

(77). While T. gives a useful survey of the negative qualities attached to country life in some of Virgil's contemporaries (78–85), I find unconvincing T.'s claim that Virgil's thoroughly positive spin on rural life was novel; parallels in writers like Varro seem to put Virgil's glorification of country life into dialogue with other similar voices during this period. The chapter culminates in an analysis of the *Laudes Ruris* ('Praise of Country Life'), which T. believes is not as idealized as some think, but rather accurately portrays the farming life of a 'typical prosperous landowner' (107–8) and succeeds as an 'immensely attractive vision of a country gentleman as lord of his estate' (114). T. omits discussion of the central section of the Praise, in which Virgil offers 'various reflections on science and poetry', because T. wants to 'keep the focus on social themes' (110). However, the *Georgics* constantly interweaves social themes with reflections on science and poetry, and it is this constant interweaving that makes it so difficult to reduce the meaning of the poem to an advertisement for the life of a country gentleman.

Chs 4 ('A Protreptic on Agronomy') and 5 ('To Enchant Readers') further distinguish Virgil's work from a technical manual by emphasizing its comparative lack of useful instructions and its focus on the prestige of agriculture, as well as on creating feelings of enchantment and emotional catharsis. As in previous chapters, T. simplifies many of the work's most controversial moments by limiting their overall goal to creating a positive emotional or aesthetic response in the reader (e.g., his discussion of grafting (144–50) or the angry ploughman (178–9)). Elsewhere, in his discussion of the Aristaeus epyllion, T. does qualify his persistent focus on its 'emotional coloring' by questioning 'whether the narrative is also overlaid with a particular political message, and whether that message was sanguine or skeptical about the prospects of Octavian's regime' (200). He calls these 'separate questions, not admitting easy answers' (200). Yet, one cannot help but feel that T.'s decision to separate the thorny political and philosophical issues raised by the text from his interpretation of the poem as a protreptic to agriculture is too easy a solution. Ch. 6 ('The Reception of the *Georgics* in Early Imperial Rome') shows that Virgil's earliest readers were drawn to the aspects of the poem that valorised rustic life for Rome's élite. T. demonstrates how poets like Tibullus, Propertius and Ovid were inspired by the *Georgics* to 'play the farmer' in their poetry, though he singles out Horace as a more complicated case: 'Despite Horace's penchant for rural themes, he seems largely to have eschewed the Vergilian fantasy of the figure playing the farmer' (215). T. reads Horace's *Epode* 2 as a satire which skewers the idealizing tendency in the *Georgics*. Yet, how do we know that Virgil himself was not skewering that idealizing tendency (in passages like the *Laudes Ruris*) by creating such conflicting visions of farming in the *Georgics*?

T.'s book is clearly written, with few typos, and contributes much of value by taking a fresh look at the *Georgics* in the context of contemporary writings about agriculture. However, some readers will find his discussion of 'how' Virgil's text differed from other agronomical texts more illuminating than his explanation of 'why.'

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J. MILLER, *APOLLO, AUGUSTUS AND THE POETS*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. Pp. xi + 408, 10 illus. ISBN 9780521516839. £65.00/US\$110.00.

This is a book about the relationship between imperial ideology and poetic discourse in the age of Augustus; it uses Apollo, the special patron of both poets and the *princeps*, as a test case. All too often, discussions of this general topic seem to be the product of fixed notions of how great poetry must respond to absolute power and so end up forcing an improbable unanimity of opinion, whether pro or con, upon a group of poets who were remarkably diverse in most other ways. It is the chief merit of Miller's book that he has no such axe to grind. He is willing to ascribe a range of different views to different poets, to different poems by the same poet, and even to different parts of the same poem. This makes it a difficult book to summarize, for there is no overarching thesis to which its many different themes are subordinated. The compensating benefit is that a series of very well-known and often bitterly contentious passages are discussed with a degree of sensitivity, humility and good sense that the intervention of politics often banishes. No reader will agree with all of M.'s readings, but his even-handed treatment will probably annoy extremists of every stripe in equal measure. These sophisticated and satisfying discussions never stoop to making a straw man of rejected arguments and M. does admirable justice to acknowledging the

wide variety of plausible critical opinion, though its vast size and often polemical nature means that he cannot engage with all of it in equal detail.

Most of the chapters are focused on particular themes, which are arranged in a rough chronology. We start in the period of rivalry with Antony, when Octavian first claimed Apollo as his patron; the highlight of this chapter is a superb interpretation of an anonymous lampoon preserved by Suetonius. The next chapter moves on to narratives of Actium, and it too foregrounds non-canonical poetic material, in this case a couple of Greek epigrams. These work well as comparative material but their intrinsic interest is not quite as high (and the press has made a mess of the Greek typography). Other narratives are extracted from widely varying generic and chronological contexts, such as Virgil's description of the shield of Aeneas and Propertius 4.6, but this is done with a sensitivity to the original setting. The extraordinarily long third chapter on Apollo in the *Aeneid* is really a book within a book and is the only place where the reader's interest may flag. It seems at times motivated more by a grim determination to cover every place where Apollo appears in Augustan literature than by relevance to the larger comparative project. It is not that the quality of the close readings is any lower, just that this chapter seems to be struggling to formulate a general interpretation of the *Aeneid* which its limited remit will not permit.

Returning to the thematic approach, the next chapter is an excellent discussion of the temple of Palatine Apollo. M. accepts the standard interpretation of the scanty material evidence, but the real focus is on literary accounts of the temple and their reflection of its ideology. The following chapter is on Apollo as a symbol of a new age, and it is mostly concerned with the Secular Games. M. argues convincingly that Augustus' major innovations were designed to insert Apolline elements. The next chapter collects programmatic passages where M. detects a tension between Apollo's ability to embody either a Callimachean or an Augustan poetics. Unsurprisingly, given the more general theme, these discussions are more oddly assorted and the comparisons are not as sharply drawn. It is also the place where the reader is most likely to feel that M.'s ascription or not of a political element to Apollo may be somewhat arbitrary. The final chapter concentrates once more on a single work, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, but it is successful where the *Aeneid* chapter was problematic. M. eschews passages in the epic where the presence of Apollo is of marginal interest to his political and comparative argument and focuses exclusively on its intensely Augustan beginning and end. Ovid is so clearly responding to his predecessors here that the approach is naturally comparative and the chapter draws together many of the themes of the book.

It may seem an unsurprising conclusion that the Augustan poets invoked Apollo, god of both the lyre and the terrible bow, with a wide range of significations, from the purely aesthetic to the purely political, with many kinds of hybrid in between. The real strength of the book, however, is the quality of the individual readings, many of which benefit greatly from the comparative framework. M. is able, for example, to contrast effectively the very different approaches of Virgil and Propertius to the battle of Actium without reducing either of them to stereotypes. At the same time, his range of critical sympathy is wide enough to do justice to the solemnity of the *carmen saeculare* and the humour of the pursuit of Daphne in the *Metamorphoses*. For its comprehensive breadth, its even-handedness and its many striking and insightful interpretations, this book will be the first place to stop for anyone interested in the rôle played by Apollo in Augustan poetry.

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S. HEYWORTH and J. MORWOOD, *A COMMENTARY ON PROPERTIUS, BOOK 3*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. Pp. xi + 377. ISBN 9780199571482 (bound); 9780199571499 (paper). £75.00 (bound); £29.50 (paper).

No apology or explanation is needed to justify this volume. These have been *anni mirabiles* for Propertian studies, in part thanks to the signal efforts of Professor Heyworth. A commentary on the third book makes for a natural fit with the current state of scholarship; the first has received a fair amount of attention, so also the fourth, while the second (itself possibly, if not probably, two books) is an especially knotty problem. Not that Book 3 does not have ample difficulties of its own, which the present volume seeks to survey and for which, in many cases, a triage is offered, if not definitive solutions.