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WOMEN AND NEO-LATIN

STEVENSON (J.) *Women and Latin in the Early Modern Period*. Pp. vi + 116. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2022. Paper, €70. ISBN: 978-90-04-52975-5.
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The history of women's engagement with Latin culture in the early modern period has attracted increasing attention over the last few decades. This short monograph by S., a leading expert on the topic, provides an overview of these last decades of scholarship and argues that there still remains much to explore.

First, S. provides a short historiography of the growing field that studies early modern women Latinists and their writings. Key to its rise was the feminist movement of the late twentieth century, which brought various early modern scholars, most notably those working on Renaissance Italy, Tudor–Stuart England and Neo-Latin literature, to the rediscovery of Latinate women's voices. As S. argues, however, this rediscovery has primarily centred around the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, while '[t]he question whether there were women of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who were more productive has barely been addressed' (p. 4; cf. pp. 87, 94–5).

The ensuing narrative starts with the rise of women's education in *bonae litterae* in Quattrocento Italy and, perhaps surprisingly in the light of the title, traces its geographical and chronological 'spread' (p. 27) in Europe all the way to the nineteenth century (although the account of these later periods reads more like a brief epilogue). The second chapter strongly evinces the practical purpose that a humanist education could have had for some women of the Italian Renaissance born into noble and politically dominant families. In the course of the fifteenth century this group would also come to include women of other kinds of upper-class families. For some, their education enabled them 'to become active political players' (p. 18), especially in the absence of their husbands. At the same time, however, S. argues that the content of their literary production was often deemed of lesser importance by contemporaries than the mere phenomenon of their Latinity itself. Thus, although women's Latinity became increasingly normalised in Renaissance Italy, women still remained largely on the periphery of the male-dominated world of humanism. In sixteenth-century France, Spain, Portugal, England and the Low Countries (the focus of Chapter 3), the same rule of thumb seems to apply as previously in Italy; Latin education for women was mainly located around noble or royal courts. Over time, more women in other upper-class positions could receive this education as well. Chapter 4 highlights how Latin knowledge increasingly yielded professional opportunities in teaching, tutoring and printing for women both in and outside the sixteenth-century courts.

Chapter 5 precedes the conclusion and is by far the most ambitious in its scope. Starting from the seventeenth century, it tells the story of the gradual withdrawal of Latin as the European lingua franca, the rise of the vernaculars and the resulting effect on women's Latinity. The growing abundance of translations provided unprecedented access to classical learning for those who had not received a fully-fledged humanist education, and some women also played a role in these translational efforts. The (at times condescending) awe that had befallen many Latinate women of the Italian Renaissance remained a continuous trope, but did not prevent some from leveraging their classical learning to secure an income or even pursue a degree. Slowly, female intellectualism came to be regarded as less exceptional as (some) women became gradually more integrated into the world of academic learning.

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An important *fil rouge* of the book consists in the various functions that Latin learning could have for early modern women. In part, this argument can be read as a critique of earlier studies by M. King, L. Jardine and A. Grafton, among others, who in their seminal case studies on women intellectuals from the Italian Renaissance have argued that women's learnedness did not serve any other function apart from being an end in itself. S.'s book rightfully challenges this narrative and convincingly shows the real-life benefits that humanist education often yielded for women in Renaissance Italy, but notably also elsewhere and later in time. Indeed, reducing what this book has to say to a critique of previous scholarship would hardly do justice to this impressive diachronic account that aptly synthesises the various and changing functions of Latin and classical knowledge for early modern women.

Nevertheless, S.'s (important) critiques are not always as new as they may seem, especially to the 'advanced students and scholars new to this particular area' (the target readership of this Brill series according to the website). In fact, her unmentioned but memorable 1998 article on 'Women and Classical Education in the Early Modern Period' (in: Y.L. Too and N. Livingstone [edd.], *Pedagogy and Power*) already argued the same, and a similar critique has also more recently been (independently?) phrased by S.G. Ross in her 2009 monograph *The Birth of Feminism*. Ross's monograph is not referred to either, nor are a number of other seminal works in this area, including P. Dronke's *Women Writers of the Middle Ages* (1984), F. Waquet's *Latin or the Empire of a Sign* (2001), the latest monograph on Anna Maria van Schurman by A. Larsen (2016) or J. Kelly's foundational 1976 essay 'Did Women Have a Renaissance?' (in: R. Bridenthai and C. Koonz [edd.], *Becoming Visible*). In the same vein, it seems odd that S. does not include her own magnum opus *Women Latin Poets* (2005) in her historiographical discussion. Writing about oneself admittedly carries its own risks, but if you have largely forged an entire subfield whose development you are now chartering, there is little room for modesty.

Another but decidedly newer argument of the book is that women from the seventeenth century onwards would have employed Latin in a much greater variety of ways than their predecessors (p. 94); according to S., the latter group's 'use they made of their knowledge of Latin was limited, occasional verse, orations and letters' (p. 87). Although I agree that the relevant sources from these later centuries are both larger in number and more diverse than many believe, this seems a difficult comparison to make, and I am therefore hesitant to accept this new claim. Future study is necessary to evince that the bulk of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Latin works by women would *not* mainly be restricted to the three categories mentioned by S., a contention that I doubt. Moreover, some women from the Italian Renaissance used their humanist education to practical and even political ends, as S. herself argues. Besides, it is not hard to find arguably unparalleled Latin(ate) works of considerable creativity in the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries (e.g. Sigea's *Duarum Virginum Colloquium*, Nogarola's *De pari aut impari Evae atque Adae peccato*, Cereta's satirical dialogue *In asinarium funus oratio* or, although in French, de Pizan's *La Cité des Dames*). Finally, the relatively greater number of surviving sources from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries may also explain a seemingly greater diversity in their use of Latin.

The value of S.'s contribution lies mainly in the useful and concise collection of accurate historical accounts across a wide time span. S.'s call to action for future research into the wealth of post-Renaissance women's Latin writings is both timely and laudable. The book will be useful to anyone studying Renaissance and early modern women authors and intellectuals as well as to those working in classical reception and early modern

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humanism more broadly. It stands outs as a fine supplement, but should not be used as a substitute for digging into S.'s earlier and more rigorous studies.

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DIVERSITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

LIBATIQUE (D.), MCHARDY (F.) (edd.) *Diversity and the Study of Antiquity in Higher Education. Perspectives from North America and Europe*. Pp. viii + 144. London and New York: Routledge, 2023. Cased, £48.99, US$64.95. ISBN: 978-1-032-23512-7.

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This broad collection of essays is a welcome addition to the ongoing, pressing conversations about what can and should be done to promote greater diversity within the field of ancient Mediterranean studies. Such a volume cannot easily encompass a wide range of voices and topics while maintaining a narrow focus, and what critiques we offer of the collection are primarily around the fact that individual essays often feel disconnected from one another. While this may not be a volume that will be read from cover to cover, it is nonetheless a valuable compilation of case studies and reflections on pressing contemporary issues within the field, across several countries (United States, United Kingdom and Greece).

The volume opens with a thoughtful contribution from P. Rankine about how classical studies as a discipline engages with university missions across a range of institution types (Howard, a historically black college and university; Purdue, a land grant institution without a Classics department; and Georgetown, a Jesuit institution). This chapter will likely speak more to faculty members in positions with some degree of permanence, since graduate students and contingent faculty are often less invested in institutional conversations around mission. Rankine's chapter nicely complements that of T.H.M. Gellar-Goad and C. Hines about integrating anti-racism into the department curriculum at Wake Forest University. Both of these chapters do a nice job of reflecting on the authors' personal experiences while also offering suggestions and applications that will be useful to other faculty who are interested in increasing diversity at the level of the institution or the department.

Many of the chapters do not address the inevitable risks and drawbacks of committing oneself to promoting diversity within higher education. On the one hand, this makes sense, as most of the authors are (either implicitly or explicitly) trying to encourage readers to emulate their experiences. On the other hand, it is useful when authors (Gellar-Goad and Hines' chapter stands out in this respect) do acknowledge the potential risks and the toll that this sort of work can take, in terms of time, energy and mental health. Given the increasingly hostile political climate around diversity in some parts of the United States, it is hard to ignore the risk that scholars take by committing themselves to the necessary work of diversifying the field.

D. McCoskey's chapter on teaching Cicero's *Pro Fonteio* provides an excellent example of how instructors might teach thorny and complicated issues like race in the

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