Editorial

I write this editorial on return from a month-long summer school at the Humboldt University of Berlin, entitled KOSMOS: Globalized Classics, with 61 student and early career participants from academic institutions in 16 countries, though with the number of individual geographical stops on the way, and in all five continents, a manifold of that. The term "globalized", reworked in the title of the final conference as "globalizing", was on the one hand intended to prompt questions about the geographical extension of the ancient world as a subject of Classics as a discipline; on the other hand, it was also meant to ask about the effects on and through Classics as an agent and as a form of knowing when its methods and practitioners are located or move beyond the default situation of the European and North American sphere. (That the differences and convergences between Europe and America are themselves a rich topic for conceptual comparative work is a separate topic, and one this journal hopes to continue addressing, not least in some forthcoming review essays).

Classics as a field has always enjoyed an ambivalent relationship with comparison, not least since the extension to other fields, other cultures, or other periods is structurally bound up with questions of the canon and of genealogy. Comparison is both inherent to familiar practices and approaches (the comparison between Greece and Rome, or the comparison between ancient and modern), and yet comparison has also functioned as a marker of approaching limits: scholars of the ancient world, from the Early Modern period to the present day, were and are aware, with various levels of anxiety, that a logical consequence of knowing the world of Greece and Rome would have to be confrontation with what lies beyond it, either in space or time: Egypt, the Ancient Near East, Late Antiquity, and in increasing circles yet later periods and

places further afield. Friedrich August Wolf could in his otherwise confident *Darstellung der Alterthumswissenschaft* (1807) still estimate that there were about 1,600 extant classical texts – though he straightaway adds in a footnote that he excludes all postclassical Christian material, and that the number is bound to increase regardless: even the proper territory of *Altertumswissenschaft* "has already become impossible to traverse in every direction even for the most diligent and optimistic." Between specialization and inclusiveness, between obligations to standards of knowledge and obligations to other agendas, the specters of knowing too much or not enough have always accompanied the imagination of the individual scholar and the scholarly community as a whole.

One way or another, Classics in the twenty-first century is bound up in the challenges, both old and new, of globalization, and the ancient world of the classicist today already looks bigger and different from before. The same goes for the inquiries of Reception Studies, which have increasingly and profitably looked to non-European worlds. But one further integral way of approaching the conceptual potential (and the conceptual headaches) of extension and concentration, histories of transfer, and modes of comparison is through Reception as a way of triangulation. When we are faced with materials and data sets from, say, Rome and China, or epic narrative from Greece and Mesopotamia, one route in is through Reception Studies as a way of probing cultures of knowing, histories of epistemologies, scholarly practices, the uses and creations of ancient or classical cultures and the modern approaches to them in the first place, thus creating common ground by offering an analysis of the frames in which we approach comparison. In addition, Reception Studies is an area that can serve as a testing ground for new forms of cooperative and collaborative work,

confronting head-on that other kind of limit that we inhabit in our discipline and in the world of our journals, that of the single-authored, case-study based article. While CRJ will continue to seek out and support the best work of that kind, the journal also encourages submissions that specifically address the potential of combined specializations.

In her editorial to the first issue of *CRJ* in 2009, Lorna Hardwick wrote of the task of naming the journal, and mentioned that titles such as 'Proteus' or 'Chameleon' had strong advocates. The straightforward "Receptions" (plural) won out, and Lorna Hardwick's admirable sense of direction, inclusiveness, and support for all aspects of "antiquity after antiquity" has made this journal, its editors hope, a forum for a field of inquiry that understands itself as both integral to Classics (literature and philology, history, philosophy, material culture and art history, and their respective historiographies) and as open to engagement with other disciplines. For this, and for her leadership in establishing this journal, I and the entire editorial team and board wish to thank her wholeheartedly.

There is no need to go back on the term 'Receptions', even if it is a term that warrants continued recalibration and interrogation, something highlighted for example by Michael Silk, Ingo Gildenhard, and Rosemary Barrow in their jointly authored book *The Classical Tradition: Art, Literature, Thought* (2014), who call for a revaluation of the term 'tradition' with emphasis on its complex indirect, diffuse, and contingent aspects. Prompted by the adaptability of the chameleon and the changeability of the figure of Proteus, though, my mind has in writing this editorial also turned to the German philosopher and philologist Friedrich Schlegel and his pronouncement on

epic poetry ancient and modern. As a genre, he likens epic to ‘a growth like a poetic polyp, where every limb, whether large or small, (which can be separated from the grown whole without maiming and without dissolution into simple and no longer poetic or epic parts) has its own life and just as much harmony as the whole’ (in his early 1796 essay 'On Homeric Poetry, with Reference to Wolf's Studies'). The polyp was in Schlegel’s time the subject of intense fascination and multiple scientific interests for the regenerative qualities of this sea creature, its transgressive nature as blurring the boundaries between plant and animal realms, and its ability to procreate and survive as a single, unconnected pieces when the main body was cut apart.

To invoke Schlegel is not to issue a call for a Romantic notion of a unified organic coherence in the knowledge and use of antiquity that persists through time and space despite its fragmentation. If anything, the polyp testifies to the ability for difference. More importantly, it is a reminder that Schlegel wrote his reflection at a moment in time when classical scholarship and its attitudes towards who and what counted as the subject and object of classical knowledge were arguable and in flux, when early institutionalisation and professionalization of the discipline of Classics was a motivator to thinkers like Schlegel to put pressure on the limits of academic discourse and practice, and on the definitions of ancient materials and genres that came with them. It is a call to remind ourselves of the flexibility and the indeterminacy of the ways in which the disconnected parts can stand in relation, and the factors that have shaped the connections we have made.

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