

BOOK REVIEW

Lucius Annaeus Seneca: Hardship and Happiness. Translated by ELAINE FANTHAM, HARRY M. HINE, JAMES KER AND GARETH WILLIAMS. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2014. Pp. xxix + 318. Hardcover, \$55.00. ISBN 978-0-226-74832-0.

Hardship and Happiness represents the fourth of a planned eight volume series of Lucius Annaeus Seneca's complete works in translation edited by Elizabeth Asmis, Shadi Bartsch, and Martha C. Nussbaum and published by the University of Chicago. Earlier volumes include *Natural Questions* May 2010; *Anger, Mercy, Revenge* July 2010; and *On Benefits* April 2011.

This series brings together many preeminent anglophone scholars of Seneca as editors and translators and succeeds in its aim to reach a wider audience through readable, modern English translations and to provide guidance for students and scholars of various disciplines through the scholarly apparatus that accompanies each work. This apparatus offers useful contextual information to a novice reader of Seneca and of Roman imperial history with historical, literary, and philosophical references. Some translations certainly benefit from the translator's expertise of that particular work, as seen in the introduction and notes. The minor criticisms of this volume that follow fall more in the category of missed opportunities than of major technical or scholarly flaws.

This volume contains translations to the majority of Seneca's essays on ethical topics, or the *dialogi*, in chronological order (Griffin 1976: 396-98)¹: *Consolation to Marcia* (*Consolatio ad Marciam*) by Harry M. Hine, *Consolation to Helvia* (*Consolatio ad Helviam*) by Gareth Williams, *Consolation to Polybius* (*Consolatio ad Polybium*) by Harry M. Hine, *On the shortness of life* (*De brevitae vitae*) by Gareth Williams, *On the constancy of the wise person* (*De constantia sapientis*) by James Ker, *On tranquillity of mind* (*De tranquillitate animi*) by Elaine Fantham, *On leisure* (*De otio*) by Gareth Williams, *On the happy life* (*De vita beata*) by James Ker, and *On providence* (*De providentia*) by James Ker.

¹ Miriam Griffin, *Seneca: A Philosopher in Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

Although the series does not include the Latin text, this volume updates the Loeb translation of John Basore from vols 1 and 2 (1928, 1932, respectively) of the *Moral Essays* in a way that it could be usefully used alongside Reynolds' OCT (or Williams 2003 text and commentary of *De otio* and *De brevitae vitae*) for scholars familiar with the Latin text. In general, the notes include references to the Latin text and variations, especially when there is ambiguity or difficulty in translation.

As a possible textbook, this volume offers the most extensive collection of Seneca's dialogues in English. Other modern English translations of Seneca's dialogues, John Davie with Oxford Classics (2007), C.D.N. Costa with Penguin (1997), and John M. Cooper and J. F. Procopé with Cambridge Texts (1995), include only select essays and excerpts. Cooper and Procopé's collection only overlaps with this volume in its inclusion of *De otio*, but it is perhaps the most similar in that its introductions and notes aim to satisfy a scholarly readership, particularly in philosophy.

Since many modern English translations of Seneca separate the *dialogi* from his other works, this series offers the potential for his corpus to be presented as an integrated whole and, thereby, to encourage a greater exploration of his complete oeuvre among scholars of various disciplines, who might be drawn initially to certain works. While the main introduction (the same in all four volumes) attempts to bring these strands of Seneca's works together by including the tragedies and their influence alongside a discussion of Seneca's Stoicism, this aim too often gets lost in the individual translations.

The introductions and endnotes vary in terms of detail, subject, and format according to the translator and, at times, miss opportunities to cross-reference within the volume or to Seneca's other works. In this aspect and in the inconsistency of format (Hine and Williams vs. Fantham and Ker), the volume seems a gathering together of different translations rather than a concerted effort to present these works as a corpus of Senecan thought or in relation to one another. For example, in an otherwise helpful introduction to the consolatory genre and its key thematic elements, Hine refers to the other consolation he translates in the volume but omits mentioning *Ad Helviam*, which immediately follows: "It (*Ad Marciam*) may be compared with his *Consolation to Polybius* and two consolatory letters (63 and 99)" (3). Even if he narrowly defines the genre as only "a work that offers comfort to someone who has been bereaved" (3) and would place, therefore, *Ad Helviam* in a different category, since it is a consolation on exile and not on bereavement, it would have been helpful to have included it in the discus-

sion of the genre. Likewise, there is no cross-referencing in the notes between *Ad Marciam* and *Ad Polybium* or the two aforementioned letters, when there appear parallels (e.g., *Ad Marciam* 11.3 with *Ad Polybium* 4.3; *Ad Marciam* 25.2 with *Ad Polybium* 9.3).

The series' editors and outside scholars and translators vet the translations for accuracy, clarity, and style to make them "authoritative". While this degree of thoroughness gives some comfort to Latinless readers, a translation is still not without interpretation, and for crucial passages of literary or philosophical importance, the reader will wish to consult the Latin. This reservation of assigning "authority" to any translation does not necessarily detract from these efforts. The overall high quality of the translations and notes make this volume (and its respective series) highly desirable for scholars and libraries alike.

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