This volume has been long in the making, since it has its origin in a conference held in Nottingham in 2003, at which the reviewer was present. The result was worth the wait, as we now have a thoughtful introduction by the two editors and ten contributions over a broad range of subjects and perspectives, which nevertheless cover enough common ground to provide reasonable cohesion for the reader.

The main aim is to present “a visual perspective on Greek and Latin epic” (1); the topics range from Homer to modern opera and film. Both editors have in other studies demonstrated their interest and expertise in the relationship between text and image. Accordingly, Lovatt’s part of the introduction summarises both the different occasions at which we may spot the visual in epic narrative, and the specifics of the epic genre. Though she has to be brief, her survey of the relationship between epic and other genres, and of the performativity of ancient literature generally, makes very instructive reading (2-13).

Vout, too, starts from Homer, and considers the question whether the visual arts in the course of the tradition developed a specific practice to “capture the grandeur of epic vision” (25). The aim of the volume, then, is to throw some light on the hypertextual character of any reaction to the Homeric poems, be they textual or visual, thereby “probing and reassessing the workings of the genre” (31).

In the first chapter (“Seeing in the Dark: kleos, Tragedy and Perception in Iliad 10”, 32-59), Jon Hesk offers a close reading of parts of Iliad 10, starting from the argument made by Slatkin’s 2007 essay on ‘tragic visualising’. He stresses the emotional impact that vision generates in the Iliad, which can result both in the desolation and in the consolation of the audience. He argues that the concept of enargeia has to be expanded by the results of modern narratology, and by the theory of film and theatre, to be fruitful when applied to epic texts. Choosing the Doloneia as an example, Hesk argues that visual effects, also when conjured up in a simile, form an emotional commentary on the main narrative, as in films, and not necessarily a point of view (41). By comparing the

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Hesk argues against Winkler’s hypothesis of epic similes’ lack of visuality and visualisability. In his interpretation, Hesk claims, the reduction of the narrative to the single elements which the reader is made to see by the poet leads to a moral problematisation of the action and finally to a moral ambiguity in the whole scene.

The second chapter (“Operatic Visions: Berlioz stages Virgil”, 60-77) at first surprises the reader by its choice of topic. Helen Lovatt states that every new production of Berlioz’ Les Troyens creates a new visualisation of the Iliad. She argues for the epic character of the French opera; on the other hand she observes that Berlioz’ epic ambitions do not include battle narrative; also, the gods as active characters are marginalised. Other characteristic features of the narrative such as the Trojan horse or the death of Laocoon do not lend themselves to a convincing mise en scène today. How, then, do the composer and present-day directors cope? The final scene in the new ending that Berlioz added to his score in 1860 creates an internal audience for the sequence of events and so leaves the ending open, offering a parallel to the endings of some books of the Aeneid (Verg. A. 4, 8, and 12). Lovatt examines most of the recent productions and compares them with the stage sketches for the premiere (in the end, the opera was never produced in full scale in Berlioz’ life time). Vision, Lovatt convincingly argues, forms an important part of the composer’s and the audience’s engagement with the fate of the Trojans, both in the opera and in the Aeneid.

Emma Buckley, in the third chapter (“Visualising Venus: Epiphany and anagnorisis in Valerius Flaccus’ Argonautica”, 78-98), starts from the ekphrasis in Arg. 5.440-450, noting the tension between the “epic norm and the gravitational pull” of the future (tragic) Medea story (70). She suggests a metapoietical interpretation and points to other moments where oblique visualisations of future tragedy offer the audience the possibility of transcending the actual epic narrative. This becomes especially evident in the Lemnos episode where Venus appears in a double function, as alma and as efera (82). Venus in her fury points back to the Aeneid—mainly through the parallel with Virgil’s Juno in the second half of the poem. Other female deities like Fama (Arg. 2) join in the task of embodying nefas. In Buckley’s eyes, we are encouraged to read this not only as an engagement by Valerius with the Aeneid, but also as an example of “tragedy’s take-over of epic” (86). Venus as a fury uses theatrical means, in a way that is comparable to the Euripidean Bacchae. A point in favour of Buckley’s imaginative reading is the observation that the Lemnos episode has

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