

BOOK REVIEW

Tombs of the Ancient Poets: Between Literary Reception and Material Culture. Edited by NORA GOLDSCHMIDT and BARBARA GRAZIOSI. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. xvi + 364. Hardback, \$105.00. ISBN: 978-0-198-82647-7.

The collection of fifteen essays under review has its origins in a research project entitled *Living Poets: A New Approach to Ancient Poetry*, directed by one of the editors (Graziosi) and based at Durham University. “The purpose of the volume, as a whole, is to make a distinctive contribution to the study of literary reception by focusing on the materiality of the body and the tomb, and by arguing that the ‘places,’ or *topoi*, outlined here [i.e., in the editors’ introduction] mediate the relationship between classical poetry and its readers” (16). With chapters on a wide range of authors and texts, both Greek and Latin, as well as their various modes of reception, the book admirably succeeds in demonstrating the myriad ways in which “the tomb ... is the place where life ends and Life begins; where the oeuvre is extended and received; where death is lamented and immortality affirmed” (3).

Part I, “Material Texts, Textual Materials,” includes five papers on the complex interplay between tomb and text, text and tomb, in both Greek and Roman culture. Platt examines the fraught relationship between the *corpus* of the mortal poet(ess) and the “body” of his or her immortal poetry, as well as the perpetuation of poetic memory, across a number of Hellenistic *epitymbia*, “both epitaph and epigraph” (43). Rawles interprets the “Tomb of Simonides” (Callimachus’ *Aitia* fr. 64 Harder) “as a successful reception of a Simonidean poetics of inscribed poetry and of epitaph in particular” (68). Martelli studies the relationship between Ennius’ auto-epitaph and the Tomb of the Scipios, as well as the Scipionic *elogia*. Garulli offers a fresh appraisal of the monument for the young poet Q. Sulpicius Maximus, which was erected by his proud parents along the Via Salaria, complete with a prose inscription in Latin and the text of an extemporaneous poetic composition by the child prodigy in Greek hexameters: “[t]he tomb ... is a vehicle not only of commemoration but also of transmission, since Maximus’ tomb functions not only as a monumental site but also as a book made of

stone" (98). Goldschmidt "focuses on three case studies in which the literary and material receptions of poet's [literary and material] *corpora* interact to tell an alternative story to the master-plot of reception which Ovid encoded in his texts" (104), especially the auto-epitaph in *Tristia* 3.3.

Part II, "The Poet as Character," includes three papers on some of the various appearances which poets make in poetry, whether their own or that of others, primarily in Greek literature. Bakola explores "the material connection of poetic personalities, styles, and oeuvres with elements of nature and landscape through the poeticization of burials" (124), in particular, the hero cult which grew up around the tomb of Aeschylus in Gela. Bing reexamines a host of epigrams in which poets commemorate the tombs of minor characters and reads them as "a kind of metafiction, reactions to, and spin-offs from, an urtext" (169). Graziosi, in one of the few essays which devotes significant attention to both Greek and Latin texts, demonstrates how "Orpheus the mythical character and Orpheus the author of religious texts ... coincide, very precisely, at his tomb" (172–3) so as to confer immortality upon both (poetic) avatars.

Part III, "Collecting Tombs," includes three papers on literary graveyards past and present both on and off the page. Höschele recounts the complex history behind the formation of the Poets' Corner at Westminster Abbey and sees a similar impulse in the sequences of poetic epitaphs in the *Garlands* of Meleager and Philip, "forming a literary necropolis of sorts" (203). Montiglio, noting that "the tombs of poets in the *Palatine Anthology* are barely described" (218), illustrates "the power of plants to eternalize the poetry of the deceased" (229) and, at the same time, "the role of plants in undermining the tomb's materiality" (231). Hanink reconstructs the network of poetic tombs in Pausanias, in particular those of the three tragedians and the traditions about the relationship among "poets, bones, and tombs" (247).

Part IV, "The Tomb of Virgil," includes four papers on different aspects of the grandest of all the ancient tombs, that (supposedly) of Virgil. Laird underscores the manipulation of closure across the *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid* through various echoes of the epitaph for Virgil in the *VSD*. Peirano Garrison "investigates Virgil's tomb as a literary, biographical, and spatial construct in the context of the ancient reception of Virgil's works" (266), especially among his Flavian epigones Silius Italicus and Statius. Hendrix reflects on the invention of the tomb of Virgil across the ages as an instantiation of the "phenomenon of materializing literary memories" (282). Smiles traces the varying depictions of the tomb and its

surroundings in the work of Joseph Wright of Derby and J. M. W. Turner, with a brief coda on the tomb of Ovid.

The back matter includes a consolidated bibliography and a relatively thorough index, but it might have been preferable to divide that single index into an index nominum et rerum and a separate index locorum. The volume contains the usual smattering of typographical errors, none serious. More importantly, the ample cross-references throughout attest not only to the strategic intervention of a guiding editorial hand but also to the inherently tight focus of the collection, which set the stage for Goldschmidt's *Afterlives of the Roman Poets* (2019).

JOHN JACOBS

Montclair Kimberley Academy, tiberiuscatiusasconius@gmail.com