

GERHARD BINDER, *P. Vergilius Maro: Aeneis. Ein Kommentar* Band 1: Einleitung, Zentrale Themen, Literatur, Indices, BAC (Bochumer Altertumswissenschaftliches Colloquium), 104, Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2019. 430 pp., €49,50, ISBN 978-3-86821-784-1.

*P. Vergilius Maro: Aeneis. Ein Kommentar* Band 2: Kommentar zu Aeneis 1-6. BAC (Bochumer Altertumswissenschaftliches Colloquium), 105, Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2019, 648 pp., €69,50, ISBN 978-3-868201-785-8.

*P. Vergilius Maro: Aeneis. Ein Kommentar* Band 3: Kommentar zu Aeneis 7-12. BAC (Bochumer Altertumswissenschaftliches Colloquium), 106, Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2019, 682 pp., €72,50, ISBN 978-3-86821-786-5

Gerhard Binder (G.B. or B. in the sequel) is today the German-speaking world's learned 'Altmeister' of Vergilian scholarship. He stepped visibly forward already in 1968 with his "Habilitation" *Aeneas und Augustus*, a virtual commentary on the Eighth Book (ahead of P.T. Eden 1975 and C.J. Fordyce 1977). The book was not least valuable by embedding Vergil in his political context. In B.'s editorial enterprise *Saeculum Augustum*, a couple of decades later, his own paper on aetiology in the Aeneid was particularly valuable. In the course of the nineties and the early years of our century G.B. and his wife Edith created a very special bilingual 'Taschenausgabe' (literally 'a pocket edition') of the Aeneid. It was commissioned to them by Reclam's long-standing "Universal-Bibliothek". The edition was issued as unassuming volumes, orange in colour, between 1994 and 2005. It should not be forgotten in this connection that the renaissance of classical literature in the German public was once due to Reclam's mass-produced translations to no small degree.

This "Binder I", as I prefer to name it here, is rather exceptional in its format. Its volumes contain three equally important parts: 1) an *independent* scholarly evaluation of Vergil's text, 2) a painstakingly reliable and readable prose translation, followed by 3) a professional apparatus leaving little to be desired in the way of a purely scholarly edition. As could be expected, regrettably though, this highly affordable and competent undertaking has had little impact in the English-speaking world, at least as far as I know.

"Binder I", except for its commentary, was reissued by Reclam in 2008 as a stylish hardback in one volume. This edition had larger format and clearer font, in short it was a very competitive bilingual edition in the market even outside the German-speaking realm. This single volume, "Binder II", repeats the text of "Binder I", but has nonetheless an appendix, 139 pages long, containing the former edition's list of departures from Mynors' text (1969), half of which

departures concerns “Absätze”, i.e. where to start a new passage by means of indentation and capital letter. “Binder II” has also an index of the epic’s names, a series of exquisite maps and a very interesting genealogical design. None of these latter accessories was strictly speaking new in relation to “Binder I”.

What motivated the deserving emeritus professor to follow up “Binder I and II” and undertake such an immense “maius opus”? I can only guess. Undoubtedly it is much more to it than the success of a married couple’s translation: “Diese Übersetzung ... ermutigte mich, den übersetzten Text auch mit einem Kommentar auszustatten.” (Vorwort, K I, p. 6).

First I need to introduce some relevant abbreviations for my review: K (I, II, III) stands for “Kommentar (1,2,3)”, (→)Z = “Zentralthema” (from 1 to 60), V = “Versgruppe” (from 1 to 446). With a view not least to *Exemplaria Classica’s* philological angle, my interest and remarks will be somewhat unevenly apportioned in the following.

As the entire K is without text and translation “Binder II” is definitely the best edition to supply one’s needs when reading or consulting K. The recommended editions of Mynors and Conte (cf. K I, p. 7) are insufficient in providing only the Latin text. It will soon become clear that even the most competent will need the translation of either “Binder I or II”. In his comments, G.B. is now very attentive to the way the poet expresses himself and how his peculiarities should be rendered. In this light shades of meaning and even word order are important for the commentator G.B.

A reviewer, then, struck by the unity and coherence of G. B.’s work, will be prone to think that there must have been a need for rounding off the earlier time-consuming engagements in some all-embracing way. Already the first inspection of these heavy volumes, 1760 pages in all, makes one hesitant to say that they are a blown-up last version of the initial Taschenbuch project. However, to describe and characterize, let alone evaluate it all adequately, is a challenge indeed. Although I can here only scratch the surface, I will try to communicate something more than my impression of a strenuous labour.

**K I.** The entire K (I-III) consists in fact of two parts, an introductory volume and two volumes of commentary in the strict sense. It is essential for B., however, constantly to refer to the first volume by means of the arrow sign → in K II and III. With its 430 pages, K I belongs to the prolegomena kind and may be designated a *Companion*, as rich as one could possibly wish. It comprises almost every conceivable topic related to the poem. More generally, it may be characterized as a *Handbook*. The specialist would perhaps skip a lot as being intended for readers with no prior knowledge of the poem, but at the same time all and sundry would certainly profit from delving into the long chapter “Deutung” (Z-46–50 pp. 264–306) which is split into 22 subheadings. Z-49 (dealing with the duel between the *pious ultor* and the *superbus supplex*) and Z-50 (on models of interpretation) have much fuel for thought for ‘Vergilians’ in B.’s competent handling. Besides, there are many other useful surveys, e.g. on dream visions (Z-13), prodigies (Z-14), speeches (Z-17), and not least on involved gods and divinities (Z-20). Personally, I appreciate in particular the chapter on the more than hundred similes (Z-15).

Every student of the Aeneid would profit from going carefully through the 24 pages on language and style in advance of their study of the text (Z-55 – 57, pp. 337–361). Few will have access to W. Görler's 32 columns on Vergil's language in *Enciclopedia Virgiliana* (I, 262–278) and as many dons will know from their classes, a thorough monographic account of Vergil's grammar and style is a deplorable *desideratum* (H. Holtorf's detailed analysis of the Bucolics in this respect (cf. *Die grösseren Gedichte* I, 1959, p. 253 ff.) was never completed). B. is all the more praiseworthy as even school commentaries of high merit (like those of Page and Williams) are without surveys on language and style (an exception being the 19th century edition of O. Brosin). It remains to add that B.'s chapter on Vergil's hexameter (Z-58) will provide the 'tiro' with basic competence in this regard as well. Nobody can expect today that students are able to digest the relevant "Anhänge" in Norden's Aeneid 6.

**K II & III.** G.B. emphasizes that there has been no German commented edition of the whole Aeneid since P. Jahn and P. Deuticke reissued the Weidemann edition more than hundred years ago (resp. as the 13th ed. of Aen. I-VI (1912) and the 9th ed. of Aen. VII-XII (1904), 650 pages altogether). These learned schoolmasters revised an annotated text initiated more than half a century earlier by Th. Ladewig. The Weidemann series of editions belongs to a totally different age. It gave both scholars and advanced pupils in the German *Gymnasium* a foretaste of scholarship. In their invaluable "Anhang" the various editors tried to improve the revision they were responsible for. Thus, Jahn discusses the divergent readings in Norden's book.

It is hard today to be a real successor to the tradition "Ladewig – Schaper – Deuticke – Jahn" as B. knows fully well. In this light, it is perhaps not surprising that he mentions as his target groups primarily ("vor allem") mediaevalists and students of comparative literature and high school teachers. Only at this point he mentions students of classical philology ("Studierende der Klassischen Philologie") who in turn join company with "Zeitgenossen die sich Vergils Aeneis am lateinischen Original erarbeiten möchten". A true medley of prospective readers! Among the target groups professional Latinists are an entity not specifically emphasized. Accordingly our commentator must ride several horses simultaneously. How does B. cope with the unavoidable conflict of interests among them?

The layout of K II and III is both special and demanding. B.'s (absent) Latin text has been arranged as 446 sequences; each sequence consists of a number of lines between 20 and 40. Within each sequence the comments are as a rule variously divided among A, B, C and D,

**A:** This rubric should not be taken for an ordinary glossary although it may look like one as it contains a lot of suggestions for translating words and phrases and thereby exempting students from consulting a dictionary. 'A' has also comments on language and style and constant references to central themes in K I. The stylistic observations are on a high level creating a bridge to interpretation. Binder deals even with textual queries ("Bemerkungen ... falls erforderlich – zur Textüberlieferung"). Here I will present a small sample of interesting examples.

In “Binder I” G.B. adhered, convincingly in my view, to the following punctuation at 1, 707ff.: *nec non et Tyrii per limina laeta frequentes/ convenere, toris iussi discumbere pictis* (followed by *Mirantur* in the next indented line). I find no longer traces of this punctuation. At 2. 349, however, B. still prefers *audendi* with *M* (and e.g. Geymonat) instead of *audentem* with *P* and *Servius*, though with doubt in his mind. At 4, 46 he once favoured *huc*, correctly I think, instead of *hunc* (preferred by Mynors, Geymonat, Conte), but K seems silent on the issue. At 4. 680 he favoured, again correctly in my view, the predicative nominative *crudelis*; in K. he is leaning towards an apostrophic vocative (can one really have it both ways?). At 6. 893–6 the old *oratio recta* understanding found also in “Binder II” (and now in Conte’s *Aeneis*<sup>2</sup>) will hardly stand the ground in spite of B.’s inspired new defense (cf. my *Critica*, p. 325). At 7. 220 B. seems right in abolishing comma/ colon after *suprema*. Whether he still sticks to it I cannot tell from K. At 8, 587f. he is reluctant to adopt with Mynors the brilliant *it* proposed by Markland (“ansprechend, aber trotz *in armis* stilistisch nicht zwingend” K III, p. 186). At 9. 390f. B. is my ally ending Nisus’ call with *silvae* (cf. my *Vergiliana*, p. 308). Likewise, we are somehow in sympathy concerning 12. 161: a pause after *ingenti mole* does justice to the truly magnificent scene described. At 12. 648 there is, seemingly, a highly elegant conjectural emendation whereby *ipse* is added after *atque* to go with *descendam* (“Als unsträfliche Seele, die von solcher Schuld nichts weiß, will ich zu euch hinabsteigen ...”). However, the grammatical intricacy involved is a little too much for me. I still cling to *istius nescia culpa* (see my *Vergiliana*, p. 344).

Some textual problems not conspicuous in “Binder II” are now singled out for discussion due to the Teubneriana (2009<sup>1</sup>, 2019<sup>2</sup>). This should accordingly attract serious interest among Vergil scholars. For example, B. is in K II focused on *et genus ab Iove summo* at 1. 380 (somewhat surprising after K I, p. 182). At 6. 601 he seems rightly uninterested in Ribbeck’s lacuna accepted by Conte and, moreover, less positive than the latter about *utramque* at 3. 685. As for the most famous difficulty in all Vergil’s oeuvre, B. was in a way an exemplary editor when he bracketed the Helena episode (2. 567–88) with Mynors in “Binder I and II” rightly ignoring the earlier OCT (Hirtzel) and Austin’s sort of compromise. Now he is close to the protean view that the episode is a draft of a kind from Vergil’s own pen.

**B:** The “Sacherläuterungen” (‘comments on realia’) are admirably rich, at times comprising in depth information on names related to mythology, history, geography, topography). In short, we find in this part ‘realia’ in a wide and varied sense. Causes for disagreement are indeed few. I only mention here the curious lemma “*Caesar*” at 1. 286 (K II, p. 42): The name has received a double entry, 1 and 2, for the dictator and his son respectively, with a Z reference to K I (Z-08) for both. Here B. has a thorough comment on the sort of double ambiguity in vogue today, that Jupiter gives each of them a protagonist role in his prophecy. B. seems, however, less enthusiastic than the usual followers.

**C:** constitutes the most substantial and important part of Binder’s work. C alone might well have been a proper monograph. Apparently, the implicit aim

in this part is a comprehensive appreciation of the Aeneid. Few would blame themselves for overlooking C defined as “Interpretationsansätze zur Kommentareinheit/ Versgruppe.” As it is, however, C is best evaluated by comparing it *in toto* with some other full-scale analysis from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, say that of A. Cartault (1926) or F. Klingner (1967) – perhaps a worthwhile topic for a future dissertation?

The C ‘monograph’ has 446 chapters so to speak. A reviewer cannot but choose some random example to give an impression of B.’s quite personal organization of his knowledge and interpretation. I have chosen Aeneas traversing the *Lugentes Campi* (6. 440-76, see K II, pages 558–66, 8½ pages, nearly 5 belong to C). Vergil’s passage has altogether 37 lines printed without “Absatz” by Mynors, but of course duly marked with indentation in “Binder II” (*Nec procul hinc* etc.). The meeting between Aeneas and the Manes of Dido (27 lines) is divided between V-179 and V-180 (in each section treated from A to D). Furthermore, B. attaches various comments separately to nine lines (440, 450, 453 and so on). In between there are some so-called bullets (•), three in number, containing more and less essential comments on the poet’s ‘models’ (a dubious term by the way). The C part owes generally much to many an excellent comment in “Binder I”. Additions and changes are relatively easy to spot in K. It remains to say that V and Z references abound and have often a significant role to play in as much as they direct our attention to internal parallels. The total impression is unavoidably somewhat disjointed and fragmentary compared to a traditional running interpretation and makes it demanding to grasp the epic as a whole. I am sorry to say this when the positive impressions are so prominent. B. is generally a very good guide on similes (in the case of Dido as *luna* he could have made a point of 1. 742). Whereas his new addition on the influence of Sophocles’ *Aias* is less illuminating (450), the comment attached to 467 is surely thought-provoking for me.

D: “Hinweise auf wissenschaftliche Literatur ... möglichst regelmäßig auch auf verfügbare Kommentare. An enormous bibliography has been compiled in K I, pp. 379 – 415. Although I have only been able to browse it I can see that B. uses it wisely and to advantage. The same V-passages dealt with above testify well to B.’s moderation and discernment in his regard.

To sum up as briefly as possible: Binder’s “Kommentar” is definitely a work to heed for the specialist, but rather a mixed blessing for the non-specialist.

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