ekpyrosis, which has made it possible for them to argue that a destructive Jupiter acts justly in his attempt to punish Thebes and Argos since he is attempting to restore harmony to the laws of nature and cosmic morality. She points out that the particularly Stoic tone of Jupiter's reasons for the punishment unleashed upon Argos and Thebes (*Theb*. 7.215–21) proves unconvincing even to Juno. Although Jupiter avenges the crime that Oedipus suffers at the hands of a number of descendants who appear to be genetically predisposed to commit crimes against humanity, he does so with an enthusiasm that is not found in the literary or philosophical traditions. Jupiter's plan for the destruction of Thebes and Argos affects the innocent as well as the guilty, which according to C. is incompatible with any Stoic interpretation of the plan as moral and humane; furthermore, Statius' portrayal of a malevolent, vengeful Jupiter in the *Thebaid* is derived more from Ovid's depiction of him in the *Metamorphoses* than it is from Homer, Virgil, or the Stoic concept of a corrective providence. The Statian divine apparatus, which subverts the Olympian apparatus of its Homeric and Virgilian models, acquires new meaning that precludes an interpretation of Jupiter as the supreme Stoic guide of the world and reflects the tyranny and injustice of the Flavians.

Three appendices round out the discussion: the first comprises a useful summary and bibliography of the various political readings of the *Thebaid* (pp. 231–4); the second contains some bibliographical notes on critical approaches to the twelfth book of the *Thebaid* from the perspective of Stoicism (pp. 235–6); and the third deals with the archaeology of the Theban myth in the prologue (pp. 237–8).

Some scholars of Statius will not agree with C.'s approach and her conclusions. Most critics, for instance, no longer take seriously the notion that Stoicism greatly influenced Statius' theological conception. But C.'s discussion of how Statius adapts elements from the Stoic philosophical tradition in the *Thebaid* represents an important contribution to Statian studies; in addition, her thesis that Statius' choice of an Oedipal theme and the proximity of the ominous world of Statius' Thebes to Seneca and Lucan suggest a pessimistic and negative view of the reign of the Flavians is illuminating. This is a significant critical achievement in Spanish scholarship. Any critic working on the literary and philosophical background of the *Thebaid* will need to refer to it.

University of Otago WILLIAM J. DOMINIK

VALERIANA

U. EIGLER, E. LEFÈVRE (edd.): *Ratis omnia vincet. Neue Untersuchungen zu den 'Argonautica' des Valerius Flaccus.* (Zetemata 98.) Pp. 374. Munich: C. H. Beck, 2000. Paper, DM 128. ISBN: 3-406-44598-5.

This Valerian omnibus of twenty-five articles and nearly 400 pages of text appears soon after the monographs of Peter Schenk, *Studien zur poetischen Kunst des Valerius Flaccus: Beobachtungen zur Ausgestaltung des Kriegsthemas in den 'Argonautica'* (Zetemata 102 [Munich, 1999]), G. Manuwald, *Die Cyzicus-Episode und ihre Funktion in den 'Argonautica' des Valerius Flaccus* (Hypomnemata 127 [Göttingen, 1999]), and Debra Hershkowitz, *Valerius Flaccus'* Argonautica*: Abbreviated Voyages in Silver Latin Epic* (Oxford, 1998), a commentary by H. J. W. Wijsman, *Valerius Flaccus,* 'Argonautica'*, Book VI: A Commentary* (*Mnemosyne* Supplementum 204

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[Boston, 2000]—this follows on from his 1996 commentary on Book V), and a translation by David R. Slavitt, *The Voyage of the Argo: The 'Argonautica' of Gaius Valerius Flaccus* (Baltimore and London, 1999). It would be an exaggeration to speak of a renaissance in Valerian studies: there has been a quickening. *Ratis omnia vincet*, surely one of the most curious titles a book has ever received [see *Arg*. 1.236], constitutes the record of a 'Colloquium Valerianum' held in November of 1997 in Freiburg i. Br. It is the second of its kind. An earlier conference was published under the same title in 1991: M. Korn and H. J. Tschiedel (edd.), *Ratis omnia vincet: Untersuchungen zu den Argonautica des Valerius Flaccus* (Spudasmata 48 [Hildesheim and New York, 1991]).

Eigler and Lefèvre divide the volume into five sections: 'Erzählkunst' (seven articles on topics such as style, direct speech, personification and allegory, and dreams), 'Vorbilder' (four articles on links with Varro Atacinus, Virgil, Ovid, and Seneca), 'Welt- und Götterbild' (five articles looking at Jupiter's plan, Jupiter and Apollo, Pallas, Venus, and the relationship between gods and humans), 'Einzelbetrachtungen' (seven papers on figures as diverse as Thoas, Orpheus, Io, Prometheus, Medea, and Absyrtus, on the paintings on the Colchian temple walls, and on the war against Perses), and finally, 'Rezeption' (Rieker's 'Das Supplement des Johannes Baptista Pius Bononiensis zu den *Argonautica* des Valerius Flaccus').

To a large extent these divisions, however helpful, are artificial. The bulk of the essays in the book concern the representation (perhaps we should say characterization and function) of individual figures (gods and humans), or the modes by which the literary tradition is adapted within Valerius' version (evident implicitly in the examination of individual figures, and explicitly in the examination of specific relations between Valerius and, in the main, earlier writers). With few exceptions (notably Schimann's 'Valerius Flaccus und Vergil—*interpretatio Vergiliana*', which shows how Valerius' poem can be read almost as an interactive guide to Virgil), this latter mode of inquiry represents an intelligent version of 'Quellenforschung', rather than the intertextualism so popular in the Anglo-American study of Latin poetry during the 1990s.

What are the chief issues raised by this collection? First, what does Valerius *mean* by his *Argonautica*? Secondly, how should we read his poem? Thirdly, what makes it cohere thematically? Fourthly, does it succeed *qua* poem?

The first of these points relates to the matter of Valerius' treatment of his gods (and, following from this, his attitude towards Jason's opening of the seas and its prefiguration of empire). It receives two approaches: for Lefèvre, 'Der *Ordo Rerum* in V . . .', by implication Schenk, 'Pallas—ein Beitrag zum Götterbild des V . . .', and Elm, 'Venus und die Tradition der Furiendarstellung', such treatment, because of the unfavorable portrait of the gods, sets Roman history (and the power accruing through this) in a pessimistic light: temporal change brings Rome no good. For d'Espèrey, 'L'universe des *A* est-il absurde?', Manuwald, 'Die Bilder am Tempel in Kolchis', Baier, 'Ursache und Funktion des Krieges gegen Perses . . .', and Ferenczi, 'Medea . . .', this pessimism is of an ontological type: the gods, who treat humans badly, act as symbols for a grim universe in which Jason, to extrapolate, is an Everyman.

The second of these issues (how should we read the poem?) concerns Valerius' place within the Roman poetic tradition. Schimann's analysis is perhaps the most stimulating in this regard: Valerius' dialogue with Virgil allows us to reinterpret both Virgil and also Valerius, through significant linguistic and situation repetition (the Amycus episode interacts thematically with that of Virgil's Cacus, Hypsipyle with that of Nisus and Euryalus, for example).

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The third of these issues relates to the matter of unity. Focus here is especially driven by the paradoxes apparent in Jason's and Medea's characters (Fuhrer, 'Ahnung und Wissen: Zur Technik des Erzählens von Bekanntem'), or of typical 'digressions' (Aricò, '. . . Die Io-Geschichte bei VF'), or by the inclusion in Valerius' version of the battle narratives of Book 6 (Baier).

The fourth issue relates the matter of the re-evaluation of Valerius' standing as a writer. Spaltenstein, 'L'invention chez VF', is negative. Kleywegt, 'In eigener Sprache', Auhagen, '. . . Erlebte Rede bei VF . . .', and Gartner, '. . . Personification und Allegorie bei VF', attempt special pleading by aiming to demonstrate Valerius' singularity.

Are any of these issues of sufficient significance to reflect or to initiate trends in Valerian or Silver-Age literary scholarship? I suspect that this could be stated with confidence of the first and second. Denis Fenney's view of Valerius' poem as resolutely 'ameliorative', *The Gods in Epic. Poets and Critics of the Classical Tradition* (Oxford, 1991), p. 335, has convinced many readers. The opening up of the seas, that is, leads in Jupiter's plan to a triumphant Roman future. Jason's characterization has been 'sanitized' to further this aim. Lefèvre, Schenk, and others cast doubts on the efficacy of Jupiter's plan, on the worthiness of the gods generally, and highlight the ambivalent standing of Jason. Their hesitant pessimism leaves us with an *Argonautica* whose imperial reservations match those of Lucan, say, or of Seneca in his tragedies, or perhaps of Statius in the *Thebaid*. I suspect that Lefèvre is correct. Not only does his view highlight in the *Argonautica* an attitude matching that of those poets just mentioned, but it also places Valerius firmly if unexpectedly within the tradition that will lead to the visions of Tacitus and Juvenal. It also has Valerius' view of empire match the current (North American, if not German) Virgilian orthodoxy.

The second of these trends is well exemplified by Schimann's article (and perhaps by those of Bessone, 'VF und die Medeen des Ovid' or Grewe, 'Der Einfluss von Senecas Medea auf die *A*. des VF'). But is it being unreasonable to suggest that the dryness of this type of intertextual criticism can at times undercut its genuine value? The divorce of literature from life does little to recommend itself to a new generation of students. This trend in Valerian criticism may be understood by recourse to the law stating that texts usually get the school of criticism (not necessarily the critics) that they deserve. Valerius, lacking deep poetic resonance, is probably best approached as a quarry by masons, a means for building up the edifice of their perception of his betters.

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TACITUS ON CIVIL WAR

R. Ash: *Ordering Anarchy. Armies and Leaders in Tacitus'* Histories. Pp. ix + 246. London: Duckworth, 1999. Cased, £40. ISBN: 0-7156-2800-3.

Historiography is the new hot topic among literary classicists, and while many pentads of Livy have by now been critically evaluated in print, the *Histories* of Tacitus have not so far received extended literary attention. This has been a loss for students of both ancient history and Latin literature, since, as Rhiannon Ash demonstrates, the representations of the four emperors of A.D. 69 in the *Histories* are bound up in complex interactions between emperor and predecessor, emperor and rival, emperor and supporting army. Beyond this, Tacitus' emperors contend with

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