



constructions of Africa within the discourse of the Augustan Age, especially that of the Nomads. What is the relationship of Augustan poetry and Augustan politics, and does it affect a poetic depiction of Africa? Is this depiction a reflection of official propaganda, and can a poetic construction become part of such propaganda? Is it a ‘natural byproduct’ of Augustan poetry’s Italo-centrism (pp. 226–8)? The answer would need to be approached from a historical, socio-cultural and literary criticism perspective, as H. admits, and would also require a comparison with depictions of other cultures and ethnicities. Within the confines of the ‘werkimmanente Perspektive’, the present study provides, however, a solid analysis of the Africa-related material of these three Augustans, providing an invaluable foundation from where the methodological approach can be broadened in order to determine in what way these ‘literarische[n] Entwürfe zu Wirkungsfaktoren im Diskurs der Zeit werden’ (p. 222).

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ANOTHER COMMENTARY ON *AENEID* 4

FRATANTUONO (L.M.), SMITH (R.A.) (edd., trans.) *Virgil, Aeneid 4. Text, Translation, and Commentary. (Mnemosyne Supplements 462.)* Pp. xii+982. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2022. Cased, €233. ISBN: 978-90-04-52143-8.
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This is the third text, translation and commentary on a book of the *Aeneid* from Fratantuono (F.) and Smith (S.), after those on *Aeneid* 5 (2015) and 8 (2018). The authors have learned from their earlier exertions and from critical reviews they have received, and their work on *Aeneid* 4 is the best of their collaboration. Yet this is to grade on a curve: while the current book is superior to the others, it remains marred by flaws. The result is an eccentric book, full of curious and often unnecessary detail.

As in their earlier efforts, F. and S. divide their authorial tasks: S. is primarily responsible for the introduction, text and translation, and F. for the commentary. In the long introduction S. discusses in depth the themes and imagery of *Aeneid* 4 as well as its political and historical dimensions, with a focus on how Dido prefigures both the Punic Wars and Cleopatra. This is a serious effort to interpret the book along multiple threads. The problem is that those threads form a tangle. S. chooses not to organise the introduction under separate thematic headings: instead, he stuffs together varied lines of interpretation into a disjointedly continuous essay. A list of the topics on pp. 33–5 gives some sense of this: Dido as Cleopatra and Hannibal; the Punic Wars; the rage of Juno; the tripartite organisation of the *Aeneid* (which both S. and F. overemphasise) and thematic links between Dido and Turnus; Lucretian language and natural law; back to the Punic Wars; the Roman *ovatio*; and Ajax as a ‘comparand’ for Dido. S. is evidently under the impression that more is more; but he would have done well to cut back the essay to give it clarity and cogency. A part of this could have involved explaining more carefully why *Aeneid* 4 ends with a display of Juno’s ‘power and success’ (p. 37), since the death of Dido and Aeneas’ departure from Carthage thwart the goddess’

efforts to keep the Trojans from Italy and since the Punic Wars – a ‘future catastrophe’, S. writes, that Juno guarantees – end in Roman victory.

S. proceeds to produce a critical text that is on the whole sound; his decision to follow G. Conte (2019), E. Kraggerud and others in printing *initu* at l. 176 is especially good. Still, there are unfortunate idiosyncrasies: as in his editions of *Aen.* 5 and 8, S. includes no paragraph breaks, which creates a sense of run-on action; and he prints two versions of l. 54, because he and F. could not agree on which reading to accept. S. also continues his now established practice of producing a superabundant apparatus (which lacks a corresponding list of *sigla*). In it S. rightly attends more to readings in the indirect tradition than he had in his earlier editions. But it is not easy to find that information, because S. crowds the apparatus with a welter of variants. Most comprise alternative spellings or obvious mistakes of transmission that are unilluminating: is it really helpful to learn, for instance, that *nun* appears in a single ninth-century manuscript for *nunc* in l. 193 and 215, or that *nunt* appears in the codex Mediceus for *nunc* in l. 206? S.’s task was not simply to gather, but to select, and his unwillingness to do that creates an indiscriminate apparatus of maximal length but minimal value.

S.’s translation is also not up to the level one would wish. There are several mistakes: to give a few flagrant examples, S. misunderstands *perpetua . . . iuuenta* in l. 32, ‘for all your youth’, with ‘in unending youth’; fails to see that *nec non* in l. 140 is an emphatic transition; misses the irony in *quippe* in l. 218; wrongly renders *compellat*, ‘upbraids’, in l. 304 with ‘urges’; and mistranslates *olim* in l. 627, ‘one day (in the future)’ with ‘once upon a time’. Yet the bigger problem is that S. is an extremely literal translator, which produces stilted, unidiomatic language and tortured syntax – for example ‘so grandly does his splendor shine forth from his exceptional visage’ (p. 57), ‘what groaning did you give forth?’ (p. 77), ‘and thus the fates of Jove demand, this is his deeply clinging boundary stone’ (p. 93). It is difficult to see why such a translation needs to exist, since its literalism is less accurate than a Loeb and not at all literary.

At this point in the book, F. assumes the authorial reins as the lead author of the commentary. F. is a prolific critic – and not bashful about citing himself; some 26 of his titles appear in the bibliography – and an inexhaustible reader of Virgil. His approach in the commentary is to write as much as he can and to squeeze as much of his Virgilian knowledge as possible into each note. This is discursive commentary at its most prolix – indeed, many notes run to two pages or more. There is fruit to be found amid all the growth; for instance, F. can be good about matters of style (although his marked tendency to note that a verbal pair is alliterative, without further comment, is an exercise in obviousness). On the whole, however, F.’s commentary is alarmingly off-kilter. Throughout he pursues bizarre lines of thought: examples include the identification of two absurd acrostics (pp. 204 and 293) and a handful of ludicrous rhetorical questions (e.g. on Dido possibly pursuing the Trojan ships in l. 543, ‘Is there any hint of Scylla chasing desperately after Minos as he departed from Megara?’ [p. 771]). Many head-scratching moments stem from his attention to parallels, both intertextual and intratextual. F. identifies echoes and imitations, even when he admits that they carry no real meaning and value (e.g. pp. 326, 361; and do we really need to be told that *cura* appears 133 times in Virgil, ‘with diverse applications’ [p. 103]?). By far his most common approach is to expound on the thematic significance of a parallel, with an emphasis on its ‘dark’ or ‘baleful’ undercurrent. That F. rarely cites the Greek of a supposed model is only one of the frustrations of his approach. He often misinterprets or overinterprets the material, and he often gets into the weeds of a reading without laying out the basics of an issue, as when he repeatedly pursues intricate discussions of the ties between the characters and stories of Dido and Camilla, but simply assumes that his audience will know *Aen.* 11 well enough to follow him. It is staggering that F. voices his support for ‘judicious, sober

warnings about the race to find inter/intratexts' (p. 306). His lack of self-awareness here is extraordinary.

The irrepressible F. and S. now have their eyes set on *Aen.* 9 (p. xi). The hope is that they will improve, and improve dramatically, on their flawed and frequently exasperating efforts with *Aen.* 4.

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VIRGIL AND ARCADIA

COLLIN (F.) *L'invention de l'Arcadie. Virgile et la naissance d'un mythe.* (Babeliana 21.) Pp. 852. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2021. Paper, €90. ISBN: 978-2-7453-5732-8.

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This weighty volume is the published version of the doctoral thesis of C., based at the Université des Antilles (Martinique). After a preface by L. Fourcaut, the introduction presents the question of whether Arcadia is a modern invention beginning with Jacopo Sannazaro or whether we can individuate its precise aesthetics in the ancient world – in Virgil in particular. C. immediately clarifies his thesis: the scarcity of explicit references notwithstanding, Arcadia is an invention of Virgil's. The book attempts to convince readers of this theory through an exegetical journey among the three main works of Virgil, which are examined in minute detail. A lexical clarification, one that makes the meaning explicit, is indispensable for the author. Because the term 'Arcadia' refers essentially to a place and the setting of several Greek myths, C. intends to treat 'arcadicité' instead, i.e. an Arcadian lifestyle and manner of being.

The volume is divided into four parts; the first, 'Virgile et l'Arcadie: mirage ou réalité?', treats several methodological questions. The critical line followed by C. sees B. Snell as one of its major exponents (cf. 'Arkadien, die Entdeckung einer geistigen Landschaft', *Antike und Abendland* 1 [1945]): according to this view, Arcadia, with its ideal and unreal character, was originally Virgilian. E. Panofsky's study ('*Et in Arcadia ego*: Poussin and the Elegiac Tradition' [1936]) is cited several times, as is the utopian value that Arcadia has acquired from the evaluation of Poussin's painting. C. begins by reflecting on the fact that – as scholarship has shown since the middle of the last century (cf. F. Cupaiuolo, *Tra poesia e poetica: su alcuni aspetti culturali della poesia latina nell'età augustea* [1966]) – in the Augustan period the theory of literary genres was obeyed and that therefore no genre could be invented that did not already have precise features. The Epicurean education that Virgil received at Naples together with Plotius, Varius and Quintilius, which permeated his early literary products, intersects with contemporary politics. Once Caesar returned to Rome and the last Pompeians lost the battle of Thapsus, propaganda went out that Caesar would present himself as the restorer of peace and morality – and as a monarch in the most positive sense of the term. To achieve that aim, he put himself forward as a new Evander, a novel Faunus-Pan, thereby acquiring a divine dimension in a particular way through the creation of a third college of Luperci. Setting Rome in a proto-Latin context further permitted its domination of other peoples.