as dispassionately as an outsider would, and there are times, it is argued, when the epic narrator of the *Aeneid* encourages us to adopt a similar perpective.

In 'Part IV. The *Aeneid*: Piety and the Gods' Patricia Johnston attempts to examine Aeneas' piety through an Epicurean, rather than a Stoic, lens, but is unable to resolve the apparent disagreement between Lucretius' attitude to religious observance and Philodemus' (?) in the treatise *On Piety*. Dirk Obbink generously offers what amounts to two essays for the price of one: he skilfully argues that Virgil inserts allusions to the Epicurean doctrine of the falsehood of the mythological representation of gods, and (via a new reconstruction of two Herculaneum papyri) examines the allegorical or decorative function of catalogues of divine amours. While he remains cautious as to what can be proved in such matters, Michael Wigodsky maintains, in the paper that immediately follows, that even if Virgil were an Epicurean, the gods of his epic certainly are not, but would have been retained for reasons which have little to do with Epicurean philosophy.

Marilyn Skinner and Daniel Delattre present two papers on poetics and music in 'Part V. The *Aeneid*: Aesthetics'. Delattre's detailed study of music and song in the *Aeneid* indicates that the poet generally conforms to Philodemus' notions about music's inability to impart ethical qualities; but Delattre also considers passages where Virgil seems to deviate from this doctrine.

The final section, 'Other Augustan Poets', contains a convincing essay by David Armstrong on Horace's debt to certain Philodemean treatises in the first book of his *Epistles*. The collection ends with an essay by Francis Cairns which identifies Epicurean thought in Propertius 2.34 and sees the poem as communicating its author's desire to be included among Virgil's circle of friends.

In sum, the volume presents some exciting examples of lines of inquiry into canonical texts which have only been made possible by Philodemus reasearch. There is much in this collection that is plausible, some that is compelling, and a little that appears rather speculative. It remains to be seen whether scholars who are not already converted to the pleasures of Philodemus' Roman garden will be convinced.

University of Cape Town CLIVE CHANDLER
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VIRGIL'S BATTLES

A. Rossi: *Contexts of War. Manipulation of Genre in Virgilian Battle Narrative*. Pp. viii + 223. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004. Cased, US$55, £34.50. ISBN: 0-472-11359-3.

In this highly stimulating book, Andreola Rossi studies 'how the *Aeneid* constantly redefines the epic imagery of war by assimilating narrative systems that are distinctive of other literary genres: above all, historiography, and to a lesser extent, tragedy' (p. 2). She aims 'to show how the presence of narrative registers that belong to different literary genres creates multiple systems of signification and, accordingly, multiple visions of reality that effectively call into question the epic nature and quality of Virgilian battle narrative' (p. 2). R. first outlines and contexualizes her aim and approach in an introduction. In her first chapter, she demonstrates how the Virgilian Aeneas' 'tale of . . . [Troy's] downfall calls attention to its inherited reusability and thus to the potential for its endless repetition' (p. 30), so countering Jupiter's prediction of a spatially and temporally unlimited Rome, and how,

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manipulating 'the tragic themes of the fall of the city (as he has inherited them from tragedy and historiography)' (p. 53), Aeneas' response to Dido's enquiry recasts the *Iliupersis* as a tragedy. In her second chapter, R. examines '*Aeneid* 9–12' (pp. 54–69) and shows how 'antithetical generic perspectives [of epic and tragedy] offer . . . antithetical interpretative frameworks and create expectations that remain irreconcilable to the very end of the poem' (p. 69). In her third chapter, she argues persuasively that scholars have paid too little attention to the possible significance of 'groupscenes' in Virgil's battle-narrative, which have intertexts in historiography, as opposed to the *aristeiae* and duels that recall Homeric epic. In Chapters 4–7, which constitute the remainder of this second part of the book, R. develops the thesis that ' "groupscenes" are not simply "narrative fillers" inserted between major episodes (duels and *aristeiae*) . . . [but] key to a definition of the imagery and ideology of war represented in the *Aeneid* as opposed to the *Iliad*' (p. 83). She also shows how historiographical *topoi* disrupt and challenge the 'signification' and 'collective values' associated with what Gian Biagio Conte has called the 'epic code', and create a ' "temporal dissonance" within the primary narrative' (p. 83), as distinct from any comparable dissonance between events of the primary narrative and those indicated in e.g. prophecy. R. concludes Chapter 7 with a discussion of the way in which 'multiple temporal and cultural systems of reality in the primary narrative' (p. 83) invite us to reconsider both the nature of the *Aeneid qua* epic poem and the rôle of its audience(s). In her final chapter, Chapter 8, R. considers how, in his epic 'cities' (Troy, the Trojan camp, and Latinus' city), Virgil causes 'spaces to undergo a . . . process of redefinition by constantly recasting their identity through different generic and temporal frames' (p. 171).

On the whole, R. deals deftly with complex primary material, criticism, and theory. I noted an apparent conflation of *energeia* and *enargeia* in her otherwise impressively sophisticated chapter on 'witnessing the past' (p. 129). I also found her response to the antagonism between 'intertextualists' and 'allusionists' somewhat 'teichoscopic' (even the combination of 'contexts of war' and 'manipulation of genre' in her title bespeaks a certain reluctance to take sides). She does, however, observe that the scholarly battlelines are drawn (pp. 2–3 with p. 3 nn. 6–10) and reminds us of the dangers of attempting to determine the poet's intentions (p. 98); and my desire, unrequited by this book, to know whether and to what extent she thinks scholars, classical or otherwise, should concern themselves with reconstructing authorial intent may well be quite unreasonable, not least because I myself continue to struggle with that question.

Such minor and perhaps hypocritical quibbles aside, R. here provides a plethora of engaging and persuasive analysis and argument. She programmatically distinguishes her approach to Virgilian battle-narrative from those that 'have turned to Roman historiography and to Livy's *Ab urbe condita* in particular to interpret episodes of the *Aeneid* in light of historical events' (p. 8 with p. 8 n. 25), but pays intelligent attention to the cultural-historical milieu in which Virgil composed his poem. Accordingly, at one point she builds on the observations of Servius, John Moles, and Angus Bowie to suggest how 'by conflating the death of Priam with that of Pompey, the narrator Virgil, who for a brief time seems to usurp the role of the narrator Aeneas, may be suggesting that Rome . . . has already completed an important cycle of rise and fall' (p. 40). I especially liked her treatment of the (anti)closural duel between Aeneas and Turnus with which Virgil leaves 'the end and the meaning' of his poem so spectacularly open to speculation. It is a considerable achievement on R.'s part to present ideas that develop and supplement, rather than merely rehash, other critics'

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discussions of point of view; which, as e.g. Philip Hardie and Richard Thomas have demonstrated, is so crucial to what the end of the *Aeneid* might mean. She also shows clearly how her own observations supplement one another. So, for instance, she subtly and convincingly contends that, via the simile at *Aeneid* 12.921–3, 'the final duel between Aeneas and Turnus becomes, in a sense, a new siege (albeit a metaphoric one)', in which Turnus embodies the city for which he fights, and points out that 'this powerful simile . . . reinforces the connections between individual and collectivity [R. has] analyzed previously' (p. 196). Another, more general, aspect of this book that I think particularly praiseworthy is its brevity (*mega biblion, mega kakon, ktl.*). R.'s interpretative mode is suggestive and provocative rather than prolonged, and she succeeds admirably in proposing and exemplifying, with both insight and concision, new ways of interpreting Virgil's elusive epic poem. I greatly enjoyed and thoroughly recommend this book, with which R. makes a most valuable contribution to Virgilian scholarship.

Harvard University BEN TIPPING
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THE *EPODES*

L. C. WATSON: *A Commentary on Horace's* Epodes. Pp. xviii + 604. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. Cased, £85. ISBN: 0-19-925324-2.

It has taken thirty-three years since the publication of the first volume of R. G. M. Nisbet and Margaret Hubbard's magisterial commentary on Horace's *Odes* for a commentary of similar stature to come out on the *Epodes*. Nisbet and Hubbard sparked a spate of more interpretive books on the *Odes* in the 1980s and 1990s. In the past few decades, however, books on the *Epodes* have been rare, and the most significant critical advances have taken place in individual articles or chapters. Watson's commentary will give momentum to the exciting scholarship the *Epodes* have recently begun to attract. Graduate students and mature scholars alike will find their task much easier and more rewarding with this research tool at their fingertips.

At Don Fowler's memorial conference at Jesus College, Oxford in 2000, R. G. M. Nisbet began his talk: 'Not everyone should write a commentary.' The remark was received with laughter and consternation. The many commentary writers in the audience were each convinced he was speaking of them. W. should rest assured that he is one of those who should. There are many *desiderata* in commentaries: learning, judgement, clarity, and a willingness to make decisions, but equally important is passion. W., who has the serious virtues, also clearly enjoys his work. He gives the impression of continually saying, 'Aha!', whether it be the discovery of the size and weight of elephant penises (12.1), of just the right reference (G. Richter, *Ancient Furniture* [Oxford, 1926], 12.12), of just the right parallel (to pseudo-Quintilian on the last words of wretches seeking vengeance at 5.92; to Pliny on exogamic grafting at 16.32), or a recondite word of his own ('chalcenteric', 16.15–16). W. thanks both Nisbet and Fowler (among others) in his acknowledgements, but it is clear that his intellectual filiation tilts more toward the lion of the philological tradition than to the postmodernist.

W. excels at setting Horace's poetry in a larger cultural context, and he has

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