

sentence structures). Books 12 and 13 which describe the wooden horse and the fall of Troy respectively are treated at greatest length and provide the richest and most convincing evidence of strong intertextual resonances. However, scrupulous as ever, G. sets even these links in the context of the wider tradition of the *Iliupersis* myth and can never conclusively show intentional authorial allusion to Virgil. Behind the analysis lingers the persistent shadow of a putative 'common source', which can never be entirely exorcised. G. devotes a sophisticated discussion to this issue in her conclusion and successfully shows the problems surrounding the invocation of a 'common source': how many different 'common sources' are needed to account for all the parallels between Quintus and Virgil in different parts of the myth? Why should either of them follow the 'common source' more slavishly than they follow Apollonius or Homer? Yet G. is reluctant to relinquish the idea of the 'common source' entirely and instead suggests taking each case of similarity with Virgil on its own merits. It is in the sections on Books 12 and 13, along with the death of Penthesilea compared to those of Camilla and Turnus, that Quintus' reception of Virgil receives its least unfulfilling treatment: for instance, in the story of Sinon, Quintus represents him as a courageous and heroic figure who stands up to torture and mutilation at the hands of the Trojans (12.360–73). G. challenges the argument that these differences preclude Virgilian influence on Quintus, instead arguing that Quintus is deliberately reversing the Virgilian portrayal to follow his own pro-Greek agenda. This could be extended to reflect back on Virgil and reveal the implausibility of Aeneas' narrative of the pitying Trojans, taken in by Sinon's Odyssean machinations. In sum, this is an important book, and one which opens up the possibility of interesting further research into what Quintus is doing with Virgil.

University of Nottingham

HELEN LOVATT

H. LOVATT, *STATIUS AND EPIC GAMES: SPORT, POLITICS AND POETICS IN THE THEBAID*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Pp. xii + 336. ISBN 0-521-84742-7. £45.00/US \$80.00.

This book, based on the author's PhD thesis, consists of an introduction and seven chapters, each devoted to one of the contests in the funeral games for Opheltes in Book 6. Each chapter is in two parts, the first dealing with intertextuality, the relationship of the *Thebaid* to the epic tradition, and the second, intratextuality, involving themes from the narrative of each contest, which are traced throughout the rest of the poem to show 'the interwoven thematic continuity ... of the *Thebaid*' (19).

Lovatt has taken on no easy task in her endeavour to find meaning in a poem that has often been taken as an episodic versification of a Greek legend. Her book attempts to answer the questions: what are the games in the *Thebaid* about and what relationship do they have with the rest of the poem and with the epic tradition? In general, her answer is that the games, like the rest of the *Thebaid*, are multivalent. Although Greek in origin and character, they contain Roman overtones and give a new slant on epic themes and on the epic tradition itself.

I suspect that the most controversial part of her book is L.'s metapoetic approach, which has Statius frequently claiming superiority to Homer and Virgil. Here are samples of these readings. In the chariot race and the discus throw, Statius' pre-eminence is expressed in quantitative terms. Statius' race has seven chariots to Homer's five and Virgil's four (ships) and in the discus contest, the *Thebaid* 'replaces the *Odyssey* as true successor of the *Iliad*' having four competitors as in the *solos* ('mass of pig-iron') throw in the *Iliad* rather than the sixteen in the *Odyssey* (26; 103). Another metapoetic reading in the chariot race interprets the wheels of the chariots erasing the tracks made in the first lap as 'repetition and imitation [which] entail deletion', that is, Statius 'replaces Homer' (28). The replacement of Homer is also the theme of L.'s reading of Hippomedon's heavy discus, which is called an *orbis* ('disc') and a *pondus* ('weight'), recalling both the discus of Odysseus (*Od.* 8.186–90) and the *solos* in the *Iliad* (23.826–35). Thus, Hippomedon's heavy discus subsumes these two Homeric objects, thereby replacing both of them (104).

Statius' reworking of the foot races in Homer and Virgil corrects the morally ambiguous Virgilian foot race, allowing the deserving Parthenopaeus, cheated out of his victory by a foul, to win in a 'do-over'. Statius thus repeats and amends 'the poetic tradition, both submitting to the power of Virgil and Homer and surreptitiously subverting it' (57–8). Statius, with his imitation of the Iliadic sword fight, is said to claim a greater closeness to Homer than Virgil since the latter does not include that event in his games (246–7).

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.

Brooklyn College of the City University of New York

J. ROGER DUNKLE

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