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## REFERENCES

Mark Storey, *Time and Antiquity in American Empire: Roma Redux*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2021, 256 pages, ISBN: 978-0-19-887150-7, £66

- 1 The reception of classical antiquity in the United States has attracted much critical attention over the past forty years. In Caroline Winterer's words, "next to Christianity, the central intellectual project in America before the late nineteenth century was classicism" (2002 1). Cultural historians have explored the "formative influence" of the classics upon the founders of the nation (Richards 7), the ubiquity of ancient models in the shaping of an American culture (Reinhold), or the burgeoning of "a classical visual culture" (Shalev 13; Winterer 2005) in the wake of the Independence. Scholars such as Michele Valerie Ronnick or John Levi Barnard have also traced the development of African American classicism since the nineteenth century. This "cult of antiquity" (Reinhold 23-24) not only allowed the citizens of the new nation to reflect on their political and cultural identity, but it also shaped their understanding of US history. Eran Shalev's *Rome Reborn on Western Shores* is telling in this respect. It has shed new light on how this fantasized kinship to the world of the ancients manifested itself through typological readings of US history, thus warping the chronology of historical time.
- 2 In *Time and Antiquity in American Empire*, Mark Storey acknowledges the importance of this scholarship, but he offers a slightly different perspective on the recourse to classical culture in the American imagination. Instead of addressing the issue in terms of reception or inheritance, he reads American texts that engage with both Roman antiquity and imperial discourse and examines how analogies with ancient Rome produce various "forms of historical thinking" (vii). Central to his argument is the

assumption that such analogues might justify *and* unsettle the political, racial and gendered categories on which modern imperial energies rest. Put another way, this book provides a critical vantage point from which one may “apprehend the composition and decomposition of what we have come to call the American empire” (viii).

- 3 Storey’s theoretically informed introduction helps him delineate the methodological ground of his inquiry. Contrary to a critical tradition that tends to privilege allegorical interpretations, he proposes to read the classical material of these texts analogically. While allegory gestures toward a complete correspondence between two objects, analogy, Storey suggests, is a “malleable trope” (94) that brings two analogues together without equating them. Because of their coeval positions, they “stand [...] in a mutually illuminating and constantly oscillating relationship of meaning” (25). Even though the line between analogy and allegory is not always clear in the texts under study (and Storey is well aware of this), this distinction allows for a renewed approach to the place of Roman culture in the American political imagination and to the historical trajectories that imperial discourse creates.
- 4 The book also intervenes into recent debates in historicist critique when it questions the relevance of chrononormative methods and warns us about the epistemological pitfall that involves reducing historicist protocols to a process of synchronization. Rather than perpetuating linear narratives that trace the enduring presence of ancient Rome in Western cultures, Storey “constellates” texts that belong in different moments of Western history—that is, he connects them so as to form a network unveiling the multiple temporalities that give shape to the United States’ relationship with classical culture. This rearranging of historical time opens up new avenues for investigating “how an analogy with the ancient world has knitted together the central materials of th[e] historically dispersed phenomenon” (10) that is American imperialism. This approach, Storey reminds us, is indebted to what is usually styled the transnational turn and resonates with recent works by Jeff Insko, Cody Marrs, or Gregory Laski that call for alternative ways of conceptualizing historical trajectories. Accordingly, the book’s scope is not limited to the ubiquity of Roman analogies in American (anti)imperial discourse: Storey makes strong epistemological claims when he defines his study as “an inquiry into cultural logics and political effects of analogical thinking—that is, the political history of a literary device” (15).
- 5 Equally impressive is the book’s corpus, which consists of a broad spectrum of works including novels, travel narratives, plays, essays, poems (but also films, photographs, and caricatures) that cover a period ranging from the late eighteenth century to the present day. In order to avoid the homogenizing impulse that animates linear historical narratives, Storey chooses not to structure his study chronologically, thus adapting the form of his argument to his constellating method. The book is divided into two parts. The first one (“Histories”) is concerned with the political cornerstones of American empire—the republic and slavery—while part 2 explores three literary genres—Christian fiction, travel narratives, and science fiction—in which Roman analogies abound.
- 6 The opening section of chapter 1 accounts for the “Roman fever” (38) that burst forth in the wake of Trump’s election. It pays particular attention to an article by Paul Krugman published in *The New York Times*—“How Republics End”—which exemplifies the persistence of Roman analogies in American political discourse and posits the

Roman Republic as a model of political virtue. Following Andy Doolen, who argues that American republicanism and imperialism cannot be untangled, Storey then traces the ideological ambivalence of the Roman-republican trope in a wide array of texts, starting with its contemporary avatars and then moving back to the American war of Independence. Ursula K. Le Guin's *Lavinia*, which narrates Aeneas' epic journey from his wife's perspective, takes us back to the mythical origins of Roman civilization, but its prophetic tone also encompasses the reader's own present. Yet at the heart Le Guin's reinvention of antiquity is a nostalgic praise of the Roman republic as a model of civic virtue—a vision that echoes an American political tradition dating back to the revolutionary era. In this reading, *Lavinia* would ultimately provide another version of Krugman's historical lesson. If representations of ancient Rome allow for a reassessment of the US republican ethos, Storey points out the limits of allegorical interpretive methods to which scholarly criticism may easily yield. This is the case of John Williams's *Augustus* (1972) and Upton Sinclair's *Roman Holiday* (1931), in which Rome and modern America are never fully equated but are placed in a dialectical relationship. After investigating how Adams's recollection of his Roman journey evidences a networked vision of historical time that undercuts grand narratives of human progress, Storey turns to James's and Hawthorne's engagement with the imperial politics of Americans' touristic gaze and the haunting presence of the ancient past in nineteenth-century Rome. While the overlapping of past and present in *Daisy Miller* (1878) and "Adina" (1874) unveils various forms of narrative irony, Roman antiquity, which materializes in the urban space of *The Marble Faun* (1860), paradoxically becomes the novel's historical context. The last section of the chapter investigates two contrasted political uses of Roman analogies that both reveal what America "no longer" is and foreshadow what it might degenerate into. In *Caius* (1851), this tension between past and present enables Louisa McCord to champion a proslavery, patriarchal and antifederalist model of society, whereas in "The Sack of Rome" (1780), Mercy Otis Warren deplores the loss of a Republican ideal modeled after the Romans and fears that the new nation might already be heading towards imperial decay. The paradox that Storey unpacks in these case studies is that the republican model that has "serve[d] as the virtuous model" in the American imagination since the late eighteenth century "is the very essence of the imperial republic" (81).

- 7 As the example of Mary McCord suggests, slavery looms large in the "imperial foundations" (83) of the republican model. The second chapter explores the ways in which the analogical process that ties Roman slavery to American history may both inform literary representations of US slavery and elicit a critique of modern capitalism, an approach that brings together various forms of temporalities resisting diachronic linearity. Storey first reads the spectral presence of classical antiquity in Tony Morrison's *Love* (2004) as a "barely noticed background noise" (97), hinting at the enduring presence of an imperial apparatus that haunts colonial discourse and Morrison's language. The enmeshment of multiple historical periods is even more patent in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) and "Tell It Like It is" (1965), or in William Demby's *The Catacombs* (1965). By connecting ancient Rome, its modern representations, and African American history, the two writers engage with the persistence of racial exclusion and violence in modern US society, an issue that underground loci—Demby's depiction of Roman catacombs and Ellison's revisiting of katabasis—help spatialize. This constellation of temporalities prompts us to reconsider the contexts through which we examine classical analogies in African American

literature. Instead of circumscribing Howard Fast's *Spartacus* (1951) to Cold-War hermeneutic protocols, Storey then probes the novel in view of other political uses of the Thracian rebel (Liebknecht's Spartakusbund and Raynal's portrait of Toussaint Louverture), constellating "diachronically dispersed but subtextually connected histories" (109) that may foster new forms of emancipation in the future. Likewise, attending to W.E.B. Du Bois' and Sutton E. Criggs' anti-imperial critiques requires that we rescale our historical coordinates and do not limit our inquiry to their immediate contexts. Moving to Robert Montgomery Bird's *The Gladiator* (1831), a historical melodrama that has often been read allegorically as a call for Jacksonian democracy and for all-conquering individualism, Storey discusses the play next to the racist hatred of the playwright's journal, and thus complicates its racial politics. He eventually takes us back to the late-colonial period and the first decades of the American nation. Despite the ubiquity of classical models in late eighteenth-century America, both Charles Brockden Brown's "The Death of Cicero" (1800) and Phillis Wheatly's poem "To Maecenas" (1773) obliquely point to the inadequacy of Roman analogies to account for the American present—notably the issue of slavery. This absence of continuity between the classical world and the new nation sheds doubt on the fantasized filiation with republican Rome that helped forge the US democratic ethos.

- 8 Each chapter of part 2 is dedicated to a literary genre traditionally associated with popular culture and seeks to discern the specific historical trajectories that Roman analogies create. "Dominion without end: Christian Fiction" opens with a discussion of Mel Gibson's *The Passion of Christ* (2004), in which the ubiquity of torture and messianic discourse provide American viewers with an ancient analogue that may sanction the torture programs that were developed by the Bush administration and revealed to the public one year after the film was released. In this respect, *The Passion of Christ* exemplifies the entanglement of theological and imperial rationales in Christian fiction. The genre, Storey argues, narrates the emergence of Christianity within the context of imperial Rome, but it also accounts for the fall of the Roman Empire as the direct consequence of the development of Christian faith. The chapter investigates the dialectical relationship that a cluster of texts establishes between such a historical narrative and a culture of US imperialism, a process that may justify and/or challenge imperial logics. The racialized representation of Christ in Lew Wallace's *Ben Hur* (1880) reads as an endorsement of modern US imperialism, contrary to Gore Vidal's revisiting of ancient Rome and early Christianity in *Julian* (1964), which exposes essentialist views of heteronormativity that are central to the US expansionist discourse. The last case study, which makes us veer back to Jacksonian America, explores William Ware's narratives of Christian martyrdom as allegories of Stuart Mill's liberal imperialism.
- 9 Chapter 4 turns to travel narratives and pays particular attention to the lingering presence of ruined monuments in modern times. Starting with a mention of Jhumpa Lahiri's *In Other Words* (2016), Storey unpacks the idea that aestheticizing Roman ruins evacuates the more violent political and historical energies of the classical worlds. Instead of perpetuating Romantic readings of ancient ruins, he probes into the political and aesthetic forces revealed by their material presence and connects nineteenth- and twentieth-century travel narratives that directly or obliquely engage with ancient Roman and US imperial politics. Placing Howells in conversation with Twain unveils "the shape of imperial fantasy and the shape of its undoing" (180). While the racial terms in which the Pompeian remains are depicted in *Roman Holidays and Others* (1908) naturalize the fantasy of a direct filiation between ancient Rome and modern America,

*The Innocents Abroad* (1867) foregrounds the writer's sense of historical belatedness and transforms his visit of the Coliseum into an experience whose Barnumesque flavor undermines exceptionalist conceptions of both Roman and American cultures. The two other texts that form the chapter's cluster require that we mobilize other periods of Roman history, a process that complicates the Roman-US analogy, though in differing ways. In Eleanor Clark's *Rome and a Villa* (1950), Rome manifests itself as a surrealist collage that coalesces its ancient past and fascism's future-oriented telos, thus making the line between authenticity and fakeness illegible. On the contrary, Margaret Fuller re-orders the various historical trajectories that traverse the Roman space by connecting its classical legacy, US history and the revolutionary energies that were gaining momentum in the Eternal City towards the end of 1847. Accordingly, Rome emerges as a space of "radical political potential" (189). This constellation sheds light on the multiple ways in which the Roman analogy offers the possibility for Americans to write or rewrite "a modernity defined by the extension of US sovereign power and its privileged citizen tourists" (192).

- 10 In the book's final chapter, Storey attends to science fiction works in which the meeting of "deep past and deep future" (223) illuminates the exclusive or inclusive logics of Roman analogies. In *Westworld*, wealthy travelers who visit Delos—an amusement park populated with androids—may choose to re-experience a fantasized version of the nineteenth-century American frontier, or to fulfil their wildest sexual fantasies in a reconstructed imperial Pompeii. This mention of Michael Crichton's 1973 film enables Storey to exemplify American science fiction's registration of an imperial imagination that strides across historical time and superimposes distinct historical periods. Central to the chapter is the relationship between the "alternative lifeworlds" of science fiction and "the reader's own present," which "exists as a kind of trace or absent-presence within the diegetic focus of the story" (198, 199). Reading the *Foundation* novels (1951-1953) in view of Edward Gibbon's account of the decline of Rome reveals Isaac Asimov's indebtedness to a conception of antiquity that simultaneously others the figure of the barbarian and testifies to the imperial politics at play in the trilogy's galactic world. This anthropological line between Western and Nonwestern cultures informs Edgar Rice Burrough's 1929 *Tarzan and the Lost Empire*, in which the eponymous hero encounters a "lost tribe" of Roman descent that has developed for almost two millennia, unbeknownst to the rest of the Western world. In Storey's reading, these Romans embody an alternative trajectory of Western history that reaffirms white superiority, but the novel also unveils the need for capitalism to "reproduce its own 'infinite futurity'" (215), a concept he borrows from Frank Kelleter. The imperial and teleological energies that animate Asimov's and Burrough's fiction are challenged in Samuel Delany's *Phallos* (1969), a novel that queers historical time and incorporates the figure of the Barbarian into its non-linear exploration of Roman history.
- 11 Storey's analogical constellations not only foreground the possibility to approach the United States' relationship with classical Rome as a multidirectional—and often heterogeneous—process, but they also create new connections between various historical moments and provide alternative models for rethinking the idea of progress, the cultural ties between Roman antiquity and US culture, or our conception of long-term history. In other words, the book convincingly invites us to reconsider "the usual templates of periodized historiography" (141) and offers an illuminating discussion of Roman analogies in relation to American imperial power. However thought-provoking

and stimulating the argument may be, its formal and aesthetic stakes sometimes beg for expansion. The book pays relatively little attention to the verbal texture of these analogies and therefore does not fully explore the intertextual dialogue between the American works under study and imperial discourse itself, although such a discussion would allow for a deeper understanding of what Storey aptly terms “the narrative production of American imperial power” (225). It is significant in this respect that the title includes the concepts that are central to his inquiry (antiquity, time and American empire) without making reference to US literature, unless one considers that literature is one facet—among many others—of an “imperial culture” (13), but such an approach would de facto question the specificity of literary discourse in the shaping or in the undoing of this imperial culture. In addition, Storey’s critique of the teleological impulse that informs historical narratives is permeated on rare occasions by genetic images (“the DNA of Roman republicanism” [40], “the juridical and moral chromosome of the ancient Mediterranean” [92], Christian fiction’s “DNA” p. 159, or “the genetic code for the whole SF subgenre” [206]) that tend to naturalize cultural objects and to undercut the book’s deconstruction of grand cultural narratives. In spite of these minor reservations, *Time and Antiquity in American Empire* is a fascinating inquiry into the multiple—and often unexpected—ways in which Roman analogies are germane to US imperial discourse. It is undoubtedly a major intervention in the political history of classical models, and it makes a compelling contribution to our understanding of transatlantic historical time.

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