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Philip Hardie, ed., Augustan Poetry and the Irrational. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. 336. Cloth (ISBN 978-0-19-872472-8) \$125.00.

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for anyone curious about digital classics. Moreover, several of the papers in Part I make a strong claim for inclusion in a classical geography syllabus and the volume is essential reading for anyone considering the spatial dimension of Herodotus.

NECJ 44.3

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Philip Hardie, ed.,
Augustan Poetry and the Irrational.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. 336. Cloth
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Scholars and librarians may perhaps be forgiven for any weariness in the face of so many edited volumes on classical subjects, whether “companions” or, as in the present case, collections of papers that originated in a colloquium. But lovers of Augustan poetry will want to make room on their shelves for this addition to the vast and somewhat unwieldy bibliography. Hardie’s collection will be of most interest to graduate students and professional scholars working on Augustan poetry; the essays assume a level of sophistication and background that may prove daunting for all but the most advanced undergraduates.

Including the editor’s introduction, there are fifteen papers in this volume, with four sections (of more or less equal length) to organize the contributions thematically. The first heading is concerned with civil war; subsequent movements of the volume address “Order and Disorder”; “Reason and Desire”; “Self-contradictions: Philosophy and Rhetoric”; and “Virgilian Figures of the Irrational.” While the divisions are both well-considered and the papers eminently appropriate for each section, there is something of an overlap that creates a synergy between the “chapters.”

Hardie’s introduction seeks to offer a definition—or at least to explore the process of attempting such a definition—of the elusive (not to say nebulous) concept of the “irrational.” The madness that is all too common in matters both martial and amatory is considered at length; the peculiar status of *furor* in the Roman consciousness (especially in an Augustan context) is of particular interest.

The individual contributions are of uniformly high quality and interest; a sur-

vey of several will offer a sense of the direction and focus of the material. Elena Giusti's essay on the depiction of Carthage in Virgil's *Aeneid* offers an insightful commentary on key passages of the first book of the poet's epic, with rich material for consideration in the study of the question of Roman identity and the relationship of Rome to its Mediterranean neighbors.

Giusti's paper accords nicely with its successor, Stefano Rebeggiani's work on madness and tragedy in the *Aeneid*. Here consideration of the Virgilian allusion to Orestes lore is connected to a sensitive discussion of the youthful career of Octavian and Augustan propaganda concerning Octavian's role in the vengeance for the assassination of Caesar. Rebeggiani's essay succeeds in showing the critical importance of Orestes lore in the mechanism of the *Aeneid*, and offers insightful material for consideration on the influence of tragic verse on the epic of Augustan Rome.

Noteworthy, too, is the exceptional treatment of Bacchic imagery in the second Georgic by Emily Gowers. The author deftly considers one of the more mysterious divinities in the Augustan pantheon, a god whose very presence in a work of Augustan verse may seem at variance with the rational tenets of an Apollo or Jupiter. Those who would consider the seeming anthesis between the Dionysian and the Apollonian, however, will profit much from Jane Burkowski's look at the Apollo of Tibullus, c. 2.3 and 2.5—a god who at first appears in rather uncomplimentary guise as the lover of the mortal Admetus. Gowers' paper is a gem of a contribution in a book with impressive competitors.

Jacqueline Fabre-Serris offers a cogent study of Ovid as would-be *praeceptor feminarum* or "instructor of women," with some consideration of Ovid's youthful visits to the circle of Messalla and his exposure to the elegiac poet Sulpicia. One of the great strengths of Fabre-Serris' essay is its consideration of a wide range of Ovidian verse, which is especially valuable in a book that understandably somewhat prejudices Virgil.

Donncha O'Rourke's essay is a rich and comprehensive examination of the Propertian corpus, with the focus on the presentation of Cynthia and the place of the poet's last book in the corpus of his work; the editor indicates that it was commissioned subsequent to the original colloquium (no doubt to expand the coverage of the volume to include the Roman Callimachus).

Séverine Clément-Tarantino reexamines one of the most puzzling problems of the second, Iliadic half of Virgil's *Aeneid*—the relationship between the Fury Allecto and the actions and motivations of Turnus and Amata, with detailed consideration of the commentary tradition on the passage from antiquity to Horsfall.

The chapters of this edited volume do not aspire to comprise a comprehen-

sive survey of the question of the irrational in Augustan poetry. Different contributors might have chosen other topics and material from the storehouse of Horatian, Ovidian, and other Augustan verse. But what the reader finds here is an eminently rewarding, fascinating set of papers that will do much to spur further consideration of a topic that is, paradoxically, both over- and understudied. To the degree that the papers do not conform to a predetermined dogmatism of interpretation, the reader will benefit from a fresh look at old problems, and will emerge with a better understanding of the challenges that confronted the poets of a world that no doubt often seemed to totter on the brink of madness.

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Neil Bernstein,
Seneca: Hercules Furens.

London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017. Pp. 168. Cloth
(ISBN 978-1-4742-5492-2) \$88.00.

Neil Bernstein's *Seneca: Hercules Furens* is the fourth monograph on a tragedy by Seneca the Younger in the *Bloomsbury Companions to Greek and Roman Tragedy* series, following its earlier publications on Seneca's *Phaedra* (2002), *Thyestes* (2003), and *Oedipus* (2015). In keeping with the mission of the Bloomsbury Companions, Bernstein's book is geared toward undergraduates and general readers who are inexperienced with the Latin language and/or Roman culture. This work also serves as further evidence of the continuing resurgence of scholarly interest in Seneca.

This slender yet richly informative book does much to cultivate greater appreciation for Seneca's *Hercules Furens*. While pointing out themes and details shared with Euripides' better-known play, *Heracles* (which received a Bloomsbury Companion in 2006), Bernstein makes it clear that *Hercules Furens* is not simply a "translation" or "reproduction" of Euripides' work, but rather a uniquely creative work to be interpreted and admired in its own right. In five thematically organized chapters (which follow a Preface that outlines the structure and content of the book), the author examines the historical, social, political, and cultural contexts that shape Sen-