1099, 1220/1, 1245, 1255, 1402, 1459, 1506, 1563, 1595, 1885, 1951; *Oct.* 49, 232, 262, 858). The translation is predictably clear and accurate: as before, straight prose is used for the iambics, and a line-by-line translation for the choruses and other lyrical passages (e.g. Thyestes' drunken meditation at *Thy.* 920ff.). We are also given the occasional stage direction: this is useful, as, without begging the question of stage performance, it is reasonable to ask what is supposed to be going on in the action, and this is often a real problem in Seneca's plays.

The introductory notes to individual plays are judicious and helpful, especially for those coming to the tragedies for the first time, and F. is good at highlighting points of interest, e.g. a rare piece of unambiguously Stoic teaching in *Oed.* 980–94, which is also a good example of Seneca using the chorus to express an alternative viewpoint. Seneca's eclectic use of sources is seen in the Agamemnon, where Aeschylus is only a distant ancestor, and it seems clear that Seneca is drawing also on Roman republican drama—and on non-dramatic sources too. The *Thyestes* is one of the most interesting of the tragedies, and F. endorses the view that it is Seneca's masterpiece, because of its 'integration of . . . dramaturgy, rhetoric, themes, imagery, moral and political issues' (p. 224). It is also remarkable for the number of its references to the world of Rome, which suggests that the play has a direct relevance to contemporary events. Another notable feature is that it has no extant source, although the titles of many plays on this theme are known, including ones by Sophocles, Euripides, and Accius. With *Hercules Oetaeus* and *Octavia* we come to plays for which Senecan authorship is disputed (*HO*) and rejected (*Oct.*). *HO* is the longest play to survive from antiquity, and some have thought that though it is not entirely by Seneca, he may at least have had a hand in it. F. subscribes to the view that he did not, and tentatively dates the play to the end of the first century A.D. or early in the second century. What is clear is that the author knew the genuine tragedies, as he repeatedly borrows or remodels passages from them. Few nowadays believe that Seneca wrote *Octavia*, though here too the author borrows from Seneca's tragedies and his prose works. A likely guess is that the play dates from shortly after Nero's death in 68, and F. rightly stresses its value in being our only surviving play on a Roman historical subject (*praetexta*). An index of names applying to both volumes completes the work; and F. and the LCL deserve our warm thanks for a helpful and attractive aid to Senecan studies, from which scholars and students alike will benefit.

University of Birmingham C. D. N. COSTA
doi:10.1093/clrevj/bni295

OCTAVIA

R. Ferri: Octavia. *A Play Attributed to Seneca*. Edited with Introduction and Commentary. (Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries 41.) Pp. x + 471. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Cased, £70, US$100. ISBN: 0-521-82326-9.

The anonymous tragedy on Nero's divorce of Octavia and his marriage to Poppaea is one of the most interesting dramas to have survived antiquity; we are lucky to have it. But we have rarely acknowledged our luck, and, with the honourable exception of John Herington, few have engaged with it at all sympathetically. A full-scale edition

The Classical Review vol. 55 no. 2 © The Classical Association 2005; all rights reserved

https://doi.org/10.1093/clrevj/bni296 Published online by Cambridge University Press

with commentary must go some way to redressing the balance, and Ferri has performed a public service by providing a commentary on such an heroic scale. To give you some idea of the riches contained within it, here are some random items from the index of subjects: anger, should be avoided by judges; *enumeratio*, *chaotica*, in Latin poetry; ghosts, in tragedy, appearing at dawn. Virtually no issue of textual criticism or dramatic technique or metrical practice is ignored; the only real lapse I noted was the lack of discussion of antilabe.

The text shows considerable independence from Zwierlein's, and in a number of cases F.'s judgement is now supported by J. G. Fitch, whose new Loeb edition he will not have been in a position to use. Naturally, I have some queries. For instance, at 262 *illos* is claimed by and for Zwierlein, but in Hosius' apparatus criticus it is assigned to Peiper. Was that right? (F.'s note here is vastly learned.) Has the lack of a subject word for *geminauit* (605) any bearing on the lacuna posited around 591, where the unnamed Poppaea must be the subject of *portet*? At 608 should there not be a mark of punctuation after *pelago*? At 903 *si* is corrected to *sin* by Gronovius, which most editors accept. Why? Horace, for instance, never used *sin*, so *si* often serves for 'but if' in his works. 'Ignotus' might have been an Horatian, and avoided it.

Equally independent is F.'s discussion of the play's possible date. The argument on pp. 17–27 that 'Ignotus' knew the work of Statius would be more convincing, first, if there were any clear verbal reminiscences of Statius' poetry ('Ignotus' is not shy of unaltered borrowings from his predecessors, as we learn from F.'s appendices A and B, but he shows no unequivocal debt to the phraseology of Statius), and secondly, if he showed any knowledge of the work of men who would have been his admired contemporaries, Valerius Flaccus and Silius Italicus: but he does not. I still feel therefore that 'Ignotus' wrote not long after Nero's fall (a view shared by Fitch in his Loeb edition, pp. 512–13, who thinks the reign of Galba possible).

The commentary is very ample indeed, and misses few tricks. It is a reviewer's job to ask for more. For instance, at 425 *siderum . . . decus*, it might have been pointed out that Astraea became the constellation Virgo. At 708 *ferunt* deserved a brief note (as introducing a mythological tale). At 744 *amplexu* is dative in form, as at *Aen*. 6.698; likewise *nutu* at 484 (only noted at 843). *Phrygiaeque solo regna dedere* (776) means what? Since Chaumartin's Budé translation—'et donna des tyrans à la terre phrygienne'—is impossible, because untrue, cf. 817, does it need a note? (*solo dare* = 'to flatten' seems unique and so worth a note [see *OLD solum* 6].) At 874–5 F. promises to discuss in a note at 971 the use of *litus*, *litora* to indicate islands, but there does not seem to be one. This raises an issue, the editing of this book, to which I will return.

Inevitably one feels that some discussions do not quite hit the mark. At 297–9 examples of aphaeresis should not be counted as synaloepha. At 436 F. takes *mente* with *horreo*, but what then does the bare *quid ferat* mean? A translation would have been welcome. (*mente* is taken with *ferat* at *TLL* VI, i.535.3–10; similar is the rather exotic Tac. *Hist*. 5.16.2 *fugam animis . . . ferant*.) At 461 *destrictus ensis* is preferred by F. to *respectus*, the reading of G, because it does not commend itself on grounds of sense. A. Hudson-Williams however said rightly in *CQ* 39 (1989) 196 that its meaning is 'crystal clear', whether we take it as a noun or as a past participle. I'd go further and suggest that if it is a noun, it makes a sharp correction of Seneca's *consensus*. At 600–2 (p. 298) we have examples not of zeugma, but of syllepsis (Professor Kenney's middle name: see Lucr. 3.614 n.); F. is, of course, aware of syllepsis—see pp. 304, 355. 604: *uotum esse* + infin. does not appear to be all that uncommon: see *OLD* 3c; Hosius refers to Sen. *Troad*. 577 and *HO* 1324. At 731 there is no absence of caesura, rather

https://doi.org/10.1093/clrevj/bni296 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the prefix *inter* is regarded as separable by tmesis (see Kenney on Lucr. 3.630). At 732 *trepidus* need not suggest fear, but rather excitement or agitation (*OLD* 3); this might prompt a rethink of the sense of the next line. At 786 if there really is any metrical fault with this line (which I doubt), then 746 is equally faulty. At 813 n. the causal genitive does not have to represent an internal quality possessed by the subject: see e.g. *aeger morae* at Lucan 7.240. At 936–4 there is nothing on the historical matter referred to in these lines, except in passing on p. 394; see Suet. *Tib.* 53.2 for the *uerbera* at least (Octavia was also force-fed).

I close with two rather more fundamental issues. F. rightly declines to make too strong a case for the literary skills of 'Ignotus', though his notes on language, metre, and dramaturgy constantly suggest a writer of real independence. It seems a shame, then, that F. is reluctant to conclude that his author simply lacked practice, rather than that he was a born bungler. For instance, how can the astronomical introduction of the play illustrate the author's poor literary abilities (1–2 n., p. 123), when the expression *radiante coma* (3) is acknowledged not to occur elsewhere in Latin poetry? At 47 does *eademque coniunx* really 'add nothing to this picture of a bereft Octavia'? Might not a sister whose brother has been murdered by her husband indeed have two sources of grief? Or again, when Octavia refers to her grief as a repetition of Electra's (59), in a scene clearly modeled on the *Electra* of Sophocles, F. expresses surprise (p. 145) at the 'metalinguistic ring' produced by 'a relatively unsophisticated poet'. Also on p. 145 F. reckons what Nutrix says in her long speech 'might as well be said by Octavia'. The critique of Claudius would, however, sound disloyal on a daughter's lips. I could draw attention to more such slights put upon the author that do not strike me as entirely deserved, but am content to draw attention to Richard Hunter's valuable essay, 'The sense of an author: Theocritus and [Theocritus]', in R. K. Gibson, C. S. Kraus (edd.), *The Classical Commentary: Histories, Practices, Theory* (Leiden, 2002), pp. 89–108 (with thanks to Professor Kraus herself).

An expensive and important book needs careful editorial attention if its price is to be justified. As a commentator myself, I am also well aware that it is easy to forget with the lapse of years that one has dealt with an issue, and to revisit it unnecessarily in a different place. Vigilant editors save our bacon by pointing this out to us. But this work has not been carefully scrutinized. For instance, the discussion of Acte's *monumenta* in the Introduction, pp. 14–15, is repeated more fully at 196 n. Stylistic criticism in the Introduction, pp. 37–8, is recycled unnecessarily at 38–40 n. (even to the counter-example from Statius). Metrical matter in n. 97 of the Introduction reappears at 173 n. 220 n., pp. 188–9, begins and ends with the same injunction to see Bömer. At 297–9 somehow a note on *seruitium* has intruded itself into the metrical discussion. It belongs right at the beginning, and the metrical matter coheres, though I am not quite sure how. 553 n. ends with a sentence that seems to belong with 562–3 n. At 842–3 n., p. 369, in the last paragraph what is said of *metus* belongs in the previous paragraph. At 940 the editors might have spared F.'s blushes by observing that *cruciata* is naturally a passive (then we would also lose the mystifying reference to 'diathesis' (*anglice* 'voice')). I do not want to end on that sour note, though I feel that editors should be hands-on in this sort of enterprise. F. himself has done his author and students of Roman drama proud.

King's College London ROLAND MAYER
doi:10.1093/clrevj/bni296

https://doi.org/10.1093/clrevj/bni296 Published online by Cambridge University Press