

EXPLORATIONS IN LATIN LITERATURE

Denis Feeney is one of the most distinguished scholars of Latin literature and Roman culture in the world of the last half-century. These two volumes conveniently collect and present afresh all his major papers, covering a wide range of topics and interests. Ancient epic is a major focus, followed by Latin lyric, historiography and elegy. Ancient literary criticism and the technology of the book are recurrent themes. Many papers address the problems of literary responses to religion and ritual, with an interdisciplinary methodology drawing on comparative anthropology and religion. The transition from Republic to Empire and the emergence of the Augustan Principate form the background to the majority of the papers, and the question of how literary texts are to be read in historical context is addressed throughout. All quotations from ancient and modern languages have now been translated, and Stephen Hinds has contributed a Foreword.

DENIS FEENEY is Giger Professor of Latin in the Department of Classics at Princeton University. His publications include *The Gods in Epic* (1991), *Literature and Religion at Rome* (1998), *Caesar's Calendar* (2007) and *Beyond Greek* (2016). He was also a Series Editor, with Stephen Hinds, of *Roman Literature and its Contexts* for Cambridge University Press. He is a Fellow of the British Academy and Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and has held Fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the American Council of Learned Societies.

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Denis Feeney , Introduction by Stephen Hinds
Frontmatter
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EXPLORATIONS IN LATIN LITERATURE

Volume 1

Epic, Historiography, Religion

DENIS FEENEY

Princeton University

WITH FOREWORD BY

STEPHEN HINDS

University of Washington



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In memory of my teachers
Mike Farrell and Ken Trembath
(Auckland Grammar School)
Pat Lacey (Auckland University)
Robin Nisbet (Oxford University)

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Foreword

Stephen Hinds

When I was approached about the idea of writing a preface to Denis Feeney's collected papers, my immediate reaction was that Denis is too young to collect his papers, and that I myself am too young for reminiscences about my years of reading Denis' papers. After all, our early encounters in pubs along the river Cam did not see us in still-new civvies at the end of World War Two; the actual year was 1984, all but two of the Cambridge men's colleges had by then admitted women, and none of the undergraduates swarming the streets between Magdalene and St. John's Colleges at closing time had seen any action in the European theatre. Denis writes powerfully in his Introduction, below, of the things that made the early 1980s a formative time to arrive as a Latinist in Cambridge; we were lucky to be there. As it happens, however, it was not one of the Cambridge Wednesday seminar sessions that first cemented our friendship but a cross-country rail excursion from Cambridge to the Liverpool Latin Seminar, another place in Britain in which vital arguments about Roman poetry (many of them with roots in the Edinburgh University of the 1960s) were happening in those years. This was not a world of reimbursed hotel bookings, conference badges, and the like: a rag-tag army of Latinists converged from all corners of the British Isles and beyond via what was then British Rail, and bundled into Francis and Sandra Cairns's capacious house in Birkenhead. After the business of the gathering was done, we partook of giant pots of homemade pasta, after which the more junior among us slept off the still-famous vino della casa in improvised bedding on floors and under tables. In those days the Classical Association did not stage APA-type conferences, the European research *réseau* was not yet a thing, and Thatcher-era higher education policies had just begun to drive a generation of Classics PhDs to become acquainted with the actual APA in search of an academic living.

This was all thirty-five years ago, and many things have changed, so I suppose it really is time for collected papers after all. However, it is clear to

me, and I hope it is clear to Denis, that these two volumes are an interim stocktaking only: an (almost) four-decade retrospect, to be sure, but with plenty more in prospect.

Denis has organised the essays chronologically but has split them between two volumes ('Epic, Historiography, Religion' in Volume 1, 'Elegy, Lyric and Other Topics' in Volume 2). There are many ways besides these in which one might organise and group them: by the individual ancient author treated; by the side of the Atlantic on which they were written (Q: in which city did Denis buy the same house twice, four years apart? A: Madison, Wisconsin); by their chronological proximity to one or other of the epoch-making books which have defined different phases of Denis' intellectual career as a literary critic, a historian of religion, and increasingly, in recent years, as a historian *tout court* (albeit a highly unusual and original kind of historian).

Let me attempt to list some characteristics of the Denis to be encountered here, which reach across the diversity of his output in books and articles alike. The first thing that can be said to anyone who has picked up this collection is that it will be a very good read indeed, one that can be recommended not just for dipping but for end-to-end immersion. Denis is a fine prose stylist, and a constructor of arguments which combine wit, clarity and nuance. Those of us who have heard him as visiting lecturer or conference panellist over the years know that he almost invariably performs without a script (as most of us do in the classroom but not in our 'papers' at the podium); and we have noted with undisguised envy how he lectures in perfect periods with perfectly structured arguments. He writes very much as he speaks, so that one typically has the sense in these pages not of a thesis served cold but of an argument developing even as the prose unfolds. Every point is delivered with the freshness and authenticity of an oral performance—if one can offer such a compliment to a scholar so invested in the non-privileging of the authenticity of the oral over the written.

Denis is, then, good to read; and this is what one would expect from a critic as sensitive as he to the unfolding dynamics of a literary text. In the heady days of that Cambridge Wednesday Latin seminar in the mid-1980s, reading was everything. These were 'jam sessions' in which extended presentations were eschewed, and in which commentatorial analysis and critical close reading were tested, and rendered sharper, more precise and less safe, by a range of reflections, both imported and locally sourced, upon contemporary 'theory'—which likewise were worked out in the detailed exegesis of particular Latin texts, not presented as *a priori* grids or

superstructures. Like many who took part in those seminars, Denis and I have spent much of the rest of our careers trying to recreate, in different kinds of classroom and conference room, that pivotal moment when interpretation would move from the expected to the unexpected, more often than not catalysed by a pause followed by a ‘well, seems to me . . .’ intervention from John Henderson. I remember renewing the feel of those Wednesdays on a visit to Madison circa 1990 in which I sat in on a graduate seminar class on ancient and Renaissance epic co-taught by Denis and Susanne Wofford to a mixed Classical and Early Modern group.

Among the essays collected here, one that gives an excellent sense of what it is like to sit in a classroom with our author is Vol. 1.9 on ‘. . . Killings, Catalogues, and the Role of the Reader in *Aeneid* 10’ (1999), from *Reading Vergil’s Aeneid: An Interpretive Guide*, ed. Christine Perkell, a collection originating (to quote the *CR* review) ‘in a summer school for American college and university teachers which aimed to encourage non-specialists to read the *Aeneid* in courses where it might otherwise not have been included’. The piece is a master class in teaching, in reading and in teaching reading; it reminds me of all the times I have watched Denis take a group through a text, opening it up in detailed and spacious ways alike.

If Denis is an exceptional reader, he is also (although he seeks to deny it) an exceptional thinker. An idea long on his back burner is a book on Cicero as an intellectual model for the Augustan poets. Despite one teaser article, Vol. 2.17 ‘Ovid’s Ciceronian Literary History’ (2015), and a Petrarchan sense of Ciceronianism running all the way through his *oeuvre*, we have been denied such a book because Denis claims (Introduction) to be ‘unable to think like a philosopher’. Well, ‘philosopher’ or not, to an extent uncommon among critics of Latin poetry Denis shows a sustained and energetic commitment to the investigation of ideas that, for most of us, will eminently qualify him as a serious thinker, and a serious historian of thought. I think, for example, of the tough-mindedness of Vol. 1.11 ‘Interpreting Sacrificial Ritual’ (2004), which takes on some heavyweight positions and shows Denis’ characteristic rigour in always seeking to test theory, and to adjudicate *between* theories, by argument; although not usually a polemical writer, he is in this case prepared to spill a little (sacrificial) blood in his quest for resolution.

Never one to be drawn into abstraction for its own sake, however, he will characteristically build from a telling example or vignette. Witness these opening moves in Vol. 2.3 ‘Towards an Account of the Ancient World’s Concepts of Fictive Belief’ (1993): ‘What do we mean when we say “Evander, or Chloe, or Little Dorrit, did this or that”, and how are these

utterances different from saying “Hitler, or Caesar, or John Major, did this or that”? . . . The very existence of a *Blue Guide to Literary Britain and Ireland* is a thought-provoking phenomenon.’ Thought-provoking, and anything but evidence of inability to nail a thought.

Staying with Vol. 2.3, let me say something about Denis as a master of bibliography, inside and outside the field. Another quote, late in that same essay: ‘Classicists have long been accustomed to cite the ancients’ distinction between the modes of belief proper to poetry and to the law-court; Victor Sage’s study of the relationship between the Gothic horror novel and changing attitudes to legal testimony suggests that this conventional antithesis could be re-examined in a much more dynamic fashion.’ That’s Victor Sage, *Horror Fiction in the Protestant Tradition* (1988): one stands in awe of the fishing expedition that found this point of comparison. Denis’ bibliography is never just a matter of rounding up the ‘usual suspects’, and the search is never done: ‘Only at the last minute before submission did I see the extremely interesting book of B. Harrison (1991); he has his own ways of . . .’, etc. (2.3 again, at n.20).

Even or especially within his own areas of specialisation, his engagement with the prior literature is always active and attentive: not for him the routine or apotropaic ‘see also’. Denis seems ever receptive to the idea that the next academic piece he reads may be a game-changer; and, in general, there is an open generosity in the way he credits the scholars he cites, whether friends or strangers, whether emergent or established. Take this early set-up in Vol. 2.1 ‘*Si licet et fas est: . . .*’ (1992) (on which more in a moment), problematising unexamined elements in the common antithesis ‘poetry for and against Augustus’: ‘With one marvellously acute question C.R. Phillips opens up many of the cracks in the edifice: “Literary critics have usually not attended closely to the protean character of the principate—about what, precisely, were the authors ambivalent?”.’ As noted above, it is never too late to acknowledge an eye-opening publication: e.g., in Vol. 1.13 ‘On Not Forgetting the “Literatur” . . .’ (2007), ‘only after sending the final draft . . . did I see the important paper on Greek “sacred history” by Dillery (2005). . . it is clear that . . .’ In line with this, Denis is readier than most of us to walk back a previously published position of his own: he makes sure that we do not miss his editorial addendum to Vol. 1.14, at n.22: ‘For up-to-date discussion [of Carthaginian cultural developments], see the papers in Prag and Quinn (2013), which touch upon Carthaginian participation in the cultural exchanges of the western Mediterranean. Accordingly, I retract the

ignorant comments at this point in the current paper', a correction first issued in *Beyond Greek* (2016) and repeated here.

A Denis on view everywhere in this collection is the Latinist who is also a far from faint-hearted Hellenist. Already Vol. 1.1, 'The Taciturnity of Aeneas' (1983), is an essay equally invested in and responsive to Homeric 'model' and Virgilian 'imitation', at a time when Hellenists and Romanists usually saw comparison between the two as a great-books competition in which either the Greek epic poet or the Latin one had to be presented as the loser. A discussion of the *Aeneid's* 'small share of dialogue or conversation' triggers a contrastive survey of the question in Homer, which, Denis says (n.49), he 'might dispense with . . . if there were an appropriate discussion to which I could refer; but I do not know of one'. We are the winners as he embarks on a sensitive and sympathetic reading of 'the healing and unifying power of dialogue' in the Homeric poems, with its own momentum, before returning to the very different power of the 'stifled, unconsummated' conversations so characteristic of Virgil's Aeneas, in the truncated *Italiam non sponte sequor* of *Aen.* 4.361 and elsewhere. As in *The Gods in Epic* (1991), a book which transformed the comparative study of Greco-Roman epic, it is not just that Denis becomes a better reader of Virgil by reading Greek (many Latinists aspire to that), but that he becomes a better reader of Homer by reading Latin (few Hellenists see the point in that). Our vocabulary of poetic biculturality continues to evolve; but the relationship between Greece and Rome is as ever a high-maintenance one, and few critics have worked as hard at it over the years as has Denis, most recently in the tour-de-force archaeology of Roman literature and culture in *Beyond Greek* (2016). Because or although he himself transcends such 'brain-balkanisation' (to use a Feeneyan term), Denis knows just what kinds of academic inertia are involved in 'thinking like a Latinist' or 'thinking like a Hellenist': witness the telling anecdote just ahead in his Introduction about a group of Oxford undergraduates responding in very different ways, according to their conditioning, to exam questions on a Latin poetic paper and on a Greek one.

As suggested at the outset, an available plotline in these volumes is the one that tracks Denis' growing authority as a historian. A key article here, for me, is Vol. 2.1 'Si licet et fas est: Ovid's *Fasti* and the Problem of Free Speech Under the Principate' (1992), which (as already noted) begins with a tour-de-force meditation on the reductive historical thinking which is a vulnerability of much work on 'poetry for and against Augustus'. This piece's contribution to the new-wave *Fasti* criticism of the time gives early notice of the Feeney who has always been ahead of

most critics of Roman verse in his understanding of how a historical argument works, and ahead of most Roman historians in his understanding of how a poetic argument works. Long before Denis began to write books which are embodiments of historical scholarship in their own right, he was always one of the few Latin poetry people to whom ‘real’ historians (and of course Denis would be the first to question the underpinnings of that category) paid attention.

Fifteen years on, consider (again) Vol. 1.13 ‘On Not Forgetting the “Literatur” in “Literatur und Religion” ...’ (2007). The title (besides tweaking the title of the Basel conference where it originated) promises a belated coda to Denis’ *Literature and Religion at Rome* (1998). But actually the paper, in its opening problematisation of ‘history as text’, is more generally reflective of Denis’ work on history and historiography in and around the time of *Caesar’s Calendar* (also 2007), and works throughout with scholarship, notably Tony Woodman’s and John Marincola’s, at the literary end of historical studies. When the piece pivots towards the representation of human access to the gods, an earlier book of Denis’ comes to mind: in effect, the other shoe drops here from the ‘epic of history’ chapter in *The Gods in Epic* (1991), as a nuanced account of the boundaries of historiography as a genre unfolds under the sign of the divine. After a great section on Herodotus (fully inhabiting its Hellenism), the second half of the paper offers mutually illuminating investigations of Livy Book 1, a book on which Denis once contemplated writing a commentary, and of Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Back to the present, and Denis is not yet done with Livy’s opening pentad: the brand-new Vol. 1.16 ‘Fictions of Citizenship in Livy’s *History*’ has arrived as a bonus 20,000-word offering for the present collection just before deadline, outside the bounds of my retrospective survey but adding a fresh chapter to the *oeuvre* of Feeney *Historicus*.

The range of inquiry on display in his four sole-authored books makes it abundantly clear that Denis has never been a recycler. One reason why a near-complete reprint of his article *oeuvre* can stand as a collection, without any need to edit out duplicates, is that each piece does in fact do something different and distinctive—even when the editors of yet another volume of essays on Horace come knocking on his door. In this sentence in Vol. 2.10 ‘Becoming an Authority: Horace on his Own Reception’ (2009), as he registers Horace’s disinclination to get trapped in a single genre, Denis could be writing of himself: ‘This is what I think of as the “Picasso dilemma”, one faced by all creative people; their fans want more of what made them fans in the first place, whereas real artists like Horace want to

keep remaking themselves and doing something new.’ Like Horace, Denis on Horace always finds a way to avoid the expected.

While Denis was penning those words, as it happens, the articles in progress on his desk were an especially unexpected bunch. The following year (2010) sees him taking (and giving) instruction in economics and mathematics: in Vol. 2.13, a post-Market-Crash meditation on tropes of financial credit in Plautus’ *Pseudolus*, undertaken after ‘many tutorials on Roman money’ from Brent Shaw (n. 1); and in Vol. 2.12, a reception piece on *Antony and Cleopatra*, whose discussion of the number-crunching *topoi* of Roman civil war (triumvirate, divided pair, rule of one) achieves escape velocity when Denis draws on R. Kaplan, *The Nothing That Is*, to elicit (n.49) the crucial mathematical ingredient available to Shakespeare but not to his ancient sources: ‘naught’, or zero. And the year after this brings Vol. 2.14 ‘*Hic finis fandi*’ (2011), an extended exploration of the absent demarcations of direct speech in Latin poetic texts, with the added bonus for the reader of a rough guide to the history of ancient and modern punctuation practices worldwide.

Obvious novelties aside, however, Denis’ articles do allow his *recurrent* habits of reading to be seen. Whereas the balance of attention in the books increasingly lies elsewhere, the papers continue to centre upon the major writers of the mid-first century BCE to the mid-first century CE. Denis himself hints just below, in the Introduction, at the potential to find his critical evolution played out in changing treatments of the *Aeneid*. And also, as just remarked, but to an extent that took me by surprise, one takeaway of these essays, seen together, is how much Horace there is. In effect, nested within Volume 2 is the core of a virtual book on Horace, perhaps Denis’ most sustained homage to his DPhil supervisor Robin Nisbet. It is to the article format that Denis turns, then, for sustained problem-solving in the Latin literary canon: besides Virgil and Horace, much Ovid and Catullus in these volumes; some Lucan, some Livy, and, as noted earlier, a persistent seam of Cicero. The lean in such pieces towards the reading list (both undergraduate and graduate) owes something to the symbiosis of writing and teaching which Denis himself will advertise below: M. Porcius Iasuchthan may feature in a footnote in the splendid Vol. 2.8 ‘Two Virgilian Acrostics . . .’ (joint with Damien Nelis, 2005), n.3, but he is not about to get an article of his own.

As a tail-piece to this brief inventory of Feeneyan traits, and at the risk of getting unhelpfully inside the head of the author of future articles, I take a moment here to celebrate one of Denis’ trademark stylistic mannerisms: viz the use of expository metaphors from ballistics, ordnance and war-craft.

I have commented on the energy of Denis' writing; one might have a drinking game based on the discovery of flying and detonating projectiles in his critical prose (Vol. 1.6 'a shattering collision of human and divine perspectives'; 1.8 'to understand its impact as the explosion of a certain kind of knowledge and power'; 2.16 'the ricocheting power of the double simile'). As many who have been with him at conferences in the mid-Atlantic states or in continental Europe will have witnessed, Denis has a secret identity as a military history buff (glimpses of actual battlefield tourism in the opening footnotes to 2.6 and 2.18).

Not so secret, even. Coming up shortly (Introduction, again) is the following set-up: 'I am reminded of the metaphor used by the Confederate chief of staff during the second day of the battle of Shiloh . . . ' Indeed. Witness too, in Vol. 2.3, the slyly demotic use of Len Deighton's *Bomber* (in an essay which only a few pages earlier had been quoting Sidney's *Defence of Poesie*) to illustrate what happens when a writer overplays his hand in attempting to create the 'reality effect':

The rearmost shell of this salvo exploded seventy-one feet from Löwenherz's port engine. The theoretical lethal radius of an exploding 10.5 cm. shell was fifty feet. This one fragmented into 4,573 pieces of which . . . 3,036 were fragments of less than a fiftieth of an ounce . . . etc.

Denis borrows the *Bomber* quotation, we are told, from Anthony Snodgrass; but the use of the airport bookstall to make a literary theoretical point is also (in period terms) pure Morris Zapp.

Denis has done an excellent job below of setting the stage for most of his individual essays, with deft touches of autobiography and anecdote; so I shall do no more in closing than to flag a few personal favourites of my own among the earlier-dated pieces, less likely to have been encountered by younger readers in real time and in their original contexts. (One unintended consequence of a collection like this is that decades of intellectual stratigraphy may be obscured in future books and articles by levelling references to Feeney (2021)!)

Among the early *Aeneid* articles, Vol. 1.2 'The Reconciliations of Juno' (1984) is a fine example of Denis' way with argument: the reading is precise and penetrating, almost forensic, and shows the rigour of thought that would soon mark *The Gods in Epic* (1991) as a major achievement of literary criticism and literary history alike. Speaking of the courtroom, no one is harder on Denis than Denis in revisiting the argumentative framing of Vol. 1.1 'The Taciturnity of Aeneas' (1983)—'I ended up arguing the case for Aeneas as his defense attorney'—so let the record

show that, a good two decades before the present retrospect, the opening page of Vol. 1.8 ‘Leaving Dido’ (1998) had already subjected 1.1 to searching reexamination. In 2021 there is only one ‘mansplainer’ still in the dock, and that is Aeneas himself.

Vol. 1.4 ‘*Stat magni nominis umbra . . .*’ (1986), alone and in its juxtaposition with Virgil’s and Lucan’s underworlds in the final section of 1.5 ‘History and Revelation . . .’ (also 1986), takes us back to the Lucanian boom of the late 1980s and early 1990s. There were perhaps others in those years whose criticism could better channel the anger and nihilism of Lucan (Henderson, Johnson), or his impetuous youth and cosmic ambition (Masters). But the argumentative and representational rigour (that word again) of this Lucanian anger and ambition is nowhere better parsed than in the above-cited articles by Feeney, as also in the laser-guided explosiveness (if I may) of the sections of *The Gods in Epic* devoted to *De Bello Civili*. 1.4, by the way, will strike us now as remarkable in its brevity, given what an influential article it is: five short journal pages, not a single line wasted, and several implications left for the reader to pursue on his or her own. Such a piece would nowadays be inflated into a forty-pager or even a full monograph: but back then (at least in British Latin), too much ‘sharing’ was regarded with suspicion, careless talk cost lives, and an article in a journal like *Classical Quarterly* was expected to innovate in as few words as possible.

For unparalleled ability to recapture the sheer strangeness of Rome’s poetic interaction with Greece, an earlyish highlight for me is Vol. 2.4 ‘Horace and the Greek Lyric Poets’ (1993). Watch and wonder as Denis builds his literary historical commentary upon *Odes* 1.1.35 *quodsi me lyricis uatibus inseres . . .* (I give about one quotation per page): ‘How extraordinary, then, that this list should ever be thought capable of extension, with the addition of a tenth name . . .’; ‘Horace will achieve this in the teeth of the invincible chauvinism of the Greeks, virtually every one of whom had a practically pathological inability to appreciate the other literary culture . . .’; ‘The Greek lyricist who was closest to him in time, Pindar, had still died over 400 years earlier (438 BCE)—as far from Horace as Sidney or Marlowe are from us . . .’; ‘Between Horace and this remote world was interposed yet another culture, that of Hellenistic Greece, of Alexandria—at first sight another barrier, but also a corridor . . .’; ‘The very urge to reach back five and six hundred years for inspiration and a standard of judgement is itself a classicising urge. Like all successful classicising initiatives, it looks wholly natural after the event, but it cannot have seemed so at the time.’ All this in a section which also finds Denis

attempting to reconstruct exactly how many modern OCT volumes would be filled by the now-lost Greek lyric poetry available to Horace.

Vol. 2.2 ‘Shall I Compare Thee . . .’ (1992) may be my all-time favourite among Denis’ papers, on the extraordinary Catullus 68, a finely paced piece which dramatises with perfection the adventure of reading that not-quite narrative elegy. As his own *in nuce* reality-check has it: ‘What actually *happens* in 68? A man provides a house, a woman arrives—the rest is analogy and reflection, nested within the expression of thanks to Allius. The poem confronts us urgently with the problem of what similes are, what kind of significance they construct.’ A historian of early Feeney will note the aptness to occasion: this essay was for a volume in honour of David West (p. 40), whose own articles on the Virgilian multiple-correspondence simile were a major landmark in the long 1970s of Roman poetic criticism. Back to Denis in 1992: ‘Here Catullus . . . highlights the dilemmas in which he has caught the scrupulous reader, as he deftly mocks (or gently sympathises with) the weighing and judging in which we have become involved in trying to descry the degrees and shades of similitude.’ What is on offer here is not just a new reading of the elegy, but a new theorisation, appropriately deft and disarming, of the poetics of Latin simile. An incidental pleasure of the piece, for insiders, will have been to imagine how the soon-to-be author of the Classical Association’s 1995 presidential address ‘Cast out theory’ reacted to the statement, two pages from the end, that ‘The beloved herself is a gap, a vacancy to be filled with analogies.’ The Barthesian smile lingers, still in those days an irritant to some.

On its twenty-first birthday, this iconic paper was to find a kind of sequel in Vol. 2.16 ‘Catullus 61: Epithalamium and Comparison’ (2013), spacious in its opening moves, generous in its cultural sweep, and capable of unlocking a productive reread of the earlier piece. Its only flaw was that the author’s modesty inhibited him from flagging in his footnotes just how central ‘Shall I Compare Thee . . .’ had become to the field of Catullan simile—and hence from exploiting the potential to measure the new essay against the earlier one quite as fully as he might. The position of the two as near-bookends in Volume 2 of the present collection will now invite that cross-referential reading.

And so back to the present (and the future). As noted earlier, I had already framed my preface when a bonus item snuck in under the wire, Vol. 1.16 ‘Fictions of Citizenship in Livy’s *History*’, giving firm notice that Denis is by no means done with publication. One other essay besides this has given me the pleasure here of a first-time read. I end, then, by drawing

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Foreword

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attention to Vol. 1.14 ‘Virgil’s Tale of Four Cities’ (2009), the Ninth Syme Memorial Lecture at Victoria University of Wellington. A lovely paper (newly available here to a readership in the northern hemisphere) on ‘the complexity of the always changing Roman identity’, effortlessly deploying half a lifetime of exploration in a fresh and engaging read of the *Aeneid* as a poem of literature and of history, reported back to the homeland in an act of *pietas* by a Kiwi whose own identity continues to be constructed, personally, familiarly and academically, between three continents, by land, sea and air. Enjoy this collection.

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