

Luduvine Goupillaud. *De l'or de Virgile aux ors de Versailles: Métamorphoses de l'épopée dans la seconde moitié du XVIIe siècle en France*. Travaux du Grand Siècle 25. Geneva: Droz, 2005. 394 pp. SF 170.00. Review by TOM CONLEY, HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

The ambition of this book is to discern the presence of the *Aeneid* in French literary circles in the reign of Louis XIV. The author argues that Virgil was present but not always obvious to the poets, artists, architects and orators who defined France's classical age. That the nation sought to define itself by an *epic* was less evident than its prevailing desire to be known by a founding "heroic poem." Goupillaud shows that a first generation of *inheritors* of Virgil gives way to a coterie of "prodigal sons" who evince a quasi-oedipal relation with the Latin poet. In the age of the *Querelle* a last group of "freed slaves" (*affranchis*) rejects the patrimony at the same time it fashions Virgil in its treatment of the painterly and architectural character of Versailles.

At the beginning of the century the *Ratio studiorum* heralds Cicero and Quintillien as the incarnation of eloquence; soon after Horace becomes a prism through which, finally, the *Aeneid* is read and appreciated. For the *modernes* at the other end, sublimity of taste or *goût* inspires intimate knowledge of a work, a knowledge that goes beyond rules and, like genius, is made clear for an infinite number of readers. It is by way of taste that Virgil is eventually assimilated. The literary world had first known a French Virgil through what Goupillaud calls Segrais's "ethnocentric translation" (Books I-VI, 1668; Books VII-XII, 1681) in which he is at odds about how to transpose classical civilization into terms that satisfy contemporary aesthetic norms. Comparative treatment of Segrais with translations by Perrin (1658) and Marolles (1662) reveals that the resistance of the Latin inspires reflection on "the very nature of beauty in art and on the almost totally impenetrable mystery of literary creation" (54). On another level readers pondered the nature of Aeneas, an emblem of perfection but also a mix of bellicosity and gallantry; he was a man, Segrais had shown, both timid and ungracious. So too did the structure of the poem cause perplexity; yet its mystery, indeed its writing of rapture, did not fail to amaze the French public. As the century bore on, the sublimity of the epic style became the matter with which new poetry of tragedy could be conceived, as shown in Racine's crafting of Virgilian lines in the contained expression of savagery in his greatest plays.

Counted among the prodigal sons at the beginning of the 1660s are Desmarets de Saint Sorlin, Nicolas Courtin, Père Charles la Rue, and others who use the *Aeneid* for the ends of pedagogy. Fénelon's *Télémaque* (1698) sums up a relation of admiration and deviation. The child and Mentor remain close to and far from the classical prototype of exemplary voyage. Fénelon's indirect imitation of the *Aeneid* "seeks to express a love for the epic genre" (249). Among the *affranchis*, writes Goupillaud (in part three of the book-dissertation), are those who engage in the *Querelle*. Virgil becomes French and leaves aside his Latin trappings in a context in which Le Laboureur writes his *Avantages de la langue française sur la langue latine* (1667), Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin issues his *Comparaison de la langue & de la poésie française avec la grecque & la latine* (1670), and Charles Perreault launches his *Parallèle des Anciens & Modernes en ce qui regarde les arts & les sciences* (1688). The *Aeneid* loses its sacred aura and is demystified at the same time it remains a model of heroic verse. The epic inspires reflection on the design of the novel as it had developed from d'Urfé to Scudéry, such that the new genre remains a variant of the epic (318).

The final chapter takes up the ways that the order, arrangement, and symmetry of the *Aeneid* inspire some of the sublimities of Versailles. Taken in its broadest sense, the artifice that Charles Le Brun engineers "consists in spatializing a debate, by marrying a promenade through Versailles to literary controversy" (334). Thus Madeleine de Scudéry's *Promenade de Versailles* can be seen as a spatial poem in which the measure of the palace bears comparison both with what the authors represent and the movement of their personages. Goupillaud notes how architecture is tied to certain kinds of discourse and causes narrative to become spatialized: "a petrified and petrifying metaphor, Versailles is above all an image stripped of the contours on which the eye of the stroller-as-reader endlessly wanders" (354).

Goupillaud's book is an exhaustive and comprehensive picture of the French literary world in the golden years of the reign of Louis XIV. The author shows that Virgil was far more internalized than held as a model that inspired imitation or adaptation. In a telling epigraph she recalls Madame de Sévigné's impressions of a forge she had witnessed upon return from a thermal cure at Vichy. She relates to Madame de Grignan that "we went into a veritable inferno" in which "we discovered eight or ten Cyclops" hammering out not Aeneas's arms but anchors destined for ships. The workers were

drenched with sweat, their mustached faces pale under their long and black hair (7). Sévigné transposes into her own words the vigor and rhythm of the workers at the forge: *Illi inter ses multa vi braccia tollunt/ In numerum* (Book VIII, 451-52). Virgil effectively occludes the woman's sidelong glimpse of French military policy and latent social contradiction.

From the beginning to the end of *De l'or de Virgile* the reader discovers the ubiquity and complexity of the Virgilian poem in classical France. The author moves through a variety of authors and situations in which the nature of patrimony and the resistance it inspires give rise to the great works of the seventeenth-century vernacular canon. If any criticism can be brought to this epic study it would be in the paratextual domain. The author, working through myriad authors and works both major and minor, leaves the reader with a half-page index that does little justice to the research. And insofar as the book carries neither acknowledgment nor expression of debt to anyone, the reader wonders if Virgil and the classical age are felt to be of a gloriously self-contained genealogy. In all events every student of Virgil in seventeenth-century France will take this book as an enduring point of reference in the years to come.

Paul Crenshaw. *Rembrandt's Bankruptcy: The Artist, His Patrons, and the Art Market in Seventeenth-Century Netherlands*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. xiv + 221 pp. + 39 illus. \$80.00. Review by H. PERRY CHAPMAN, UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE.

Rembrandt declared bankruptcy in 1656, when he was fifty years old. Ever since Filippo Baldinucci commented on its rarity, in 1686 (in one of the first biographies of Rembrandt), critics have factored Rembrandt's bankruptcy into their assessments of his life and work, often without fully understanding it. Consequently the interpretation of Rembrandt's *cessio bonorum*—ceding of goods to the municipality to be sold for the benefit of his creditors—serves as a barometer of Rembrandt's shifting critical fortunes. Baldinucci attributed Rembrandt's insolvency to his eccentric, excessive collecting of art and to his buying back his own prints to inflate their prices, which he considered symptomatic of Rembrandt's larger eccentricity. Recent critics, depending on their view of Rembrandt, have interpreted the bankruptcy as, alterna-