

S.'s and M.'s monographs come close on the heels of Hershkowitz's more imaginative book, reviewed in *CR* 50 (2000), 54–5. Her intertextual and postmodern reading places the *Argonautica* and Jason cleverly within the troubled courtier's world that produced Lucan's poem and that, under a different emperor, produced those of Silius and Statius. For Hershkowitz, Jason practices a form of courtier's double-speak and learns to navigate in his mythological world the double bind (praise and comply without seeming to praise and comply—collusive dissimulation [p. 273] she terms it) that must have characterized intercourse with the powerful in the world of the Imperial court. For S. and M., Jason is more of a traditional Aeneas, honorable and *virtus*-driven. For them, Valerius' epic conception and vision of power, as Feeney would say, is 'ameliorative'. Hershkowitz's book, with justification, notes that Book 6 above all treats a civil war and so provides a commentary on the events dramatized by Lucan and, of course, on those that befell Rome at the end of Nero's reign (p. 226; contrast S. p. 272). S. (and M.) seems less interested in this point, perhaps because, unlike Hershkowitz, they see this poem as conditioned by the events of the reign of Vespasian. It deserves to be stressed, however, that this is no sure thing. Syme long ago argued that the whole of this poem should not be seen as Vespasianic ('The *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus', *CQ* 23 [1929], 129–37). So the doubt remains: how one judges Jason's participation in the 'Skythenschlacht' (as a good or a bad thing) may condition how one judges the efficacy of Jupiter's plan and the progress of civilization, and the establishment of empire generally (a point stressed as well by P. Hardie, *The Epic Successors of Virgil* [Cambridge, 1993], p. 87). Comparable points could be made of the conflict with the Doliones.

But perhaps this is to quibble, for both authors make more sense of this poem than has been vouchsafed hitherto. We should be grateful. It is regrettable to say, however, that the central disappointments of Valerius' narrative remain to be explained away: that the *Argonautica* moves so little, that it rarely surprises, and that it diverts so much less than Statius' coeval *Thebaid*. Valerius is still not quite palatable: unifying and edifying (or even unedifying) ideologies do not necessarily make for good art.

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## MARTIAL

C. HENRIKSÉN: *Martial, Book IX: a Commentary, Vols 1 and 2*. (Studia Latina Upsaliensia, 24:1 and 2.) Pp. 223, 209. Uppsala: Uppsala University Library, 1998, 1999. Paper. ISBN: 91-554-4292-7.

Book 9 is one of Martial's most interesting *libri*. Unlike Book 8, which seems to have been dedicated to Domitian and, being specifically designed for him, contains no obscene material, Book 9 definitely does. And yet, of Martial's twelve *Epigrammaton libri*, it contains the highest percentage of poetry for the emperor.

H.'s two-volume commentary pays a lot of attention to the imperial theme. His useful introduction focuses on such topics as Domitian's military campaigns and the deification of the emperor. In addition, H. offers a critical discussion of J. Garthwaite's theory (*Ramus* 22 [1993], 78–102) that the epigrams contained hidden criticism of Domitian's moral legislation (vol. I pp. 17–20; cf. *ad* 9.11; 12; 13; 16; 17; 36). Unfortunately, there is no discussion of Garthwaite's interpretation of 9.64, 65 and 101 (*Domitian and the Court Poets Martial and Statius* [Diss. Cornell University, 1978], pp. 150–67).

In most cases, however, H. does provide exhaustive surveys of previous discussions. Moreover, H.'s explanations of *Realien* are not simply part of a fact-finding mission, but they contribute to an understanding of the poems. Within the wealth of parallel texts adduced, H. indicates which he believes most relevant for intertextual interpretation (cf. e.g. vol. II pp. 80f. the allusions to Ovid in 9.70), and there is a strong emphasis on the literary traditions of the respective epigrams.

H. has some interesting things to say on book composition (vol. I pp. 15–20), but his discussion of the functions of the published book (especially in 9.54, 58, and 99) might have benefited from a closer look at D. Fowler's article on 'Martial and the Book' (*Ramus* 24 [1995], 31–58), which H. mentions in passing (vol. I p. 108 n. 1). H. is mainly interested in reconstructing the primary meanings of those epigrams which may originally have been sent to specific addressees. The shortcomings of this approach, however, which is indebted to P. White's *libellus* theory, become evident when H. distinguishes between the epigrams with addressees he considers fictional and the poems he believes to have been addressed to real persons. For example, H. argues persuasively that the probably fictional name *Cantharus* in 9.9.1 is used because of its association with drinking (vol. I p. 87). But he believes that the *Auctus* in 9.21 was a real person, and interprets this poem as 'Martial's way of expressing his gratitude for Auctus' unsolicited services to him' (vol. I p. 124). In a poem on a financial theme, however, *Auctus* may be a well-chosen name as well—a joke that would have been appreciated by the general readership of the published book.

Another case in point is the prose epistle at the beginning of the book. It is addressed to one Toranius and contains an *epigramma extra ordinem paginarum* praising the poet Avitus and, finally, Martial himself. Following White (*JRS* 64 [1974], p. 58), H. argues that this preface 'does not belong to the actual book', but functions as a complimentary address to Toranius and Avitus (vol. I pp. 47–9). However, when Martial talks of an *ordo paginarum*, this is a clear reference to the book itself. And, since at the end of the epigram the general readership is addressed, there is no reason to limit the preface's function to a private communication between Martial and his *amici*. In addition to Martial's praise of his epigrams, the preface might in fact contain an implicit message for a broader audience: the ninth book, unlike its predecessor, has not been conceived specifically for Domitian, who is not mentioned in the epistle at all. It is interesting to note that, despite the large number of epigrams dealing with the emperor, Martial introduces his new book as a conventional *liber* with no specific focus on Domitian. Thus, after reading the epistle, we will not be surprised that 9.2 marks the return to obscene epigram.

H. ought to have paid more attention to the concept of erotic poetry in general, but all he has to say about 'Martial's Sexual Attitudes' is a repetition of J. P. Sullivan's (*Philologus* 123 [1979], 288–302) theory that Martial is a moralist attacking sexual 'deviants'. Thus H. argues that, in the light of Martial's 'contempt for male homosexuality', *prostituisse mares* in 9.7.2 must allude 'to the prostitution of grown-up men' (vol. I p. 82). But this interpretation is inappropriate in 9.7, which deals with the castration and prostitution of children. Are Domitian's *siderei mares* in 9.36.10, whom H. cites as a parallel to 9.7.2, also adult male prostitutes? And, more importantly, there is no such thing as 'contempt for male homosexuality' in the epigrams, as is made clear by numerous passages where Martial himself acts as a lover of boys (cf. H. P. Obermayer, *Martial und der Diskurs über männliche Homosexualität in der Literatur der frühen Kaiserzeit* [Tübingen, 1998]; reviewed in *CR* 49 [1999], 570–1).

Similarly, H. keeps telling us about Martial's 'utmost disgust at acts of oral sex'

(e.g. vol. I p. 149). But he is proved wrong by his own discussion of the widely debated epigram 9.67, where Martial himself desires *fellatio* (cf. 2.31, 4.17, 4.50). H.'s questionable definition of 'oral sex' has obviously misled him into believing that a *fellatrix* and a *cunnilingus* provide 'the same service' (vol. II pp. 74f.; cf. A. E. Housman, *JPh* 30 [1907], pp. 247f. = *Classical Papers* [Cambridge, 1972], ii.725). An interpretation of 9.67 focusing on the rôles of the sexes has now been advanced by Obermayer (op. cit., pp. 223f.).

Although one may not always agree with H.'s interpretations, one outstanding merit is that he has more to offer than a simple accumulation of material. H.'s commentary represents not only a valuable source of information, it is also in its own right an invaluable contribution to the interpretation of the epigrams.

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## AVITUS

A. ARWEILER: *Die Imitation antiker und spätantiker Literatur in der Dichtung 'De spiritalis historiae gestis' des Alcimus Avitus. Mit einem Kommentar zu Avit. carm. 4,429–540 und 5,526–703*. Pp. xi + 384. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1999. Cased, DM 248. ISBN: 3-11-016248-2.

Arweiler studies Avitus of Vienne's (c. 490–518) use of ancient and late antique literature in his *De spiritalis historiae gestis*. Since he is concerned more with imitation than with Avitus, the historical background (pp. 1–6) is out of date and derivative. A. missed I. N. Wood, *Avitus of Vienne: Religion and Culture in the Auvergne and the Rhône Valley, 470–530* (D. Phil., Oxford, 1979) and a new commentary on *SHG* 1 by L. Morisi, *Alcimi Aviti De mundi initio* (Bologna, 1996); also perforce N. Hecquet-Noti, *Avit de Vienne, Histoire spirituelle. Tome 1: Chants I–III, Sources chrétiennes 444* (Paris, 1999). While M. Roberts, *Biblical Epic and Rhetorical Paraphrase in Late Antiquity* (Liverpool, 1985) emphasized paraphrastic technique in biblical epic, A.'s work rightly reminds us that Christian poets such as Avitus did not employ just the Bible and a rhetorical manual. Although he avoids classical learning in his correspondence (unlike his relative Sidonius), Avitus, long known as an amplifier of biblical material with free excursus (e.g. the Nile, *SHG* 1.262–89, the Phoenix, *SHG* 1.239–44, an anatomy of the human body, *SHG* 1.75–113), was clearly learned in Latin poetry, both Christian and pagan. A. deserves credit for being the first to demonstrate in detail just how he composed from his poetic sources. But classical allusions are not all. Avitus used biblical exegesis. D. J. Niles (*Doctrine and Exegesis in Biblical Latin Poetry* [Liverpool, 1993], pp. 118–27) noted both general (pp. 118–27) and more specific (pp. 57–73) exegetical points. A. begins with material on the spiritual, moral, and historical senses of scripture, but the treatment is patchy. For instance, when discussing *SHG* 1.160 ff., Adam's sleep and Christ's death, he cites Jer. *In Is.* 13.48, but misses Aug. *CD* 22.17, and more importantly Avitus' own *Hom.* 2. Here considerably more work needed to be done. Hariulf (*Chronicon Centulense* 3. 3, *PL* 174.1257A) mentioned *Quaestiones* on the Pentateuch by Avitus. If these are not chimerical, they raise important questions about the relationship of his poetry and his own exegesis. A. (p. 24) points to glossematic material; the lost *Quaestiones* might explain it. A. has noticed Eucherius' influence (pp. 28, 29, 31), but (aside from