Reception

A recent special issue of the *Classical Receptions Journal* marked the twentieth anniversary of the publication of Charles Martindale's *Redeeming the Text. Latin Poetry and the Hermeneutics of Reception*.[1] Although the rich and various examples of classical reception scholarship that have appeared over the past two decades are by no means all cut from Martindale's cloth, the 'seminal' and 'influential' nature of his study is surely not in doubt.[2] It is fitting, then, that this issue's round-up of reception publications focuses on a small cluster of recent studies that, like *Redeeming the Text*, explore the complex reception histories of Latin literature, and do so with a keen eye to the theoretical underpinnings of such scholarship; fitting, too, that our first title, *Romans and Romantics*, features Charles Martindale among its editors.[3] The eighteen essays in this collection in fact range well beyond literature, with visual culture and the physical fabric of the city of Rome playing an important role; but encounters with Latin texts are a central component of the book, and the overarching theoretical and methodological framework for examining them bears the clear imprint of Martindale's reception manifesto. The introduction emphasizes the importance of remaining alert to the two-way dynamics of reception: not only do the contributors explore the ways in which Romanticism was shaped by antiquity, but they also examine the impact that Romanticism has had on subsequent views of antiquity. Although the idea of reception as a two-way process is often parroted, its implications are not always interrogated and explained so carefully as they are here. Most valuably, *Romans and Romantics* acknowledges and confronts the overly simple 'myths' that attach to our ideas of both the classical *and* the Romantic, showing how notions of what Romanticism 'is' are just as contingent and subject to distortion as those of the classical. So, for example, Timothy Saunders' fascinating chapter on 'Originality' successfully challenges the assumption that Romanticism was in some way antithetical or inimical to Roman studies, and that it was responsible for the lasting negative impression of Latin (literary) culture as imitative and inferior. Instead, he argues, 'Romantic notions of originality' (85) were more complex than we might assume, and could certainly find space for recognizing and celebrating Rome's creative use of its Greek heritage. Other chapters offer useful studies of the 'varied, vital, and mutually sustaining' (v) interactions between Romantics and Romans, including accessible accounts of key authors such as Shelley, Byron, and de Staël. Particularly worthwhile, though, is the final section, 'Receptions'. By focusing on post-Romantic material, it lays bare our own modern preconceptions of the Romantic movement and encourages contemplation of how receptions of Romanticism are as important as receptions of Rome. Ralph Pite's excellent chapter on Thomas Hardy, for example, shows how this author, and many of his late nineteenth-century contemporaries, might be disappointed by visiting Rome: their expectations of the city, shaped by their own Romantic inheritance, could be

[1] *Classical Receptions Journal* 5.2 (June 2013); Charles Martindale, *Redeeming the Text. Latin Poetry and the Hermeneutics of Reception* (Cambridge, 1993).

[2] Lorna Hardwick, 'Editor's Note: *Redeeming the Text* – Twenty Years On', *Classical Receptions Journal* 5.2 (2013), 167–8.

[3] *Romans and Romantics*. Edited by Timothy Saunders, Charles Martindale, Ralph Pite, and Mathilde Skoie. Classical Presences. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. xxii + 454. 8 figures. Hardback £89, ISBN: 978-0-19-958854-1.

undermined by the revelation of the modernized capital of a newly unified Italy, 'threaten[ing] the post-Romantic traveller's cherished idea of 'an eternal city frozen in time'' (328).

Pite's delineation of modernity's 'troubled relation to the past' (329), of the uneasy and perhaps unexpected sensation that, even when in Rome, one may not be 'at home' in the classical past, resonates with another recent Classical Presences volume: *Two Thousand Years of Solitude. Exile After Ovid*.[4] In this unique and fascinating collection of essays, edited by Jennifer Ingleheart, the reception history of Ovid's exilic poetry is approached from a range of directions. As the 'archetypal exile', Ovid has been a rich source of inspiration, 'uniquely susceptible to being adapted to a wide range of aesthetic, intellectual, and political agendas' (9). Twelve of the seventeen essays examine poetic receptions, showing how poets including Dante, Petrarch, du Bellay, Milton, Marvell, and Derek Mahon explore their own experiences of 'dislocation and alienation' (2), whether literal or metaphorical, by reading and reshaping the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*. Particularly noteworthy is Duncan F. Kennedy's chapter on 'Pushkin's Ovidian Exile', which expertly outlines the Russian writer's debt to Ovid in his own poetry written in exile, and throughout his poetic career. Like Saunders in *Romans and Romantics*, Kennedy reminds us that imitation need not equate to inferiority, for it was by 'creatively imitating the tropes of exile' that Pushkin 'fashioned for himself a new identity' as a poet (206). Another recurrent theme of the collection is how Ovid's exile poetry seems to provide tantalizing personal access to the poet. This access may be illusory, yet it has fired the imagination of subsequent writers in various ways, particularly the prose authors under consideration in the collection's five remaining essays. The uncertain nature of the crime that led to Ovid's banishment, the *carmen et error* (*Tristia* 2.1), is – as Helen Lovatt's contribution shows – perfect material for a detective story. The novelistic versions of Ovid's exile by David Wishart and Benita Kane Jaro fruitfully pursue both 'history and detective fiction. . .along a continuum of argument, narrativity, conspiracy, and speculation' (256), themselves becoming models of how texts such as the exilic poetry are read and picked over in an attempt to unlock a historical mystery.

In a similar vein, Maggie Kilgour's *Milton and the Metamorphosis of Ovid* (which builds on Charles Martindale's early study of Milton and ancient epic[5]) also presses us to think about how later receptions of a text can refocus our attention on our own readings of the ancient text itself.[6] And, again, the important creative potential of imitation is a central theme: Kilgour argues that by recognizing that 'for Ovid, belatedness is a source of power, as imitation is the path to innovation and liberation' (xiii), we can better understand the use that Milton makes of him; just as Ovid consciously metamorphosed past literature in his own works, so Milton (and other artists) delight in 'display[ing] their own Ovidian powers by putting a new spin on old stories' (xiv). Kilgour

[4] *Two Thousand Years of Solitude. Exile After Ovid*. Edited by Jennifer Ingleheart. Classical Presences. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. xvi + 384. Hardback £74, ISBN: 978-0-19-960384-8.

[5] Charles Martindale, *John Milton and the Transformation of Ancient Epic* (London, 1986).

[6] *Milton and the Metamorphosis of Ovid*. By Maggie Kilgour. Classical Presences. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. xxiii + 373. Hardback £74, ISBN: 978-0-19-958943-2; paperback £30, ISBN: 978-0-19-871712-6.

proceeds to demonstrate Milton's creative engagement with his Latin model through detailed readings of his early poetry, and of course *Paradise Lost*, arguing for the particular importance of Ovid's depiction of Narcissus to the latter. The final chapter, an analysis of Milton's late *Samson Agonistes*, then provides a valuable complement to Ingleheart's collection. Kilgour shows how Milton drew heavily on Ovid's late poetry – particularly *Tristia* 2 – in order to explore his concerns over how his own poetry would be read in the future. Ovidian scholarship has already demonstrated the richness of this long poem as an ancient 'manifesto for reception', through its argument that faulty *readings* of his poems were responsible for Ovid's exile, rather than faulty authorship. Kilgour utilizes these findings to great effect to show how Milton, too, attempts to counter potential misreading by 'offer[ing] us, as Ovid did his readers, the authorized version of the meaning of his words and life that will be perpetuated through later generations' (316) – all the while remaining anxiously aware, like Ovid, that such control over future readings remains impossible to achieve. Ingleheart's promise that Ovid's exilic literature is 'good to think with' (16) is thus upheld by Kilgour's fascinating account of Milton.

From Ovid we move to another author who was central to *Redeeming the Text*. The reception of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, briefly sketched out by Martindale, is afforded a detailed and sharply focused study in Edward Paleit's *War, Liberty, and Caesar. Responses to Lucan's Bellum Ciuile, ca. 1580–1650*.[7] Though this narrowly conceived historical (and geographical, for the book is concerned specifically with England) focus might appear too niche to attract a wide readership, Paleit explains the importance of these decades: in this 'age of Lucan', the author was 'frequently, prominently, and intensely studied, used, translated, adapted, and indeed quarrelled over' (11), resulting in two full-length translations, several lengthy historical poems written in imitation of the *Pharsalia*, and numerous uses of extracts from it in a wide range of literature. Paleit's study of this intensive engagement with Lucan is similar to *Romans and Romantics* in its caution against too readily accepting lazy or misguided stereotypes of a particular historical period and its use of antiquity. In this case, although we might assume that the burgeoning republican movement of the first half of the seventeenth century appropriated Lucan's Republican epic for its own ends, at the expense of all other readings, Paleit argues that this is only one facet of early modern responses to the poem. He demonstrates that many important readings of Lucan at this time were not primarily concerned with its politics, but were rather attracted by other features of the *Bellum Civile* – its emotional register, for example, or its depiction of the supernatural, as in Ben Jonson's admiration for Lucan's 'boldest and most horrid' depiction of Erictho (cited at 163). This is not to say that political interpretations of Lucan are not important to Paleit's study, but he does well to remind us of the kaleidoscopic array of readings that can characterize even a fairly limited historical period: the 'age of Lucan' is a vigorous and fertile time because of its variety, not its uniformity.

Another welcome feature of *War, Liberty, and Caesar* is its focus on how the reading habits and practices of these early moderns – shaped by the humanist educational

[7] *War, Liberty, and Caesar. Responses to Lucan's Bellum Ciuile, ca. 1580–1650*. By Edward Paleit. Classical Presences. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. viii + 338. Harback £70, ISBN: 978-0-19-960298-8.

curriculum, and by the influence of key texts such as Aristotle's *Poetics* – determined their response to Lucan. In general, classical reception studies could often take better account of how such contexts shape readings of ancient texts, whether this means confronting the particularities of a given historical period or sharpening our awareness of the routes by which classical texts reach most readers, in most places and times: that is, through translation. Although the body of scholarship on translations of classical texts is growing fast,[8] our final title for consideration, Stuart Gillespie's *English Translation and Classical Reception. Towards a New Literary History* carves out its own space as an impassioned and deeply engaging study which is to be thoroughly recommended to a wide readership.[9] Gillespie does not need to argue particularly hard for how influential classical literature has been on Western literary traditions, but, he believes, we have been far less ready to acknowledge and understand the vital role that translations have played in connecting ancient texts with modern authors and readers – and, crucially, in making them *belong* to a vernacular tradition. This book considers a wide variety of modern poets and translators, from Shakespeare to Dryden, Wordsworth to Ted Hughes, in a lucid and accessible style: even 'difficult' poets are explained clearly, as in the fascinating discussion of the far-reaching effects of Ezra Pound's versions of Propertius. In just a few pages, Gillespie shows how Pound's work helped to challenge prevailing ideas 'of what translation is or can be' (24), prompted readers and scholars to revisit the poetry and read it anew, allowed Pound himself to forge his own poetic persona, and 'changed the possibilities for twentieth-century poetry and translation more widely' (28). Like *Redeeming the Text*, then, this study's assertive claims for 'a new literary history' are relevant beyond the sub-field of (Latin) literary receptions; and while it may not be as ground-breaking as Martindale's study, it serves as another potent reminder of how the lessons of classical reception study have consequences for anyone involved in the study of the classical world.

JOANNA PAUL
Joanna.Paul@open.ac.uk
doi:10.1017/S0017383514000151

General

Originally published in Dutch in 1995, *Antiquity. Greeks and Romans in Context* by Frederick Naerebout and Henk Singor aims to provide (in its own modest words) a 'reasonably comprehensive one-volume' overview of the Greco-Roman world for

[8] See, for example, Lorna Hardwick, *Translating Words, Translating Cultures* (London, 2000); Aleka Lianeri and Vanda Zajko (eds.), *Translation and the Classic. Identity as Change in the History of Culture* (Oxford, 2008). See also *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English* (4 vols, Oxford, 2005–10; Gillespie co-edited volume 3), alongside *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*, which commenced in 2012 with the volume on 1660–1790, edited by David Hopkins and Charles Martindale.

[9] *English Translation and Classical Reception. Towards a New Literary History*. By Stuart Gillespie. Malden, MA, and Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Pp. x + 208. Hardback £75, ISBN: 978-1-4051-9901-8.