

Reviews

Virgil: a census of printed editions 1469–1500, edited by Martin Davies and John Goldfinch, with an introduction by R.C. Alston and a foreword by Lotte Hellinga. Occasional papers of The Bibliographical Society, number 7. A centenary publication. London, The Bibliographical Society, 1992. 128 pp. Five plates.

Virgil's stature, high in his lifetime, increased greatly from the day he died. Literary critics, benign or hostile, grammarians and commentators, school teachers as far afield as Egypt—all devoted much labour to the Virgilian corpus. The renown of the poet was reflected also in the writing of the imperial period, and the survival of no less than three almost complete and four fragmentary manuscripts from late antiquity bears eloquent testimony to a vogue enjoyed by no other pagan Latin poet. Medieval manuscripts come in battalions, and it is hardly an exaggeration to say that no self-respecting medieval monastery could be without at least one Virgil. Citations of classical Latin authors in the works of medieval scholars provide further evidence of the pre-eminence of Virgil: the famous twelfth-century grammarian Peter Helias, for example, in his treatise on Priscian's grammar cites Virgil 147 times as against (the next highest figures) Terence 38, Lucan 26, and Juvenal 24.

Virgil was not the first classical Latin author to be printed—that distinction was reserved for Cicero, whose *De officiis* was brought out at Mainz in 1465 from the house of Fust and Schoeffer (there is a convenient table of *editiones principes* of Latin authors in J.E. Sandys, *A history of classical scholarship*, II.103). The first printing is generally, and perhaps correctly, assigned to Sweynheym and Pannartz, to Rome, and to a date c. 1469, but it is not impossible that priority should go to the undated edition produced in Strassburg by Johann Mentelin. After 1469 there was a regular spate of production, and it is the totality of 179 incunable editions of Virgil which is surveyed in the present volume.

But for Walter Arthur Copinger (1847–1910) The Bibliographical Society in its present form would never have come into existence and the present volume never have been printed. For what we have here is the commemoration of a double centenary: that of the society, and that of the publication of Copinger's *Incunabula Virgiliana* in volume 2 of the society's proceedings, in 1892.

W.A. Copinger emerges from Alston's introduction as a man of wide-ranging interests and enormous intellectual energy. He never finished his studies at University College Durham, but left to join a firm of solicitors in London. Subsequently called to the Bar, he published what are still standard textbooks on copyright and conveyancing. Appointed lecturer in law at Owens College Manchester, he eventually became professor and Dean of the Faculty there. A lifelong bibliophile, he amassed a library of some 30,000 volumes which included hundreds of editions of Thomas à Kempis and of the Bible; most of the facsimiles in his *Incunabula Biblica* (1892), indeed, were made from books in his own collection. His bibliographical labours,

REVIEWS

however, accounted for only a portion of his mature output, for he also wrote copiously on the antiquities of Suffolk and Co. Cork, and on matters theological.

The present volume is the result of downloading the Virgilian records from the Incunabula Short-Title Catalogue (ISTC) which is (and I quote from Davies' introduction to it on p. 17) 'a database of fifteenth-century printing now being compiled at the British Library and held in MARC format on the Library's BLAISE-LINE computer service'. 'ISTC was in origin a conversion of F.R. Goff's *Incunabula in American libraries: a third census* (1964–1972) to machine-readable form. The way the file is disposed still conforms essentially to Goff's alphabetical sequence...' (ibid.) The need to turn bibliography into an exact science was already apparent to Copinger, who was ever concerned to base bibliographical entries on autopsy, as far as possible, and, failing that, on the reports of witnesses whom he trusted; it is enough to say that for the Bibliothèque Nationale he was able to turn to the eminent Léopold Delisle. That Copinger would have applauded the formation of a bibliographical database goes without question; but whether he would have approved of this particular downloading may be questioned.

For the editions which he or his helpers had seen (they number 85 out of 180 in the *Incunabula Virgiliana*, and are marked by a star) Copinger gave title and publication details, collation, description (foliation, incipits, etc.), information about surviving copies, and references to secondary literature. The present check-list deliberately omits information about collation, foliation and incipits. Why so, one may ask. Presumably such information is held in the database, and could easily have been drawn off.

Worse than such omissions, though, is the presence of positive misinformation. For the purposes of this review I naturally turned to the holdings of the British Library, and had the joy of handling the Vindelinius de Spira edition of 1470 (no. 2 in the present list), the Strassburg edition by Mentelin of c. 1470 (no. 3), and the Jenson edition of 1475/1476 (no. 17). The last of these makes my point, for the list of additional items included in the edition (pieces from the *Appendix Vergiliana*, verse summaries of the *Aeneid*, and so forth) does not correspond at all to the order in which these items appear in the book. The Donatan life, for instance, opens the volume but appears more than half-way through the ISTC list, the *Moretum*, *Priapea* and other *App.Verg.* pieces come immediately after Maffeo Vegio's 'Liber XIII Aeneidos', not after *De signis caelestibus* as in the ISTC list, and so on. The ISTC list in short bears no relation to the arrangement of material in the edition, and one may reasonably ask why so. Incidentally, I can see no reason in the case of no. 2 for enclosing the place of publication, Venice, within square brackets, but not the name of Vindelinius, when the eight-line epigram which concludes the edition begins: *Progenitus spira formis monumenta maronis | Hęc uindelinius scripsit apud uenetos*.

Let me end with a sobering reflection. Many of the items listed in this volume survive only in a few copies, but of 37 editions only one copy is still extant. The single copy of no. 90 and the single copy of no. 147, the former located in Leipzig, the latter in Berlin, were lost during the last war. With memories of the Arno flooding and the conflagration which devastated Norwich City Library coming back to mind, all those of us who love old books must hope and pray that those 37 unique editions survive all hazards by fire and water.

Across Bin Brook: Latin Poems in Various Metres by F.J. Lelièvre and H.H. Huxley. Printed by Antony Rowe Ltd., Chippenham, Wiltshire. ISBN 0 9519726 0 X. First published in 1992. No price stated.

In the nineteenth century and well into this one polished erudition was manifested by the cultivation in British universities and schools of prose and verse composition in both classical languages. Taste and felicity, skill and wit were regularly a mark of this endeavour. Wilamowitz acknowledged in his *Erinnerungen* that appreciation of his verses was more lively here than amongst his countrymen—though I do recall having my attention drawn by C.J. Fordyce to a false quantity in a Latin hexameter by the great Prussian polymath (a short ‘u’ as the first syllable of *humanum* at the end of the line). There will not be many, if in fact there will be any, such works as this *libellus* published hereafter. It worthily witnesses to a cultural activity of which there are now very few connoisseurs and capable practitioners left. Thomas Arnold of Rugby considered classical verse composition a ‘contemptible prettiness’, but it survived his strictures. As late as 1949 there was the publication of ‘Some Oxford Compositions’, followed in 1964 by that of ‘More Oxford Compositions’. Maurice Bowra, J.D. Denniston, T.F. Higham, and Maurice Platnauer were amongst the glorious company of collaborators. Doubtless not everything they wrote could have been read without suspicion by a native speaker (the ultimate ideal), but their *Sprachgefühl* and general versatility were of a remarkably high order. Lelièvre and Huxley belong to this tradition and as a dinosaur myself I greet their *opusculum* with pleasure and gratitude.

Elegiacs prevail in the collection, but otherwise the range of metres is wide, being divided between quantitative and accentual kinds. Technical dexterity and humour abound. Nearly every page exemplifies the authors’ capacity for producing *tours de force*. Huxley (p. 75) remarks on his liking for accentual rhyming poems, pointing out that they can be easily understood and appreciated by those with ‘small Latin’. Maybe he could now favour us with a florilegium of such pieces *discipulorum in usum*? Titbits of this sort could enliven lessons and help to maintain interest and numbers where the ancient tongue is still taught. Here is a grace from the pen of Anon. with Huxley’s rendering of it (p. 48):

Heavenly Father, bless us,
And keep us all alive;
There’s ten of us for dinner
And not enough for five.

*Pater noster, benedic
Peccatores decem,
Quibus fert pauperies
Propiorem necem.
Sis adiutor, Domine,
Servos ne relinque;
Namque cena nostra vix
Pascet ora quinque.*

REVIEWS

But a serious note is struck in not a few pieces. L.'s 'Joyce' (p. 20) is a tender quatrain in elegiacs in memory of his wife, while his version of 'The Banks o' Doon' by Robert Burns, also in elegiacs, well conveys the tone of the original. H., as a former President of the Virgil Society, might have been expected by the reader to stress the heroic mode in his work, but it is the Ovidian spirit of parody and pastiche, very cleverly and neatly realised, which pervades it. However, Virgil is not absent: see, for example, 'Life with Lavinia' in elegiacs (p. 58), *Lacrimae Vergilianae* in hexameters (p. 59) on Aeneas' victory and its cost in terms of the death and suffering of worthy people (the last line echoing Lucan, *Victrix causa Iovi placuit, sed victa Maroni*), and the pessimistic version of the Fourth Eclogue's apocalypticism (p. 63), deploring the physical and moral pollution which today threatens the world.

Professors Lelièvre and Huxley are to be congratulated on their *libellus*. Caviare to the general, but delectable to those who understand.

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H. MacL. CURRIE

Books Received

Mention in this column does not preclude a fuller review in a subsequent issue of the *Proceedings*.

Maria ALESSIO, *Studies in Vergil Aeneid Eleven, an Allegorical Approach* (Montfort & Villeroy 1993) 257 pp. Paperback. No price given.

Michael Antonius CARO, *Carmina Latina et Latinae Interpretationes*, ed. Alfredo BECERRA (Los Angeles 1993) x + 141 + 135 pp. Paperback. No price given.

VIRGIL, *Eclogues*, edited with an Introduction and Commentary by Wendell CLAUSEN (Oxford, Clarendon Press 1994) xxx + 328 pp. Casebound. £40.00.

STATIUS, *Thebaid*, a new translation by A.D. MELVILLE, with an Introduction and Notes by D.W.T. VESSEY (Oxford, World's Classics 1995) lvii + 373 pp. Paperback. £7.99.

Pentekontaetia: Addenda and Corrigenda

When a future archivist comes to write 'Son of Pentekontaetia' (or some such sequel) the following addenda and corrigenda may be useful.

- p. v For *9 Jan 42* read *9 Jan 43*.
- p. 15 Delete the (meaningless) words *and slightly to shift his historical allusion*.
- p. 17 For *Underword* read *Underworld*.
- p. 17 For *Stalingrad* (now Volgograd) read *Leningrad* (now St. Petersburg).
- p. 33 The President was George Malcolm Young (1882–1959).
- p. 34 The President was Cyril Bailey (1871–1957).
- p. 39 The PA by E.V. Rieu was published in *PVS* 21 (1993), 35–51.
- p. 45 *PVS* volume 1 was edited (in so far as any editing was necessary) by A.J. Gossage (AJG to DWB 18 Sep 93). This should be added to the *res gestae* of AJG on p. 48, and corrected in references to *PVS* 1 on pp. 99, 107, 108.
- p. 46 For (*Minutes 16 Feb 65*) read (*Minutes 16 Feb 63*).
- p. 48 *PVS* 21 (1993) now holds the record at 171 pages.
- p. 57 A set of VS publications has been deposited in the Joint Library (8 May 93).
- p. 57 A group visit to Cumae was held (24–31 Oct 93) and a report circulated to members. This should be added to p. 68.
- p. 68 For (*G&R 1959, 85–86*) read (*G&R 1959, 86–89 plus 2 plates*).
- p. 68 For £25 read £5.25.
- p. 69 s.v. Finances. The list of headings has been scrambled, and should follow the order on pages 69–73.
- p. 69 For *increase was applied for* read *increase was implemented*.
- p. 88 The mis-spelling of *Maguinness* is due to the original.

Publications

- p. 103 The most comprehensive repository of VS literature (far outstripping the British Library) is the Joint Library. This now contains (w.e.f. 8 May 93) complete sets (either originals or photocopies) of:
 - List A Pamphlets (*Pente* pp. 104–105)
 - List B Summaries (*Pente* pp. 105–106)
 - List C Proceedings (*Pente* pp. 106–113)

Pamphlets 1–24 (1944–1961) and Summaries 1–53 (1944–1961) are available on request in Room 502. Bound volumes of *PVS* (1–5, 6–10, 11–16, 17–20) are in Stack 15. The current volume is on the Periodicals shelves.

The Joint Library holds additional copies of 3 PAs (*Pente* p. 116) viz. T.S. Eliot (shelf 203A), Lord Wavell (Tract Box 48 in Stack 29) and Sir John Lockwood 1961 (*ibid.*).

Vergilian Society publications (*Pente* pp. 66–67) are incomplete but shelved in Stack 18.

PENTEKONTAETIA: ADDENDA AND CORRIGENDA

Other related publications include:

Memnisse Iuvabit (*Pente* pp. 113–114) on shelf 95.19Y

ORVA (vide infra) on shelf 95.19Q

GWK Biography (*Pente* p. 93) on shelf 204B

- p. 104 I have copies of Pamphlet 3 (T.S. Gregory) and Pamphlet 5 (R. Speaight) but no dates of delivery—if ever delivered.
- p. 105. Conversely, Summary 2 (E.H. Warmington) remains a mystery: this was delivered, but I wonder if it was ever published.
- p. 114. *Memnisse Iuvabit* is now a Duckworth title (£11.95). Another publication with some resemblance to *Memnisse Iuvabit* is *Oxford Readings in Vergil's Aeneid* (*ORVA*), ed. S.J. Harrison, OUP 1990. This contains 26 essays on the *Aeneid* including 4 reprints from *PVS* (3 of them also reprinted in *Memnisse*) plus the VS lecture of 15 Jan 72, which was not published by the VS.

Meetings

- p. 116 For *R.D. William* read *R.D. Williams*
- p. 119 s.v. 15 Mar 47 delete *Revd*
- p. 120 s.v. 15 May 48 delete *Revd*
- p. 121 s.v. 10 Mar 51 add *PVS* 21, 35–51
- p. 129 s.v. 19 Mar 66 add *ORVA* 25, 449–465
- p. 131 s.v. 14 Nov 70 cf. *ORVA* 9, 191–207
- p. 132 s.v. 15 Jan 72 add *ORVA* 7, 145–166
- p. 133 s.v. 10 Nov 73 add *ORVA* 6, 127–144
- p. 134 s.v. 22 Nov 75 add *ORVA* 15, 295–304
- p. 135 s.v. 13 Jan 79 cf. *G&R* Apr 79, 61–80
- p. 135 s.v. 10 Feb 79 cf. *G&R* Oct 82, 143–168
- p. 136 s.v. 19 Jan 80 add *ORVA* 20, 378–389
- p. 138 s.v. 15 May 84 cf. *ORVA* 9, 191–201
- p. 141 s.v. 2 Mar 91 add *PVS* 21, 65–79
- p. 142 s.v. 23 Nov 91 add *PVS* 21, 53–63
- p. 142 s.v. 14 Mar 92 add *PVS* 21, 17–34
- p. 142 s.v. 9 May 92 add *PVS* 21, 1–16
- p. 142 s.v. 5 Dec 92 add *PVS* 21, 111–150 ('Descent into Hell')
- p. 142 s.v. 23 Jan 93 add *PVS* 21, 89–110 ('Hopelessly Devoted')
- p. 143 Add to Index: Austin, R.G. 24 Feb 51
- p. 145 s.v. Williams. For 14 Nov 71 read 14 Nov 70, and for 24 Feb 79 read 24 Nov 79.

D.W. BLANDFORD

The illustration on the front cover is of a piece of Italian majolica of the fifteenth century which shows Dido's feast; her eyes are on the gifts brought by Achates, and she is hugging Ascanius/Cupid; ...*interdum gremio fovet inscia Dido | insidat quantus miseræ deus* (*Aen.* 1.718–9).

Photograph: British Museum, Department of Mediaeval and Later Antiquities, reproduced with their kind permission.