

JAN ROBINSON TELG genannt KORTMANN, *Hannibal Ad Portas: Silius Italicus, Punica 12,507-752. Einleitung, Übersetzung und Kommentar* (Wissenschaftliche Kommentare zu Griechischen und Lateinischen Schriftstellern), Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2018, 405 pp., 78,00 €, ISBN 978-3-8253-6868-5.

In the preface to his book, a slightly revised version of his dissertation (2017) defended in Münster, Kortmann (K.) writes: 'It may not be revolutionary to write a scholarly commentary.' Yet, this is the bread and butter of our business, aiming at a better understanding of our classical authors, and K. has done us all an excellent service.

His commentary on the brief but most important episode of Hannibal's march against the walls of Rome in Silius, Pun. 12, is a very welcome addition to the scholarly publications on Silius, whose number has considerably increased in recent times. The older commentaries by Spaltenstein (1986/1990) and Feeney's on bk. 1 have been complemented by several new ones on individual books: Bernstein on bk. 2 (bk. 9 in preparation), Fröhlich on bk. 6, Littlewood on bks. 7 and 10, Ariemma on bk. 8, and van der Keur on bk. 13. More commentaries on single books are in preparation, e.g. Klaassen's (bk. 14), Matthias' and Littlewood/Augoustakis' (bk. 3). K. was not yet aware of Bernstein's excellent work on Book 2, published in 2017 (p. 11, n. 14). K. feels some need to explain why he does not comment on the whole of Book 12. As it becomes clear to the reader that his work oscillates between an interpretative monograph and a scholarly commentary, his decision, in the end, seems reasonable enough. K.'s otherwise commendable discussion of commentaries' theoretical background and of the right choice of text might have benefitted from a reference to the useful considerations in Most (Glenn W. Most (ed.), *Commentaries – Kommentare. Aporemata: Kritische Studien zur Philologiegeschichte*, Band 4. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1999).

As mentioned above, K.'s work contains a monographic part (p. 9-89) and a detailed commentary, preceded by the text itself (a slightly revised version of the standard text by Delz, BT 1987) and a translation that is close to the Latin original, but readable (p. 90-101; 105-336). The translation is complemented by a brief structural overview of the passage (103), which serves as a helpful guide to the commentary itself. A full bibliography and indices locorum, nominum et rerum, verborum have been added. All in all, the material is well-arranged.

The introductory part could have been published separately as a short monograph, as it is rich in valuable observations and insights into the overall structure of the *Punica*, its linguistic and literary particularities, and its use of traditional motives. Kortmann's observations in this introductory part are clearly laid out in sub-chapters: dealing with the context of the episode, its historical background, protagonists (Hannibal, the gods, the Romans), literary technique, motives. K. has wisely decided (p. 9) not to start all over again with a biographical survey, plenty of which have been offered in both older and more recent studies. This allows him to more thoroughly address specific interpretative questions.

In the passage on Hannibal, K. carefully guides his readers on their way to his interpretation of the *Ad portas*-episode as a kind of Gigantomachy. Here he can follow suit on the excellent, albeit brief discussion by Stocks (2014, 223-7). Both the development of Hannibal's character during the poem and the literary figures that can be identified as models for the Punic leader in Silius' historical epic make this interpretation very plausible indeed. K. is well aware of the problematic relation between historicity and epicity, pointing to it at different occasions (p. 18, 34). He makes a convincing suggestion as to reading the epic presentation of events (*coepta immania pandit*, 12.510, p. 18) as a metapoetic comment, esp. in combination with K.'s remarks on the technique of *prolepsis* and *metalepsis* (p. 37). For the theoretical background on *metalepsis*, a reference to Nauta's fundamental articles might have been helpful (R. Nauta, *Metalepsis and Metapoetics in Latin Poetry* and R. Nauta, *The Concept of 'Metalepsis': From Rhetoric to the Theory of Allusion and to Narratology*, in: U. Eisen/P. v. Möllendorff, *Über die Grenze. Metalepse in Text- und Bildmedien des Altertums*, Berlin 2013 (= *Narratologia* 39), 223ff and 469ff).

K.'s discussion of the literary models of Hannibal as an epic 'hero' is also very insightful. K. uses the term 'Interfiguralität' (discussed on p. 39-41) to describe Silius' technique of blending epic heroes and anti-heroes to form the historical character. On p. 21, in the introductory paragraph on the protagonists, one misses a reference to Hannibal and Lucan's Julius Caesar; the comparison is not drawn before p. 40. For Capaneus and the 'Epicurean' hero, one may now also consider my article, based on a 2013 conference paper: C. Reitz, *Is Capaneus an Epicurean? A case study in epic and philosophy*, in: Federica Bessone, Marco Fucecchi (Eds.), *The Literary Genres in the Flavian Age. Canons, Transformations, Reception*. Berlin/Boston, De Gruyter 2017 (= *Trends in Classics Supplementary Volumes* 51), 317-31).

K. extensively discusses the role of the gods, esp. Jupiter, as well as the characterization of the Romans. I agree with his view (p. 49) that Rome in this episode is an object of the gods' actions rather than an active antagonist. Whereas the people of Rome are distinguished by their pious behavior, the senate's actions are certainly based on Stoic models.

K. also offers a chapter on Silius' literary technique, stressing once more the similarities as well as the differences between the historiographers, mainly Livy, and Silius. One might have wished for a brief problematization of the term 'Quelle' (source) that K. frequently uses (esp. on p. 59). The table showing the narrative sequences in both authors (p. 59f) is very helpful to follow the ensuing discussion as to the internal coherence of Silius' story line. K. convincingly outlines the parallels between books 12 and 17 (p. 70). The strongest part of K.'s introductory essay is his discussion of the motives at play. He distinguishes, so to speak, between physical, mainly spatial, and psychological motives: The city walls, the gates and the Roman Capitol provide the narrative with a space in which to unfold. The motive of fear and the *urbs capta*-motive (p. 81) are used to illustrate the psychological violence of Hannibal's attack. K. convincingly points out the parallel of Aen. 9, the camp of the Trojans threatened by an attack by the Rutulians. The weather motive (in this case the unbroken continuity of three days and three nights, and the storm) can be interpreted as an illustration of the psychological action. K. carefully analyses the dramatic effect of storm scenes and rightly points out that Silius used this epic device in a novel way: The storm, let loose by Jupiter, proves to be helpful instead of dangerous.

Due to the overall structure of his book, his interpretative essays are not entirely free of repetitions (esp. on the role of Jupiter). This however, does not lessen the quality of his work (e.g. p. 18 and 46).

The commentary not only offers detailed linguistic and literary considerations, but also helps users to place individual passages into context. The structural outline given on p. 103 facilitates orientation in the bulk of material. The themes and suggestions made by K. in his introductory essay are complemented by detailed discussions in the commentary. Short paragraphs introducing the lemmata provide information about their historical background. K. heavily relies on Seibert (1993); one might perhaps have expected some more recent studies to be mentioned (e.g. B. Mellace, *Annibale poteva vincere? Un riesame della sua avventura terminata con la „finzione“ di Zama*, Roma 2016; S. Modrow, *Vom punischen zum römischen Karthago. Konfliktreflexionen und die Konstruktion römischer Identität*, Heidelberg 2017). K.'s analysis of verbal and stylistic details is excellent. For instance, I have already mentioned above his discussion of *pandit* at 12.510f (p. 110f), where he suggests a metapoetic reading. I also found revealing his analysis of the characters' speeches (e. g. the *cohortatio* at 12.511-17). K. has an eye for the interpretative significance of word order; cf. e.g. his discussion of the central position of *Romam petis* (12.513) and the final position of *Tonantem* (12.517). The problematic combination of historical 'source' and epic tradition is addressed in an excellent manner; see, e.g. his commentary on 12.668-80, the section on the divine origin of the storm. K. convincingly outlines structural symmetries between the passage in bk. 12 and the final

book of the *Punica*, bk. 17. The closural effects of the finale, vs. 12.729-752, are insightfully discussed (p. 316); again, the importance of the Vergilian pretext is revealed in detail.

Where necessary, K. discusses problems of the textual transmission (on 12.518, 572, 577, 578, 631, 669, 685, 749). His approach is mainly conservative, usually preferring the text of the manuscripts to conjectures. At 12.669, however, he defends an old conjecture by Lefebvre, one by Bauer at 12.685. This leads me to my final compliment: K. has made appropriate use of the older editions and commentaries, he masters the secondary literature in all languages, and he quotes honestly and carefully, wherever some predecessor comes into play (e. g. Spaltenstein's (1986/1999) pivotal commentary which has all too easily been forgotten or taken for granted in some of the more recent studies).

In a very few instances, I found K.'s style somewhat inconsistent (e. g. Bredouille, Showdown, im Griff haben, Entspannung der Götter), but this is a matter of taste. Typos are few and never distortive. The book's design is elegant.

All in all, this is a very useful book, not only learned and reliable, but also a pleasure to read and to consult.

LIST OF WORKS CITED

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