Stephen Orgel. *Wit's Treasury: Renaissance England and the Classics*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021. Pp. 216. $39.95 (cloth).
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For the most part, *Wit's Treasury: Renaissance England and the Classics*, Stephen Orgel's contribution to classical reception studies, is characteristically wide-ranging, shrewd, and insightful. Lucid and conversational, it moreover affords a welcome change from so much literary criticism these days—dense, lugubrious, jargon-filled, and deadly dull. Orgel's strengths run more to English criticism and poetry than to Greek or Latin, so he spends most of his energy examining closely the claims and achievements of early English translators. Orgel observes how differently English writers, collectors, and printers through the Renaissance and beyond responded to the challenge of being classical and how differently they defined the classics through various rereadings and reimaginings.

In the first three chapters Orgel elegantly surveys English literary attempts to reproduce the classical, beginning with usually neglected works like the Earl of Surrey's surprising translation of two books of the *Aeneid* into blank verse in the 1530s. His choice of meter baffled contemporary critics because the original languages were in quantitative verse and English poetry generally rhymed. For a while translators used fourteener couplets to sound classical, such as Thomas Phaer's *Aeneid* (1558), Thomas Drant's versions of Horace (1566, 1567), Arthur Golding's rendering of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1567), nine of ten Senecan plays (1559–1581), Arthur Hall's ten books of Homer's *Iliad* (1581), and George Chapman's magnificent final version of that poem (1611). But Gavin Douglas's Scots translation of the *Aeneid* (1513, pub. 1553) into loose pentameter couplets was a metrical harbinger of things to come. Christopher Marlowe's brilliant adaptations of Musaeus's *Hero and Leander* (1598) and Ovid's *Amores* (1599) established the pentameter couplet as the English classical meter, subsequently adopted by George Chapman for his translation of the *Odyssey* (1614–15) and continuation of *Hero and Leander* (1616). No less an authority than Vergil himself ratifies this prosodic change when he comes to life in Ben Jonson's *Poetaster* (perf. 1601) and recites a bit of *Aeneid* 4 in pentameter couplets.

Ranging widely, Orgel traverses the untrodden foothills of Parnassus, surveying manuscripts and other recondite sources: Bernard André's allegorical *Historia Henrici Septimi* (1490s, unpublished); William Byrd's 1588 setting for some lines of Ovid's *Heroides*, translated into quantitative measures with corrected errors in the metrics; the notebooks of King Edward VI; an English manuscript version of *Oedipus* for school production in fourteeners, replete with comic scenes and two songs. "It has nothing to do with Sophocles" (15), he remarks wryly. Orgel also sheds new light on major figures, especially Marlowe. He brilliantly characterizes *All Ovids Elegies* as "Marlowe's sonnet sequence, the psychic drama of a poet-lover whose love is both his creation and his ultimate monomania, frustration, despair" (20). Foregoing the usual comparison of *Hero and Leander* to its source in Musaeus, Orgel daringly calls Marlowe's "passionate, tragic, comic fragment of an erotic epic" "the best expression of the Ovidian world view in English," despite its occasional infelicities and errors (24, 27). *Hero and Leander*, he observes, has plenty of energy and sexual excitement, but also a foreboding sense "that these heroes are too good for their world, that the gods are jealous, that nothing this beautiful is ever allowed to get away with it" (27).

In these chapters, Orgel offers the reader probing insights and casual corrections of the record. Modern reconstructions of Marlowe's life and reputation depend heavily on speculation, and largely posthumous gossip and invective (18–19). Claims for the popularity of Golding's Caesar by a modern biographer and by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow conflict with historical fact (38–39). Those who sneer at Ben Jonson's unacknowledged reliance on handbooks may themselves be guilty of unacknowledged reliance on bibliographies, periodical indices, Wikipedia, and Google (40–41). Richard Stanyhurst's much-ridiculed *Aeneid*

attempts to restore the old language of Anglo-Irish and translate classical quantitative meter (45–51). Despite irrational assumptions about what is natural and pleasurable in language, Samuel Daniel's *A Defense of Ryme* (1603) was "on the right side of history" (55).

"What did the classical look like?" (57), Orgel then asks. He answers by examining the Arundel Marbles, Italian and English paintings, Prince Henry's collection, print illustrations, Inigo Jones's designs, and the famous Peacham drawing of a scene from *Titus Andronicus*. Drawing on his seminal series of reproductions, *The Renaissance and the Gods* (1976), Orgel observes that mythographers like Vincenzo Cartari, Lilio Gregorio Giraldi, and Natalis Comes sometimes portrayed classical gods as alien, monstrous, and grotesque; they thus created "an endlessly malleable symbolic repertory" (62), which later artists freely manipulated, embracing inherent multiplicities, contradictions, and anomalies. This embrace always included recognition of difference, anachronism, and similarity to the present. And this paradoxical hermeneutic, Orgel concludes, means that "nothing in the past is safely past, and the dark side of how productive classical models were was how dangerously pertinent—how alive—they could also be" (99).

Orgel then sketches developments in book making, noting classical elements in illustrations and the transition from black-letter type to Roman, black-letter used until the eighteenth century for English classics like Chaucer. In "Staging the Classical" Orgel surveys drama, beginning with *Fulgens and Lucrece* (1497) and *Gorboduc* (1569) and ending with Shakespeare and Jonson. One cannot help wishing Orgel had here spent more time on fewer plays and figures, shining his light more intensely, for example, on Shakespeare's or Jonson's fraught but fruitful encounters with antiquity, with Seneca, Ovid, Plautus, Terence, Vergil, or Homer.

Orgel concludes with some perceptive observations on the later history of appropriation and representation. Francis Bacon's dissent from the adulation of the classics and Thomas Browne's objection that such adulation promotes a debilitating "plagiarism" forecast disturbing future developments: they engender the modern assumptions "that the sciences have nothing to learn from the humanities, that science and engineering are the core disciplines, and that ethics, philosophy, history, and the training of the imagination are irrelevant to the world served by science and engineering, the 'real' world of business and politics" (144). Our attitude to the classics, as Orgel demonstrates in *Wit's Treasury*, always defines us.

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IMOGEN PECK. *Recollection in the Republics: Memories of the British Civil Wars in England, 1649–1659*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021. Pp.256. $85.00 (cloth).
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Histories of 1650s England have witnessed a recent upsurge of interest, and Imogen Peck follows this trend with her meticulously crafted *Recollection in the Republics: Memories of the British Civil Wars in England, 1649–1659*, establishing how the civil wars were remembered in their immediate aftermath. Drawing on a rich variety of sources, Peck successfully breaks down the binaries of elite/popular and national/local to demonstrate the multiplicity of responses to the civil wars across the political and social spectrums.

At the same time, Peck situates the memorial culture of the English Republics in relation to other post-conflict societies to highlight the "consistency in some of the challenges that have confronted post-war states across time and space" (2). For the Commonwealth and Protectorate governments, the problem was the paradoxical need to remember the civil wars as a short-term political tool to legitimize the state's authority while also desiring to forget the immediate