

detachment from negotiation and contestation, to be wholly unphilosophical; and the questions that are posed, explored, and sometimes played with in drama do not seem to be obsessively concerned with establishing philosophical authority. Billings maintains that ‘*enactment* is essential to drama’s method of investigating philosophical topics’ (8, my emphasis). I would make a simpler and less restrictive claim: enactment is essential to drama, whether or not the dramatic enactment involves an investigation of philosophical topics. Tragedy, satyr-drama, and comedy are essentially enactive and performative. By contrast, Billings’ ‘philosophical stage’ seems to withdraw into abstraction: ‘I *read* dramatic texts as enacting the process of *thinking*’ (12, my emphasis).

By contrast, then, let us remind ourselves of the look and sound and movement of drama in performance – taking, as an example, Rush Rehm’s admirable (and impeccably edited and produced) Bloomsbury Companion to Euripides’ *Electra*.⁷

Electra depends on a rich mixture of language – rhetorical, poetic, imagistic, descriptive, proverbial. Like all live theatre, Greek tragedy also had an essential *material* aspect: the physical space where the performance took place...; the setting for each tragedy; the actors whose costumes, gestures, and movement helped bring their characters to life; and the props they used to tell the story. (79)

That is drama.

And what, finally, of satyr-drama? The fourteen extant lines of the *Sisyphus* fragment occupy six pages of Billings’ attention: his interest lies entirely in the fragment’s putative philosophical content. The one satyr-play that survives intact is Euripides’ *Cyclops*: but Billings, seemingly indifferent to generic distinctions, places the *Cyclops* among ‘tragedies of escape’ (109). Fortunately, there is now a detailed, informative, and judicious edition and commentary, co-authored by Richard Hunter and Rebecca Laemmle, that I strongly recommend.⁸

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Latin Literature

The second volume of Harm Pinkster’s *Oxford Latin Syntax*¹ is a stunning achievement and an admirably thorough account of the Latin ‘complex sentence and discourse’. Far

⁷ *Euripides. Electra*. By Rush Rehm. Bloomsbury Companions to Greek and Roman Tragedy. London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. Pp. vi + 189. 5 b/w illustrations. Hardback £70, ISBN: 978-1-3500-9567-0; paperback £22.99, ISBN: 978-1-3501-9161-7.

⁸ *Euripides. Cyclops*. Edited by Richard Hunter and Rebecca Laemmle. Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020. Pp. xii + 268. 3 illustrations. Hardback £69.99, ISBN: 978-1-316-51051-3; paperback £22.99, ISBN: 978-1-108-39999-9.

¹ *The Oxford Latin Syntax. Volume II. The Complex Sentence and Discourse*. By Harm Pinkster. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2021. Pp. xxxii + 1438. Hardback £145, ISBN: 978-0-19-923056-3.

from restricting itself to classical prose, the work covers Latin texts from *c.* 200 BC to *c.* AD 450, in both poetry and prose. Overall, I was struck by the good balance that Pinkster maintains between presenting Latin syntax in a systematic and well-structured way and leaving enough room for the portrayal of the Latin language as a dynamic phenomenon, in which the frequency of and predilection for certain linguistic constructions keeps changing and the ‘correctness’ of certain expressions is a matter of time and context. Equally salutary are Pinkster’s reminders of the role that intonation must have played in the production and reception of Latin – and of what we lose by no longer having access to it. Throughout, Pinkster gives due consideration to the fact that it is often hard to securely classify a grammatical phenomenon, but that several analyses might be possible. Similarly, where appropriate, the importance of the larger interpretive context of a sentence for understanding and classifying its grammatical phenomena is acknowledged as well – which is a great achievement in a monumental work that quotes a wealth of examples from such a wide range of Latin texts.

The fact that the Latin examples are translated throughout, except for the sentences listed as ‘supplements’, makes the volume accessible. At times, Pinkster uses grammatical terms that readers might not be used to: for instance, ‘conjunction reduction’ for what is more commonly called ellipsis (585). However, these terms are usually well explained and make good sense, even if it might take a little while to get used to them. While I generally admired the clarity of Pinkster’s prose, I thought that some of the charts and figures that are included are not all equally helpful. For instance, it took me a while to figure out how to make sense of the ‘distribution of the conjunctive coordinators in a number of prose and poetry authors/texts by percentage’ (622), combining no less than thirteen authors in one figure, and I was a bit frustrated to learn from the text below that ‘the results are not entirely reliable’ anyway – maybe a more general prose summary of the main facts could have made things a bit easier.²

I very much enjoyed reading Gian Biagio Conte’s small (119-page) volume on Virgilian textual criticism and stylistic analysis.³ The book is a continuation of his *Critical Notes* on the text of the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid*,⁴ published in between his two Teubner editions of the *Aeneid* of 2009 and 2019. In this new volume, Conte presents three chapters on Heinsius, Christian Gottlob Heyne, and Ribbeck and Sabbadini as editors and critics of the Virgilian text. A recurring theme is the role of readings preserved in later (mostly Carolingian) manuscripts, as well as in the indirect tradition for the Virgilian text, but also the way in which the very different personalities of these critics influenced the style of their criticism. Following on from this, Conte presents a couple of cases where the more recent manuscripts preserve original readings. Another chapter is dedicated to four textual notes on the *Aeneid*, followed by an intriguing chapter on syntactic coordination as an – overlooked – feature of Virgil’s style, one that signals his ambition to become a new Homer, even while the

² A note might be added on the production of the volume: I was quite surprised to find that pp. 481–512 were missing from my copy, which instead contained pp. 513–44 twice. Certainly a disappointment with a book of this price.

³ *Virgilian Parerga. Textual Criticism and Stylistic Analysis*. By Gian Biagio Conte. Berlin, De Gruyter, 2021. Pp. vii + 128. Hardback £72.50, ISBN: 978-3-11-070395-5.

⁴ G. B. Conte, *Critical Notes on Virgil. Editing the Teubner Text of the ‘Georgics’ and the ‘Aeneid’* (Berlin, 2016).

internal form of his epic betrays poetic ideals that are very different from the Homeric ones. The concluding two chapters present an 'aporetic discussion' of *Aen.* 4.436, as well as of the very much discussed lines on the gates of sleep in *Aen.* 6.893–8. An interesting addendum traces the parallels between textual criticism and judicial procedures, such as the role of evidence and testimonies in establishing the truth. Conte's volume is a pleasure to read and very convincingly presents some of the key questions of textual criticism, the history of the discipline, and what is at stake in it. Aside from the undisputed relevance for specialists, any or all chapters of this volume will make for very good reading for students, who might yet need to be convinced of the relevance of textual criticism, which Conte so wonderfully brings to life.

Textual studies are also very much alive in Antonio Ramírez de Verger's impressive textual commentary on Book 6 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.⁵ This is the third instalment, after those on Book 13 by Luis Rivero and on Book 15 by Georg Luck,⁶ of what will become a full collection of textual commentaries on and a critical edition of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *opera minora* ('minor works'), a monumental undertaking of the Nicolaus Heinsius Research Group at the University of Huelva.⁷ In his introduction, Ramírez de Verger first presents a detailed overview of the editions of the *Metamorphoses*, from the first editions of the fifteenth century to the present day, and of their strengths and weaknesses. This is followed by a very thorough commentary on any textual issues, based on a reading of a substantial proportion of the manuscripts, as well as a study of the editions of the text. At times, I thought that the entries could be a bit more economical; I found a few bits of information without direct relation to the textual questions at hand and a few rather long quotations from ancient sources in the original, which could perhaps be shortened. But that is a minor quibble. In his discussion, which incorporates all of Heinsius' editorial notes, Ramírez de Verger often opts to keep the manuscript readings. Others might make other choices; but regardless of where one stands on these matters, Ramírez de Verger's volume will certainly become a key starting point for any close engagement with the text of *Metamorphoses* 6.

Franco Bellandi has written a very thorough commentary on Juvenal's ninth Satire.⁸ In the introduction as well as throughout the commentary, he pays close attention to the dialogical form of this satire – the only one by Juvenal that is completely written as a dialogue – and its ambiguities, the satire's structure, the persons involved, the theme of homosexuality, and the relationship between *Satire* 9 and *Satire* 2. Bellandi opens the introduction by stating that this satire has for a long time been excluded from editions and commentaries, due to the 'roughness' of its subject matter.⁹ He now sees the text facing a similar hesitation in the current climate – arising from

⁵ *Book VI of Ovid's Metamorphoses. A Textual Commentary.* By Antonio Ramírez de Verger. Sammlung Wissenschaftlicher Commentare. Berlin, De Gruyter 2021. Pp. viii + 415. Hardback £136.50, ISBN: 978-3-11-073082-1.

⁶ L. Rivero García, *Book XIII of Ovid's Metamorphoses. A Textual Commentary* (Berlin, 2017); G. Luck, *A Textual Commentary on Ovid, Metamorphoses, Book 15* (Huelva, 2017).

⁷ 'Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Research Project', <<http://www.uhu.es/proyectovidio/ing/index.html>>, accessed 9 October 2021.

⁸ *Giovenale, 'Satira' 9. Introduzione, testo, traduzione e commento.* By Franco Bellandi. Texte und Kommentare 67. Berlin, De Gruyter, 2021. Pp. x + 393. Hardback £100, ISBN: 978-3-11-072598-8.

⁹ 'Per la scabrosità dell'argomento' (1).

good intentions but no less distorting – of ‘political correctness’.¹⁰ In response to ‘politically correct’ readings that stress the ancient tolerance (at least before the third or fourth century AD) towards sexual deviance, Bellandi sees Juvenal in *Satire* 9 going against opinions prevalent at his time and condemning both the active and the passive partner in the homosexual relationship. He links this with a more general change in the attitude to sexuality after the reign of Hadrian, with an ever-increasing distrust of any ‘free’ forms of sexuality and a focus on married love and procreation. Bellandi offers a very rich commentary with detailed discussions of matters of textual criticism, style, intertextuality, Juvenal’s lexical and grammatical choices, and the social and cultural background of the ninth *Satire*. Well beyond what Courtney could offer in his ground-breaking commentary on all of Juvenal’s *Satires*,¹¹ Bellandi’s commentary greatly helps our understanding and appreciation of this text that has been unjustly neglected for too long.

Another commentary that I enjoyed is Thomas J. Keeline’s *Green & Yellow on Cicero’s Pro Milone*.¹² In the introduction, Keeline gives an admirably vivid account of the historical background of the case, which should make the study of this wonderful speech accessible to students who encounter it for the first time – but it is also a very nice read for more experienced Ciceronians. Throughout his commentary, Keeline is very good at elucidating Cicero’s argumentative strategies in the context of this case and the function of his sophisticated rhetorical tropes, which Keeline lays out well, along with the textual, grammatical, and linguistic features that require explanation. I was less sure whether a lengthy plea for the crucial importance of the learning of vocab before or when reading Cicero, under the heading of Cicero’s “‘Periodic’ Sentences”, is fully appropriate in the introduction to a commentary – although it is undoubtedly very good advice for students and will greatly contribute to their enjoyment of the text as they embark on studying the *Pro Milone* under Keeline’s expert guidance.

Another great commentary is that by John Briscoe and Simon Hornblower on Book 22 of Livy’s *Ab urbe condita*, the one that contains the narratives of the Roman defeats at Trasimene and Cannae.¹³ The commentary is a wonderful combination of the two authors’ profound expertise on the linguistic, literary, and historical aspects of Livy’s text. In particular, the very substantial introduction to the volume does more than just set the scene: it discusses the course of the war, Livy’s sources for this book, its structure and literary characteristics, the way that it reflects the Roman religion of the time, and the question of Roman politics, strategy, and the manpower involved in the war. The commentary itself is very thorough and helpful throughout. In their

¹⁰ ‘Oggi, dopo il tempo della censura e del silenzio, il pericolo che corrono testi come questo è diverso, pressoché opposto, quello di una differente manipolazione, magari ispirata a buoni sentimenti, ma non meno distorsiva: il nuovo rischio è quello dell’esegesi ligia ai canoni del “politically correct” (1).

¹¹ E. Courtney, *A Commentary on the Satires of Juvenal* (repr. Berkeley, CA, 2013).

¹² *Cicero. Pro Milone*. By Thomas J. Keeline. Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. xix + 381. Hardback £79.99, ISBN: 978-1-107-17973-8; paperback £24.99, ISBN: 978-1-316-63144-7.

¹³ *Livy, Ab urbe condita. Book XXII*. By John Briscoe and Simon Hornblower. Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020. Pp. xiii + 365. 4 maps. Hardback £74.99, ISBN: 978-1-108-48014-7; paperback £24.99, ISBN: 978-1-108-48014-7.

literary comments, Briscoe and Hornblower are often in dialogue with the analyses of Livy's Cannae narrative in a recent volume by van Gils, de Jong, and Kroon, but, in contrast to these, they emphasize the crucial importance of Livy's engagement with Polybius, which, as they convincingly show, should not be left out of sight.¹⁴

George Kazantzidis has written a fascinating book on 'the poetics of morbidity' in Lucretius' *De rerum natura*.¹⁵ Kazantzidis – successfully, to my mind – calls for a reconsideration of illness and disease in Lucretius' work: rather than as a problem to be solved, he argues, disease should be regarded as an integral element of Lucretian philosophy and poetics. In four chapters – two of which are based on material that the author has published previously¹⁶ – he discusses the productive side of illness as an architect, its connection with narrative unity and closure, the sublime dimension of disease (in particular of Lucretius' depiction of epilepsy in Books 3 and 6), and Lucretius' relationship with Callimachus and the sublime dimensions of the plague in Book 6. Kazantzidis offers a penetrating analysis of the Lucretian text, based on perceptive close readings and insightful analyses of Lucretius' intertextual relationship both with medical and philosophical texts and with the poetic tradition. I particularly enjoyed his discussion of illness in Lucretius as a creative force, which brings its own kind of order and design into a world otherwise governed by the random clashes of atoms, and which is conceptually aligned with the *clinamen* ('swerve'), as well as his analysis of the intertextual web of allusions that is created when Virgil and Ovid re-read Thucydides' account of the plague or Callimachus' Erysichthon from the *Hymn to Demeter* through the lens of Lucretius' own intertextual engagement with these texts.

Overall, however, my impression is that a bit more could have been done to integrate the four chapters into one coherent narrative that could raise even wider questions on the role of illness and disease in Lucretius and, potentially, in other authors as well (the conclusion to the volume only summarizes the main findings in an 'afterword' of one and a half pages – there could have been room for further reflection, based on Kazantzidis' excellent analysis of the text). In Chapter 3, Kazantzidis refers in passing to the work of Havi Carel on the phenomenology of illness, which suggests that illness should be approached as a process that radically modifies the ill person's body, values, and world, and which seems to offer several points of contact with the representation of illness in Lucretius.¹⁷ In the application of such insights to the text not only of Lucretius, but also to the representation of illness in other works of Latin poetry, there could be great potential for fruitful further research, for which Kazantzidis paves the way – research for which the label 'timely', unfortunately, has already become too much of a topos...

¹⁴ L. van Gils, I. de Jong, and C. Kroon, *Textual Strategies in Ancient War Narrative. Thermopylae, Cannae and beyond* (Leiden, 2019).

¹⁵ *Lucretius on Disease. The Poetics of Morbidity in 'De rerum natura'*. By George Kazantzidis. Trends in Classics Supplementary Volume 117. Berlin, De Gruyter, 2021. Pp. 211. Hardback £91, ISBN: 978-3-11-072265-9.

¹⁶ G. Kazantzidis, 'Disease, Closure and Lucretius' Sense of an Ending', in A. Michalopoulos, S. Papaioannou, and A. Zissos (eds.), *Dicite, Pierides. Classical Studies in Honour of Stratis Kyriakidis* (Newcastle, 2017), 138–69; G. Kazantzidis, 'Intratextuality and Closure: The End of Lucretius' *De rerum natura*', in S. Harrison, S. A. Frangoulidis, and T. D. Papanghelis (eds.), *Intratextuality and Latin Literature* (Berlin, 2018), 83–98.

¹⁷ H. Carel, *Phenomenology of Illness* (Oxford, 2016).

Sara Lindheim has written a thought-provoking book on *Latin Elegy and the Space of Empire*.¹⁸ She examines the use of space – in particular, of the space of Rome’s expanding empire – in Catullus, Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid. In the introduction as well as throughout the book, she includes some fine observations on maps as tools for conceptualizing space, with particular focus on Agrippa’s map of the Roman world – which Lindheim takes to be the first world map on public display in Rome. The second pillar of her argument, to which she frequently refers, is Jacques Lacan’s theories about the constitution of the subject, which seeks after a unified wholeness, but which is, in reality, inherently fractured, lacking, and unstable, just like the images and signifiers to which it clings in its search for this wholeness. Lindheim finds this same fractured sense of self in all of the poets under discussion in her book.

To my mind, her approach is most successful and yields the most novel results in her excellent first chapter on Catullus, in which she shows very well how the poet brings together – for instance, in the poems mentioning the death of his brother (poems 65, 68, 101) – places from Rome’s expanding territory, in close connection with issues of Rome’s collective and the poet’s personal identity. This chapter is also a very salutary reminder that Rome’s massive territorial expansion was not an exclusively Augustan phenomenon, but started earlier under Pompey and Caesar, and that the break between Republican and Augustan literature is less sharp than our rather strict categories of ‘Republican’ and ‘Augustan’ often lead us to assume. Lindheim’s discussion continues with chapters on Propertius’ Cynthia in 1.8a–b and 1.11–12, on Tibullus’ elegies, on Propertius’ *Elegies* 4.2–4.4, and on Ovid’s amatory and exilic poetry. Her focus on ‘roads’ (*viae*) in the poetry of Tibullus and on the motif of walls and boundaries in Propertius 4.2–4.4 work particularly nicely and guarantee the coherence of the chapters and of Lindheim’s always detailed and nuanced readings. The least surprising part of her book was the final section on Ovid’s exile poetry, where the sense of dislocation and of an unstable and fractured self is so much to the fore.¹⁹ Lindheim includes a discussion of the motif of language in Ovid’s exile poetry, which made me wonder whether Ovid’s conceit of the travelling book, which Lindheim does not discuss, might have made for an interesting conclusion to her discussion.²⁰ This would also have raised the question of how the map of the city of Rome, as sketched out in *Tristia* 3.1 in particular, would relate to the map of the empire that is so important to Lindheim’s approach.

Lindheim brings together her observations in a very clear conclusion. While I found myself agreeing with many of her results, this could have been an opportunity to reflect a bit more – and more explicitly – about the role of genre, which remains just below the

¹⁸ *Latin Elegy and the Space of Empire*. By Sara H. Lindheim. Oxford Studies in Classical Literature and Gender Theory. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2021. Pp. 256. Hardback £65, ISBN: 978-0-19-887144-6.

¹⁹ Perhaps some of Stephen Hinds’s excellent work on Ovid’s exile poetry, which Lindheim does not quote, could have enriched her discussion, such as S. Hinds, ‘Booking the Return Trip: Ovid and “Tristia” 1’, *PCPS* 31 (1985), 13–32; S. Hinds, ‘After Exile: Time and Teleology from *Metamorphoses* to *Ibis*’, in P. Hardie, A. Barchiesi, and S. Hinds (eds.), *Ovidian Transformation. Essays On Ovid’s Metamorphoses and Its Reception* (Cambridge, 1999), 48–67; or S. Hinds, ‘Dislocations of Ovidian Time’, in J. P. Schwindt (ed.), *La représentation du temps dans la poésie augustéenne. Zur Poetik der Zeit in augusteischer Dichtung* (Heidelberg, 2005), 203–30.

²⁰ See *Ov. Tr.* 1.1; 3.1; also *Pont.* 4.5.

surface throughout most of her discussion, and which is raised more explicitly when she concludes her book with a very short comparison of the elegies with Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and their 'unbounded narrative': which role do the genres of lyric and elegy play in this presentation of the poetic self, which Lindheim brings out so neatly, and its relationship with Rome's territorial expansion? What is it about these genres that invites the poets to present themselves as such fractured inhabitants of an ever-expanding empire? But leaving the reader to ponder such larger questions is certainly one of the hallmarks of a very stimulating scholarly work. Lindheim's book definitely falls into that category.

Ingrid Hesekamp tackles a very interesting topic: the picture of Africa created in Augustan poetry, that is, in Virgil's *Aeneid*, in Horace, and in Propertius.²¹ Rather than presenting her main thesis from the start, as is the standard in most English-speaking monographs, Hesekamp offers a commentary on key scenes and passages in which Africa is depicted in the text of her three authors. She works very thoroughly and makes many penetrating observations on the way in which the space of Africa – that is, for the purpose of this study, the area of the Roman province of Africa, excluding Egypt – is constructed in the texts, in particular the *Aeneid*, which takes up far more space in the monograph than the poetry of Horace and Propertius. Yet Hesekamp's study is out of touch with some of the recent advances that have been made in the construction of identity and foreign peoples in the *Aeneid*: I was surprised not to find a reference to, let alone engagement with, Elena Giusti's book on the construction of Carthage in the *Aeneid*, which would have been most relevant to Hesekamp's topic, or to the now substantial literature on the construction of ethnic identity, as, for example, in Joseph Reed's seminal monograph.²² While Hesekamp's focus is on the poetic construction of space, the complexities of identity construction would seem to be inseparable from the question of how Africa is presented in the three works under discussion. Hesekamp is also fairly uncritical of the *Aeneid*'s connection with praise of Augustus – again, some awareness of the long debate standing behind the epic's relationship with Virgil's Augustan present could have helped give more nuance to her discussion.

For Horace, Hesekamp is more interested in the overall picture of Africa that emerges from his poems than in what this might contribute to a new and deeper understanding of his poetry. As for Propertius, she herself admits that Africa only plays a marginal role in his poetry – somewhat curiously subsumed under 'lyric poetry', as opposed to epic, in the concluding discussion – so one could ask why his *Elegies* have been included at all. The book's overall conclusions did not strike me as particularly surprising: they are, roughly speaking, that Virgil constructs a full-blown picture of Africa that ultimately underlines the importance of Italy as Aeneas' goal; by contrast, Horace and Propertius refer to a couple of details that are known about Africa, with Horace using Africa as a paradigm of both Rome's rise and fall and in order to

²¹ *Das Bild von 'Africa' in der augusteischen Dichtung. Poetische Konstruktionen eines geographischen Raumes (Virgil, 'Aeneis' – Horaz – Propertius)*. By Ingrid Hesekamp. Göttinger Forum für Altertumswissenschaft, Beihefte 11. Berlin, De Gruyter, 2021. Pp. viii + 264. 2 b/w illustrations, 4 colour illustrations, 4 tables. Hardback £100, ISBN 978-3-11-073609-0.

²² E. Giusti, *Carthage in Virgil's Aeneid. Staging the Enemy Under Augustus* (Cambridge, 2018); J. D. Reed, *Virgil's Gaze. Nation and Poetry in the Aeneid* (Princeton, NJ, 2007).

underline his tenets of moral philosophy. The main strength of Hesekamp's work lies rather in the detailed and thoughtful comments on the texts themselves. The book still shows signs of what might be a virtue in a German PhD dissertation, but would have profited from more rigorous revision for the final publication, such as the explication of rather basic premises (e.g. the definition of lyric or epic poetry) and some rather long footnotes, one of them taking up two whole pages.²³ In these as well as in other respects, a more thorough revision as well as a stronger focus on the main argument(s) of the book would have been welcome.

Gregor Bitto and Bardo Maria Gauly have edited an intriguing volume on 'autofiction' in ancient literature;²⁴ for the purpose of this volume, that term covers the interplay of 'factual' (i.e. autobiographical) and 'fictional' elements in an author's self-representation. The contributions (somewhat puzzlingly, all by German authors) cover a wide range of authors and texts, from Callimachus to Hieronymus, via Ovid (who is the focus of three of the ten contributions), apologetic texts by Seneca, Pliny, and Apuleius, ancient historiography, Horace, Prudentius, and Philostratus. The book has one true virtue that collected volumes often lack: it is very consistent and admirably focused on the question of how the concept of autofiction can provide a productive new approach to the many complex instances of authorial self-fashioning in Greek and Latin literature. In particular, it becomes clear that the discipline of Classics has something very valuable to offer to the study of this literary concept: a nuanced attention to how intertextual relationships with the 'autofiction' of past authors contributes to the sophistication and complexity of 'autofictional' authorial self-fashioning.

That said, the volume misses the opportunity to make an even more fundamental contribution to the study of autofiction in ancient (and later) texts. In his introduction to the volume, Gregor Bitto, after giving a brief outline of the concept of autofiction and its ancient roots, states that it was expressly not the editors' intention to impose one specific understanding of autofiction on the contributors and to give them space to examine whether the concept is fruitful at all for their fields of study.²⁵ While this intention in itself can certainly be laudable in other contexts, in this case it means that most of the contributors begin by explaining, albeit briefly, the concept of autofiction as defined by Doubrovsky, Darrieussecq, and Zipfel, eventually starting, to my mind at least, from roughly the same understanding of the term.²⁶ A clearer conceptual guide from the editors could not only have avoided a good amount of repetition (which, to be sure, is less of an issue for readers who will consult the volume

²³ Note 316, on the identification of Atlas in *Aen.* 4.246–51, extends from p. 107 to 110.

²⁴ *Auf der Suche nach Autofiktion in der antiken Literatur*. Edited by Gregor Bitto and Bardo M. Gauly. Philologus Supplement 16. Berlin, De Gruyter, 2021. Pp. x + 246. 1 colour illustration. Hardback £100, ISBN 978-3-11-073903-9.

²⁵ 'Entsprechend den unterschiedlichen Begriffsentwicklungen von "Autofiktion" in der Diskussion der letzten Jahrzehnte ist es ausdrücklich nicht angestrebt worden, ein für alle Beiträge verbindliches Verständnis festzulegen, noch überhaupt die Applizierbarkeit unhinterfragt vorauszusetzen' (9).

²⁶ See, e.g., S. Doubrovsky, *Fils* (Paris, 1977); M. Darrieussecq, 'L'autofiction, un genre pas sérieux', *Poétique* 27 (1996), 367–80; F. Zipfel, 'Autofiktion: Zwischen den Grenzen von Faktualität, Fiktionalität und Literarität?', in S. Winko, F. Jannidis, and G. Lauer (eds.), *Grenzen der Literatur. Zu Begriff und Phänomen des Literarischen* (Berlin, 2009), 285–314.

only for individual contributions) but could also have allowed the contributors to take their observations even further and make the collection even more relevant for the study of autofiction in other literatures. The paper by Lisa Cordes, for instance, is based on a robust theoretical background, going back to the work of Fischer and Zipfel, which leaves open the intriguing possibility that no personal experience at all is reflected in a text posing as autofictional.²⁷ Similarly, Christopher Diez in his contribution very perceptively makes the point that, for an ancient audience of the author's contemporaries, the question of what was 'factual' and 'autobiographical' was much easier to decide than for modern readers. These observations would have merited more sustained attention throughout the volume. They could have served as a productive starting point for the contributions and opened up the door to more momentous advances in our theoretical understanding of autofiction, which, as the volume certainly succeeds in showing, offers a very rich potential for the study of ancient texts.

Ramunė Markevičiūtė und Bernd Roling have edited a fascinating collection on 'goals and strategies of imparting knowledge in early modern didactic poetry in Latin',²⁸ the product of a conference at the Freie Universität Berlin in early 2019. Markevičiūtė opens the volume with a very useful introduction, in which she retraces the position of didactic poetry in early modern discourse on how to present and communicate scientific knowledge. She concludes by postulating that, as long as didactic poetry is not brushed aside as 'premodern play', but its scientific approach is taken seriously, it creates a counter-argument to the 'bifurcation of science' and the humanities, which itself is only one of many possible ways of researching nature and organizing society.²⁹ The twelve contributions in this volume all take this credo seriously. Each one is dedicated to one or more didactic poems from, roughly, the fifteenth century to the eighteenth. Never even having heard of many of them before, I was intrigued to learn about didactic poems on the pagan gods, citrus fruits, alchemy, the cannon, tobacco, the representations of technological devices such as pumps in neo-Latin Jesuit didactic poetry, cider (in the only non-Latin poem to which a paper is dedicated in this collection), the human brain, and astronomy. Most of the papers start with a brief introduction of the authors in question and their contexts, which makes the volume a wonderful starting point for anyone who wants to delve deeper into early modern didactic poetry.

Even though I found hardly any explicit cross-references between the individual papers, the volume as a whole has a remarkable coherence, despite the vast differences between the didactic poems examined in the collection in terms of subject matter and time of publication. Almost all contributors pay very close attention to the form of the poems in question, to their position in the long history of the genre of didactic poetry,

²⁷ C. Fischer, *Der poetische Pakt. Rolle und Fiktion des poetischen Ich in der Liebeslyrik bei Ovid, Petrarca, Ronsard, Shakespeare und Baudelaire* (Heidelberg, 2007); Zipfel (n. 26).

²⁸ *Die Poesie der Dinge. Ziele und Strategien der Wissensvermittlung im lateinischen Lehrgedicht der Frühen Neuzeit*. Edited by Ramunė Markevičiūtė and Bernd Roling. Frühe Neuzeit 237. Berlin, de Gruyter, 2021. Pp. viii + 261. 2 b/w illustrations, 9 colour illustrations. Hardback £72.50, ISBN 978-3-11-072068-6. Available in open access via <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110722826>.

²⁹ 'Solange sie [i.e. die Poesie der Dinge] nicht als vormoderne Spielerei, als Zeugnis eines unterentwickelten Stadiums von Naturerkenntnis abgetan und in ihrem wissenschaftlichen Ansatz ernstgenommen wird, schafft sie einen Gegenentwurf zu der von Bifurkation geprägten Naturwissenschaft, die wir letztendlich als nur eines von vielen Konzepten anerkennen müssen, die Natur zu erforschen und Gesellschaft zu organisieren' (20).

and to the use of ancient, medieval, and Renaissance precedents – mostly from the didactic tradition in poetry and prose, but epic and epyllion play a role too – and of contemporary texts and discoveries, as well as to the ways in which scientific knowledge is presented and conceptualized. The only paper that I found to fit in less well with this overall focus on the development of the didactic genre was that by Juliane Küppers – though interesting in itself – on the three versions of the foreword to Newton’s *Principia*, which says more about the reception of Lucretius than early modern didactic poetry itself. Otherwise, themes that keep coming up throughout the volume are the role of myth and aetiology, of the panegyric of people and places, of allegory, personification, and anthropomorphism, and of the political influence of some of the didactic works, as well as the question to what extent the didactic poets impart true, practical knowledge to their audience. Several of the didactic poems examined here are firmly situated in the Jesuit tradition of labour and the use of the human intellect, and of the interweaving of science, erudition, and Latin philology *ad maiorem dei gloriam* (‘for the greater glory of God’).

Among the ancient models for these texts, Lucretius’ *De rerum natura* and Virgil’s *Georgics*, along with passages from epic texts and the tradition of ancient aetiological narrative, naturally feature quite heavily. Occasionally, however, I found myself wondering whether this range of texts could not have been extended a bit more. For example, Johanna Luggin, in her paper on Claude Griffet’s *Cerebrum* (‘Brain’), quotes a dialogue between the poet and Prometheus, in which the poet wants to ask very many questions, but is unable to choose which one to put to the titan, only to find in the end that Prometheus has already vanished into thin air (lines 82–6, 102–4, quoted on 198). To me, this seems to owe much to the witty and, at times, insecure didactic persona of Ovid’s *Fasti* and his dialogues with his divine interlocutors.³⁰ So, texts like the *Fasti* would seem to merit a more influential position in the didactic tradition than is currently granted to them, at least in some of the papers. Given that many of the texts treated in this volume have not yet attracted much scholarly attention, it is regrettable that it does not have a conclusion, which would draw together the main themes shared by so many of the papers and sketch out avenues for further research. Even so, the collection is a wonderful read for anyone interested in the didactic tradition and wanting to learn more about (and perhaps find a research topic on) its very rich and vibrant life in neo-Latin literature.

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³⁰ On which see, e.g., J. F. Miller, ‘Ovid’s Divine Interlocutors in the *Fasti*’, in C. Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History III* (Brussels, 1983), 156–92.