P. PIERONI, *MARCUS VERRIUS FLACCUS' DE SIGNIFICATU VERBORUM IN DEN AUSZÜGEN VON SEXTUS POMPEIUS FESTUS UND PAULUS DIACONUS. EINLEITUNG UND TEILKOMMENTAR (154,19–186,29 LINDSAY)* (Studien zur Klassischen Philologie 147). Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2004. Pp. 180. ISBN 3-631-51720-3. €39.00.

Grappling with the text of Festus' epitome of Verrius Flaccus' 'encyclopaedia' is no easy matter. As well as demanding from its editors knowledge of anything from Roman grammar and topography to fish and fowl, the sole surviving manuscript (the *Farnesianus*) is severely damaged. Supplemented in parts by humanist apographs (complete with their own problems), the text has endured centuries of learned fiddling from some of classical scholarship's best textual critics, which must all be assimilated. Individual excerpts have long been the subject of discussions in books and articles, but there has been no collection of this bibliography and until recently few modern attempts to look at the work or the information it provides as a coherent whole. Astonishingly, Pieroni's work, based on his 2001 thesis, is the first proper stab at a commentary. The book falls into two main sections. In the first part, P. discusses the history of the text and its authors; his commentary takes up the second part of the book.

The introduction (9–37) provides a clear and concise survey of scholarship on the multiple problems of the text and its author(s) — Verrius, Festus, and Paul the Deacon. It begins with a brief survey of the origins of the Roman glossographical tradition, and the early interest in etymologies apparent from authors such as Naevius, Ennius, and Accius. P. then discusses (12–15) the life and career of Verrius Flaccus. Verrius' status as a freedman and as an imperial employee sets him apart from late Republican antiquarian scholars such as Varro, and is important for understanding the context and (Augustan?) agenda of his work; it is a pity that P. did not choose to expand on this topic. P. goes on to discuss the epitomators of Verrius, and the relationship between their work. He rightly rejects (21–2) the view of A. Moscadi, 'Verrio, Festo e Paulo', *GIF* 31 (1979), 17–36, that Festus had created, not merely an epitome, but an independent work.

Having discussed the complicated compositional stages of the text, P. continues with the story of its transmission and reception. He rightly observes (31) that the date 1475, long accepted as the year in which the manuscript was rediscovered by the Greek Manilius Rhallus, must now be backdated by about twenty years, since the humanist Lorenzo Valla made use of Festus for his notes on Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*. P. also discusses the less well-known manuscript tradition of Paul the Deacon, through whose brutal epitome we are forced to approach the lost sections of the text of Verrius/Festus' work. P.'s history of interventions on the text presents the results of centuries of scholarship in a lucid manner.

P.'s commentary (39–168) discusses only the lemmas beginning with the letter N, the first letter to survive in full in the *Farnesianus*. Light is shed on the usual rag-bag of Festan material: the mysterious *di Nixi*; pontifical rituals and calendrical matters; military honours; types of container; glosses of African and Etruscan words; and various elements of archaic terminology, including fragments from the *lex* of the temple of Aventine Diana, from the Latin *foedus*, and from the Twelve Tables. For each lemma discussed, P. gives a bibliography for questions of a textual and historical nature. Where relevant, he provides full quotations from authors with material comparable to or derived from that of Festus (e.g. on the term *nefrendes*, at 47) — helpful as many of these sources are scattered and/or obscure.

P.'s text follows Lindsay's 1913 Teubner edition, flawed in various ways and in need of reassessment, as P. himself notes (34; 35, n. 143). P. lists forty instances (35–6) where his readings or supplements diverge from those of Lindsay, mostly minor and readily acceptable changes. Several of these readings derive from Renaissance and later scholarship, and had already been taken up by Lindsay in his *Glossaria Latina* edition of Festus (1930), e.g. in the lemma *niger lapis*, where P. supplements <*Hos*>*tilium* (i.e. Hostus Hostilius, grandfather of Rome's third king), rejecting the untenable <*Quinc*>*tilium* of Lindsay 1913 (who there followed Orsini and Müller). Since the whole lemma is not printed, only the few words on which P. has chosen to focus, his commentary must be read in conjunction with Lindsay's Teubner. This format is perfectly acceptable for an easily-available work (Livy, for instance), but more problematic for Festus, which few will have readily at hand, and where the context and layout of each lemma is so important to our understanding of the work as a whole.

P.'s work is early confirmation of the recent resurgence of interest in the text of Festus. He offers his readers a competent, solid, and sensible, if conservative, work. The book has adequate

indices and an up-to-date bibliography, and is well-produced. Typographical errors are few (e.g. Fuanioli instead of Funaioli (139 n. 279); Shackelton Bailey instead of Shackleton Bailey (13 n. 33)). P. comments upon the difficulties in providing an elegant translation of a work which is so concerned with etymologies; nevertheless, as the only translation of Festus is the obscure and idiosyncratic French version of Savagner (1846), it is a great pity that he chose not to translate the text.

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C. NAPPA, *READING AFTER ACTIUM: VERGIL'S* GEORGICS, *OCTAVIAN, AND ROME*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005. Pp. xii + 293. ISBN 0-472-11475-1. US$75.00.

To oversimplify grossly, interpretations of Vergil's *Georgics* fall into one of three categories: the optimistic (which view the poem as a positive celebration of human achievement), the pessimistic (which maintain that it is all about failure and loss), and the ambiguous (which hold that it portrays the human condition as characterized simultaneously by struggle and success). The new study by Christopher Nappa belongs to the third group but presents the ambiguous position with a twist. According to N., not only have the inconsistencies, contradictions, and opposing viewpoints found in the *Georgics* been purposely introduced by Vergil himself, but they are part of an authorial strategy that forces the readers, as they advance through the text, to continually question their assumptions and make up their own minds about the puzzles and conundrums with which the poet presents them. Rather than being an inert feature of the text, or a message in itself, ambiguity is thus a means of setting in motion a dynamic intellectual and emotional process.

In focusing on the reading(s) generated by the *Georgics*, N. avowedly (and, as he acknowledges himself, unfashionably) seeks to uncover Vergil's intention in writing the poem and orchestrating its effects. In particular, N. believes that the poet invites a political reading and that one of his primary addressees is Octavian, to whom Vergil reportedly read the poem after his return from Actium and whom he seeks to 'engage in a constructive dialogue . . . on the potential courses available to him and on the potential interpretations of his character, achievements, and motives, which would have been a central concern to the Roman and Italian elite' (1–2). While the poem holds meaning for all readers, it has special applications for Octavian and his contemporaries in the specific situation after the defeat of Antony; this 'reading after Actium' N. sets out to reconstruct.

After laying out his approach in the extensive Introduction, N. embarks on a linear reading of the *Georgics*, dedicating one chapter to each book and providing detailed and often very perceptive interpretations of all significant passages (the Conclusion presents a 'rereading' of *Eclogue* 1 in the light of the *Georgics*, picking up on Vergil's self-quotation in the sphragis). This procedure mimics the experience of every individual reader's progress through the poem; in addition, N. at important junctures considers the meaning that a particular part of the text would have had specifically for Octavian. Somewhat contrary to his own methodological remarks, which seem to posit a considerable openness as to the poem's meaning, N. ends up finding in the *Georgics* what comes pretty close to a 'message'. (Perhaps we are to understand that by asking questions, Vergil means to elicit from the reader not just any reaction but specific answers after all?) In N.'s view, the poem indeed depicts life as a constant struggle, and the *labor* instituted by Jupiter is *improbus*, that is, from the perspective of those who have to engage in it, decidedly unpleasant. But there is really no alternative, as the Golden Age is both unattainable and ultimately undesirable (N. shows in detail that every Golden Age-like state depicted in the poem is flawed in one way or another). Therefore, all that human beings can do is adopt a positive attitude to *labor*; this way, they might in fact achieve something (just as, for example, Aristaeus gets his bees back), even though — life in the Iron Age being what it is — success is never assured. As for Octavian, at this critical moment in his career his job is to build a sense of community at Rome, not to let civil war resentments break out again, and not hubristically to strive for kingship.

If Vergil's intention is to make his readers grasp these (fairly banal) points, his roundabout and puzzling method of getting his message across is considerably more interesting than the message itself. Something similar is true for N.'s book, which is notable for its careful close readings, which anyone working on the poem should consult. Individual readers may have different reactions to N.'s interpretations and will certainly disagree with some of them (to choose one example that involves a famous passage, I simply cannot believe that 'haud mollia iussa' of 3.41 refers to