access to ancient orthodoxy and a perspective on what makes *De oratore* special (pp. 26–38), and a detailed synopsis makes it easy for readers to find their way through the intricacies of Cicero's discussion (pp. 43–48). The translation itself includes running headers, integrated headings, and copious explanatory notes, and among the three appendices is a 'List of Readings' that, by recording departures from the Latin of Kumaniecki's Teubner edition and from the standard Leeman–Pinkster commentary, will explain the occasional surprise for those using the translation as a crib. The glossary is a somewhat mixed bag of technical terms, but it is followed by a valuable index of names and places that are identified, explained, and keyed to their appearance in the text.

The introduction and notes are helpful and reliable, though there are some idiosyncrasies. An insistence on rendering 'officia oratoris' as 'activities of the orator', for example, is justified in a fussy, pedantic, and ultimately unhelpful note (p. 29 n. 37). Contrast the elegance of Harry Caplan's corresponding explanation in the Loeb *ad Herennium* (p. 6 n. a), which provides precisely what readers need to know without overindulging the commentator's ego. M. & W. sometimes focus too narrowly on the business at hand. Though conscientious at tracing internal references and connections among the disparate parts of *De oratore*, they are reluctant to look beyond the work before them. The curious account of Roman oratory embedded in Cicero's preface (1.12–20), for example, begs for comparison with the *Brutus*'s more emphatic attempt at literary history. That discussion was, admittedly, still a decade away, and there will always be some hesitation to explicate an earlier text with reference to a later one, but modern readers, especially inexperienced readers, can profit from being pointed to the development of Cicero's thought.

The translation seeks to capture the easy elegance of the original, and it is largely successful in this aim. Thus, to take an example almost at random, 'Exierant autem cum ipso Crasso adulescentes et Drusi maxime familiares et in quibus magnam tum spem maiores natu dignitatis suae conlocarent . . .' becomes 'Crassus had also brought with him from Rome two young men, both very good friends of Drusus, in whom their elders then placed high hopes for the preservation of their political standing . . .' (1.25). Strengths and weaknesses here are characteristic: making Crassus the subject is a good way to handle *ipso*, but 'their political standing' for 'dignitatis suae' is not so good a rendering. 'Their' is awkwardly ambiguous and 'political standing' is too personal, since the point at issue is the political position not of individuals but of the optimates as a group. Sometimes the translators' grasp of Roman rhetoric seems much firmer than their feel for the nuances of Roman literary and political culture. Yet on the whole, they succeed in reproducing the experience of reading Ciceronian sentences and grappling with Ciceronian thoughts. Modern students of rhetoric will be truly and rightly grateful to them for doing this so well.

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ESSAYS ON THE *AENEID*

H.-P. STAHL (ed.): *Vergil's* Aeneid. *Augustan Epic and Political Context*. Pp. xxxiii + 324. London: Duckworth (in association with The Classical Press of Wales), 1998. Cased, £40. ISBN: 0-7156-2808-9.

This book contains an introduction and fourteen essays. Each essay is supposed to treat a passage of the *Aeneid* considered 'important for understanding the epic, and

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then [to] closely interpret the chosen passage in its context and (if applicable) in the light of its references to political and historical facts and developments' (p. xvii).

There are, of course, problems with a brief like this. The dilemma is clearly identified in the opening of Don Fowler's excellent contribution on *Aeneid* 7.601–40, entitled 'Opening the Gates of War' (p. 155): 'I do not believe that disputes about the *Aeneid* can be settled by reference to their Augustan context . . . because there is no stable context, no frame which itself is not a contestable construct, and because, even if there were, the relationship between text and context is always a matter of interpretative choice'. Fowler goes on to show how the opening and closure (the theoretical sense of closure is, of course, in play) of the *geminae belli portae* are paradigmatic of the conflicts energizing Roman power and identity, of Virgil's poetic production, and in turn of our contesting readings of the two and of the interaction between them.

The very accommodation of such sentiments is obviously commendable, but the approach of this volume as a whole can only be *prima facie* ecumenical. I am not the first to point out that the declaration of pluralism can end up furthering a conservative agenda. That is what happens here: Stahl, opening his Editor's Introduction, lists the range of schools of thought on Virgil which his collection purports to comprehend: Virgil as imperialist victor, as victim/subject to imperialism, as subject to constructions of modern readers, as advocate of the republic to Augustus, etc. S. does not specifically address the contents of the pieces to follow, but instead allows the contributors to provide their own summaries of their contributions: one wonders how, had he surveyed the pieces directly himself, his conception of the collection would have been tempered by points like those made by Fowler (or even by Duncan Kennedy's important essay '"Augustan" and "Anti-Augustan": Reflections on Terms of Reference' in A. Powell, *Poetry and Propaganda in the Age of Augustus* [Bristol, 1992]).

Kennedy's more extreme articulation may be strident, but the issue of closure presents an important, inevitable caveat for anyone attempting to tell stories about literature and politics in any time or clime. However, the most positivist of literary historians would concede that this consideration is perhaps even more important for the 'Augustan' period than it is for treating politics in and of, say, nineteenth- and twentieth-century European literature. For such later texts at least, collateral discourses of political theory do abound, however open to various appropriations they are or have been. But Augustan 'politics', by the nature of its construction by cultural-historically minded classicists, collapses far more rapidly into questions of textuality: S.'s very conception of '*the* Political *Aeneid*' is an ideological chimera. Still his introduction offers a conscientious and at times even self-conscious survey of twentieth-century interpretations of the *Aeneid* and politics.

The subsequent chapters, including S.'s own study of *Aeneid* 3.268–93, are, by and large, useful and illuminating. Some exemplary contributions can be discussed only selectively and very cursorily here: Anton Powell's consideration of the political significance of the underworld in *Aeneid* 6, read partly against Homer's account, is an important study. The concluding observation that 'Tartarus, for Vergil, is actually defined by the concept of disloyalty: he calls it *impia Tartara*, twice' is very suggestive for the poem's later reception—this bears on the tradition of parodic katabases like John Donne's *Conclavum Ignatii*, as well as the obvious case of Dante's *Inferno*. Elaine Fantham's treatment of Amata is an assessment of the character's rôle from literary-historical perspectives. Particularly refreshing (for this collection) is Fantham's point of departure: a sense of the novelty of the *Aeneid*'s plot emerges when it is considered in relation to pre-existing tradtions in earlier Roman myth as well as Greek literature.

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Stephen Harrison's discussion of the Danaid iconography on Pallas' swordbelt in relation to the sculptures of Augustus' Palatine temple is fascinating. A sustained examination of the ideology of the Danaids in Augustan Rome has implications which go beyond Virgil. Harrison also considers the extant contemporary poetic descriptions in Propertius 2.31, Ovid *Ars Amatoria* 1.73–4 and *Tristia* 3.1.61–2. The fact that, along with *Aeneid* 10.495–505, the language of these passages plays down the fact that the figures are only *representations* supplements the tenor of Harrison's important reading: the threat to stability posed by these incarnations of barbarism therefore appears all the more salient. Another highlight in this volume is Philip Hardie's engagement with the debate between Drances and Turnus in the Council of the Latins—a part of the poem which deserves a good deal more attention than it has so far received. Hardie's rich and sensitive reading of this episode leads us from a historicized reading of the applied rhetoric in the *Aeneid* to a sense of its implications for epic tradition.

David West's mischievous conclusion treats humorous elements towards the *Aeneid*'s close. This piece at times seems to be almost as much devoted to Denis Feeney's work as it is to Virgil's. Of course, the unhappy brief of the volume means that any attempt at a formal editorial conclusion would indeed have been leaden and depressing. So, given his self-imposed dilemma, the editor has done us a favour here: a scholarly account of the politics and comedy of the conversation between Jupiter and Juno must be the best way out of a collection conceived like this.

This book has been carefully printed and produced. All excerpts from Latin and Greek texts which receive significant discussion have been translated, but the positioning of English renderings before the quotations in the original languages is irksome. Leaving aside the ethos unfortunately implicit in giving such priority to English versions, this practice will impede the flow of the contributors' arguments for many readers. As noted above, some of the individual chapters are interesting, and all of them could have been published in reputable periodicals. But somehow the book comes to be less than a sum of its parts, and thus accomplishes something rather unusual: a substantial contribution to Virgilian studies which confirms the critical orthodoxy.

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ANCIENT VIRGILIANS

†S. TIMPANARO: *Virgilianisti antichi e tradizione indiretta*. Florence: Olschki, 2001. Cased. ISBN: 88-222-5010-9.

With Sebastiano Timpanaro's recent death we have lost a scholar of towering abilities and remarkably wide interests, a sure support and a true friend to many. Over the fifteen years since he published *Per la storia della filologia virgiliana antica* (*FVA*), he gave much close thought to the issues and problems raised by *FVA* and now goes back over the same ground in helpfully historical sequence, offering us a sort of history of how the text of Virgil was studied down to *c*. 400 A.D., with additional thoughts on (e.g.) author-variants. T. has changed his position a couple of times (astonishingly, he accepts my note on *Aen*. 7.772). Much detail and historical perspective have been added, illuminatingly, but the intellectual novelties are rather limited.

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