Trojans' legitimate and *involuntary* conquest of Italy with the 'arguments advanced by ancient – and modern – historians about Rome's allegedly involuntary conquest of the Mediterranean' (p. 388). While the reader must not impute to S. the dangerous ideology that he ascribes to Virgil, it is difficult to understand why he must resort to such doublethink in accommodating Virgil's view of destiny and divine intervention in ways that, as he would say, 'are not expressly stated by the author' (p. 161).

I have only sketched some of my issues with a book that claims to be engaged in a fight for truth and objectivity comparable to that of Darwinists against Creationists (p. 235). My last concern regards the lack of representation of twenty-first-century Virgilian scholarship. In what is a surprisingly brief bibliography for such a long book, only twelve items postdate 2006 (three by S. and three by A. Powell, the book's editor and author of *Virgil the Partisan* [2008] for the same series) and only 31 postdate the year 2000 (six by S.). Nowadays, the issues treated in the book are rarely dealt with as if the questions that they pose about authorial intention and implied readership could find such straightforward answers. The debate has moved instead towards what has long made the poem and the ideological system that it was undoubtedly part of such a minefield for contrasting political readings and tensions. While few academics would get away with not taking into consideration the last sixteen years of academic work in the field, S. and the editor feel justified in simply acknowledging the writer's bracketed dismissal of what he calls the 'unintentionalists' (p. 150). This must be a worrying situation. But I shall play the optimist and trust that S.'s post-2016 readers are by now used to being wary of claims to final and absolute truth.

University of Warwick ELENA GIUSTI
e.giusti@warwick.ac.uk

ASCANIUS IN THE *AENEID*

ROGERSON (A.) *Virgil's Ascanius. Imagining the Future in the* Aeneid. Pp. viii + 237. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Cased, £75, US$99.99. ISBN: 978-1-107-11539-2.
doi:10.1017/S0009840X17001925

This slim volume intensively explores the background, representations and implications of Virgil's Ascanius. The monograph demonstrates a fruitful broadmindedness about the function of character in epic as a repository of signifiers and thus a worthy object of semiotic interpretation. While the *Aeneid* that emerges may be a familiar one to Anglophone 'pessimists' preoccupied with the epic's delays, alternatives and inconsistencies (pp. 11–12), the sharp focus on Ascanius and strong intratextual readings provide many persuasive re-evaluations of key individual episodes. The brief chapters juxtapose examples effectively and link together well to make a convincing case for taking Ascanius seriously.

Chapters 2 and 3 on the inconclusive Italian genealogy and troubling Trojanness of Ascanius' naming establish ambiguities about Aeneas' Trojan son in the pre-Virgilian tradition that are important for the argument, but contain information and sources familiar to most Virgilians at least since A. Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome: Local Tradition and Imperial Power* (2001). Subsequent chapters feature R.'s skills in drawing intratextual comparisons, and her close attention to Virgilian language and self-allusion generates fresh insights. Chapter 4 links the Andromache and Dido episodes through both women's attachment to a child *imago*: Ascanius' disturbing resemblance to the lost Astyanax and the

Cupid substitute that intoxicates Dido. R. shows how the *Odyssey*'s epic discourse of family resemblance and the ideological expectations of Roman ancestral *imagines* (pp. 65–8) underscore the inappropriate regressiveness of Andromache's comparison: Ascanius is temporarily a 'ghostly' substitute in Andromache's *parva Troia*, and further substitutions (Cupid) and spectral alternatives (Dido's hypothetical *parvulus Aeneas* at 4.328–9) suggest a troubling proliferation of Ascanius 'doubles' within the poem.

R.'s careful attention to the language and associations of Ascanius' *imago* yields further results in the following chapter on the *lusus Troiae*, where she proposes an attractive reading of Ascanius' address to the mob of Trojan women (pp. 90–100): the conjunction of *belli simulacra* (5.674) to describe the Troy games activates a ghostly suggestion in the *galeam inanem* (5.673) Ascanius tosses to the ground. His bid for authority through recognition, *en ego vester / Ascanius* (5.672–3) thus becomes undermined by the deceptive duplicates implied by this terminology, and instead veers into an ironic potential replay of Pentheus' failed address to his mother in Euripides' *Bacchae* (first observed by J. Conington ad loc. in 1884, as R. notes, p. 97 n. 50). An Ovidian reuse of the Virgilian scene in his Theban narrative provides a satisfying confirmation of the themes of deception and misrecognition (p. 99). The precision of the earlier readings helps to establish the semantic field that makes sense of the Euripidean allusion; in his heroic leap to the spotlight, Ascanius remains strangely invisible, possibly unrecognised and ultimately ineffective as his father arrives to disperse the women.

R. reads Ascanius' struggle to fulfil adult roles as symptoms of deep ambivalence about the epic's own progress to closure (pp. 13–14). The strongest chapters illustrate two forms of developmental delay in the poem: 'Protecting Ascanius' (Chapter 7) highlights the imagery of precious objects in the section 'Jewel-Like Boys' (pp. 131–44) and the associated vulnerability of childhood with similar descriptions of other characters, while 'Growing Up' (Chapter 8) demonstrates Ascanius' multiple failures to do so. Although the poem's interest in doomed youths has been well established since D. Fowler's seminal piece, 'Virgil on Killing Virgins' in M. Whitby et al. (edd.), *Homo Viator: Classical Essays for John Bramble* (1987), R. presents convincing intratextual links for Ascanius' visual connection to representations of female warriors (Penthesilea and Camilla) and non-Romans like the Gauls depicted on Aeneas' shield (pp. 141–2). R. argues:

> Each of these parallels suggests Ascanius' beauty and that his involvement in war is a potential menace not just to his enemies but also to himself. They also underscore his exotic, potentially dangerous otherness, again raising the issue of whether he might be too Trojan for a rightful place in Virgil's Roman epic. (p. 143).

As R. notes, Flavian epic certainly recognises and amplifies these associations.

Nisus and Euryalus are probably the most memorable doomed youths of the epic, and yet R.'s reading of Ascanius' underestimated role as commander of their night raid yields equally intriguing new insights. R. first establishes unwitting violence as a childish characteristic in her discussion of Silvia's stag, and then effectively analyses Ascanius' speech as an example of boyishly over-enthusiastic rhetoric (pp. 156–9). Taking Ascanius' 'childishness' seriously lends greater pathos to this episode; seeing Ascanius as a boy leader playing at war games highlights the emphasis on age difference between Nisus and Euryalus, and the ultimate inadequacy he demonstrates in not coping with the real adult reactions of Euryalus' bereaved mother. There are no words of consolation, only a hasty removal of inconvenient female grief.

Not all readers will assent to R.'s pessimistic conclusion that Aeneas and the poem seemingly 'suppress' Ascanius: 'His voice, when heard, is swiftly silenced, and after

Aeneas leaves to engage in his climactic encounter with Turnus, he simply vanishes' (p. 189). This is not the only problem with the poem's ending, as readers are aware. Nonetheless, R.'s provocative suggestions flow from a sustained engagement with Ascanius' characterisation and its place in the epic's poetic economy. The topic is concentrated, and at times, narrowly Virgilian, with only a few mentions of Telemachus in the *Odyssey* or other significant poetic models for problematic *rites de passage*, such as perhaps Hylas in Theocritus 13. Ascanius' artificially prolonged childishness allows the much older Aeneas to marry a nubile Lavinia, whose age and Virgilian descriptions correspond to Ascanius much more closely (pp. 108–10, 138): could this be a strategy adopted from the *Odyssey*, where Telemachus' celibacy (in direct contrast with the suitors' and Odysseus' sexual activity) signifies his inadequacy to take over as king? Overall, the book is well produced with no obvious typos and with appropriate scholarly apparatus.

Yale-NUS College, Singapore J. MIRA SEO
mira.seo@yale-nus.edu.sg

'A NEW SENECA'

STAR (C.) *Seneca*. Pp. x + 195. London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2017. Paper, £12.99, US$20 (Cased, £39.50, US$65). ISBN: 978-1-84885-890-9 (978-1-84885-889-3 hbk).
doi:10.1017/S0009840X1700227X

The obvious comparisons for this volume are C. Mendell, *Our Seneca* (1941) and M. Griffin, *Seneca: a Philosopher in Politics* (1976). Both books were great successes and remain highly respected; S.'s admiration is nuanced and laudable, referring, for example, to 'Our Seneca' (p. 3). Both, equally, are very much documents of their times; Griffin, especially, invites a revisit. The arc of Seneca's career was that of Cicero's – although both were highly partial to philosophy from an early age, each made his name first in politics and gravitated to philosophy as danger made politics less desirable. S. strikes for balance, the twentieth general handbook in Tauris' *Understanding Classics* Series. Advanced undergraduates and pre-prelim graduate students would seem the intended audience: bibliography is entirely English-language scholarship, further reading is suggested, and the chapters cover the expected topics (politics [in the introduction, esp. pp. 8–24], philosophy, tragedy and *Nachleben*).

The introduction tackles Seneca's biography, and it rehearses well the known facts without becoming bogged down in detail. Refreshingly, Seneca is acquitted of hypocrisy (pp. 18–20), with S. considering the charges as political fictions several successive ages found convenient deflections in their own times. S. stays close to the ancient sources: no analysis is attempted of Seneca's control at a key juncture in Roman politics, nor how Neronian diplomatic initiatives and civic restructuring, that is to say, Seneca's and Burrus', percolated through events in Roman imperial politics and foreign policy, at least, up to the reign of Marcus Aurelius. Nero's three short-lived successors enjoyed significant commands and offices with Seneca and Burrus at the helm, and at least three of their successors as emperor had their early careers in Seneca's gift.

S.'s *The Empire of the Self: Self-Command and Political Speech in Seneca and Petronius* (2012) has done much, along with J. Ker and J.-P. Aygon, to reshape an appreciation of Seneca's philosophy. Not surprisingly, the first chapter, 'Seneca's Philosophy',