

and carefully. This chapter and the previous one are partly revisions of previously published articles, but D. here additionally considers the importance of the Augustan context. She thus suggests that Paris may not merely be a lover misapplying a text written specifically for the *Romana iuventus* (*Ars am.* 1.459), but also a representation of ‘a specific Roman youth, namely Octavian, similarly recognized late – in his case through a posthumous adoption – as the scion of a famous ruling family, and similarly about to embark on a war that would utterly change his sociopolitical world’ (p. 99). Helen, responding as the conflicted object of Paris’ advances, is a parallel for Rome, but specifically ‘a Rome conflicted about Octavian, a feeling that may not have lessened with his transformation into Augustus’ (p. 113). Helen and Ovid thus invite careful reading of both Augustus’ claims and the *Heroides* as a whole. They support D.’s argument for reading the collection as an expression of growing concerns about the Augustan principate, which the coda further exemplifies with Acontius and Cydippe’s letters.

This book provides innovative readings of a selection of Ovid’s *Heroides* within and in response to their political contexts and makes a strong case for reading the entire collection in this way. It offers a compelling invitation to follow D. in reading the *Heroides* through a sociohistorical lens.

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SENECA AS A PHILOSOPHER AND WRITER

GRAVER (M.) *Seneca. The Literary Philosopher*. Pp. xii + 305. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023. Cased, £85, US\$110. ISBN: 978-1-107-16404-8.

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G.’s monograph represents a good example of the concept of emergence, wherein the whole exceeds the mere sum of its constituent parts. While eleven out of its twelve chapters have already been published as articles throughout the past couple of years, the book does not appear as a rehash. Not only has the material undergone revisions and updates for this publication, but when considered collectively, the chapters also present a comprehensive panorama of Seneca as both a philosopher and a man of letters.

Perusing the introduction is advisable for its invaluable insights and to learn more about G.’s perspective on crucial questions regarding Seneca’s philosophical oeuvre. G. stipulates some fundamental assumptions that underlie her interpretations. She regards the majority of Seneca’s writings as ‘formally therapeutic in nature’ (p. 3), aimed primarily at enhancing the lives of their recipients. Scholars should bear this intention in mind when interpreting Seneca’s texts, simultaneously recognising him also pursuing in his works more extensive (e.g. theoretical, literary etc.) interests that far transcend the mere provision of aid and counsel. Consequently, while therapy acts as a motivating factor behind crafting a text and shapes its structure to a certain extent, it does not curtail Seneca’s broader philosophical and literary aspirations.

Regarding the tragedies, G. holds a view that is a minority opinion, as she acknowledges. She does not consider the dramas to be by the same author as the

philosophical works; so they are omitted from her considerations. Substantial portions and even whole chapters of the monograph are dedicated to *De beneficiis*, *De otio* and *De ira*. Nonetheless, the primary source for G.'s studies comes from *Epistulae morales* (cf. also the *index locorum* at the end of the book). G. regards these *Letters* as pure fiction and destined for a wider audience from the outset. The presence of Lucilius 'is honorific, rather than functional' (p. 11) in her eyes.

The introduction establishes the rationale and the structure of the book, which is divided into four sections. Part 1, 'Recreating the Stoic Past', unearths Seneca's engagement with earlier Stoic traditions and illuminates his personal perspective on Stoicism. The first chapter 'The Life of the Mind: Seneca and the *Contemplatio Veri*' examines how Seneca managed to promote a contemplative life of study despite the Stoic imperative of *vita activa*. G. focuses primarily on the arguments in *De otio* and in *Epistulae morales*. In the ensuing chapter 'Action and Emotion: Seneca and the Stoic Tradition' G. demonstrates that Seneca did not alter essential Stoic concepts of ethics and psychology. His main contributions lie in the development of novel rhetorical strategies for disseminating these Stoic teachings. The third and last chapter of this part, 'The Treatise *On Benefits*: Real Kindness and Real Agency', contains a detailed analysis of *De beneficiis*, a segment I found particularly illuminating. G. not only extracts Seneca's concept of *beneficium* from this long and demanding treatise, but also illustrates how *beneficium* is interwoven with other concepts such as the so-called *oikeosis*, friendship and divine providence.

Part 2, 'Rival Traditions in Philosophy', directs the view from Seneca's own philosophical school to its biggest rivals – the Epicureans and Peripatetics. Chapter 4, 'Seneca and Epicurus', delves into Seneca's interaction with Epicurus and particularly the potential sources he might have drawn upon. In Chapter 5, the attention turns to the Peripatetics. After an overview of Seneca's reception of Aristotle and the Peripatetic school in general ('scientific' Peripatetic content in *Naturales quaestiones* is omitted, though), G. concentrates on *Letter* 92. She compellingly demonstrates how this epistle responds to Peripatetic viewpoints from a Stoic perspective. Seneca might have encountered these views in a text akin to the so-called 'Stobaeon Doxography C.', although the latter text notably diverges from some concepts discussed in the Senecan letter. The fourth major Hellenistic school, the Academy, is not allotted a chapter of its own. However, Chapter 5 also contributes insights regarding the Old Academy, and Chapter 9 takes the Platonic *Phaedrus* into consideration.

Part 3 deals with 'Models of Emotional Experience'. Given the current popularity of emotions in antiquity as an object of research, its three chapters may also appeal to scholars working on this topic. Chapter 6, 'Seneca's Therapy for Anger', conducts a meticulous analysis of Seneca's *De ira*. G.'s focus lies on Seneca's therapeutical advice on how to avoid and compress anger in Books 2 and 3. Her careful examination reveals that Seneca barely fulfils his central pledge to provide effective therapies for compressing acute outbursts of anger. Furthermore, his recommended remedies scarcely draw upon the theoretical reflections about the nature and origin of anger in Book 1. Since *De ira* is Seneca's first major philosophical treatise, his relative inexperience in crafting such works could account for these inconsistencies in structure and reasoning, as G. proposes. Subsequent to this, Chapter 7, 'The Weeping Wise', scrutinises notions of consolation within *Letter* 99 of *Epistulae morales*. Seneca's Stoic sage is portrayed as not devoid of compassion and might even shed tears. Following these examinations of rather negative emotions, Chapter 8, 'Anatomies of Joy: Seneca and the *Gaudium* Tradition', navigates into the realm of joy. In addition to presenting Seneca's own concepts of joy, G. evaluates his use of sources and the tradition within which he positions himself. Hence, the chapter contains a case study of Seneca's 'working methods as a philosopher' (p. 176).

The concluding Part 4, ‘The Self within the Text’, treats a complex, yet rewarding subject: Seneca’s views on the creation of literature and the self. In ‘The Challenges of the *Phaedrus*: Therapeutic Writing and the *Letters on Ethics*’ (Chapter 9) G. addresses Seneca’s response in *Epistulae morales* to the Platonic position preferring oral discourse over written communication. Chapter 10, ‘The Mouse, the Moneybox, and the Six-Footed Scuffling Solecism’, revises the portrayal of Seneca as an overly solemn moral philosopher. As G. effectively illustrates, Seneca employs humour and satire not only for entertainment but also as a rhetorical device to undermine and mock opposing viewpoints and individuals. I found Chapter 11, ‘The Manhandling of Maecenas’, particularly insightful. Commencing with the critique of Maecenas’ poetry and lifestyle in *Epistle* 114, G. elucidates that, for Seneca, the manner of living and the manner of writing are closely intertwined (*talis oratio qualis vita*). Thus, work and author are inextricably linked. The chapter also explores the significance of concepts such as *ingenium* and *oratio virilis*. It becomes evident that the latter must be defined more from an absence of traits perceived as indicative of *mollitia*. The final Chapter 12, ‘Honeybee Reading and Self-Scripting’, takes Michel Foucault’s interpretation of *Letter* 84 and his idea of ‘scripting the self’ as the starting point. G. expands and refines Foucault’s concept by showing that Seneca does not refer to pre-literary texts but to ambitious literature. In the texts created by the *ingenium*, the self can be recognised and potentially endure beyond the death of its author.

Due to their origin, the individual chapters can be read separately; it is, however, recommended to study them collectively. They mutually complement each other, yielding a cohesive whole. G.’s engaging and accessible writing style renders the book an intellectual feast not only for specialists but for anyone interested in Seneca’s philosophical works.

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MARGINALITY IN LITERATURE

ARAMPAPASLIS (K.), AUGOUSTAKIS (A.), FROEDGE (S.), SCHROER (C.) (edd.) *Dynamics of Marginality. Liminal Characters and Marginal Groups in Neronian and Flavian Literature. (Trends in Classics Supplementary Volume 143.)* Pp. x+176. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2023. Cased, £82, €89.95, US\$103.99. ISBN: 978-3-11-106158-0.

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This is a slender but densely packed and eclectic book on ‘marginality’ in Neronian and Flavian literature. Taking their cue from modern scholarship that explores ‘marginality’ as a critical concept, albeit with diverse approaches (cf. L. Edmunds, ‘Toward a Minor Roman Poetry’, *Poetica* 42 [2010]; M. Formisano and C.S. Kraus [edd.], *Marginality, Canonicity, Passion* [2018]), the editors have assembled a collection that revisits distinctions between the ‘center/canonical and periphery/marginal’ (p. 4) by looking in