

L.'s most enterprising metapoetic interpretation reads the bodies of the wrestlers as texts, suggesting (among other possibilities) that the match represents an opposition between literary tradition ('the literal birthright of Agylleus [son of Hercules], with his weight and size') and poetic innovation ('Tydeus ... stealing [Agylleus'] paternal role model, small, tight and clever in his tactics') (211). In her discussion of the themes of land and conquest, L. views Tydeus' victory as an allusion to 'Statius' conquest of literary territory ...' (216). According to L., the boxing match between Capaneus and Alcidas has similar significance. Capaneus, who is closely associated with the myth of the gigantomachy, is seen as 'a bizarre and unexpected poet figure' (131), standing in for Statius, whose 'poetic ambitions as a (traditional) form of gigantomachy [attack] the order of the poetic cosmos' (139).

Although I agree that Statius corrects Virgil in the foot race, I must confess my scepticism about the other metapoetic readings, notwithstanding L.'s ingenious arguments. My primary objection lies in the inconsistency between the numerous metapoetic references L. finds to Statius' challenge of Homer and Virgil and his explicit warning to the poem not to contest the 'divine *Aeneid*' (*Theb.* 12.816). Statius' caveat seems to me sincere, despite L.'s characterization of it as 'mock-modest' (310). Presumably, L. views this inconsistency as an example of what she sees as Statius' schizophrenic attitude toward the *Thebaid*, which she explains by applying the traditional chariot of song metaphor to the race between Amphiarus (another poet figure) and Adrastus' empty chariot. The former represents Statius as 'the authorized poet' and the latter, his disavowal of 'responsibility for what he creates, representing it as something out of his control, a sort of madness' (37).

On the other hand, I must stress that metapoetic interpretation is not all there is to this book. L. effectively argues for the 'Romanness' of the *Thebaid* (166–91), which the poet sees as an educative tool for Roman youth (*Theb.* 12.815), and provides an illuminating presentation of the interconnections between games and war (257–75). Her application of gender theory to epic heroism in Statius produces some interesting results (219–41). The Statian hero in athletics and war possesses masculine qualities (hotness, dryness, tightness, hardness, and rigidity), but his heroic glory is lost in death when these qualities are replaced by their feminine polar opposites (217–19; 222–41). Even in military victory, heroes can undergo feminization. Agylleus and Thiodamas are presented as examples of this process (230–5). L. makes a good case for Agylleus' sexual humiliation (feminization) by Tydeus in the wrestling match being reflected in the night raid (230–4). I, however, must disagree with L.'s arguments for the feminization of Thiodamas in the night raid (234–5), which are based upon his being compared to a female tiger ('Caspia ... tigris', *Theb.* 10.288–9) and to a mother bird (*Theb.* 10.459). I wonder whether the grammatical gender of *tigris* means very much here since the word is always feminine in poetry. Similarly, the mother bird simile need not indicate feminization, since it is inspired by the simile used by Achilles to describe his heroic efforts on behalf of the Achaeans (*Il.* 9.323–4).

Some miscellaneous items. The transliteration of the Greek word for 'cause' should be *aition* and not *aetion* (176). The imperfect subjunctives, *agerem, exsequer strueremque* (*Aen.* 5.51–4) appear in a contrary-to-fact condition and therefore should be translated 'if I were spending this [day] ... I would perform ... and would build ...' instead of L.'s indicatives 'I myself will do', 'I will accomplish and I will build' (290). Typos: *auctoritatis* for *auctoritate* (8) and 'see' for 'seen' (136).

L.'s close reading of the *Thebaid* and its poetic predecessors has performed a valuable service, revealing the games of Book 6 as an integral part of the poem and locating them within the context of the epic tradition. Moreover, others may find L.'s metapoetic approach more convincing than I. In any case, I am sure that this interesting book will provoke lively discussion among Statian scholars.

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C. A. WILLIAMS, *MARTIAL, EPIGRAMS BOOK TWO. EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION, TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. Pp. xii + 303. ISBN 0-19-515531-9. £38.99.

Craig Williams' commentary on Book 2 falls somewhere between the more comprehensive commentaries on Martial published in recent years and those that have been kept short. Its professed goal 'is to help contemporary readers, both those who have previous experience reading Martial and those who do not, deepen their understanding of the text ... by locating the epigrams in the

cultural and literary contexts in which they arose and by drawing attention to specific features that are characteristic of author and genre' (v–vi). Whether or not this goal has been met is largely a matter of target group; readers new to Martial will no doubt find the book a useful tool (though I would insert a caveat, see below), whereas in certain respects, one could perhaps have desired a fuller treatment from a commentary that is the first on Book 2 since Friedländer's of 1886.

W.'s book consists of a preface (v–vii) and an introduction (3–14) that discuss Martial's life and works, epigram before Martial, characteristics of Martial's epigrams (themes, characters, formal features, and book structure), *Nachleben* and reception and manuscript tradition. The introduction is followed by text, translation and commentary (15–282) for each of the ninety-two epigrams; a bibliography (283–96) and indices (297–303) conclude the book.

The introduction, which covers a wide range of topics in only eleven pages, is necessarily rather elementary and clearly oriented towards readers who are more or less new to Martial. As such, it provides an adequate overview of matters that are important to the reader of Book 2, though I miss a wider grasp of Martial's work and a discussion of the role of this book in the corpus as a whole; for instance, W. does not address Niklas Holzberg's recent (and important, I think) suggestion that Books 1–12 were actually designed as a dodecalogy and constitute a poetic whole (Niklas Holzberg, *Martial und das antike Epigramm* (2002), 135–52). Problematic, particularly to new readers of Martial, are W.'s designations for the three manuscript families and their archetypes. According to W., the families are 'usually identified by means of the sigla  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$ ' and 'each of them derives from an archetype now lost to us ( $A^A$ ,  $B^A$ , and  $C^A$  respectively)' (12f.). But to my knowledge, no editor has ever referred to the archetype of family  $\alpha$  as  $A^A$ ; in fact,  $A^A$  (etc.) was the siglum given the archetype of the first family by Lindsay in his OCT edition of Martial, and the family derived from it he called the  $A^A$  family. Heraeus, finding these sigla somewhat bulky, changed them to  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ , and  $\gamma$ , and spoke of the  $\alpha$  family etc., which since then have become the standard designations. Thus,  $\alpha$  and  $A^A$  are really mutually exclusive.

The main part of W.'s book is, obviously, the Latin text with translation and commentary. W.'s text is based on Lindsay's OCT edition (a choice that is to be commended), and deviations from Lindsay are presented in a table on p. 14, a great help to the reader. It is a matter of ten instances, five of which concern quotation marks or punctuation; in four cases, W. agrees with Shackleton Bailey's Teubner edition (1991) against Lindsay; in one line (84.4), he chooses an emendation suggested by Rooy and printed by Friedländer but adopted neither by the OCT nor by the Teubneriana.

W.'s translations are in prose, certainly more helpful to the reader than verse would be, and aim 'to reflect the tone of the original as expressed, for example, in word choice', while at the same time staying 'as close as English permits to Martial's syntactic structures and word order'; they are 'intended to be accessible to Latinless readers', but keep 'names of people and places, units of currency ... as well as certain terms so laden with specifically Roman ideology as to be untranslatable (e.g., *cinaedus*)' (vi–vii; whatever the 'ideology' behind such a word). The translations are very readable and W. has done a good job in reflecting the tone of Martial's Latin. In some cases, though, his renderings are too free for the English version to be of much help in understanding the Latin. For instance, in 5.4, Martial's *persona* says that he lives two miles from Decianus, and that 'quattuor haec fiunt, cum rediturus eam'; the *cum*-clause, W. translates simply as 'there and back'. In 36.3, W. renders 'mitrarum ... barba', i.e. 'the beard of men who wear the mitra' (the eastern cap particularly associated with Attis and the cult of Cybele), as 'the beard of a man who uses hairnets'; this may have the same effect on a modern reader as *mitra* on an ancient, but it is certainly not in the Latin. Sometimes, he inserts explanations into his translations, as in 43.3, where he translates 'Lacedaemonio ... Galaeso' as 'the river of Spartan Tarentum', and in 43.7, where the Latin 'misit Agenoreas Cadmi tibi terra lacernas' is translated as 'the land of Cadmus has sent you Tyrian mantles'; keeping Cadmus but dropping his father Agenor, W. deprives the epigram of a neat parallelism. In 72.3f., 'Latinus / ... Panniculi percutit ora' receives the rendering 'Latinus slaps Panniculus' ... face in the mimes'; in 74.3, W. translates 'tonsum templa ... reum misit' as 'he sends the freshly shaven defendant to give thanks at the ... temple'; and in 84.1, 'Poentius heros' as 'the hero Philoctetes'. There are a couple of further instances of such 'redundant' translations, which, in my opinion, rather belong in the commentary. It is along the same line when W., in his note on 75.8, criticizes the Loeb translators Ker and Shackleton Bailey for rendering 'Martia ... arena' (the arena of the Colosseum) too literally as 'the sand of Mars', commenting that 'Martia' is more likely metonymic for "Roman". But Ker and Shackleton Bailey, no doubt fully aware of the metonymy, wanted to preserve it in their

translation; if one translates it simply as ‘Roman’, one removes important ideological connotations of the kind W. has declared himself eager to keep.

The translations are followed by the actual commentary, in each case introduced by two sections on ‘Themes’ and ‘Structure’. Here, I think, lies the foremost merit of the book, for W. is very attentive particularly to the individual arrangement of each epigram (witness, e.g., his discussion of 7, 22, 56, 70), and to the position of the epigrams within the context of the book as a whole. The line-by-line commentary is aimed at explaining not so much the Latin itself as the contents of the poems, a reasonable approach as Martial seldom presents syntactical difficulties. The size of the book makes it necessary to be quite selective in choosing what to comment upon and what to leave out, and I think that W. has done a rather good job here; I seldom had the feeling that something that would have deserved notice had been entirely omitted. Then, it is another matter whether or not one feels convinced by W.’s explanations. It is, of course, in the nature of things that a commentary cannot please everyone, and some issues are bound to remain contentious or obscure. On the whole, though, W. adopts a fairly balanced approach, and is wisely, I think, cautious about controversial interpretations, even if it means that he dismisses as ‘highly unlikely’ Holzberg’s attractive suggestion about the implication of the juxtaposition of 89 (on a drunkard and poetaster who shares various vices with great Romans) and 90 (on Quintilian); in most cases, W. accounts for the solutions suggested by others, even when he does not agree with them, giving the reader a chance to form his own opinion.

There are some matters, though, that bring down the overall impression. One such is W.’s ambivalent attitude towards the poetic ‘I’, or Martial’s *persona*: often, he names the speaker simply ‘Martial’, even when the epigram is apparently not autobiographical; sometimes, he gives the impression that the speaker is of a consistent opinion throughout the *Epigrams* (e.g., ‘in line with Martial’s *persona*’; 93), while elsewhere keeping the question open as to whether Martial ‘adopts various and sometimes contradictory personae’ (114). There is also an occasional tendency to explain hyperbolic statements as if they had some basis in reality. In the note on 7.2, for example, W. dismisses Walter’s idea that a certain Atticus, a (fictitious, as W. notes) dilettante of many pursuits who is said, *inter alia*, to write *historiae bellae*, must have written anecdotes or stories rather than historiographical works. But as Atticus is nothing more than a type, the point is only effective if we imagine him as an author of substantial histories, and W.’s remark ‘but Atticus could easily have been an amateur historian’ feels rather unnecessary.

Such things may be a matter of subjective interpretation, but there are also some factual errors in W.’s book. Some of these are pure lapses, like ‘Ovid’s Cynthia’ for Ovid’s Corinna (8; Cynthia is the object of Propertius’ poetical affections); 5.2.7 is not the first line to refer to Domitian as *Germanicus* (29); in the note on 4.1–2, W. claims that the *Sextus* of 5.38 is Domitian’s secretary, while he is considered (probably correctly) a fictitious character by Heraeus and Shackleton Bailey in their Teubner editions, and by Howell in his commentary ad loc. A very peculiar statement is found on p. 101 (and repeated on 141), where W. (with reference to W. Maaz, *Lateinische Epigrammatik im hohen Mittelalter* (1992)) reports that *Candidus* is ‘one of six names attested only in Martial and Godfrey of Winchester’, the others being *Aper*, *Caecilianus*, *Didymus*, *Postumianus*, and *Probus*. This is naturally an absurd statement, as all of these names are well attested; if one looks in Maaz’s book, though, it appears that he is speaking only of the names ‘die bei römischen Dichtern bis Juvenal und Petron vorkommen’ (80, n. 158). Another peculiarity concerning a name is found in W.’s note on the vocative *Glypte* (45.1); he observes that the name ‘occurs only here in Martial and is listed neither in *PIR* nor in Solin and Salomies 1994’ (= H. Solin and O. Salomies, *Repertorium nominum gentilium et cognominum Latinorum* (2nd edn)). But *PIR* is far from exhaustive, and Solin and Salomies list only Latin names, not Greek; a look in Solin’s *Die griechischen Personennamen in Rom* (2nd edn, 2003), 1259, renders sixteen instances of *Glyptus* in Rome alone. Curious, too, is W.’s remark apropos of 73 (a monostichic hexameter), saying that ‘whether it originally consisted of two lines or one, the poem’s dactylic meter is fairly unusual in Latin epigram’ (231); but it is hardly unusual because it is dactylic, but rather because it would have been written in stichic hexameters, if it is assumed that a line has fallen out in the mss. before the line preserved, a theory that W. does not believe in. A monostich in hexameter would not be unusual because it was written in hexameter, but because it was a monostich. A more serious error is found on p. 263, where W. says that ‘the story of Attis, kidnapped and castrated by the *galli*, or priests of Cybele, is memorably recounted by Catullus ... (63)’; if the Attis legend exists in such a peculiar variant (it has nothing to do, at least, with the story as told by Catullus), it would at least have merited a note stating the source.

Such rather glaring errors detract, I am afraid, from the overall impression, and I am not sure that such merits as there undoubtedly are can make up for them. Together with some inconsistencies in the system of references and a few omissions from the bibliography of works quoted in the text, they leave the impression of a book that has been published before it was properly finished, which is unfortunate, because I am convinced that W. could have done a better job with this commentary. Perhaps, we may in time hope for a second edition.

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L. COTTA RAMOSINO, *PLINIO IL VECCHIO E LA TRADIZIONE STORICA DI ROMA NELLA NATURALIS HISTORIA* (Studi di storia greca e romana 9). Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2004. Pp. 427. ISBN 88-7694-695-0. €35.00.

Ramosino's absorbing study, a revised version of her doctoral thesis (Perugia, 2002), engages with Pliny the Elder's text in a bifurcated way. The first part, concerned with historiographical questions and those fragmentary historians favoured by Pliny, traces the conflicting responses of scholars (particularly German critics of the nineteenth century) to the sources of the encyclopedia, including the controversial index of Book 1 and its complex relationship to the body of the work. She then considers Pliny's attitude towards individual historians and annalists, especially Cato the Elder, Varro, Cornelius Nepos, Verrius Flaccus, and Livy. Her aim in this part of the study is to analyse Pliny's criteria of selection in shaping the historical material that features in his work and to clarify the broad patterns imposed on the past as represented (selectively) to readers of the *Natural History*. In so doing, R. directly confronts some difficult methodological issues, such as the status of citations which may have been filtered through an intermediary source or which are signalled without attribution, but her reflection on problems of detail does not mean that she loses sight of the bigger picture.

R. argues that Pliny shows a marked preference for historians of the second century B.C., above all Cato the Elder, whose influence on the body of the text is more substantial even than the explicit citations suggest; and Pliny often cites Calpurnius Piso and Cassius Hemina, whose works cohere with his own historiographical tastes. In particular, R. identifies Pliny's fondness for dating events relative to particular wars as a feature evocative of the early Roman historians, including Cato (65–6). Yet later historians such as Sallust and Sisenna are pointedly absent, censored by Pliny, R. suggests, for ideological reasons. Pliny's preference for historians of the second century B.C. means that the material in the *Natural History* connected with the founding of the city and the regal period is much richer than the historical data provided for the early to mid-Republic, at least until the Gallic invasion of the fourth century B.C. She also shows that even when Pliny does address historical events of the early to mid-Republic, he often displays a marked independence from the traditions preserved by Livy and Dionysius. R. suggests that Pliny's evocative neo-Catonian emphasis dove-tails perfectly with the contemporary political ideology of Vespasian and deftly counteracts the philhellenism associated with Nero's principate. In this sense, Pliny the Elder is a man of his times, who has judged the contemporary scene shrewdly (and who can filter the past through his own experiences, such as investing Antony with Neronian traits, 345). His own (lost) historical narratives are characterized by R. as distinctly pro-Flavian in their outlook (26–39).

The second (more ambitious) part of the study considers the history of Rome as presented in the *Natural History*, and progresses in a linear, chronological way from the prehistory of Italy and the foundation of Rome through to the regal period, the rise of republican Rome as an imperial power, and the last century of the Republic, ending with the conflict between Antony and Octavian (although personally I would have liked to see a final section on Pliny's treatment of imperial history). In this section, R. does not claim to offer a complete and exhaustive narrative of Roman history, but a revealing Plinian 'parzialità', which allows us to see how a Roman of the first century A.D. close to the imperial *domus* selectively transmits his vision of history to posterity. She suggests that Pliny invests the diverse historical elements of his narrative with a much tighter moral and intellectual coherence than one would expect in an encyclopedic work, as pre-imperial Roman history is narrated from a distinctively Vespasianic viewpoint. In fact, R. characterizes Pliny as actively promoting fundamental standards of the Flavian cultural agenda through his treatment of historical events. It did seem (to this reader at least) that R.'s arguments could have been bolstered by a more nuanced discussion of the contemporary context and the prevailing