of ancient literature and the modern world.

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