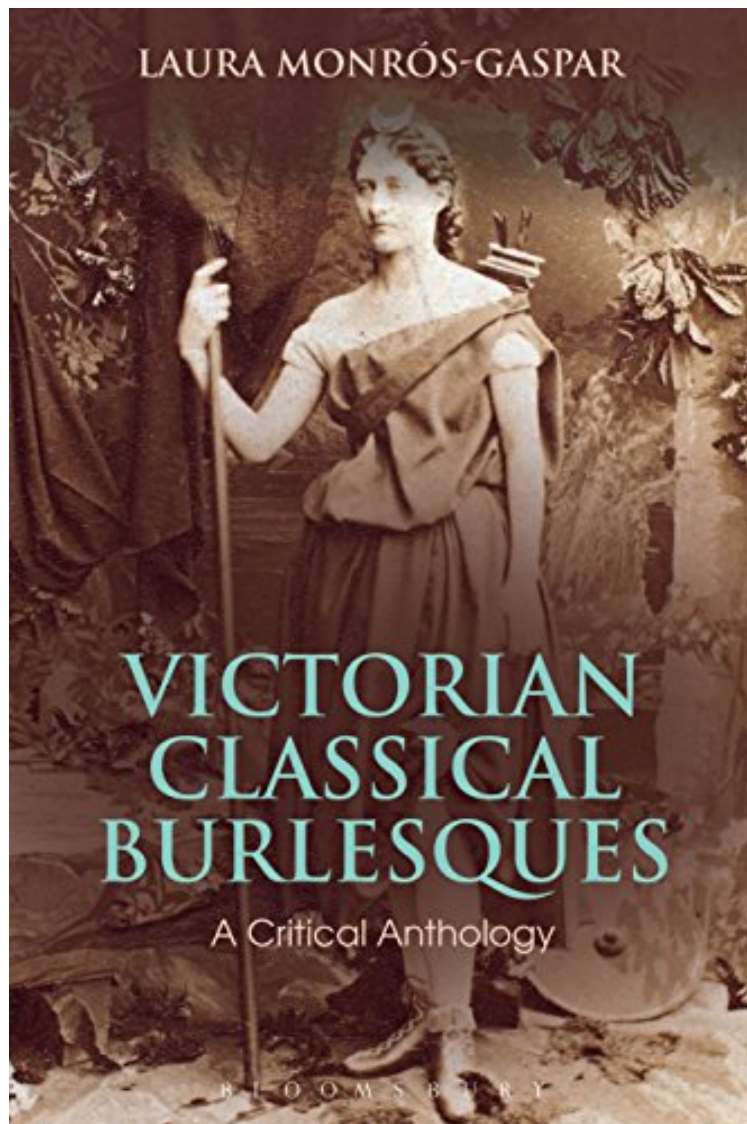


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Laura Monros-Gaspar

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Laura Monros-Gaspar : Victorian Classical Burlesques: A Critical Anthology (Bloomsbury Studies in Classical Reception) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Victorian Classical Burlesques: A Critical Anthology (Bloomsbury Studies in Classical Reception):

The Victorian classical burlesque was a popular theatrical genre of the mid-19th century. It parodied ancient tragedies with music, melodrama, pastiche, merciless satire and gender reversal. Immensely popular in its day, the genre was also intensely metatheatrical and carries significance for reception studies, the role and perception of women in Victorian society and the culture of artistic censorship. This anthology contains the annotated text of four major classical burlesques: *Antigone Travestie* (1845) by Edward L. Blanchard, *Medea; or, the Best of Mothers with a Brute of a Husband* (1856) by Robert Brough, *Alcestis; the Original Strong-Minded Woman* (1850) and *Electra in a New Electric Light* (1859) by Francis Talfourd. The cultural and textual annotations highlight the changes made to the scripts from the manuscripts sent to the Lord Chamberlain's office and, by explaining the topical allusions and satire, elucidate elements of the burlesques' popular cultural milieu. An in-depth critical introduction discusses the historical contexts of the plays' premieres and unveils the cultural processes behind the reception of the myths and original tragedies. As the burlesques combined spectacular effects with allusions to contemporary affairs, ambivalent and provocative attitudes to women, the plays represent an essential tool for reading the social history of the era.

This is a rich treasure trove for anyone interested in Classical Reception and in theatre history. Four nineteenth-century Greek tragic burlesques have been brought together for the first time in this volume, along with a wealth of contextual evidence and scrupulous editorial standards. (Fiona Macintosh, Professor of Classical Reception and Director of The Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama (APGRD), St Hilda's College, University of Oxford, UK) We take for granted that the classical world was a familiar one for many Victorian artists, writers, spectators, and readers. This collection shows us just how classical literature, art and language saturated Victorian popular culture, and was the domain of the comic, the burlesque and the 'low' as well as the high art of the nineteenth century. Laura Monroacute;s-Gaspar's anthology offers us the evidence of four funny, convoluted, frivolous burlesques of classical myths, to show us another side of the Victorians -- unbuttoned, at play. The plays are impeccably edited, so that readers without the classical education of the Victorian gentleman can follow the playful satire of serious learning. Monroacute;s-Gaspar's Introduction places these plays thoroughly in their context of Victorian London, yet reminds us of the modernity and energy of the Victorians. These are plays which, as Monroacute;s-Gaspar argues, helped to shape London's West End, and may still raise a sardonic smile 150 years later. (Katherine Newey, Professor of Theatre History, University of Exeter, UK) Laura Monroacute;s-Gaspar's edition of four classical burlesques from the Victorian period makes available four texts from the 1840s and 1850s which will enhance our understanding not only of Victorian burlesque drama but also of the relationship of the Victorian public to classical drama and literature. Monroacute;s-Gaspar has provided a detailed introduction, which places the burlesques within the context of Victorian culture, politics and social concerns, particularly in relation to women in that period, and provides a brief history of the burlesque form and of the burgeoning Victorian interest in the classics educationally and through painting and sculpture. The commentary and annotations on the individual plays relate each play to the source texts and provide full details of characters and their relationships, textual variants and of the myths on which the plays were based. There is also useful reference to Victorian performers and Victorian theatre practices. This well-illustrated anthology will be invaluable not only to students of Victorian theatre and of Victorian responses to the Classics, but also to readers interested in exploring the particularly playful interaction between Greek and Victorian culture represented in these burlesques. (Jim Davis, Professor of Theatre Studies, University of Warwick, UK) These four surprisingly entertaining plays are introduced and annotated with a fine scholarship so light of touch that to read it is a pleasure in itself. (Oliver Taplin, Emeritus Professor of Classics, University of Oxford, UK) An indispensable work of scholarship for those working in Victorian Studies, classical reception, gender studies and performance history. The author's Introduction to the selected texts adroitly maps the place of burlesque in the interaction between the classicising modes in Victorian culture and the commodities of everyday life. The commentary and notes on the texts illuminate the changes made in the burlesques from the first versions sent to the Lord Chamberlain's Office to the staged and published versions, bringing together textual and performance histories. (Lorna Hardwick, Professor Emerita of Classical Studies, The Open University, UK) About the Author Laura Monroacute;s-Gaspar is lecturer at the University of Valencia, Spain. Her publications include *Cassandra the Fortune-Teller: Prophets, Gypsies and Victorian Burlesque* (2011), *Cassandra de Florence Nightingale* (2011), *Nineteenth-century Literature: A Reader* (2012) and *Persiguiendo a Safo: escritoras victorianas y mitologiacute;a claacute;sica* (2012).