eliminates the possibility that the poet may take an independent and even creative attitude to the ideologies of his age.

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AN OVIDIAN *VADE MECUM*

B. W. BOYD (ed.): *Brill's Companion to Ovid.* Pp. xiii + 533. Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 2002. Cased. ISBN: 90-04-12156-0.

The contributors to this book are: Peter White, E. J. Kenney, Barbara Weiden Boyd, Peter E. Knox, Patricia Watson, John F. Miller, Elaine Fantham, Alison Keith, Gianpiero Rosati, Garth Tissol, Gareth Williams, Michael Dewar, Ralph Hexter, and John Richmond.

What do *I* think a Companion to Ovid ought to do? First, I think it should aim to draw in as wide a contemporary audience as possible. Secondly, it should combine solid general introductions to the author and to the varied issues raised by his diverse poetry, with some insight into the fruitfulness of close reading and the examination of minutiae. In its approach to modern scholarship, it should be 'Janus-like', taking a critical look back to previous scholarship and forwards to potentially fruitful, as yet unexplored avenues for discussion. In short, it should be both 'referential' and 'inspirational'. This is no mean task. I was, therefore, heartened to read from the brief preface to the Brill Companion that B. W. Boyd shares the same general viewpoint. She wants Ovid to be 'available and accessible to all who read him' (p. ix); she has asked her contributors—an impressive list of Ovidian scholars—to 'seek out a balance between a comprehensive overview of a particular topic and a focused analysis of some aspect of it' (p. ix); and she hopes that the present volume will make a contribution to Ovidian studies 'by inspiring scholars and readers to think again about an old friend' (p. x).

In general, I feel that this is a very well-disciplined book which lives up to its laudable aims. First, its structure is straightforward and linear—we move from two introductory chapters on the poet and his style to chronologically arranged chapters on specific poems or types of poetry, from *Amores* to the exile poetry, and beyond to the posthumous responses. Though this structure might not appeal to all, it does make the volume very user-friendly and accessible to the many readers who will want to 'dip in' at various stages (the *index locorum* is very welcome in this regard). Secondly, the volume is sensitive to both the English and the Latin readership: in most chapters, where specific text is referred to, both Latin and English translations are given; even the two chapters of a more technical and specialized nature, namely those of Kenney ('Ovid's Language and Metre') and Richmond ('Manuscript Traditions and the Transmission of Ovid's Works'), which are primarily directed towards Latinists and textual critics, offer some real insight for the reader in translation.

There are some excellent reference chapters, which are simple in their aims but most welcome: White, on the poet's own life, as far as it can be ascertained from his own writings; Kenney's very detailed chapter on Ovidian language and style—the longest in the book (pp. 27–89) and an extension of his 1973 contribution to the Ovid volume edited by J. W. Binns; and Richmond's analysis of the history of the ancient text with specific reference to the Ovidian traditions.

As for the chapters on specific texts, they largely succeed in maintaining that delicate balance between the general and the specific, between providing background and

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inspiring further analysis: particularly good in this regard are Knox, Miller, Keith, and Rosati. The only chapter which does not maintain the balance is, ironically, the chapter on *Amores* by Boyd herself (pp. 91–116). The chapter is divided (for ease of reference) into two sections, 'Literary Approaches' and 'Historical Questions', but it is the former which dominates the chapter as Boyd appears to get bogged down in the potential intertextual resonances in a single word ('turbo', 102–9). This leaves little room for the 'Historical Questions', by which is meant the poems' (playful) response to Augustan political discourse. This is particularly disappointing given the importance of this line of enquiry for Ovid's later poetry.

This volume will inevitably invite comparison with *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, edited by Philip Hardie, which was published in the same year. Though this is not a review of the latter, it would be helpful to draw general comparisons between the two in order to aid Ovidian readers in search for the right companion for them. I will do this by focusing on each volume's discussion of one poem which has received particular scholarly attention in recent years, namely the *Fasti*.

The contributions on the *Fasti* in the Brill Companion are divided into two chapters: J. Miller deals with the more 'literary' concerns of intertextuality, genre, and structure, E. Fantham with the socio-political aspects. Miller takes a commendably even-handed approach with modern scholarship, and this is best shown in his dealings with the issue of genre (pp. 181–2): he acknowledges the attraction of the influential theory of Stephen Hinds—that the poem is both generically conscious of its elegiac status, in opposition to epic, and playfully transgressive—but is careful to remind us that that there are other theories that have been and should be tried. The following chapter by Fantham aims to analyse the way in which the poem interacts with the imperial, political, and religious discourse of its time. Even-handedness was always going to be more difficult in this chapter, given the establishment in the last decade of (essentially) two opposing critical camps: the *Fasti* as a sincere (flattering) meditation on the political–religious system of its day or as a work which playfully subverts Augustan discourse and opens up fissures in the construction of Roman religious time. Fantham has always belonged to the former camp, and her chapter maintains a conservative approach to the poem's intentions, concluding with the suggestion that the poem be read largely as a 'poetic enterprise, an artistic meditation on the calendar and its religious associations' (p. 230). Though Fantham's scholarship here is typically solid, the chapter is marred by the fact that she neither properly addresses nor raises convincing objections to the issues of the 'subversive' camp. Though the sheer polyphony of the *Fasti* makes it impossible to assert that Ovid is being consistently subversive, this camp cannot be dismissed as easily as Fantham attempts: simply phrased questions (e.g. 'Must we read [the note on the assassination of Caesar] as casual, almost flippant?', p. 199) and negative statements (e.g. 'Wit and humour do not have to be negative', p. 209) are no substitute for a proper assessment of the subversive viewpoint. I agree with Fantham (pp. 198–9) that the briefness of the note on Caesar's assassination on the Ides of March is a somewhat weak argument for 'subversion', but what about other more problematic episodes, such as Ovid's suspiciously Pythagorean stance on animal sacrifice (1.317–456), Janus' diatribe on moral degeneracy in Augustan Rome (1.191–226), and the rape of Vesta in Book 6? Moreover, serious objections could be raised in some of the episodes that Fantham uses to argue for Ovidian panegyric: e.g. 1.650—does not the fact that Livia was not the only woman to share Augustus' bed (actually the third wife) work against any simple flattering reading (p. 201)?

The Cambridge Companion, by contrast, has just one short chapter specifically on *Fasti*, by C. Newlands, though there are other brief sections on the poem scattered

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around the book, under chapters like 'Ovid and Empire' and 'Ovid and Genre'. Newlands's critical approach, essentially the same as that set out in her monograph (*Playing with Time: Ovid and the Fasti* [Ithaca, 1995]) and very different from Fantham's, is to demonstrate how Ovid playfully points up the instability of the established 'truths' in Augustan national identity by means of, for example, ironic juxtaposition and unreliability of narrators.

The handling of the *Fasti* in each volume demonstrates the two major respects in which the Companions differ. Brill structures its chapters chronologically by poem-type; Cambridge prefers to establish critical mindsets in which to situate all of Ovid's production and enable the reader to see the 'bigger picture' across the spectrum of his poetry. Brill aims for detailed assessment of modern scholarship; Cambridge is much keener to privilege certain approaches which are deemed most rewarding.

As the handling of the *Fasti* in each volume suggests, those intent on detailed critical study of Ovid will ultimately find it beneficial to use the two volumes in conjunction. That said, I feel that, on balance, the Brill Companion will prove the more useful for the majority of the Ovidian readership—even though it is considerably more expensive—and will be the first port of call for the student of Ovid for many years to come.

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DE CLEMENTIA

E. Malaspina: *L. Annaei Senecae* De clementia *libri duo*. Pp. 480. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2001. Paper, L. 80,000. ISBN: 88-7694-500-8.

This hefty edition and commentary—a revised doctoral thesis at the University of Turin—is devoted chiefly to establishing the text of Seneca's *De clementia*. Malaspina promises to provide a more particular treatment of date, sources, structure, and ideological context in the introduction to another edition, with translation, of the same work.

In the present volume, 130 pages of prolegomena review in minute detail the evidence for the relationship among the MSS. M. confirms the prevailing opinion that all existing MSS. derive from a corrected copy of N (Vaticanus Palatinus Lat. 1547), dated to the early ninth century. This includes R (Vaticanus Reginensis Lat. 1529, late ninth or early tenth century), which had been thought to be a witness to an independent tradition by a number of scholars, beginning with Rossbach, who discovered it at the end of the nineteenth century. Most importantly, Hosius (H.) endorsed this view in his two Teubner editions, even after Rossbach himself had abandoned the hypothesis. It is the influence of H.'s text, especially the revised edition of 1914, that has made another examination of the evidence necessary. M.'s catalogues of errors and corrections in N and R present the data accurately, and his analysis is sound. The immediate predecessor of N was likely a manuscript written in new Roman cursive, and behind this, M. speculates, another written in cursive minuscules.

M. has equipped his text with a skeletal critical apparatus that records major variants in the MSS. and those conjectures by modern scholars that he has adopted in his text. For a full conspectus of readings and emendations, one must consult the separate 'lista critica' that follows the text, where M. records virtually every discrepancy among the MSS. and printed editions. Besides the major witnesses, M.

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