

G. O. Hutchinson, *Greek to Latin: Frameworks and Contexts for Intertextuality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. xi + 438. ISBN 978-0-19-967070-3. £90.00.

Few people could have written this book. Perhaps even fewer would have. Gregory Hutchinson has mustered his encyclopaedic mastery of classical literature and unleashed a *magnum opus*. Like all such monuments, readers will either stand transfixed, or resent an eyesore encroaching into valuable peripheral vision. Like it or lump it – notice it you must.

The book gets moving (the ‘tour’ metaphor is Hutchinson’s quaint touch) from a limiting historical cul-de-sac; most of the recent studies of intertextuality in Latin literature have confined themselves to Latin-Latin interaction. Only a select bunch has braved the linguistic borderlands to study Latin writers’ use of Greek, and not many at all have mulled over the relationship in broader terms. Hutchinson professes to kill both birds (bigger/generic, smaller/specific) with one stone. But one senses that for this author, the seductive devil is (always will be) in the detail; the default mode is more commentary than monograph, and readers who crave the shelter of an overarching thesis will have to seek it elsewhere. Hutchinson’s defining scholarly manoeuvre is ‘complication’ – smothering his audience with so much material that the breathing space of generalisation peters out completely. This is not necessarily a drawback, and it is tough to take issue with Hutchinson’s intellectual modesty in gesturing only to sketch out ‘what the evidence indicates’ and ‘to set much of that evidence before the reader.’ (p. 1). But the fact remains that this book is more a (staggering) collation and organisation of material (Greek to Latin) than it is a host of ways to think about intertextuality (Frameworks and Contexts).

Branding quibbles aside, this book is no mean feat. Everyone will get something from its spectacular divagations around unforgiving (often unfamiliar) terrain. Hutchinson fences his ground into four main lots: Part I ‘Time’ (pp. 3-42) covers Roman ways of doing and organising literary history; Part II ‘Space’ (pp. 43-132) catalogues *all* the places wherein Romans would have ‘experienced’ Greek literary culture; Part III ‘Words’ (pp. 133-219) gazes intently at the linguistic frames constraining and enabling the passage from Greek to Latin, and reaps fertile case studies; Part IV ‘Genre’ (pp. 221-354) squares up Roman interaction with Greek literature through the prism of the prose and hexameter ‘super-genres’. Below I plod through each section, spoiling the view of Hutchinson’s magnificent *thauma* with a few oblique snapshots.

The first two chapters (Part I) probe the ‘structures of time’, latticing Roman models of literary history. Hutchinson notes the peculiar Roman habit of conceptualising literature as a vertical, chronological sequence of authors divided by genre: ‘a set of parallel mini-histories’ (p. 11). The author disarmingly defamiliarises the obvious – as he says, it was by no means inevitable that literature should be thought of as a composite of such straight lines, and likewise regarding the curiously tendentious habit of separating Greek literature sharply from Roman. Hutchinson points out (p. 12) that we barely notice this seemingly natural division because our contemporary institutional structures have inherited it, and perpetuate it. This polymath has an axe to grind about the Greek *or* Latin tendencies of modern Classics.

After accumulating the evidence for the ‘two-sequence’ approach to literary history (and for every point, rest assured that the evidence is well and truly accumulated), Hutchinson shifts onto how these sequences are made to relate to (or clash with) each other. Roman authors often bumped up against their predecessors with aggressive body language; this was often all-out ‘war’, and *imitari* was not just

imitation, but Bloomian beating of the father at his own game. Hutchinson's pluralistic framework shows that literary history differs from author to author, depending on the agenda at hand; the one big constant throughout is the 'double structure' of Greek vs. Roman. Of course, this big structure cannot go anywhere without its travel bag of requisite 'complexities' (p. 42).

Part II 'Space' is perhaps the hardest-going thicket of the book, and the place where this hybrid creation reads most like a bloated commentary. As Hutchinson remarks with donnish understatement: 'an encounter with an abundance of evidence is unlikely to prove altogether fruitless.' (p. 45). Granted, but the constant hacking through the undergrowth of brackets and abbreviations leaves the sequential reader prose-parched. When we are allowed a peek to see the wood for the trees, we spot our travel agent guiding us through a world-tour of various spaces in which both writers and readers of Latin works experienced Greek ones. Hutchinson begins at home and radiates out: Rome to Alexandria, and everything in between.

Within these chapters Hutchinson exhaustively compiles the evidence for hands-on Roman exposure to literary Greek and literary Greeks, and shows how these experiences are deeply wired into the prescribed patterns of an ideal elite Roman life: the obligatory educational sojourn in Athens, for example. He is certainly not writing a history of Roman grand tours here, which flags a methodological snag. The book in general has little time for diachronic considerations, flattening Greek and Latin literature into the static space of synthesis, blunting the ebb and flow over its 100 BCE – 200 CE timeframe. Hutchinson occasionally takes care to measure broader changes, but he confesses straightaway that space is much more important to him than time (p. 1). A fallout of this prioritising is a transhistorical effect sure to leave some bad travellers a little queasy.

Part III 'Words' is where Hutchinson's broad learning and impeccable philological credentials really pay off. A commentator at heart, the linguistic 'specifics' of Greek to Latin are where that heart is. He starts with the practical interaction that was Roman authors writing Greek; he points up the strenuous effort to retain Roman identity even (especially?) when composing in Greek. He goes on to discuss the active barriers erected to keep the two languages distinct (another version of Roman cultural/linguistic separatism). The natural distance of the languages helps the divide; but Romans patriotically drive a sledgehammer into the wedge. When snippets of Greek do sneak into Latin texts, they are often there to stigmatise dubious concepts. Even the genres that code-switch most freely still maintain a po-faced separation. This sense of distinctness is the clear refrain of Chapter 6.

Chapters 7-9 get to work with some interesting analysis of Greek-Latin 'transpositions'. Firstly, Hutchinson performs close comparative readings of helpful triadic families: that is, a Greek version is pitted against two Latin adaptations, for example Polybius, Livy and Silius on Hannibal's crossing of the Alps. Chapters 8-9 seize more on the 'frameworks within which the transposition takes place' (p. 183), such as style; Hutchinson is good (and more sensitive to diachrony) with the different stylistic constraints operative at different periods. While he is always apologising for the micro-level of verbal scrutiny, his readings stand up well as ambassadors for complexity; his destinations are never 'simple conclusions', but makeshift half-way houses actively discouraging all sorts of lazy, settled generalisation. No rest for us wicked travellers.

Part IV is a book in itself. Hutchinson takes on a mammoth review of Greek-Latin vibrations in the super-genres of prose and hexameter poetry. Much killer material will strike in these chapters. Chapter 10 humbly teaches that the two great innovations in the history of Latin prose (rhythm and the pointed style) stemmed from contemporary Greek developments. Chapters 11 and 12 survey the 'grounds' of

prose and hexameter poetry. Hutchinson poaches the term from cognitive grammar, meaning the situation and setting of an utterance; he captures nicely how obvious little things such as addressee and authorial identity affect the move from Greek to Latin. While the Greek question is always in the background, these chapters might also be useful for those getting to grips with the basic distinctions between ancient literary genres. Hutchinson has his feet firmly planted on the grounds here.

The last two chapters finish on a hexametrical high note. 'Space and Intertextuality in Hexameters' (pp. 295-321) looks at the tension between localised Roman settings and Greek material across the full gamut of hexameter genres. Questions of Greek and Roman identity lurk in the background here (and everywhere); but for a scholar so sold on 'complexity' in all its complex forms, Hutchinson leaves the door open to criticism for retailing fairly simplistic (spatial) notions of what it meant to be Roman, or to render a text Roman. Hutchinson's Latin literature seems to become Roman with the recipe imperative 'just add Rome'. When he does turn from space to time in the final chapter ('Hexameters: History and Internal Mixture' (pp. 323-54)), he bracingly takes on the old orthodoxy – that post-Augustan literature shies away from Greek models to keep things domestic. *Au contraire*, if smug imperial Latinists still think they have ground for ignoring Greek, Hutchinson swipes it from under their feet in one fell swoop.

After lovingly elucidating Lucan's deep absorption of Greek models in his Thessalian episode (6.333-412), Hutchinson says that the passage is accessible to a reader who has a skeletal knowledge, but 'the complexities build up the more the reader knows.' (p. 349). This would be my epigraph for *Greek to Latin*, encapsulating its imposing scope and self-imposed limitations: Hutchinson is a reader who knows a lot (much more than this reviewer), but this immense knowledge does not punch anywhere above complexity-building. His redoubtably modest approach claims merely to give readers space to spread their wings and think for themselves. Framed/contextualised so, the book is a job well done.

He concludes: 'And so I leave them [Hutchinson's readers], poised for flight.' (p. 354). Who's poised then, author or readers? If this pilot wants a quick eject, his readers will be flying back again and again to this crisp aerial sweep, whenever time keeps coming to redraw the map of *Greek to Latin*.

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