

Amongst the numerous fine individual entries, there are some notes which are less convincing. So, for instance, N. argues that in metrical patterning and the idea of strolling by a river the description of Blaesus at 2.1.194 evokes Vergil's (very different) picture of Gallus at *Ecl.* 6.64 and then goes on to suggest a point of comparison in political disgrace. N. also rejects the idea that 2.7.124–5 refers to a tradition that Laodamia worshipped a Bacchic statue of Protesilaus in a Maenadic frenzy on the grounds that the evidence is slight. See, however, Bettini's *A Portrait of the Lover* (trans. Gibbs, 1999), Reeson (2001) on *Ov., Her.* 13.33–4 and *Apul., Met.* 8.7 with Hijmans, *Mnemosyne* 39 (1986), 351, 358. Additionally, the book is hampered by constraints of space. Frequently I was left wishing for longer entries, more cross-references to other poems in the collection, and a fuller picture (particularly in the case of the intertexts). Occasionally, N. could have done more with her material: for example, she does not bring out the significance of the verbal echoes of the *Thebaid's* Opheltis episode, where the slave Hypsipyle laments a high-born child, in Statius' consolation for Melior who is mourning the death of the low-born Glaucias.

The book is well-produced, with only a few mistakes (e.g. p. 31 the reading of Courtney is *qualis* not *quales*; the lemma at 2.3.24–25 prints *rapinae* instead of *rapinis*).

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A. AUGOUSTAKIS (ED.), *BRILL'S COMPANION TO SILIUS ITALICUS*. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2009. Pp. xxi + 512. ISBN 9789004165700. €155.00/US\$225.00.

Considered with disdain and hostility by modern scholarship in the first half of the twentieth century, Silius Italicus is now back in fashion, with *Brill's Companion to Silius Italicus* one of the most remarkable indications of this renewed interest. Silius' great narrative skill, his learned and ingenious intertextual research, and his historical, social and axiological thought are all prominent in this excellent set of essays, though the aesthetic and poetic dimensions of the *Punica* could perhaps have been further explored. The book is organized into four parts, rather *passe-partout* and not properly Silian, but which introduce stimulating debates for the reader as the authors, on similar points, offer diverging opinions (the figure of Scipio for instance, and the relationships with Domitian). They are: Part A, 'Introduction'; Part B, 'Context and Intertext'; Part C, 'Themes and Images'; Part D, 'Reception and Criticism'. The book also contains a comprehensive bibliography and useful Indices.

The first part introduces the author, his reputation, and the text of the *Punica* (chronology, intertextuality, structure), and offers a clear and interesting exploration of the different theories and analysis of the recent bibliography on the poem. The second part considers the relationships between Silius and his many sources and intertexts. Pomeroy reminds his reader of the difficulties in identifying the non-Livian authors which Silius used in his treatment of historical episodes. He then focuses on Silius' use of 'Thucydidean narratives' in Livy which reflects literary debates and different ways of understanding historical causality, revealing ethical rather than political aims. Gibson extends the discussion on the sources of Silius, and, using Quintilian's definition of *historia* as *carmen solutum*, he explores how Silius exploits both poetic and historical predecessors at the same time. He focuses on the digression on Sicily in Book 14, with an erudite and detailed examination of Silian allusions to, and merging of, previous poets and historians in his description. The next diptych in this part deals with the relationships between Silius and Virgil. Ganiban explores the rôle of Dido in the characterization of Hannibal and his tragic heroism. Mythological past and epic traditions guide Hannibal's decisions in the *Punica*, much more than historical motivations: Dido's curse and Juno's hatred motivate his action throughout the epic, but also implicate and enclose him in a destructive dynamic of defeat. Hannibal, as a blind hero, always looks back to the past and ignores, unlike Virgil's Aeneas, the weight of fate on the future. Kennedy Classen tries to rehabilitate Silius' originality when rewriting his models and shows how he combines Homeric and Virgilian models in Hannibal's and Scipio's characterization. The echoes in Books 12 and 13 of Homeric *nekyia* and Virgilian *catabasis* are examined in detail. Hannibal is compared to Aeneas, Achilles and Ulysses but fails to reincarnate them, being rather a new Turnus, unlike Scipio, who is a true new Aeneas, Ulysses and Achilles. Marks contributes to the exploration of

Lucan intertextuality in the *Punica*, suggesting a symmetrical frame (perhaps too symmetrical) for the *Punica*, based on the allusions to Lucan's epic, and assimilating the Punic wars to a civil war. Roman defeats due to the self-destructive nature of the city in Books 1 to 10, and Carthaginian defeats for the same reasons in Books 11 to 17 twice replay the Pompey-Caesar Civil War (a 'conflict of heads' for world hegemony in both epics) and Scipio is a parallel to Domitian in guaranteeing peace and security after civil wars. Lovatt explores the relationship between Silius and Statius, basing her analysis on the example of the games in *Thebaid* 6 and *Punica* 16. Her aim is not to prove which one wrote first, but to explore the possibilities of interactions between the two poets, in both directions, advocating looking for readings 'which offer the most interesting story'. If her suggestions are not always convincing, they nonetheless highlight the poetic competition between Flavian poets and the deep differences between two literary and ideological worlds.

The third section covers a range of topics. Asso explores the figure of Hercules as heroic model for Hannibal and Scipio, paradoxically and surprisingly assuming that the unphilosophical weakness of Hercules contributes to making him a paradigm of heroism for Roman men. Tipping approaches exemplarity through Scipio, 'the true hero of the *Punica*' whose 'status as exemplary Roman is uncertain'; his models and parallels are all marked by duality: Hercules, Bacchus, Alexander, Domitian. Tipping portrays Scipio, eager for personal power and glory, as an exemplary figure of republican individualism which leads to civil war, the downfall of the Republic, and imperial tyranny. The ambiguity of the hero and allusions to Lucan create for Tipping, unlike Marks, a negative view of Domitian: repetitions, comparisons and substitutions in the *Punica* reveal a pattern of Roman history, from Republic to Empire, where the republican collective spirit is overshadowed by power-hungry individuals encouraged by the Roman ethic of competition. Fucecchi continues the exploration of Silius' characters with Fabius and Marcellus; despite divergences, the two share important behavioural analogies, which build a single model of heroism that Scipio will subsequently assume. Ariemma looks at Varro as a demagogue in Books 8–10, Roman consul and worst enemy of Rome, whose character is built up through contrast with other Roman generals and similarity to Hannibal. Harrison considers Silius' skill in writing ecphrasis in the *Punica*, discussing five objects (Dido's temple, Hannibal's shield, Hercules' temple at Gades, the temple at Liternum, and Hasdrubal's cloak), which all stress the future defeats and humiliations of Hannibal with ironic effects for the reader who knows Hannibal's future, when the Punic hero reads self-glorifying scenes. Manolaraki explores tides in the *Punica*: in Book 3, Hannibal's contemplation of Atlantic tides at Gades provides a recurrent motif which contrasts the author's knowledge with Hannibal's ignorance, and underlines the strong thematic, symbolic and narrative unity of the epic in spite of its digressive appearance. Cowan appeals ingeniously to theories of counterfactual history and highlights Silius' originality in his 'what if' narratives. These alternative narratives do not reinforce the idea of determinism and *fatum* proper to historical epic, but instead introduce a Silian poetics of contingency, in a paradoxical tension with the teleological tendencies of epic narrative. His demonstration both underlines the importance of great heroes, able to modify world history, and the nature and structure of the *Punica*, based on successive turning-points where history, and narrative, could turn and take a different path. Keith offers a reading in which Silius opposes Roman West, masculine and loyal, with Carthaginian East, feminine and treacherous. From this perspective, Hannibal is an instrument for female action: Dido, the ancestor whom he avenges, Juno, who encourages him to fight against Rome, Anna Perenna, who urges him to engage the Romans at Cannae, Asbyte, female partisan of Hannibal, and his wife Imilce. He is a 'female-focused hero', and consequently unable to defy Roman power. Finally, Bernstein, through central figures of the *Punica* — Hannibal, Fabius, Pacuvius and Scipio — considers the relationship between paternal and political authority. Scipio manages private and public obligations most effectively, and, Bernstein argues, is consequently linked by Silius to the ideal emperor, such as Domitian. Bernstein, basing his analysis on the cases of Saguntum and Capua, also discusses the issue of *syngeneia*, as a potential means of unity between states actually doomed to failure.

The last part of the book deals with the reception of Silius' *Punica*. Muecke, on Silius' first humanist editors shows how they contributed to the spread of knowledge, and interest in Silius, and thus to his great popularity, with consequences for the whole textual tradition. Dominik explores his subsequent scholarly treatment and the changing attitudes towards Silius, from popularity during the Renaissance to disdain during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,

and the recent shift towards a more positive attitude. His concluding essay brings us back to Augoustakis' introduction, and he outlines current scholarly debates which are at last examining the *Punica* as a poetic entity.

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R. J. LITTLEWOOD, *A COMMENTARY ON SILIUS ITALICUS' PUNICA 7*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. xcix + 276. ISBN 9780199570935. £75.00.

R. Joy Littlewood's commentary on Silius Italicus' *Punica* 7 is the first readily available commentary in English on an entire book of this Flavian epic. The reception of this poem has seen many twists of fortune; it was not much read or researched in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In recent decades, however, interest has picked up significantly, signalled most clearly by the publication of *Brill's Companion to Silius Italicus* in 2010 (ed. A. Augoustakis). There has already been a commentary on the entire epic in French by F. Spaltenstein (1986/1990; 2 vols): obviously, because of its greater coverage it cannot be as detailed as a commentary on a single book; it only has a brief introduction, and due to the recent developments in research on Flavian epic, it is already out of date in some aspects of its approach. Besides, there are a few commentaries on individual books, but either they are not in English or they are unpublished dissertations. It is therefore to be hoped that L.'s commentary will start a process of opening up the poem to an English-speaking readership and enable people to engage more closely with Silius Italicus' epic; help as provided by commentaries is all the more necessary since there is no modern English translation.

With a view to giving users a taste of Silius Italicus' poetry and also covering important aspects of the epic, the choice of Book 7 is a good one: this book narrates events from a period in late summer 217 B.C., after Rome's defeat at Lake Trasimene, and shows the dictator Fabius (the 'Cunctator') confronting Hannibal; it includes a number of speeches and character portrayals as well as aetiological digressions that illustrate the origins of the war and its effect on the Italian countryside (see vii–viii, lxxv–lxxix). The book thus presents paradigmatic examples of various types of Silius Italicus' narrative style (albeit no divine scene) and key features of the poem's underlying themes. The volume follows the standard format of a commentary: it consists of an introduction (xv–xcix), the Latin text, derived entirely from the most recent critical edition by J. Delz in the Teubner series (1–28), a map (30–1), the commentary itself (33–251), a bibliography (252–67), and indexes (268–76).

The extensive introduction discusses the life and circumstances of Silius Italicus, his literary models, the protagonists and the structure of *Punica* 7, the poet's epic style, as well as the transmission and reception of *Punica*. In all these respects it presents an up-to-date account of the current state of scholarship with ample bibliographical references; the presentation is clear and readable, though there is a tendency for it to be somewhat narrative with numerous details, which are perhaps not always necessary. A section on the structure and purpose of the whole epic and the place of *Punica* 7 within it might have been useful, but thoughts on this issue are frequently given implicitly; such a piece could have been juxtaposed with an overview of the underlying historical events as seen in modern historical scholarship. On a more technical level, the section on language and style could have also covered metrics and prosody.

In line with the fact that *Punica* has been called 'the most intertextual of poems' (M. Wilson 2004; see p. xx) and with developments in recent research, almost half the introduction is devoted to 'Literary Models' (xix–lxii): L. reviews Silius Italicus' relationship to the historical sources Livy and Polybius as well as to the poetic predecessors and contemporaries Homer, Ennius, Virgil, Ovid's *Fasti*, Lucan, Statius and Valerius Flaccus. This is an impressively wide coverage, which goes beyond the frequently adduced Homeric epics and Virgil's *Aeneid* to take account of all the main writers in the genre of narrative epic and, with Virgil's *Georgics* and Ovid's *Fasti*, to include also didactic epic. Numerous intriguing verbal allusions and correspondences in themes and motifs are outlined, some more obvious than others, though sometimes the relevance of this background for an understanding of Silius Italicus' epic could have been made more explicit. Since L. discusses the intertextual connections by means of significant examples, the analysis, perhaps inevitably,