A NEW COMMENTARY ON TIBULLUS

R. MALTBY: *Tibullus:* Elegies. *Text, Introduction and Commentary.* (ARCA Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs 41.) Pp. xii + 529. Cambridge: Francis Cairns, 2002. Cased, £75. ISBN: 0-905205-99-5.

Though praised by Quintilian as the most accomplished of the Roman elegists and raised by the scholarship of the last few decades to a considerable level of critical attention, Tibullus continues to generate little of the enthusiastic devotion lavished on the other Augustan love-poets. The terse elegance of his modest output perhaps cannot expect to be a match for Propertius' passionate eccentricities and Ovid's exuberant *lasciuia*. That said, however, Tibullus is now far more generously equipped with modern commentaries than are Propertius and the various amatory works of Ovid. Kirby Flower Smith's commentary on the whole of the *corpus Tibullianum* (New York, 1913), despite its endearing fascination with the substantial quotation of Romance poetry from the Renaissance, has proved to be one of the early twentieth century's most abidingly serviceable commentaries on a classical Latin text, and Paul Murgatroyd's judicious and well-researched commentaries on Book 1 (Pietermaritzburg, 1980) and Book 2 (Oxford, 1994) are also firmly established in the libraries of all students of Augustan poetry. Now we have Robert Maltby's splendid new commentary on both of the genuine books. It may be worth noting also that a plan to publish a commentary on them was announced by Hermann Tränkle in the preface to his *Appendix Tibulliana* (Berlin and New York, 1990), but it has not appeared. It would not be appropriate to allow one's frustrations with the absence of large-scale commentaries on so much of the poetry of the first century A.D., as indeed on so many of the books of the *Aeneid*, to detract here from our appreciation of M.'s achievement. It is a major work of sound and mature scholarship. With its substantial introduction, reviewing the manuscripts and editions, a brief but fair critique of modern scholarship, surveys of the poet's life and work and of his style, as well as a very useful bibliographical appendix, comprehensively updating research on the whole corpus (both genuine and spurious), this commentary is sure to be the starting-point for research on Tibullus for many years. The text is based on that of Lee (Leeds, 1990), from which it differs in some thirty-four places (see p. 74). These changes, many of which involve no more than a difference in punctuation, are all reasonable and well defended in the body of the commentary. Only two offer new conjectures (1.3.26, 1.5.42).

Murgatroyd acknowledged a debt of inspiration and guidance to Guy Lee and Barrie Hall, the two scholars to whom M.'s commentary is dedicated. A *synkrisis* is therefore in some ways inevitable and proper, however much it would be regrettable to be drawn by Quintilian's example into a comparative ranking. They approach the task of commenting in much the same traditional way, and much of M.'s work updates aspects of Tibullus' poetry already documented and discussed by Murgatroyd, whose commentary on Book 1 is on a very comparable scale, on Book 2 considerably more expansive.

Differences in emphasis are, however, noticeable. M., perhaps regrettably, does not fully share Murgatroyd's interest in metrical phenomena (though he does provide an excellent technical and statistical analysis of Tibullan metrics, pp. 68–72) and the contribution made to the subtle richness of Tibullus' poetry by assonance and alliteration, nor are his introductions to individual poems, especially in Book 2, as full

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as those of Murgatroyd. (Even the unusually complex 2.5, to which Murgatroyd devotes over five pages of introduction, merits scarcely one page.) Not every reader will regret M.'s comparative lack of interest in structural patterns of the type which Murgatroyd detects in individual elegies, again especially in Book 2. (M. diplomatically states his attitude to such studies on p. 32.)

On the other hand, he gives particular attention to 'recent research on the Hellenistic Greek background to Tibullus' poetry . . . the apparent simplicity of which is only on the surface' (p. 26). He himself graciously acknowledges that Murgatroyd was already moving in this direction in his commentary on the second book, and it is not by adducing previously undetected allusions to specific Hellenistic models that he so effectively achieves this goal of convincing the reader of Tibullus' artfulness. His *index rerum notabiliorum* contains, for example, barely two dozen references to the *Anthologia Palatina*, a substantial number of which are cited already by Murgatroyd, indeed by Smith. It is hardly M.'s fault that he is unable to muster even a single citation of Euphorion, supposed at least by the grammarian Diomedes to be, along with Callimachus, Tibullus' chief model, but it does give pause for sombre thought.

M. brings out Tibullan *doctrina* particularly in the many discussions of certain and circumspectly proposed etymological plays, whether detected already by himself or others, or published here for the first time. As the author of *A Lexicon of Ancient Latin Etymologies* (1991) and a onetime *Mitarbeiter* at the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, he is singularly well placed to detect and expound on such plays. Almost all are persuasive, or at least plausible. Of those in the latter category, I am particularly tempted by the play on the derivation of *auis* suggested by *uagantes* at 1.3.59. Can etymological enquiry reach saturation point? Tibullus must now be closer to that limit than any other Latin poet. Perhaps M. might turn his attention to the etymologically almost uncharted regions extending through so much first-century A.D. poetry. It might have seemed that the names of elegiac mistresses could not be more intricately resonant than they have already been found to be, but M., developing the reference to light and brightness already detected in Delia's name, proposes a very telling and suggestive contrast with Nemesis, the daughter of Night, who darkens the second book (p. 44). Just as plausibly, and perhaps even more significantly, he argues that the name Delia signals a link with the *Eclogues* through an allusion to Diana, born on Delos no less than was her twin brother, the god of poetry, and referred to as Delia for the first time at *Ecl*. 7.29 (see Servius on 3.67). It has always been appreciated that the pastoral element in Tibullus' elegies (to say nothing of the fact that Book 1 contains ten poems), gives them a particularly strong affinity with the *Eclogues* (M.'s index contains almost fifty references to them). This programmatic link through the naming of the heroine of Book 1 is a very attractive proposition. Like Tibullan scholars in general, M. has rather less to say about the rhetorical background to Tibullus' poetry than is accorded to Propertius and, more especially, Ovid. This may be a true reflection of Tibullus' subdued style, but one may reasonably wonder if there is yet more latent sophistication here also.

Commentaries are notoriously difficult to review fairly. One tends to note disagreements on detailed points of commission or omission, but to catalogue such *addenda et querenda* conveys a distorted impression, detracting from an evaluation of the positive merits of the work. Word-limitation prevents me from parading such a list here, but, having worked closely with his commentary for several months now, I find from my marginalia that M.'s careful research offers in any case much less scope than do many commentaries for correcting or debating *minutiae*. He is to be warmly

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congratulated for this solid and indispensable contribution to the study of Augustan elegiac poetry.

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OVID THE ILLUSIONIST

P. HARDIE: *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion*. Pp. viii + 365, ills. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Cased, £47.50. ISBN: 0-521-80087-0.

Philip Hardie has long since established himself as one of the most masterful interpreters of Latin poetry, and his recent study of Ovid, at once compendious and essayistic, is every bit as accomplished as his earlier volumes on Roman epic and every bit as authoritative as the *Cambridge Companion to Ovid* he edited (also 2002). If the author had been inspired by Virgil to subtitle his first book 'Cosmos and Imperium', perhaps it was the witty spirit of Ovid who urged understatement on him for this outing, for *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion* is not merely an investigation into the irreverent Augustan's illusionism. It is that, of course, but it is much more, for around the broad theme of illusion and related threads such as intertextuality, the play of absence and presence, poets' ambitions to gain immortality, and readers' and perceivers'—and lovers'—desire, H. has in fact fashioned a book on all of Ovid—or virtually so, for only the *Medicamina* and the *Halieuticon* go unmentioned. It is not a straight-on survey, like Hermann Fränkel's *Ovid: A Poet between Two Worlds* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1945), but if that highly influential vision, respectfully invoked by H., spoke, like the even broader contributions of Auerbach and Curtius, to the immediately post-war world of 1945, H. presents a turn-of-the-millennium Ovid. H. distills, refines, and develops the insights of many of those who, over the past fifteen or so years, have foregrounded the linguistic, figural and literary (i.e. intertextual) games of the ingenious Ovid; H. gives credit and frequently cites dozens of other scholars, so that even as he himself puts his own original stamp on the material, allowing a whiff of the postmodern but no more, one can take his vision as to a certain extent representing Ovid as he is read by our generation.

The historicity of response itself is thematized in H.'s book by his recurrence, at irregular intervals, to moments in Ovidian reception, from Petrarch, Shakespeare, and Jonson in the Renaissance to Malouf and Ransmayr in the late twentieth century. H. does not in any way attempt a full account of Ovidian 'reception'. While the recent novels that present very different fictions about the end of Ovid's days in Tomis serve as the book's endpiece, the other literary figures, and the nineteenth-century visual artists Ingres and Gérôme, pierce the focus on Ovid's poetry, each illuminating a particular aspect of Ovidian illusionism. This is actually of a piece with H.'s proceeding even when focused on Ovid, for though he moves in a generally chronological way through Ovid's *oeuvre*—major foci are *Amores*, *Heroides*, *Metamorphoses*, and the exile poetry, in that order—he is neither held hostage to that scheme nor bound to follow strict order within any given work. Rather, not unlike Ovid himself, he progresses thematically, instancing now, say, cenotaphs, now *paraklausithyra*, now the pastoral—nor are these, as my examples are meant to show, even of the same order. When it serves his interpretive purpose, he will jump ahead or backward within Ovid's poetic career, and likewise include a reading of Catullus or Lucretius, Virgil, Horace, or Lucan, if that will be illuminating. For a time, I found

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