

**Myrtia, n° 24, 2009**

*Octavia*, Attributed to Seneca. Edited with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary by A. J. Boyle, Oxford 2008, 340 pages.

A. J. Boyle has written a very interesting and learned commentary on Seneca's *Octavia*. The author explains in the preface that this edition aims to elucidate the text, and "to locate it firmly in its historical and theatrical context." In the introduction, there is a useful discussion of the Roman theatre. The Latin text is then printed together with a critical apparatus and an English translation. I would now like to make the following observations on the text of the *Octavia*.

At line 26 *Octavia* states that the world obeyed Claudius more than it obeyed Oceanus (*ultra Oceanum*). Oceanus has been personified by the poet: cf. line 39 *paruit liber diu / Oceanus*. Cf. also Lewis- Short, s. v. *ultra* II, b: "Of number, measure, degree, quality, etc., beyond... more than."<sup>1</sup>

At line 208 the star of Leda (*sidera Ladae*) is mentioned. The poet is referring to the constellation of the Swan. According to Hyginus, Zeus placed the images of the Swan and the Myths, Middlesex 1972, vol. I, page 206. Note that *sidera* is a poetic plural.

At line 215 f. Juno is said to keep Jove in her ethereal bed (*aetherio... toro*). For the adjective *aetherius* cf. Propertius 1, 13, 24 where Hercules is said to have burnt with love for Hebe *in aetheriis... iugis*, i. e. on Mount Olympus: cf. my Studies In The Text Of Propertius (Athens 2002), page 24.

At line 263 a Fury is said to have visited a Stygian bed (*Stygios toros*). According to Propertius, girls do not care to discuss whether anything awaits us after the Stygian cares (post *Stygias... erumnas*), i. e. after death: cf. my Studies, page 78.

At line 321 personified Death (*Mors*) is said to hover before men's eyes (*ante oculos... vagatur*).

At line 436 Seneca states that he dreads what Nero may say (*quid ferat mente horreo*). Note the use of *falsa anaphora*. *Fertur*, in line 435, means "comes", whereas *ferat*, in line 436, means "may say".

At line 556 Nero states that Amor disparages (*detrahit*) the gods in the sky (*superos polo*). Cf. Lewis- Short, s. v. *detraho* II, B: "To lower in estimation,

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<sup>1</sup> On Oceanus personified cf. P.L.M., page 165: *arbiter orbis, mundumque gubernas, venerabilis*, etc.

disparage.”<sup>2</sup>

At line 557 Amor is said to be winged. At 2, 12, 5 ff. Propertius states that Amor is winged due to the human heart (*humano corde*). He explains that lovers are tossed about on the metaphorical sea of love: cf. my *Studies*, page 18. Amor is said at Propertius 3, 10, 28 f. to torment (*verberet*) the lover with painful arrows (*gravibus pennis*).

At line 628 the Parthians are mentioned. Propertius contrasts golden cups from Parthia with native wooden cups: cf. my *Studies*, page 149. Burmannus noted that at Propertius 4, 5, 26 the alteration *aureaque* was proposed.

At line 640 *quieta... sede refers to Elysium*. At Propertius 4, 11, 99 ff. Cornelia states that after death she hopes to be taken to the “honoured waters” (*honoratis... aquis*), i. e. to Elysium: cf. my *Studies*, page 172. The fact that Propertius is referring to Elysium was mentioned by Burmannus.

At line 687 the chorus states that a violent band should disparage (*detrahat*) Poppaea due to her exalted marriage (*toris... altis*).

At line 715 ill-omened stars (*sideribus atris*) are mentioned. For the connection of comets with disaster cf. Flower Smith’s note on Tibullus 2, 5, 71. For portents cf. also Lucan I, 525 ff.

At line 810 Cupid is said to have influenced (*trahit*) captured Jove in heaven. Cf. Lewis- Short, s. v. *traho* II, 1: “To draw along; to attract, allure, influence.”

At line 814 the infinitive *regi* is governed by the adjective *facilis*: cf. Boyle’s note on page 260. Cf. also my *Studies*, page 22 *facilis cedere lympham manu and faciles aurem praebere puellae* (“girls who are quick to offer an ear”).

At line 842 Nero threatens to punish the crowd, which dares to exalt (*attollere*) its darling (*oculos*) against the sacred face of his wife. Octavia was the darling of the crowd. Cf. Lewis- Short, s. v. *attollo* II: “exalt” and s. v. *oculus* (1): “As a term of endearment, the apple of my eye, my darling”.

At line 969 f. Octavia says *petat puppis rector / tandem Phariae litora terrae*. Boyle (ad loc.) understands *Phariae terrae* to mean “Egypt”, but Octavia, as he admits, was “exiled to Campania”. In reality, since *Pharia* means Isis (cf. Lewis- Short, s. v. *Pharus*, C 2) and since Campania was the location of the most famous temple of Isis (cf. Flower Smith ad Tibullus I, 3, 25) it is evident that *Phariae terrae* means “Campania”. In other words, Octavia tells the helmsman to set sail for the shore of the country of Isis, i. e. Campania.

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<sup>2</sup> For *detraho* cf. line 687. Amor, as is well known, disparaged the gods because he could dominate them: *invictus, victor, potens*: cf. Carter, *Epith.*, s. v. *Amor*. Everybody knows that *omnia vincit Amor*.

At line 979 the mss. reading *Maurorum* makes sense. The Carthaginians were famous for their cruelty: cf. Lewis- Short, s. v. *Poeni*: “*Poenorum crudelitas*”. Cf. also Lewis- Short, s. v. *Maurus*: “*Poet. for African; Maurae manus, i. e. Poenorum arma, Ov. F. 6, 213.*”

Conclusion. This is an excellent book which makes a valuable contribution to our knowledge of Roman tragedy. The author should be congratulated on the production of a fine tool of research, which is particularly informative as regards the historical background to the play. We look forward eagerly to further monographs of such high quality from the Latinists of America.

Heather White