

## BOOK REVIEW

*Latin Poetry in the Ancient Greek Novels.* By DANIEL JOLOWICZ. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2021. Pp. 416. Hardback, \$127.73. ISBN: 9780192894823.

This book is one of the most ambitious in recent scholarship on the Ancient Greek novel. It takes as its focus the possible engagement with Latin poetry by three novelists, Chariton, Achilles Tatius and Longus. The large, intensely detailed product of Jolowicz's thorough investigations merits the scrutiny not only of experts on the Greek Novel but of scholars engaged in the broader question of (Roman) Greek intertextual affiliation with earlier Latin literary texts.

Given the fractious debate behind the so-called Latin question (for which see, above all, Gärtner 2013),<sup>1</sup> an introduction which explains the cultural background, research methodologies and parameters of the textual investigations is key. Jolowicz succeeds in fitting into a mere 34 pages the most important questions, and it in and of itself will prove to be a valuable first port of call for anyone requiring a succinct summary of the evidence available on Greek readers of Latin in the Roman Empire, bilingualism and the possible use of Latin in Greek education. Jolowicz synthesizes a wide range of material with admirable clarity. Inevitably, some of the conclusions drawn by Jolowicz on the basis of what is at best tenuous evidence, in order to substantiate any (let alone widespread) knowledge of Latin poetry on the part of educated Greek readers of the novels, are unlikely to convince all (including the present reviewer). Sometimes Jolowicz unwittingly makes the case "against," himself: he states (4) tellingly that there is a "remarkable lack" of ancient evidence for what Greek authors thought of Latin literature. One must think, too, of the readership. If Jolowicz claims, as he does, for a Greek novelist's "sophisticated engagement" (31) with Latin poetry beyond mere knowledge of it, then one must assume perception of such engagement on the

<sup>1</sup>Gärtner, Ursula. „Das griechische Epos der Kaiserzeit und die Bezüge zur lateinischen Literatur,“ *Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique*, 59 (2013), 87-139.

reader's part, and, correspondingly, a level of knowledge of Latin poetry to allow activation of such latent allusive activity. Given that the primary intertextual texture of the Greek novels is Greek, and that the novelists sometimes embed programmatic tropes inherited from Plato and Alexandrian poetry, one would all the more expect similar pointers for the reader to look for the learned degree of engagement by the novelists for which Jolowicz argues. The author concedes the lack of advertisement for Latin intertextuality in the texts and argues for a different model of allusive behavior when it comes to Latin intertextuality. Instead, such allusions are "covert" because Greek models have a cultural value which cannot openly be ceded, too, to Latin models. Such allusions, therefore, are consciously unadvertised but available to those readers who have a "decent knowledge of a range of Latin poets" (33).

Jolowicz's theoretical approach is openly positivist (29) in that it includes an author's intention in the activity of allusion, as opposed to one which adheres to the broader scope of intertextuality. Concrete evidence for knowledge of Latin poetry by these novelists is therefore essential, especially given the strength of claims made by J. (namely that his book establishes Latin poetry as "an essential frame of reference," 2). Proving that authors (or readers) had a "decent knowledge" rests principally on the diaspora of Latin and bilingual papyri, which do contain Latin poetry, especially the *Aeneid*, but the vast majority of which (4th-century onwards) postdate the Greek novels discussed by Jolowicz. It is clear that Latin poetry was read by *some* elite Greeks in the early empire (even if only as aids for Latin learning). Jolowicz's analysis of Latin allusions in the Greek novels requires a level of knowledge on the part of the Greek reader at least equal to that expected for Greek allusions. Evidence of word lists and lexica as aids for basic language acquisition (18) does not lead one to assume profound literary engagement. Occasional anecdotes about elite Greek-speaking Romans with intimate knowledge of Latin poetry (19) prove the exception rather than the rule. Some Greek readers surely did fit into the template Jolowicz constructs, but the question remains whether a Greek novelist would (or could) pervasively engage with Latin literature to the extent that this book claims.

The main body of the monograph is in three sections, on Chariton, Achilles Tatius and Longus. In each case, the discussion of each author's possible knowledge of and engagement with Latin poetry, followed by minute analysis of key allusions to Latin poetry, is exemplary. Jolowicz has a mastery of the current debates in scholarship and more broadly of the literary and thematic designs of each novel. The first three chapters concern Chariton, with discussion in

particular of the author's appropriation of tropes from Latin elegy (especially Ovid). The third chapter looks carefully at allusions to the *Aeneid*, and some cogent parallels are often adduced (and in isolation seem plausible). The three chapters on Achilles Tatius follow a similar pattern (Chapter 4 is focused on elegy, Chapter 5 on the *Aeneid* and Chapter 6 on post-Virgilian authors including even Seneca). One of the more obvious difficulties in proving allusion between texts which have similar subject matter is the inevitability of similar vocabulary. Jolowicz carefully indicates Ovidian elegiac allusions in amatory contexts in Achilles Tatius, but (e.g. 134-135) terms denoting love, chastity and desire in both Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* and Achilles are to be expected and the argued-for parallels do not convince. Similarly, apparent allusions in the speech of Melite to Dido's speech in *Aeneid* 4 on the treachery of Aeneas contain (e.g. 194-195) vocabulary typical of lament and grief.

A single (but long) chapter is devoted to Longus, whose pastoral novel is a very suitable test case for the hypothesis of the book, given how similar some of the settings and narratives are in Longus' novel and (above all) Virgil's *Eclogues*. The author again draws meticulously discussed parallels between the alluding text and Latin poetry, and at the primary level of peculiarity of vocabulary and similarity of contexts makes persuasive claims. Jolowicz also tackles head-on the theory of the "lost common Hellenistic source" (in this case Philitas, the Hellenistic predecessor of Theocritus), the recourse of scholars who rule out indebtedness to Latin poetry on the part of Longus: namely, that the similarities between Longus and Virgil's texts are not down to a direct indebtedness, but rather because they allude to a Hellenistic text no longer extant for the modern reader to consult. For Jolowicz, the poetic corpus of Philitas was probably not available to Longus and his contemporaries anyway, and he argues that the Virgilian recasting and representations of Philitas in the *Eclogues* account for Philitan presences in Longus. One aspect Jolowicz does not include in that respect is the final word of the novel, *paignia* (games), which scholars have long recognised as an allusion to the title of the poetic collection of Philitas. As the final word of the novel, the allusion has an especially emphatic position and must surely reflect a form of signalling on the part of Longus to the reader.

Another line of argument by Jolowicz for Longus' direct use of Virgil is the emphasis on the city and its interference in the rustic idyll. For example, the opening of Longus' main narrative includes a description of Mytilene as a "big city," which J. argues alludes to the programmatic *urbem* (Rome) of *Eclogues* 1. For Jolowicz,

Longus adopts directly from Virgil the idea of the city as a “disruptive force” in an idealized pastoral world (265), even if that disruption is eradicated by the end of the novel. This is a surprising connection to draw (the allusion to Virgil’s “city” alone is weak), and one which does not take account of the strong presence of New Comedy as a key intertextual element in the fabric of Longus’ novel. It is firmly established in Longan scholarship that the city symbolizes and is bound up with generic motifs from New Comedy (see, e.g., Hunter (1983), 67-72).<sup>2</sup> Jolowicz is careful to disambiguate New Comic influences from Latin elegiac presences at page 125 for Achilles Tatius, but neglects to do so for Longus (despite the even greater importance of New Comedy for understanding Longus).

This is a scholarly and detailed study which attempts to prove a hypothesis for which the evidence is meagre. Nevertheless, Jolowicz makes as strong a case as possible on the basis of meticulous readings and has advanced an age-old problem in provocatively new directions. Typographical errors are few (e.g. read “to a Greek of a romantic perspective,” 19).

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<sup>2</sup>Hunter, Richard L. *A Study of Daphnis and Chloe*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983.