

(*M.Caes.* 3.14) or implicitly (*Addit.* 8 and 7), but *amor* here lacks passionate exclusivity. Instead, there is an emphasis on networks of friendship, while other members of their families, such as Fronto's wife, the emperor and Marcus' baby, are named as objects of *amor*, and of kisses desired and given, along with the correspondents. Then in *Ad Verum* 1.7 it is clear that kissing can be an envied mark of privilege. W. remarks that we learn here 'something important about kisses throughout the Latin textual tradition and, as far as we can tell, in Roman social practice as well' (257).

Earlier too, W. had admitted that the realities and subtleties of interpersonal relationships among Romans sometimes come through the texts being scrutinized for language (60), and it is partly because this is particularly true of the funerary inscriptions, that ch. 4 is the crowning glory of the volume. As W. says, one would not be aware from the Latin literary tradition or from scholarship on it, that 'Romans were often buried in groups, individuals identified as *amici* not infrequently were members of these groups, and friends provided a key role in Roman commemoration of the dead' (260). 'More often than has been acknowledged, Roman burials and the inscriptions marking them perpetuated the memory of and thereby enacted the ties not only of kinship, marriage, or slavery, but of nothing more nor less than *amicitia*' (337). Of course, comparing inscriptions with high literature is difficult: many are undatable, and many fail to mention the legal status of the individuals named. But epigraphists have established that most Latin inscriptions were produced between the first century A.D. and the beginning of the third century A.D., and that freedmen and freedwomen are over-represented. In the absence of legal ancestors, parents or siblings, they commemorated relationships with their former owners (where the language of *amicitia* is avoided), with their own freed slaves, with *conliberti* of their former masters, and with *amici* and *amicae*, citizen and slave. Indeed, slaves figure among the commissioners of inscriptions as well, commemorating friends as well as spouses and children, whom they call, without legal warrant, *coniuges* and *fili*.

Ch. 4 ends with a typology of the uses of the language of *amicitia* on epitaphs (296–354). The group commemorations do indeed give us 'an indirect glimpse at the varieties of household structures that could arise in conjunction with slavery and manumission' (324); the joint burials of two friends in a single tomb show that Martial 1.93 is not describing something unusual (339).

Reading Roman Friendship is itself well worth reading for its insights into Latin literature and Roman social history. Let us hope that the large number of typographical errors will be corrected in the reissue that it certainly deserves.

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T. D. KOHN, *THE DRAMATURGY OF SENECA TRAGEDY*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013. Pp. 184. ISBN 9780472118571. US\$65.00.

In the mid-1540s, Westminster School put on the first performance in England of a Senecan tragedy, *Hippolytus*. The English were behind the times: the same play had already been staged sixty years earlier in Rome, under the direction of Pomponius Laetus. Yet while early modern readers of Seneca had no reservations about staging his drama, twentieth-century scholarship stressed the limited performance potential of Senecan tragedy. T. S. Eliot memorably identified it as 'drama of the word': Otto Zwierlein's influential 1966 monograph pursued this more fully, arguing for Seneca's plays as *Rezitationsdrama*. The tide is now turning again: in addition to the collection of essays on the topic by distinguished Senecans, collected in George W. M. Harrison's *Seneca in Performance* (2000), more recent critical commentaries, especially those by A. J. Boyle on *Troades*, *Oedipus* and *Medea*, have devoted serious space to the performance potential of the plays. Kohn's monograph — drawing not only on his status as classical scholar but also his experience as an actor and director — aims to build on this trend, offering a systematic 'performance criticism' of Senecan tragedy *in toto*.

An introduction rehearses the critical performance debate — covering issues of dating, transmission and imperial theatre culture along the way — and outlines K.'s own approach, which is to develop the work of Dana F. Sutton's *Seneca on Stage* (1973) by subjecting the Roman drama to the same kind of performance criticism Oliver Taplin has provided for Greek tragedy. A

further general chapter sets Senecan drama in context, visualizing the plays within the Vitruvian theatre space and considering the use of stage decoration and machinery, props, lighting and sound effects. Thereafter, K. tackles each play (including the incomplete *Phoenissae*, but omitting the pseudo-Senecan *Octavia* and *Hercules Oetaeus*) in probable order of composition, providing practical advice on the staging of scenes and smaller ‘action units’, and providing analysis of the rôle and placement of non-speaking characters and the chorus. A short conclusion to every chapter attempts to illustrate the contribution dramaturgy makes to the individual theme of each play: the monograph concludes by asserting the importance of dramaturgy to the central obsession of Senecan tragedy, the exploration of the effects of emotion on the inner life of its characters.

There are some conspicuous successes with this method. K. confronts notoriously hard-to-stage scenes such as the *extispicium* of *Oedipus*, using cautious judgement about the use of props and the rôle of mime to show how such scenes can practically be staged. Close attention to performance criteria can help in making textual-critical decisions: K. adjudicates on competing manuscript authorities at *Oed.* 103–5 and *Tro.* 248–9, and (against critical consensus) argues that Cassandra, not Clytemnestra, is the *fésta coniunx* in Act 4 of *Agamemnon*. In perhaps the most significant insight of the monograph, K. highlights Seneca’s consistently pointed exploitation of the ‘three-actor’ convention. So, for example, the same performer in *Thyestes* plays both Fury and infuriate Atreus, in a layering of character that complements the involved intratextual relationship of these two characters. The fraught gender-dynamics of *Agamemnon* and *Medea* are reinforced with single actors playing all the male parts. And, as K. shows, when Seneca does flout the ‘three-actor-rule’, it is for palpable effect: *Troades*, for instance, a play full of non-speaking characters whose mute presence underlines their impotence, powerfully breaks its own rules when it allows its fourth actor Astyanax a mere two words — ‘Miserere, mater!’ (*Tro.* 792) — before he is led off to his death.

K.’s monograph is also a work of rather limited focus. To assert, for example, that there is lots of stage business in *Medea* and *Phaedra* because a central theme of these plays is ‘scheming’ is suggestive, but underdeveloped. K.’s attempt to account for the awkward staging of *Hercules Furens* and *Troades* by making the confused dramaturgy a function of the thematic issue of maddened perception or shocked incomprehension within the plays is, for this reader, ingenious but implausible. K. has important observations to make about the rôle ‘silence’ and ‘spectacularity’ play from a performance perspective, but misses the opportunity to link his work with the related scholarship of Boyle and Schiesaro in these areas. And it is a pity that K. makes no attempt to integrate his ‘big idea’ — that the plays are above all interrogations of emotion and psychological interiority — with the important work of Gill, Leigh, Nussbaum and Schiesaro, who have done so much to elucidate Seneca’s obsession with emotion in these plays.

Such criticism should not detract from the very real value of K.’s work, which succeeds in its stated aim of showing that dramaturgy is a key ingredient of Senecan drama. This monograph should not only stimulate more attention to the interaction between stage business and the thematic/linguistic preoccupations of individual plays: it should also in turn encourage new performances of Seneca into the twenty-first century.

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G. D. WILLIAMS, *THE COSMIC VIEWPOINT. A STUDY ON SENECA’S NATURALES QUAESTIONES*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. xi + 393. ISBN 9780199731589. £30.00/US\$45.00.

Following the Teubner edition, edited by Harry Hine in 1996, there was a proliferation of studies on Seneca’s *Natural Questions* (*NQ*), Williams’ book, which draws on some previously published articles, integrating them with much new material, is part of this renewed interest, offering a systematic analysis of the text from a new perspective. W.’s basic contention is that *NQ* represents an invitation to its readers to transcend vices, daily activities and political troubles, but also vain scientific efforts, and instead dedicate themselves to the true *otium* of the contemplative life. This invitation is not expressed in a simple step-by-step guide, but rather follows a complex path, reflecting the contradictions and difficulties faced by any *proficiens* hoping to reach his goal.