NATURAL QUESTIONS

P. Parroni (ed.): *Seneca:* Ricerche sulla natura. Pp. lxix + 626. Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore/Fondazione Lorenzo Valla, 2002. Cased, €27. ISBN: 88-04-49507-3.

Prof. Parroni wrote a long and generous review of my Teubner edition of the *Natural Questions* (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1996) in *RFIC* 125 (1997), 113–25. My review appears far less promptly than his did, for which I apologize. His edition was preceded by a series of articles, and I benefited from those that appeared before my edition (I printed his conjecture *turbine* for *turbines* at 7.6.3, and mentioned others in the apparatus). P. provides not only Latin text and apparatus, but also an introduction, Italian translation with *apparatus fontium*, end notes on subject matter and textual points, and indices.

The introduction first (pp. xiii–xxii) describes the *NQ* and its contents, and its place in Seneca's literary output. P. highlights the dialogue form of the work, and fruitfully suggests that S. is often conducting the dialogue with himself, rather than an undefined adversary. On sources (pp. xxii–xxvi) P. agrees that it is unlikely that S. used a single source, as used to be thought, but he suspects that Gross goes too far in positing reading of multiple sources; so his review of the possible sources of each book is tentative about specifics, such as the question whether S. read Aristotle at first hand. On style (pp. xxvi–xxxv) P., following Traina, illustrates the combination of 'interiority' and persuasion, and the varied means used to achieve them. The final section (pp. xxxv–xl) surveys reading of, and reactions to, the *NQ* from Lucan to Goethe and Leopardi.

An appendix to the introduction (pp. xli–li) first describes the manuscript tradition, accepting my stemma (P. himself has always championed the importance of manuscript Z). Presumably M. D. Reeve's remark, in *JRS* 90 (2000), 201–2, that ζ is defined on the basis of a small number of easily corrected errors, appeared too late for P. to react. On the book order, he accepts the conclusion reached independently by Codoñer and myself, that the original order was 3–7, 1–2, and usefully compares the prefaces of Book 3 and Varro's *Res Rusticae*. Finally (pp. li–liv), P. details the differences between his editorial principles and mine. To put it succinctly, I apply strict stemmatic criteria in my apparatus, excluding most of the isolated readings of δ, unless they are of interest as conjectures, but recording all of Z's sometimes trivial errors where Z is the sole representative of its branch. P., on the other hand, includes a large number of δ's readings, chiefly because of their value for scholars interested in the mediaeval and humanist worlds, but omits a lot of Z's minor errors, and does not report the readings of the brief excerpts Y and γ (but surely mediaevalists will want to be told about these excerpts, especially Y, which is over two centuries older than any other manuscript?). He has recollated all the main manuscripts, and is more generous in recording the corrections by later hands in W and F. He does not use the unspecific ς for readings found in late manuscripts, but mentions specific manuscripts he has collated himself (though sometimes he resorts to 'uulgo' where, presumably, his manuscripts do not give the reading). Another difference is that P. does not record scholarly conjectures that anticipated readings later found in manuscripts.

There are dozens of passages where our editions diverge, as one would expect in a text that is often so uncertain. Probably most users of my Teubner edition, myself included, will agree in some measure with P.'s comment on it that 'lasciano talvolta perplessi gli arditi e non sempre necessari interventi congetturali' (p. li). But that does

The Classical Review vol. 55 no. 2 © The Classical Association 2005; all rights reserved

https://doi.org/10.1093/clrevj/bni297 Published online by Cambridge University Press

not mean that P. is over-conservative. He not infrequently prints conjectures where I print the paradosis or obelize (interesting conjectures that have appeared since my edition include 1.3.10 *omnium*] *omnes* A. Mele; 1.7.3 *in<de> speciem* G. Abbamonte; 3.26.7 *ut* post *hoc faciunt* del. P.). Occasionally, though, his reasons for sticking to the mansucripts are unconvincing. For example, at 6.2.1 he accepts the transmitted text, taking the *stulti*, the *prudentes*, and the *imperiti* to be three separate groups. But elsewhere in S. the *imperiti* are normally indistinguishable from the *stulti*, so this interpretation needs further justification. At 6.12.1 *Archelaus, antiquitatis diligens* the problem lies not in the syntax, as P. appears to think, but in the inherent implausibility of Archelaus being described in these terms. At 7.21.4 *omnibus autem stellis* must refer to the planets alone, hence Gercke's *<V> stellis* and my *stellis <erraticis>*; to defend the paradosis P. needs to show not simply that *stella* can mean 'planet' as opposed to 'heavenly body' in general, which is not in dispute, but that *omnes stellae* can refer to planets to the exclusion of other heavenly bodies. (I have noted a few slips in the apparatus: 1.5.2 *uideamus . . . quo<dam>modo*: the manuscript variants are omitted; 3.10.4 the note should refer to the *transit* in ll. 20–1, not l. 19; 3.16.4 l. 17 *sunt* is in all the manuscripts, not just δW^2; 6.27.4 the note should refer to the *quo* in l. 21, not l. 19; 7.30.5 *habet* for *habeat* is not my conjecture: as my apparatus states, Gercke erroneously attributed this reading to manuscript E.)

Italian readers of the *NQ* have been well served in recent years, for the late D. Vottero produced an earlier edition with introduction, translation and notes (Turin, 1989), which made a useful contribution to the text and interpretation of the *NQ*, and P. does likewise. This is a valuable edition from which all readers of the *NQ* can profit.

University of St Andrews HARRY M. HINE
doi:10.1093/clrevj/bni297

LUCAN'S SNAKE BOOK

C. WICK (ed.): *M. Annaeus Lucanus:* Bellum civile. *Liber IX*. Einleitung, Text und Übersetzung. (Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 201.) Pp. xvi + 155, ills. Munich and Leipzig: K. G. Saur Verlag, 2004. Cased, €82. ISBN: 3-598-77813-9.

C. WICK (ed.): *M. Annaeus Lucanus:* Bellum civile. *Liber IX*. Kommentar. (Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 202.) Pp. 448, fig. Munich and Leipzig: K. G. Saur Verlag, 2004. Cased, €96. ISBN: 3-598-77814-7.

One of the most attractive parts of Lucan's epic *Bellum Civile* is its ninth book. Here the reader is presented with some sensational scenes involving all three protagonists of the work. After opening on a short scene picturing the murdered Pompey's 'ascension' to heaven, the book focuses on the anti-Caesarean hero, Cato the Younger, leading his army through the horrible deserts of Libya, while the final 150 lines picture Julius Caesar himself during a highly symbolic visit to the ruins of Troy. The long Cato section contains some remarkable passages in which the poet shows some ingenious variations of standard epic elements. For example, there is a violent sandstorm (444ff.), a catalogue of desert snakes (700ff.), and, in what is probably one

The Classical Review vol. 55 no. 2 © The Classical Association 2005; all rights reserved

https://doi.org/10.1093/clrevj/bni297 Published online by Cambridge University Press