

APPROACHES TO LATIN LOVE ELEGY

BOWDITCH (P. L.) *Roman Love Elegy and the Eros of Empire*. Pp. xvi + 330, colour ills. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023. Cased, £109.99. ISBN: 978-3-031-14799-9.

KEITH (A.), MYERS (M. Y.) (edd.) *Virgil and Elegy*. (Phoenix Supplementary Volume 60.) Pp. xii + 500, ills. Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2023. Cased, CAD\$115. ISBN: 978-1-4875-4795-0.

MCCALLUM (S. L.) *Elegiac Love and Death in Virgil's Aeneid*. Pp. xiv + 220. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023. Cased, £76, US\$100. ISBN: 978-0-19-286300-3.

GARDNER (H. H.) *The Latin Love Elegists*. Pp. viii + 93. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2024. Paper, €70. ISBN: 978-90-04-68814-8.

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While different in their approaches, structure and intended readership, the four books reviewed here are connected by their common aim of responding to traditional views of elegy as a minor, ‘softer’ genre, which stands in binary opposition to the magniloquence of epic. These books thus build upon long-established developments in the field of Latin literary criticism, which have contributed to a general reassessment, and deconstruction, of the taxonomic categorisations of Latin texts, and Latin poetry more specifically, pointing out its generic fluidity (e.g. J.E.G. Zetzel, ‘Re-Creating the Canon: Augustan Poetry and the Alexandrian Past’, *Critical Inquiry* 10 [1983], 83–105; G.B. Conte, *The Rhetoric of Imitation: Genre and Poetic Memory in Virgil and Other Latin Poets*, ed. tr. C. Segal [1986]). Notably, R.O.A.M. Lyne’s study on Virgil’s *Aeneid* (R.O.A.M. Lyne, *Further Voices in Virgil's Aeneid* [1992]) exemplifies this renewed interest in identifying unaligned and ambiguous perspectives (‘further voices’), especially within poetic texts composed in the Augustan or early imperial period. It is no surprise that the elegiac contents have catalysed these underlying streams of ambiguous, unsettled and self-reflective discourse, which – once allowed into the literary landscape of Latin poetry – shake generic boundaries. That Virgil did not write anything that can be formally regarded as elegy, *stricto sensu*, makes his oeuvre a promising space of enquiry for oblique and subterranean elegiac resonances.

Two of the four books, namely Keith and Myers’ edited volume and McCallum’s monograph, explore precisely this interaction between Virgil and elegy. Gardner and Bowditch focus on more obviously elegiac poets (so to speak), including Propertius, Tibullus and Ovid as well as Gallus, the pre-elegiac Catullus and the evanescent Sulpicia. However, less obvious, particularly in the case of Bowditch, are the approaches and arguments that these two latter books pursue. While connected by the overarching topic of Latin elegy and the destabilising tendencies within it, each of the four books has a distinct origin and layout, and to some extent is conceived for a different readership. As a part of the *Brill Research Perspectives in Classical Poetry* series, Gardner’s volume is

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a compact introduction to the main features of Latin love elegy and does an excellent job of combining readability, clarity and conciseness with accuracy and depth of thought. A variety of perspectives and approaches features prominently in the twenty-two-chapter volume edited by Keith and Myers, which will undoubtedly become a fundamental piece of scholarship for those who work on Virgilian and elegiac poetry, and its reception. Focusing on the elegiac themes of love and death in the *Aeneid*, McCallum's monograph demonstrates how intertextuality can contribute to shedding light on the intergeneric dynamics within Virgil's poetry. From a different methodological standpoint, Bowditch investigates Latin elegy's ambiguous attitude towards imperialistic discourse through postcolonial theory, thus showing how elegy articulates tensions between intellectuals and the new political regime.

For the remainder of this review, I will not offer a comprehensive and detailed summary of each book, but rather touch upon the four volumes' main ideas and takeaways, outlining how, taken together, they advance our understanding of elegiac poetry and its interaction with other literary genres and political discourse.

At the starting point of Gardner's compact volume lies the acknowledgement that elegy is a transitional genre, which arises from the crisis of the Roman citizen-soldier model (pp. 1–2). Gardner structures her survey into five parts, which together provide a coherent picture of Latin love elegy. Focusing first on antecedents and origins, Gardner notes that Latin elegists drew on Greek archaic poets, including Archilochus, Mimnermus and Solon, along with Hellenistic epigrams and Callimachean poetry. Following the arguments made by S. James (e.g. S. James, 'Introduction: Constructions of Gender and Genre in Roman Comedy and Elegy', *Helios* 25 [1998], 3–16; S. James, *Learned Girls and Male Persuasion: Gender and Reading in Roman Love Elegy* [2003]), Gardner maintains that Latin elegy incorporated elements from New Comedy, and accordingly the Roman comic writers Plautus and Terence. Along with patterns of Roman comedy (e.g. the character of the *puella* as reflective of the unattainable *hetaira*), the pre-elegiac Catullus employs words and phrasing that resonate with the language of political relationships, including *foedus*, *amicitia* and *pietas*, thus establishing elegy as an ambiguous reflection of contemporary political discourse. After pondering the hypothetical role of Gallus (and his almost entirely lost body of work) as an intermediary between Catullus and the Augustan elegists, Gardner moves on to gender dynamics within elegy (pp. 32–51). Elegy presents the elegiac mistress, namely the *puella*, as (poetic) *materia* ('matter') shaped by the hands of the elegiac poet and *amator*; however, the focus on the elegiac mistress and the ambiguity of elegiac discourse also articulate the poet's inability to fully dominate his poetry. This coexistence of conflicting tendencies within elegy becomes more apparent as the poetic persona is gendered as feminine, as in Ovid's *Heroides* (staged as epistles written by female characters of mythology) or the *Appendix Tibulliana*, which has been argued to include poems authored by the Augustan poet Sulpicia. Moreover, elegy also features events experienced from the perspective of the *puella*, who shifts from being abstract and objectified (*scripta*) to being embodied, as in Tibullus' description of Pholoe's grey hair (Tib. 1.8.43–6). Building upon previous scholarship (e.g. M. Wyke, *The Roman Mistress* [2002], along with works by Keith and A. Sharrock), Gardner maintains that the *puella* is often described through language that resonates with the visual arts. Yet, while this poetic 'matter' (*materia*) should be controlled by its poetic creator, the (male) elegist often gestures towards the risk of losing control over his poetic production. This frustrated desire means that love often overlaps with (sexual) violence in elegy, which makes elegiac discourse highly relevant to more contemporary concerns that have arisen from the #MeToo movement.

Shifting the focus to elegy's engagement with its political context, in the fourth section (pp. 67–74) Gardner maintains that the elegists tend to equivocate or even disavow

Augustan values. Defined through negative attributes, elegy is intrinsically anti-conformist and presents itself as a poetry of *pax*, ostensibly replacing war with love. Building upon postcolonial approaches, Gardner argues that, by supporting and at the same time (subtly) undermining Roman imperialism, elegy enables Augustan poets to position themselves in relation to a new normal, which was anything but stable. The final section of the book (pp. 74–81) focuses on the legacy of elegiac poetry: elegy establishes a paradigm of how to write love poetry in the ages to come, from late antiquity to the present day, as the example of *The Big Sick* (2017, written by Emily V. Gordon and Kumail Nanjiani) demonstrates. In sum, Gardner offers a compact but well-rounded survey of the Latin love elegists, which successfully condenses the main patterns and threads of elegy as a genre. The book will be a helpful tool for students of ancient Greek and Roman subjects, as well as academics of Classics (in the broad sense) and related fields who need to get a sense of the main trajectories and themes, as well as the most updated scholarly discussions, on the topic of Latin love elegy.

Similar to Gardner's book, the volume edited by Keith and Myers approaches its subject matter somehow holistically; nonetheless, it does so more extensively by relying on the multiple perspectives and insights that the twenty-two contributors bring to the fore. Originating from a combination of papers given at the *Symposium Cumanum* 2017 and the *Celtic Conference in Classics* 2017 (Montreal), the volume focuses on Virgil's multifaceted relationship with elegy, as observed by Keith in the introduction (p. 4). Examples such as the presence of Gallus and his poetics within the *Eclogues*, Orpheus' excessive love in the *Georgics* and Ascanius' portrayal as an elegiac beloved (*puer delicatus*) in *Aeneid* 10, all confirm that elegiac instances play a prominent role within Virgilian poetry and its reception. Distributed over four parts, the contributions focus on elegiac elements within Virgil's poetry (Part 1), the presence of Virgil in Ovidian elegy (Part 2) as well as Virgil's elegiac tendencies within imperial poetry more broadly (Part 3) and the reception of Virgil's elegiac discourse in later literary contexts (Part 4).

Among the contributions from Part 1, 'Elegy in Vergil', both J. Henkel and J. Fabre-Serris focus on the *Eclogues*, emphasising the polemical essence of Virgilian poetry, which shows a tendency to reframe and restructure literary genres. As Henkel maintains, through allegorical and metapoetic discourse, *Eclogues* 1 stages an opposition between Meliboeus as being exemplary of Gallus' elegiac poetry and Tityrus as the embodiment of Virgil's bucolic poetry. Accordingly, the (poetic) conflict between Meliboeus and Tityrus exemplifies different views of literature, love and political power. Despite the antagonistic engagement with Gallus' poetics, the metapoetic content of *Eclogues* 1 implies the prominence of elegy as a genre within Virgil's poetry. In the following chapter Fabre-Serris examines *Eclogues* 10, suggesting that pastoral poetry can be a remedy – *pharmakon* – for love, whereas elegiac poetry is ineffective at healing lovesickness. Featuring prominently in the elegies of Tibullus and Propertius, the motif of the *medicina amoris* can thus be interpreted as a response to Virgil's critique of elegy in *Eclogues* 10, which demonstrates that the experience of the elegiac poet may benefit other unhappy lovers. Continuing this reading of Virgil's incorporation of elegy as polemical, or at least ambiguous, Gardner reconsiders accounts of the *Saturnia regna* in Virgil's poetry vis-à-vis Tibullus' problematic engagement with the motif of the Golden Age. Drawing on Tibullus (e.g. Tib. 1.3, 2.3 and 2.5), Virgil's accounts of the *Saturnia regna* in *Eclogues* 4 and *Georgics* 1 articulate the impossibility or futility of agriculture, but also the connection between agriculture and (civil) war, thereby representing the Golden Age as antithetic to several aspects of Augustus' agenda. Other chapters in Part 1 investigate how elegy features in Virgil's poetry through the (elegiac as well as Homeric) motif of *nostos* (Myers), the characters of Turnus and Camilla in the *Aeneid* (E. Anagnostou-Laoutides)

and the metapoetic agency of Erato in *Aeneid* 7 (McCallum). In the final chapter of this section W. Gladhill reassesses the origins of elegy as a possible development from the *neniae*, namely funerary litanies, generally performed orally. By examining the episode of Euryalus and Nisus in *Aeneid* 9 as an example of ‘nenian’ elegiac elements in Virgil, Gladhill reveals generic anxieties resonating with other passages of the *Aeneid*, where the magniloquence of epic seems to be rejected.

Part 2, ‘Vergil in Ovidian Elegy’, includes contributions on the reception, and distortion, of Virgilian elements in Ovid’s *Amores*, *Ars amatoria*, *Remedia* and *Medicamina* as well as the *Fasti* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*. Ovid’s playful and often irreverent engagement with Virgil’s poetry is masterfully exemplified in the chapters by B. Weiden Boyd, J.P. Hallett and S. Papaioannou. Drawing on the idea of the *Fasti* as ‘a sort of bricolage construction’ (p. 176), Weiden Boyd focuses on the retelling of Aristaeus’ epyllion, which exemplifies how Ovid interrogates Virgil’s works to uncover their most ambiguous and problematic aspects. The omission of the main character of *Georgics* 4, namely Orpheus, may be the result of Ovid’s revision of the *Fasti* during his exile in Tomis. Indeed, Virgil’s characterisation of Orpheus as an unhappy lover and unfortunate poet would have seemed a dangerous subject to a poet banished from Rome due to his amatory *carmen* (cf. *Tr.* 2.207–8), as Ovid was. In the following chapter Hallett explores Ovid’s allusions (*Am.* 3.9) to a comparison between Tibullus’ and Virgil’s poetry. By elevating elegy and epic to the same level, Ovid downplays Virgil’s epic poem and its shortcomings. This is exemplified by the repurposing of Venus: unlike Virgil, Ovid does not sanitise Venus’ sexual history, thus undermining Augustus’ moral ideology. Returning to the *Fasti*, Papaioannou reconsiders Ovid’s reception of Virgil’s Anna as an elegiac *ancilla* (*Fast.* 3). Several aspects of Anna Perenna’s aetiology in Ovid – including the pre-Virgilian tradition of her affair with Aeneas, her connection to the *lena* as well as *ancilla* of the elegiac tradition and her association with witchcraft – suggest that Virgil is indebted to ‘lower’ genres for the construction of his character, and accordingly highlight the intergeneric nature of the *Aeneid*.

Both Part 3, ‘Vergil and Elegy in Imperial Latin Literature’, and Part 4, ‘Vergil’s Elegiac Mode in Reception’, focus on the reception of Virgil’s elegiac ‘modes’ in later poetic production: while Part 3 investigates imperial Latin poetry, Part 4 examines the reception of Virgil and elegy more broadly. Chapters from these two sections include re-readings of Calpurnius’ *Eclogues* 2 and 3 (Y. Baraz), Valerius Flaccus’ *Argonautica* (J. Blum-Sorensen) and Statius’ *Silvae* and *Achilleid* (A. De Cristofaro) vis-à-vis Virgil’s own incorporation of erotic poetry. Furthermore, G. Abbamonte, L. Roman and L. Miletti interrogate the presence, or absence, of elegiac contents in the reception of Virgil in Servius’ commentary, the humanist poet Pontano and fifteenth-century Antiquarian writers from the Regno di Napoli, respectively. An oblique form of reception of ‘Virgilian elegy’ can be found in Lucan’s account of the deforestation of the sacred grove of Massilia. By building on Lucan’s well-known strategy of the *imitatio negativa* (that is, the reversal of scenes or phrases), G. Celotto maintains that the deforestation of Massilia’s grove is described through language resonating with scenes of sexual assault. Lucan conflates Virgil’s epic (particularly the scene of Camilla’s death in *Aen.* 11) with elegiac poetry, thus transforming the elegiac motif of *militia amoris* into *amor belli*. Focusing on a different aspect of the reception of Virgil and elegy, N.B. Pandey shows how the paratexts surrounding Virgil’s works have contributed to making them appear as an elegiac *corpus*. Perhaps the most notable among Virgilian paratexts, the elegiac epitaph engraved on the poet’s tombstone exemplifies multiple generic tensions, reshaping Virgil as someone who tried to construct his poetic narrative as an elegiac poet. Turning to late antiquity, K. Draper examines Ausonius’ *Cupido Cruciatu*s, which, while being an

explicitly Virgilian poem (as per Ausonius' *Preface*), includes Ovidian elements. This manipulation – or, rather, 'correction' – of the Virgilian model through Ovid's elegy sheds light on the incorporation of elegiac patterns in Virgil's poetry. Focusing on the Italian Renaissance, J.M. Ortiz shows how Ludovico Ariosto amplifies the elegiac subtext of Euryalus' and Nisus' tragic deaths (*Aen.* 9) in his *Orlando Furioso* (1532). Alongside revealing the unorthodox content of the Virgilian episode, the elegiac elements in the narrative of Angelica and Medoro also demonstrate Ariosto's pessimistic view of the Renaissance as a means to recover the past. Overall, Keith and Myers' edited volume not only provides original insights into Virgil's engagement with Latin love elegy, but also sheds light on the broader dynamics characterising Augustan poetry and its reception.

In her monograph McCallum takes a more specific angle, which aims to reveal the incidence of elegy in the second half of Virgil's *Aeneid* (Books 7–12). By using intertextuality (and, to some extent, intratextuality) as her main hermeneutical tool, McCallum explores how *amor* ('love') and *mors* ('death') contribute to the emergence of elegiac discourse within Virgil's epic poem. Along with intertextuality, McCallum reconsiders Virgil's elegiac motifs vis-à-vis avenues of enquiry related to the composition of the *Aeneid* as well as Virgil's influence on his literary context. Before delving into the main object of her analysis, McCallum provides context for her reading of *Aeneid* 7–12 against other investigations of intergeneric discourse within Virgil's poetry (pp. 8–36): Virgil's engagement with elegy within the *Eclogues*, the *Georgics* as well as the first six books of the *Aeneid* have been the object of various studies, whereas intersections with elegy and other non-epic literary genres within the Iliadic part of the *Aeneid* have not been explored in much detail. McCallum effectively shows how Virgil's poetry might have been influenced by Gallus' elegy, though observations on this matter remain necessarily speculative. The focus on Gallus and on the influence of his poetic legacy on Virgil is a strength of the introduction; however, one occasionally gets the impression that McCallum misses the opportunity to signal other elegiac echoes in Virgilian poetry. For instance, in the discussion of Gallus' echoes in Virgil's *miseram Eurydicen* (*G.* 4.526), the relevance of the adjective *miser* within Catullus poetry (e.g. Catull. 8.1 and 10; 30.5; 50.9; 51.5) is overlooked; similarly, as it comes to Dido in *Aeneid* 4, it would perhaps have been beneficial to look 'in retrospect' at Ovid's elegiac treatment of Dido in *Heroides* 7 (pp. 32–5). These omissions, which are intrinsic to the summative nature of introductory chapters, do little to harm McCallum's introduction, which does an excellent job of laying out the methodology and main topics of the monograph as well as igniting the interest of readers for what may follow.

What follows is a stimulating and intriguing reading of intergeneric discourse within *Aeneid* 7, distributed over the first two chapters of the book. Chapter 1 focuses on the invocation of Erato in *Aeneid* 7.1–45 (the so-called proem in the middle) as a matriarch of amatory poetry, which signals the intromission of elegiac material within Book 7. Through a refined intertextual analysis, Chapter 1 demonstrates that the elegiac motifs of love and death conveyed by the symbolic role of Erato have a programmatic meaning. Continuing this avenue, Chapter 2 demonstrates how love becomes a lethal force in *Aeneid* 7, conflating the elegiac themes of *amor* and *mors*. This conflation is exemplified by the figures of Lavinia and Turnus: the former combines both erotic (love) and military (death) appeal; the latter is qualified by words and phrasing (e.g. *pulcherrimus*, at *Aen.* 7.55) that hint at both amatory and martial defeat. Similarly, etymological, symbolic and intertextual/intratextual connections suggest that Amata represents a crucial elegiac figure in the *Aeneid*: while her name recalls the past participle of the verb *amo*, intratextual echoes of the Gorgonian Fury and Dido as a Fury in earlier books of the *Aeneid* demonstrate that Amata's elegiac figure has destructive implications. Further intertextual analysis of

the representations of Ascanius and Turnus, along with Amata's later appearance (*Aen.* 7.580–2), confirm that the elegiac content transforms into epic *amor*, which has destructive implications.

In the following chapter McCallum pointedly demonstrates that generic interactions allow the coexistence of different aspects of Venus: the epic mother; the Lucretian, generative, natural force; and the goddess of love. Through the juxtaposition of Venus' maternal and erotic aspects as well as her Homeric, Apollonian and Lucretian background, Virgil has Venus encapsulate his 'generic experimentation', which thwarts 'epic parameters' (p. 87). Permeated by elegiac patterns, the episode of Venus' encounter with her husband, Vulcan, exemplifies *amor* as a powerful weapon, which turns into actual *arma* as Venus requests new armour for her son Aeneas. Vulcan's fabrication of weapons culminates in his sexual intercourse with Venus, so that elegiac content generates *arma*, which in turn engenders *amor* and sexual pleasure. Drawing on previous remarks concerning Erato's powerful role (cf. Chapter 2), Chapter 4 focuses on the catalogues of heroes from *Aeneid* 7 and 10. Here, the incorporation of funerary and amatory elegy produces generic tensions, while at the same time underscoring the connections between *amor*, *arma* and *mors* within Virgil's poem. In the catalogue from *Aeneid* 7 (761–77), mythological digressions about minor heroes and Etruscans (such as Virbius/Hippolytus, Turnus and Camilla) allow Virgil to merge *amor* with *arma* and *mors*. The introduction of Hippolytus/Virbius to the Italian heroic landscape forecasts his doom through allusions and intertextuality, and it also establishes a link to the tension between *amor* and *mors* in the Turnus and Camilla episode. Similarly, the portrayal of Cycnus among Aeneas' Etruscan allies (cf. *Aen.* 10.185–93) recalls Gallus as a sorrowful and unfortunate elegiac *amator* in *Eclogues* 10, as demonstrated by, among others, the 'subtle intertextual reverberations' of the expression *dum canit* (*Aen.* 10.191; p. 120). In the heroic catalogues of *Aeneid* 7 and 10 Virgil displays intertextual connections with mythological narratives, which are in turn interwoven with elegiac erotic and funerary motifs.

The final chapter of the book reconsiders *Aeneid* 12 as the culmination of Virgil's experimentation with amatory and funerary elegy. Virgil's generic interplay further suggests that *amor* holds catastrophic consequences for the central Italian characters of the *maius opus*. Turnus' metaphoric association with the wounds of love, along with the (intra)textual and thematic links to fire and Juno (*Aen.* 12.4–9), embodies the connection between *vulnera amoris* and the elegiac *violentia*. While the portrayal of Turnus at the beginning of Book 12 evokes the love-struck Dido, the metaphor of Turnus as a lion connects him to both Nisus and Pallas, thus transforming the motif of the eroticised youth into the lamented hero (*mors*). Similar to Turnus, the depiction of Lavinia at 12.64–9 exemplifies Virgil's intergeneric discourse by combining epic (Medea in Apollonius' *Argon.* 3) and elegiac motifs (Acontius and Cydippe via Catull. 65). The intertextual link between Lavinia's blush and Propertius' *puella* at 3.8.7 as a catalyser of elegiac rivalry suggests that Lavinia embodies the causes of the *Aeneid*'s Iliadic wars. Both Turnus and Lavinia, among others (including Latinus and Amata), articulate the connection between love and war, and the amatory and sepulchral, thus fulfilling the importance of *amor*, *mors* and *arma* in Erato's programmatic speech (*Aeneid* 7).

Finally, by means of two case studies – namely Statius' epithalamium for Stella and Violentilla (*Silv.* 1.2) and Ovid's Phaeton and Caieta (*Met.* 2.325–8; 14.441–4) – the epilogue sheds light on how Virgil's intergeneric experimentation influenced post-Virgilian poets, who seem to take the coexistence of love and death as a prominently elegiac topos. The glossary of 'Elegiac Concepts' (pp. 183–90) and indexes make the book more easily accessible to a diverse readership and also allow scholars to identify specific topics or passages of interest throughout the volume. In sum, McCallum's compelling

monograph is an essential addition to existing scholarship on intertextuality in Latin poetry, generic interactions, Virgil and elegy.

Bowditch's book is another compelling, original and welcome contribution to the body of scholarship on Latin love elegy, while it takes a different hermeneutical standpoint from McCallum's monograph. Combining both existing and new research findings, the chapters within Bowditch's book explore love elegy from an Orientalist and postcolonial perspective, thereby offering fresh insights into how elegy may reflect 'colonial discourse' in Rome. The introductory chapter details Bowditch's methodological and theoretical framework, which relies on postcolonial theory, mostly E. Said's *Orientalism*, while also building upon classical scholarship that has explored Latin elegy through postcolonial lenses (e.g. the works by Keith and Wyke). In the introduction Bowditch clarifies certain terms and definitions, including 'postcolonial' (where 'post-' also refers to cultural responses of newly decolonised territories; pp. 4–5) and 'colonial discourse' within the context of Latin literary production: here, 'colonial discourse' stands for 'rhetorical systems that reflect, fashion, and instil the attitudes and self-perceptions of the Roman metropolitan elite', who distinguished 'themselves from an "Other" over whom Rome held sway' (pp. 8–9). Following D.F. Kennedy ("Augustan" and "Anti-Augustan": Reflections on Terms of Reference', in: A. Powell [ed.], *Roman Poetry and Propaganda in the Age of Augustus* [1992], 26–58), Bowditch re-evaluates Latin elegy as potentially functional to Augustus' promotion of his empire, rather than as 'oppositional'. While appropriating and reflecting the concerns and interests of Roman imperial dominance, elegy is also a rejection of public engagement, thus resulting in ambivalence between the dominant discourse of colonial, Orientalising motifs and the elegiac conventions – specifically, the elegiac mistress. Elegy incorporates the tropes of Hellenistic Greek poetry; at the same time, Greek culture is distanced as exotic and somehow a danger to Rome's sovereignty, as the Horatian *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit* testifies (Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.156). The idea that the conquered (Greek) culture may, in turn, dominate the (Roman) conquerors is a central thread within the book and suggests that the Romans' appropriation of 'Others' may also mean an acknowledgment of, and openness to, differences.

Chapter 2 examines elements of Rome's colonialist relation to Egypt in Tibullus 1.7, drawing on Said's *Orientalism* and postcolonial studies in classical scholarship. After remarking on the ambivalence between familiarity and novelty in the characterisation of 'foreign' populations, Bowditch explores how Egypt is reshaped in the Roman context of Tibullan elegy, wherein Osiris, as the inventor of agriculture, along with his feminised self, interacts with the ritualistic patterns of the Roman triumph. Osiris represents a counterpart to Messalla as an embodiment of Roman civilisation, but at the same time is a doppelgänger of the effeminate Bacchus/Dionysus, thereby oscillating between the masculinity embodied by Messalla and the features of an elegiac mistress. While the landscape description in the poem contributes to an Orientalising and feminising depiction of Egypt as 'Other', Osiris is qualified as *levis*, which enhances his association with the elegiac mistress. Thus, Osiris' representation in Tibullus 1.7 combines Orientalism with the ritualistic component of the triumph over foreign land as well as the features of the feminised but empowered elegiac mistress, namely the *dura puella*. However, Bowditch observes that the *dura puella* is herself a product of the elegiac poet's fantasy, and in Tibullus 1.7 she becomes a projection of the Roman incorporation of Egypt – and its culture. Along with the ambivalent meaning of the *dura puella*, the repetition of the adjective *mollis* in relation to Messalla suggests how 'elegy itself acts as a "soft-power" resource of cultural imperialism' (p. 53). Accordingly, Osiris' ambivalence in Tibullus

1.7 reflects Rome's ambivalent attitudes toward Egypt, a province to be both integrated and assimilated.

In Chapter 3 Augustan symbolic architecture is reconsidered vis-à-vis poems by Propertius (including 1.8A, 1.11, 2.3 and 4.3) that exhibit a cartographic awareness of Rome's geographic expansion. By engaging with the conceptualisations of space within Rome's Orientalising rhetoric, elegiac discourse transforms provinces and other foreign lands into the elegiac *puella* or the *mollis amator*. In Propertius 2.3 Cynthia's cartographic imagery represents both Rome's conquests and the (feminine) land yet to be conquered; as a product of Hellenistic poetry, the elegiac *puella* (Cynthia) reflects Rome's cultural ambition to dominate Greece. In Propertius 4.3 knowledge of geography, cartography and climatology contributes to the depiction of map-reading as a discipline. Arethusa's view of the *tabula* ('map') endorses Rome's legitimacy to claim power over the *orbis terrarum*: by drawing on the Hippocratic *Airs, Waters and Places*, Arethusa's cartographic view makes Rome's settings appear to be the best environmental conditions. Concurrently, following well-established rhetorical and historiographical traditions (especially Cicero, Sallust and Livy), the elegiac *amator* emerges as the product of Rome's *mollitia*, 'refinement' or 'softness', namely as a result of Rome's contact with 'Other', eastern territories. Thus, the survey of cartographic and imperialistic imagery in Propertius suggests that, while seemingly legitimating Roman rule, elegy may include more ambiguous discourse.

Chapter 4 moves from R. Barthes's ideas regarding the pleasure of the text to explore the relation between imported foreign goods and the elegiac mistress within poems by Propertius, Tibullus and Ovid, wherein the *puella* may serve as an 'unstable metaphor' for Roman imperialism (p. 114). For instance, Propertius 2.16 presents the poet's rivalry with a wealthy praetor, which articulates the ambivalent picture of the empire and the pleasure of eroticised foreign goods. Not only does the contest for Cynthia's favours in the private realm of elegy parallel the rivalry between Antony and Octavian for Rome, but the depiction of Cynthia as an accumulator of foreign goods also resonates with conventional narratives (e.g. Lucretia in Livy 1.57–8) associating Roman women with the body politic. Concurrently, Propertius' Cynthia evokes condemnations of luxury associated with female depravity that can be found in Sallust (cf., e.g., *Cat.* 11.5–6) and Cicero (*Cael.* 13–6). While in Tibullus 2.3 (and 2.4), feminine vanity takes the blame for imperial expansion and the decadence of the body politic, Ovid's *Medicamina* and *Ars* 3 suggest that foreign goods coming to the city contribute to the attire of the elegiac mistress. As the *puella*'s adornment and appearance are compared to symbolic Roman buildings in *Ars* 3.107–33, one may infer that foreign goods affect the architecture of Rome, and accordingly reshape its symbolic meaning. Representing both the stereotypical foreign woman enslaved, brought from the East, and the greedy woman who asks for more delicacies and luxury, the elegiac *domina* further emphasises the ambiguous meaning of imported goods and luxuries that feature in Augustan elegy.

Chapter 5 explores the metaphorical, denotative and performative significance of the triumph in Latin elegy, wherein it enforces the differences between imperial Rome and its conquered 'Others'. The echoes of Horace's 'captured Greece' at the beginning of Propertius' *Monobiblos* ('Cynthia first captured wretched me with her eyes') strengthen the elegiac ambivalence between conqueror and conquered. Indeed, the elegiac poet can be interpreted as both the *triumphator* importing Greek poetry and the vanquished lover succumbing to his elegiac mistress. Tibullus gestures towards the motif of triumph in some of his poems, including 2.5, which celebrates the introduction of Messalla's son to priesthood. The reference to Messalla's victories contributes to the depiction of Rome as a military force. Concurrently, this triumphal narrative points out that more eastern,

foreign goods will come to Rome, thus continuing to undermine Roman *mores* ('customs') and traditional ideas of masculinity. Relevantly, in 3.11, Propertius appeals to mythological and historical *exempla* of powerful women to rationalise his own enslavement to the elegiac mistress: women such as Cleopatra, Omphale and Semiramis all recall the Orientalising motif of eastern threat, which is both replicated and overcome by Rome's military power. Thus, the incorporation of thematic and ritualistic patterns connected to triumph suggests that powerful women mirror, yet at the same time undermine Rome's imperial hegemony. Despite these ambivalences and contradictions, through triumphal descriptions and allusions, Augustan elegists invite their readers (or audience) to contemplate the 'idea of empire' (p. 192).

Chapter 6 recalls, once again, the Horatian motif of *Graecia capta* to show how elegy as a genre draws on Hellenistic models; in this case, the elegiac mistress is (re)read as a reflection of the courtesan of New Comedy. Elegy's derivation from Greek comedy and its characterisation as a *mollis* ('soft') literary genre, along with the lifestyle of the poet-*amator*, builds upon a prominent motif within Roman oratory, namely the distinction between the pure Hellenism of Athens and the degraded Asiatic aesthetic of those who would later be colonised by the Greeks. The chapter focuses on Propertius 3.21 and 3.22, which illustrate the tensions between feminised *mollitia* and the masculine ideals of domination in Augustus' propaganda. By combining imperial expansion with cultural corruption, the two poems articulate the cultural hybridity intrinsic to imperial Rome, thus undermining the Orientalising rhetoric of Augustan propaganda through an ironic subtext.

Continuing the discussion on cultural hybridity, Chapter 7 examines passages from Tibullan and Propertian elegies to show that Rome's incorporation of the Egyptian god Isis is evidence of ambivalent attitudes to its newly acquired province. While Tibullus' depiction of Delia as Isis in 1.3 dissolves the difference between 'Roman' gods – who, according to Augustus' legislation, must be worshipped in the pomerium – and foreign gods, Propertius' Pelasgian Juno (Prop. 2.28A and B) reinforces the Graeco-Roman backstory of Isis. Furthermore, while marking a binary distinction between Egypt and Italy, Propertius 2.33 stresses Isis' hybridity. This hybridity, in turn, undermines the rhetoric of 'Otherness' that imperialistic propaganda was apparently promoting.

Within the monograph, Bowditch perhaps misses the opportunity to provide a more fluid and less binary view of genders, which would have nuanced the analysis of gender roles and dynamics (particularly in Chapters 2, 4, 5 and 6). Except for this minor point, the book fulfils its primary aims. Bowditch compellingly and originally demonstrates that elegy constitutes a form of 'colonial discourse', while also embedding the ambiguous and contradictory views of Rome's hybrid assimilation of the 'Other'.

All four books are carefully edited; a few minor typographical errors and formatting inconsistencies do not undermine comprehension and readability. The authors and editors of the volumes are worthy of praise and admiration for contributing significantly to our understanding of Latin elegiac and Augustan poetry.

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