

REVIEW

VIRGIL AND ENNIUS

Nora Goldschmidt, *Shaggy Crowns: Ennius' Annales and Virgil's Aeneid*. Oxford Classical Monographs. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. x + 258. Hardback, £55.00/\$125.00. ISBN 978-0-19-968129-7.

This book begins with a perfect image, included on the frontispiece and discussed on the first page of text: ‘The only securely attested visual representation we have of Quintus Ennius ... is a herm bust inscribed “Q. Ennius” now in the Thermae of Diocletian in Rome ... The most striking feature of this herm is that the head is missing’ (1). We have enough to posit what we have lost, but no possibility of reconstructing it or of restoring it to its original context. Thus, too, Ennius’ *Annales*; the reasonably numerous fragments and *testimonia* allow us to understand the foundations and scale of the poem, and leave us to conjecture (or conjure) the rest.

Nora Goldschmidt’s book embraces this reality. Despite the primacy of Ennius’ epic in its title, this is a study of what was built upon the now-fractured *Annales*, rather than of the *Annales* themselves (4). While this book forms part of the ‘triumvirate’ of English-language books concerned with Ennius’ epic that appeared in 2013 and 2014, it is, and should be evaluated as, a book about Vergil.¹ Goldschmidt’s contribution fully deserves its place as one pillar of that welcome and invigorating trio, however, since she ably demonstrates the impact of Ennius’ epic upon Vergil’s mythographic project. To the extent that it is practical, I will leave an assessment of the purely Vergilian issues to my colleagues elsewhere, and focus here on what the book brings to bear on questions of Latin historiography and Roman cultural history.

Goldschmidt begins with an ‘Introduction’ setting forth the scope of her project and its scholarly antecedents and influences (1–16). This is the first monograph on the relationship between Vergil and Ennius since Eduard Norden’s 1915 *Ennius und Vergilius*, which alone would justify the choice of topic. Goldschmidt here also presents a clear rationale for her approach in light of current scholarly methodologies, in particular intertextuality, reception, and memory studies. Her specific argument concerns Vergil’s success in claiming the cultural position of Ennius’ epic for his own *Aeneid*, a success achieved, she

¹ The others are Jackie Elliott, *Ennius and the Architecture of the Annales* (Cambridge, 2013) and Jay Fisher, *The Annals of Quintus Ennius and the Italic Tradition* (Baltimore, 2014). I reviewed the former in *Histos* 9 (2015).

will argue, through the direct appropriation of Ennian modes of memory and exemplarity.

The first chapter, ‘Reading Ennius in the First Century B.C.’, is divided between ‘The Republic’ and ‘Augustan Rome’, although the latter section usefully makes reference to the reception of the *Annales* in the later Empire. The historical terms of this periodization are somewhat forced; Propertius is considered under the Republic (25), for example. Goldschmidt is concerned here with the place of the *Annales* in the work of Vergil’s predecessors and contemporaries compared to its place after the appearance of the *Aeneid*, and not with the role of the *Annales* in the political imagination of the Republic as compared to that of the Principate. (Such a book is a real desideratum, but it will no doubt come, based in part on the foundations laid here.) Her project in this chapter is instead to explore the ways in which the use of the *Annales* as a school text shaped its subsequent appreciation, a point to which she will return to good effect in the fifth and final chapter. Here, she builds upon previous scholarship in suggesting that sections of the poem were particularly suited to excerpting as set-pieces, and that it may be worth considering the text (in terms of its reception, at least) in terms related to the catalogs of *exempla* that begin to appear in the late first century.²

This chapter underscores the inseparability of Ennian reception from the study of Ennius’ epic. Because of the dearth of second-century *testimonia*, and because so many of the longer or more evocative fragments concern (or are taken to concern) earlier Roman history, the *Annales* can seem an artificially archaic text. Our apprehension of it is shaped by the greater distance of its first-century readers from the material of its early books, and it can be easy to forget that, at the time he was writing, Ennius’ epic was a work of *contemporary* history and cultural comment. Though it is ancillary to her main argument, Goldschmidt makes an important point here when she demonstrates that the use to which first-century Romans put the *Annales* all but precludes our access to it on its own terms. The argument that ‘early Republican literature was partly a construction of the first century BC’ (35) is not unique to this book, but we are a long way from fully working through its implications for the study of third- and second-century Latin texts.

Chapter 2, “‘Archaic’ Poets’, explores the implications of first-century writers’ agency in this construction of ‘early’ Latin literature. One of the interesting things about ‘Augustan’ attitudes towards (the idea of) antiquity is the selectiveness with which the past was mined. Those who sought a usable past in the first century faced a store of material that had already been curated and

² The remark of Cicero adduced concerning Ennius and the *maxima facta patrum* (28) raises an interesting point about the specifically political and martial character of so many of the exemplary figures which Ennius’ reception associates with him. Livy’s history of early Rome is replete with memorable women; were the *Annales* perhaps less so?

adapted through the selective reuse of prior generations, and the resulting solution was a sort of brilliant paradox—the new discovery of a yet older past, the invention (as has been well studied) of ‘authentic’ tradition. In this chapter, Goldschmidt discusses how Vergil participated in this cultural process, setting his epic before the *Annales* by reshaping his readers’ understanding of Ennius and his epic. She posits a similar relationship between Ennius and Naevius, and among Naevius, Livius Andronicus, and their (albeit non-Latin) predecessors: ‘my innovation is the most traditional’.

Chapter 3, ‘Sites of Rome’, applies this understanding of Vergil and Ennius, Ennius and Naevius, to specific examples from the *Aeneid* and the *Annales*. As Goldschmidt explores, ‘Virgil’s Tiber landscape is a highly self-conscious one, acutely aware of its historical and literary residue’ (79). In this and the chapter’s other case studies, the book succeeds beautifully in its presentation of the deep and resonant relationships among the places shared by these epics, and of the details of Vergil’s artistic moves. Naevius, however, seems something of a cipher here and in the previous chapter; as Goldschmidt leads us to appreciate Ennius with greater nuance, Naevius’ *Bellum Punicum* becomes the ‘unknown’ text onto which we may project what we need from his contribution to the literary history of Latin epic. Ennius’ own reception of his predecessors and contemporaries probably embraced a considerably more diverse corpus than the articulation of a linear epic genealogy might imply, and, in fact, Goldschmidt does not need there to have been a specific relationship between Ennius’ *Annales* and Naevius’ *Bellum Punicum* for her points about the *Annales* and the *Aeneid* to be valuable. This study is at its strongest when its target text is the latter epic.

That said, Chapter 4, ‘Punica’, demonstrates the undeniable relevance of Naevius’ poem to Goldschmidt’s book. In this chapter, she explores the importance of the Punic Wars in Roman historical memory and in the *Aeneid*, which, as she discusses, has been downplayed in previous scholarship in part because of the absences of various characters from Anchises’ description of Roman heroes in the Underworld or in the scenes on Aeneas’ shield. Goldschmidt, instead, focuses on Vergil’s location of key events in Sicily, in the first half of the poem, and on certain battle scenes in the second. Her argument for the continued impact of the First Punic War at Rome is striking and convincing, and pushes intriguing questions about the metaphorical connections between (the idea of) Sicily and empire beyond Cicero’s *Verrines*, at the same time that it complicates our understanding of the means and motivations behind Romans’ memories of their wars.

To give one small example, Vergil’s reference to Drepana as *inlaetabilis ora* (3.707) is much richer when it refers not simply to Anchises’ death in the following lines, but far forward (for Aeneas) and backward (for the reader) to the naval defeat of 249 BCE (115). And while we cannot know the extent to which

any given Roman audience might understand Naevian references, Goldschmidt must be correct that the references are there (as, for example, at 120–1, on *Aen.* 5.437–42). She deftly integrates passages of Silius Italicus among her close readings in the second half of the chapter, and, while I would recommend reading the book from cover to cover, the resulting discussion of the epic legacy of the Punic Wars could stand alone.

Chapter 5, ‘Epic Examples’, brings together the conclusions of the preceding chapters. Goldschmidt suggests that Vergil’s *Aeneid* ‘consciously replaces the role long played by the *Annales* as an epic school text’ (150), in particular by reconstituting the set of *exempla* that would be formative for young Romans. She returns here to the importance of catalogs or collections of *exempla*, adduced in the first chapter, presents a survey of Ennian *exempla*, and then turns to their resonance in the *Aeneid*. The readings of Ennius in the context of Republican memory practices here are not wholly satisfying from a historiographic point of view (154–65); the proffered interpretations of a number of passages rest in part or whole on the reconstructions of fragments’ contexts by Skutsch and others (156, 158, 163), assumptions about what the poem ought to have included (159), or the evidence of other texts (including, I should note, a welcome integration of fragments of Republican drama, 157–8, 164). That said, on the one hand, the direct association of Ennius’ *Annales* with the development of *exempla*-driven cultural memory at Rome is not essential to her argument, and on the other, it is a valuable idea, even if I am not convinced by any given reading.

In the rest of the chapter, Goldschmidt first offers a discussion of places where she argues (or extends others’ arguments) that the *Aeneid* engages with exemplary figures from Rome’s past as constituted in the *Annales*. In brief, she suggests the *Aeneid* was able to encompass, and thereby both subsume and reduce, the epic project of the *Annales* within such set-piece episodes as the parade of heroes or the description of Aeneas’ shield. She then builds upon this premise to explore instances in other parts of the poem, focusing on the figure of Turnus, in Book 9 in relation to the classic Roman *exemplum* of the lone defender, and in Book 12 in terms of the self-sacrifice associated with the Decii Mures. Through close readings of a variety of texts, and direct verbal parallels drawn between the *Aeneid* and fragments of the *Annales*, Goldschmidt succeeds here in delivering a compelling assessment of Vergil’s use of his predecessor. Ultimately, she proposes that the ways in which the *Aeneid* represented the *Annales* ensured that no reader could return to that older epic as an unmediated source for Roman cultural memory; beyond poetic appropriation, we have here the suggestion of a significant, and destructive, formative act, brought, at the conclusion of this chapter, into an Augustan historical context (192).

The book concludes with a Postscript (193–6) in which Goldschmidt briefly but eloquently acknowledges the issues that arise from the quotation-contexts

of Ennius' fragments, and their implications. 'In some ways all texts,' she notes, 'and classical texts above all, exist via reception' (194). Thus the *Aeneid* and its antique commentaries may be a 'source' for the *Annales*—but, perhaps, for Vergil's *Annales*, not Ennius'.

Thus readers interested in Vergil, Latin literary history, and Roman cultures of reception will find much of value in this stimulating study. While this book is as indebted to previous scholarship as any revised doctoral project, Goldschmidt has new things to say about Roman literary reception and, to the extent that I am able to judge, the *Aeneid*. Moreover, she is clear and consistent in her articulation of her project: from the book's title to its Postscript, this is a study of the engagement of Vergil's *Aeneid* with Ennius' *Annales*. Its meticulously crafted Appendix (197–218) presents verbal parallels between the two works and will be of great use for future work on the relationship of the poems.

I offer the following general remarks not as criticisms of the book, but because, as a historian reviewing the book for a journal with a historiographic focus, I think a few caveats may be useful for readers whose research into textual commemoration at Rome embraces both prose and poetry. That is, this is an excellent work on Vergil's reception of Ennius' *Annales*, which is precisely what it purports to be, but it is informed by the methodologies of literary-critical reception. If you are sympathetic to such approaches, you will profit from Goldschmidt's readings even when you do not agree with them; if you are not so inclined, or if you bring to the book specific questions about third- and second-century Latin literature, you may find more problems than solutions.

As part of the 'Oxford Classical Monographs' series, this book is and shows its origins as a revised doctoral thesis. That is not a problem, of course, but it does inform the nature of the work in the sense that the analysis is at times less than subtle in its invocation of its inspirations, as when Goldschmidt's arguments proceed from Harold Bloom's influential *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford, 1973). The application of this mode of poetic criticism to the relationship between the epics of Vergil and Ennius (or of Ennius and Naevius) constructs a generic model for those texts based upon criteria that might have resonated less in their authors' own day, when something was not excluded from being 'history' because it was composed in hexameters. And although I would argue that Bloom's ideas are (or can be) relevant in historiography, that is, obviously, a complicated proposition, in part because his model gives more cultural agency to authors than it allows for historical specificity. Ennius' epic lionized a particular mode and class of governance at a particular place and time, and there are interesting reasons, which have nothing to do with Vergil, why it may have had its period of greatest use and popularity in the early to mid-first century BCE. To put this another way, it is a useful thought experiment to consider that Livy 'killed' Cato's *Origines*, but one cannot proceed

much further with that idea using only the texts as we have them. Moreover, we risk granting the *Annales* a greater importance than it had, and also a steeper decline, if we accept Vergil's construction of his rival.

This leads to my second caveat. Again as a result of the focus of Goldschmidt's project, she does not spend much time on Ennius' second-century context of production or the reception of the *Annales* in the first generations of his poem's assumed circulation. She cannot be faulted for either; the first is contested, the second virtually unattested. Perhaps related, however, is the impression that the book fosters that the *Annales* was a poem primarily concerned with exemplary moments from Rome's foundation through the great wars of the third century. Goldschmidt at one point characterizes the Punic Wars as 'the defining theme of the first two historical epics in Latin literature' (148), a generalization that (I think) is belied by what evidence we do have for the *Annales*. To be fair, and as I have noted above, she is explicit that 'rather than aiming at a definition of what the original *Annales* were "really like", this book remains primarily about the reception of Ennius' epic in the first century BC' (4). At times, though, it seems that the text under study is already itself the product of that reception; that is, Goldschmidt's *Annales* really is Vergil's. This does not detract from the Vergilian readings, but it does limit the independent utility of their Ennian (or Naevian) corollaries.

Everyone's least favorite sort of book review is the type that has more to say about the book the reviewer wishes the author had written than it does about the book she actually wrote. That is not my intention here; I am very glad Goldschmidt wrote this particular book. She has demonstrated, artfully and insightfully, why we should include fragments of Ennius' *Annales* in our approaches to Vergil's *Aeneid* both within and beyond the seminar room. For a book that does not claim to be about Ennius, this is a fine accomplishment indeed.³

Florida State University

JESSICA H. CLARK
jhclark@fsu.edu

³ I apologize for my delay in completing this review; that delay in no way reflects the quality or interest of the work under review.