

(unfinished) Books 4–6. This scholarly *tour de force* is not, however, without its difficulties: S.'s discussion (for instance) of the ending of Book 4 (pp. 150–2) as showing Lucretius' reversal of Epicurus' expository order is plausible in itself, but his discussion does the poet scant justice: the point of the diatribe against love in this book is precisely that the romantic lover *thinks* that he is seeing the truth when he is in fact being deceived by his own imagination, and the concluding pages on the biology of reproduction are set against the background of this infatuated lover who sees the girl as a goddess when in fact she is as much part of the biological world (4.1174–6) as he is. Similarly the argument against teleology is Lucretius' (as a good teacher) taking the chance to nail this important illusion; even though the 'vital properties' aspect is less relevant, the 'illusion' of teleology makes it supremely relevant here in a discussion of illusions. The discussion of Book 6 ends with the suggestion that the epilogue on the plague at Athens is not how the poet would have left it. Had he lived, we would have been shown the Epicurean moral of the passage ('what is terrible is readily endurable') explained. Alternatively, one might follow Penwill ('The Ending of Sense: Death as Closure in Lucretius Book 6', *Ramus* 25 [1996], 146–69, not in S.'s bibliography) which sees the ending as expressing the tragic sense of the poem, a reading which leaves Lucretius firmly in the 'poet' rather than 'philosopher' camp: the lack of any ethical conclusion (like the relative paucity of ethics in the poem as a whole) does not in general lend much credence to S.'s picture of the poet out to convert us to his fundamentalist faith but rather gives us a text of great aesthetic power and dexterity whose finale is one of art and artistry rather than ethical debate.

This book will provoke healthy critical debate and is already required reading. It is not afraid to raise big questions about Lucretius as a writer and a thinker with exemplary clarity and scholarship. S.'s own style is (in fact) redolent of the Lucretian didactic manner: he takes us round the universe of the poem, stopping to linger on points of detail with minute attention to accuracy, but being driven by a single-minded sense of direction and purpose, imparting clarity to what in other hands might be obscure. Many of us will have reservations about his conclusions, but his opinions, and the light his arguments shed on the detail of the poem and its background, cannot be ignored by any serious student of this poem.

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A BACKWARD GLANCE

R. F. THOMAS: *Reading Virgil and his Texts: Studies in Intertextuality*. Pp. 351. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999. Cased, £33. ISBN: 0-472-10897-2.

Though a collection of previously published material, none of it revised, this book has a surprising overall cohesion. From the outset, T. has rigorously staked out and delimited his scholarly territory, and this volume is a testament to his success in maintaining focus over two decades and more. The main texts under investigation are the *Georgics* and *Eclogues*; the central 'critical narrative' involves Virgil's profound engagement with and gradual transcendence of Callimacheanism (both narrowly and broadly construed). The first chapter ('Preparing the Way') consists of four articles on Catullus and Roman Alexandrianism, which provide a useful introduction to the volume; the next ten feature substantial individual articles dealing with Virgil and important Hellenistic sources; the last ('Intertextuality Observed') comprises eight

shorter notes on particular, localized instances of Virgilian allusion. In every chapter T. addresses difficult problems of interpretation and artistic debt. Virtually all these analyses have important implications that reach well beyond the confines of Virgilian studies—from the subtle and probing analysis of the relationship of the *Victoria Berenices* to the proem in *Georgics* 3 (Chapter II), to the intricate tracing out of lines of literary genealogy present in Virgil's birds-and-leaves simile at *Aen.* 6.309–12 (Chapter X).

As with so many leading Latinists, T.'s principal methodological tool is intertextual analysis. At various points (most notably in Chapter IV, 'Virgil's *Georgics* and the Art of Reference') T. grapples productively with difficult conceptual and theoretical issues, often those introduced into Latin studies by some of his more avant-garde contemporaries. Perhaps as a result of such influences, T.'s methodological approach has changed over time, and subtle but important differences are evident from one chapter to the next. In the earlier essays poetry appears to be conceived as a more-or-less self-contained discourse that operates according to its own laws, has its own independent history, and so on. Later essays make at least sporadic gestures towards broader notions of inter-discursivity and contextualization.

While his close readings of Virgilian poetry are invariably thoughtful and judicious on the level of detail, T. sometimes seems slightly out of his depth when framing larger interpretive issues. His theoretical posturing in particular generates curious moments at various points in the volume. To take just one example, T. opens Chapter IX by declaring his intention to avoid the lamentably 'diachronic' orientation of previous discussions of genre in Hellenistic literature—and then proceeds to deliver an analysis that is unmistakably diachronic in its basic underpinnings and assumptions. Indeed, it is hard to imagine a meaningful scenario in which an intertextualist like T. investigating 'the transformation of forms or genres' (p. 247) could avoid diachrony. For the most part, such metacritical missteps are relatively harmless, detracting only slightly from the rigorous textual analyses to which they are attached. Somewhat more troubling, though, is T.'s occasional tendency—despite his professed stance of 'disengagement with specific theoretical approaches' (p. 1)—to take a reactionary poke at critical methodologies that he clearly does not fully understand. The disdainful assessment of deconstructive, new historicist, and feminist modes of criticism (pp. 66–7) as doing something other than explicating literature is a notable case in point, and T.'s evident conviction that his own critical procedures possess a timeless validity that is in no way culturally conditioned is naive.

The introduction is part survey and part defense of the book's contents; as the only new material in the volume, it is, at barely ten pages, disappointingly short. It opens well with a useful discussion of terminology (pp. 1–2), in which T. explains the evolution in his thinking that has led him to adopt the term 'intertextuality'. Many subsequent issues, however, are left conspicuously undeveloped. For instance, T. acknowledges that the analysis of Chapter XI ('Voice, Poetics, and Virgil's Sixth *Eclogue*') looks very much like a palinode to Chapter III ('From *Recusatio* to Commitment: The Evolution of the Virgilian Program'), but then dismisses the notion with the simple declaration: 'I think it is in fact not so' (p. 6). Here a brief elaboration was surely in order for his more skeptical readers. Similarly unfortunate is T.'s failure to respond more carefully and in greater detail to Stephen Hinds's recent critique of his approach to intertextuality in *Allusion and Intertext. Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (Cambridge, 1998). The latter specifically engages two important essays included in the volume, focusing on potential limitations arising from T.'s reliance upon rigidly dyadic analytical categories—in particular, the strict differentiation

between the ‘clearly defined allusion’ and ‘mere accidental confluence’ of language. T.’s rebuttal (in a lengthy footnote) fails properly to address this essential point and consequently adds little to an important theoretical debate. There may well have been a plausible and constructive response to Hinds’s challenge, but this brief counter-blast, more notable for its sarcasm than its argumentation, was not it.

Reading Virgil and his Texts, then, might be said to exhibit both the great strengths and occasional limitations that have characterized T.’s scholarship over the years. Despite the scattered missteps mentioned above, this well-produced volume is sure to consolidate T.’s important achievement in raising critical awareness of Virgil’s profound and extensive engagement with his Hellenistic models. For this reason in particular it is an immensely valuable collection, and one that rewards re-reading as few others.

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S. MARIOTTI (dir.): *Orazio: Enciclopedia Oraziana*. 3 Vols: pp. xxxiv + 946, xxi + 950, xxii + 1046, numerous ill. Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1996–8. Cased.

The three volumes are sensibly divided into sections and subsections, as follows: Volume I: 1. Texts and Traditions; 2. Biography; 3. Composition; 4. MS Tradition; 5. Editions, Translations, and Commentaries; 6. Places and Peoples; 7. Individuals. Vol. II: 8. Literary and Philosophical Tradition; 9. Antiquities, Anthropology and Society; 10. Religion and Myth; 11. Concepts and Feelings; 12. Literary Forms and Motifs; 13. Language and Style. Vol. III: 14. Antiquity; 15. From the Middle Ages to the Present Day; 16. Horace Abroad; 17. Festivals in the Twentieth Century; 18. Music, Iconography, and Figurative Arts; 19. The Ancient Scholia; 20. Indexes.

I have been very slow to come to terms with these sumptuous volumes, despite a long relationship. I was confused about the function of a work which on the one hand contains an essay on the manuscript tradition by Cesare Questa (good) and on the other a text of the poems attributed to no editor (bad). There are also some Greek verses by Flaccus (i.214 and 316), where Kytzler, who seems unaware of Gow–Page’s edition of the *Garland of Philip*, in which all the other poems attributed to Flaccus are collected, does not say why these two are felt to be by Horace (unhelpful). Now the reason may be given in some item of his bibliography, but he had ample space in which to justify this improbable proposition (improbable, because Suetonius knows of no Greek verses ascribed to the poet). In §19 the text of Porfyrio’s commentary is simply reprinted from Holder, but account has not been taken of the numerous corrections he made on pp. 614–17 of his edition. Thus, as regards mere typographical errors, in the note to C. 1.34.14–16 we still find *flectibus* instead of *fletibus*, and at 2.1.9–10 *destinati* instead of *destinasti*. An emended text is retained on C. 2.17.5–6, whereas Holder expressly returned to the transmitted text at that point; likewise he repudiated the change of *saltus* to *saltatus* at 3.6.22, but the emendation is reprinted here. At 3.19.9 the tradition offers *sicut*, for which Holder printed Pauly’s emendation *scilicet*, but in the corrigenda he preferred Stangl’s *Siculi*; Pauly’s reading appears here. This reprint is thus a missed opportunity (regrettable).

I therefore turned to one of my *cari colleghi* for an explanation. It was alleged that books like this form part of the modern Italian gift or barter economy (so reassuring