

KEITH MACLENNAN, *Virgil: Aeneid VIII*, Bloomsbury Latin texts, London-Oxford-New York-New Delhi-Sydney: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017, vi+284 pp., \$24.95 (pb), ISBN 978-1-4725-2787-5.

Keith MacleNNan has produced a new and useful college-level edition of *Aeneid* 8. The work consists of an introduction, an adaptation of the text of Mynors' OCT, commentary, and appendices. Though it appears concurrently with another excellent reader's edition, that of James O'Hara (Focus Commentary, Hackett Publishing, 2018), I will generally avoid contrasting the two in this review.

MacleNNan's introduction begins with a careful consideration of both the historical background relevant to book 8 and the social context in which the *Aeneid* was written. After unfolding the political developments of the late 40s and 30s BC, MacleNNan (hereafter M) turns to what can be pieced together of the life of Virgil himself. In this section, though he does glean a few hints from the Vergilian corpus, he is generally circumspect and tries to avoid conjecture.

Overall, M's introduction to Virgil's poetry is sensible. His analysis consists of familiar topics, and he presents well-known material in a pithy yet readable format. He explains how the *Aeneid* takes its place within the Vergilian corpus, amidst which he offers a brief analysis of the *Georgics*; here et passim, however, M divulges a hesitancy to embrace the darker side of Virgil, even in the *Georgics*. Per the *Aeneid*, M picks up on hints in Virgil's earlier works about the poet's eventual epic venture. He also neatly points out that Virgil's idea to adapt "Homer is so engrained in modern readers that we forget that it was not at all obvious that he should" ever have done so (p. 10).

In such a short introduction, it is not surprising that M's exposition of literary allusion is brief. Still, he does offer one rather full sample analysis in his "Note" on page 13, where he explains the literary background of Apollo deterring Virgil from writing epic in *E.* 6. The lack of footnotes in the introduction, likely to have been the decision of the press, not the author, is a distraction: the aforementioned "note" is one example. Further, in the analysis of Aeneas that follows, there is a conspicuous intrusion of an entirely parenthetical paragraph offering source material; I can only imagine that the decision not to include footnotes was at the behest of the press.

Though M singles out Richard Thomas for reading of the *Georgics* rather too darkly, from which approach M demurs, he clearly prefers Thomasian terminology (at least in the introduction), for M uses the term "reference" to

describe several instances of Virgilian imitation; (for which, he might have done well to refer to Thomas' useful *HSCP* 1990 article.)

Though he might have done more in his exposition of allusion, M's discussion of Aeneas qua character is as rich as his consideration of Virgil's adaptation of traditional material is useful. M goes on to explain how Aeneas is not simply the forerunner of but also an ancestor of Augustus. Parallels between Aeneas and the first emperor are well and thoughtfully drawn out, and M shows here a balanced interpretation of the poem, noting that in the face of an optimistic reading there are also hints of "a dark side even to Augustan Rome" (p. 16). M is, in my view, right to assume that an exclusively anti-Augustan attitude does not obtain: "Livia, if no one else, would have seen through it" (p.17).

After a book-by-book summary of the epic (pp. 18–27), intended for the student who has not read the entire poem in translation before tackling the Latin, M turns to an analysis of *Aeneid* 8 proper (pp. 28–46). He begins by explaining the position of the book within the poem, noting the tripartite structure of the *Aeneid* as a whole. He then moves to an organizational analysis, noting how, at the midway point of the book, Pallanteum foreshadows the future city of Rome. This allows not only for equilibrium in the eight book itself but also for two cities (Carthage and Pallanteum), each of which uniquely contrasts with the future Rome, to demarcate the division of the epic into three parts.

In his discussion of the book, M includes many insights scattered throughout his rolling analysis, thus preventing it from becoming a mere summary. For example, discussions such as those of the etymology of the word Pallanteum (p. 31) and the background of the Ara Maxima (p. 33) provide useful information, enlarged upon more suitably in the introduction than in a commentary. Here M introduces his consideration of the Hercules-Cacus episode with an explanation of the terms aition and epyllion, yet he fails to note that the latter term is a modern one, a literary genre no doubt understood in antiquity but not articulated per se. He then explains the myth in the context of the epic, revealing Virgil's deviation from other versions of the myth such as that of Propertius; M refers to Galinsky's seminal 1966 *AJP* article to suggest that scholars have found in the tale a "suggestion of Turnus as Aeneas's opponent and Antony as Augustus's" (p. 36).

M's analysis of Aeneas' visit to Pallanteum offers careful attention to the chronological aspects of Evander's presentation. The reception of Aeneas within Evander's house is presented as evocative of the close of the first eclogue, when Tityrus invites Meliboeus to rest with him for a short time, noting also the parallel between Hercules and Aeneas (p. 40).

The focus of M's discussion is, naturally enough, the forging and presentation of the new armor, in the midst of which is Aeneas' final meeting with Evander and his departure for Caere. Here, again, necessarily

M paraphrases a good bit; one might like to have seen a bit more detail, for example on the eventual consequences of “Mezentius’ disgusting brutalities” (p. 42). Apropos of the shield, M follows Hardie (*Cosmos and Imperium*, p. 348) in regarding its content as a declaration of Rome’s manifest destiny, asserting that Hardie’s approach “has the great merit of accommodating Virgil’s Shield to what we can know of how Virgil read his Homer” (p. 46).

The antepenultimate and penultimate sections of M’s introduction consider Virgil’s style and meter (pp. 46–60). His analysis of style is generally useful but a bit subjective (e.g. in M’s exposition of the poem’s “pace” and “tone”). Nonetheless, this section should be helpful for first-time students of Virgil. His metrical analysis is even better, offering an excellent elucidation of Virgilian dactylic hexameter. M closes the introduction with a brief exposition of Virgilian reception (pp. 60–65), including Faltonia Betitia Proba’s *Cento Vergilianus de Laudibus Christi* and discussing paintings based on episodes from *Aeneid* 8, such as the seventeenth-century work of Claude Lorrain (1662) depicting the arrival of Aeneas at Pallanteum (pp. 61f.).

The text that M uses is that of Mynors’ 1969 OCT with but one non-orthographic adjustment (line 588; on which, *v.* p. vi et ad loc.) where, as Fratantuono/Smith, M reads *in* to open the line rather than Mynors’ *it*. The text offers no apparatus; it is followed by a list of abbreviations and a small map before the line-by-line commentary begins (p. 93), itself introduced with some notes that might have been better confined to the introduction (*sc.* the spelling of Virgil’s name, an explanation of Servius’ antique commentary and DServius’ augmentation of it, p. 94). Only here (p. 93) do we find an explanation of the frequent appearance of asterisks throughout the work; the placement of this explanation in this locus may be a source of frustration for the student who fails to read this page carefully. (The asterisks are meant to direct the reader to a topic found in the indices, pp. 249–84.) The first index is entitled “Terms,” a rather broad category; nevertheless, as the reader is directed there chiefly by asterisks, the section title’s lack of precision should not present a problem for the student. The second is a useful index nominum, and the third, a helpful alphabetical vocabulary list.

These indices are preceded by a lone appendix in which M discusses Virgil’s treatment of Julius Caesar, Cato and Catiline; with regard to the last, M might have discussed Cicero a bit more fully (touched upon ad 668–70). Given the brevity of the appendix (two pages), it seems to me that this information might have been better included in either the introduction or the commentary, or some combination of both.

The commentary itself is, as a whole, excellent. It offers the student-reader the means necessary to grasp the sense of the text. Yet this is not all it does, for it also has many rich observations for the scholar as well, and will profitably be consulted, alongside larger commentaries, by anyone working on *Aeneid* 8. For example, M’s quasi-footnote just after ad 46, entitled,

“Further note on lines 35–46” reveals the features of the passage that suggest that Virgil failed to revise these lines. He takes as evidence the inclusion of an incomplete verse, as well as the repetition of lines 43–45 from 3.390–92 (and, virtually so, 393), and the fact that the repetition itself is not a fulfillment of prophecy but merely a re-use of familiar material. (Even if M is right, this excursus might have been more useful published separately as a scholarly note rather than as an insertion; still, it is of value to scholars, even if it may trammel the college-level reader a bit.)

M’s discussion of the difficult simile of Vulcan as a busy woman is also quite good (ad 407–13). M boils the section down well for the student-reader: “The points of comparison in the simile are two: the resolute nature of both characters, Vulcan and the housewife, and the time they get up. Another point comes out clearly: it is one of dissimilarity between, on the one hand, Vulcan’s work prompted by Venus and her seduction of him, and on the other hand, the housewife’s work prompted by her concern for her own character and the welfare of her children...” (ad 414, p. 181). To this locus M correctly compares Apollonius’ *Arg.* 3.291–97 and 4.1062–67, pointing up Gransden’s suggestion that the passage may evoke the Augustan moral program. As he closes his analysis ad 415, M amusingly notes, “the line clearly brings out the contrast between a five-star luxury bedroom and a large-scale iron foundry in full swing...” Other times, however, as with any commentary, more might have been offered (e.g., ad 729–30, where M’s “there is an element of pathos” sheds little light on Aeneas’ ignorance, or 731, where M’s statement that “the alliteration* and the archaic* combination of *-que* and *et* draws attention to the phrase” is true, but does not give the reader enough to ponder, particularly as this is the final line of the book).

Finally, M’s further reading section is sparse. Fortunately, there are other commentaries on whose bibliographies those studying the text more closely can draw (e.g., O’Hara’s). This is a minor blemish that M might wish to address in subsequent editions.

Overall M’s commentary is of high quality for a college-level edition. His ad loc analysis is useful, his general introduction very good and, though some items are arranged oddly (again, something quite possibly the fault of the publisher), M is to be praised for offering useful observations on nearly every page. The edition will be helpful to students and useful to scholars for many years to come.

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