

CHRISTOPHER CHINN, *VISUALIZING THE POETRY OF STATIUS: AN INTERTEXTUAL APPROACH* (Mnemosyne supplements 449). Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2022. Pp. xii + 348. ISBN 9789004498853. €119.00.

This volume stands out for its comprehensive investigation of visuality in the poetry of Statius as a whole. Through an intertextual approach, combined with ancient and modern theories of vision, it explores how visuality shapes Statius' poetic corpus and how, in turn, Statius defines the very notion of visuality itself.

Flanked by an introduction and a conclusion, this book is divided into nine chapters. Drawing on a comparison with Aeschylus' *Septem* and Euripides' *Phoenissae*, ch. 1 examines how Statius' visualisation of the Seven in the Catalogue of *Thebaid* 4 incorporates 'tragic' ways of seeing. While retaining Aeschylus' chiasmic arrangement of the heroes and their weapons from the *Redenpaare* scene, Statius replaces Aeschylus' visualisation of the shields through the eyes of male viewers with Euripides' female gaze. Thus, the *teichoskopia* scene in the *Phoenissae* provides the blueprint for a female mode of spectatorship that results in Statius' choice of Argia and Atalanta as critical viewers of the heroic parade. The discourse on the Catalogue in *Thebaid* 4 continues in ch. 2, which evaluates the influence of epic visualities from Homer and Virgil. Whereas the Catalogue of Ships in *Iliad* 2 provides a series of toponyms, along with cartographic and 'hodological' perspectives that virtually expand the Argive geography through a tour of Homeric Greece, the Catalogue of Italians in *Aeneid* 7 stands out as a model for techniques of deviant focalisation, as well as for the arrangement of the narrative sequences into a series of 'pictorial' panels. Ch. 3 examines how Statius' ecphrases associated with Vulcan's craftsmanship (the necklace of Harmonia, the Temple of Mars and the House of Sleep) stage the adultery story of Mars and Venus as a 'visual metanarrative'. Although the reading may not always be straightforward, this section highlights how the spatial configuration of the three ecphrases evokes an imperial geography reminiscent of the *Aeneid* and how Statius' visualisation of the adultery story redefines Virgilian ways of focalising imperial history in the *Aeneid* itself. Returning to martial objects, ch. 4 compares the minor ecphrases of Theseus' and Crenaeus' shields. Linked through imagery of bulls or bull-like creatures and allusions to Catullus 64, these shields form an ecphrastic pair that functions as a smaller-scale surrogate for the grandiose shield ecphrases in Homeric and Virgilian epics. However, rather than reflecting the main themes of the poem to which they belong, as do the shields of Achilles and Aeneas, the shields of Theseus and Crenaeus provide visual and aesthetic criteria for reading the narrative of the *Thebaid* itself 'as if it were a kind of visual object' (18).

The visual essence of the *Achilleid* is addressed in ch. 5, with a focus on the blush that accompanies Achilles' transformation. The hero's blush, constructed through allusions to other literary genres, can be read in light of the meanings attributed to this phenomenon by the Roman audience in terms of youth, shame, anger and deception, thus becoming a visual and hermeneutic tool for interpreting the poem itself.

The last four chapters deal with the *Silvae*. Ch. 6 shows how Domitian's equestrian monument (*Silv.* 1.1) and the public space in which it stands engage with the epic visualities of the *Aeneid* and the visual history of Rome. Combining this scenario with the genre of ecphrastic epigram, the description of the statue marks a new chapter in Rome's 'spectacular' history and develops its 'epic visuality' into a 'visuality of Empire' in which Domitian's achievements are magnified. A miniature version of Domitian's colossus is the statuette of Hercules Epitrapezios (*Silv.* 4.6), examined in ch. 7. This ecphrastic poem transforms the epic and epigrammatic visualities of *Silvae* 1.1 through a detour into satire, thus replacing the imperial visuality of epic with one of luxury and imperial consumption. Moving on to the poems dedicated to the villas of Manilius Vopiscus (*Silv.* 1.3) and Pollius Felix (*Silv.* 2.2), ch. 8 discusses how Statius draws on visual strategies to celebrate 'the good life' in the exclusive spaces of villas by reversing the traditional Roman moralising criticism against the luxury of private homes. By critically engaging with various intertexts (mainly Horace and Virgil), Statius celebrates — through ecphrasis and visual distinction — what a moralising attitude would have condemned. Ch. 9 focuses on the baths of Claudius Etruscus (*Silv.* 1.5) and the tree of Atedius Melior (*Silv.* 2.3). The aquatic environments of these poems, marked by the illusion of reflection, stage the dynamics of the erotic gaze through a series of allusions to Ovid and Horace which suggest different ways of visualising erotic stories. Interestingly, this chapter shows how Statius reworks Augustan erotic visuality by scrutinising the visual errors that can be attributed to the Ovidian lovers' gaze through the figure of the Horatian

wise lover, who can indicate alternative ways of viewing. The book closes with a final investigation of the impact of Statian visuality on late antique authors such as Ausonius, Claudian and Dracontius, thus brilliantly demonstrating how Statius takes pride of place in defining a new notion of visuality within the literary tradition.

Through a series of insightful analyses and stimulating observations, this volume not only enhances our understanding of the multifaceted phenomenon of visuality in Statius, but also lays the theoretical foundation for future studies on this fascinating topic in other authors.

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CHRISTOPHE BURGEON, *LA VIRTUS, LA FIDES ET LA PIETAS DANS LES PUNICA DE SILIUS ITALICUS* (Giornale Italiano di Filologia – Bibliotheca 23). Turnhout: Brepols, 2020. Pp. 532. ISBN 9782503590301. €95.00.

This study re-evaluates the notion of moral exemplarity in Silius Italicus' *Punica* by looking at three specific values, *virtus*, *fides* and *pietas*, and the extent to which these values contribute to or, when lacking, undermine the moral ethos of the main Roman protagonists and their allies. This unrevised version of Burgeon's doctoral thesis appears to intersect mainly with two works: B. Tipping on the articulation and destabilisation of Republican exemplarity in the *Punica* (*Exemplary Epic: Silius Italicus' Punica* (2010)) and F. Ripoll's treatment of moral values (*pietas* and *virtus* prominently) in Flavian epic (*La morale héroïque dans Les épopées latines d'époque flavienne: Tradition et innovation* (1998)).

B.'s main argument is that true moral exemplarity, according to Silius, requires a balance in the exercise of *virtus*, *fides* and *pietas*. For the individual or the community, the over-prioritisation of one value over another, for instance, inevitably leads to failure or death. The notion of paradox is therefore paramount to B.'s analysis of Silius' deployment of the values, which highlights cases where they appear to clash with one another. The whole study is based on the assumption that the entire epic is driven by a moral imperative to enable readers to derive valuable lessons from the past and participate in the moral rejuvenation of the *Urbs* initiated by Domitian.

The volume is divided in two parts. Part 1 offers a short biography of Silius as a politician turned poet and whose attachment to Stoicism may have influenced his manner of death, some insights into the contemporary perception of Silius and the *Punica*, as found primarily in Pliny the Younger and Martial, and the tensions surrounding the figure of Domitian in the poem either directly or by association with Hercules, Scipio Africanus and Romulus. Two further sections discuss the *Punica's* multifaceted relationship with its historiographical and literary models. While acknowledging Silius' debt to Livy and Polybius, B. holds the first-century B.C. historian Valerius Antias as the most likely source whenever the *Punica* departs from Livy. As for literary influences, the usual suspects loom large, among which Homer, Ennius and unsurprisingly Virgil's *Aeneid* and Lucan's *Bellum Civile* for the greater part of the discussion. The sub-section on Silius' intertextual engagement with Valerius Flaccus and Statius is rather brief; references to recent studies on the topic would have been helpful, e.g., G. Manuwald and A. Voigt (eds), *Flavian Epic Interactions* (2013); F. Ripoll in W. J. Dominik *et al.* (eds), *Brill's Companion to Statius* (2015), 425–43.

Part 2, the main bulk of the study, looks at how the values are deployed within specific episodes and characters of the *Punica*. In ch. 1, B. questions the moral stature of the Saguntines, whose steadfast *fides* to Rome during the siege of their city is undermined by their lack of *pietas* in the mass slaughter that ensues to avoid slavery at the hands of the Carthaginians. Likewise, the war prisoner Regulus, in ch. 2, proves his *fides* to Rome by advising the Senate to turn down the Punic conditions for peace during the first Punic war, and to Carthage by returning to captivity after his diplomatic mission, but fails to observe the basic requirements of *pietas* towards his family as he abandons wife and children. In ch. 3, Fabius Maximus Cunctator is seen as a less than straightforward moral *exemplum*: Silius' lack of emphasis on Fabius' command of all three values