

SENECA IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

F. CITTI, C. NERI: *Seneca nel Novecento. Sondaggi sulla fortuna di un 'classico'*. (Lettere Classiche, Ricerche 97; Centro Studi La permanenza del Classico, Ricerche 1.) Pp. 271, pls. Rome: Carocci editore, 2001. Paper, €15.49. ISBN: 88-430-1979-1.

This study of the reception of Seneca in the twentieth century is divided into four parts: 1. Seneca as Moralist; 2. Seneca as Dramatist; 3. Seneca as Character; and 4. Seneca on the Internet.

In Part 1, after noting the familiar ambivalence about Seneca as philosopher, C. & N. examine Spanish Senecanism (María Zambrano, Juan Carlos García Borrón, H. G. Alexander), the Christian Senecanism of Gustave Thibon, Concetto Marchesi's treatment of his 'dramatic style', the exploitation of his maxims and sententiae by such writers as Alain De Botton and Günter Grass.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Part 2, on Seneca as dramatist, is the longest in the book, and it is here that C. & N. find most substantial evidence of Seneca's continuing influence. They begin with the revival of stage performances, most notably the Rome production of *Thyestes* in 1953 with Vittorio Gassman as Atreus. Although C. & N. place particular emphasis on Italian productions, there is also detailed discussion of Peter Brook's *Oedipus*, and substantial acknowledgement of productions in France, Germany, and the USA. The list they offer is by no means complete.

There follow discussions of T. S. Eliot (both as essayist and poet) and of Senecan tyrant figures in Eugene O'Neill (*The Emperor Jones*), Albert Camus (*Caligula, Le Malentendu*), and Michael Ayrton (*The Maze Maker*). Of particular interest is the discussion of twentieth-century adaptations of *Phaedra*, *Medea*, and *Thyestes*. *Phaedra*, it seems, was the tragedy which appealed most, with reinterpretations by D'Annunzio, Unamuno, Cvetaeva, Yourcenar, and Hugo Claus. *Medea* was rewritten by Jean Anouilh, Jean Vauthier, José Bergamín, and Alejo Carpentier (these two Spanish versions linking Medea and Jason with Columbus and the conquistadors). *Thyestes* was adapted by Antonin Artaud (a version which was never performed and was subsequently lost) and Hugo Claus (a powerful version much influenced by Artaud's theatre of cruelty).

Turning from Seneca's works to Seneca himself, C. & N. quote Don Fowler's discussion of the difference between 'reading texts' and 'reading people', an important distinction in the case of Seneca, a man important both as a creator of texts and as a character in texts. The context for the representation of Seneca in the twentieth century was frequently the encounter between Christianity and Paganism, a context suggested by the tradition of a correspondence between Seneca and St Paul. C. & N. can cite a number of novels which focus upon Agrippina or Nero or Piso's conspiracy in which Seneca plays a part as well as Hubertus zu Löwenstein's *Seneca, Kaiser ohne Purpur, Philosoph, Staatsman und Verschwörer* (1975), an autobiographical novel. Also important are the hostile representations in both Robert Graves's *I Claudius* and *Claudius the God* and Mika Waltari's *Lauso il Cristiano*.

C. & N. begin their final chapter by noting the all-pervasiveness of the internet at the end of the twentieth century (and the beginning of the twenty-first). They also note the difficulty of untangling references to Roman Seneca from references to the Seneca Indians of upstate New York. Although this section of the book is perhaps the most innovative (the internet figures rarely in works on the reception of antiquity), it is perhaps the least likely to be of enduring value, primarily because the internet is such

an amorphous, mutable beast. (URLs for all sites are listed at the end of the chapter.) C. & N. note references to Seneca in various online encyclopaedias (almost all in English), some produced by reputable scholarly organizations, some of dubious value. They note Seneca's association with sites concerned with philosophy, with drama, with history, and with vegetarianism. More useful to readers of this journal are likely to be sites containing texts and bibliographies, most notably Latin Library (for texts) and the Katholieke Universiteit, Nijmegen (for bibliography of Senecan tragedy). They also note a number of essays on Seneca in online journals, again of mixed quality. Finally, they note sites which contain, among other things, courses on Seneca's *Medea* (both in French), an Italian hypertext version of *De breuitate uitae*, and another (from Louisiana) designed to enable accelerated reading of the *Letters to Lucilius*. The chapter concludes with sites containing collections of Senecan maxims.

The book is undoubtedly a useful one and a valuable starting point for more detailed research on recent Senecan reception.

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UNFAIR TO WILAMOWITZ?

I. GILDENHARD, M. RUEHL (edd.): *Out of Arcadia. Classics and Politics in Germany in the Age of Burckhardt, Nietzsche and Wilamowitz*. (Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies Supplement 79.) Pp. viii + 208, ill. London: Institute of Classical Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London, 2003. Paper, £45. ISBN: 0-900587-90-3.

The volume began as papers delivered at a one-day conference in Princeton on 9 April 1999 on 'The Gods of Greece and their Prophets: Liberal and Illiberal Moments in German Classical Scholarship since Burckhardt and Nietzsche'. It seeks to make anglophone monoglots aware of earlier German scholarship. Translations of German citations are regularly provided. Its danger is that because they cannot control German sources readers will accept what is written as truth. Among scholars discussed are Jacob Burckhardt, Albrecht Dieterich, Werner Jaeger, Nietzsche, Franz Overbeck, Richard Reitzenstein, Hermann Usener, and Wilamowitz. Ignorance of essential sources (e.g. some twenty recent editions of scholarly letters) astounds. No proven authority in the subject matter of the conference participated nor apparently vetted the papers. The results are not unexpected. Exceptions are Lionel Gossman on Jacob Burckhardt and Martin Ruehl on a politically incorrect essay of Nietzsche on the Greek state. A selective *index nominum* omits much. Bibliography is scattered in notes. A critical collection of English language translations and contributions lacks.

Among the more bizarre chapters is Egon Flaig's (pp. 105–27) condemning Wilamowitz's *Glaube der Hellenen*, which he repeatedly dates to 1928, as anticipating Nazi ideology. The title is better 'What the Greeks Believed' than 'The Faith of the Hellenes' (p. 112). Yes, one can find occasional inconsistencies and strong statements of long-held views, but the octogenarian author was dictating from his deathbed and never corrected a proof. Wilamowitz's view that most men believe what they are told and but a few question accepted tradition is condemned (p. 115) as 'an elitist extremism', implying 'a social dichotomy between an elite endowed with superior intellectual abilities, and a large mass lacking them'. Surely Socrates, Plato, and