

T.H.M. GELLAR-GOAD, CHRISTOPHER B. POLT, eds., *Didactic Literature in the Roman World*, Routledge monographs in classical studies, London-New York: Routledge, 2024, xii+202 pp., £130.00, ISBN 978-1-032-45650-8.

This is a rather interesting collective book on the didactic literature of antiquity. The volume is in fact varied for topics considered, as well as characterized by a good level of contributions, which support views if not always completely shareable, however generally exposed with clarity and care.

Chapter one, by Michael Paschalis, is inspired by a famous article of R.D. Brown ("Lucretius and Callimachus", *ICS* 7, 1982, 77-97). The arguments put forward by Paschalis in this paper appear really thin but not very compulsory. I refer in particular to the alleged reminiscence of Callimachus' *Hymn to Zeus* (2 ἀεὶ μέγαν) in Lucretius' *De rer. nat.* 1.931 (where *magnus* means 'difficult' with reference to the novelty of the poem and it doesn't look like a revival of the great Hellenistic poet, of which Lucretius echoes instead in this context, as it is well known and as Paschalis also says, the prologue of *Aitia*).

Chapter two, by Alison Keith, contains a new and well-grounded focus on the still debated philosophical interests of Vergil and therefore on his supposed adherence to the Epicurean creed, already highlighted in the ancient biographies of the Augustan poet (e.g. in the *Vita Vergili Probiana*, quoted and highlighted at the beginning of the article). Vergil's *Georgics* are the work at the heart of this study, but in the light of the research perspective here adopted by Alison Keith, here is also analyzed the famous first eclogue. A significant part of the discussion concerns the Noric cattle plague and the comparison with the well-known Lucretian model.

Following on from Alison Keith's article, in the third chapter Peter Heslin proposes an acute and in-depth analysis of Vergil's, so to say, not fanatical Epicureanism. In fact, Heslin focuses on what Vergil affirms in famous contexts of the second book of the *Georgics* on the ideal condition of the Epicurean philosopher (2.490 *felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas*) and on that of the farmers of the Golden Age (2.458-9: cf. 2.493). According to the author, Vergil's alleged less intransigent Epicureanism would distinguish the Augustan poet from the zealous Lucretius, as poetry, in Vergil's opinion, would be rather different from philosophy.

Chapter 4, by Leah Kronenberg, which concerns Hesiod and Vergil and their description of cold winter in *Works and Days* (493-563) and in *Georgics* (1.291-310), is in our opinion the one that elaborates the arguments less shareable among those contained in this useful volume. I think that one cannot see irony and double (erotic) meanings everywhere. Friedrich Nietzsche warned against the exercise of an «insolent familiarity» with the ancient world. Scenes and details described by the two poets are only evidence of realism and should not be overinterpreted. For example, the Hesiodic passage can be easily explained by considering that the lazy man's ἐλπίς ('expectation') of the arrival of a more favorable season, without

doing anything else, is deemed by the Greek poet neither ethical nor practical (but certainly not a symbol of masturbation), as well as for Hesiod, as we know, there was a good and a bad contest.

Chapter five, by Steven J. Green, firstly studies instructions given by Vergil in the *Georgics* on how to manage the animal mating process. Green also focuses on the influence by Vergil on Grattius' *Cynegetica* or on the second book of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* and his description of *adulterium*. A rather different analysis regards Germanicus' adaptation of Aratus' *Phaenomena* and marital infidelity in the cosmos, about Jupiter's love intrigues, which are of course other examples of *adulteria*, while nothing comparable – as the author often emphasizes – is found in Aratus or Cicero.

Chapter six, by Melanie Racette-Campbell is an excellent study on erotodidaxis in Roman elegy. The essay compares Lucretius, Vergil's *Georgics* and Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* with the elegiac Augustan poetry. Two main verbs are at the ground of the study: *docere* et *discere* (and one time also *accipere*). This very interesting linguistic analysis allows us to consider whether the elegiac poet (Propertius, Tibullus or Cornelius Gallus) learns or teaches love (the second case is that of *praeceptor amoris*). As regards Propertius, as Racette-Campbell writes, we can say that his poem as a whole can be considered a real lesson about the elegiac love.

Chapter seven, by Joseph McAlhany, focuses on Marcus Varro's lost Menippean Satires' fr. 375 Astbury. At this purpose, rather convincingly McAlhany rejects all the previous amendments, starting with the very well-known and drastic by Scaliger. Therefore, he only replaces *nigellis pupuli* by *nigelli pupuli* (the error appears to be caused by the previous words, where you can find two endings in *-s*: *oculis suppaetulis*).

Chapter 8, by Sarah Culpepper Stroup, is another article regarding Marcus Terentius Varro and in particular his work *De re rustica*. The author does not agree with all the previous considerations on the nature of this Varro's work composed in 37 B.C. Stroup carefully analyzes the well-known relationships between Varro and Cicero, especially in relation to the Cicero's "dialogic project", to the common friendship with Atticus, who is an interlocutor of the second book of *De re rustica* and also of several Cicero's works. The author's conclusion, mainly grounded on a linguistic basis, but that I don't believe very persuasive, is that Varro's *De re rustica* is to be understood as a posthumous homage to Cicero.

Chapter 9, by Del A. Maticic, is a brief note on the *Constitutio Limitum* of Hyginus Gromaticus, a treatise of the Flavian age contained in the *Corpus Agrimensorum Romanorum* (on p. 167 you can find the rather egregious oversight *Romanarum*). The study analyzes the presence of three sources quoted by Hyginus: Archimedes's *Sand Reckoner*, Vergil's *Georgics* and Lucan's *Pharsalia*. Not very convincingly, as I suppose, the author argues that the inclusion of these learned references in this technical treatise would produce a kind of "anxious"

intertextuality, alluding to the Roman wars that were the background to the activity of the surveyors of that time.

The ten and last chapter, by James J. O'Hara, tries to propose a new interpretation of a particularly studied work, namely the *Ars poetica* of Horace. This article is linked to an announced author's book aptly entitled *Teaching, Pretending to Teach, and the Authority of the Speaker in Greek and Roman Didactic and Satire*. In fact, O'Hara claims here that Horace's poem is not, as some believe (e.g. B. Frischer), a completely parodic text, but that the Augustan poet sometimes truly teaches the literary subject sometimes ironically pretends to teach (a sophisticated but not improbable hypothesis).

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FRANCESCO CANNIZZARO, *Sulle orme dell'Iliade. Riflessi dell'eroismo omerico nell'epica d'età flavia*, Firenze: Società Editrice Fiorentina, 2023, 409 pp., ISBN 978-88-6032-689-8.

Francesco Cannizzaro, giovane studioso che ha pubblicato diversi contributi sull'epica flavia, ha dato alle stampe questa rielaborazione della sua tesi di dottorato "Sulle orme dell'*Iliade*: Imitazione omerica e strategie emulative in *Argonautiche*, *Tebaide* e *Punica*", discussa nel 2020 presso l'Università di Pisa. In essa, C. esamina le complesse riscritture di quattro episodi omerici nelle *Argonautiche*, nella *Tebaide* e nei *Punica* tramite minuziose comparazioni da cui sono tratte acute e giuste conclusioni sulla tecnica imitativa e poetica di Valerio Flacco, Stazio e Silio Italico.¹ C. tenta, inoltre, di apportare nuovi elementi sulla cronologia relativa dei tre poemi, particolarmente problematica per quanto concerne gli ultimi due.

Il volume è scritto in una prosa scorrevole e con uno stile molto chiaro, ben curato e pressoché privo di refusi.² Inoltre, oltre a essere stato pubblicato in

¹ In realtà, C. va oltre, non solo studiando gli episodi omerici nella letteratura grecolatina fino agli epici flavii (ad es., egli dedica alcune pagine alla ricezione della *Dolonia* in Ovidio e Lucano e a quella della *Dios apate* in Apollonio Rodio e Virgilio) e notando i possibili influssi di questi modelli "mediatori" su di essi, ma anche chiedendosi come mai essi manchino in alcuni autori in cui ci si aspetterebbe che ci fossero. Ringrazio Sergio Casali per i preziosi suggerimenti offerti.

² Ho riscontrato soltanto: p. 103 n. 88 "le imprese Tideo e Capaneo" invece di "le imprese di Tideo e Capaneo"; p. 156 "a lungo del suo poema" invece di "a lungo nel suo poema"; p. 166 "da parte dalla cavalleria di Volcente" invece di "da parte della cavalleria di Volcente"; p. 223 n. 212 "oltre, che ovviamente" invece di "oltre che, ovviamente"; p. 243 "sul commento di Gervais cfr. *supra*, p. 8" invece di "sul commento di Bernstein cfr. *supra*, p. 8"; p. 294 n. 66 "Un accenno