

character, a real woman from late-Bronze-Age Greece. She reconsiders Calypso: Weaver, by bringing in experimental archaeology to suggest that weaving a sail and making Odysseus' clothes (collecting and preparing wool, washing, dyeing, spinning, weaving, stitching), alone on an island without a group of weaving companions, would have taken a vast amount of time. Perhaps, then, Calypso's story is less about keeping a man captive for seven years and more 'about a woman who's been given an impossibly large and lonely task, who's been held hostage by the demands of her labour' (250). I give just two examples among many, as this book deserves to be read immersively and without spoilers. Suffice to say that these are fascinating shifts in perspective that not only bring the lived experiences of real women to the fore, but will forever change the way we see the Homeric poems.

LILAH GRACE CANEVARO

University of Edinburgh, UK

l.g.canevaro@ed.ac.uk

doi:[10.1017/S0017383525100594](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383525100594)

This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original article is properly cited. The written permission of Cambridge University Press must be obtained prior to any commercial use.

Latin literature

Introducing newcomers to Latin literature and its history is an important aim, which Laurel Fulkerson and Jeffrey Tatum achieve amazingly well in their ambitious history of Latin literature 'from its beginnings to the age of Augustus'.¹ They provide a thoughtful and exciting introduction to the key genres and texts up to and including the Augustan age: the beginnings of Latin literature; Republican drama; oratory and rhetoric; the 'personal voice' in satire, Catullus' poetry and Cicero's letters; didactic literature; history and biography; Augustan love poetry; Augustan epic; and the Augustan 'personal' poetry of Vergil's *Eclogues*, the works of Horace, and Ovid's exile poetry. The writing is lively and clearly conveys the authors' passion. I particularly liked the fact that the chapters include discussion of individual lines and phrases, to give readers an idea of the sound, rhythm, and style of the language. Another thread that runs through the volume is the way Latin literature developed through a dialogue with Greek texts, and how later authors kept shaping it in a reaction to both their Greek and Latin predecessors. A number of useful 'sidebars' (that appear at the end of each chapter, though) provide introductions to basic concepts such as Roman nomenclature, Latin metre, slavery in Rome, Callimachus' *Aetia*, or the civil wars, followed by recommendations for 'further readings', of both primary texts in English translation and some key secondary literature, commendably containing a section of a few crucial works in languages other than English. A timeline of historical events and the lives of key Roman authors, maps, and a glossary provide further orientation for readers with no

¹ *A History of Latin Literature From its Beginnings to the Age of Augustus*. Edited by Laurel Fulkerson and Jeffrey Tatum. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2024. Pp. xviii + 382. 3 maps. Hardback £85.00, ISBN: 978-1-10-8-48177-9.

prior knowledge. The only aspect that I thought should have received a bit more attention is the transmission of Latin literature and the role of textual criticism, which would have provided more background, e.g. for the discussion of an important textual variant in the poem of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Otherwise, I very much enjoyed this lucid and intriguing account of Latin literature up to the age of Augustus and hope that it will reach many newcomers as well as students of Latin – and that Fulkerson and Tatum, or others, will soon undertake the task of writing a follow-up volume on imperial Latin literature.

Alex Mullen and Anna Willi mark the successful completion of the ERC-funded 'Latin Now' project² with a volume tracing the development of 'Latinization, Local Languages, and Literacies in the Roman West'.³ In the wake of the two sister volumes,⁴ this one carefully traces the fascinating process by which, in the north-western provinces (Spain, Britain, Gaul, and Germany), a patchwork of local languages came to be replaced by various forms of Latin as the dominant language by the end of the imperial period, with accompanying changes in literacy and writing practices. The authors pay close attention to the power dynamics and social contexts surrounding these transformations as well as their impact on individual and cultural identities. In the introduction, Alex Mullen clearly sets out the methodological parameters of the 'Latin Now' project as well as some of its key challenges, often concerning the quality of the data feeding into the large digital databases on which the project is based – a topic that is nicely re-echoed in the individual contributions.

These large databases, as the volume successfully demonstrates, allow both for an unprecedented overview of the material that has been preserved – stone inscriptions, but also writing on any other kinds of material as well as the writing instruments themselves – and a much more fine-grained analysis than before, by zooming in on developments in individual regions and communities. An interdisciplinary approach is also key, as sociolinguistics, archaeology, epigraphy, and history are combined to interpret the data. Based on these premises, the chapters in the volume all very nicely show how linguistic change and changes in writing practices are by no means uniform phenomena, but progress with considerable regional and local variation, with indigenous languages often existing much longer than has previously been assumed, and bi- or multilingualism being the norm rather than the exception. In an 'intermezzo' at the end, Greg Woolf neatly outlines the next steps for future research, based on the questions and methods of 'Latin Now', that could be applied to other parts of the Roman world, but also to the question of to what extent these provincial experiences fed back into the use of Latin on the Italian peninsula itself. The volume is a fascinating read and a good illustration of how digital tools, combined with interdisciplinary expertise, provide intriguing and more nuanced insights than were previously possible.

² <https://latinnow.eu/about/#:~:text=LatinNow%20is%20an%20ERC%20funded,years%20from%201%20March%202017>.

³ *Latinization, Local Languages, and Literacies in the Roman West*. Edited by Alex Mullen and Anna Willi. Oxford Studies in Ancient Documents. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2024. Pp. 512 + 107 colour illustrations. Hardback £119.00, ISBN: 978-0-19-888751-5.

⁴ A. Mullen (ed.), *Social Factors in the Latinization of the Roman West* (Oxford, 2023); A. Mullen and G. Woudhuysen (eds.), *Languages and Communities in the Late and Post-Roman Western Provinces* (Oxford, 2023).

Coming to early Latin literature, Maria Mertsching explores the roles of ‘central marginal figures’ in Latin comedy, i.e. the figures, primarily female, who are hardly ever seen or heard on stage, but whose absent presence is still central for the comic plot.⁵ With the aim of elucidating the dramatic function of these figures, as well as the way in which they are characterized by those on stage, Mertsching offers detailed case studies of Plautus’ *Casina* and Terence’s *Andria*. Kenneth Burke’s concept of the ‘dramatistic pentad’ (‘act’, ‘agent’, ‘scene’, ‘agency’, and ‘purpose’) helps Mertsching describe and understand the functions of absent female figures for the plot of each comedy as well as the often surprising reversals they engender or are subject to. Mertsching delves deep into these comedies, paying attention to the characterization of the protagonists who, in turn, offer a characterization of absent female figures as well as the conflicts they are involved in, to offer a full picture of the way these are presented. The framework of Burke’s pentad, while useful, turns out to be a bit limiting at times, when Mertsching foregrounds the function of a marginal figure, in Burke’s sense, over the actually much more intriguing observations she makes on the dynamics of social status at play as well as the way marginal female figures are characterized differently by male and female figures on stage, and the comic reversals in their status. Overall, however, Mertsching successfully shows the variety of functions of ‘central marginal’ characters in comedy by, for once, placing them in the spotlight.

When we think of more recent approaches to Latin literature, environmental aspects certainly stand out as one of the key developments that promise particularly timely new insights into Latin texts, making them relevant from a new angle in our current age of climate change. In what follows, I am going to discuss four new books that use environmental approaches – two in Bloomsbury’s series ‘Ancient Environments’ – or that focus on nature in ancient Rome and Roman literature. What emerged for me with particular clarity was the wide range of different approaches that could all be taken under this ‘environmental turn’ and that, as one would expect, produce very different results.

I begin with Andrew Fox’s monograph on trees in ancient Rome, with the nice subtitle ‘Growing an Empire in the Late Republic and Early Principate’.⁶ Clearly situating itself within a body of scholarship on trees and vegetation (equally growing) in ancient Rome and beyond, Fox frames the central question of his book in a rather general way, as ‘what was the impact of trees in the Roman city?’, which he sets out to answer by discussing literature as well as material culture. Fox first studies the way trees conserve and convey the memory of Rome’s past in the city of Rome, while being vulnerable to changing meanings, but also communicating the power of the Julio-Claudian dynasty. The second chapter is a discussion of the trees that were brought to Rome, based on Pliny’s account of trees in the *Natural History*, and the way he balances the social utility and commercial values of trees with their notions of civilization, luxury, and excess. The chapter on ‘trees in the triumph’ examines the way trees and parts of them communicated ideas of conquest, but Fox also keeps an eye on the practicalities of

⁵ *Ein Blick über den Bühnenrand: Zentrale Randfiguren und ihre dramaturgische Funktion in der römischen Komödie*. By Maria Mertsching. Munich, Narr Francke Attempto, 2025. Pp. 292. Paperback £67.81, ISBN: 978-3-38-1-13361-1.

⁶ *Trees in Ancient Rome. Growing an Empire in the Late Republic and Early Principate*. By Andrew Fox. London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2025. Pp. xii + 190. 13 illustrations, 5 tables. Paperback £26.09, ISBN: 978-1-350-23781-0.

using trees in triumphal processions. The final chapter considers the place of trees in the physical city of Rome. What clearly emerges from the book is the ambivalent nature of trees, as not only long-lasting monuments, but portable material, and elements of living nature, as well as the wide range of meanings and functions they can have. Overall, I thought that the book felt a bit short compared with those to be discussed next for what I thought was a certain lack of nuance and sophistication in the framing of its central question and the handling of the evidence, but also of the secondary literature, including contemporary environmental thought, that makes the following books so exciting. But Fox's book still serves as an accessible introduction to the topic and a good starting point for further research.

One author in particular makes his absence felt in the work by Fox, and that is Ovid and his tree-filled *Metamorphoses*. This gap, however, is very impressively filled by the volume that Francesca Martelli and Giulia Sissa have edited on 'Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and the Environmental Imagination'.⁷ The editors note that Ovid's poem often portrays the human disruption of the ecosphere, denouncing its dangerous consequences, and aim to bring out these dynamics by subjecting the Ovidian epic to various lines of contemporary ecocritique. The volume begins with a poem by John Shoptaw, entitled *Whoa!*, which retells the Phaethon episode of the *Metamorphoses*, reflecting the devastating results of climate change, with a protagonist named Ray, who bears some resemblance to Donald Trump, 'the impetuous heir of Sol' (222). Some reflections of the author on that poem and its genesis form the final contribution of the book, which is thus nicely framed, urging us to reflect on the connection between the Ovidian text and its afterlife in our current climate crisis.

Giulia Sissa opens the volume by tracing Ovid's position on blood sacrifice in the *Metamorphoses* as well as the *Fasti* in light of the fluidity of a metamorphic world and Ovid's proto-'eco-critical' approach, followed by an eco-critical reading of Medea in the *Metamorphoses*, by Marco Formisano, as embodying the 'muddy muddle' at the centre of the epic. I also very much enjoyed Francesca Martelli's thoughts on how multispecies temporalities intersect with human temporality in both the *Fasti* and the *Metamorphoses*, as well as Emily Gower's intriguing discussion of the temporality of trees and humans in the Ovidian epic, where trees appear as a foil to the rise and fall of cities and dynasties rather than the lifespan of individual human beings. Claudia Zatta offers an excellent discussion of the 'relational ontology' at the heart of the *Metamorphoses*, which invites us, the observers, to create subjective and personal ties with our environment.

The relationship of the *Metamorphoses* with later texts is equally prominent throughout; Shane Butler presents a fascinating reading of a poem of the Latin Anthology, the *Elegia de Philomela* ('Elegy on the Nightingale'), and the way this poem mediates between human and non-human sound. Ovid's interconnected world of humans and non-human beings in the *Metamorphoses* and its influence on medieval moralizing readings and bestiaries is discussed by Miranda Griffin, and two papers on Ovid and Shakespeare, in particular *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Julia Reinhard Lupton) and *Macbeth* (Sandra Fluhrer), nicely trace the reception of Ovid's environmental thought. Diana Spencer unearths some connecting threads between

⁷ *Ovid's Metamorphoses and the Environmental Imagination*. Edited by Francesca Martelli and Giulia Sissa. Ancient Environments. London, Bloomsbury, 2025. Pp. xi + 250. Paperback £28.90, ISBN: 978-1-350-26898-2.

ideas of a cycle of transformation and teleological instability in late-republican and Augustan authors and in Ovid. To my mind, there seems at times a certain risk involved in the volume, that of making Ovid look almost too ‘contemporary’, as though he were anticipating some of our current concerns with climate crisis and the environment. The contributors show themselves aware of this risk, though, and overall I very much admired the editors for their thoughtful and inspiring undertaking and the individual papers for their fresh and timely insights into the Ovidian text.

K. Sara Myers takes a very different approach in her book on gardens in Latin literature.⁸ She argues that the representation of gardens – understood as cultivated and enclosed natural spaces – in Latin texts is more indebted to the literary tradition and literary discourses than horticultural reality and practice, and she offers an intriguing analysis of these discourses. Some readers might perhaps wish to see more of an engagement with ‘real-life’ gardens or with environmental approaches in such a book, but, to my mind, Myers’ reminder of the gap between ‘real’ ancient gardens and their literary representation is a healthy one, and the results she achieves with her literary analysis fully justify her approach. Focusing on a wide range of texts, Myers shows very nicely how gardens can be a site of masculine self-fashioning, while women are usually classed as intruders in a garden space, or, if they enter it, are depicted as secluded virgins on the brink of rape or marriage or as hypersexualized females, and how gardens can be ‘good to think with’, inviting literary reflections on issues of gender, social class, narratological and metapoetic aims, but also on the relationship of horticulture and agriculture and of Greek and Latin texts. In five chapters, she discusses elite male self-fashioning in texts on gardens; one of her key texts and paradigms, the old Corycian’s garden in Vergil’s *Georgics*; the role played by women in the garden in the poetry of Catullus and Ovid, among others; the satirical use made of gardens in satire and epigram; as well as the role played by the accounts of gardens in both poetry and prose in Columella’s didactic work.

One important recurring theme is the role of boundaries, of inclusion and exclusion, in the context of gardens, while Myers herself very ably keeps pushing the boundaries of her discussion, by including fragmentary as well as late-antique and early-Christian texts. In the epilogue, she shows how gardens became imbued with new allegorical dimensions of meaning, eventually also allowing for the representation of women as active cultivators in the garden. Throughout, Myers is in close dialogue with the secondary literature on the works she studies, while providing many insightful observations into the functions of gardens in literature and the works under discussion. For instance, I particularly liked her discussion of the way Flora’s garden in the *Fasti* is in dialogue with that of Pomona in the *Metamorphoses*, reflecting the close relationship, but also the key generic differences between the two Ovidian works, or the role of the garden as both something connected with, but also fundamentally different from Columella’s work on agriculture, as well as the different functions of prose and poetry in didactic contexts. While Myers’ take on gardens thus notably differs from other ecocritical works reviewed here, it is still a very important one, which offers significant new insights for our study of ancient texts.

⁸ *Ancient Roman Literary Gardens. Gender, Genre, and Geopoetics*. By K. Sara Myers. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2024. Pp. xvii + 294. Hardback £59.00. ISBN: 978-0-19-7-77320-8.

Erik Pugh Fredericksen approaches the topic from a different angle in his book on ‘The Environmental Poetry of Augustan Rome’.⁹ His focus is on Vergil’s *Eclogues* and *Georgics* as well as Horace’s *Odes*, which he reads through the lens of ecocriticism, combined with an attention to the literary construction of space. In the case of the *Eclogues*, he starts by analysing the spatial relationships of these poems, in particular *Ecl.* 1 and 9, intriguingly showing how the Roman practice of land-surveying is reflected in Vergil’s emphasis on boundaries and borders, which are absent from his model Theocritus, and how fictional places in these poems are constructed as local, particular places that influence the way Vergil’s bucolic characters process and experience the world. In the second chapter, he builds on this analysis by studying the relationships and ecological interactions between humans and non-humans in the *Eclogues*, who together create the specific, resonant soundscape of the poems, in a coexistence of human song with the environmental sounds emanating from the bucolic space. The chapters that really stood out to me, however, and that deserve a very wide readership, are the two on the *Georgics*. In the first, Fredericksen offers a stimulating analysis of the place of man in the natural context of the *Georgics*, by questioning the presumed binary of nature and culture and showing that the poem instead constructs a combination of human, animal, and plant agency. In the process, he provides thought-provoking new answers to long-standing questions, e.g. by suggesting that the issue is not so much whether or not the poem actually teaches its readers any practical knowledge, but that what it offers is the *fantasy* of a knowledge that could help humans understand their connections to non-human beings and embed them in their environment as beings that are connected to, but that also stand out in, the web of ecological relations.

In the following chapter, he nicely shows that the space of the poem can be understood as ‘fractal locality’, i.e., a constant interplay of different units of space, from the small and local to the global. Here, we encounter again the Corycian old man, also discussed as a key paradigm of garden literature by K. Sara Myers. Fredericksen suggests that he embodies a model of space that is embedded in the past, as an example of a secluded, circumscribed life, which is set off against a broader conception of space in the narrative of Aristaeus’ bees with its much wider reach, seeking an almost cosmological form of knowledge. This ‘fractal’ model of space allows him to bring Rome and its growing empire into the discussion, without limiting himself to a dichotomy between ‘agricultural’ and ‘political’ aspects of the poem, which are actually closely intertwined. These two chapters work particularly nicely together and complement each other, providing a fresh, exciting take on some of the most-discussed aspects of the *Georgics*. Reading the book up to this point, I became very curious to know what Fredericksen would have made of the ‘environmental’ side of the *Aeneid* – but I admit that this would have become a very different kind of book, had it been solely focused on Vergil, but certainly an intriguing one as well.

Fredericksen next moves on to Horace’s *Odes* and traces the interaction of the poetic world with the natural environment, arguing that this is an important element not just of the odes on spring or winter, but other ones as well. In particular, the focus here is on time and on how the linear life of human beings interacts with the cyclical patterns of natural time, as the poet exhorts his audience to behave in accordance with nature, but

⁹ *The Environmental Poetry of Augustan Rome*. By Erik Pugh Fredericksen. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2024. Pp. viii + 307. Hardback £90.00, ISBN: 978-1-00-9-47617-1.

also on Horace as a ‘nature poet’: a *vates* with a privileged relationship to the non-human environment and the gods. The poetics of the *Odes* is a ‘poetics of nature’, where concepts and descriptions of nature and ethical imperatives for men’s lives are intertwined. In the final chapter, Fredericksen discusses the connection between the odes and individual places, but also the idea that is pervasive in the *Odes*, of movement between places and the mobility of Horace’s poetry itself, which is presented as arising out of local ecological networks while also giving back to them.

In the epilogue, Fredericksen interestingly places his discussion in the context of Ovid’s exile poetry and the way the poet constructs his relationship with the natural world, both that of his place of exile and of his native Italy and Rome that he longs for, as they impinge upon his very body and the character of his poetry. This allows him to show that, for environmental poetry, the key question is not whether a poet is referring to a ‘real’, concrete place, but that a poetic work actually presents itself as entangled with a certain place and its environmental features, treating them as a key concern and presenting its poetics as shaped by the non-human environment. While I generally thought that this was a nice, suggestive way of ending the book, it also raised more questions for me than it probably should have: what, then, are the differences between the approach to nature, say, in the *Eclogues* and Ovidian exile poetry? Are humans really ‘de-centred’ in both in a similar way? And what is then distinctive about Augustan environmental poetry, as similar readings along the lines suggested by Fredericksen could probably be developed about earlier or later works as well? However, it is a huge merit of Fredericksen’s original book to have given rise to these questions in the first place and to have opened up these exciting new avenues for further discussion.

Overall, I hope that it becomes clear from these reviews how much environmental approaches to ancient texts have to offer, but also where some of their potential pitfalls might lie. We should be careful not to turn ancient authors into ‘proto-environmentalists’ who have somehow anticipated our current climate emergency all along, and we should also beware of too easily dismissing more ‘traditional’ literary critical approaches. While readings inspired by, say, current interdisciplinary thought on the environment can create exciting new insights, so can a nuanced and detailed engagement with the literary features of a text, as well as, of course, a combination of both. Either way, I found it both thrilling and reassuring to see that, whichever approach we choose, Latin texts do have exciting insights to offer in our current state of climate crisis – where we, perhaps, need them more than ever.

Still in the field of Augustan poetry, Donncha O’Rourke has written a very rich and insightful book on the way Propertius, in his elegies, responds to the works of Vergil.¹⁰ Starting from the observation that Propertius’ poetry is a very early, maybe the earliest, case of the reception of Vergil’s entire oeuvre in elegy, O’Rourke, after carefully contextualizing his approach in the contested field of intertextuality and the study of literary allusion and poetic memory, examines the way the genre of pastoral poetry, in Propertius, especially Book 4, provides a space in which the poet stages a competition between epic and elegy. In the second chapter, he traces the ‘Vergilian women’ of Propertius 4 and their connection with the ghost of Dido, to show how Propertius paves the way for much later criticism of the *Aeneid*, in bringing to the fore the marginalized

¹⁰ *Propertius and the Virgilian Sensibility. Elegy after 19 BC*. By Donncha O’Rourke. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2024. Pp. xv + 485. Hardback £120.00, ISBN: 978-1-108-48173-1.

and silenced voices of women that Vergil, in his ‘elegiac sensibility’, writes into his epic. Other chapters treat Propertius’ handling of Roman history and legend in Book 4; Propertius’ appropriation and Romanization of Callimachus and the aetiological dimension of his reading of Vergil; and the overall design of Propertius’ fourth book and the engagement of its bucolic, georgic, and epic structures with Vergilian poetics.

There are many fine observations in the book, many more than I can summarize – to give but a few examples: I liked the idea that elegy 4.9 flips the priority between poets and makes the Vergilian epic look secondary to Propertius’ own, primary text, the ‘source’ of poetic inspiration; that Propertius, in 4.10, counteracts the Vergilian attempt to limit the number of the dedications of the *spolia opima* and keeps history open where Vergil tries to limit its repetitions; or the observation and interpretation of the fact that Propertius’ Book 4 has as many lines in total as the twelfth book of the *Aeneid*. O’Rourke also builds textual criticism and the disputed authenticity of certain lines in Vergil and Propertius into his discussion in an exemplary way. His book offers a wealth of intriguing insights into the Propertian text and its relationship with Vergil’s oeuvre, but also with poets such as Callimachus, Homer, and Apollonius, and shows how Propertius both collides with and pays homage to Vergil, collaborates in his canonization, and amplifies an elegiac moment inherent in the *Aeneid*, while also showing a wider image of Rome than his predecessor and giving us a ‘new Vergil’ in the process. The book is an exciting read for anyone interested in Augustan poetry and, more generally, the intricacies of intertextuality and literary allusion.

Salvador Bartera and Kelly Shannon-Henderson have edited an introduction to the works of Tacitus in a new series by Oxford University Press, ‘The Oxford Critical Guide to Tacitus’,¹¹ aiming to introduce newcomers to his oeuvre. To this end, they have gathered chapters by specialists on the *Agricola*, *Germania*, *Dialogus de oratoribus*, and each book of the *Historiae* and *Annales*. All of the chapters do a very good job at presenting these in light of their key themes and interpretive issues raised, both historical and literary, while also paying attention to Tacitus’ literary models, his style and literary technique, the structure of individual books, and the particular difficulties faced by a historian of the Principate. While students need to turn to other companions or introductions for a quick overview of the *Historiae* and *Annales* as a whole, I can immediately see the practical usefulness of the volume for university classes that focus on one or a few books and that will profit immensely from the format of this new series. While especially useful for students, the volume does have a lot to offer for more advanced scholars as well; in particular, I liked the focus of several chapters on the interconnections between the individual works of Tacitus, so that, over the course of the volume, a holistic, yet multifaceted view of Tacitus’ oeuvre emerges. The book is a very fitting tribute to Bartera’s and Shannon-Henderson’s teacher, mentor, and eminent Tacitean scholar, Anthony J. Woodman, and a wonderful resource for training the next generation of students and scholars of Tacitus.

Finally, we come to something that is certainly not mainstream, but still interesting: Rainer Jakobi offers the first standalone edition, after the *editio princeps* (first printed

¹¹ *The Oxford Critical Guide to Tacitus*. Edited by Salvador Bartera and Kelly E. Shannon-Henderson. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2025. Pp. viii + 271. Paperback £25.00. ISBN: 978-0-19-896758-3. Other volumes in the series, which started in 2024, cover Homer’s *Iliad* (edited by Joel Christensen) and *Odyssey* (edited by Jonathan Ready).

edition), of an epitome of Valerius Maximus' collection of *exempla* by Ianuaris Nepotianus.¹² The epitome is only partially transmitted, up to Valerius 3.2.7, and has so far usually been edited as part of editions of Valerius Maximus' work. Jakobi offers a new edition and commentary, both of the main text of Nepotianus and the fragments for Books 3–9. Although this is really a work for the specialist reader, including a translation would probably have helped extend the reach of Jakobi's work a bit and make more readers familiar with Nepotianus' work. As Jakobi sets out in the introduction, the epitome is of interest because Nepotianus still presents it as a work in its own right (*hoc meum*), leaving out some of Valerius Maximus' *exempla*, especially non-Roman ones, and adding others, and also in other respects adapting the work to his own late-antique context (probably fifth century, Jakobi argues) and for a readership that is seeking rhetorical instruction rather than a broader political and ethical education. In the edition itself, Jakobi is often hesitant to intervene in the text as transmitted, although he does suggest some emendations where the text is clearly corrupt. In the commentary he shows very clearly where Nepotianus draws from Valerius Maximus' own source texts, especially Livy and Cicero, as well as other authors. Despite the fragmentary nature of the text, there is certainly some interesting work that could be done on it and on its techniques of epitomization, for which Jakobi's text and commentary provide a very good basis – a topic that is perhaps especially interesting at a time when we are constantly surrounded by a rather new wave of *epitomae*, as generated by AI.

ANKE WALTER

Zürich University, Switzerland

anke.walter@uzh.ch

doi:10.1017/S0017383525100600

This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted re-use, distribution and reproduction, provided the original article is properly cited.

Art and archaeology

The books reviewed here offer a chance to look right across our discipline and each subfield's priorities and approaches. Sometimes, from the perspective of another, these can seem quite alien though there are also common preoccupations. I trace some of those oddities and commonalities here, not at all as a criticism of any of these authors or their disciplines, but as a reflection on the variety of ancient visual and material studies today.

One of the beauties of the fine new exploration of the Temple of Artemis at Sardis by Fikret Yegül and Diana Favro is that it encourages something we often forget to do: to slow down and look closely at just one monument.¹ Most of us have probably encountered this temple as a floor plan among several, grouped together to demonstrate

¹² *Die Valerius Maximus-Epitome des Ianuaris Nepotianus*. By Rainer Jakobi. Berlin, de Gruyter, 2025. Pp. viii + 178. Hardback £89.00, ISBN: 978-3-11-0-26600-9.

¹ *The Temple of Artemis at Sardis. The Hellenistic Temple Tradition in Asia Minor*. By Fikret Yegül and Diane Favro. Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2025. Pp. xiv + 324. 257 b/w and colour illustrations, 5 plans, 12 plates. Hardback £100, ISBN: 978-1-009-53216-7.