NICHOLAS HORSFALL, *Fifty Years at the Sibyl's Heels: Selected Papers on Virgil and Rome,* Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2020, xvi+528 pp., $110.00, ISBN 978-0-19-88638-6.

This book is a posthumously published collection of 42 papers and chapters by the eminent Latinist and Romanist Nicholas Horsfall. A leading scholar in the field of Virgil, H. is well-known for having written five tremendously detailed commentaries on the *Aeneid,* as well as 145 papers relating to Latin and Roman studies and over 130 reviews, many which have had a vast impact on the field of Classics and its research. The selection in this book is chronologically arranged (except for the final paper "The poetics of toponymy" (2002), which was placed last), so as to provide the reader the opportunity to follow along the path of H.'s thought process over the almost fifty years he wrote for. The final selection was decided upon and edited by Ailsa Crofts, who also provided five English translations for the originally Italian papers "Camilla o i limiti dell invenzione" (1988), "I pantaloni di Cloreo" (1989), "*Barbara tegmina crurum*"(1989), "*Externi duces*" (1991), and "L'Eneide e le strutture sociali dell' Italia primitive" (1991). This effort was undertaken for one of the primary purposes of this publication: to gather H.'s most groundbreaking, game-changing and influential papers, many of which are considered classics in today's scholarly environment, and to make these more accessible to a wider audience by providing translations and easier access to various papers that were limited in availability. Papers range from subjects concerning Virgilian studies and Latin literature and authors, issues with Roman and Italian history, society, politics and culture, and the resulting selection is a stimulating one. Rather than summarizing every paper within their chronological order, I will discuss the various threads of interest that emerge from this publication and notable discourses resulting from them.

By far the most represented in this book are discussions of Virgil's use of sources and his creative process for writing the *Aeneid* in relation to existing Latin and Greek literary, mythological, and historical traditions (notably in "Some problems in the Aeneas-legend", 1979) with specific consideration of Greek models in "The prehistory of Latin poetry: some problems of method" (1994). The general discourse to be taken from the papers following the examination of the presence and influence of other sources on Virgil's plot and characters, is that Virgil seems rather unorthodox in his treatment of historical material in the service of

providing simplicity in place and time and consistency throughout the narrative of the *Aeneid* (e.g., 156-9). "Virgil and the conquest of chaos" (1981) demonstrates how this is the case for mythological material, and in "Virgil, history, and the Roman tradition" (1976) the process of interpreting historical material is taken further, with Virgil's epic material being privileged over historiographical material in favor of linking history to an Augustan present. I would have liked to see this last paper include more resistance to the pro-Augustan reading it is leaning into, but it is a useful paper nonetheless in that its analysis is remarkably thorough. Further papers also demonstrate H.'s habit of consistently identifying new areas to research, as he does in "Virgil and the poetry of explanations" (1991), which considers literature of prophecy and aetiological poetry as antecedents for the *Aeneid*, and "The *Aeneid* and the social structures of primitive Italy" (1990), which H. notes examines "virgin terrain" by looking at "extracting remains of indigenous erudite tradition on Italic constitutional antiquities" (303) through the works of Cato and Varro. Literary material is uncovered too, rather notably in one of H.'s earliest papers, "Dido in the light of history" (1973). Characterized by H.'s extraordinarily detailed approach, the paper examines and analyzes elements of Carthaginian cruelty and perfidy throughout sources discussing the Punic Wars and how these details are reproduced by Virgil in his character of Dido. This paper's close reading gives particular attention to possible influence of Naevius' Dido on Virgil's, which H. tentatively suggests to have been greater than previously thought. On the basis of this, H. shows Virgil's Dido to not have been written as the sympathetic character she is sometimes made out to be by Christian writers and does so with great attention to detail whilst also providing a vastly thorough overview of the history of the scholarship on the subject. Similarly thorough and strong analyses of sources are carried out in "*Turnus ad portas*" (1974), which convincingly demonstrates that allusions made by Virgil to passages describing Hannibal in historical accounts relate to Virgil's character of Turnus, and in the originally Italian "Camilla, or the limits of invention" (1988), which provides a more nuanced view regarding the character of Camilla and the elusive coexistence of invention and allusion to elements from epic and mythological material, historiography and antiquarian accounts. H. shows us that simplistic polarization between invention and allusion is to be avoided as he convincingly concludes that, based on the (limited) available evidence, the figure of Camilla is most probably a complex Virgilian invention, whose creation is indebted to a wide range of sources that provide (often mythological but also various historical and antiquarian) antecedents on which Virgil based his new character. And so, invented and traditional elements coexist in the figure of Camilla in such a seamless manner that the line between the two can

hardly be distinguished, leaving the ultimate answer to what is Virgilian invention and what is tradition validly unresolved. Important to note is that H. is not afraid to leave matters unresolved or take a more suggestive stance but instead provides bases and prompts for further research, as he does in "Virgil and the illusory footnote" (1990), which shows it can be fruitful to re-examine Virgil's ambiguity in mentioning "sources" (*fama, ut dicitur*) as it provides insight into questions of Virgilian invention (291).

The essays often examine questions of propaganda and politics in light of Rome's connection with Troy and pre-historic Italy, especially within the *Aeneid* and Aeneas' role in the process of becoming "Roman". Notable there, I found the refined yet short (in true Callimachean fashion) paper "*Externi duces*" (1991), which reconciles Aeneas' genealogy with his Trojan, Italian and eventual proto-Roman status, through a word study of the adjective *externus*. It shows how Virgil uses the word to both distance the Trojans from suspicion that they were oriental and effeminate, as well as their Italian homeland, as "true *externi*", in order to reconcile East and West (301). Across the essays discussing Roman propaganda and politics in light of the *Aeneid*, there seems to be a general idea of redemption for Trojan youth ("Numanus Remulus: Ethnography and propaganda in *Aeneid* 9.598ff." 1971), but on condition of maintaining and assimilating to Latin culture (in the delightfully insightful. "Chloreus' trousers" 1989). This, H. argues, is in service of the necessary *aition* for the presence of the Trojan *Penates* at Lavinium (281, "Aeneas the colonist" 1989), however, with some Graeco-Roman contempt for the East remaining still. H. also shows Virgil's treatment of contemporary issues through considerable allusions to civil discord as H. demonstrates in "The structure and purpose of Virgil's parade of heroes" (1982), whilst he presses for further research into contemporary allusions (170).

H.'s treatment of Roman society's relationship with literature and literacy was something I vastly enjoyed, providing necessary research as the basis for much of the later research done, discussing questions of literacy ("*The Uses of Literacy* and the *Cena Trimalchionis"* 1989), titulature ("Some problems of titulature in Roman literary history 1981), and understanding of Ancient Greek amongst Roman elites ("*Doctus sermones utriusque linguae?*" 1979), which are important questions to be asked when exploring issues of intertext or influence across Greek and Latin literature. "Rome without spectacles" (1995), a rather entertaining read, examines the use of *lectores* and *notarii* due to everyday ophthalmological issues and the need to multi-task amongst Roman elites. The employment of *lectores* and *notarii* made overlap between the contrasting concepts of *otium* and *negotium* possible; by performing duty-related activities through dictating one's thoughts to a

notarius and listening to readings by a *lector* during times set aside for *otium,* the line between *otium* and *negotium* was transgressed. Another important issue discussed was the extent to which the *Plebs Romana* had access to Latin literature ("The cultural horizons of the *Plebs Romana*" 1996), in which H. notes his delight at spurring possible further research in this field, which he does writing in the intimate style H. is known for. Notable mention must be made of "Cicero and poetry" (1993), which discusses Cicero's "sentimental objection to the *Noui*" (330) as a catalyst in his loss of interest in poetry, which was a refreshing addition to this collection.

Other essays, which could be placed under the yoke of a general theme of Latin literature and its problems produce papers such as "*Excudent alii*" (2011), and "*Barbara tegmina crurum*" (1989), discussing various aspects of Virgil's style and lexical agility, "Poets and poetry in Virgil's Underworld" (2013), treating the meta-poetical consideration of the poet, and "The *Moretum* decomposed" (2001), which in my opinion was the most charming and surprisingly humorous paper included.

The last field that emerges to be of particular interest for H. from this selection, has to be that of geography and its subdisciplines of topography and toponymy in Latin poetry, with the latter being an interest he notes has been in the making since 1967. Four papers on this have been included, "The Caudine Forks" (1982), "Illusion and reality in Latin topographical writing" (1985), "The geography of the *Georgics*" (1997) and lastly "The poetics of toponymy" (2002) at the very end of the collection. Their unity lies in H.'s suspicion of the epistemological foundations of Latin geographical and topographical writing (181), demonstrating through several close readings that topographical and toponymical imagery has often been taken from other, more dramatic literary treatments of geographical sites as opposed to agreeing with the actual physical terrain of the site in question. H.s passion and joy for his subject is tangible in these papers, characterized by personal anecdotes and an even more intimate style. The decision to put "The Poetics of Toponymy" last is a rather justifiable one, even though A. Crofts notes its reasons were "neither scholarly nor editorial, nor indeed rational" (vii), but the paper does everything it can to show its readers who H. was as a person and scholar and forms a fitting end to the chronological journey through H.'s scholarship.

The selection demonstrates H.'s academic interests well and constitutes a prime example of his continued ability to find new questions to be asked and tackling issues that lay at the basis of further scholarly work that has been and can be done, whilst remaining tentative in the most appropriate manner and places. H.'s style ranges between intimate and personal to more compressed at times, with the latter being more difficult to follow,

especially for a wider audience. The book can be particularly useful for graduate students in want of an accessible introduction to H.'s work as well as for those seeking a starting point from which to consolidate a strong basis for their understanding of existing Virgilian scholarship, as H. treats many key issues within the field and thoroughly traces the existing scholarship for the issues he discusses.

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