

ERICH SEGAL: *The Death of Comedy*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass. 2001. ISBN 0-674-00643-7. XI, 589 pp. USD 23.95.

It is not easy to give a balanced judgement of a work written by a celebrity like Erich Segal. The task would be less difficult if the first name of the author were Charles. But to be brief, the bulk is disappointing: the 589 pages do not correspond to the substance. The book is divided between ancient Graeco-Roman and later Western comedy. There are few new insights, as least as concerns the Old Comedy, and in general, this part is a bit disappointing. The chapters on Roman comedy reveal a somewhat surer footing. The second half of the book, on post-classical comedy, is mixed in its quality. The chapters on Shakespeare and Molière offer little beyond plot summary. But there are better chapters, e. g., on Machiavelli, Ben Johnson, and others. The volume has an erudite appearance with its 118 footnotes, but it does not provide many new insights into its subject, at least as far as the ancient times are concerned.

*Heikki Solin*

JOSEPH FARRELL: *Latin Language and Latin culture from ancient to modern times*. Roman Literature and its contexts. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2001. ISBN 0-521-77663-5. XIV, 148 pp. GBP 12.95.

The argument in Farrell's exciting and stimulating essay has two main components: first, that Latin culture should include all written (and spoken) Latinity, in other words, that we should override the divide between ancient and medieval Latin and read all Latin as part of Latin culture; second, that languages, and the Latin language in particular, are not only there to be studied and taught; they are the subjects of representation of certain literary cultures. Farrell brings together texts from a wide variety of periods, from Sappho to Stravinsky.

Chapter one, which begins with Virgil, is fundamentally concerned with the idea of Latin as a civilizing force, the Roman linguistic imperialism (not a completely felicitous expression) which conquers and civilizes the conquered by teaching them Latin. Chapter two examines the *patrii sermonis egestas* through Valerius Flaccus and Lucretius, and how this is connected with modern traditions worshipping Greek and despising Latin, represented by Virginia Woolf and W.B. Yeats. Chapter three is dedicated to women writers; F. considers Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, Sulpicia, Hortensia, Perpetua, and others; Chapter four discusses the metaphors used to speak about Latin. Discussion on metaphors continue in Chapter five. All in all, a thought-provoking little book, well written, more essayistic than academic.

*Heikki Solin*

*A Lexicon of Greek Personal Names. Volume IV: Macedonia, Thrace, Northern Regions of the Black Sea*. Editors P.M. FRASER and E. MATTHEWS. Assistant Editor R.W.V. CATLING. Clarendon Press, Oxford 2005. ISBN 0-19-927333-2. XXIX, 387 pp. GBP 115.