If one were looking to find fault with this book, one could suggest that the structure of the work does not hang together as well as some of the publicity about it might suggest. Chapter 5, for instance, rather, as suggested, goes off on a tangent from the thrust of the book up to this point. The subtitle, 'Local history and the polis', looks a little like a misnomer – engagement with local polis history is delayed until Chapter 6, and thereafter is sometimes left aside while Clarke pursues some related notion that she thinks deserves coverage. This is a very discursive work; there are long footnotes that touch on matters that Clarke clearly wants to address, but don't feel are directly relevant to her main text. This, and the book's slightly unfocused feel, gives the impression that this work originated in a Ph.D. thesis, though in fact it didn't. The problem, such as it is, seems to me to arise from the work trying to be two books at the same time; to quote Clarke (vii), 'a study of constructed time' and 'an examination of the writing of history'. The result is that the chapters do not seem to share much in common apart from the vague notion of 'time'.

But in the end, this is merely quibbling. The work overall may be less than the sum of its parts, but when the individual parts are this rich and this rewarding, such criticism seems churlish. The discursiveness of the work is what makes each chapter so worthy of study. To take a few examples: some considerable time ago I wrote something (never published) on the date of the battle of Eurymedon given by Diodorus Siculus – it would now be impossible for me to return to that material without engaging with what Clarke has to say about Diodorus's dating systems. The chapter on rhetoric has important implications for how one thinks about the use of Athenian history in the likes of Andocides, or Aelius Aristides. The final chapter is relevant for the Second Sophistic. One may not always agree with Clarke's conclusions, but they must be taken into account.

In short, there is something for everyone in this book. It redefines how we think about history. It is a key text for Greek history, one that no serious scholar of the period can afford to ignore. Hopefully, there is a paperback planned so that the work can take its proper place on students' and teachers' bookshelves.

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This collection of articles derives in part from the papers presented at the 26th biennial conference of the Classical Association of South Africa held at Durban and Pietermaritzburg in 2005. John Hilton explains in the introduction that the conference’s theme, ‘The Classical Tradition/Classical Receptions’, reflects the complexity and ambiguity of processes of cultural exchange. The volume’s Latin main title, *Alma Parens Originalis?*, ‘Original Motherland?’, similarly points to the ambiguous influence of classical culture and thought across the globe, literally questioning notions of origin, tradition and authority. The editors expect their readers to know Latin, for they give no translation or clarification of the phrase. Because this excludes readers whose familiarity with classical culture depends on translation, the title is at risk of re-establishing the very authority it is intended to question. The subtitle, ‘The Receptions of Classical Literature and Thought in Africa, Europe, the United States, and Cuba’, reflects a structural asymmetry: while the volume’s first two sections consist of six chapters, the latter one contains only two, and the words ‘Africa’ and ‘Europe’, which refer to continents, are unevenly aligned with the national designations ‘the United States’ and ‘Cuba’.

The essays address a wide range of interesting topics. The book’s first section deals with the reception of classical literature in Africa and opens with Lorna Hardwick’s essay, which outlines the framework for Classical Reception Studies. Referencing a number of South African, West African, North African and Caribbean adaptations of Greek drama, Hardwick demonstrates what the discipline of Classics has traditionally tended to ignore: that cross-cultural migrations are never unilinear trajectories, but rather represent complex socio-political and aesthetic interactions. The migratory model she proposes is helpful to Classical Reception Studies, because it acknowledges the cultural politics at play in the relationship between source and receiving culture, a politics that in some of the book’s other analyses remains underexposed.

Of the five following essays in the ‘Africa’ section, four deal exclusively with South Africa. Like Hardwick, Betine Van Zyl Smit and William J. Dominik discuss dramatic adaptations. Van Zyl Smit traces the depiction of Medea in Afrikaans drama from 1858 to 2005, while Dominik looks at three Afrikaans plays that draw on Greek and Roman literature and mythology to expose the exercise and abuse of power in modern South Africa. John Hilton directs his attention to poetry and discusses the classical influence in the work of the South African writer Roy Campbell. The remaining two essays in this section step away from literature. Michael Lambert embarks on a comparative study of ancient Greek and contemporary South African
magical practices, aiming to dissolve the Europe/Africa binary and demonstrate the relevance of the classics to African scholarship. Finally, Johnson O. Ige focuses on the influence of ancient Greek and Roman orators in Nigeria, presenting politician Chief Bola Ige as an example of a 'Classical orator'.

Like the first part, the second part 'Europe' focuses primarily on literature. The first two essays look at the influence of Plato in E.M. Forster's *Maurice* (Nikolai Endres) and at readings of the story of Arion and the Dolphin in Herodotus, Ovid and Vikram Seth’s 1994 libretto *Anne Gosling*. Jan Bloemendal embarks on a Senean reading of Daniel Heinsius’s 1623 biblical tragedy *Herodes Infanticida*, which dramatises the massacre of the innocent children of Bethlehem. In Bloemendal’s reading, Heinsius’s tragedy both Christianises Senean drama and paganises a religious topic, which challenges the convention of purity of genre. The methodology used by Marianne Dircksen in her analysis of the readership of Tacitus from antiquity to the 21st century highlights an important aspect in Classical Reception Studies: historicity. Dircksen demonstrates that classical material cannot be viewed as a static point of departure and that meaning is always historically and culturally contingent. Of the two final essays in the 'Europe' part, the first is by Bernhard Kytzler, who traces the *Nachleben* of the authorial comment at the end of Statius’s epic poem *Thebaid* in a number of Classical, Medieval and Humanist Latin texts. Anton van Hooff, finally, looks at the western concept of suicide from antiquity to the present.

Though the inclusion of the United States and Cuba in the volume’s title promises more, the third and final part ‘The United States and Cuba’, consists only of two essays. Isabelle Torrance discusses Antón Arrufat’s *Los Siete contra Tebas*, a Cuban reworking of Aeschylus’s tragedy that evokes the 1961 events at the Bay of Pigs, when Cuban exiles led an attack against Castro’s regime. Condemned as ‘counter-revolutionary’, the play was banned from circulation. Torrance’s focus is on the recourse to classical tragedy as a political vehicle, and in this respect her essay links thematically to some of the essays in the ‘Africa’ section. Elke Steinmeyer concludes the volume with an investigation of how the myth of Electra has been adapted into comics. She addresses the politics of genre and challenges the conservative tendency to align ‘Classics’ with High culture, a tendency that has no historical bearing, as much classical material was never exclusive to an élite. In her attempt to thus ‘save’ the classics from the traditions that subsequently appropriated and instrumentalised them, Steinmeyer too emphasises the importance of historicity.

In conclusion, this volume successfully demonstrates the continued relevance and presence of classical literature and thought. The book’s cohesion could have been improved by ordering the essays thematically.
rather than geographically. This would have helped readers to recognise correspondences between different analyses and it would have increased the volume’s theoretical weight. Especially since Classical Reception Studies seeks to emphasise the multi-directional nature of cultural exchange and question the idea of static cultural boundaries and traditions, the editors’ choice to structure the volume geographically rather than thematically comes as a surprise. We should keep in mind that Classics traditionally appropriated and (ab)used antiquity not only as the origin, but also as the centre of Western civilisation. Precisely for this reason, the migratory model Hardwick proposes is so relevant to Classical Reception Studies: because it addresses time and space. It is, in other words, not enough to acknowledge history. In order to escape from the grip of ‘The Classical Tradition’ and all it stands for, we should problematise geography as well.

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At the heart of this volume, Translation and the Classic, lies a paradox. The word ‘classic’ suggests permanence, persistence through time, universality, enduring value. Yet ‘translation’ conjures up notions of adapting, transforming and reinterpreting a text to meet the demands of a specific target language and of readers situated in a particular place at a particular time. By virtue of its classic status a text would seem to resist translation. And yet it is precisely the classics that are most widely and most often translated – indeed, ‘translatability’ would seem to be almost a defining characteristic of the classic. How translators, each in their own way grapple with the paradox just outlined, forms the subject of this stimulating and thought-provoking book.

Most of the eighteen contributions deal with the poetic classics of ancient Greece and Rome as translated into major European languages, especially English. But there is discussion also of wider theoretical issues by, among others, the doyen of translation studies, Lawrence Venuti, as well as treatment of such topics as Godard’s film, Le Mépris (Contempt), Graeco-Arabic translation, and J.M. Coetzee’s revision of T.S. Eliot’s notion of the classic. In the final chapter of the volume, Coetzee himself discusses several passages from his novels that have created difficulties for translators. He concludes (rightly in my view, but perhaps discouragingly for some of the contributors), ‘I doubt very much that there is or can be such a thing as a
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