

EDITORIAL

A new editorial team and a new cover design (we hope readers will agree that this has been exceptionally well managed by Oxford University Press) may prompt reflections both on the continuity of our enterprise and on the potential, if not for radical change in what we offer, at least for some degree of *aggiornamento* in the style and aims of *The Classical Review*. For the editors, this may not be a bad occasion to break their traditional silence and express these reflections in the form of an editorial: the tenor of the times is, after all, towards explicitness and against the imposition of unexamined principles under the pretence of self-effacement. We are strongly conscious of our responsibility not merely to carry on the tradition of our predecessors, but to think anew about what we are doing, to reinforce the principles of free and fair comment that lie behind our work, and to try our best to meet the expectations of the international scholarly community which, now perhaps more than ever before, forms our readership.

Not only the cover, but also the layout of the inside of the journal, is under reconsideration. Readers will observe that in this issue the ‘notices’ section is shorter than usual. Over the next year we shall be phasing out the traditional dichotomy between ‘reviews’ and ‘notices’, which, whatever its original rationale may have been, now seems to us unhelpful. In future, the ‘notices’ section will be reserved for largely factual accounts of books which in our view are not suitable for more extended critical comment, reissues of books already reviewed in our pages where only minor amendments or additions have been made, collections of articles with no obvious connecting theme, and so on. Apart from items of this kind, it seems to us neither easy nor desirable to make a distinction, on whatever grounds, between more and less important contributions. In our opinion, all contributions which aim to express critical judgement in a discursive form deserve the courtesy of the larger typeface and the concise heading, informative or witty as the case might be, which were hitherto confined to the ‘reviews’ strictly denominated.

The Classical Review aims to command respect as the premier English-language periodical devoted entirely to the reviewing of books dealing with the ancient Graeco-Roman world. In pursuit of this overall ambition, it must aim in the first place to cover all significant work in the subject (or, rather, all work supposed significant, for such judgements are always in some measure a matter of opinion). Our notion of what constitutes ‘the subject’ is broadly conceived as the study of a whole civilization in all its aspects. We aim to give attention impartially to texts and commentaries, linguistic and literary studies, ancient history, ancient philosophy, classical art and archaeology and related material-based disciplines, and the increasingly prominent study of the classical tradition, the history of scholarship, and issues of theory and methodology as applied to classical topics. We believe that we largely continue to succeed in our aims as far as coverage is concerned—depending, of course, on the willingness of publishers to send us review copies; but if there are books that we ought to be reviewing and are not, we hope that readers will bring them to our notice.

As we indicated above, we aim to publish reviews which are consistently both informative and critical, and which observe professional standards of accuracy, clarity, fairness, and relevance. Within these constraints (which the editors will, if necessary, intervene to enforce), our reviewers are free to express their own opinions, whether

favourable or unfavourable. Their opinions are not necessarily the opinions of the editors. We aim to encourage constructive and courteous debate among the different approaches and tendencies within the profession, believing with Cicero that, not only in philosophy but in all areas of life and scholarship, ‘non tam auctoritatis in disputando quam rationis momenta quaerenda sunt’. However, we continue our policy of not printing replies to reviews. The space for these is simply not available.

The pressures that now impinge on scholars holding a full-time academic post (certainly in our own countries of Great Britain and Ireland, but we suspect elsewhere as well) are such as to make anyone think twice about spending time on reviewing, important as—and we have no doubt of this—the practice is. However, perhaps in compensation, our network of reviewers has widened, particularly as the advent of e-mail has made it immeasurably easier for us to reach well-qualified reviewers worldwide. We hope it will continue to do so. We take this opportunity to express our appreciation of the efforts of those who review for us, and especially those who do so regularly. To read books with the care required to review them properly takes much time and concentration; to distil 800 or 900 words of fair and constructive comment from one’s reading calls, equally, for great attention and effort. We, and our readers, depend on the continued willingness of our contributors to be generous with their time and expertise; our sincere thanks to all of them.

Now that we have broken our silence, we propose to continue. We intend that each future issue of *The Classical Review* should be introduced by a brief editorial drawing attention to what we see as its highlights. Our judgement here will inevitably be subjective, but one of the benefits of editing a journal such as this is that one acquires a sense of trends in classical scholarship across its full range; we hope, then, that in casting an eye widely over the entire contents of an issue we will be able to flag interesting developments which busy readers, who are always likely to home in on reviews of immediate relevance to their own research and teaching, might otherwise miss, and which, in our opinion, deserve foregrounding in their own right.

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