

A. J. BOYLE, *OID AND THE MONUMENTS: A POET'S ROME* (Ramus Monographs 4). Bendigo, Vic.: Aureal Publications, 2003. Pp. xvii + 318, 16 pls, illus. ISBN 0-9499-1613-7. £32.00/Aus\$70.00.

The urban landscape of Rome and its buildings figure far more extensively in Ovid's poetry than in the combined oeuvre of the other Augustan poets. For that reason alone, a knowledgeable compilation and commentary have been overdue and ought to be welcomed. In the present monograph, the utility of the compilation outweighs that of the commentary. The conspectus of monuments, some 110 pages in all, organized by type and location (such as "Forums" and "Hills") and comprising the relevant Ovidian texts in both Latin and English, is eminently serviceable. As for the commentary, which is of approximately equal length, it seems fair to say that 'A poet's Rome' more accurately is Boyle's view of how Ovid looked at the monuments and sites: the interpretive bias is heavy and often heavy-handed.

The plate is set in a lengthy introduction (62 pages) where Augustus, his actions, and his putative responses to Ovid's poetry emerge as remarkably simple constructs. The work of scholars such as Wallace-Hadrill and Zanker on the Augustan 'cultural revolution' has left no impact; instead, we are back to the comfortable old schema of a ruler who is equipped with ideology, moral fascism, and a surfeit of vindictiveness stemming from frustration especially in the years after 2 B.C. The *Metamorphoses*, therefore, was the final straw as it was a 'pervasive indictment of abused power', and Ovid's sheer subversiveness, his instances of 'blatant indictment', and his exposing of Augustus for 'ideological rape' readily explain his brutal transfer to Tomi. There is a hermeneutic cross-current of which B. is aware: 'Monuments are complex texts, and, like other complex texts, are subject to multiple readings' (49). Such, however, is not the operative *modus interpretandi* in B.'s commentary where matters most often are reduced to the posited dichotomy between Augustan intent and Ovidian subversion. In the process, the poet of wit and levity is seen as wielding a mighty sledgehammer.

This seems like unnecessary overkill. To be sure, one would not assume that Augustus would appoint Ovid as the official guide to architecture and art in the capital city. Of course Ovid eroticizes the buildings as he does so much else. Public venues like theatres and porticoes are the perfect setting for trysts, assignments, and making a timely move on your lady *du jour*. As always, however, the Augustan context is a great deal richer, and not just in terms of viewer or reader response. Take the social history of the theatre: in contrast to other cities in Italy, the Roman aristocracy resisted its permanent construction because the theatre, as Cicero makes clear, was a venue for the true will of the Roman people at all levels of society. This results in some interesting perspectives on Augustus' making theatres an important part of his building programme and on Ovid's treatment of the subject; similar perspectives arise from the growth of *fasti* in many locales and at diverse levels of society during the Augustan reign. B.'s approach, however, is more one-dimensional. When remarking on the Mausoleum, for instance, he asserts that 'the days of multivalent Rome ... were now over' (37), referring to Augustus' taking over most building activities while the multivalency of the building itself goes unmentioned. An opportunity is missed to explore the relationship between these two phenomena.

The list of sites and buildings, however, that Ovid takes up in his poetry is certainly useful. It is organized in a clear and detailed manner, and B. provides both the Latin text and a facing English translation. Cross-references are both plentiful and helpful, and there are extensive indices not only to monuments and sites but also to the literary and epigraphic sources, though Lugli's *Fontes* is not mentioned anywhere. The factual information on each item is usually reliable, up-to-date, and a good summary of what can be found in Richardson and Steinby. The thirty-two black and white photos, all taken by the author, provide a homely contrast to Ovid's sophisticated poetry.

University of Texas at Austin

KARL GALINSKY

G. D. WILLIAMS (ED.), *SENECA: DE OTIO, DE BREVI TATE VITAE*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Pp. xiii + 271. ISBN 0-521-58223-7. £16.95.

The two Seneca 'dialogues' brought together in this edition make an effective pair. Both are concerned with the issue of time and its proper use. In both Seneca compares the life of public service with the life devoted to philosophical leisure, encouraging his addressee to turn away from