

on one particular book of the Propertian oeuvre. In G. Manuwald's profound discussion of the *Monobiblos*, the book's position within the collection, its structure, and composition are convincingly explained. The discussion of the second book, by H. P. Syndikus, on the other hand, appears to be a little less coherent whole; the book is analyzed elegy by elegy, but a thematic structure of this chapter might have been a more beneficial choice. However, given the book's loose and complicated structure, Syndikus laudably succeeds in pointing out the crucial themes in the poem. The skillful modification of the themes of the first book is represented as the core of the second, and the development of the authors' poetic skills and interests is nicely brought out. K. Newman's analysis of the third book focuses on Propertius' poetic identity, and on his position in the literary tradition, whereas H.-C. Günther's discussion of the fourth book emphasizes the refinement of the poet's thought and ideology, and the somewhat dramatic change in the subject matter of his poetry.

The last part of the book deals with the reception of Propertius after his time. S. Gavinelli examines the fate of Propertius' elegies during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance; she discusses the copying process and the commentary tradition as well as the prevailing ideas and conceptions about the Augustan elegist in the periods under scrutiny. In his paper, B. Zimmermann studies the later reception of Propertius, demonstrating the huge impact that contemporary social and cultural ambience has often had in the reading of Propertius' poetry.

All in all, the *Brill Companion to Propertius* succeeds in illustrating the many sides of this poet's work and legacy. The structure of the book is functional, as every part introduced above works as an independent whole as well as in interaction with the other chapters. The chapters engage with each other – since total unanimity is not always achieved, the voices of different scholars are heard and some issues are left open for further discussion. The book is recommended for all those who wish to familiarize themselves with Propertius' work and character.

Elina Pyy

FRANCIS CAIRNS: *Sextus Propertius. The Augustan Elegist*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York 2009. ISBN 978-0-521-86457-2 (hb), 978-0-521-11770-8 (pb). XVI, 492 pp. GBP 62, USD 117 (hb); GBP 27.99, USD 48 (pb).

In his extensive survey of the poetry of the Roman elegist, Francis Cairns uses the personal history of the poet as his starting point. He examines the characteristics typical of Propertian elegy and the development of the poet's work, paying particular attention to the circumstances of Propertius' personal life and to the external forces in the ambience of his day that directed and influenced his art. The goal is to examine how Propertius' background, social standing, and personal contacts resulted in the poetry which is so notably different from the contemporary elegists.

The point of departure proves fruitful, as the book makes the reader reflect more thoroughly and critically on the world of poetics and art during the early Principate, revealing the people, the events, and the motives behind the poetry. Since Propertius' personal history and his role in the literary circles of the time are not known with the same precision as those of, e.g., Virgil's and Horace's, a great amount of speculative discourse is inevitable when arguing

about the influence of Propertius' background on his works. Cairns is nonetheless well aware of this and does not neglect to point out the highly debatable nature of his conclusions. One of the objectives of this book appears indeed to be to encourage further and more open-minded scholarly discourse about the background of Propertian elegy.

The central theme of this book is the nature of Roman patronage in its relation to poetics in general and its effect on Propertius in particular. The author begins with a thorough examination of Propertius' family background (his hometown, social contacts, economic circumstances, and the political standing of his family), subsequently discussing the poet's youth and education compared to the other known poets of the era. He then moves on to discuss at length and in detail the patrons that supported and influenced Propertius' career. One chapter is dedicated to (Volcacius) Tullus, one of the addressees in the *Monobiblos*, and his family background. The author discusses the nature of the relationship between the Propertii and the Volcaciai, shedding some light on the complex equation of friendship, kinship, and patronage in the Roman world.

A considerable part of the book is dedicated to the other addressee in the *Monobiblos*, Gallus. The author argues that Gallus, besides being the other of the two early patrons of the poet, was indeed the Roman elegist C. Cornelius Gallus, and a major influence on Propertius' style. According to Cairns, Gallus' pervasive impact on Propertius' work has often been underestimated and has not been examined with sufficient depth, and that the lack of interest in the subject has severely distorted the view of Propertius' poetry. In chapters 3–7, the author attempts to fix this shortcoming by discussing the Gallan markers in Propertius' poetry from verbal, metrical, and thematic viewpoints. He pays particular attention to the Gallan characteristics that set Propertius' elegies apart from other surviving contemporary works belonging to the same genre. Cairns' extensive examination of the little known elegist explains and laudably sheds some interesting light on the elegiac tradition and the consistency and inconsistency within it.

The latter part of the book is dedicated to Propertius' evolving elegiac style and to his new patrons' impact on it. After the *Monobiblos*, Propertius entered the patronage of Maecenas and Augustus, and, according to Cairns, the contents of Propertian elegy changed along with the patrons. The author examines Book 2 in particular as a state of transition, and discusses the effects that Maecenas had on Propertius' gradual move from erotic elegy towards social, political, and moral themes, as well as towards discussing contemporary persons and events. Propertius' relationship to Maecenas, and the benefits and contacts it offered him are also discussed in order to illustrate the development of the poet's career.

The relationship of Propertius with the *princeps* is discussed as well. The author argues that from the moment of his entry into Maecenas' circle, Propertius' poetic services were fully at the disposal of Augustus, and remained so for the rest of his career. Cairns represents Propertius as a prominent member of the group of poets devoted to the celebration of the regime; he examines Propertius' work from the second book as focusing on themes that expose the poet's loyalty and gratitude to his patron. Especially interesting are the observations that the author makes when discussing the elegiac poet's treatment of Augustan moral values, and the coexistence of private and public themes in his work. In his attempt to disprove the conception of Propertian elegy as 'subversive' towards the Augustan ideology, the author manifests a rather strong and unyielding idea of the nature of Roman patronage. However, his views appear justified and are convincingly argued.

All in all, Cairns' monograph is a comprehensive survey of the nature and background of Propertian elegy. The main argument – that Propertius' personal, social, and political background determined the patronage he enjoyed, which had an impact on his literary development – is straightforward and convincing. The insightful use of Propertius' poetry together with other sources, and the versatile methodological means utilized add to the prestige of the study. The book makes the reader reflect on the background of Roman poetry in general, and to consider more open-mindedly the people and the events that influenced the stylistic, thematic, and linguistic choices of the poets of this particular era. Hopefully Cairns' work will result in further research on this fascinating subject.

Elina Pyy

VICTORIA RIMELL: *Ovid's Lovers. Desire, Difference, and the Poetic Imagination*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York 2006. ISBN 978-0-521-86219-1. VIII, 235 pp. GBP 50, USD 90.

Victoria Rimell's ambitious work tackles a difficult topic, namely issues concerning identities, intertextuality and intersubjectivity. This collection of six essays concentrates on the *Medicamina*, the *Ars Amatoria*, the *Metamorphoses* and the *Heroides*, offering fresh, but in some cases also controversial, perspectives on Ovid and his gender constructions.

Rimell harnesses the idea of intersubjectivity to study some central themes in Ovid. The concept of intersubjectivity is used in philosophy and psychology to describe a condition between subjectivity and objectivity, a kind of common sense or agreement between people that shapes our ideas and relations. From this perspective, Rimell presents desire subjects that seduce each other, the relationship between self and other, and especially the relationship between male and female worlds, which she considers to be the heart of Ovid's vision of poetry and imagination.

Rimell well shows how complicated it is to interpret Ovid. She challenges recent criticism of Ovid: "In this book, I want to sidestep the kinds of questions that have repeatedly been asked of Ovid in the last thirty years, by asking not (simply) about constructs of femininity, or of masculinity, or about whether Ovid can be judged a anti-, proto- or pseudo-feminist, but instead about relationally, about the desiring subject in Ovid's poetry as a being-in-relation." (pp. 3–4).

Rimell uses numerous quotations from Ovid to point out how the myth of Medusa and Narcissus can be seen in his texts in different forms. She emphasizes the meaning of gaze and asks, for instance: Who actually looks at whom and why? Who is the intended reader and who is actually vying against whom? And what were Ovid's ideas behind the scenes of desire and metamorphoses, which are often filled with snakelike and mirrorlike figures? (pp. 27–30).

In the first chapter ("Specular logics: *Medicamina*", pp. 41–69), Rimell examines Ovid's *Medicamina*. She points out that the text might be intended for both male and female readers, which could be interpreted as either a threat or a boost for the self-identity of both genders.

In the second chapter ("*Double vision: Ars Amatoria I, 2 and 3*", pp. 70–103), Rimell studies the only surviving Roman love manual, the *Ars*, and how the power between women and men changes constantly in this text. In her view, this is Ovid's way to manipulate male and