

The 'Afterword' is a unique final chapter that does not summarise the preceding material with some conclusions. Drawing on the previously shown approach, K. tries to shed light on some of the most thoughtful questions of ancient history and gender studies, such as how Graeco-Roman society understood gender, the originality of Livy to include women in his work as a literary 'gendered component' (p. 216) or the traditional dichotomy of gender in public and private spaces. However, this is a fundamental topic and much discussed among scholars, which perhaps would have been worth elaborating in more depth.

K.'s analysis is thorough and introduces specific data on the number of references to women throughout the preserved documentation. By means of the tables included (pp. 12, 14, 72, 111, 115, 134, 148, 201), readers can visualise the collected data. Throughout his study K.'s approach echoes with varied purposes: from the exposition of names and events alluding to women to narrative elements that unveil Livy's characteristic process. Moreover, K.'s method belongs to hermeneutics, in terms of its exhaustive analysis of AUC, and to sociology, since it regularly alludes to aspects of identity, otherness (p. 107) and other attributes of this field. Another of K.'s efficient approaches is a linguistic analysis based on the use of terms carefully chosen by Livy in order to meet his instructive purposes (p. 208). Similarly, K. discerns and discloses how fictional and real women alike are always shown from a male perspective embodying Livy's period and society.

Livy and his depiction of women in AUC have been a matter of several research papers on gender and women in antiquity (among the most significant see S.E. Smethurst, *G&R* 19 [1950]; E.E. Best, *CJ* 65 [1970]; J.-M. Claassen, *Acta Classica* 41 [1998]); we should re-emphasise that this is not the focus of K.'s volume. Instead, it is a narrative and linguistic examination of AUC, aiming at Livy's interaction with and description of the women included. Although the title chosen by K. may evoke it, *Livy's Women* is not a work focused on women as historical beings but rather as tools handled for achieving an objective.

Thanks to the information collected in such an exquisite and detailed way, K.'s book is essential for students and scholars interested in the study and narrative composition of the end of the Republic. It is an exhaustive and rigorous work on Livy's literary expertise and his practical incorporation of women as relevant actors at crucial moments in the history of Rome.

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## HORRIFYING LITERATURE

ESTÈVES (A.) *Poétique de l'horreur dans l'épopée et l'historiographie latines*. (Scripta Antiqua 127.) Pp. 471. Bordeaux: Ausonius, 2020. Paper, €30. ISBN: 978-2-35613-330-4.

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Latin literature notoriously embraces macabre and violent poetics in the first centuries BCE and CE. In a substantial development of her 2005 thesis, E. explores the notion of horror in Latin epic and historiography and makes a major francophone contribution to this

burgeoning subfield of imperial Latin literature. This is a distinctively francophone approach to the subject with broad theoretical foundations, highly structured argumentation and a clear-sighted intellectual framework. After a brief introduction, outlining the scope of the book and some of its basic assumptions, E. splits her discussion into four broad sections, on the lexicology of ‘horror’, horror as a theme within major historiographic and epic works, the aesthetics of horror and an axiological study of the pleasure and usefulness of horror in Latin literature, before a brief, general conclusion. This is an ambitious book that defines the notion of ‘horror’ in first-century Roman literary thought, explores its increasing importance in Latin literature, before reconstructing an overarching aesthetics of horror within the Roman literary world. While I did not agree with every argument, this is a book that Classicists will find useful and thought-provoking.

E. opens with certain sensible assumptions: firstly, horror is experienced rather differently in the pre-Christian, Roman world; it creates a sense of unbearable, violent fear; horror is extreme and excessive. My greatest reservation concerned E.’s selection of texts for her study: the generic limitation to epic poetry and historiography (one cannot include everything), the side-stepping of Roman tragedy (where the poetics of horror have been well explored), and the chronological restrictions to the first centuries BCE and CE all seem reasonable. However, the exclusion, amongst others, of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (E. does refer occasionally to the hugely important Medusa and Erysichthon episodes) on grounds of its generic complexity struck me as a missed opportunity: Ovid’s text is surely a key turning point in Rome’s love affair with the poetics of horror.

E.’s analysis of horror is predicated upon a detailed quantitative and semantic study of the verb *horrere* and its compounds and cognates. It begins by exploring a range of fear words in Latin before zeroing in on what separates *horror* from its companions. E. then moves to contemporary explication of fear vocabulary in rhetoric and philosophy, and the apparent development of a literary language of fearing. Finally, a generic exploration, first of historiography, then of epic, suggests, unsurprisingly, that epic poetry tends to use more expressive vocabulary than prose history. Historiography in particular seems to have a clear hierarchy of fear words by intensity. Epic meanwhile uses more variety and doubles up different word families to suggest a greater intensity of fearing that combines physical, physiological and psychological effects. The artificial separation between the use of *horridus* in the morally neutral sense of ‘bristling’ and the engaged sense of ‘horrifying’ is less plausible (one of E.’s key passages, Sallust, *Iug.* 101, illustrates this point perfectly – the battlefield strewn with broken corpses and weapons is literally *horridus*, but the revelation of the slaughter also horrifies internal and external audiences). E. concludes by suggesting that only the *horrere*-family can activate a true sense of ‘horror’. This seems less convincing (e.g. Statius’ Polyneices wanders, out of his mind with fear, through a storm at *Thebaid* 1.358–75 before meeting Tydeus [*fraterni sanguinis illum / conscius horror agit*, 1.402–3] at Argos. These two are explicitly equivalent characters, and it makes little sense to me not to read the aesthetics of horror through both.). The section ends with a working definition: horror is an intense and excessive fear, often with a moral dimension.

A thematic exploration of horror is articulated through the rhetorical concept of *phantasiai*. Horrifying images in literature are typified by blackness, excess and ugliness, and epic and historiography become increasingly similar in their use of theme and *topos* as the first century progresses. E. explores what she terms *loci horrendi* in epic, namely forests, mountains, caves and depictions of the Underworld. Historiography provides a narrower focus, given its avoidance of scary caves and *katabasis*. Virgil’s *Aeneid* is the important model for the epic successors, and these *loci* provide an opportunity to contrast the divine, the unknown and the irrational with progress, civilisation and rationality. It is

surprising not to make more of the extensive work done in Latin literature on the sublime, especially given the essential ineffability of horror and the stock locations in which E. places horrifying poetics. At the conclusion of this section E. tentitiously splits her collection of *phantasiai* in two, those that depict beauty and those that depict ugliness. The first generate what she terms *horror ad venerationem*, the latter *horror ad odium*, and these two categories inform subsequent sections.

The aesthetics of horror is again predicated in rhetorical terms, figuring horror as a problem of *mimesis*. Should one describe horrifying things? Articulating the unspeakable, both in the literal and in the moral senses of that word, is as much an ethical problem as an aesthetic one. E. sees Rome's increasing obsession with the spectacular and the gory in terms of *tumor*, but rather than read it in Callimachean terms (a strategy that characterises much recent work on post-Augustan epic), she sees it through the rhetorical lens of Atticism versus Asianism. On this reading, *tumor* shatters verbal barriers, allowing for *phantasiai* that are physically repellent and morally repugnant. Ultimately, this notion of *tumor* takes the Roman aesthetics of horror away from metaphor by looking directly at the horrifying (especially wounds, severed body parts and wreckage-strewn battlefields), yet replacing verisimilitude with something beyond realism.

The final section explores horror from an axiological perspective, specifically in terms of *delectatio* and *utilitas*. It remains tricky to negotiate the pleasure one gets from reading a text that is both excessive and ugly. E. identifies a 'naïve' pleasure linked to the poetics of *aemulatio*, where horror requires an 'educated' audience alert to intertext and aware of the mimetic problems that horrifying scenes pose. In particular, *horrere* suggests emulation of portrait sculpture and theatrical spectacle. Further pleasure is to be gained when thinking of horror in utilitarian terms: horror acts as a blurring device, deconstructing clear morality in epic and increasingly confusing neat distinctions between admirable Roman conqueror and barbarian Other. Horror reveals evil, even or perhaps especially when this is most uncomfortable for the reader. As a quality, it goes beyond mere sensationalism and provides a coherent artistic and ideological vision.

There is much to admire in a monograph that provides a sweeping interpretation of such a large swathe of Roman literary culture and combines it with some deft close readings of individual texts. There are some weaknesses: the constant use of transliterated Greek and Roman terminology feels awkward and unhelpful. As a reader from an anglophone background, I felt there were some surprising gaps in the bibliography (G.W. Most's seminal '*Disiecti membra poetae*', in R. Hexter and D. Selden, *Innovations of Antiquity* [1992], perhaps the most glaring omission), but E.'s work is, not unreasonably, firmly rooted in francophone scholarship. The text can be overly schematic, forcing epic and historiography apart, rather than seeing what they have in common (especially Lucan and Silius Italicus), and splitting different meanings of *horrere* by context, rather than reading a semantic continuum. E. is best as a close reader: for example, the analysis of dark woodland spaces in *Aeneid* 9, Lucan's *Bellum civile* 3 and Statius' *Thebaid* 2 and 4 is well handled, and I especially enjoyed the invocation of the aesthetics of Republican bust portraiture in Lucan's portrayal of Cato. Her book on horror is a welcome addition to Latin literature studies.

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