

remark 'so we were not the only cowards!' As L. observes, the joke slyly punctures the Roman perception of war-prisoners as damaged goods (78–9). This is a particularly revealing instance of Plautine reaction to contemporary values. At the same time, L. recognizes that the playwright is no simplistic subvertor. The captive Philocrates who, in the end, prefers *fides* to trickery reinstates traditional values and gives the play an enriched complexity (85–6).

The chapter featuring Plautus' *Mercator* has less to offer on the interaction between comic drama and Roman history. The vast bulk of it (the longest chapter in the book) treats material from Greek New Comedy, Greek philosophy, and Greek rhetoric. The discussions concern familiar *topoi* that contrast the virtues of the country against the vices of the city, the advantages of a stable agricultural life over the hazards of sea-faring, a preference for subsistence farming over mercantile ambitions and the pursuit of profit. The theme, to be sure, has a long life. It recurs in Roman literature, as is well known. L. cites comparable phraseology in the *De Agri Cultura* of Cato, a contemporary of Plautus. But the very longevity of the motif renders it questionable as an issue burning enough to help account for the *Mercator* of Plautus (to which L. in fact devotes relatively few pages). The chapter does make one arresting suggestion: that Rome's decision to destroy Carthage and forbid a rebuilding anywhere near the sea gained rationalization as a cleansing of corruption inherent in mercantile activities, thus connecting it with the intellectual presuppositions characteristic of the second century B.C.E. (153–7). But this has only the loosest connection with Plautine comedy. The key text for the rationalization appears in a source composed three hundred years later. And the claim that Plautus' *Mercator* recast its Greek model to reflect upon contemporary issues falls well short of persuasion.

L.'s examination of Terence's *Adelphoe* in the context of Aemilius Paullus' funeral games (where it was first performed) and Paullus' career generally makes an appealing argument. L. wisely abandons the old efforts to identify the brothers Micio and Demea with Paullus and Cato in a one-to-one correspondence (160–6). As he notes, Cato was a multi-dimensional figure who badly suits the cantankerous conservatism of a Demea, and Paullus projected many of the characteristic features of the traditional Roman that could not be summed up simply as libertarian philhellenism. There was more overlap than distinctiveness (172–5). L. reconstructs a more intricate set of associations that linked the two men and connect the play to their contemporary circumstances, such as the intermingling of father/son and general/soldiers themes. In particular, he isolates the public controversy over Paullus' triumph that turned on Paullus' supposed parsimony toward his troops, a behaviour (and the criticism of it) that closely parallels the debate on education between Micio and Demea in the *Adelphoe* (184–9). Not everyone will find the parallel all that close. But the play plausibly picks up on contemporary discourse and divisive issues. It is, however, somewhat ironic that L. who begins his book by questioning the search for topicality in Plautus ends by finding it in a play of Terence.

The book, in brief, has an uneven quality. But it is thoughtful, incisive, and generally stimulating. L. deserves credit for reviving an approach that detects contemporary echoes in Roman comedy but appreciates their subtlety and complexity.

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M. M. BIANCO, *RIDICULI SENES: PLAUTO E I VECCHI DA COMMEDIA* (Leuconoe 2). Palermo: Flaccovio, 2003. Pp. 153. ISBN 88–7804–218–8. €14.90.

The use of stock characters is a well-known feature of Roman comedy. Most notable are the young lover, the clever slave, and the old man. The latter, either immoral lecher or pillar of society, notoriously takes things to their extremes, be it his gullibility, avarice, or amorousness. Arguably the most memorable among these are Plautus' *senes*. They are the topic of Bianco's book, which assembles four essays on various aspects of this comic stereotype: its characterization by means of language and imagery (13–53); the old man's avarice, amorous passions, and life as a henpecked husband (55–87); the *senex* as comic schemer (89–113); and the father-son-relationship: role model and rival in love (115–38). There is a section with conclusions (139–42) and a rich bibliography (143–53).

B. is particularly strong and comprehensive on language and imagery, also keeping an eye on questions of performance. He concludes that there are several theatrical jobs a *senex* can do in Plautus (139), depending on his relation to other characters: husband, master, father. He has succeeded in producing a thorough analysis of this complex stock type. Still, B. could perhaps

have looked further at the Greek background of Plautine comedy, exploring how other ancient dramatists staged old age. A brief discussion of the various types of old women in ancient drama would also have been helpful (there is a section on the *uxor dotata* (81–8), but there are other types like the old nurse, *nutrix*). Summaries of what we know about the realities of being old in the ancient world and of the *Nachleben* of the *senex* in European drama would have made nice additions.

There are occasional slips, but they do not mar the overall positive impression. Just two details: *peculiaris* (45) does not mean ‘vantaggioso’; he could profitably have used some works that are absent from his bibliography, most notably S. L. Walker, *The Senex Amator in Plautus: A Study in Development*, diss. Chapel Hill 1980, and for imagery (30–9) J. T. Svendsen, *Goats and Monkeys: A Study of the Animal Imagery in Plautus*, diss. University of Minnesota 1971. In sum, B. has advanced our understanding of the *senex* in Plautus and must be congratulated on this achievement.

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M. CHASSIGNET, *L'ANNALISTIQUE ROMAINE. TOME III. L'ANNALISTIQUE RECENTE. L'AUTOBIOGRAPHIE POLITIQUE (FRAGMENTS)*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2004. Pp. clix + 295. ISBN 2-251-01435-7. €61.00.

This volume provides a critical edition and French translation of the known fragments of late Republican historiography. The Introduction surveys each author's life, works, and reception (both ancient and modern). The text, supported by a rigorous *apparatus criticus*, appendices, and extensive supplementary notes, is divided between the later annalists and political autobiography.

Hermann Peter's *Historicorum Romanorum Reliquiae* is acknowledged as the model for this volume (cvi). Peter's edition provides the foundation, with little alteration, for the histories of P. Rutilius Rufus, Q. Claudius Quadrigarius, Proclius and L. Scribonius Libo, and for the memoirs of M. Aemilius Scaurus, P. Rutilius Rufus, Q. Lutatius Catulus, and L. Cornelius Sulla. The texts of Valerius Antias and Q. Aelius Tubero include minor additions in the selection of fragments, whereas the histories of Q. Lutatius Catulus, L. Cornelius Sisenna, and C. Licinius Macer constitute a more fundamental departure from previous editions.

Sisenna's history has been fundamentally reorganized, but the Introduction and Notes offer no systematic justification for this rearrangement of the fragments. The structure and scope of each work are discussed in the Introduction, but without reference to individual fragments. The Notes offer historical and literary commentary as well as textual and linguistic analysis. As a result there is only sporadic discussion of individual fragments precisely where it is most needed to convince the reader that the selection and arrangement of fragments presented in this volume is to be preferred to any previous editions. There is a general tendency both in the Introduction and the Notes to present conflicting arguments but to avoid making judgements on matters of scholarly dispute.

The general conservatism of this volume may be illustrated by its treatment of Sulla's memoirs. The text follows Peter's selection and arrangement of the fragments, albeit with occasional differences in how much of the source text is cited. No new fragment is added. The Introduction mentions several passages from Plutarch which scholars have at various times associated with Sulla's memoirs (civ, n. 549), but no mention is made of Appian, notably Sulla's letter to the *interrex* L. Valerius Flaccus advising the appointment of a dictator in the closing months of 82 B.C. (*B.C.* 1.98), discussed by Heinz Bellen, ‘Sullas Brief an den Interrex L. Valerius Flaccus: zur Genese der sullanischen Diktatur’, *Historia* 24 (1975), 555–69, at 556–9. One may add Pliny's testimony that the one thing lacking to Sulla's *felicitas*, as Sulla himself admitted, was the fact that he had failed to dedicate the Capitolium (*NH* 7.138). There is no explicit reference to Sulla's memoirs in these passages, but they surely deserve some mention in the Introduction or Notes.

The reliability of each fragment in this volume is clearly annotated: passages marked ** mention the author's name but not the work, passages marked * fail only to cite the exact book within a work, while the absence of an asterisk indicates that the author, work, and book citation are all mentioned in the source text. The Appian passage may not satisfy these criteria, but the Pliny passage certainly qualifies for a ** annotation, and it is arguably more reliable than Tacitus' record of Smyrna's assistance to Sulla in the war with Mithridates (*Ann.* 4.56.2), which is nevertheless included as a fragment (fr. 19 = fr. 17A Peter), even though the Notes express doubts as to the reliability of its attribution (245). Its only virtue is the long respectability gained by its