

Russianists, a greater engagement with them would have made the book more directly relevant to Classicists more generally.

Wadham College, Oxford

PHILIP ROSS BULLOCK
philip.bullock@wadham.ox.ac.uk

REACTIONS TO LATE ANTIQUITY

SCHOTTENIUS CULLHED (S.), MALM (M.) (edd.) *Reading Late Antiquity*. (Bibliothek der klassischen Altertumswissenschaften, Neue Folge, 2. Reihe, 156.) Pp. 267, colour ill. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2018. Cased, €48. ISBN: 978-3-8253-6787-9.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X1800210X

The period between AD 250 and 750 is not just a time of decline and fall: the redefinition of the time span as Late Antiquity emphasised the cultural liveliness of the period even as the structures of the state were disappearing. This volume captures this vision and, through-out three sections and thirteen articles, develops it. Through a careful selection of essays, the volume expands dramatically not just the canon of works linked to Late Antiquity, but also the contexts of reception. Thus, Late Antiquity is a complex period, and its afterlife not just the product of western scholars and statesmen who appropriated the decline and fall of the Roman Empire and the Early Middle Ages. The book is the product of a conference ‘Reading Late Antiquity’, hosted by the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities in the spring of 2015.

The first part, ‘Theoretical Outlooks’, focuses on the ‘theoretical and methodological implications of reinterpreting Late Antiquity’ (p. 10). The first contribution, by J. Uden, concerns the *Pervigilium Veneris* as it is constructed in Walter Pater’s novel, *Marius the Epicurean* (published in 1884). Uden forces the reader to reconsider Late Antiquity: Pater’s reception of the second-century *Pervigilium Veneris* is late-antique indeed, caught in time between the archaisms of late-antique literature and the novelty of the ideas promulgated with a new age. In his contribution, ‘Fragments, Allegory and Anachronicity: Walter Benjamin and Claudian’, M. Formisano urges the reader to embrace anachronism. In Formisano’s article, Walter Benjamin’s conception of allegory in *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* becomes a tool with which Formisano analyses Claudian’s *De raptu Proserpinae*. Formisano states that ‘to adopt an allegorical interpretation implies on the one hand a focus on the individuality and singularity of events and objects, and on the other, a radical subversion of the literal meaning by evoking a multiplicity of extra-linguistic meanings’ (pp. 41–2). This definition in hand, Claudian’s *De raptu Proserpinae* becomes Benjamin’s allegory, especially in the tale of Proserpina’s weaving, which she left unfinished. That Arachne completes the tapestry indicates further discontinuity, an allegory in the sense of Walter Benjamin. The broader conclusion of Formisano’s article is that anachronicity can, in fact, shed new meaning: in an act of inversion, it is the modern text that becomes received by Antiquity. The last article, by J. Hernández Lobato, ‘Late Antique Foundations of Postmodern Theory: a Critical Overview’, returns to more traditional themes, namely the attraction of postmodern thinkers like Derrida and Lyotard to Late Antiquity. Hernández Lobato focuses on the theology of Pseudo-Dionysius the

Areopagite, whose emphasis on ineffable realities and its deconstructive mechanisms through negative philosophy influenced the deconstructionists who, in turn, would push the deconstruction inherent in negative philosophy to its modern form. Thus, late-antique theology becomes a postmodern moment *avant l'heure*.

Part 2, 'Decadence and Decline', turns to the reception of Late Antiquity in Western Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The contributions here all indicate that decadence is accepted and transformed. The exception is the first article by O. Heilo, which centres on the parallels between two works by Jacob Burckhardt, *The Age of Constantine the Great* and *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*. Heilo argues that Burckhardt treats the appropriation of Classical culture in the two periods differently. What was evidence of cultural stagnation in the *Age of Constantine* became reinvigorating discovery in the *Civilization of the Renaissance*. To explain the discrepancy, Heilo suggests that it was Burckhardt's relationship with his own time, which he likened to Late Antiquity, that justified the negative attitude. In S. McGill's 'Reading Against the Grain: Late Latin Literature in Huysmans' *À rebours*' decadence is a nodal point in the intellectual lifestyle of Huysmans's hero, Jean des Esseintes. S. Rebenich's contribution focuses on Oswald Spengler's *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, in which decadence becomes a natural part of the process of historical change. Spengler, Rebenich argues, broke down chronological and geographical barriers, and thus anticipated Peter Brown's own proclivity for destroying traditional historical periods and geographical units. Schottenius Cullhed's 'Rome Post Mortem: the Many Returns of Rutilius Namatianus' investigates the enduring importance of Rutilius Namatianus' *De Reditu Suo*. Rutilius Namatianus' Rome attracted many different individuals and groups: its decadence appealed to Byron, the eternal Christian Rome to fascist propagandists, whereas the collapse of paganism could interest modern audiences. H. Harich-Schwarzbauer explores the reception of the empress Theodora in early twentieth-century Vienna through the lens of Alma Johanna Koenig's novel *Der heilige Palast*. Theodora becomes a deliberate, unyielding empress, living in a resolutely modern Constantinople, not unlike Koenig's Vienna. In the last contribution of this section C.O. Tommasi addresses Respighi's opera, *La Fiamma* (which was first staged in Rome in 1934), set in Byzantine Ravenna. Overall, while not denying the fundamental perception of the period as decadent, this section of the volume shows that decadence was, in fact, an extraordinarily flexible concept, one that was not merely loathed but also appreciated for its own sake (Huysmans) or as an object of analysis (Spengler).

The last section, 'Continuities and Transformation', is more heterogeneous than the other two parts. The themes range from the reception of late-antique travel literature in twelfth-century Byzantium to late twentieth-century Swedish literature. Methodologically, the first two articles stand apart from the others in that they are more traditional pieces of textual criticism. A. Putter's contribution, 'Versifications of the Book of Jonah', demonstrates that late-medieval versifications of biblical texts used late-antique compositional conventions in the same way that late-antique scholars could look back to Classical models: late-antique writers had set the rules. D. Westberg's 'Literary Mimesis and the Late Antique Layer in John Doukas' *Description of Palestine*' demonstrates that the sixth-century rhetorician Chorikios enjoyed a broad reappraisal in the Byzantium of the Komnenoi. His description of a painting of the Annunciation at the church of St Sergios at Gaza would become the template used by Doukas for a painting from Nazareth. H. Bodin's "'I Sank through the Centuries": Late Antiquity Inscribed in Göran Tunström's Novel *The Thief*' centres on a mystery novel that describes the theft of a late-antique artefact housed in Sweden, the *Codex Argenteus*, and the discovery of a hidden message in Gothic. The last contribution, '*Mundus totus exsilium est*: On Being Out of

Place' by C. Conybeare, places side by side two extraordinarily different individuals: Augustine of Hippo and Edward Said. As Conybeare demonstrates, if Said is indebted to Augustine, the debt remains unacknowledged (p. 256). Rather, it is the mediation of a monk, Hugh of St Victor, as well as paralleled historical contexts that turn Augustine into Said's hidden inspiration: like Augustine, Said was out of place, constantly moving, striving for, but never attaining one's *patria*.

There is little doubt that this work succeeds in expanding the canon not just of works, but also of contexts in which Late Antiquity is received. Rebenich barely touches on the issue of the Nation State, whereas Spengler's work lends itself to broad discussions about the rise of National Socialism in Europe (his ideas were rejected by the Nazis), instead focusing on the commentaries of contemporary scholars like Mommsen and Seeck. Tommasi expressly eschews politics, simply saying that 'Respighi had willy-nilly become the embodiment of the values of martial *Romanitas* that most attracted Fascism' (p. 164). Respighi's widow could, after the war, stress that Respighi emphatically refused attachment to the fascist party (p. 165). Italian fascism does make an appearance in Schottenius Cullhed's contribution, but it is only one of the many lives of Rutilius Namatianus.

The volume does expand on the reception of Late Antiquity. Traditionally, the focus of the studies has been on western statesmen and scholars. While these individuals feature in the volume, they are not alone. H. Bodin presents the reception of Late Antiquity in twentieth-century Sweden. Moreover, the inclusion in this volume of Alma Johanna Koenig, a woman novelist from Vienna, and Edward Said, the critique of Western imperialism, extends the scope of reception dramatically. Through her study of Alma Johanna Koenig, Harich-Schwarzbauer also discusses the depiction of Theodora in *fin-de-siècle* Europe, including Sarah Bernhardt's portrayal of Theodora on the stage, and the painting of Vanessa Bell, the older sister of Virginia Woolf and a member of the Bloomsbury group. While Late Antiquity has been used as a means to justify the very existence of the European nation-state, Edward Said transformed (indirectly) the thoughts of Augustine but nevertheless adapted them in his narrative of the colonising structure. The volume expands the debate beyond the scholastic (and to an extent stately) culture of western Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to include under-represented groups and cultures.

Reading the volume, however, exposes the reader to many unfamiliar works, some of which border on the esoteric. For instance, Gorän Tunström's *The Thief* was translated into eleven languages – though Bodin does not state which ones – but not English: the English translation was never published. While *La Fiamma* is more familiar, Tommasi very carefully details the plot, aware that her reader might not know the details. Schottenius Cullhed engages the reader with a film, *Il Ritorno*, which came out in 2004 but lacked publicity in Italy. These works could benefit from greater contextualisation. It is unclear how *The Thief* relates to Late Antiquity or its reception in Sweden beyond the fact that the *Codex Argenteus* is itself a late-antique artefact. Respighi's opera becomes remarkable by the fact that it is unremarkable: Respighi (*post mortem*) was inadvertently enmeshed in the turmoil that followed the end of World War II, as were many of his contemporaries. Lastly, Uden's piece fails to contextualise Pater's work in a broad intellectual setting. While Uden says that Pater's book is an attack against traditional philology, he does not engage in wider discussions about perceptions of history as a discipline, either as a form of science (Ranke) or literature (Scott). Pater's work nevertheless would closely engage with the debates about history as a field of scientific inquiry in the nineteenth century (D. Kelley, *Fortunes of History* [2003], pp. 240–7).

The volume largely succeeds in broadening the scope of the reception of Late Antiquity, even if at times it exposes the reader to unfamiliar works. It is a volume that is likely to pique the curiosity of the reader to at least read or watch some of the works

discussed in the volume. Moreover, it engages the scholar of Late Antiquity to consider new contexts in the reception of Late Antiquity.

Università degli Studi di Pavia

LAURENT J. CASES

laurent.cases@unipv.it

CLASSICS AND IRISH POETRY

IMPENS (F.) *Classical Presences in Irish Poetry after 1960. The Answering Voice*. Pp. x + 219. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. Cased, £80. ISBN: 978-3-319-68230-3.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X18002445

This monograph offers a fresh and timely look at the classical tradition – and the function of the Classics – in the work of the Irish poets Seamus Heaney, Michael Longley, Derek Mahon and Eavan Boland. It aims to substantiate the claim that the relationship these poets had with the Classics was unique – that due to the democratisation of education in the post-war world and the ensuing decline in programmes dedicated to classical study, the post-1960 generation of poets was the first and last to marry a variety of socio-economic backgrounds with direct knowledge of classical texts and narratives. Combined with the religious and post-colonial forces that inevitably informed the poets' engagement with their source texts, their classical rewritings upset traditional binaries and reflected the historical and social changes that characterised Ireland and Northern Ireland in the late twentieth century.

Separate chapters consider Heaney, Longley, and Mahon and Boland. The first, however, offers a useful overview of the Classics in modern Irish poetry, focusing in the first instance on the work of W.B. Yeats, P. Kavanagh and L. MacNeice. I. begins by discussing Yeats' investment in Greek literature as a democratic medium that represents the people it addresses, and therefore as a model for an Irish national literature grown from but not outgrowing folkloric tradition. Kavanagh's disavowal of Yeats' vision of an ideal Ireland rooted in the romanticisation of the rural world swiftly follows, and I. details his use of Greek literature to offer a pastoral poetic that reflected the reality of living in the County Monaghan countryside in which he was raised. As for MacNeice, I. argues that his appropriation of classical material explores the tensions between ancient and modern literature and cultures, emphasising the need to maintain the historical integrity of the source text while simultaneously reflecting contemporary issues. Heaney, Mahon, Longley and Boland are located as poets who would both draw on their predecessors and emulate their drive to use the Classics to support their own poetic projects. I. argues that, in the absence of a common and inclusive Irish literary tradition, the Classics offered Heaney et al. a cultural heritage that transcended – and enabled them to speak across – borders, gender divisions and religious dichotomies.

Chapter 3 deals with Heaney, whose appropriation of classical texts, I. contends, allowed him to go beyond the topicality of his poems about the North and his own experiences. I. points out that Kavanagh's influence is present in the mid-1960s poems, which make use of mythology to support a vision of poetry rooted in the local: i.e. 'Antaeus', which takes the myth of the titan who draws his strength from the land and aligns it with the poet's voice, is itself grounded in Heaney's experience of growing up in