A. J. BOYLE, *SENECA: MEDEA*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. cl + 481. ISBN 9780199602087. £100.00.

Boyle's edition of Seneca's *Medea* is destined to be *the* English commentary for the foreseeable future, and deservedly so. Building on the expertise of Costa (1973), Hine (2000) and Németi (2003), B. offers an array of intriguing insights to this bold play. An ample introduction, new Latin text, facing translation and extensive commentary of almost three hundred pages make up the bulk of this volume.

The introduction contains information familiar to readers of B.'s previous commentaries (sections on 'Seneca and Rome' and 'The Roman Theatre' closely replicate the introduction of his *Oedipus*), with some new subdivisions pertinent to the *Medea* (for example, 'Seneca on Anger', 'Medea in Rome'). B. stresses the political nature of Roman tragedy (xxix, xxxv) and highlights the way that Seneca's *Medea* conjures a framework for understanding violence as an essential element of both the origin of civilization and the existing social order (lii). This introduction repays close reading as B. touches upon many stimulating points, noting that each of Seneca's tragedies 'even the two where infanticide is unrealized (*Oedipus* and *Phoenissae*), pivot around the murder of children' (lxxxix), and that Medea's psychological insights not only apply to herself, but 'she is also a profound reader of other minds' (xcvii). Seneca's own literariness is mirrored in the character of Medea whose literary self-consciousness 'is a defining constituent of this Medea's identity' (cix). In reviewing the various tendrils of the *Medea*'s reception, B. pauses to illustrate the influence of Seneca's version on the plays of Corneille, Glover and Grillparzer (cxxix–cxxxiv). A three-page catalogue of artistic works (for example, tragedies, opera libretti, short stories, sculptures) from 1900 to the present day graphically demonstrates that the myth of Medea has a global reach and that she has become a multivalent icon. Short sections on the metre and B.'s own hermeneutics of translation conclude the introduction.

As in his other commentaries, B. features an English translation with his text and keys his commentary to both the Latin and English. The translation is vibrant throughout, and fits the histrionic and hyperbolic heights of Medea's rhetoric as well as the more thoughtful and reserved Argonautic odes. B. strives to mimic Seneca's alliteration, tone and syntax when possible so Seneca's 'maiusque mari Medea malum, / merces prima digna carina' becomes 'Medea, more monstrous than the sea, / Merited meed of the first ship'. This section concludes with a selective critical apparatus as well as a catalogue of the thirty plus differences from Zwierlein's OCT (primarily moments in which B. agrees with the manuscript tradition against more recent conjectures).

The meat of the work, however, is the commentary itself, which features strong grammatical and syntactical help, as well as the expected references to history, politics, *loci communes*, metre, staging and reception. Readers will find much to like here, depending on their own interests. Throughout the commentary, B. excels at pointing out what makes Seneca's version of the Medea myth original to him and how the subtle changes from Euripides' tragedy or Ovid's many Medeas (cf. Hinds 1993) serve his carefully delineated dramatic, poetic and philosophical aims. For example, his astute observations on the rôle of the Corinthian citizens who 'enter to observe or to participate in the procession at the end of Act I' and will return in the final act 'in an attempt to destroy Medea' (136), and Seneca's general tendency 'to reverse Euripides' focus on the close interaction between the Chorus and Medea' (153) reveal how Seneca alienates Medea from the other characters in the play. B. teases out information that pertains to the times in which Seneca lived, such as the Nurse's advice regarding dissimulation (165–6), Nero's interest in magic (297) and the ability of *munus* possibly to suggest 'amphitheatrical shows' (192). Notes on *sententiae* (130–1), *fatum* (243), the various metres of Medea's magical *carmen* (320), the rôle that stepmothers such as Livia and Agrippina the Younger played in political life (337) and the possible sacrificial connotations of *hoc age* (269) are particularly accomplished and convincing. B.'s interest in Seneca's dramatic poetry comes out frequently with careful notes on metrical issues, alliteration, intra- and intertextuality, imagery and close readings of various motifs of the play. For instance, Medea's magic 'reflects the paradoxical nature of Medea, the mother who distributes death' (298), while the final choral ode's 'repetition and inversion of imagery from the Chorus' opening song … underscore the dramatic transformation of Medea' (338).

At times, the commentary seems to want to do too much, and appeal to too many possible tastes or levels of expertise. For example on 139–40 one will find expansive reflections on intertextual matters and the possible religious ramifications of Seneca's language, but these notes bookend

simple grammatical help about the independent use of the subjunctive, while the entry on the god Hymenaeus/Hymen leads to B.'s ruminations on invocations of Hymen in opera and the 'Temple of Hymen' of the 'late eighteenth-century Scottish medical quack James Graham, the centerpiece of which ("the Celestial Bed") was recently re-created in the Museum of London'. In spite of this penchant for detail, there are certain moments that could be expanded such as the reiteration of the Nurse's 'messenger' speech in the fourth act with Medea's subsequent incantation. While the audience certainly would experience a 'theatrical shock' (313), the poetics of this repetition are not explored in depth. But such quibbles are few and far between. This is a commentary that fulfils its purpose adeptly and comprehensively, and Senecan students and scholars will come back to it again and again in the decades to come.

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A. ZANOBI, *SENECA'S TRAGEDIES AND THE AESTHETICS OF PANTOMIME*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014. Pp. xi + 282. ISBN 9781472511881. £65.00.

Pantomime has finally been receiving its due and Zanobi has been part of this welcome direction in scholarship. Hall, Wyles and Zimmerman, among others, have edited books and published articles on the growth of this performative genre, but the book under review is the first to focus itself specifically on the question of the potential influence of pantomime on Seneca. This book, however, is a bit of a tease: the rubric to the Introduction (vii–xi) is 'The *Vexata Quaestio* of the Dramaturgy of Seneca's Tragedies' and seems to promise that the author will take a stand on the question of whether Seneca wrote his plays for performance and whether they were in fact performed in his lifetime. In the Conclusion (201–3), however, Z. retreats to safety allowing herself only the cautious statements that 'pantomime … may have affected Seneca's writing, no matter what the destination for his tragedies he envisaged' (202) and 'it is unnecessary to assume that he [Seneca] wrote them [the tragedies] in a way that excluded the possibility of any of the forms of performance, whether rhetorical or theatrical' (203). This is a very great pity for a more rigorous application of the implications of the material Z. has gathered would help settle the performance question. Her analysis of the connections between Deianira in the *Hercules Oetaeus* and jealousy as a theme in pantomime (118–20) holds great promise for addressing the authenticity of Senecan composition of the *Hercules Oetaeus*, which once again has found champions in Konstan and Filippi, among others, yet Z. demurs (239 n. 75). Hercules makes an appearance *vis-à-vis* madness as a theme in pantomime (*Hercules furens* 895–1053: 103–5); the *Hercules Oetaeus*, however, places him squarely within the tradition of the adultery mime.

The lost opportunities in this book do not eclipse its many great virtues. Z.'s background on the rise of pantomime as a genre (1–17) is concise and her headings for subjects such as cast, costumes, and musical accompaniment make the topics easy to follow. Her instinct (4) that pantomime must go back at least to the early part of the first century B.C., tied to the Latin root *salt-* in inscriptions about popular performance, is almost certainly correct; the games of Marcellus in 22 B.C. marked the 'official entry' (3) of pantomime into Rome. Pp. 17–51 establish the rhetorical *color* of emotion in late Republican and early Imperial writers. The disjunction between showing an objectified emotion and emotions based on personal experience is central to Z.'s critique of Seneca's tragedies (302) and so essential to her argument. Her examples for the influence of popular performance on Roman literature are extremely well chosen: pantomime on Catullus 63 on Attis (25–9), mime on Cicero's *Pro Caelio* (29–34), mime and pantomime in Ovid (34–8), the structure of Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* as a mime (38–42), mime in the *Satyricon* (42–6), culminating with the pantomime of the judgement of Paris in Apuleius (46–51). Given that this is a book on Seneca, more attention might have been paid to the *Apocolocyntosis*.

In the introduction (vii), Z. distinguishes four features that set Senecan drama apart from Aristotle's categorization of classical Athenian tragedy. One would expect each of the four to be given its own chapter: 'structural looseness' (ch. 2) does, while 'lengthy descriptive passages' is considered over chapters on descriptive running commentaries (ch. 3), monologues of self-analysis (ch. 4) and narrative set pieces (ch. 5). 'Freedom in handling the chorus' and 'showing of death onstage' are largely ignored (*pace* 83–7) to the detriment of the book since the ways in which