tendentiousness: G.'s denial in Ovid of Propertius' 'tension between the elegiac poet and the more serious, nationalistic subject-matter' (30) seems overstated when compared to his astute remarks on the *Fasti*'s own generic sensitivities: for example, the bellicose Romulus and peaceable Numa 'articulate both the thematic and generic tensions of the poem' 27–44n.; cf. 13–14n.). Similarly, G.'s suggestion (311–14 (v) n.) that the setting of Cancer marks the departure from the *Fasti* of the constellation which he sees as ominously 'rising' at Propertius 4.1.150, though attractive, applies to the latter an upward trajectory that is not obvious. On the whole, though, balance and judiciousness prevail. A select bibliography is a constant feature of all notes (e.g. 1–2 (i) n. on Callimachus cites rather than repeats the nine pages in Fantham, op. cit.), and meticulous cross-referencing enables the reader to garner relevant material under disparate lemmata. In other respects, too, the commentary compensates for the selectivity of its introduction: G. brings out the text's metaliterary dimension (e.g. nn. 2, 89–288 (iv), 709), highlights nuance (e.g. nn. 3–4, 188, 233, 277, 288) and ambiguity (e.g. pp. 97–9, 165–6, 322), and displays a keen eye for Ovidian wit (e.g. nn. 53, 181–2, 353–60, 405–10), word-play (e.g. nn. 180, 301, 340, 419, 671–2) and metrical effects (e.g. nn. 323–4, 425–6); lexical observations and cross references abound; generous assistance is provided with translation.

Typographical errors in English and Latin (e.g. 82n. '*transitiones*' not '*transitions*' (an infelicitous autocorrection); 715n. '*gentium*' not '*genitum*') are few, and likely to irritate the author more than the reader. In sum, G.'s commentary is a rich resource for the literary, linguistic, and historical aspects of *Fasti* 1. It lucidly combines secondary literature with the author's personal interpretations, which will surely, as he hopes (ix), stimulate debate.

Trinity College Dublin DONNCHA O'ROURKE

M. GALE (ED.), *LATIN EPIC AND DIDACTIC POETRY: GENRE, TRADITION AND INDIVIDUALITY*. Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2004. Pp. xxiii + 264. ISBN 0-9543845-6-3. £45.00.

U. GÄRTNER, *QUINTUS SMYRNAEUS UND DIE* AENEIS*: ZUR NACHWIRKUNG VERGILS IN DER GRIECHISCHEN LITERATUR DER KAISERZEIT* (Zetemata 123). Munich: C.H. Beck, 2005. Pp. 320. ISBN 3-406-53133-4. £68.00.

This review brings together two very different books with a shared focus on Virgil and the epic tradition. The collection of essays on epic and didactic poetry edited by Monica Gale originated at the Celtic Conference in Classics at Maynooth in 2000. It goes far beyond the generic interface between epic and didactic to embrace varied interactions between both genres and their traditions, some essays focusing exclusively on didactic, most looking at epic. This book could be used as a model for the way that reading classical literature inevitably shades into reception studies: that on some level we are always studying reception, whether the reception of Nicander by Virgil, or the reception of Virgil by twentieth-century Welsh poetry. In contrast, Ursula Gärtner's *Habilitationsschrift* on the influence of Virgil's *Aeneid* on Quintus Smyrnaeus' *Posthomerica* is concerned with the after-life of Virgil's *Aeneid* and occasionally gestures towards intertextuality, yet ultimately fails to move far beyond the important but narrow philological question of whether or not Quintus Smyrnaeus was intentionally alluding to the *Aeneid*.

Latin Epic and Didactic Poetry comes in three loosely related sections. The first section is most clearly focused on the relationship between epic and didactic as genres. Llewellyn Morgan's article is justifiably placed at the beginning of the book because it deals with a fundamental defining feature of the genre(s) under discussion: the hexameter. It ranges broadly across Latin literature from Lucilius to Martial, and focuses on satire as the 'evil twin' of epic. M. here takes up once more the cause of metre making meaning and produces a rewarding read for any Latinist. Gale's own essay ('The story of us: A narratological analysis of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*') suggests that Lucretius' poem has a degree of 'narrativity' which deconstructs the division between narrative and didactic poetry. She suggests various narrative trajectories for the poem: the course of a life, from birth to death; cosmic birth and decline; the story of the reader's journey towards enlightenment. These linear movements are set against narrative dislocations and cyclical movements and the image of the poem as an icon for the cosmos. The piece finishes with a discussion of closure. This is a stimulating, lucid, and direct engagement with the generic issue and the nature of narrative. Andrew Laird's contribution ('Politian's *Ambra* and reading epic didactically') equally sets out to blur the boundaries between epic and didactic, but in a radically

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0075435800001258 Published online by Cambridge University Press

different way: by exploring a Neo-Latin poem about Homer and showing how it both uses Homeric narrative techniques to tell its own story (most strikingly through the vision of Achilles, which blinds Homer and inspires him) and sets Homer up as the fount of all education, while simultaneously maintaining a disquieting sense of the fictionality of epic mimesis. Damien Nelis ends the section with a rich and densely argued exploration of the transition from didactic to epic in the works of Virgil, exploring in great detail and variety the intertextual resonances of the proem in the middle of the *Georgics*: a must-read on this much used and studied passage.

The second section brings together four essays on the epic and didactic traditions and individual engagements with them, starting with Stephen Harrison on 'Virgil's *Corycius senex* and Nicander's *Georgica: Georgics* 4.116-148'. This tightly written piece argues that the description of the Corycian old man is a metapoetic reference to Virgil's Hellenistic predecessor, Nicander. The arguments made for identification of the *Corycius senex* as Nicander are less strong than the resulting discussion of the implications of this move: but perhaps the proof of the pudding is in the eating? The next two articles form a pair: Ray Clare on Valerius Flaccus' Lemnian episode and Bruce Gibson on Statius' Hypsipyle. Clare's discussion of Valerius' reworking of Apollonius via Virgil is lucid and stimulating — a very useful contribution on this under-read poem. Gibson equally produces a scholarly and impressive reading of Hypsipyle's role as obsessively repetitive narrator: and it is good to see investigation of the relationship between the Flavian epics — there is clearly much material here for further research. Catherine Ware extends the reach of post-Virgilian epic up to Claudian, and touches on his similarities to Statius. This broad and complex article explores the poetics of Claudian in the prefaces to his *Panegyrics*: through Virgil and Silius, he turns himself into a further reincarnation of Ennius. With one essay on didactic, the section is weighted towards epic — perhaps inevitable given the relative weight of the genres?

The final section gives us three brief tasters of the reception of Virgil from late antique times to modern. Green's essay takes us back a few years to Juvencus, a Spanish bishop, who wrote a version of the gospels as hexameter epic in the third century C.E., thus arguably representing the beginning of Christian epic. Like Ware, Green focuses on his preface, and analyses a typical passage, to discuss his use of Virgil and Lucretius, thus engaging with both epic and didactic. Most compelling of this section is Philip Hardie on the Neo-Latin poet Fracastoro's didactic poem about *Syphilis*, which goes much further than you would expect: out to the New World, in fact, in search of a cure for syphilis, where it encompasses 'the beginnings of western colonialist imperialism' and 'cultural and moral responses to a major event in the natural world'. The final essay in the book is Ceri Davies on 'The *Aeneid* and twentieth-century Welsh poetry' which takes three poems by three different poets and shows how each engages with the *Aeneid* in a uniquely Welsh way, by using Welsh poetic techniques, and reflecting on Welsh identity. In sum this is a wide-ranging and fascinating collection of very high quality which offers much for anyone interested in epic, didactic, and the reception of Virgil.

The second book under consideration was both exciting and depressing in equal measure. Quintus Smyrnaeus' *Posthomerica* is a text that richly deserves a wider audience. Probably written in the third century C.E., this poem self-consciously sets itself up as a bridge between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, starting directly where the *Iliad* left off, and covering, among other episodes, the deaths of Penthesilea, Memnon, Achilles and Paris, the wooden horse, and the fall of Troy. G. provides an important service by opening the text up to discussion of its relationship with Latin epic and opening up the question of Virgil's 'after-effects' on later imperial Greek literature. The book begins with a tightly written summary of the evidence for imperial Greek knowledge of Latin literature and Virgil's *Aeneid* in particular, going against the oft-repeated orthodoxy that Greeks did not read Latin. G. is careful and conservative in her analysis, and yet sustains convincingly the plausibility of Virgil's influence on Quintus and other Greek writers. The main bulk of the analysis takes the *Posthomerica* book by book and discusses both links in subject matter and verbal parallels. There follows a brief glance over the wider situation in later Greek literature. A table of correspondences (both Quintus-Virgil and Virgil-Quintus), with reference to page numbers of discussion, is included at the end, serving well the interests of those who wish to follow up the reception of Virgil in Quintus.

Different parts of the *Posthomerica* and of G.'s treatment have different effects: there are several books (6–10 in particular) in which G. finds no significant parallels; many of the earlier verbal parallels seem less than convincing (the language difference, of course, creates difficulties for this sort of argument — Virgil's words can never be exactly repeated by Quintus, nor can his

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0075435800001258 Published online by Cambridge University Press

sentence structures). Books 12 and 13 which describe the wooden horse and the fall of Troy respectively are treated at greatest length and provide the richest and most convincing evidence of strong intertextual resonances. However, scrupulous as ever, G. sets even these links in the context of the wider tradition of the *Iliupersis* myth and can never conclusively show intentional authorial allusion to Virgil. Behind the analysis lingers the persistent shadow of a putative 'common source', which can never be entirely exorcised. G. devotes a sophisticated discussion to this issue in her conclusion and successfully shows the problems surrounding the invocation of a 'common source': how many different 'common sources' are needed to account for all the parallels between Quintus and Virgil in different parts of the myth? Why should either of them follow the 'common source' more slavishly than they follow Apollonius or Homer? Yet G. is reluctant to relinquish the idea of the 'common source' entirely and instead suggests taking each case of similarity with Virgil on its own merits. It is in the sections on Books 12 and 13, along with the death of Penthesilea compared to those of Camilla and Turnus, that Quintus' reception of Virgil receives its least unfulfilling treatment: for instance, in the story of Sinon, Quintus represents him as a courageous and heroic figure who stands up to torture and mutilation at the hands of the Trojans (12.360–73). G. challenges the argument that these differences preclude Virgilian influence on Quintus, instead arguing that Quintus is deliberately reversing the Virgilian portrayal to follow his own pro-Greek agenda. This could be extended to reflect back on Virgil and reveal the implausibility of Aeneas' narrative of the pitying Trojans, taken in by Sinon's Odyssean machinations. In sum, this is an important book, and one which opens up the possibility of interesting further research into what Quintus is doing with Virgil.

University of Nottingham HELEN LOVATT

H. LOVATT, *STATIUS AND EPIC GAMES: SPORT, POLITICS AND POETICS IN THE* THEBAID. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Pp. xii + 336. ISBN 0-521-84742-7. £45.00/US $80.00.

This book, based on the author's PhD thesis, consists of an introduction and seven chapters, each devoted to one of the contests in the funeral games for Opheltes in Book 6. Each chapter is in two parts, the first dealing with intertexuality, the relationship of the *Thebaid* to the epic tradition, and the second, intratexuality, involving themes from the narrative of each contest, which are traced throughout the rest of the poem to show 'the interwoven thematic continuity . . . of the *Thebaid*' (19).

Lovatt has taken on no easy task in her endeavour to find meaning in a poem that has often been taken as an episodic versification of a Greek legend. Her book attempts to answer the questions: what are the games in the *Thebaid* about and what relationship do they have with the rest of the poem and with the epic tradition? In general, her answer is that the games, like the rest of the *Thebaid*, are multivalent. Although Greek in origin and character, they contain Roman overtones and give a new slant on epic themes and on the epic tradition itself.

I suspect that the most controversial part of her book is L.'s metapoetic approach, which has Statius frequently claiming superiority to Homer and Virgil. Here are samples of these readings. In the chariot race and the discus throw, Statius' pre-eminence is expressed in quantitative terms. Statius' race has seven chariots to Homer's five and Virgil's four (ships) and in the discus contest, the *Thebaid* 'replaces the *Odyssey* as true successor of the *Iliad*' having four competitors as in the *solos* ('mass of pig-iron') throw in the *Iliad* rather than the sixteen in the *Odyssey* (26; 103). Another metapoetic reading in the chariot race interprets the wheels of the chariots erasing the tracks made in the first lap as 'repetition and imitation [which] entail deletion', that is, Statius 'replaces Homer' (28). The replacement of Homer is also the theme of L.'s reading of Hippomedon's heavy discus, which is called an *orbis* ('disc') and a *pondus* ('weight'), recalling both the discus of Odysseus (*Od*. 8.186–90) and the *solos* in the *Iliad* (23.826–35). Thus, Hippomedon's heavy discus subsumes these two Homeric objects, thereby replacing both of them (104).

Statius' reworking of the foot races in Homer and Virgil corrects the morally ambiguous Virgilian foot race, allowing the deserving Parthenopaeus, cheated out of his victory by a foul, to win in a 'do-over'. Statius thus repeats and amends 'the poetic tradition, both submitting to the power of Virgil and Homer and surreptitiously subverting it' (57–8). Statius, with his imitation of the Iliadic sword fight, is said to claim a greater closeness to Homer than Virgil since the latter does not include that event in his games (246–7).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0075435800001258 Published online by Cambridge University Press