

Myrtia, n° 24, 2009

S. J. Heyworth, *Cynthia: a Companion to the Text of Propertius*. Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. XVI + 646.

This book, a revised Cambridge *Ph. D.* thesis, is ultimately a diffused –it occupies almost 700 pages- *apparatus criticus*: the author (henceforth H.) makes explicit what is usually implicit in any *apparatus criticus*, i.e. he lists the textual choices arrived at by the critics who operated within the “vulgate” (p. VII) and explains why he has accepted, rejected or hesitated over, as the case may be, the options chosen by the scholars he mentions. Such a compilatory survey is very informative and useful.

The work suffers from two fatal flaws. First of all, those which are intended to be H.’s original contributions, i.e. his conjectures, are mistaken, as H. White has demonstrated (*Veleia* 2006, p. 399ff.). Secondly, H. has committed a grave error of omission. There is one monograph which has explicitly and exclusively dealt with the text of Propertius, namely H. White’s *Studies in the Text of Propertius (London Studies in Classical Philology 29)*, Athens 2002. This work goes well beyond the limits of the vulgate known to H.: H. White, by applying the “*méthode*” of “*saine critique textuelle*”, i. e. the “*méthode philologique*” for her use of which she has been loudly praised in mainland E. U. (cf. *Πλάτων* 1998, p. 252) has “restored the text to an unparalleled extent, and has cast an entirely new light on the poet’s complex artistry”, as I write in my review (published in *Orpheus* 2003, p. 354ff.) of her book. I refer the readers, for the sake of brevity, to my incomplete but impressive list, which I provide in the said review, of the Propertian passages explained by Dr. White. Unfortunately, H. has not read Dr. White’s monograph, and therefore he leaves his readers ignorant of the spectacular *restitutio textus* achieved by her: cf., as three significant examples which could be easily multiplied, H.’s disastrous treatment of the reading *etrusca* on p. 161 and of *exsectis* on p. 306, as well as his total failure to understand *longas* at III, 7, 60.

Post Scriptum. The reader will note that the acute review by my learned colleague S. Viarre (*Gnomon* 2009, pp. 704-706) and mine beautifully tally. In support of what Prof. Viarre writes it might be noted that *Cancri terga* (IV 1, 150) clearly (*terga* = *testudo*, shell) denotes the shell of the Crab, as H. White has brilliantly explained (op. cit., p. 129 ss.), and not, of all things, Augustus, as Heyworth (p. 434f.) contends, in the teeth of the astrological context.

Giuseppe Giangrande