

E. DEKEL, *VIRGIL'S HOMERIC LENS*. New York/London: Routledge, 2012. Pp. 166. ISBN 9780415890403 (bound); 0203806220 (ebook). £80.00.

Is another study of the relationship between the *Aeneid* and the Homeric epics really required? Dekel thinks so, and gives his reasons in a stimulating opening chapter. He believes that the traditional understanding of Virgil's epic as a poem of two halves (the first Odyssean and the second Iliadic) is unhelpfully reductive, even as a shorthand. He argues that for the *Aeneid* as a whole the *Odyssey* is a more significant model than the *Iliad*. This is not simply because Virgil's poem contains a larger number of episodes derived from the *Odyssey* than episodes derived from the *Iliad* (although this is the case). The *Odyssey* is also more important because it is a different type of poem from the *Iliad*: D. suggests that the *Odyssey* should be regarded as 'the very first intertextual epic', reading it as a 'reinterpretation through repetition' of the *Iliad* itself (19); he argues that the *Odyssey* offers Virgil crucially 'a conceptual model for writing an intertextual epic' (2), but importantly also an approach to and reading of the *Iliad* to which the Roman poet may react in his own dealings with that poem. It is this latter proposal which is D.'s most original one, and it forms the focus of attention in the rest of the book. Unfortunately, it must be said that after this mostly lucid and thought-provoking start the remaining chapters come as something of a disappointment, in terms of both their scope and their clarity of argument.

The second chapter identifies in the *Odyssey* 'an attempt to construct the aftermath of the [*Iliad*] and to interpret the *Iliad* in light of that aftermath' (32). D. offers an analysis only of very selected aspects of such a reading of the *Iliad*, and makes surprisingly heavy weather even of these. Much the most interesting section is concerned with the meeting between Odysseus and Achilles in *Odyssey* 11, where the presentation of Neoptolemus is convincingly seen as validating Odysseus' kind of heroism over and above that of Achilles in the *Iliad* (56–62).

The third and fourth chapters are directly concerned with the *Aeneid*, and specifically with how 'Virgil positions the *Aeneid* in relation to the *Iliad* through the *Odyssey*'s own manipulations of the post-Iliadic experience' (63). The figure of Neoptolemus is once again seen as central (66–75): his negative portrayal in *Aeneid* 2 and 3 'calls into question the overall Odyssean heroic paradigm' (75). Something similar is true of Aeneas' references to Odysseus himself: in *Aeneid* 2, Odysseus may be a survivor but his characterization is not at all attractive; in *Aeneid* 3, Odysseus' heroic survival is 'trumped' by that of Aeneas, who is portrayed as not only surviving but enabling others to survive too (92–109).

It will be apparent even from this summary that D.'s discussion of the *Aeneid* focuses almost exclusively on Books 2 and 3. This is peculiar, given that it is surely in the second half of Virgil's epic that his approach might find its most interesting applications. In fact D. ends his book with seven pages of analysis of the final scenes of the *Aeneid*, which provide one of his most satisfying readings (Aeneas has an 'Odyssean ruthlessness', which is emphasized partly by reminiscences of Neoptolemus from *Aeneid* 2.109–15); but this partly has the effect of leaving one wondering why he did not deal with other parts of Books 7–12. The absence of any treatment of the second half besides its climax is particularly surprising given the provocative expansiveness of some of D.'s claims in the first chapter — for example, that 'there is simply no way for [Virgil] to engage the *Iliad* in any kind of meaningful dialogue without using the *Odyssey*' (20: such a claim passes untested in the book). As it is, his monograph is rather brief; the main text is 115 pages long, which is frankly too short for an adequate (let alone a full) exploration of some of the author's central propositions. One therefore leaves the book with a sense that D. has arrived at a way of approaching the *Aeneid*'s relationship to Homer which is potentially fruitful — but of which the full value remains to be seen.

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D. LEHOUX, A. D. MORRISON and A. SHARROCK (EDS), *LUCRETIUS: POETRY, PHILOSOPHY, SCIENCE*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. x+326. ISBN 9780199605408. £70.00.

This is a collection of papers delivered at a conference held at the University of Manchester in 2009. Following an illuminating Introduction by Alison Sharrock, Monica Gale traces Lucretian