

BOOK REVIEW

The Roman Hannibal: Remembering the Enemy in Silius Italicus' Punica. By CLAIRE STOCKS. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014. Pp. xii + 276. Hardcover, \$120.00. ISBN 978-1-78138-028-4.

Over a decade ago, when asked, I would say that we are entering a “Renaissance” of sorts in the study of Flavian epic, in particular Silius Italicus’ *Punica*. I am happy to report that progress has exceeded expectations: the cloud of prejudice that once hovered over the study of the longest poem in Latin literature seems to have largely faded. In particular, monographs such as the one under review contribute substantially to our understanding of the poem: this is the revised 2009 dissertation by Stocks, a book that is in many ways provocative and handsomely produced, comprising an introduction, eleven (short) chapters, a conclusion, and two indices.

The focus of this study is Hannibal, more precisely Silius’ fashioning of the Carthaginian general from a Roman perspective and for a Roman audience, “the product of Rome’s continual process of re-evaluation and re-engagement with the Carthaginian” (9). In the first four chapters, Stocks examines the literary tradition that influences Silius’ construction of the hero stereotypically as a *perfidus*, treacherous enemy, as found, for instance, in Cicero, Cornelius Nepos, Horace, Valerius Maximus, and Seneca, in addition to the Greek sources, such as Polybius and the fragmentary historians. The Roman approach exemplifies a love/hate relationship towards Hannibal: he is cast as the enemy par excellence, while he is also presented as one who achieves glory and fame as a cultural icon.

In Chapter 3 (“Silius’ Influences”), in particular, Stocks surveys Livy’s account of Hannibal, not just during the Second Punic War, but most importantly after the war, during Hannibal’s exile from Carthage through his final days in the kingdom of Prusias. In the fourth chapter (“Epic Models”), Stocks turns to the epic models that inform Silius’ portrait of Hannibal from the Homeric Achilles and Hector through Ennius and Virgil’s Aeneas and Turnus to Lucan’s Caesar and Pompey, Valerius’ Medea, and Statius’ Capaneus. The array of epic heroes is not exhaustive but offers stimulating readings of some passages from the *Punica* and the various intertexts exploited by the Flavian poet. Hannibal emerges as the

Roman *uir*, the type of leader whom the Romans obviously lack: he is the Romanized hero who “best exemplifies for Rome the ideal of *Romanitas*” (79).

In Chapter 5 (“Silius’ Roman Hannibal”), Stocks turns to Silius’ portrait proper, as Hannibal is presented to the reader as brilliant, destructive, cruel, merciful, power hungry but also preoccupied with fame and glory. Stocks promotes the idea that Hannibal does not simply rise and fall, but that “his mythic status continues to grow and evolve” (80). Stocks traces Hannibal’s progressive growth to fame and glory from Saguntum through Cannae in the sixth chapter (“Out of the Darkness and into the Light”) and clearly points out the parallels between the Carthaginian and the Roman generals, like Paulus, as both opposite and complementary pairs.

In Chapter 7 (“Hannibal’s Decline after Cannae: Separating Man from Myth”), her discussion turns to Hannibal’s famous “decline” at Capua, while in the following chapter (“Imitators and Innovators”) Stocks analyzes the role of the figure of Marcellus as one who “usurps” Hannibal’s place in the epic as the foremost *uir*: of course, even though Marcellus rises to become a key player in the epic, much like Hannibal, he is not the one who ultimately beats the Carthaginians. It is in the tenth chapter (“The ‘Lightning Bolts’ (*Fulmina*) of War”) that Stocks returns to the idea of heroes/protagonists that mirror one another, as she traces Scipio’s progressive journey from darkness into light, namely how he becomes the “self-styled rival and emulator of a Hannibal model” (185). In a word, in Silius’ epic, we encounter many facets of the Hannibal model, appropriated and imitated by various other men, especially the Roman *uiri* who claim the role of the protagonist in the poem. As Stocks concludes, “Hannibal is no longer sole *uir* against a plethora of Rome’s *uiri*; he has become his own plurality—a series of Hannibals ever growing” (234), and this is the most significant of Silius’ legacies.

I noted the omission of important recent discussion of “otherness” in Latin literature and Silius in particular (Augoustakis, *Motherhood and the Other*, 2010; Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity*, 2011), as well as some discrepancy in translations of the same passage (e.g. pages 229, 233). But overall, this book offers many stimulating discussions of the multi-faceted *Punica* and paves the way for monographs on some of the other figures of Silius’ epic world (Fabius, Paulus, Marcellus).

ANTONY AUGOUSTAKIS

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, aaugoust@illinois.edu