pietas (the sanctions in this case being moral). This aspect of the study is very interesting. B illustrates a way in which the Romans dealt with potentially destructive power, but it probably relates better to hierarchical and competitive than to horizontal and fraternal thinking. It is noticeable that B's sets of brothers often tend to have one dominant personality, usually the elder brother, so that the problems of hierarchy can be envisaged even among brothers.

At any rate, B is surely right that brothers were extremely important, and her study illustrates well how they negotiated their relationship with regard to an evolving ideal of pietas. This kind of approach has great potential for the study of other power relationships at Rome, especially if scholars duplicate the care and multidisciplinary facility shown by B.

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ALESSANDRO BARCHIESI The Poet and the Prince: Ovid and Augustan Discourse (Berkeley, London and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1997); 292; ISBN 0520 202236; $US45.00/£35.00.

Of late Ovid's Fasti, even more than the Aeneid, has become the focus of debate among scholars seeking to clarify the complex interrelation of literature and politics in the 'Augustan Age'. This revived interest in the Fasti, after a long period of relative neglect, is set to spill over into the Classical Studies curriculum internationally with the coming available of an attractive and readable translation into modern English verse by Betty Rose Nagle (Indiana University Press). Barchiesi's book, translated
from the Italian, looks to be the most sophisticated and innovative study to emerge from the current wave of research. It is densely reasoned, engagingly written and comprehensive in scope. Though designed as a cumulative argument, it is the sort of work that can be consulted over and over again because it makes perceptive observations about almost every passage and every significant facet of Ovid’s great unfinished calendrical poem. Don’t expect to read this book in one sitting.

In his opening Acknowledgements Barchiesi explains that it was not his interest in Ovid that led him to consider broader questions of critical method but rather the reverse. His strong sense of the polarisation between ‘formal’ and ‘historical’ interpretations of literature and his desire to escape from or resist this dichotomy led him to the Fasti as suitable ground on which to test-drive his own interpretative methodology. This is literary scholarship inspired not by the literary text so much as by the theoretical problems of literary criticism at a particular time; as a stage in the scholar’s intellectual autobiography: ‘My book can be read, I think, as an attempt to dismantle the militarised frontier or to inhabit a no-man’s-land’ (ix). Fortunately the author seems to have come to be as passionate about the Fasti as he is about the theoretical dilemmas that drew his attention to the poem in the first place.

If the Roman calendar and the recurrence of festivals and holidays could ever have been described as apolitical, that state of innocence could not be said to have survived Julius Caesar’s calendrical reforms and Augustus’ support for old religious usages. In the same way that his moral legislation politicised relations between the sexes, Augustus’ renewal of Roman religion politicised time. This, at least, is the view of Barchiesi and numerous other scholars who have been drawn to the Fasti because of its obvious intrusion into an arena so close to the heart of imperial policy. It has been assumed by some in the past that in the Fasti, finally, Ovid is falling into line with what he perceives to be Augustan values by attempting to compose a patriotic poem celebrating the
links between the calendar and Roman national identity as defined by its legendary past. This, though, makes the Fasti something of an anomaly when considered alongside the Amores, Ars Amatoria and Metamorphoses which can hardly be thought to be inspired by Augustan religious or political ideals. Those modern critics who question the 'Augustanism' of the Fasti are, in fact, authorised by the character of the Ovidian corpus as a whole which is rendered inconsistent and perplexing by this text—unless scholars have been misreading it by severely underestimating Ovid's ingenuity. The design of the poem is a perfect cover for a subversive poet because it allows the juxtaposition of Augustan items with other deflationary materials in a way that seems to be dictated by the fixed sequence of the calendar rather than contrived by the author.

Barchiesi claims to be trying to find a middle way between these two approaches to reading the poem, but in actuality his sympathies are unquestionably with the 'subversive' school. Cleverly he undermines the 'pro-Augustan' camp by attacking them on their history before making a frontal assault on their criticism. In particular, he challenges the conventional periodisation which treats the career of Augustus as defining a coherent segment of history. 'Augustanism' is a concept no less polysemous than the works of literature that engage with it (7-8; 43-44). What neat phrase do we have for that period covering the last years of Augustus' rule and the first years of Tiberius', the historical context of the Fasti, a poem which is addressed and dedicated to Germanicus? The political and social situation was vastly altered from the early years of Augustus' supremacy and to apply a term like 'propaganda' to such diverse circumstances as, on the one hand, the years immediately before and after Actium and, on the other, the security and stability of Augustus' last decade is to drain it of most of its consistency of meaning (253-254). Barchiesi's position might be simplistically classified as 'mild anti-Augustanism'. He plays down the degree to which the regime was openly repressive; highlights the subtlety and complexity of both the literary text and the historical context,
and treats Ovid’s insubordination as ideological and covert rather than political and provocative. Ovid is ‘pricking the bubble of authority’ (238).

There are, according to Barchiesi, seven principal techniques by which Ovid accomplishes this. First are the poem’s multiple generic affiliations which prevent it being read as unproblematically didactic. Epic, Callimachean aetiology and love elegy occupy equally important roles to the extent that the poem enacts a kind of dialogue between genres and the rival value-systems implicit within them. Secondly, there are conspicuous ‘syntagmatic tensions’, collocations of passages which, while adjacent in terms of the somewhat arbitrary order imposed by the calendar, present conflicting ethical and tonal impressions, as where the commemoration of Octavian’s adoption of the name ‘Augustus’ (1.587-616) is framed by two accounts of stories associated with the festival of Carmenta (1.465-586; 1.617-636). Thirdly, there are ‘paradigmatic effects’, in that for any date Ovid has made a selection from a range of associated events and recollections and consequently his omissions no less than his choices are in many instances pointed. Fourthly, Ovid exploits Augustus’ willingness to link himself with founding figures like Aeneas and (especially) Romulus, playing up the potential awkwardness of these connections: ‘As an archaic model Romulus is incompatible with the present, as a projection of the present he acts as an alarming mirror’ (174). A fifth Ovidian device is to destabilise the reader’s confidence in the reliability of some of the instruction imparted in the text by putting it in the mouths of gods who, in telling their own stories, are characterised as being either partial or of dubious credibility: ‘The authority of divine informants is an open question in the Fasti, in a state of constant negotiation with the reader and liable to produce unexpectedly mischievous innuendos’ (191). Barchiesi identifies a sixth technique in Ovid’s readiness to highlight discrepancies between the practice of a festival or ceremony in his own day and its origin; to indicate a disjunction between the myth and its ritual observation in Augustan Rome. Lastly, Ovid’s inclusion of
episodes of sexual comedy, such as those in which Priapus plays a leading part, helps to undermine any attempt to read the poem as reverential in its intentions. To these seven main techniques should perhaps be added as an eighth factor, that Ovid left the poem only half completed, which Barchiesi (along with other modern commentators) suggests may have been contrived as a deliberate and symbolic discontinuance. ‘Are we so sure’, he asks, ‘that the Fasti are just an interrupted utterance and that the interruption cannot be a communicative “gesture”? The personal situation of the author invests the damaged year with at least a potential metaphorical meaning: the time of Ovid’s life is severed like the structure of the poem’ (262).

Whether or not one agrees with Barchiesi’s conclusions, this book deserves to be consulted not just by those interested in Ovid but by anyone who wants to understand what we are accustomed to think of as the Augustan era, such is the richness of the author’s delineation of late-Augustan culture and the cogency of his insights. The book avoids the narrowness of much academic research in Classics, even extending to a lively and illuminating discussion of the portrayal of Ovid in recent Italian, German and Australian literature (in the works of Antonio Tabucchi, C. Ransmayer and David Malouf). This is a fine example of what modern literary scholarship can do.

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