

Review

S. CASALI, *VIRGILIO, ENEIDE 2: INTRODUZIONE, TRADUZIONE E COMMENTO*. Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2017. Pp. 390. ISBN 9788876425721. €25.00.

Sergio Casali's sensitive and detailed commentary on *Aeneid* 2 is the first in a new *Syllabus* series of editions and commentaries published by the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa. A brief foreword by Gianpiero Rosati gives the aim of the series: to provide up-to-date and versatile tools for the study of important Classical texts, accessible to Italian undergraduate students and their teachers. C.'s commentary more than achieves this. It engages closely, thoughtfully and with very considerable insight with the text and its scholarship, and will be an indispensable resource for scholars of Virgil across the world as well as its intended audience in Italian universities.

A substantial introduction discusses *Aeneid* 2 and the traditions in which Virgil was working. C. opens with a brief discussion of Dido's pointed interrogation of Aeneas in Book 1, noting how perfect an introduction it provides — despite its apparent awkwardness — to the delicate task that Virgil faces in telling the story of Troy's fall and Aeneas' survival. Careful attention to the nuance of the epic text is characteristic of C.'s approach, and can be seen throughout the delicate exploration of how Virgil fulfils his demanding task in the pages that follow. In the body of the introduction, C. divides the book into three main sections (the horse, Sinon and Laocoon; the night battle; the flight) and provides plot summaries before clear discussions of how these events are (or are not) depicted in other ancient texts and modes of story-telling. Without becoming bogged down in detail, these extensive overviews of the myths of Troy's fall and the selective nature of Virgil's version of them provide an invaluable resource for those seeking a reliable and expert guide to the complex history of these stories, while also remaining focused on the questions raised at the beginning of the introduction about Virgil's presentation of the survivor, Aeneas.

The introduction is followed by a brief note on the text, tabulating where and how C.'s decisions disagree with those of previous major editors. The text is substantially in accord with Conte's; C.'s significant editorial choices are discussed in the commentary. The text itself is next, with a literal and lucid facing translation in Italian prose. The commentary follows, after which come an extensive bibliography, a general index, an index of Latin words and phrases discussed in detail in the commentary, and an *index locorum*. There are minor errors on p. 58, where the text reads *posset* for C.'s preferred *possit* (l. 187) and *ars* for *pars* (l. 207), though both are correct in the commentary. The choice of *possit* instead of the *posset* favoured by most editors is explained with an appeal to the vividness it imparts. C. argues that *iussit, ne ... possit* makes Sinon's alleged recollection of Calchas' order and the thought behind it appear more present to the Trojans, and thus both more pointed and germane and — though he does not say so directly — perhaps also the more to be stymied. Not everyone will agree with the subtlety of C.'s psychological reasoning, involving as it does a shift from the more normal syntax seen earlier in *statuere ... piaret* (l. 184) and some tension with the pluperfect subjunctives that follow, but it is a good illustration of C.'s attention throughout his commentary to the effect of diction and other narrative choices on the sensitive (sometimes traumatised) audiences of the stories told throughout the book. He answers well the claim in Horsfall *ad loc.* that the reading *posset* would be very hard to explain if *possit* had originally been written, and — usefully for his undergraduate audience in particular — is neither dogmatic nor dismissive in his discussions of such choices ('la scelta è difficile' appears more than once).

At times I expected more reference in the commentary to C.'s earlier work on the *Aeneid*. There is no specific *ad loc.* comment, for example, on the description of the Trojans in Greek armour as *immixti* among the enemy (l. 396) and its echoes of the description of Aeneas as *principiis permixtum ... Achivis* (1.488), though readers of C.'s article in *CQ* 49.1 (1999), 203–11, will remember his suggestion there that Aeneas understands the implications of his depiction on the frieze around Juno's temple in Book 1, and takes pains with the use of *immixti* in Book 2 'to

explain to Dido the possible origin of the rumour of a “Greek Aeneas” (209, n. 18). In this work, however, C. is more interested in image making than unmaking, and concentrates on the ways in which Aeneas — in telling the story — minimises his own responsibility for, and involvement in, the arguably contemptible scheme proposed by Coroebus.

The commentary in general is admirably full (without being overwhelming) and generous to its audience. It gives necessary information in a manner easy to understand, while also allowing for further exploration following the tracks laid down by C.’s discussion. His voice and literary interpretive interests can be clearly discerned, but at the same time are not allowed to stand in the way of the satisfaction of his readers’ needs. C. engages closely and courteously with other commentators, from Servius to Horsfall, and his work is a must-have for university libraries and for scholars of the *Aeneid*. I look forward to future works in the same series, in the hope that they too display the many positive qualities of this welcome commentary on *Aeneid* 2.

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