

wise lover, who can indicate alternative ways of viewing. The book closes with a final investigation of the impact of Statian visuality on late antique authors such as Ausonius, Claudian and Dracontius, thus brilliantly demonstrating how Statius takes pride of place in defining a new notion of visuality within the literary tradition.

Through a series of insightful analyses and stimulating observations, this volume not only enhances our understanding of the multifaceted phenomenon of visuality in Statius, but also lays the theoretical foundation for future studies on this fascinating topic in other authors.

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CHRISTOPHE BURGEON, *LA VIRTUS, LA FIDES ET LA PIETAS DANS LES PUNICA DE SILIUS ITALICUS* (Giornale Italiano di Filologia – Bibliotheca 23). Turnhout: Brepols, 2020. Pp. 532. ISBN 9782503590301. €95.00.

This study re-evaluates the notion of moral exemplarity in Silius Italicus' *Punica* by looking at three specific values, *virtus*, *fides* and *pietas*, and the extent to which these values contribute to or, when lacking, undermine the moral ethos of the main Roman protagonists and their allies. This unrevised version of Burgeon's doctoral thesis appears to intersect mainly with two works: B. Tipping on the articulation and destabilisation of Republican exemplarity in the *Punica* (*Exemplary Epic: Silius Italicus' Punica* (2010)) and F. Ripoll's treatment of moral values (*pietas* and *virtus* prominently) in Flavian epic (*La morale héroïque dans Les épopées latines d'époque flavienne: Tradition et innovation* (1998)).

B.'s main argument is that true moral exemplarity, according to Silius, requires a balance in the exercise of *virtus*, *fides* and *pietas*. For the individual or the community, the over-prioritisation of one value over another, for instance, inevitably leads to failure or death. The notion of paradox is therefore paramount to B.'s analysis of Silius' deployment of the values, which highlights cases where they appear to clash with one another. The whole study is based on the assumption that the entire epic is driven by a moral imperative to enable readers to derive valuable lessons from the past and participate in the moral rejuvenation of the *Urbs* initiated by Domitian.

The volume is divided in two parts. Part 1 offers a short biography of Silius as a politician turned poet and whose attachment to Stoicism may have influenced his manner of death, some insights into the contemporary perception of Silius and the *Punica*, as found primarily in Pliny the Younger and Martial, and the tensions surrounding the figure of Domitian in the poem either directly or by association with Hercules, Scipio Africanus and Romulus. Two further sections discuss the *Punica*'s multifaceted relationship with its historiographical and literary models. While acknowledging Silius' debt to Livy and Polybius, B. holds the first-century B.C. historian Valerius Antias as the most likely source whenever the *Punica* departs from Livy. As for literary influences, the usual suspects loom large, among which Homer, Ennius and unsurprisingly Virgil's *Aeneid* and Lucan's *Bellum Civile* for the greater part of the discussion. The sub-section on Silius' intertextual engagement with Valerius Flaccus and Statius is rather brief; references to recent studies on the topic would have been helpful, e.g., G. Manuwald and A. Voigt (eds), *Flavian Epic Interactions* (2013); F. Ripoll in W. J. Dominik *et al.* (eds), *Brill's Companion to Statius* (2015), 425–43.

Part 2, the main bulk of the study, looks at how the values are deployed within specific episodes and characters of the *Punica*. In ch. 1, B. questions the moral stature of the Saguntines, whose steadfast *fides* to Rome during the siege of their city is undermined by their lack of *pietas* in the mass slaughter that ensues to avoid slavery at the hands of the Carthaginians. Likewise, the war prisoner Regulus, in ch. 2, proves his *fides* to Rome by advising the Senate to turn down the Punic conditions for peace during the first Punic war, and to Carthage by returning to captivity after his diplomatic mission, but fails to observe the basic requirements of *pietas* towards his family as he abandons wife and children. In ch. 3, Fabius Maximus Cunctator is seen as a less than straightforward moral *exemplum*: Silius' lack of emphasis on Fabius' command of all three values

and inability to drive Hannibal out of Italy depict the Roman general as no more than a beacon of light in Rome's darkest hours. Ch. 4 focuses on the battle of Cannae, starting with its Ovidian prelude in the retelling of the metamorphosis of Dido's sister, Anna, into an Italic nymph who plays an ambiguous role as Juno's messenger to Hannibal, and its Lucanian vignette of civil war in Solimus' accidental parricide on the eve of the battle, foreshadowing the dissension between Terentius Varro and Aemilius Paulus, the two Roman consul-generals at Cannae. B. then analyses these two figures in detail, but progressively reverses the traditional readings. Varro's flight to Rome proved decisive in allowing Rome to experience a military awakening and reorganise its army decisively in the aftermath of Cannae. Paulus' *devotio*, however, proved ineffective, almost fatal to Rome, as Scipio laments to the ghost of Paulus in the nekya (*Pun.* 13.712–13). Marcellus, in ch. 5, for all his *virtus*, *fides* and *pietas*, is paradoxically driven more by a desire for personal glory than collective interest. For B., the ultimate moral *exemplum* is found in Scipio Africanus, who strikes the perfect balance between *virtus*, *fides* and *pietas* and whose moral ascendancy is unambiguously linked to his military victory at Zama, signing off the end of the second Punic war. Ch. 7 rounds up the study by looking at the aftermath of the second and third Punic wars and how Silius hints at the end of the *metus hostilis* as the root cause of Rome's subsequent moral decline and civil wars.

Though some of the readings are less convincing than others (e.g. B. on Hannibal is rather binary), the study has the overall merit of showing how the *Punica* creatively engages both with the historiographical (especially Livy) and epic traditions. Allusions to Stoicism could have benefited from fuller referencing. To a large degree, the book's focus is on historiographical reception in epic, and as such it makes a brilliant contribution to the increasing body of critical discussions on the permeability between the historical and literary cultures in ancient Rome.

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JAMES McNAMARA and VICTORIA E. PAGÁN (EDS), *TACITUS' WONDERS: EMPIRE AND PARADOX IN ANCIENT ROME* (Bloomsbury classical studies monographs). London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022. Pp. viii + 281. ISBN 9781350241725. £65.00.

The present volume, which collects some of the papers from a conference held at Victoria University of Wellington (2018), offers a wide range of perspectives on the use of paradoxography in Tacitus' works. Since Tacitus is an unexpected venue for the use of wonders, the contributors' main goal is not only to describe the unusual event that Tacitus records, but also explain its meaning, both within the Tacitean context and in relation to the historiographical tradition (and related genres). The volume, which is divided into three parts, for a total of ten papers, offers some valuable discussions and thought-provoking interpretations, even though there is considerable overlap among the papers, some of which could have benefitted from a more condensed analysis.

Kelly Shannon-Henderson's contribution examines some instances of Tacitean *miracula*, which, she argues, have implications as regards questions of truth and falsehood relating to Tacitus' historiographical methodology. Whereas some of the marvellous material that Tacitus includes is 'purely' paradoxographical, that is, similar to what one would find in, say, Phlegon of Tralles, Tacitus, unlike traditional paradoxographers, often provides a causal explanation of the phenomenon to underline its truthfulness or to correct false reports by adducing further proofs (e.g. eyewitnesses' accounts). In a few cases, Tacitus refuses to explain the marvel without denying its truthfulness, thus leaving his readers to draw their own conclusions. Rik Peters focuses on the danger that seeking wonder can cause to a historian since the wondrous was felt to be in opposition to the truth. Hellenistic historians dealt with this tension in different ways: Tacitus, who is an heir to the same tradition, goes a step further by applying a didactic element to his use of wonders. Arthur Pomeroy considers the *Dialogus*, particularly Aper's second speech and its relationship to Cicero's *Brutus*. Focusing on terms of admiration and wonder (*admiror*, *miror*), Pomeroy sees Aper's use of them in reference to the orators of the past as a warning 'that one can