

## BOOK REVIEW

*Serviani in Vergili Aeneidos libros IX-XII commentarii*. Edited by CHARLES E. MURGIA, completed and prepared for publication by ROBERT A. KASTER, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. LXXIII + 558. Hardback. ISBN 978-0-19-084956-6.

In 1975 Charles Murgia published a volume of *Prolegomena to Servius*, subtitled *The Manuscripts* (Berkeley, University of California Press), which was the basis of a new critical edition of Servius' commentaries, notably those devoted to Books 9-12 of the *Aeneid*, that is the last part of the so-called *Editio Harvardiana*. It is worth mentioning that two volumes of this renowned edition had previously been issued: namely the vol. II, including *Aeneid* 1 and 2, edited by E. K. Rand and his collaborators (Lancaster, 1946) and vol. III, including *Aeneid* 3-5, by A. F. Stocker, A. H. Travis and others (Oxford, 1965). The first volume, intended to include the commentaries to the *Bucolics* and *Georgics*, was abandoned in 2001, after the death of his editor, G. P. Goold. The editor of vol. IV (*Aeneid* 6-8), P. K. Marshall, also passed away in the same year, but luckily the project has not been given up: it has been entrusted to J. Brusuelas, E. Chr. Kopff and D. Obbink. In turn, Murgia's announced volume had been expected in vain for a long time: hopes had been lost with his death in 2013. Finally, it has been completed and published by Robert Kaster.

The revised text of Servius with the two (upper and lower) critical apparatus comes from Murgia's drafts (reviewed by Donald Mastronarde) and can thus be considered as his own work, as Kaster points out in the "Foreword" (vi-x). Murgia did not have time to outline an overview of the textual tradition and/or a description of the principal manuscripts, which he planned to provide (as stated in his drafts). So, Kaster supplied a summary *ad hoc* in the first part of the "Preface" (xi-xx), adapting Murgia's short article on Servius' manuscripts in *The Virgil Encyclopedia* (ed. J. Ziolkowski and R. F. Thomas, Chichester UK, 2014, 1154-1157), and relying on the just quoted *Prolegomena*. The presentation of the text with its two apparatus, taken from Murgia's drafts, occupies the second half of the "Preface" (xx-xxxviii). After a bibliography (xxxix-xlii), a list of abbreviations (xliii-xliv), authors and works (xlv-lxxiii) and the *sigla codicum* (1-3), there is the critical text with its double apparatus (5-516), to which Kaster added an *apparatus fontium et*

*testium*. The text is followed by two appendices, the first including a group of scholia considered *adespota* (517-521) and the other arguing over Giuseppe Ramires' theory on Servius' tradition (522-526). Kaster has taken the latter from an unpublished work that Murgia presented at the meeting of the American Philological Association in 2004. The volume concludes with an *index locorum* (527-542) and an *index nominum* (543-558).

Charles Murgia was one of the greatest specialists in philological studies about Servius, just like his mentor George Goold. Robert Kaster is a world-renowned scholar of Latin erudition in Late Antiquity. Their edition is worthy of praise: needless to say, it is set to become the reference edition of Servius and the *Seruius auctus* over many decades. Given the great usefulness of these commentaries, not so much to the understanding of Virgil's oeuvre but rather for the study of what we may call "Virgilian exegetical stratification," as well as for our knowledge of the culture of Late Antiquity, Murgia's and Kaster's work is to be welcomed with enthusiasm and gratitude. It is on this largely positive background that the following criticism must be seen.

The Harvard program started from the need to replace the old edition by Thilo and Hagen, which is no longer considered appropriate for many reasons, but especially because of its format, presenting Servius' text in roman type and the words found only in the *Seruius auctus* in italics. The problem is that the latter not only adds some phrases, but also makes deletions and other changes to Servius' text. The main purpose of the Harvard edition was indeed to clearly distinguish the *Seruius auctus* from Servius, in order to understand and evaluate the specific contribution of both commentaries to Virgil's work (and to the culture of Late Antiquity as well). Thus, when there are major differences between the two texts, Rand's volume II presents them in parallel columns: the *Seruius auctus* on the left and Servius on the right. But one may wonder why the *Seruius auctus* has an apparently prominent place (as the first to be read) compared to Servius, that is usually more reliable, while the former is full of medieval errors. And what is worse, when there are only minor differences between the two texts, the reading of the *Seruius auctus* is printed in the text and that of Servius is relegated to the apparatus! This is the result of Rand's primary interest in the *Seruius auctus*, and it is also an awkward reaction to the marginalized position that the latter occupies in Thilo's edition.

The editors of volume III tried to resolve this problem, printing both *Seruius auctus* and Servius next to each other in the text, even when there are minor differences. But this does not change the fact that the reader is invited to start from the

later and less reliable of the two, which is still on the left side of the page. Furthermore, when Servius' comments have no parallel in the *Seruius auctus*, they occupy the full page; if, on the contrary, the comments of the *Seruius auctus* have no parallels in Servius, they occupy three-fourths of the page. It is not always easy for the reader to realize, from time to time, if he is dealing with the text of Servius or the *Seruius auctus*: he has to maintain a high threshold of attention to distinguish one from another.

In this respect Kaster claims he found "a minimum stratagem to warn readers immediately whether they are reading Servius or *Seruius auctus*" (xxiii): the text of the latter is printed between two vertical lines. It is true that the distinction between the two appears much clearer with this device, which is simple and effective; but I wonder why Servius' comments are still printed on the right side of the page, after those of the *Seruius auctus* that are on the left, when there are differences between them. It seems that Rand's prejudice concerning the primacy of the latter is not yet completely overcome.

Another expedient found by Kaster in order to facilitate the understanding of the *Seruius auctus* is to add words within double angle brackets to clarify obscure or incomplete phrases, and to enclose in double square brackets words that the compiler "should have omitted" (xviii). E.g. 9.214-215, *MANDET HVMO*: *[[aut]] id est 'cui mandari defuncti solent'; <<SOLITA>> FORTUNA scilicet*. Admittedly, this device makes the reading of the text easier and clearer; but some confusion could arise with interpolations in square brackets, and marginal or interlinear additions in angle brackets.

The upper and lower apparatus were already in volumes II and III of the *editio Harvardiana*, the upper including the readings of the manuscripts of the *Seruius auctus* and the lower dedicated to those from Servius' codices. In the edition by Murgia and Kaster, there is still the double apparatus, but it serves a different purpose as the variants of both texts are collected together in the lower, while the upper includes only some readings from "auxiliary witnesses" to the *Seruius auctus* (mainly **T** = the *Turonensis* of Bern, and **v** = *Vaticanus lat.* 1570). The choice to make the lower as a positive apparatus, rather than negative (as it was in the previous volumes), is completely appropriate, since the witnesses change frequently; but the mix of readings of Servius and the *Seruius auctus* in the same venue, on the other hand, does not help. Furthermore, the devaluation and marginalization of **T** and **v** does not always prove profitable, as sometimes their readings turn out to be better than those from the main manuscripts of the *Seruius auctus*, **F** (*Parisinus*

*lat.* 7929 + MS 172 of Bern) and **G** (MS 167 of Bern). Kaster is well aware of this, so much so that some variants judged especially worthy of note from **T** and **v** are recorded in the lower apparatus, for the benefit of the *constitutio textus*, but at the expense of consistency.

In the construction of Servius' text, the priority given by Murgia to the family **Δ** (mainly **J** = MS 292 of Metz, and **L** = MS B.P.L. 52 of Leiden) as a general criterion works well, but with some *caueat* that cannot be underestimated, especially the lack of witnesses for large portions of *Aeneid* 9 and 12. Besides, the origin and position of the family **θ** (**A** = MS Aug. CXVI of Karlsruhe, and **O** = MS Laud. lat. 117 of Oxford) in Murgia's view is not clear: it is said to descend from **Δ** with contamination from **Γ** (xii), but a little later we find it within the tradition **Γ** as opposed to **Δ** (xvii).

The discussion on the so-called family **α** (identified by Giuseppe Ramires as an independent source, based on the agreement of *Vossianus lat.* F 25 and *Parisinus lat.* 7961), that was supposed to find place in the "Preface," is rather relegated at the end of the volume as "Appendix B." I will not enter here into the dispute between Murgia and Ramires, but I cannot hide that I share the position of the latter. I take the occasion to recall an article that makes a significant contribution to this debate, but which is missing in the bibliography of the volume: G. Ramires, "Il valore delle aggiunte dei mss. **α** nella costituzione del testo dei commentary virgiliani di Servio", in F. Stok (ed.), *Totus scientia plenus. Percorsi dell'esegesi virgiliana antica*, Pisa, 2013, 231-255. In any case, Murgia's stance leads him to have recourse only to *Parisinus* (**Pc**) in addition to **F** and **G** (and sometimes it happens that the former gives the best reading); but this is quite weird, as *Leidensis* (**Le**) is older than **Pc**.

Despite these problematic points, the last volume of the *editio Harvardiana* will enjoy great success for its merits and usefulness among scholars of Virgil, of Servius and of Late Antiquity in general.

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