

CHR. GNILKA, *Philologische Streifzüge durch die römische Dichtung*, Basel: Schwabe, 2007, VI + 532 pp., 4 pll., ISBN 978-3-7965-2408-0.

This is a substantial collection of articles, reviews (and an amusing story, pp. 11-6) dealing with Latin poetry from Catullus c. 103 to the *Epilogus* of Prudentius, most of them (roughly two thirds) published before. Three pieces (pp. 131-233) are devoted to Claudian, six (pp. 311-493) to Prudentius, an author who owes much to Gnilka's erudition. The back cover of the volume offers a summary (in the form of a plea) of the content and a biographical sketch of the author who is still active as Emeritus at the University of Münster.

It is very difficult to give, in a short review, an idea of the impressive learning, the critical subtlety and the valuable insights spread out in these pages which represent philological *parerga* of over forty very productive years. There is a great deal to learn and to think about, even where one disagrees, and disagreement is almost inevitable, as may be seen from previous controversies revived here and there.

G., as a militant follower of Günther Jachmann, is convinced that the text of many Latin poets is plagued by interpolations, even in places where most people would not suspect anything, and that one of the most urgent tasks – if not *the* most urgent task – of classical scholarship (see, e. g., his debates with H. Tränkle, pp. 293-310; 441-2) is to unmask and delete them. “Gesunde Echtheitskritik”, as G. calls it (p. 347), is the central, unifying theme of the volume. When this kind of surgery leads to the deletion of material which appears not to be genuine, it is the most beautiful, most valuable gift that a modern scholar could offer to an ancient poet (p. 443). We have here, in other words, a full-fledged campaign against the conspiracy of wily counterfeiters who have contaminated (in antiquity already) the texts of Virgil, Phaedrus, Calpurnius, Juvenal, Iuvencus, Prudentius and others.

The elaborate *Indices* (pp. 495–532) are like the key to an arsenal full of the tools and weapons used in this campaign. First, there is a list (S. 517–8) of all lines that G. wants to delete, from Phaedrus (14 lines) to Juvenal (8 lines) to Prudentius (42, if I have counted correctly). The Index entitled “Wörter, Namen, Sachen” (S. 519–25) offers a number of key concepts, such as “Autorvarianten, angebliche...Binneninterpolation ... Doppelfassungen ... Echtheitskritik ... Eigennamen ... Emendatorische Interpolation ... Klein-und Grossinterpolation ... Konkordanzinterpolation ... Mehrfältige Interpolation ... Interpolatorische Nachahmung ... Promythien, unechte ... Pronomina bei Interpolationen ... Schlussinterpolation ... Syntaktische Interpolation ... Wort- und Versinterpolation... Zusatzinterpolation...” As one can see, the phenomenon (some would say “the phantom”) has many names, and the more names it is given, the more real it becomes. The Index of modern authors (S. 526–32) also gives a number of clues, e. g. “Bentley, Richard, ... Interpolament im Phaedrustext erkannt 19f. 27–29, verkannt 29f...” Here, the world of scholarship is divided into those who recognize fake lines and those who more or less naively accept them as the real thing and even fall into traps (like Emanuela Colombi who, p. 279, “ist ... hereingefallen”). The passages listed under “Jachmann, Günther” add up to a guide to the complex methodology of this most powerful and influential enemy of interpolators. (Jachmann’s theory in a nutshell may be found on pp. 244–5).

We also catch glimpses of controversies between G. and his critics, giving him the advantage of having the last word. Moreover, we see some of G.’s students, e. g. Maria Becker, already in action, hunting interpolators and earning the praise of the master, pp. 442; 453, n.5.

Once, G. grants that he – like everyone else – starts from certain presumptions or presuppositions (“Voraussetzungen”), pp. 286–8, “... denn Existenz und Organisation einer antiken kritischen Ausgabe lassen sich nicht allein aus der Juvenus-Überlieferung erschliessen: man muss die Vorstellung solcher Ausgabe schon in sich tragen ...”. This sounds as if his concept of the genesis of interpolations is like a Platonic idea which one either carries in oneself or will never grasp; see p. 477 his disapproval of K. Smolak who got lost “weil ihm, dieses Problem zu lösen, der rechte

Begriff und die rechte Vorstellung fehlten oder weil ihm beides in diesem Zusammenhang nicht vor Augen trat."

In spite of the formidable methodology at their disposal and in spite of the inborn idea that guides their steps, our modern exterminators of unwanted poetry basically rely on subjective impressions and rhetorical statements. The general idea is to make the "real" poet look good and the "interpolator" look bad, and this, as I see it, is what G. is doing: "Befreit von den beiden Schlussversen zeigt sich jedenfalls das Gedichtchen als Meisterwerk, an dem es nichts zu tadeln gibt" (p. 34); "[der Vers] sitzt wie ein totes Stück in dem lebenden Organismus" (p. 47); "Rückschauend erkennt man voll und ganz, wie sich die eingefälschten Zeilen ... dem sorgsam ausgebildeten Gesamtorganismus ... nicht fügen" (p. 297); "Kurzum: was der Dichter kühn entwickelt, das ist unter der Hand des Redaktors zu einem Artefakt geronnen ..." (p. 298); "Wir müssen darauf achten, dass über dem philologischen Mikroskopieren der Texte nicht das verlorengelassen wird, was allein das unbewaffnete Auge wahrnimmt: die natürliche Plausibilität" (p. 301); "Wer die klare Komposition, die energische Gedankenführung dieser Strophen verfolgt hat und den volltönenden Schluss auf sich wirken lässt, der wird von der angehängten Strophe ... überrascht" (p. 451); "Im nächsten Vers ... bereitet der Pseudo-Prudentius seine Schlusspointe vor, indem er, ebenso unlogisch wie gefühlsarm, eine absteigende Vitalitätskurve bildet" (p. 452); "Hier zeigt sich wieder die Sucht nach überspitzten, inhaltsschwachen Formulierungen, die das Interpolationswesen auszeichnet" (p. 456); "... das entspricht voll und ganz jener interpolatorischen Rhetorik, die spitz und dunkel zugleich ist" (p. 458). We are not told how one can be "spitz" and "dunkel" at the same time, but these interpolators, woefully untalented as they were, clearly did not lack complexity. And I detect just as much "Rhetorik" in G.'s prose as in the poetry he wants to remove.

G. is certainly entitled to his opinions which he presents and defends with admirable dialectical skill. But, frankly, he seems to be unduly harsh in censuring scholars who do not subscribe to his theories. I am thinking in particular of his review of J.-L. Charlet's book on the *Cathemerinon* of Prudentius (Paris 1982), first published in *Gnomon* 59, 1987, 299-310 (here on pp. 381-401). I do not know Prof. Charlet personally, and I feel not compe-

tent to judge the merits of his book, but I must admit that I felt uncomfortable when I read G.'s pronouncement (p. 380) that, after reading the two pages of the preface, he already doubted whether the author had achieved his goal. I would not mention this, if G. did not say himself (p. 399) that Ch. explored those "tiefere Bereiche christlichen Denkens", the reviewer would have assumed from previous chapters to be closed to him. Obviously, preliminary impressions can be misleading. I am more upset about a remark like the following (p. 384): "Diesen Aufsatz [an article by G. published in 1980] konnte Ch. nicht mehr benutzen, aber es scheint fraglich, ob er sich durch ihn hätte belehren lassen...". That a scholar of G.'s undisputed status should have felt the need for such a comment is difficult to understand.

G.'s aggressive critique of A. Cameron's book on Claudian (Oxford 1970) has been criticized in turn for its "unfruchtbare Polemik" by L. Piacente (cited by G. on p. 197). It must be one of the longest reviews (25 pages) ever published in *Gnomon* which is a curiosity in itself. It is reprinted here in an even longer form. The gist of the additional comments seems to be that Cameron, in the meantime, has learned a little from G., but not nearly enough.

Another curiosity is G.'s use of the words "verschiefen, Verschiefung" (e. g. pp. 23; 197). This seems to be a neologism based on "schief", as in "schief liegen", but one can only guess its exact meaning. It is used in a negative sense, as in "verdunkelt und verschieft" (p. 23, of a probable interpolation in the text of Phaedrus).

Even if one disagrees with the author and does not appreciate some of his dogmas – or some of his attitudes which may strike readers as rather dogmatic – he is on the right track very often and has much to offer. His main strength, to me, is exactly the kind of "Mikrophilologie" that he himself does not fully trust (p. 301) – i. e. the patient, painstaking analysis of a text, in order to distill the exact meaning of a word or a phrase, placing it into its proper historical and literary context, a true labor of love that never ends and results in page after page of subtle interpretation through erudite association.

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