distinctly Roman (and hence anachronistic) military practice. This is not an isolated incident: cf. e.g. the Roman-style colonization of Troy suggested by Penelope (1.51–6 with Knox ad loc.). More generally, the verbal wit and rhetoric of the epistles is more often attributed by R. to the heroines than to Ovid. Clever rhetoric is certainly required of Hypermestra, who, in a period of relative calm after the fateful wedding-night, has to use all her powers of persuasion to get the husband she had planned to murder to rescue her. But does clever verbal skill really fit the immediate emotional situation of Canace?

To summarize, R.'s commentary has its own thematic priorities and sees itself operating alongside the commentaries of Shuckburgh and Palmer. If one is looking for the potential richness of intertextual play in these epistles, and a steady guide through the textual complexities, this is an invaluable read (and I mean 'read': the commentary also works well read from cover-to-cover as a critical appreciation). R. should be congratulated for bringing these often-neglected poems into the mainstream.

University of Manchester STEVEN J. GREEN

HEROINES REVOICED

E. Spentzou: *Readers and Writers in Ovid's* Heroides. *Transgressions of Genre and Gender*. Pp. xx + 231. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. Cased, £45. ISBN: 0-19-925568-7.

This book marks a turning point in the recent boom in studies on the *Heroides*. After roughly two decades of scholarship (beginning with a seminal article by Duncan Kennedy in 1984) which has profoundly renewed the interpretation of this Ovidian text by putting the 'interpretative conspiracy' (p. 2) between the author and the reader into centre stage, a sense of saturation and a reaction were inevitable. That kind of reading, largely prevalent nowadays, privileges a complicity which of course comes at the expense of the heroines: the result is a cold and detached attitude that gratifies the reader who is able to catch the author's nods and winks, and which turns Ovid's characters into the unconscious tools and victims of this literary game. S. vigorously reacts to this marginalization and devaluation: she rehabilitates the heroines and puts them once again into the centre of the work by conferring upon them a strong identity, both as individuals (as single voices with their own personality) and as a collective entity, as the voice of a gender—the female writers—which asserts itself in the face of its male readers–addressees. Yet this shift of emphasis is hardly a return to previous critical positions. S. knows all too well that the heroines are *scriptae puellae*, ventriloquized by their male author, but she does not resign herself to considering this condition an insurmountable obstacle to recovering something of their distinctly feminine voice.

For this purpose, she has recourse to a set of critical instruments provided by French feminist thought (Kristeva, Cixous). Through concepts like 'speaking subject' and 'Platonic *chora*', S. rescues the heroines' voice from Ovid's authorial/male control: 'there are parts where Ovid himself loses his assertive manner and in a moment of bewilderment and hesitation he allows the discourse (and the heroines) to be seduced by the irresistible vigour of the feminine *chora* that lurks behind the images that he thinks he skilfully manipulates' (p. 106). S.'s reading is attentive to perceiving the conflicting tensions that lie beneath the authorial voice and emerge as the evidence of the heroines' resistance against the strictures of the masculine discourse. Prisoners as

The Classical Review vol. 54 no. 2 © The Classical Association 2004; all rights reserved

https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/54.2.390 Published online by Cambridge University Press

they are of a male text, and of the many (also male) texts which have written their stories, the heroines still reveal their strength in their struggle for emancipation: to the inescapable objectivity of an already written destiny (in the model-texts), the heroines oppose a desperate vitality. They are resisting readers of previous texts and fight against the truths asserted by the male authors in those texts (a further good example, beside those that S. illustrates, can be seen in Helen's protest at 17.25–6 against Paris's innuendo of 16.162 [cf. Kenney 1996, ad loc.]: she contrasts her own truth with a whole tradition of male authors and readers: Aristotle and others, Ovid, Paris, ourselves). But they are also authors of another, alternative text: by narrating their stories, they claim the rôle of writers and assert not only a different, feminine truth but also another possible plot and ending. So our learned reading of intertextualist (and male) readers contrasts, e.g. with Phaedra's trust in the effectiveness of her letter (p. 137 n. 23): S. refuses to play the game of ironic complicity solicited by Ovid which would undermine Phaedra's expectations, and resolutely contests any objectivist model of reading.

After the introductory chapter ('Getting Down To Essentials?', pp. 1–12) and a methodological one ('Reading Characters Read: On Methodology', pp. 13–42), and before a short postscript ('Writing on the Edge?', pp. 197–9), four chapters are the core of the book, which metaphorically dramatizes the lives of the heroines, *scriptae puellae* who wake up from male-mastered literary texts (Homer, Euripides, Virgil, etc.) and turn themselves into writers of their own stories challenging the dominant male power structures. Chapter 3 ('Landscapes of Lost Innocence', pp. 43–83) explores the rhetoric of a Golden Age nostalgia, a pre-literacy stage of their lives, which is followed ('The Heroines in the *Chora* of the Writing', pp. 85–122) by their becoming readers and letter-writers. By asserting their will to construct for themselves a different love story, the heroines impose another order and even a happy ending, independently of previous male literary authorities. The next two chapters are more explicitly concerned with the interdependence of genre and gender and explore some generic issues of the Ovidian collection: they show how letter-reading and letter-writing is a powerful tool for constructing a story and manipulating its sense according to the gendered author's identity (for this purpose, S. makes effective use of Letters 16–21). By confronting male and female letter-writing, Chapter 5 ('Postcards Home: The *Heroides* as Letters', pp. 123–59) contrasts men's 'phallic' determinacy and women's hesitation and resistance ('women doubt and tarry while men are obsessed with the end', p. 128): the heroines' so often lamented repetitiveness is nothing but their (metapoetical) will to defer their own predetermined fate, the 'official' literary plot which is waiting for them. This resistance to their authorial predecessors and to the grand narratives to which the heroines belong is also evident in the letter-form (this is the theme of Chapter 6: 'A Splintery Frame: The *Heroides* as Short Stories', pp. 161–95): the 'shortening' of the model-texts is a signal which asserts feminine values and protests against the grander genres with their *telos*, but the heroines' slender voice is also, of course, the marker of elegy (and in this way they somehow reconcile themselves with Ovid, the resisted author: 'they join forces in a common wish to subvert the elevated longer forms of epic and tragedy', p. 164).

Even those who may remain somehow skeptical of the hope of recovering the 'lost innocence' of us readers (and who reply, with Oenone, that 'nulla reparabilis arte/laesa pudicitia est: deperit illa semel') should agree that the strong case S. makes for a feminine reading of a male-authored text deserves great attention. Sensitive and thought-provoking, passionately argued and written in a style lively, witty, suggestive (behind which the many friends of the late Don Fowler, one of the supervisors of this doctoral thesis, will no doubt sometimes hear his 'voice'), this book provides a

https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/54.2.390 Published online by Cambridge University Press

multitude of brilliant and perceptive observations and is a salutary reaction against the recent scholarly trend. It will greatly contribute to the ongoing discussion and appreciation of this Ovidian work.

University of Udine GIANPIERO ROSATI

SCRIPTAE PUELLAE

M. WYKE: *The Roman Mistress. Ancient and Modern Representations*. Pp. x + 452. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. Cased. ISBN: 0-19-815075-X.

This volume contains an Introduction followed by ten essays, equally divided between 'Love Poetry' and 'Reception'. As W. makes clear in the introduction, only two of the essays—concluding pieces on receptions of Messalina—are entirely new. Of the preceding eight, the notes of the first four have been supplemented with references to literature that has appeared since original publication, while essays five to eight have undergone more substantial revision.

Students of Roman love elegy will give a warm welcome to the collection of W.'s influential series of five articles on the genre, and be grateful for the generous bibliographical supplementation or revision performed on them. The addition of a detailed general index and a lengthy Index of Classical Passages Cited further increases both access to these classic articles and the value of the collection as a whole. Since the texts of the majority of the articles on elegy are in essence unchanged, and their place as foundations for modern readings of elegy assured, I need make no comments except of a general kind. The first is to note W.'s frank and disarming admission (p. 2 n. 1) that Propertius is the focus of the essays on love elegy, and that the 'elegies of Ovid are considered only where they appear responsive to those of Propertius, and those of Tibullus scarcely feature at all'. As W. implies here, one cannot necessarily generalize from Propertius to the rest of love elegy—especially if the true full range of the genre is considered, including Ovid's erotodidactic poetry and the *Heroides*. The tone which these articles maintain as a group is attractive: readable, fluid, with no melodramatic epigraphs from Nietzsche or Lacan, and (perhaps not a coincidence) few promises on which W.'s criticism—or the elegies—cannot deliver. Also welcome is the retrospective influence of W.'s later work on reception on the new versions of these articles on elegy. For, in addition to more lengthy and explicit engagement with the views of previous scholars than in the originals (e.g. pp. 14–17) and the helpful addition of translations lacking from the originals, a number of genuinely useful modern and early-modern illustrations have been introduced. The fifth paper, a version of W.'s 1994 *Ramus* article on 'Taking the Woman's Part', has been more substantially recast so as to reflect its final position here in the series of articles on love elegy. Engagement with previous scholarship was a notable feature of the original, but it is here thoroughly updated and pushed to centre stage. Amongst new material added, in welcome anticipation of the concerns of the second half of the collection, is a series of reflections on Mark Antony. (A final, if trivial, point is the transformation rich and strange which these four articles have undergone from their original appearance in the likes of *JRS*: glossy paper and a fancy type replace—in this handsomely produced volume—the austere layout and production values of the journals. The effect is strangely disorientating.)

The second half of the collection offers, in addition to the pair on Messalina, three

The Classical Review vol. 54 no. 2 © The Classical Association 2004; all rights reserved

https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/54.2.390 Published online by Cambridge University Press