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That a classical journal with its emphasis on imaginative criticism of the classics should be something of a novelty is in itself a telling comment on the present state of classical studies; yet few could contest the validity of the aims of *Arion* or of its censures of the present state of classical studies.

The present approach to classical literature is characterised as 'all rigor where philology is concerned and all slack muscle when one comes to those few tired pages of "appreciation" . . .'. Because any approach that is not philological is liable to be branded as vulgarisation and because classical literature alone of all literatures 'is kept innocent of modern critical methods and discussion', and because classical standards are no longer comparable to those of other branches of humane study 'we have', the editors claim, 'dropped out of the Common Pursuit'. Indeed, there is even a suspicion among non-classicists that the reason why classical literature is not subjected to critical discussion is that it would not survive such a test.

Arion is concerned chiefly with the interpretation and evaluation of classical literature, the publication and reviewing of translations, and the appraisal of popular, seminal, and standard works on the classics; it is the editors' view, surely justified, that their aims and approach are 'not honored in current scholarly practice'. The editors seem aware that several battles, already fought in English studies, may have to be fought again in classical studies: they will have to establish that literary evaluation is not a purely subjective process or one dictated solely by the intellectual fashions of the time and they will have to maintain respect for criticism by abiding by their own explicit resolution to discourage unscholarly work and 'merely irresponsible or impressionistic forays into antiquity'.

Inevitably, the validity of the approach advocated by *Arion* will be judged to a certain extent by the articles, translations, and reviews that it prints as an earnest of the type of work it favours. This first issue is uneven in standard, and it will be unfortunate if a valid approach is discounted because it has been inexpertly pursued. If the issue were to be judged solely on Thomas Rosenmeyer's perceptive, supremely articulate, and always illuminating exegesis of the characters and significant elements of the *Seven Against Thebes*, then the approach of *Arion* would be vindicated beyond all doubt, but the other long critical article in the issue, H. A. Mason's *Is Juvenal A Classic?*, is a disquieting piece of work. Much criticism of classical literature is sheer browbeating or outright flannel, and there is a danger that in correcting ludicrous overstatements critics may tend to direct their scorn at a classical author, rather than at his critic, as Mr. Mason seems to do in attacking G. G. Ramsay's judgment in the Loeb edition of Juvenal that 'Juvenal is the greatest satirist, and one of the greatest moralists, of the world'; further, it may need to be stated that Juvenal is a literary opportunist, *vis-à-vis* his material, rather than a man with a serious moral purpose, but it is questionable critical practice to berate an author for failing to measure up to the evaluations of his critics or to his imitators (that is, Johnson), rather than to take him on his own terms (and it is the content of Juvenal's poetry Mr. Mason discusses, rather than its form, certain elements of which, he frankly admits, may have a significance that escapes him). Two translations are printed in the issue, one excellent and one mystifyingly bad. William Arrowsmith's translation of the prologue of *The Knights* flows easily, is humorous and inventive in its renderings, and could surely be acted to good effect. Of Richard Braun's clotted and contorted versions of Propertius I can say nothing charitable, and the reader may be pardoned his blank stare, or splutters of fury, at seeing such a lucid if unremarkable couplet as:

Non ego nunc Hadriae vereor mare noscere tecum,
Tulle, neque Aegeo ducere vela salo, (I. vi. 1-2)

rendered:

In this era, Tullus, and in your company,
I have no fear of learning an unknown ocean
(leaving on Adriatic salt or the Aegean).

The review section contains articles on recordings of readings of classical authors, on traditions of (Greek) cultural history, on Robert Fitzgerald's translation of *The Odyssey*, and on Peter Green's *Essays In Antiquity* and Professor Lloyd-Jones' *Greek Studies in Modern Oxford*, as well as a feature entitled *Autolyceus* which quotes choice fatuities on the classics.

An approach like that of *Arion* will certainly be welcomed by classics teachers in state schools, at least, where the classics have now only a precarious hold, but the approach of schools is to a large extent determined by the approach of universities, where, to use an unfortunate but accurate expression, there is a philological establishment in power, reluctant to admit this new approach and perhaps ignorant or suspicious of its possibilities. Just why classics is now in danger of, to quote the editors of *Arion*, 'not competing at all for the serious attention of the community of letters' may be appreciated if one considers the situation of a boy or girl reading English and Greek or Latin in a sixth form: nominally he or she is studying two literatures uniquely worthy of study, but whereas English literature can be studied and evaluated as an illumination of thought, experience, indeed of life itself, classical literature – largely, but not entirely, because of present examination requirements – tends to be studied merely as an illumination of ancient grammatical and syntactical practice, at best to be translated, and at worst to be picked over, magpie fashion, for tags for use in compositions.

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