

WALTHER LUDWIG: *Miscella Neolatina: Ausgewählte Aufsätze 1989–2003*. Vols. 1–3. Edenda curavit ASTRID STEINER-WEBER. *Noctes Neolatinae, Neo-Latin Texts and Studies*, Bde. 2.1–3. Georg Olms Verlag, Hildesheim 2004; 2004; 2005. ISBN 978-3-487-12533-6. XII, 582 S.; VIII, 624 S.; X, 614 S. EUR 264.

These three massive volumes include 66 articles on German humanism and Neo-Latin literature, written in the fifteen years between 1989–2003 by the German grand old classicist and Neo-Latin scholar Walther Ludwig. He has published extensively on ancient and Neo-Latin literature, Latin in everyday life of the early modern scholars and also on the use of Latin as the language of sciences, such as medicine. The author himself has selected the articles and revised most of them for the present publication which was edited by Astrid Steiner-Weber for his 75th birthday. The articles give a representative view of German Neo-Latin literature and its different genres, uses and contexts, studied from a philological perspective. The book is loosely arranged into twelve thematic sections, which focus, for example, on humanism and Christianity, university history, Greek studies, different literary genres and humanistic activities in various parts of early modern Germany. The third volume includes a complete list of Ludwig's publications from 1944 to 2003.

The collection opens with an introductory view of Latin as a language of literature, communication, religion and science in Renaissance and early modern Germany, but also in Italy, France and the Netherlands. Ludwig also draws attention to the under-studied use of ancient mythical figures as personal symbols and emblems, for example, in book printers' seals. The subsequent articles concentrate on specific texts or authors whose writings illuminate the variety of Neo-Latin literature. For example, they deal with controversies over maculate/immaculate conception and disputes over the causes of melancholy and prophetic visions – be the reason for these phenomena demons, as certain theologians and Luther argued, or natural courses, as the medical view maintained. Ludwig shows how the classical literary traditions helped early modern authors, for example, to celebrate Christian and contemporary figures in the classical bucolic form, to compose consolatory literature in times of private distress (Wolfgang Reichart's poems and letters on the death of his two-year-old son), or in the traditional epideictic mode to praise universities (Jacob Locher praising the university of Ingolstadt in order to attract new students to the town after a plague epidemic had swept through it in the 1520's). Nearly all major German Neo-Latin authors are somehow mentioned in the articles. Delightfully, the volumes do not concentrate only on major literary genres but also deal with minor forms, such as erotic poetry (Jean Bonnefons's lovely *Pervigilium veneris*), parodic learning (*Ius potandi*), satire and invective (*Epistolae obscurorum virorum*) and the dialogue form. One of the aims of the selection clearly is to cover as many literary genres as possible, from encomia and epigrams to epitaphs and epicedia.

Most of the articles focus on individual sixteenth-century German scholars or poets and their texts composed under specific circumstances. Frequently, the author deals with less known texts of famous authors, like Nicodemus Frischlin's wedding epic or Castiglione's elegiac poem and fictitious letter written in the manner of Ovid's *Heroides*. Thus, the articles enrich the common view of these well-known authors and their literary activities. The articles are written in a strict, scholarly style and have a clear structure, usually beginning with biographical data and then concentrating on the texts, letters or poems that are included both in Latin and in

German translation. The discussion usually includes a summary of the main contents of the texts, analysis of their rhetorical structure and careful identification of classical influences and quotations. The articles are always heavily annotated with references – even though I detected some predilection for references to male scholars – and thus best approached by scholarly and philologically-oriented readers. Ludwig follows the adaptations of individual ancient motifs (e.g., the motif of the kiss in Plato's epigrams) and later imitations of ancient authors (e.g., the reception of Horace and Isocrates), underlining the importance of knowledge of the classics for scholars working on early modern texts, both Latin and vernacular. Frequently, Ludwig shows how classical traditions and humanistic learning were combined with other intellectual and religious traditions (e.g., Lutheran or Protestant Christianity) that likewise shaped the thinking and writing of early modern intellectuals, as well as how Christian views were expressed by imitating classical genres, and how the coexistence of different intellectual traditions and world views at times led to intellectual and political controversies.

The third volume closes with an interesting and partly polemical section on the present situation of Latin and Neo-Latin studies, the latter still being even more neglected at today's universities than classical studies. The first article in this section offers a somewhat pessimistic perspective on the future, complaining and warning about the decreasing knowledge of classical languages. Ludwig underlines the importance of reading Neo-Latin texts in comparison with both ancient and early modern primary sources to avoid misinterpretation and speculation. In looking back to the glorious past compared with the present 'Lateinarmut', this is also the most monumental part of the three volumes. Characteristically, the third volume ends in two homages, describing the lives and scholarly activities of two scholars of the Renaissance and Neo-Latin periods, Paul Oskar Kristeller and Josef IJsewijn. We can only hope that the future will bring new scholars to continue the work of these men in various countries and also in other disciplines, such as literary studies, philosophy, history, theology and sciences. Ludwig wisely emphasises the importance of interdisciplinary co-operation in reading Neo-Latin texts and contextualising them in the early modern intellectual climate. Among several suggestions for improving Neo-Latin scholarship Ludwig mentions, for example, the production of bilingual editions of Neo-Latin texts, the study of letter collections as sources for early modern thinking and everyday contexts, the composition of Neo-Latin dictionaries, and the study of the role of Neo-Latin literature in various countries and in relation to their "national" literatures. Along with Ludwig and as a scholar living far in the northern darkness I warmly welcome open-access on-line editions. Since all texts can with good reason be studied from different perspectives, I also welcome speculation as long as it means a fruitful and thought-provoking interpretation of Neo-Latin texts and discussion about their relevance to the present world.

It is impossible to analyse the individual articles in detail here. It goes without saying that the three heavy volumes are highly useful to anyone working on German Neo-Latin literature. By drawing attention to unstudied poems, pointing out previously unnoticed connections between texts and offering access to unpublished letters as historical documents, Ludwig's large oeuvre with its extreme scholarly precision fundamentally contributes to the writing of a history of Neo-Latin literature. It illuminates the reception of the classics in early modern Germany and offers ample material for further studies.