

J. B. HALL – A. L. RITCHIE – M. J. EDWARDS (ed.), *P. Papinius Statius. Thebaid and Achilleid. Volume I. Text and Critical Apparatus*. Edited by J. B. Hall, in collaboration with A. L. Ritchie and M. J. Edwards, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007, pp. xxxviii + 441, ISBN 9781847183538.

J. B. HALL – A. L. RITCHIE – M. J. EDWARDS (ed.), *P. Papinius Statius. Thebaid and Achilleid. Volume II*. Translated by A. L. Ritchie and J. B. Hall in collaboration with M. J. Edwards, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007, pp. viii + 292, ISBN 9781847183535.

J. B. HALL – A. L. RITCHIE – M. J. EDWARDS (ed.), *P. Papinius Statius. Thebaid and Achilleid. Volume III*. Discussion and secondary apparatus by J. B. Hall, in collaboration with A. L. Ritchie and M. J. Edwards, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008, pp. 774, ISBN 9781847184900.

This is an enormous undertaking which should not pass us by. A new text of Statius' *Thebaid* and *Achilleid*, a new translation of that text, and a huge resource on their manuscript tradition and reception history: despite idiosyncracies, there is a huge amount of extremely valuable material. Barrie Hall is Emeritus Professor of Latin at the University of London, and has published editions of Ovid *Tristia* and Claudian *Carmina* in the Teubner series. A. L. Ritchie is a freelance copy-editor, while M. J. Edwards will be best known of the three and is currently Professor of Classics at Queen Mary University of London and Director of the Institute of Classical studies. Teachers and students of Statius should beware: this is by no means an orthodox text; as in Shackleton Bailey's Loeb it has a high proportion of conjectures printed in the text (see Paolo Asso's review in *BMCR* 2004.11.02). Unlike Shackleton Bailey's Loeb it will not be easily available, or used uncritically as a standby. The advantage of being published in such a way is that it will only accrue authority from the positive endorsement of a community of readers, and secondly, the third volume in particular offers such a wealth of evidence that we might feel encouraged to join in the debate, to produce, as it were, a do-it-yourself Statius. I should confess at this point that I am not a textual critic, but rather a reader of Statius, and my aim in this review is to assess what sort of Statius Hall, Ritchie and Edwards present us with, and what difference this text might make to our readings of the *Thebaid* and *Achilleid*. I will not attempt to duplicate Valéry Berlicourt's excellent review (*BMCR* 2010.04.10), which goes into a great deal of detail, especially on volume III.

The first volume contains a new text of the *Thebaid* and *Achilleid*, along with a clear apparatus criticus, a concise introduction, a bibliography of works dealing with textual matters, a conspectus siglorum and an index of names. The

second volume is a translation of the *Thebaid* and *Achilleid* aimed at showing how the editors understand the text they have printed, while remaining readable and contemporary. In volume three there is a detailed list of manuscripts and critical discussion of previous editions and interventions; an orthographical index, and a secondary apparatus.

Hall has examined many witnesses for the textual tradition (about ninety for the *Thebaid* and fifty for the *Achilleid*) and displays here the fruits of decades of work. He concludes that the tradition is still highly corrupt, and that intervention is needed to reach ‘the author’ (vii). In particular, he argues that P(uteaneus), which was treated with reverence by many earlier editors, is not as sacrosanct as scholars such as Klotz and Vollmer believed. He also argues that  $\omega$  is not a useful category, because he does not see the other manuscripts as closely related, and denies that there is a bipartite tradition, at least for the *Thebaid*: the manuscripts relate to each other in complex ways, and it is not easy to say which is likely to be right. He therefore includes no stemma because he does not believe it is achievable to produce one. Hall’s arguments and the data that he presents in the third volume seem to me to present a strong case, and any reassessments of the textual tradition of the epics of Statius will need to take this book (and its substantial offerings of evidence) into account.

This approach has clearly affected the practice of editing the text. Since P is less highly valued, and the possibility of returning to an archetype closer to the original has been abandoned, the importance of conjecture is greatly enhanced. In the introduction to volume 1, Hall et al. state that they are ‘not content with a *pis aller*. Statius was a popular author who wrote to be understood on a first hearing; and the endless scrabbling with more or less unsatisfactory manuscript readings in an obstinate desire to squeeze some sense out of them is in our view a futile exercise.’ (vii–viii) I am anxious that this emphasis on Statius as popular and readable will tend to encourage a flattening out of the complexities and difficulties of Statius’ writing: I do not believe that it is necessary to be simple in order to be popular, especially not if you are writing Latin poetry.

I have, therefore, looked at the text of the games in book six, the part of the poem with which I am most familiar, to gain a sense of how they approach Statius. I looked at all the places where Hall has printed his conjectures in the text, especially where the apparatus showed only Hall’s conjecture in opposition to the manuscripts consulted (*Hall v. codd.*). There were some notable improvements on Donald Hill’s 1983 Leiden text: I especially liked 358, where Hall’s substitution of *deum qui* for *deum nam* effectively and elegantly connects the line with the previous line, where Housman had felt there was a lacuna. But I had no sense of how *qui* might have become *nam*: the concision of the apparatus has perhaps been taken too far. Hill’s apparatus often presented more of the information and argument. The disadvantage of relying on a translation to convey readings of the Latin is that it does not allow the opportunity for argument and explanation, as, for instance, might have been possible in a commentary. The secondary apparatus gives more information on the MS readings, but little connected argument. The conjecture of *iure* at 334 makes for plausible sense. *tueri* in 689

also seems to me to be a credible solution to a genuine problem. Often, however, I am not sure what is to be gained from the conjecture over the manuscript tradition. For instance, at 303 Hill prints *laesisse* while Hall goes for the much more anodyne *flexisse*: the MSS give us Neptune the father of Arion training him in a rather brutal way, while Hall's version removes that brutality. However, Hall's repunctuation, removing Hill's semi-colon after *pater*, is attractive, and I agree with Berlincourt that the blank slate policy taken towards punctuation has clearly been productive and effective. At 417, Hall prints *replicantur* rather than *duplicantur*, creating an antithesis that had not been there before (although ironically it is there in Joyce's translation already) between riders first bending forwards and then backwards. This is suitably Statian: but it loses the sense of doubling, which is equally, if not more, importantly Statian. At 603 Hall replaces the rather anodyne *horridus*, describing Idas as he pursues Parthenopaeus, with the much more telling *inuidus*. *Horridus* here does feel rather like padding, but where do we draw the line between making the poem intelligible and improving on it? The game starts to feel a little like contributing to an online poetry forum. Are we getting to what the author wrote, or what we might have liked him to write? At 779 Hall emends away two of a sequence of five verbs (*leuat* becomes *laeua* and *minatur* becomes *minatus*) which seem to me important in building the pace of the boxing match at this point. Another example of this 'flattening' is the change of *non sic* at 864 to *sic sibi*, turning a typically Statian negative comparison, into a more normal simile. Even more extreme is the change of *Thebarum* at 922, where Polynices is declared victor 'of Thebes', and the text itself remarks on this extraordinarily hubristic ill omen, into *turmarum*, making him only victor 'of the troops'. Of course he cannot yet be victor of Thebes, but the transgressive nature of the declaration is important. For me, then, the popular Statius is less attractive: I would be slightly less inclined to run to a recitation of this text. But to what extent is my response conditioned by years of familiarity with Hill's text? Time will tell.

Ritchie's translation enters a now almost crowded field: as well as Shackleton Bailey's Loeb translation of 2003, there are also those of Jane Wilson Joyce (Cornell: Ithaca, 2008) and Charles Stanley Ross (Johns Hopkins: Baltimore, 2004). Ritchie's translation is a translation of Hall's text; to use it, you must first embrace the text. It is certainly clear, and mostly avoids the archaisms which marred Mozley's old Loeb, and often persist in Shackleton Bailey's version. It is, however, a plain, prose translation, and it sometimes suffers from a slight clumsiness in the desire to convey the sense as accurately as possible. It is also rather more wordy than Shackleton Bailey, or indeed Ross. Joyce is the most readable of the four, although her translation choices do not always hit the mark, and her typographical manipulations can be distracting rather than helpful.

Here is an example from book six:

emissos uidere atque agnouere Pelasgi.  
et iam rapti oculis iam caeco puluere mixti  
una in nube latent, uultusque umbrante tumultu

uix inter sese clamore et nomine noscunt.  
euoluere globum et spatio quo quisque ualebat  
diducti – delet sulcos iterata priores  
orbita – nunc auidi prono iuga pectore tangunt  
nunc pugnante genu et pressis replicantur habenis. (6.410-7 Hall)

As they shot out the Pelasgians watched and recognised them, and already they were swept out of sight, and already confused in the blinding dust they are hidden in a single cloud, and with their faces obscured in the press they can barely identify one another by shouting out their names. They emerged from the cluster and, drawing clear by such a margin as each was able to achieve – the succession of wheels obliterates the previous ruts – in their eagerness they now bend forwards and touch the yoke-pole, now with knees braced lean backwards, tugging at the reins. (Ritchie)

The Pelasgi saw them as they shot out and recognized; and already, snatched from vision and mingled in blinding dust, they are hidden in a single cloud and as confusion obscures their faces they barely know each other by shout of names. They unroll the pack, separated by intervals matching the strength of each. A second track deletes the previous furrows. Now eagerly they touch the yoke with sloping chests, now they bend double with striving knees and hard-drawn reins. (Shackleton Bailey)

The Grecians watched them start but soon lost sight  
of separate horses in the blinding dust.  
A single cloud obscured them, one so dark  
they scarcely saw or heard each other's cries.  
Then the pack thinned. The chariots formed lines.  
The second circuit smoothed out former furrows.  
The eager drivers leaned and touched their yokes,  
flexed with their knees, and doubled tight-held reins. (Ross)  
Pelasgi watched, scanning the course, as the teams hurtled past:  
now they were out of sight, now swathed in blinding dust, screened  
by a single cloud; faces blurred in confusion, drivers  
barely recognized one another by shout, by name. Some,  
bowling clear of the bunch, strung out along the rail, each  
placed according to strength.

The second lap wiped out ruts  
left by the first. Keen men now leaned forward, chests grazing  
the yokes, now arched backwards, knees braced, reins hauled in  
tight. (Joyce)

Ritchie makes the best attempt at conveying the word order here, with 'as they shot out' bringing out the emphasis on the chariots, even if putting the Pelasgi at the end would be a step too far. Ritchie definitely takes more words

than the concise Shackleton Bailey, perhaps over-explaining *clamore et nomine noscunt* and *spatio quo quisque ualebat*. However, Ritchie introduces a new interpretation of *delet sulcos iterata priores orbita*, not as a second lap, but sets of wheels running in each other's tracks and erasing them. The use of the word yoke-pole is symptomatic of a desire to be specific and detailed. Shackleton Bailey comes out well here, with vigour, concision and pace, while Ross loses too much in his effort to be clear: not just the reference to the *Pelasgi*, but also any sense of how and why the chariots 'formed lines'. Joyce's line 410 goes a long way from the Latin, losing the sense of the chariots starting (hurtling out, perhaps, rather than past), and introducing a new and anachronistic metaphor with *screened*. However it is definitely the most poetic of the two verse translations, with strong use of internal rhyme and alliteration. Ritchie's translation, then, is an important companion to the text, offering new interpretations, but is unlikely to work well on its own. Despite its flaws, Joyce's translation may be the best choice if one were to teach Statius *Thebaid* in translation.

This is unlikely to become the standard text of the *Thebaid*, which in my opinion will remain Hill. Although Hall et al.'s interventions do provide some advances, there are too many problems. Perhaps what it really demonstrates is the need for a new OCT of the *Thebaid* and *Achilleid*. This is an extremely well-produced book, for which the authors must be congratulated. I spotted no errors, and it is clearly laid out and well organised. It is also modestly priced compared to Brill, although more expensive than Shackleton Bailey's equally conjectural Loeb. Volume III in particular is a treasure trove of fascinating material, and any lover of Statius will find much to enjoy in these volumes. These volumes would also make fantastic material for a graduate class in textual criticism.

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