his innovations in the epic genre will have more difficulty to find their way here, as will those who are looking for more immediate help in reading Lucan's dense text.

A word seems due on the adopted text and translation. W. explicitly says that she has not freshly collated the manuscripts, nor systematically followed any of the great twentieth-century editions (Housman, Badalì, Shackleton Bailey) (p. 33), but she does not explain her own principles in this field nor add a comparative table of textual changes. For further discussion readers are simply referred to the individual lemmata of the commentary. On the other hand, the added German translation in prose is a great help, given the difficulty of Lucan's Latin. It contains functional subtitles that assist the reader in finding a specific scene or keeping the overall view. It also relieves the commentary of a number of interpretative remarks. Having clarified her aims as a translator, not without showing some higher aspirations, W. surprisingly ends on a modest note: 'die spröden und starren, ja sperrigen Satzgebilde der Übertragung können nur Wortmaterial widergeben, nicht aber die gedrängte, kühle Schönheit von Lukans Sprachminimalismus' (p. 35). Much as I regret the recurrence of the idea that the classics are in the end impossible to translate, W.'s qualification of Lucan's style is interesting and would seem to ask for further discussion.

W. deserves praise for publishing a full commentary on the whole of Lucan's long and varied Book 9, rather than on highlights or a single passage. The material collected in the commentary is well ordered and accessible, and the two volumes have been designed and printed with care and good taste, although they are excessively priced. The publication will no doubt be a standard work of reference for scholars in the years to come. Having said this, I add that our overall interpretations of Lucan (and of his 'heroes' such as Cato) are not greatly advanced here and that the commentary seems less suited for those who seek immediate assistance in reading.

One cannot help wishing that philological meticulousness and discipline, as represented exemplarily in this publication, could somehow be combined with a rather more adventurous 'Anglo-Saxon' approach to the text. Who will take up the daring task of writing a sound and detailed, postmodern commentary on a section of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*?

Radboud University Nijmegen VINCENT HUNINK
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PLINY'S ETHNOGRAPHY

T. MURPHY: *Pliny the Elder's* Natural History. *The Empire in the Encyclopaedia.* Pp. x + 233. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. Cased, £50. ISBN: 0-19-926288-8.

Until recently reviews of books about Pliny's *Historia Naturalis* would often begin by noting the author's bold rehabilitation of an unfashionable and neglected subject. The *HN*'s thirty-seven books (containing by Pliny's own estimation 20,000 facts) have long been mined for illuminating nuggets, but the encyclopaedia has suffered critical neglect as a cultural artefact in its own right, characterized as a lapidary accumulation of fact upon dry fact with apparently slight regard for critical appraisal or interpretation.

This neglect is no longer quite the case. Various scholars have published on Pliny, and also on other ancient compilers and excerpters like Athenaeus (Braund and Wilkins, 2003), arguing that the selection and organization of material within such

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works reveals a great deal about the cultural assumptions and priorities of the authors and their times.

Into this expanding field has come Trevor Murphy's *Pliny the Elder's Natural History*; his subtitle, *The Empire in the Encyclopaedia*, reveals the direction he has chosen to take. The broad focus of M.'s questions (what elements are included and excluded from the *HN*? What does their organization reveal about Pliny's world view and that of his peers?) is therefore no longer new, but his application of these questions is. While other works have looked at science and technology (Healy), the philosophical underpinnings of Pliny's approach to the natural world (Beagon), and art in Pliny's Roman Empire (Carey), M. examines a hitherto unmapped area of the *HN* which in recent years has, like Pliny himself, found itself increasingly in the mainstream of ancient historiographical thought: how notions of ethnography and geography in the *Historia Naturalis* reveal Roman attitudes to the oikoumene and the empire's rôle within it.

M.'s first chapter examines the structures and principles of the *HN* ('contrast, antithesis, and the association of ideas . . . an aesthetic that prizes metaphor and associative drift'). M. perceives a tension between this loose and drifting encyclopaedic structure and an ideological unity which pervades the text; the latter is the fruit of Roman power, both in the person of Pliny the traveller, administrator, solider, and courtier, and in his encyclopaedia's constant comparison of the peripheries of empire and knowledge with Italy, and specifically Rome, at the centre (as at 37.201–5). Pliny's Romanocentric structuring of knowledge is the leitmotif of the book and the subject of M.'s second chapter.

M.'s fourth chapter, on geography in the *HN*, also puts Rome at the centre of Pliny's world. In passages like 27.2–3, Pliny's reader, like stout Cortes upon his peak, surveys the margins of the known world from a notional high place and sees that Rome illuminates and orders the whole; more subtle but of comparable effect is Pliny's use of the triumph. M. argues in the tradition of scholars like Nicolet that Pliny's triumph-like focus on famous rivers and mountains, and his frequent references to Roman parades of captured artefacts, peoples, and places, shaped his overall understanding and presentation of the natural world. This is a useful reading of the *HN*; M. must be right to name the triumph as one of Pliny's heuristic tools, though one might wonder how far this method of organization is pursued by Pliny as a deliberate intellectual tactic, and how far it is a consequence of the shape of his source material or of a conceptual geography shared with a long line of Roman cartographers and triumphatores (whom M. lists) rather than deliberately derived from them; elsewhere we see that Pliny was equally happy to use other organizing structures, such as the periplus.

Chapters 3 and 5 look at the *HN*'s ethnographical material. M. concludes that Pliny's work is not really a practical gazetteer, but a work that examines various sorts of extreme in order to 'demarcate . . . and stabilise . . . the boundaries of the known, and so of Roman power' (p. 213). The incorporation of extremes—of physiognomy in the case of the Sciapodae or the speechless horripilant Choromandae of India, of behaviour in the case of the primitive Chauci of Chapter 5—serves to imply the totality of the *HN*'s (and Rome's) knowledge, showing that 'no possible declension of human morphology has been left unrecognized'.

It also illustrates by contrast Rome's cosmopolitan rôle as organizer and orderer of chaos. The corollary is that the *HN*'s organization and display of knowledge had a political dimension, and this is the subject of M.'s closing chapter. He argues that the control of knowledge in the Roman world was a matter for the emperor, citing

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familiar tales of library foundations and burning of banned books, and observes that in the *HN* the collection of knowledge is often an imperial prerogative or imperially sponsored. M. therefore suggests that there was a tension between Pliny the polymath encyclopaedist and Pliny the imperial courtier (or 'career civil servant'): where Pliny professes ignorance this can 'only [be accounted for by] the polite assumption on Pliny's part that his own power of vision did not extend as far as Caesar's eye'. At the same time Pliny, for M., uses the imperial imprimatur of his dedication to Titus to 'claim . . . imperial power and authority for his book'.

M.'s reading is acute, though it opens wider questions about intellectual life under the Flavians. Was his postulated imperial control of the sources and organization of knowledge ever completely successful? Book-collecting was what Pliny did on a grand scale; in M.'s second chapter we see him presenting himself as one of Cicero's idealized literary aristocrats in a world of exchange and liberality, perhaps in opposition to the unlettered collectors lampooned by Petronius and Seneca. The way lies open to ask whether Pliny's self-presentation was part of a broader social discourse on the collection, ownership, and use of knowledge, and here Pliny's own nephew and heir, who combined an independent senatorial cultural identity with imperial loyalty, might have been a useful comparandus.

This moves beyond the scope of M.'s book, though, which offers a valuable way of reading Pliny's geographical and ethnographical material, and which will be particularly useful to those interested in the history of ideas in the Roman empire and the cultural life of the Flavian epoch. It is attractive and well written, and its index (everything from Cato the Younger to Oscar Wilde, via cheese, giraffes, and unicorns) is indicative of the charming *ποικιλία* that can make books on Pliny such a pleasure to read.

The Queen's College, Oxford MATTHEW NICHOLLS
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STATIUS

D. R. Shackleton Bailey (ed., trans.): *Statius:* Thebaid*, Books 1–7*. Introduction, Text, and Translation. (Loeb Classical Library 207.) Pp. viii + 459. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2003. Cased, £14.50. ISBN: 0-674-01208-9.

D. R. Shackleton Bailey (ed., trans.): *Statius:* Thebaid*, Books 8–12*. Achilleid. Text, Translation, and Indexes. (Loeb Classical Library 498.) Pp. vi + 441. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2003. Cased, £14.50. ISBN: 0-674-01209-7.

C. S. Ross: *Publius Papinius Statius: The* Thebaid*. Seven against Thebes*. Translated with an Introduction. Pp. xl + 386. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004. Cased, £39.50. ISBN: 0-8018-6908-0.

Mozley's 1928 Loeb edition of the Statian corpus took up 1203 pages in two volumes; this edition takes up 1352 pages in three volumes, with the first devoted only to the

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