

S. J. HEYWORTH, *Ovid: Fasti Book 3*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019, 296 pp., £ 24.99, ISBN 978-1-107-60246-5.

In the preface, Heyworth (hereafter 'H.')

remarks that his commentary on Ovid *Fasti* 3, which was started in earnest in 2009, has had a gestation period of about 35 years, through the author's days as a graduate and teacher of *Fasti* 3 at Oxford. It represents the fifth major commentary on a book of the *Fasti* to appear in English over the past 20 or so years, and the first on *Fasti* 3 for nearly a century.¹

This is a truly excellent commentary. It is both informative for a dip-in reader and eminently readable for those approaching the text and commentary in linear fashion. Its central aim is to promote an appreciation of this intricate text within existing scholarly debates.

The work opens with general introductory sections. 'Ovid's Life and Career' (pp. 1-5) presents a useful summary of Ovid's poems with particular emphasis on how earlier works anticipate the diverse thematic priorities of *Fasti*. Though H. offers a chronology for Ovid's poetry (p.5), it proves to be a working guide for the reader, as the next two sections, on the relationship between *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses* and Ovid's exile/ exile poetry respectively (pp. 5-9, 10-13), encourage us to read the late Ovidian works not only together but also in both directions, as interwoven texts. In particular, we should be alive to the prospect of reading Ovid's exile into all parts of *Fasti* (see also commentary notes on verses 114, 116, 309-10, 325-6, 344, 563-4, 565-6, 576, 589 and 593-4). The next section ('*Fasti* and Calendars', pp. 13-18) provides a very effective and concise explanation of the development in Roman systems of timekeeping from the city's origins to the formation of the Julian calendar. Further introductory sections focus on Book 3 specifically (pp. 18-28) and on the genre, style, and metre of the poem (pp. 28-42), all of which are handled with the same care – although I would not personally define the poem as 'didactic' (pp. 28-31), for which I maintain that a more coherent didactic pose is required.²

The Latin text (pp. 49-73) is the result of independent study of the main MSS, in preparation for an Oxford Classical Text, though no apparatus criticus is included in this edition. In contrast to Fantham's 1998 Cambridge commentary on *Fasti* 4, H.'s text is presented in continuous fashion – i.e. not punctuated by artificial calendrical notation – and internal speech is not demarcated by inverted commas. These strategies seek to preserve the reading experience and interpretive dynamics of the original, and H. is sensitive to moments where speech can

¹ Cf. E. Fantham, *Ovid: Fasti Book IV*, Cambridge 1998; S.J. Green, *Ovid, Fasti 1: A Commentary*, Leiden 2004; R.J. Littlewood, *A Commentary on Ovid Fasti Book 6*, Oxford 2006; M. Robinson, *A Commentary on Ovid's Fasti, Book 2*, Oxford 2011.

² See S.J. Green, *Ovid, Fasti 1: A Commentary*, Leiden 2004, 3-4, 12-13.

be attributed to different parties (e.g. n. on 253-8 and, more provocatively, n. on 703-8) and where conceptual links are subtly created between different 'episodes' in the book (e.g. n. on 400 and the disappearance of fish between Numa and Pisces, n. on 523-696 and the ways in which Ovid's treatment of Anna Perenna reflects/ deepens motifs and episodes found elsewhere in the book).

The commentary section itself interrogates the text from a wide variety of perspectives – literary/ intertextual, cultural, historical, religious, topographical – but, to my mind, the most distinctive strengths of the commentary are its attention to (i) the poem's generic conflict; (ii) the richness of Ovid's verbal/ etymological play, and; (iii) the dynamics of internal characterisation.

Generic Conflict. *Fasti 3* opens with a provocative generic statement, as the god of warfare, compliant but only partially disarmed, makes an appearance within his own month. Mars' epiphany visualises the *Fasti's* push-and-pull tension between epic and elegy (see nn. on 171-6), and H. is very effective in teasing out the meta-poetic play within individual narratives. So, in the manner of an epic poet, Mars renders Silvia both 'heavy' and 'rising' (nn. on 21-2, 23-4, 25-6); martially alert Sabines become 'swollen' (n. on 201); and thunder crashes 'heavily' (n. on 368). But the evidence suggests that elegy packs the greater punch in this generic duel: after all, the poet takes small draughts from the shallow stream of Egeria (n. on 273-4), and the poetry-creating hoof of Pegasus is suitably light (n. on 456). In such a literary environment, it is tears, the hallmark of elegy, that eventually win out over warfare (n. on 232); and the heavy thunder of Jupiter gives way to the descent of a peculiarly 'slender' shield (n. on 373-4). As the examples above demonstrate, play between epic and elegy often operates within the same episode. The sequence of stories for 7 March (435-48) sees a young armless Jupiter become part of a Gigantomachy. And it is worth noting that even in the 'epic' tale of Romulus' birth, Silvia dreams of two trees that are both equal and of differing lengths (31-4) – a vision of the elegiac couplet and epic hexameter combined.

Verbal/ Etymological Play. Ovid's capacity for etymological play is well recognised, but H. reveals its intensity within *Fasti 3*; see e.g. nn. on 7-8 (Pallas), 11-12 (Vesta), 29-30 and 62 (Ilia/ Ilias), 174 (Gradivus/ gressus), 245-6 (Esquilinus/ excubiae), 261-2 (Numa/ nemus), 666 and 668 (Anna/ annona/ anus). H. is particularly sensitive to Ovid's word play, and there are some ingenious suggestions on offer. The (implied) shout of *ave* from the Sabine babies between the enemy battle lines may not be a curious sign of infantile knowledge ('grandfather') but actually a mishearing of the more natural cry, *au*, *a*, or *vae* (see n. on 224). Ampelos picks fruit, falls, and is commemorated by Bacchus in the form of a star; but through the employment of *legit*, *decidit*, and *Liber*, Ampelos is also a reader who falls like the elegiac couplet and is commemorated in a book (n. on 413-14).

Characterisation. Characterisation is complex in Ovid, and H. shows that there is space to view: Numa as both archetypal image of piety and religious manipulator/ confidence trickster (n. on 370-1); Ariadne as stager of her lament: does she already know that Bacchus is close at hand? (n. on 508); Aeneas and Anna as clandestine lovers to match Lavinia's suspicions (nn. on 622 and 645).

While the notes are a constant source of stimulation for the scholar, H. is equally sensitive to the needs of the less advanced Latin reader. There is widespread translation, paraphrase, or otherwise discussion of awkward phrases and sentences, and there is ample help with Ovid's grammatical construction and lexical choice. Accordingly, the reader is directed towards accessible resources such as the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, the Latin grammar of Gildersleeve and Lodge, and major commentaries in English; references to the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (n. on 15-16) or the German grammar of Kühner and Stegmann (n. on 231) are rare.

Criticism of H.'s commentary, and further suggestions for inclusion, are minor. H. is alert to the potential for bias in both Mars-as-narrator and the poet narrating about Romulus in the presence of Mars (e.g. nn. on 70, 229-52), but it might have been worth bringing these observations together into a more central note on Mars as particularly subjective character within the *Fasti*: note in particular his selective viewing of his own temple in *Fasti* 5.³ The note on *flaminibus* (137) might be expanded to give basic details about this sacred position, and there could be a note on the rare poetic compound *oliviferis* (151). Does *saepe* in 269 present an opportunity for initial misreading, in light of *saepe* in 267? I would not take *summisere* (372) in the unusual sense 'raise'; it seems to me to indicate the reverential lowering of one's eyes in the presence of the supernatural, after which *ecce* (373) announces a new focus skywards. In the main story of Anna Perenna, which regularly aspires to epic status, a ship progressing *pede ... aequo* (565) surely invites a metapoetic reading. Finally, I wonder if *Fasti* 3 is designed to be a particularly 'fishy' month? In addition to Pisces and the fish in the story of Numa, we encounter fish-filled rivers (581 *piscosos ... amnes*), and we are invited to contemplate a story about fishy transformation even when it is not actually delivered (723-4 *subitos pisces*).

This review has plucked just some of the rich pickings available from this commentary. It is exemplary in terms of its scholarly focus, conciseness, and attention to a variety of different readers of the poem. Suffice it to say that it has been well worth the wait.

STEVEN J. GREEN
Yale-NUS College, Singapore
steven.green@yale-nus.edu.sg

³ See C. Newlands, *Playing with Time: Ovid and the Fasti*, Ithaca 1995, 96-102.

