

T.'s analysis of the complexities of these writers' positions and the strategies they employed is genuinely subtle and illuminating.

The final view of Ovid, in 'Ovid and Historiography', is Pierre Bayle's bracingly intelligent and multi-layered article in his *Dictionnaire*. In a stimulating and well-supported discussion, T. traces the evolution of the article's evaluation of Ovid's life through the early editions. In his sharp awareness of the limitations and unreliability of all sources, including (perhaps especially) Ovid's own writings, the extreme fallibility of speculation, and yet the need to construct a narrative, this article is seen as a microcosm of one of the great themes of the *Dictionnaire*: both the limitations of historiography and at the same time the necessity for serious historical enquiry.

This monograph is wide in its scope and well written. T. guides the reader securely through the frequently paradoxical role that the figure of Ovid played in such major cultural developments as the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, the increasingly important presence of female authors and readers, and the evolution of the principles of historiography. All quotations in French and Latin are provided with translations, which are well handled (I noticed only a few slips).

There are, inevitably, a few minor reservations. The book could have done with a little more 'de-thesifying': while some of the accounts of recent critical debates are helpful, as in the case of Bayle, for many readers the ubiquitous name-checking in the text of critics of the past 40 years will often add little to the flow of the argument, and – especially when recounting squabbles over details of interpretation – could better have been relegated to the footnotes. As well as the usual sprinkling of typos, six lines of the text on p. 17 are repeated word for word on p. 45. A number of other slips should also be noted when they involve French writers: Pierre-Daniel Huet, later Bishop of Avranches, was never a Jesuit (p. 37), and neither was Michel de Marolles, abbé de Villeloin (p. 39); Nicolas Perrot d'Ablancourt is called Pierre and indexed as Pierre Ablancourt; while Jean de Lingendes is consistently called Delingendes and indexed under 'D'. Théophile de Viau is discussed at length, but is absent from the bibliography of primary sources (he strangely appears under Guido Saba, his editor, among the critical works).

These, though, are small complaints. In its contribution to seventeenth-century French studies, this scholarly monograph opens up new and stimulating perspectives; in terms of Ovidian scholarship, it offers a rewarding illustration of the pervasive, creative and so often surprising presence in early modern culture of this most famously polysemic of poets.

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PIETRO BEMBO AND ETNA

WILLIAMS (G. D.) *Pietro Bembo on Etna. The Ascent of a Venetian Humanist*. Pp. xvi + 419, colour pls. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. Cased, £41.99, US\$65. ISBN: 978-0-19-027229-6.
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The briefest glimpse of Pietro Bembo's prose – so ably translated by W. in the edition provided at the conclusion of the volume under review – gives a sense of the irrepressible

youth who climbed Mount Etna in 1493 and of the range of his many scholarly enthusiasms. The young author of *De Aetna* – a father–son dialogue ranging up the wondrous slopes of Etna and into the depths of naturalistic explanations of its phenomena – would go on to become the official historian of Venice, the librarian of St Mark’s Basilica and a prominent cardinal. He would also publish widely, including works that would ultimately shape the form of the Italian madrigal, and indulge in love affairs with powerful and cultured women such as Lucrezia Borgia and Isabella d’Este. As W. so ably draws out, Bembo’s colourful and eventful life also saw him engaging with key developments in humanism, the identity of the Venetian patriciate and the culture of Quattrocento Venice, not to mention early modern printing.

The Aldine Press therefore plays a significant supporting role in the narrative laid out by W. Founded in Venice in 1494 by Aldus Manutius, the press inaugurated what might be termed the second stage in the development of European printing. The Gutenberg Bible, printed between 1450 and 1455, marked the first major project to be printed using movable metal type, but both it and the incunables that followed generally sought to imitate the design and layout of lavish manuscript works. The Aldine Press, by contrast, was the first to produce volumes in the portable, octavo format, and the first to cut an ‘italic’, handwriting-style typeface, as opposed to the traditional, calligraphic-style black-letter font. Although from a design standpoint Pietro Bembo had no hand in these developments, both he and his *De Aetna* are irrevocably linked with the development of new humanist typefaces: his 1495 account was the first to be published using a new and, at the time, visually fresh ‘roman’ (an upright font, such as this review is printed in) face cut for Manutius by Francesco Griffo. Such was the quality of Griffo’s design that it was revived by the Monotype Corporation in the late 1920s; and such was the legacy of the Venetian cardinal whose work it first adorned that the typeface thus created was named ‘Bembo’. This face has since been digitised, and in its lead form can still be found in the type-cases of letterpress printers around the world.

The extent to which the novelty of the Aldine typeface can be read as an analogy for the young Bembo, and the behaviour and ideas revealed in his *De Aetna*, marks an important theme within W.’s volume, but it is nevertheless one of several. The volume opens not with the printed context of Bembo’s volcanic narrative, but rather with its deep intellectual roots, as W. traces the identity and development of ‘the Etna idea’ in Classical literature. Surveying the writings of Pindar (*Pythian* 1), Virgil (*Aeneid* 3), Lucretius (*De rerum natura* 1 and 6), Seneca (*Letter* 79) and Ovid (*Metamorphoses* 5 and 15) regarding the volcano, alongside, of course, the anonymous (pseudo-Virgilian) first-century *Aetna* poem, W. demonstrates that Mount Etna has variously been mythologised, de-mythologised and *re*-mythologised throughout its career within the Greco-Roman literary tradition. The Etna Idea, therefore, is characterised by a ‘doubleness of perspectives’, clearly evidenced in Bembo’s text, which simultaneously acknowledges the mythological memories associated with the volcano, whilst also coolly enquiring into the natural causes of its remarkable phenomena. W.’s careful explication of the Etna idea – complete with generous, and translated, samples of its Greek and Latin sources – is a highlight of the volume and sure to become an important resource for any student or scholar of Classical thought on volcanoes.

The second chapter considers the multiple contexts of travel literature within which *De Aetna* was written and against which it might be read: the traditions of antiquarian travel that preceded Bembo, the elephant in the room of Petrarch’s famous account of ascending Mont Ventoux (*Fam.* 4.1) and the broader, modern narratives of the history of mountaineering (which have generally dismissed pre-modern interactions with mountains as rooted

solely in fear and distaste). W. is laudably careful, however, not to push any comparison with modern experience too far, and the third and fourth chapters delve into the details of Bembo's education and the peers and teachers whose ideas and interests shaped his own intellectual – and physical – journey to Etna. The fourth chapter also considers the Venetian, patrician context of Bembo's upbringing, and in so doing highlights the tension evident in *De Aetna* between the demands of state, characterised by the dedicated and harried person of Bernardino Bembo, and the desire for *otium*, represented by the youthful Pietro and necessary for the full pursuit of intellectual endeavours.

The final three chapters consider – in markedly different ways – the connections between Bembo's text and the physical realities external to it. The fifth chapter – incorporating a succinct and readable history of the Aldine Press – offers a persuasive argument for the 'interrelationship of physical form and textual meaning' (p. 199), both in Aldine productions in general and in *De Aetna* in particular, with the roman typeface, 'so fresh and adventurous in print design' being 'symbolically meaningful in a work that tells of youthful adventure and (self-)exploration on Etna's slopes' (p. 202). This issue of self-exploration is continued in the sixth chapter, which considers the multiple landscapes – and not just those of Etna – that form Bembo's presentation both of his volcanic journey and of himself. The most significant of these are Noniano – the tranquil garden and family home in which the father–son dialogue is located – and Venice, which simultaneously intrudes into Bembo's narrative in the form of his father's continuing concern with affairs of state, and yet is also overwhelmed by the irrepressible, wild nature of Etna, with which Pietro also repeatedly repulses his father's phlegmatic attempts to explain away the wonder of the volcano. As such, W. argues that the duality of the Etna idea – just like the Aldine font – also becomes a portrait of Bembo. The final chapter takes this concept of self-representation to its literal conclusion, considering the collection of art and antiquities formed by Bembo as a conscious act of familial memorialisation, and analysing in particular the images within the collection that are known to be or may be claimed to be portraits of Pietro.

Appropriately enough, however, it is Pietro Bembo who is given the last word, with the volume closing with a dual-language edition of *De Aetna* newly-translated by W. This is not the first English translation of *De Etna* – the 2005 *I Tatti* edition by M.P. Chatfield provides the text alongside translations of Bembo's lyric poetry – but, if the preceding monograph can be read as its critical apparatus, it is certainly the one with the most comprehensive introduction. The inclusion of the translated text raises the volume from the status of an important and fascinating monograph to an indispensable reference work.

It is unusual but, in this case, necessary to discuss the volume under review as a material object. Although not quite an Aldine octavo – this would be a high bar for a reasonably-priced modern hardback monograph – the volume has clearly been produced with a close and fitting attention to the presentation of the text that it contains. The design of the bordered title-page (although perhaps more evocative of fine printing of the early twentieth century than of the late fifteenth) is a pleasing touch, whilst the setting of the text in Bembo (which is signalled to readers who may not be experts in typeface by way of a note on the final printed page) is a delightfully apt and evocative touch.

In both presentation and content, then, this volume deserves whole-hearted recommendation. W. demonstrates a magisterial command of a wide range of scholarly concerns, from the history of mountaineering to the complex political and scholarly landscape of Quattrocento Venice. Set against this broad backdrop of interests, the volume is also clearly rooted in a deep and confident command of the extensive and multi-lingual literature concerning Pietro Bembo in particular. Part-biography, part-critical edition, interspersed with

surveys of art, printing and Classical volcanic literature, this volume is sure to become a well-thumbed reference for students and researchers across a range of fields.

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THE RECEPTION OF CAESAR IN DRAMA

DIMITROVA (M.) *Julius Caesar's Self-Created Image and its Dramatic Afterlife*. Pp. x + 236. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018. Cased, £85, US\$114. ISBN: 978-1-4742-4575-3.

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This book grew out of a doctorate in Classical Reception studies, and it must be assessed as a contribution to this field. It considers aspects of Caesar's image as he himself shaped it in his *Commentaries*, their transformations in Lucan and ancient historians, and their reincarnation in a number of plays and one opera composed by English playwrights or for the English stage. This fairly eclectic selection comprises Shakespeare's *Tragedy of Julius Caesar* (1599), Nicola Haym's libretto for Handel's *Cesare in Egitto* (1724) and George Bernard Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1898, published 1901), as well as lesser-known Elizabethan and Jacobean dramas. In this category fall Thomas Kyd's *Cornelia* (1594); the anonymous Oxford play *Caesar's Revenge* (performed late 1590s, published 1607); George Chapman's *Caesar and Pompey* (c. 1605, published 1631); William Alexander's *Julius Caesar* (1607); John Fletcher and Philip Massinger's *The False One* (c. 1619, published 1647); and Jasper Fisher's *Fuimus Troes* (1607–1625, published 1633). Of this latter group, five have also been examined in D. Lovascio's recent monograph *Un nome, mille volti: Giulio Cesare nel teatro inglese della prima età moderna* (2015), but D.'s angle is quite different. In her words, 'Instead of extensive contextualization aimed at elucidating how the circumstances under which these works have been created have shaped their representation of Caesar, my approach is to suggest an alternative, "Caesarean", context' (p. 26).

To this end, after an introduction surveying the primary texts and outlining the structure of the book, D. devotes the first chapter to Caesar's self-representation in the *Gallic* and the *Civil Wars*. Here she identifies three areas of interest, whose afterlife in English drama forms the subject matter of the next three chapters: Caesar's key characteristics of clemency and speed or efficiency; the relationship between Caesar-the-author and Caesar-the-protagonist; and what D. calls 'Caesar's self-institutionalisation', which applies to his self-promotion in the *Commentaries* and his larger-than-life stature in the plays. Moreover, each of the final three chapters begins with a study of the development of these themes in intermediary authors, primarily Lucan, Suetonius and Plutarch. As such the book is undeniably ambitious in the literatures it seeks to embrace.

This structure, however, also causes tensions in the level of coverage. While D. is well-versed in the recent historiography on the Caesarean corpus, her chapter's discussion of these texts is synthesising rather than original – as is fair if her real interest is in the plays. This applies even more to the sections on Lucan and the ancient historians that start off the subsequent chapters, so that the reader has to wait until well into Chapter 2