

Review

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Sergio Casali, *Virgilio, Eneide 2: Introduzione, traduzione e commento. Syllabus 1*. Pisa: Edizione della Normale, 2017. ISBN 978-8-876425-72-1 (paperback). Pp. 390. €25.00.

This fine commentary is what one would expect from Sergio Casali, given his impressive body of work on Vergil and other Augustan poets. The “Premissa” by Gianpiero Rosati announces that this is the first of a new series of commentaries for Italian university students, offering a clear Italian translation, and notes with linguistic and stylistic analysis, as well as information about the historical, social and cultural context in which each work was written. Casali’s commentary should be excellent for students in the Italian classroom, but anyone working on or teaching *Aen. 2* will benefit from owning it. He offers the student expert advice for understanding the Latin, with key concepts explained clearly in the notes for those new to advanced study of Latin poetry, for example, both “tema e variazione” and the alternate *-ēre* ending of the perfect in line 1, consonantal *-i* in 16, *virum* for *virorum* in 18, half-lines in 66, historical infinitives in 98–99, final monosyllables in 250, and the impersonal passive (said to have an archaizing tone) in 634–635. But Casali also has much to offer the scholar or more advanced student: the Introduction and notes show his deep mastery of both

the most challenging philological problems in the book, and sophisticated contemporary approaches to literary issues in texts like this.

As readers of his earlier work know, Casali's strengths are in close reading, in comparing Vergil's text to that of his likely sources, and in understanding the workings of intertextuality, allusion, and ambiguity. *Aeneid 2* is a fertile field for these talents. A thirty-five-page introduction describes "Eneide 2 e la tradizione precedente," in which, for each section of the book, Casali starts with a prose summary about a page long, and then clearly and helpfully lays out how Vergil's narrative is like or different from that of other versions. He describes the choices Vergil made to achieve apparent goals, for example that the fall of Troy must seem inevitable, and Aeneas depicted as a hero who preferred to die, but who was persuaded to protect and leave with his family. But Casali also ponders the effects on the reader who may see what choices Vergil is making, especially when the poet seems to allude to another version of the story. This is a great strength of the commentary, discussed both in the Introduction (see, e.g., p. 35) and in numerous notes. Casali notes on lines 45–47 that one of Laocoon's ideas about the horse, that it was simply a siege engine, has been suggested by modern scholars as the origin of the myth of the horse: did ancient scholars think this too? On 61–62, Casali suggests that Aeneas's comment that Sinon was ready to die for his mission may reflect an earlier Greek source in which Sinon is a courageous hero, as he is later in Quintus Smyrnaeus: here allusion to a mythic variant perhaps accounts for "deviant focalisation." In 212 the word *diffugimus*, used of the Trojans fleeing from the serpents, may be an allusion to the cyclic version in which Aeneas himself "flees" to Ida after the prodigy of the serpents. Similarly, Vergil's and Aeneas's use of the words *inmixti Danais* at 396 may allude to—and perhaps for some readers explain away—the story that Aeneas negotiated with the Greeks for his escape, perhaps also alluded to at 1.488 *se quoque principibus permixtum agnuit Achiuis*, as Servius suggested. Allusion to an alternate version in which Aeneas cooperated with the Greeks may also be seen in 635–636, *genitor, quem tollere in altos / optabam*, where the verb may suggest the story that when Greeks offered to let Aeneas carry some wealth with him he "chose" his father instead. On 557 Casali has a good note on allusion to the death of Pompey in the depiction of Priam's body on the shore, where we see that "V. allude 'irrazionalmente' a una versione tragica della morte di Priamo."

Throughout the commentary there are excellent Introductions to sections large and small. There are valuable full discussions of Sinon, Palamedes, the Palladium, Laocoon, Aeneas's dream of Hector, Coroebus (and his "stupidità" in earlier texts), Pyrrhus, the death of Priam, the Helen episode (printed in brackets, with a lacuna suggested after 566, but discussed in a four-page

introduction, followed by rich notes on problematic lines), Ascanius's flaming head, and the shade and prophecy of Creusa. Casali's bibliography is impressive, but on Pyrrhus and the death of Priam I would add J. S. Carnes, "Degenerate Neoptolemus: praise poetry and the novelization of the *Aeneid*," in Peter I. Barta, ed., *Carnivalizing Difference: Bakhtin and The Other* (London, 2001), 99–117, and on Ascanius, a book that no doubt came out too late for him to use, Anne Rogerson, *Virgil's Ascanius: Imagining the Future in the Aeneid* (Cambridge, 2017). Another 2017 volume that would make a good companion to Casali is S. J. Heyworth and James Morwood, *A Commentary on Vergil, Aeneid 3* (Oxford, 2017), which similarly calls upon its authors' strengths in philology, intertextuality, and narratology. Casali's text comes with an apparatus criticus, not established by him but based on the principal published editions, and the commentary offers frequent clear discussion of textual problems and even punctuation.

Casali's whole treatment of Sinon is particularly rich and interesting. The Introductory note at 77–104 shows how Sinon deceives the Trojans by talking about another deception, that of Odysseus. "Tutto l'episodio di Sinone è una lezione al lettore sulla potenza di una narrazione efficace ed emotivamente coinvolgente." Excellent too are notes on 105–106 on how Sinon's Trojan audience, Aeneas's Carthaginian audience, and Vergil's readers are all hanging on Sinon's words and eager to hear the rest of his story, and on 116–119 on the complex set of speakers within speakers in the text ("V. dice che Enea dice que Sinone dice che Euripilo dice che Apollo dice"). Casali more than once calls attention to flaws and inconsistencies in Sinon's story (there are two explanations for why the Greeks built the horse, and he says both that they want to abandon the war, and that after returning to Greece they will come back to resume their assault), and Casali expects that Aeneas (in hindsight), his audience, and we readers will appreciate the way that his flawed but moving false story convinced and destroyed the naïve Trojans, who appear as bad readers. Casali also calls attention to some similarities between Sinon as storyteller and Aeneas as narrator of Book 2—both men say *testor* when swearing an oath (155, 432), and both resemble the Odyssean Odysseus in several ways. But he ultimately shies away from seeing possible flaws in Aeneas's narrative as indications that perhaps it too is not to be trusted. On 483–484, as Pyrrhus is breaking down the door, Casali notes that Aeneas's narrative is from the point of view of the Greeks, but instead of fully discussing this problem he quotes Heinze: "ma ciò è giustificato dal fatto che egli vive la situazione, immedesimandosi in loro [negli altri personaggi], con grande intensità" (*La Tecnica epica di Virgilio*, edited by M. Martina [Bologna, 1996], 108 n. 65). What does "giustificato" mean here, if not (to quote *The Wizard of Oz*) "pay no attention to the man

behind the curtain”? Similar problems mark Aeneas’s very specific claim to have seen the death of Priam, and then his subsequent detailed narration in which it is very hard to imagine Aeneas’s vantage point, and here again we get another eirenic quotation from Heinze rather than the eristic approach I would expect from Casali. On 431–434, where Aeneas swears that he did not avoid combat in order to survive the battle, Casali briefly notes that this is the second person in Book 2 who says *testor*, but he concentrates on the difficulties of the Latin, and does not pursue the narratological implications of this resemblance. Similarly, he notes without much comment on 434–437 the absence of any explanation of how Aeneas survived the deadly battles of 410–430. He does note repeatedly, however, that many aspects of Aeneas’s narrative are designed to defend and justify his actions. On 744 *fefellit* he notes that Aeneas “freudianamente” exaggerates in his “autogiustificazione,” and on 745–751, the description of how he searched desperately for Creusa, says that it is clear that Aeneas wants to justify himself in the eyes of Dido, as both Servius and Servius Danielis note. And self-justification is not only for Aeneas: On the crucial passage in 601–603 where Venus says that the war is not Helen or Paris’s fault, but that of the gods, Casali nicely calls attention to the quote in Servius Danielis that Venus is covering up her own role in starting the war by giving Helen to Paris: *latenter hic Venus suam purgat inuidiam*.

Throughout the commentary there are similar excellent notes on sources, intertexts, and subtleties of Latin style. This well produced and reasonably priced paperback is highly recommended.

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Call for Vergilian Society Tour Directors, 2020

The Vergilian Society invites applications for the direction of classical summer and winter programs for 2020 and beyond. We are particularly interested in innovative and exploratory programs at different levels, wholly or partially held at the Villa Vergiliana at Cumae, such as geological and Latin pedagogical tours. Tours involving Campania are particularly sought after for 2020, as well as those with an emphasis on Sardinia, Northern Europe, Rhodes/Cyprus/Crete, or Classical New York. But prospective directors are invited to submit applications for programs that encompass any area(s) of the Greco-Roman world. The Chair of the Villa Management Committee will supply prospective directors with details regarding as well as help them to develop their proposals into full programs. Please contact Steven Tuck, Chair of the Villa Management Committee, if you would like to propose a tour or discuss the possibility.

CHAIR VILLA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (2017–2019): Steven Tuck, Dept. of Classics, Miami University, 105 Irvin Hall, Oxford OH 45056, tucksl@miamioh.edu