

here, he has quite legitimately gone to great lengths to document his lack of faith in the manuscript texts, and the resulting book is extremely useful. His *Companion* will join the ranks of existing indispensable commentaries. His text, I have to say, is more Heyworth than Propertius, and readers might be wise to stay with Fedeli's Teubner edition.

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Classical World 102.4 (2009)

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Oliver Taplin. *Pots and Plays: Interactions between Tragedy and Greek Vase-painting in the Fourth Century B.C.* Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2007. Pp. x, 309. \$75.00. ISBN 978-0-89236-807-5.

Taplin builds upon his earlier book, *Comic Angels* (1993), by focusing on representations of tragedy in South Italian vase-painting from the fourth century B.C. After a lengthy introduction he discusses 109 vases that "may be," "might be," "apparently," "just possibly," "evidently," "arguably," "plausibly," "possibly, but far from definitely" are "related to a tragedy." No vases are absolutely illustrations of specific Greek tragedies. In this respect Taplin reflects current scholarship that avoids the false precision of, for example, A. D. Trendall and T. B. L. Webster in *Illustrations of Greek Drama* (London, 1971). Yet Taplin is so deeply disturbed by this approach that he "adopt[s] a somewhat polemical tone against the 'new' orthodoxy" (271 n.110). The "somewhat" should be stricken from that sentence. The tone of the book is often snide and unpleasant. For example (9), "The evidence needs to be considered in some detail, especially since no less an authority than Luca Giuliani has expressed serious doubts, even going so far as to claim. . . ." Or (24) "It is noticeable that in their arguments, iconocentrists tend to seize on any discrepancy, however slight, to refute any claimed connection—they can, on occasion, 'out-pedant the pedants'." When really angry, he quotes without giving the original reference (16): "I have heard fourth-century Western Greek vase painting dismissed as 'spät und schlecht'."

Despite the fireworks Taplin does not offer any new substantive arguments to support his position, although he does add a discussion (37–41) of specific "signals," elements in scenes like a rocky arch or a pedagogue, that indicate, to him, a depiction of a tragedy. Instead of his "call for acquaintance" (*Comic Angels* [Oxford 1993], 22), he now proposes (25) that "The vases are not, then, according to my approach, 'banal illustrations' [no source cited by Taplin], nor are they dependent on or derived from the plays. They are *informed* [*sic*] by the plays; they mean more, and have more interest and depth, for someone who knows the play in question. That is the core of what I mean by calling a vase 'related to tragedy'." In short, the more you know the more you will appreciate the vase. No scholar denies this point. What the "iconocentrists" do believe, however, is that if you want to understand how South Italian artists constructed their scenes, then being "informed by the plays" does not help much. Instead we get an impoverished view of the artist who is deprived of any creativity. Yet, according to Pausanias (10.25–27), Polygnotos in his *Iliupersis* used five literary sources in addition to oral tradition ("the more popular account," 10.27.1) and, even more importantly, Polygnotos himself. (See my book, *The Parallel Worlds of Classical Art and Text* [Cambridge, 2003] 164–172.)

Taplin's discussion of the individual vases is traditionally organized by playwright and play. When he leaves polemic aside, his comments are useful and often perceptive. He was sadly done a disservice in that a large number

(over 15 percent) of the photographs are fuzzy. In some cases, Trendall and Webster have sharper photographs and, in any case, must still be consulted, since Taplin does not and did not intend to replace it. He has acquired some excellent color photographs of a number of both unpublished and recently discovered vases. One error needs to be corrected. Taplin (271 n.102) says that “Greek mirrors made expressly for the Etruscan public make a striking contrast—see [F.] de Angelis 2002.” As far as I know, no such Greek mirrors were produced. This article, “Specchi e miti. Sulla ricezione della mitologia greca in Etruria,” examines Greek myths on Etruscan mirrors. Moreover, Taplin cites only the subtitle for the journal and not its name, *Ostraka*; and the volume number is 11 not 15. Finally the publisher printed the bibliography in a minuscule type best read through a magnifying glass.

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Classical World 102.4 (2009)

Craig Kallendorf. *The Other Virgil: Pessimistic Readings of the Aeneid in Early Modern Culture*. Classical Presences. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. Pp. xiii, 252. \$90.00. ISBN 978-0-19-921236-1.

One of the ways opponents of the so-called “pessimistic” readers of Virgil’s *Aeneid* have sought to discredit them is through the charge of presentism. In this argument, interpreters who emphasize the poem’s “further voices” drown out Virgil’s own and foist a modern distrust of war and empire onto a staunchly pro-Augustan epic. As Craig Kallendorf demonstrates, however, any attempt to portray “pessimistic” responses to the *Aeneid* as strictly contemporary critical constructs finds itself belied by history. For throughout the early modern period, readers show themselves to be attuned to the attention Virgil gives to the human cost of the Roman mission, and to the ambivalence in his portrayal of Aeneas. This successful attempt at historicizing the Harvard School (to echo the title of one of Kallendorf’s articles; see p. x, n.8) breathes new life into the story of Virgil’s reception. Along the way, Kallendorf provides a model of how to avoid presentism while still applying current thinking to the past, as he turns to literary theory and cultural studies to illuminate themes that, he convincingly relates, lie within the early modern texts, and to deepen our understanding of how those works operated in their historical settings.

Along with a preface, introduction, and conclusion, *The Other Virgil* contains three sections, each of which contains three parts. The first section (17–66), “Marginalization,” centers upon Francesco Filelfo’s fifteenth-century *Sphortias*, written for Francesco Sforza. Kallendorf argues that we should not read this epic as a univocal panegyric of its namesake, but rather should recognize that it expresses reservations about the protagonist and his martial achievements, even as it also praises them. By imitating the *Aeneid*, Kallendorf continues, Filelfo gives a darker hue to Sforza’s ascent to power (see esp. 50–61). For Kallendorf, this stands as an instance where imitation reveals interpretation: Filelfo saw ambiguity in Virgil’s treatment of Aeneas and the Romans, and activated it in his own poem via intertextual borrowing. This stimulating reading is only one of several fine aspects of the section. Notable are Kallendorf’s survey of Renaissance approaches to the *Aeneid*, with an illuminating catalogue of “pessimistic” responses (30–50), and his strong Foucauldian analysis of the relationship between literature and power (63–66).

Section Two, “Colonization,” which treats how early modern poems “pick up on the colonial theme in the *Aeneid* . . . [and] on the complexities with which