

GIAN BIAGIO CONTE (ed.), *P. Vergilius Maro. Aeneis*. Recensuit atque apparatu critico instruxit Gian Biagio Conte. Bibliotheca Teubneriana, Berlin - New York: De Gruyter, 2009, pp. xliii + 429, ISBN 9783110247169.

The editor of Vergil is given riches far superior to those available to the editor of any other Latin author. The editor of the *Aeneid* alone can enjoy an even wealthier position. I do not speak of the sales and royalties that a new critical text of the most important work of Latin poetry should expect to command but rather of the formidable manuscript resources on which all such editors can place a secure footing. Seven Virgilian codices survive from the fourth to sixth centuries A.D., of which three are almost complete (and aptly described by C(onte) as like “monumenta Vergilio dicata” [VI]): M, the Mediceus, Bibl. Med. Laur. 39.1; P, the Palatinus, Vat. Pal. Lat. 1631; and R, the Romanus, Vat. Lat. 3867. That MPR, with support where appropriate from the fragmentary FGV (and Mabilon’s account of A for *Aen.* 4.302-5) and very occasional insight from several Carolingian manuscripts (particularly a and y), provide a solid route to comprehending the state of the text of Virgil at the height of the Empire is beyond dispute, and editors since Ribbeck have acted on this conviction consistently. As a result, texts of the *Aeneid* in the last century and a half have differed more through the varying levels of editors’ Latinity and credulity than through the application of varying stemmata: indeed, the *Aeneid*’s recension is open and, although C. rightly acknowledges (XXV) that there is no true *codex optimus*, a stemma cannot be drawn. That one does not expect revelations in the modern critical apparatus of Virgil is tacitly acknowledged in C.’s preface (which opens with Bacch. fr. 5) as much it was in Sir Roger Mynors’ *OCT* (which opened with *Aen.* 6.179). The scholarly debts of the Virgilian editor are inevitably major (and C.’s chosen dedicatee is Friedrich Klingner). None the less, C.’s edition, the first original text of the poem for 40 years, is a welcome and worthy product that undoubtedly deserves its place alongside Ribbeck, Mynors and Sabbadini-Geymonat.

Collation of Virgilian manuscripts floundered in the wake of Ribbeck, not least since the numerous uninspected Carolingian manuscripts advertised neither readings preferable to the antique tradition nor obvious hints for quite where the prospective collator should begin his daunting task. Serious progress was nevertheless made by Mynors and (to a lesser extent) Geymonat, who collated fourteen Caroline mss, discovering in some cases clear lines of descent from the capital mss. For the present edition a further eight have been collated by C. (aided especially by Silvia Ottaviano). The unsurprising result of these indubitably praiseworthy endeavours is that no new independent branches emerge for the text. Equally expected is the fact that nothing new is offered in the case of the ancient mss, save the reassignment of some corrections in M (especially to Aste-

rius), on which matter C. has been assisted by the expertise of Julia Ammannati. One other novelty is that C. has chosen to cite a (Bern. 172 et Paris. Lat. 7929) and γ (Guelf. Gud. Lat. 2° 70) throughout the poem, on the basis that they could be independent to some degree from R and P respectively, but this precaution brings scant concrete gain.

C.'s preface is written in attractive, lucid and lapidary Latin that very often succeeds in achieving a lively and elegant turn of phrase. It outlines the major manuscripts (VI–XIII) before moving to discuss their possible affiliations and the necessity for conjecture (XIII–XVI). C. shows some sympathy for, if not full acceptance of, Edward Courtney's provocative theory about the existence in the tradition of a fourth-century archetype on the basis of shared faults in the antique mss that do not seem to originate via contamination. More firmly, C. rejects the notion that an editor can, by any means, reconstruct a pre-Varian text that is reflective of quite how Vergil's 'fair copy' could have stood on his death in 19 B.C. C. moves swiftly to survey previous editors (XVII–XVIII), not shirking the deserved and expected *laudes Ribbecki*. Discussion then turns to outlining his editorial method (XIX–XXI) and to the eight newly collated Carolingian manuscripts (XXI–XXV): g (Paris. Lat. 7925), i (Regin. 1669), j (Brux. Bibl. Reg. 5325–5327), k (Hamburg. scrin. 52), w (Guelf. Gud. 66), x (Montepess. H 253), y (Paris. Lat. 10307) and z (Paris. Lat. 7927). The introduction closes with some more general remarks (XXV–XXX), including the thorny matters of orthography¹ (XXVI–XXIX) and punctuation (XXIX), and with several warm acknowledgements (XXX). At the close of the edition stands a dense and useful *index nominum* (405–29).

In constructing his apparatus, C. has steered between the niggardliness and indulgence of earlier editors, prudently aiming for the golden mean that is “minime ieiuu[s]... at minime redundan[s]” (XIX). On this basis he hopes that a reader can still, where appropriate, “aliter diiudicare... aliumque textum suo Marte effingere” (ibid.). C. makes a welcome appeal for a return to the lengthier editorial annotations found in the *apparatus critici* of earlier scholars, primarily Leo, Buecheler and Housman, whose vigour and liveliness is largely absent from the modern apparatus (XXV). C. attempts here to remedy this loss and gives himself ample space to discuss numerous matters of interpretative or syntactical difficulty and provide relevant bibliographical details conveniently. Several of C.'s notes are indeed of a considerable length, and the edition is all the better for it (e.g. 1.380, 2.567–88, 3.360, 4.423, 572–3, 5.778, 6.601, 7.543, 773, 9.214, 674,

¹ C. maintains that he knows “pro certo” (XXVIII) that Virgil's orthographic practice was inconsistent. As a result, he adopts variations in spelling on the joint bases of objective manuscript evidence and subjective euphony of sound. Such variation, aided further by the indirect tradition, can be witnessed in C.'s acceptance of the archaic *moerorum* (at 10.24, 144 and 11.382, each modifying *agger*) against the typical *murorum* (at 4.89, 9.468 and 11.130). C.'s careful work in this field results in his adoption of *fraglantia* (P and several Carolingian mss) at 1.436, Heinsius' *Acrisionaeis* (supported by Housman) at 7.410, and the form *Cunere* advanced by Ribbeck and Timpanaro at 10.186.

12.53, 648). In almost every instance the contents of C.'s apparatus are clear and sufficient, although it is unfortunate that he does not explain the reasoning on which he varies regularly between positive and negative citations of lemmata.

Despite the confidence with which MPR can instil the editor, a careful eye must be kept throughout both on possibly ancient readings preserved in the Carolingian manuscripts alone and on the poem's sprawling indirect tradition that began almost as soon as Varius dispatched the poem to the world. In the case of Carolingian codices, C. in several cases extracts from them genuine benefit, e.g. 3.127 (*consita*), 4.94 (*nomen*), 5.522 (*subitum*), 573 (*Trinacriis*), 8.672 (*spumabant*) and 11.230 (*petendum*). Elsewhere, e.g. at 1.193 (*humi*), 9.236 (*sepulti*) and 10.838 (*pectora*), C.'s rejection of the capital mss' readings is less convincing. In the case of the *testimonia* of the indirect tradition, C. is diligent in recording the relevant information, and in numerous places wisely prefers against the direct tradition the text preserved by Servius *et al.*, e.g. 5.720 (*animum*), 6.383 (*terra*) and 12.120 (*limo*); in two other cases – *quosne* at 10.673 and *floros* at 12.605 – neither seems fully persuasive against the ancient paradoxes.

The most significant means by which modern texts of Virgil differ is in their receptivity to conjectures. Although C. demonstrates a ready eye for attractive emendations, including those from more recent years, he must ultimately be located in the more conservative camp. Excluding the suggestion of lacunae and transpositions, along with orthographical and similarly minor changes, the following figures can be given for C.'s treatment of conjectures from the Renaissance onwards: 105 such emendations are recorded, of which only eighteen (17%) are accepted into the text. In no book do more than 25% of 'modern' conjectures cited gain acceptance except in the 10th (where six of fourteen are adopted); in books 8, 11 and 12 no such emendation attains success. Combined with the fact that silence regarding conjectures not cited is to be interpreted as straightforward disapproval (XXVI), these figures are not a great advertisement for the efficacy of verbal conjecture upon the text of the *Aeneid*. Given C.'s general conservatism in so influential an edition as the Teubner, it now behoves scholars of the twenty-first century to provoke the poem's text regularly in order to see whether the cotton-wool casing applied to it in particular by scholars over the centuries is indeed fully merited.

Disregarding several clever changes in punctuation (of which 2.295 and 5.80 are particularly successful), C. makes four conjectures of his own, although all are relegated to the apparatus. At 4.176 *gradu* is good in sense but somewhat removed from the transmitted *metu*, a fault not shared by Baehrens' clever *initu*. At 5.505 both *fremuitque* or *stepuitque* are evident improvements on *timuitque* but do not surpass Slater's *micuitque* in elegance or relevance. After 6.601 C. follows Ribbeck's plausible suggestion of a lacuna but the verse tentatively suggested (*quid memorem inuisum magnis te, Tantale, diuis*) introduces a repetition (*quid memorem*, also opening 601) and apostrophe that would surprise. At 12.648, C.'s method of correcting the defective metre, namely inserting a parenthetic *en* after *atque*, is neat but not in harmony with Virgil's typical use of the exclamation.

Some admirable conjectures are accepted into the text proper: Ottaviano's *tripodas laurusque Clari* at 3.360, Heinsius' *Scyllamque Charybdi* at 3.684 (but not Nisbet's elegant *utrimque* in the following verse), Bentley's *auersos* at 9.761, *incautus* at 10.386 and *genitore* at 10.704. Other impressive suggestions, such as Huet's *auri* at 1.343, Ribbeck's *claram* at 2.569, G's *lauris* at 6.658, Madvig's *huc* at 12.617 (also in many *recentiores*), are unfortunately left in the apparatus. It is a shame that some other conjectures pass entirely without record: *paret* at 2.121 (conjectured anonymously before Madvig, perhaps by Jortin, in 1733), Porson's *fluio* at 3.702, Allen's *Euiadum* at 4.469, Peerlkamp's *propinqui* at 8.216, Wakefield's *lecto* at 8.455, and Burgess' deletion of 11.309. By contrast, a few of the conjectures that C. does choose to record could not have been written by Virgil, e.g. Ribbeck's *pollicitu's* at 1.237, Mackail's *tripoda ac Clarii laurus* at 3.360, and Gemoll's *lateri eminus* at 9.579.

C. has been careful in attributing conjectures to their originators although a cursory inspection reveals some slight inaccuracies: at 2.727 and 7.703 the attractive suggestion *exagmine* advanced by Housman can be found in earlier editions, such as those of de Zanni de Portesio (Venice, 1504 etc.); West's *adeo* at 6.304 was preceded by Giovanni Battista Bolza; Reeve's excellent *aut* for *an* at 6.533 also occurred (by design or error) in the Latin text alongside Vittorio Alfieri's translation of the poem (*Opere Postume* [Brescia, 1809] Vol. 9); Heyne's *radiisue* at 6.616 was conjectured tacitly by Bentley (*ad Ter. Eun.* 1085); the deletion of 9.151 is attributed to the ed. Parm. of 1479 but the edition should be that of 1795; at 6.745-7, "ed. Parm." is imprecise, and inaccurate either way, since the conjecture was first proposed by Joseph Trapp in 1718.

C.'s attitude to interpolation is more bold. Several lines are bracketed in the poem, usually deservedly: 3.230, 4.126, 6.242, 901, 8.46, 9.151, 529, 10.278, 11.404, along with the spurious verses cited by Servus Danielis after 3.204 and 6.289. In the two cases where C. brackets the close of a line, however, there is room for doubt: at 1.380 we may have a case *poetam non textum emendandi*, since the closing phrase *et genus ab Ioue summo*, although a little abrupt, can be taken as an informative modification of *patriam* (*genus* being accusative); at 12.218 Schrader's smart suggestion of *aequos* may be a more probable correction of the transmitted *non uiribus aequis* than its wholesale deletion. Especial sympathy is shown in the apparatus to recording other suggestions of interpolation or lacunae, especially from the ever-suspicious mind of Ribbeck. The Helen Episode (2.567-88) is treated in its own distinctive way, italicised to indicate C.'s conviction (different from his earlier statements in print) that it is Virgilian but a mere draft that was not polished to completion. Some will believe this to be the case, but, if these criteria were implemented throughout the poem, one would suspect to see italics applied (rightly or wrongly) oftentimes elsewhere, not least to the *tibicines*.

The printed page presents itself cleanly and attractively to the eye. Two matters that would slightly detract from this aesthetic virtue would nevertheless have been beneficial to the scholar: C. has chosen not to record on every page the major witnesses that are available but rather only when they change, which

means that one often has to turn back to obtain this information; secondly, it would be convenient if beneath this information could be recorded all instances in which ancient writers cited lines of the poem, however much that addition would disfigure the page.

But enough for now. Although the edition must command a high price in the modern and murky world of academic publishing, the cost is fully merited by the achievement: C.'s *Aeneid* is a major work of scholarship that demonstrates at each turn impressive editorial tact and a rarely refined sense of the Virgilian. The edition deserves strong commendation.

DAVID BUTTERFIELD
Queens' College, Cambridge
djb89@cam.ac.uk

