Latin Literature

Mairéad McAuley frames her substantial study of the representation of motherhood in Latin literature in terms of highly relevant modern concerns, poignantly evoked by her opening citation of Eurydice's lament at her baby's funeral in Statius' *Thebaid* 6: what *really* makes a mother? Biology? Care-giving? (Grief? Loss? Suffering?)[1] How do the imprisoning stereotypes of patriarchy interact with lived experiences of mothers or with the rich metaphorical manifestations of maternity (as the focus of fear and awe, for instance, or of idealizing aesthetics, of extreme political rhetoric, or as creativity and the literary imagination?) How do individuals, texts, and societies negotiate maternity's paradoxical relationship to power? Conflicting issues of maternal power and disempowerment run through history, through Latin literature, and through the book. McAuley's focus is the representational work that mothers do in Latin literature, and she pursues this through close readings of works by Ovid, Virgil, Seneca, and Statius, by re-reading their writings in a way that privileges the theme, perspective, or voice of the mother. A lengthy introduction sets the parameters of the project and its aim (which I judge to be admirably realized) to establish a productive dialogue between modern theory (especially psychoanalysis and feminist philosophy) and ancient literature. Her study evokes a dialogue that speaks to theory – even contributes to it – but without stripping the Latin literature of its cultural specificity (and without befuddling interpretation of Latin culture with anachronism and jargon, which is often the challenge). The problem for a Latinist is that psychoanalysis is, as McAuley says, 'not simply a body of theories about human development, it is also a mode of reading' (23), and it is a mode of reading often at cross-purposes with the aims of literary criticism in Classical Studies: psychoanalytical notions of the universal and the foundational clash with aspirations to historical awareness and appreciation of the specifics of genre or historical moment. Acknowledging – and articulating with admirable clarity and honesty – the methodological challenges of her approach, McAuley practises what she describes as 'reading-in-tension' (25), holding on not only to the contradictions between patriarchal texts and their potentially subversive subtexts but also to the tense conversation between modern theory and ancient literary representation. As she puts it in her epilogue, one of her aims is to 'release' mothers' voices from the pages of Latin literature in the service of modern feminism, while simultaneously preserving their alterity: 'to pay attention to their specificity within the contexts of text, genre, and history, but not to reduce them to those contexts, in order that they speak to us within and outside them at the same time' (392). Although McAuley presents her later sections on Seneca and Statius as the heart of the book, they are preceded by two equally weighty contributions, in the form of chapters on Virgil and Ovid, which she rightly sees as important prerequisites to understanding the significance of her later analyses. In these 'preliminary' chapters (which in another book might happily have been served as the main course), she sets out the paradigms that inform those discussions of Seneca and Statius' writings. In her chapter on Virgil McAuley aims to transcend the binary notion that a feminist reading of epic entails

[1] *Reproducing Rome. Motherhood in Virgil, Ovid, Seneca, and Statius*. By Mairéad McAuley. Oxford Studies in Classical Literature and Gender Theory. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. xi + 449. Hardback £90, ISBN: 978-0-19-965936-4. Hardback. Pp. xii + 449.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383516000139 Published online by Cambridge University Press

either reflecting or resisting patriarchal values. As 'breeders and mourners of warriors. . .mothers are readily incorporated into the generic code' of epic (65), and represent an alternative source of symbolic meaning (66). Her reading of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* then shows how the poem brings these alternative subjects into the foreground of his own poetry, where the suffering and passion of mothers take centre-stage, allowing an exploration of imperial subjectivity itself. McAuley points out that even feminist readings can often contribute to the erasure of the mother's presence by their emphasis on the patriarchal structures that subjugate the female, and she uses a later anecdote about Octavia fainting at a reading of the *Aeneid* as a vivid illustration of a 'reparative reading' of Roman epic through the eyes of a mother (91–3). Later, in her discussion of mothers in Statian epic, McAuley writes: 'mothers never stand free of martial epic nor are they fully constituted by it, and, as such, may be one of the most appropriate figures with which to explore issues of belatedness and authority in the genre' (387). In short, the discourse of motherhood in Latin literature is always revealed to be powerfully implicated in the central issues of Roman literature and culture. A chapter is devoted to the themes of grief, virtue, and masculinity as explored in Seneca's consolation to his own mother, before McAuley turns her attention to the richly disturbing mothers of Senecan tragedy and Statius' *Thebaid*. The book explores the metaphorical richness of motherhood in ancient Rome and beyond, but without losing sight of its corporeality, seeking indeed to complicate the long-developed binary distinction between physical reproduction (gendered as female) and abstract reproduction and creativity (gendered as male). This is a long book, but it repays careful reading, and then a return to the introduction via the epilogue, so as to reflect anew on McAuley's thoughtful articulation of her methodological choices. Her study deploys psychoanalytical approaches to reading Latin literature to excellent effect (not an easy task), always enhancing the insights of her reading of the ancient texts, and maintaining lucidity. Indeed, this is the best kind of gender study, which does not merely apply the modern framework of gender and contemporary theoretical approaches to ancient materials (though it does this very skilfully and convincingly), but in addition makes it clear why this is such a valuable endeavour *for us now*, and how rewarding it can be to place modern psychoanalytic theories into dialogue with the ancient Roman literature. The same tangle of issues surrounding maternity as emerges from these ancient works often persists into our modern era, and by probing those issues with close reading we risk learning much about ourselves; we learn as much when the ancient representations fail to chime with our expectations.

The theme of this half-year's review turns out, indeed, to be persistence and the experience of reading, and not just because it takes a certain stamina to read one's way through the crate of books that arrives for the *Greece & Rome* reviewer every six months (especially when many of the books are so good and demand such thorough and attentive reading), and then to produce a review at the end of it while also grappling with the multiple demands of modern academic life. 'Persistence' here refers rather to its usage to describe one mode of relation between ancient and modern (on which more below) in William Fitzgerald's new study of the concept of 'variety'.[2] Variety is described in his

[2] *Variety. The Life of a Roman Concept*. By William Fitzgerald. Chicago, IL, University of Chicago Press, 2016. Pp. ix + 243. Hardback £38.50, ISBN: 978-0-226-29949-5.

title as a 'Roman concept' but explored here as one whose significance endures far beyond the classical context to the present day. Although it does not have quite the moral commitment and urgency of McAuley's study and reflection, Fitzgerald's book has similar concerns about the practice of literary criticism and the 'transhistorical debate' (60) between the classical world and later cultures. His book begins by showing us that our modern English word 'various' has lost so much of its erstwhile significance that it is nowadays so unemphatic as to be little more than a verbal shrug. His study, he tells us, was stimulated by noticing the richness by comparison of the Latin term *varius*, leading him to wonder how the English derivative lost its substance. And indeed the English 'various' has not always been this way: Chapter 1 demonstrates how much more it has meant in English poetry of previous centuries, from the 'infinite variety' of Shakespeare's Cleopatra to the 'various' world of Mathew Arnold's 'Dover Beach'. The book then sets out to recover the richness of what Fitzgerald calls 'the *varietas* complex' (60), a *topos* that is rooted in the Roman world and whose grip on the imagination has waxed and waned over the intervening centuries (burgeoning especially in late antiquity and the Byzantine and Renaissance eras). *Varius* describes the uneven colouring of the unripe grape, the scarred back of the slave, the mottled marble of the rich man's villa, the diversity of the Roman empire, the beauty of a woman's breasts, or the rhetorical technique of an eager-to-please Roman orator, among many other things. The starting point of literary variety spills out fluently into consideration of its philosophical, political, theological, and more broadly aesthetic implications. Fitzgerald considers the presentation, in rhetoric, of variety in nature, as creativity or distraction, exuberance or tedium, celebration or exhaustion, abundance or satiety, harmony or fragmentation. The *varietas* complex invites us to participate in different kinds of attentiveness, perspective, and focus, by turns taking a wide view of a variegated whole and then zooming in on detail. Once we are attuned to the complex of motifs associated with variety we see how it crops up everywhere in Latin literature. In Chapter 3, 'Putting Variety at Issue', Fitzgerald shows how a *varietas* is positively valued (in different ways) by Pliny the Younger, Lucretius, and Horace, playing a key role in their thinking or aesthetics. For instance, Pliny cultivates variety in his life and works as a way of spreading his bets, whereas for Lucretius *varietas* compensates for the limited nature of a pleasure that is conceived of as freedom from pain. Back to 'persistence': Fitzgerald claims at the start of his Chapter 2 that 'persistence is a historical fact too, and an important one' (31). This is an explicit dig at 'historicists' and is accompanied elsewhere by some tart remarks about reception theory and its monopoly on meaning ('meaning is not all, nor always, created at the point of reception, as the mantra of reception studies has it' [6]), which he also revisits in his conclusion (198). While Fitzgerald is attuned to the importance of specific context and happy to outline a broad chronology of the *varietas* complex in Chapter 1, he is explicitly not writing a linear history of the concept (30), but rather exploring it as a more or less stable cluster of ideas that has transhistorical value. And rather than reducing all of a text's meaning to the point of reception, he works from the assumption that vocabulary is inherited and brings its historical baggage with it. So, reflecting the transatlantic influence of the field of comparative literature, the idea is to play more freely with some of the tropes that are shared by cultures, even when those cultures are separated by millennia. To illustrate Fitzgerald's means of tackling the conversation between ancient and modern texts, which is promiscuous and non-linear yet precise and effective, we can compare the different ways in which he

deploys Dryden and Hopkins in his reading of Lucretius. First, with a technique familiar from Classical Reception studies, he uses Dryden's translations and appropriations of Lucretius' work to open up his reader's appreciation of Lucretius' use of the Latin language (103). The subsequent comparison with Gerard Manley Hopkins is of a different order: there is no claim of a direct link between the two poets, but rather their respective poetry is understood as independent variations on similar themes of the glory of nature's variety and of the 'analogy between the physical world and the texture of language itself' (107). Even now, in Fitzgerald's view, this rich '*varietas* complex' remains latent in our modern world, ready to be re-awoken for us. Indeed, the modern celebration of socio-cultural diversity and multiculturalism is drawing on the 'deep cultural memory' of the idea that nature rejoices in variety (81). I am not sure if I have entirely grasped the significance of this methodological challenge to the well-embedded interpretative trends of reader-reception and historicism, which is only briefly sketched here, but it seems important (a counter-mantra 'meaning inheres in the tools that are available' is proposed on p. 198). In light of our discipline's continuing need to develop satisfying interpretative strategies and to articulate and explore the relevance of ancient literature, I hope that its implications will continue to be explored further in due course by others or by Fitzgerald himself, alongside the methodological challenges thrown down by McAuley. At any rate, if this book models the practice of such an approach it is a good advertisement for its merits. The final Chapter 5 arrives at the subject which for me is the most enticing: miscellaneous works which (like so many kinds of ancient literature) have in earlier period been among the most influential of ancient texts but in the last century dismissed as the lowest of sub-literary. This chapter begins:

> Martial's oily cloak contaminating the garments that come into contact with it (1.53.4) might bring to mind the improvised cloakroom of a modern party, where the motley nature of the gathering is represented by the variety of outerwear piled on a bed. Social metaphors provide not only a source of figures for the miscellany itself but also an image of its readership. Some of the most important ancient miscellanies are framed as symposia or banquets... (161)

This passage by no means offers incisive argument; rather its sequence is an effective way of moving the reader through a range of ideas that will prove useful in the chapter that follows for the appreciation of ancient miscellanies. You need to be a skilful writer to pull this off without appearing to ramble. Fitzgerald's ambition here is to find us the critical skills to read miscellany *as* miscellany, and to appreciate what this specific form of reading might feel like. This is a tough challenge, and the chapter barely scuffs the surface of the subject of the value of ancient miscellaneousness, but even this mild abrasion moves things forward most helpfully. Fitzgerald suggests, for instance, that a new appreciation of miscellaneous literature might be potentially useful for enabling literary criticism to develop new models of interpretation that go beyond the recently fashionable searches for unity and the perfect structure of the book. Ultimately this book is a delight (suitable for leisure reading!) and seriously thought-provoking – appropriately enough, in many directions. I think I was already aware without having thought about it much of the origin of the English word 'desultory' in the Latin *desultor*. Fitzgerald's study has induced me to think far more profoundly about the distinctions between the older and newer meanings, and their significance: perhaps beneath the

disparaging modern senses of 'half-hearted', 'superficial', or 'lacking commitment' there lies a more positive sense ready to be evoked by the thought of the astonishing skill, balance, agility, and wow-factor of the circus rider who leaps from horseback to horseback before an admiring crowd. Similarly, this book might be a kind of manifesto for the neglected value of variety and its intellectual significance. One of the work's additional achievements is that it so clearly evokes and encourages the pleasures and rewards of reading; these pleasures are attendant not only on reading the Latin and English poetry to which it draws our attention (and of which I am left keen to read more) but also on reading the book itself. Even if you never read another word of Horace or Hopkins you will put down this book having enjoyed poring over their words with Fitzgerald, and will feel that some of his erudition has rubbed off on you, yet professional Latinists will find both pleasure and serious utility. One cavil: for a book that contains so many titbits to which I would have liked to return, the index is inadequate.

There is much that is worthwhile and enjoyable about a(nother) new study of Juvenal, not least the deployment of the delightful concept of 'loiterature' (21–4) and the inclusion of black-and-white photographs of locations in Rome that illustrate the importance of the city's topography and its close relationship with Juvenal's poetic depiction of Rome.[3] Larmour's considerable expertise in a range of areas (ancient sport and the arena, satire, cultural memory, and comparative literature) are brought to bear upon the project of interpreting Juvenal's satirical poetry in the gladiatorial terms of spectacle and punishment. However, this book suffers by comparison with the delicacy of Fitzgerald's treatment of the dialogue between ancient and modern, and the various elements are not to my mind synthesized into an entirely satisfactory whole. Beside the subtleties of Fitzgerald's juxtaposition of Lucretius with Hopkins, Larmour's summaries of works of Jonathan Swift, Evelyn Waugh, Martin McDonagh, and Viktor Pelevin as recognizable 'remnants or reworkings of Juvenalian discourse' (305) look much cruder and less theorized. In a book that has such evident reach beyond the discipline of Classics, it also seems odd that the decision was made to leave so much of the Latin untranslated.

Meanwhile, *Augustan Poetry and the Irrational* is a collection of essays that aims to challenge some hard-to-shift prejudices about classical literature, setting out to critique the idea that literature of Augustan era is characterized by rationality, classicism, and order imposed after the chaos of the civil war; the volume brings a little of the frisson of the irrational into our appreciation of Augustan poetry.[4] This association of the Augustan with intrinsic rationality has long affected the way in which we categorize and interpret the 'classic' authors of this period (and of later periods such as eighteenth-century England), and has shaped the aesthetics of 'the classic' (witness the erasure or repression of Seneca as a source for myth in psychoanalysis via German Idealism [McAuley, pp. 271, 294]). To challenge this association is simultaneously necessary, uncomfortable, and ultimately rewarding for those of us working within that

[3] *The Arena of Satire. Juvenal's Search for Rome*. By David H. J. Larmour. Oklahoma Series in Classical Culture. Norman, OK, University of Oklahoma Press, 2016. Pp. xi + 365. 11 b/w illustrations. Hardback $34.95, ISBN: 978-0-8061-5156-4.

[4] *Augustan Poetry and the Irrational*. Edited by Philip Hardie. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. xiv + 327. Hardback £75, ISBN 978-0-19-872472-8.

self-reflective field called 'Classics'. Philip Hardie's first chapter is much more than an introduction to the volume, and constitutes a fascinating essay on the provocative subject of the Roman irrational. It interweaves discussion of the significance of the individual chapters in the volume (penned by a variety of European scholars, both emerging and more established) with beautifully executed examination of the context within which debates about rationality unfold. In his representation, the age of Augustus is an era energized by furies, usually chained up and suppressed, but at times let off the leash to run amok; the poetry is characterized by 'repression and the return of the repressed (14). (There are resonances here with McAuley's exploration of mothers and the maternal as the irrational forces underlying the patriarchal order of epic.) Far from the bringer of order, however, Augustus may himself be 'an insult to rationality' (20), the figure who breaches precious boundaries between mortal and god, republic and monarchy, revolution and tradition, mercy and revenge. If there is balance and harmony to be found in the poetry of Virgil, Horace, Tibullus, Ovid, or Propertius, the various chapters of this volume demonstrate that it is not the calm imposition of rational order but a precarious balance that this literature has struggled for, wrestling to get the better of recalcitrant ideas and dark forces. Augustan poets (like their predecessors and successors) are found to be constantly oscillating between comprehension and a more open appreciation of the incomprehensibility of life and the universe – very much like the shifting perspectives on a dappled whole evoked by Fitzgerald's discussion of the aesthetics of variety.

An edited volume on Horace's *Epodes* is in the more traditional mode of a collection of new essays dedicated to a hitherto underappreciated work: a 'pugnacious little collection', as the editors describe the *Epodes* in their preface (v; their own collection is *far* more amicable), that is often thought of as 'repugnant' (85) and contains much that is rebarbative, not least – in addition to its obscenity – its disquieting *variety*.[5] The first handful of chapters in this volume establish how rewarding it is to read the *Epodes* against the background of various aspects of the literary tradition (Callimachus, Lucilius, Archilochus, fables), and many of the chapters cast new light on Horace's engagement with the themes of poetry, impotence, corporeality, and descent into civil war. Notably, and speaking to some of the themes of McAuley's work on motherhood, Emily Gowers' contribution identifies an 'obstetric metaphor' running through *Epodes* (111), which allows her to probe some of the gender convolutions in these poems. In a nice execution of the kind of non-reception cross-cultural comparison that Fitzgerald is championing, she uses Artemisia Gentileschi's painting *Judith Slaying Holofernes* to render more compelling her description of the unlucky boy buried up to his head by murderous witches in *Epodes* 5 as a 'childbirth scene captured in reverse' (109). Her first section explores the idea that the poet is striving to usurp women's biological and professional roles (116), and this notion of female impersonation leads neatly into the second section of the paper, where Gower springs a genuine surprise: her conclusion that 'after all these years' the 'hags' of *Epodes* 8 and 12 may in fact (or 'also' [127]) be *cinaedi*; this twist adds another layer to the themes of power and

[5] *Horace's Epodes. Contexts, Intertexts, and Reception*. Edited by Philippa Bather and Claire Stocks. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. xiv + 279. Hardback £70, ISBN: 978-0-19-874605-8.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383516000139 Published online by Cambridge University Press

gender explored in the chapter. Gowers' essay is the centrepiece of the collection, the title itself revealed in the final footnote to be an oblique allusion to the influential work of John Henderson, whose presence is felt in all these works of scholarship on Latin literature. Indeed, in their introduction the editors mention the key influence of Henderson's 'reader-response' approach to the *Epodes*, but (ironically in the light of Fitzgerald's critique) this is associated with the text's own bullish insistence on being read and re-read (22–3). Elena Giusti's clever piece next explores the boundary between the Bacchic frame and the content of *Epode* 9, where the boozy border induces 'double vision' with fusions and confusions of the Roman and foreign generals. This volume doesn't do much, perhaps, to alleviate anxieties about the difficulties of Horace's *Epodes*, nor could nor should it, but in their various ways the essays within enable us to enjoy the poems (anew) and to discuss them with new confidence, and this is without doubt a useful contribution to scholarship. As Latinists, elucidating the Latin texts must, of course, be our primary endeavour, but we must also make sure that we keep them difficult, acknowledge the temptations of oversimplification and reductiveness and strive to resist them, and insist on requiring – for ourselves, for our readers, and for our students – engaged and tenacious reading. Students in particular often crave from their teachers a lofty explanation of what texts mean, and to an extent we are all attracted to this kind of certainty; perhaps it is the job of scholars and teachers to confound these yearnings and to make it possible for us to find satisfaction in other ways of reading. Indeed, this collection of witty and insightful essays (which naturally play off the wit and insights of Horace's original Latin poetry) may serve to remind us of the joys of being a Classicist, which include the astonishing richness and continued relevance of the literature that we are privileged to spend our days reading, and the long perspective that our temporal distance from this literature affords us. These qualities are conceived and experienced differently by every generation, and our scholarly ambitions and tools adapt accordingly.

In their various ways, all the books under review here have reflected on the challenges of negotiating this shifting terrain: knocking Augustan rationality of its pedestal, prodding at the resistance to interpretation of the *Epodes* or of ancient miscellanies, exploring the possibilities of utilizing modern psychoanalytic theory, or comparative literature, or other interpretative techniques. Now that the search for original and definitive meaning of a text has given way to more complex and contested strategies for finding meaning, what does it mean in the twenty-first century to proceed with integrity as Classical scholars? What is the value of our work? Are we fiddling in Rome, while our own world burns? Or might these works written thousands of years ago still offer valid invitations to make sense of human experience? While much of the interpretation of Latin literature in the books reviewed here is at the level of meticulous, laborious detail, zooming into the textual crux or disputed reference, other parts step back to take a look at the broader significance. And while all this scholarship must inevitably be ancillary to the ancient texts, some of it is nevertheless able to speak to us in its own right as a valuable contribution to human knowledge and/or as an enjoyable read. At the very least, the works under review here mostly exhibit what I consider to be vital qualities for good scholarship: precision of thought and language and generous engagement with the work of others. Even when ideas are complicated and new, and one has to read slowly back over sentences to unpick the arguments being expressed, it helps immeasurably when it is clear that the writer has thought very carefully about the vocabulary he

or she uses, and is not merely aiming for a general effect: this is evident in the writing of McAuley and Fitzgerald and of most of the individual contributors to the two edited volumes. Increasingly I appreciate it when writers make it clear that they have actually read and understood the work of their colleagues, and, rather than relegating them to a footnote ('on X see Y'), make it explicit what it is that Y has said about X, where its value lies, and what its further implications might be. When authors engage thoughtfully with the arguments of other scholars – not just of the usual suspects, but of a wider circle of colleagues in the discipline – this is one of the most satisfying things to witness as a reader. Such intellectual collegiality was especially on display in McAuley's book and in the *Epodes* volume, and it makes me happy to belong to this community.

REBECCA LANGLANDS
r.langlands@exeter.ac.uk
doi:10.1017/S0017383516000139

Greek History

It is quite remarkable that the study of Greek economic history has been long pursued in the absence of any overall synthesis. The revised translation of Alain Bresson's *The Making of the Ancient Greek Economy*, originally published in French in 2007, is undoubtedly a major contribution that will have a significant impact on how the subject is taught and studied in the Anglo-Saxon world.[1] The volume is effectively divided into two parts. The first situates Greek economies in their environment, by exploring demography, sources of energy, agriculture, pastoralism, and non-agricultural production. The second part focuses on the nature of ancient markets, by examining internal and external markets, the international division of labour, and the role of currency, credit, and taxation. While the first part is primarily a useful summary of current research, the second part is an original contribution to our understanding of Greek markets. Not only are we given for the first time a detailed analysis of how the *agora* and the *emporion* functioned, but Bresson is able to fully document the existence of complex networks creating an international division of labour. These are major advances, but the work has two major problems. Despite its size, it is a lopsided analysis. It is remarkable, for example, that there is not a single chapter devoted to labour, and that its nineteen-page index lacks any reference to terms such as wages, class, exploitation, poverty, or consumption. And, while Bresson offers an excellent description of many economic aspects, the book is distinctly unconvincing whenever it tries to explain patterns or the nature of Greek economic growth. It will be essential for any future work in Greek economic history, but for a comprehensive framework that can actually explain things, we will unfortunately have to wait.

This review includes a series of stimulating contributions to the history of Athens, the community that dominates ancient sources and modern accounts of classical Greek history. But, before we move to them, it is a pleasure to highlight the publication

[1] *The Making of the Ancient Greek Economy. Institutions, Markets, and Growth in the City-States*. By Alain Bresson. Translated by Steven Rendall. Princeton, NJ, and Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2016. Pp. xxviii + 620. 13 figures, 16 tables. Hardback, £34.95, ISBN: 978-0-691-14470-2.