

Alessia Ferreccio: *Commento al Libro II dei Posthomericæ di Quinto Smirneo*. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura 2014 (Collana Pleiadi 18). xxxviii, 426 pp. EUR 58.00. ISBN 9788863727173.

Ferreccio's commentary on Book 2 of the *Posthomericæ* is a valuable addition to modern scholarship on Quintus Smyrnaeus. It takes its place in the – to date far from complete – list of commentaries to individual books of the epic, which have been published or at least prepared from the second half of the 20th century onward. Hence, Ferreccio's work on Book 2 forms a necessary contribution to the published commentaries of Bär 2009 (Book 1, verses 1–219), James and Lee 2000 (Book 5) and Campbell 1981 (Book 12), and the thus far unpublished dissertations of Ozbek 2008 (Book 9), Tsomis 2012 (Book 10) and Carvounis 2005 (parts of Book 14). Even so, about half of the books of the *Posthomericæ* still lack a proper commentary, which marks an important flaw in Quintus research: its fragmentation. Besides the notes to the edition of Vian 1963 and to the translations of James 2004, Toledano Vargas 2004, Gärtner 2010 and Lelli (ed.) 2012, no commentary on the entire epic has been published in the last century. Ferreccio makes adequate attempts to answer to this lacuna in her treatment of Book 2. The elaboration of intra-textual references she cites, however, cannot go into enough depth to do honour to the place of Book 2 within the larger picture of the epic, as will be shown below.

The brief introduction to the commentary starts with a selected bibliography, aptly outlining the new research interest in the *Posthomericæ* since Vian 1963. Ferreccio embraces the most recent turn in Quintus scholarship initiated by Bär 2009 and Maciver 2012 and understands the *Posthomericæ* as a sophisticated reworking of Homer that is both accessible to a broad public and challenging for a more learned audience (p. xvi–xvii, xxxi). This perspective is the dominant source of inspiration throughout her commentary, which is presented as a mainly linguistic and stylistic study with a particular focus on *imitatio Homeri* (p. xvii). The rest of the introduction is devoted to a brief discussion of four foci in Ferreccio's research – two narrative and two stylistic aspects. First, she mentions the imitation of scenes and gives a short overview of examples relevant to Book 2 (p. xviii). Next, she makes some excellent comments on the characterization of Memnon and Antilochus and their relation to the Homeric characters Hector and Patroclus. She will come back to this important intertextual parallel on several occasions in her notes to the text (after p. xviii–xxi, see e.g. also p. 140, 210). Although she thus provides additional and convincing proof for this theory, her commentary lacks sufficient cross references to shape them into a coherent argument. Hence, the reader may miss important clues, unless (s)he knows where to look. As a third focus, and the first on a stylistic level, Ferreccio discusses Quintus' refined use of Homeric *iuncturae*, of which she provides an extended

list (p. xxi–xxiv). Finally, she stresses Quintus’ excellent grasp of the Homeric epithetic system by giving a detailed overview of his specific adaptations (p. xxiv–xxvii). Attached are four tables that support her argument, containing lists of Quintus’ ‘Lieblingswörter’ (p. xxxii–xxxiii, inspired by Bär 2009) and of Homeric hapax legomena (p. xxxiii–xxxiv), Quintian hapax legomena (p. xxxiv–xxxvi) and dis legomena in Book 2 (p. xxxvi–xxxvii). All in all, the introduction provides stimulating thoughts on Quintus’ narrative style. A few other matters, however, remain understudied: squeezed together in footnote 3 (p. xiii–xiv) are lists of references to studies that do address the issue of Quintus’ uncertain identity and problematic dating, and his possible use of Latin, Hellenistic and Epic Cyclic sources, but the author does not take a stand in these complex discussions herself. Particularly the latter matter deserves more detailed attention, given the fact that the commentary repeatedly refers back to these possibly problematic sources (e.g. on the origin of the name ‘Memnon’, p. 43). Generally, Ferreccio’s narrative analysis seems to consider Book 2 more in isolation than in relation to the other books in the Posthomerica, as can be seen in her discussion of the general theme of Book 2 (p. xxvii–xxx). She aptly outlines the pathetic motif of the “grief of a mother for the loss of her son”, underlines the importance of Eos’ character and her rivalry with Thetis and relates both aspects to the battlefield scenes of Memnon and Antilochus. This discussion, however, does not take into account the place of Book 2 within the totality of the Posthomerica, which would put the story of Memnon and his heroic encounters on the battlefield in a quite different perspective. In particular, further elaboration on the parallelism between Books 1 and 2 would be in place. At the end of this introduction, the reader has a clear impression of Ferreccio’s approach, but still is in the dark about some of the important issues the commentary will obliquely broach en cours de route.

Ferreccio relies on Vian’s 1963 text edition, still the most established Quintus edition available, which she cites without added comments or apparatus criticus (p. 3–20) and with but three proposed corrections (p. xxxi).

A detailed commentary on Book 2 forms the core of the work (p. 21–328). Each section starts with an Italian translation of the Greek passage that will be discussed. This serves as a useful introduction, but unfortunately shatters the translation into pieces of, on average, 10 to 20 verses long, which are hardly traceable without a table of contents. The translation in free verses stays close to the Greek text and counts exactly as many verses. The detailed verse to verse comments have a strong linguistic focus. Ferreccio is very thorough (see e.g. her list of iterative verbs in footnote 148, p. 109–110) and pays ample attention to (Homeric) intertextuality and occurrences elsewhere in the Posthomerica. This sometimes leads to more text-interpretative conclusions or

general observations about the narrative composition of Book 2. On p. 70–73, for example, she discusses the parallels between Memnon’s arrival in Troy and a similar scene about the Amazon queen Penthesilea in Posthomerica 1. The comparison she conducts here indicates just how well Book 2 fits in with the rest of the epic. Therefore, it would have been useful to anticipate to this relationship in the general introduction. Ferreccio mainly focusses on the obvious parallels between Penthesilea and Memnon, but could have gone deeper into the more subtle differences between both characters: on page 72, she does not observe the considerable differences between the battle aristeia of both heroes; on p. 71 and 76, a reference to Priam’s second thoughts during the arrival of Penthesilea, which clearly contrast with his present hopes, would be in place; p. 96 would particularly benefit from a more thorough study of the contrasts between both heroes concerning their (un)moderate behaviour (now only briefly mentioned on p. 72). On the other hand, Ferreccio makes interesting comparative studies of the imagery used for Penthesilea and Memnon (p. 72) and successfully points out the Homeric inspiration of several Quintian similes. She provides a rich analysis of the use of sun and light images for the characterization of Achilles, their intertextuality with the Iliad and the similar representation of his son Neoptolemus further on in the Posthomerica (p. 121–123). On other occasions, however, this intra-textual relationship could have been taken further, such as in her rather superficial discussion of the simile of the earthquake and its iconic counterpart in book 3 (p. 137). The commentary is sufficiently annotated and derives its main inspiration from Vian 1963 (text edition and narrative coherence), Bär 2009 (literary style and Homeric reworking) and Gotia (light imagery and pathos in the narrative), but seems to rely less on James’ 2004 literary comments. In all, Ferreccio provides a thorough study of Book 2, with attention to linguistic, intertextual and – to a lesser extent – narrative literary aspects. The absence of cross references, however, makes some of her arguments hard to follow, which does not give them the credit they deserve. The dense layout adds to this problem. The only clearly distinguishable indications to guide the reader through the different sections of the commentary are the subtitles to each passage, which in themselves do not really catch the eye. The addition of a more detailed table of contents would have made the work more searchable. At present, the reader must leaf through the book without so much as the help of markings in the margin or bold fonts for emphasis. A subdivision of the text in larger thematic entities (such as ‘assembly’, ‘arrival’, ‘banquet’, ‘battle’ and ‘mourning’) would have been helpful to add structure to the commentary.

The extended bibliography (p. 329–365) is conveniently arranged in four parts: the first on editions, translations and commentaries, the second on other studies, the third on lexica and concordances and the fourth on grammars and dictionaries. The first three have a separate section on Quintus, which gives a

suitable and up to date overview of the research conducted about the main author, including several unpublished DPhil and PhD dissertations and an occasional MA thesis. Some bibliographical references show flaws (e.g. p. 347: de Wit 1951 is a thesis from Leuven).

An index of cited passages (p. 367–414) concludes the commentary. Additional indices on personal names, terminology and Greek terms would have made the work more user-friendly. At present, it is particularly difficult to find full references to, for example, the main character of Book 2 or to Memnon's counterpart in Book 1: Penthesilea now surprisingly appears on p. 37, where she is first mentioned in the Greek text.

In general, Ferreccio's work provides a meritorious addition to Quintus research, which combines rich linguistic studies with relevant – though more superficial – observations on a literary level. Such literary analyses regrettably risk to get lost in the rather obscure layout and book division. Ferreccio relies on excellent studies of the past and, rather than taking a stand in these matters herself, applies them to Book 2 on a very detailed level, which leads to refreshing observations about the individuality of this book. Even if its relation to the rest of the epic could have been further elaborated, the commentary provides a creditable example of close reading and is an ideal tool for further research on *Posthomerica* 2.

Cited studies

Bär, S. 2009. *Quintus Smyrnaeus "Posthomerica" 1, Die Wiedergeburt des Epos aus dem Geiste der Amazonomachie. Mit einem Kommentar zu den Versen 1–219.* Göttingen.

Campbell, M. 1981. *A commentary of Quintus Smyrnaeus Posthomerica XII.* Leiden.

Carvounis, A. 2005. *Transformations of epic: reading Quintus of Smyrna, Posthomerica XIV.* DPhil Oxford.

Gärtner, U. 2010. *Quintus von Smyrna. Der Untergang Trojas: Griechisch und deutsch.* 2 vols. Darmstadt.

Gotia, A. 2009. *Lumineux-obscur et couleurs chez Quintus de Smyrne et ses modèles,* Târgu Lăpuș.

James, A. 2004. *Quintus of Smyrna, The Trojan Epic, Posthomerica.* Trans. and ed. by A. James, Baltimore.

James, A., Lee, K. H. 2000. *A commentary on Quintus of Smyrna, Posthomerica V.* Leiden.

Lelli, E. (ed.). 2013. *Quinto di Smirne. Il seguito dell'Iliade,* Milano.

Maciver, C. A. 2012. *Quintus Smyrnaeus' "Posthomerica". Engaging Homer in late Antiquity.* Leiden.

Ozbek, L. 2008. *A Commentary on Quintus Smyrnaeus, Posthomerica 9.* PhD Pisa.

Toledano Vargas, M. 2004. Quinto de Esmirne, Posthoméricas, introducción, traducción y notas. Madrid.

Tsomis, G. P. 2012. Originalität und Rezeption im zehnten Buch der Posthomerica. Habil. Diss. Frankfurt am Main.

Vian, F. [1963–1969] 2003. Quintus de Smyrne, La suite d'Homère, Tomes I–III (texte établi et traduit par F. Vian). Paris.

Tine Scheijnen, Gent
Tine.Scheijnen@UGent.be

[Inhalt Plekos 17,2015 HTML](#) [Startseite Plekos](#)
