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Review

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by G. Viansino

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G. VIANINO (ed., tr., comm.): *Marco Anneo Lucano: La Guerra Civile* (Farsaglia). (Classici Greci e Latini.) (2 vols: Vol. I, Books I–V; Vol. II, Books VI–X). Pp. cxi + 1024 (cxi + 1–490; 491–1024). Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori, 1995. Paper, L. 22.000 (each). ISBN: 88-04-40742-5; 99-04-412228-3.

In the last decade, Lucan's epic *Bellum Civile* seems to have regained much of its old status as a first-rate classic. Its puzzling theme, pathetic tone, and literary character meet with increasing interest among scholars, testified to by the ever-growing number of new studies and texts. In Italy, where Lucan has always remained in great favour, there are already several cheap and easily available bilingual editions (e.g. in the BUR and Bompiani series), as well as a monumental text-critical edition (Badali, 1992).

V., the author of a well-known monograph on Lucan, *Studi sul Bellum Civile di Lucano* (Salerno, 1974), has now added a new edition, which combines the advantages of popular and strictly scientific publications. The series 'Classici Greci e Latini' is not intended for a specialist audience, but this new Lucan will satisfy general readers and scholars alike. The two apparently modest volumes prove surprisingly rich: Viansino not merely provides a reliable Latin text with facing Italian translation, but also much extra information and analysis, and even what amounts to a commentary on the entire text.

The first volume opens with some 75 pages of introduction. Apart from the obligatory paragraphs on historical epic, the political context, the role of *Fatum* and *Fortuna*, the anti-Virgilian tone, and Lucan's style, it also studies the narrative structure, the characters involved, and the poet's use of historical examples. Then follow two *Vitae* and 32 pages of general bibliography. The commonly added third *vita* from the MS U is regrettably omitted, but the bibliography deserves compliments, as it is thematically arranged, to the great benefit of beginning readers and scholars. The rest of the first volume is taken up by Books 1–5. Each book is preceded by an extensive 'premissa', which provides a summary, an elaborate analysis, text-critical notes, and specific bibliography; it is followed by a brief commentary (usually some 25 pages) dealing with the literary models and Lucan's innovations. The second volume, containing Books 6–10, ends with a full index with much information on *realia* of history, geography, and mythology.

V.'s attempt to provide a complete edition of Lucan is in itself a praiseworthy enterprise, and the various elements in the volumes are all of high quality. The text is sound, the prose translation is unpretentious and helpful, and the documentation is detailed and well-organized. Everything is based on modern scholarship and greatly facilitates access to this complex poem.

Nonetheless, on some points improvements do seem possible. V.'s Latin text is based on the edition of Shackleton Bailey (1988). Though most of the latter's unhappy choices are explicitly discarded, it would have been even better to have adopted the more reliable text of Badali (1992). The Italian translation is accurate, but the mass of clarifying phrases added between square brackets weary the reader's eyes on every page. In the bibliography, Italian contributions are somewhat favoured at the expense of English scholarship; for example, I found no reference to the studies of Masters (1992), Hardie (1993), and Martindale (1993), or the important translations of Widdows (1988) and Braund (1992). Finally, it would be more convenient if the ample introduction and commentary to each book were included in a separate, documentary volume. This would prevent users from constantly having to thumb through the book.

However, these critical remarks should not obscure the great merits of this edition. These two volumes are a good introduction to Lucan and a valuable tool for all those who wish to study his poem. V. deserves compliments for his great achievement. For a mere L. 44,000, this is as much Lucan as one could possibly get.

Nijmegen, The Netherlands

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