The level at which her comments are pitched varies significantly, leading this reviewer to wonder about the intended audience. No knowledge of Greek is assumed (it is always translated) and some entries present very basic information (e.g., the Muses as daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne and goddesses of the arts without a strong religious component, cf. Lares, Apollo, etc.). Likewise, lexicographical information is sometimes given on fairly straightforward words (e.g., the TLL definition of hircus as a male goat). On the other hand, both the introduction and the commentary presuppose some familiarity with at least the basic generic features of pastoral and didactic, information that would be useful in helping some readers appreciate Becker’s larger claims.

Becker is good at leading the reader through the poems’ structure: the seasonal divisions in eclogue 5 and the different stages in the ever more heated exchange of 6. Another strength is her ability to provide parallels at different levels of discourse: from vocabulary and phrasing, to syntax, inuncturae, and finally themes. In the accumulation of parallels it sometimes seems that it is Vergil’s Eclogues that receive less attention than they deserve: for instance, when Nyctius is described as candidus at 6.14 one might expect a reference to Alexis in Verg. Ed. 2.16; a! in 5.76 is noted as the only instance of an exclamation in the collection, but no reference is made to its frequency (and Neoteric coloring) in Vergil’s book; two Homeric and two Vergilian similes are quoted to demonstrate that the ancients were afraid of snakes, but there is no mention of latet anguis in herba (Verg. Ed. 3.93).

While readers will find points of disagreement, the commentary offers a useful introduction to some of the major questions and gives helpful guidance through the poems. Becker provides a basic tool that students and scholars can consult with profit as they begin their own engagement with these peculiar poems, which still have much to reveal.

Princeton

Yelena Baraz


Diana Spencer’s ‘Roman Landscape’ is part of the Classical Association’s ‘Greece and Rome New Surveys in the Classics’ series (‘short books dedicated to key themes and concepts in the classical world’). Its first challenge is to show that landscape qualifies for inclusion in this series – that somewhere in our fragmentary image of Roman Italy, we can point to a specifically ancient sense of scoping and shaping the natural world that turns the land into a theme or concept akin to Landschaft. The search takes us across an expansive literary and artistic terrain in which we meet familiar figures such as Varro, Virgil and Pliny, and familiar sites such as the Villa ‘Farnesina’, Livia’s villa at Prima Porta, and Hadrian’s Villa at Tivoli, but with an intense eye on what all of these do to, and with, the world around them. And for S., the search is justification enough, for it is searching «for a Roman sense of landscape» that «illuminates and enriches understanding of their world and its differences from and similarities to (y)ours» (p. 15). Equip-
C. Vout: Spencer, Roman Landscape

ped with approaches from Art History, Archaeology, Cultural Geography and Phenomenology, S. sets out to discover how ancient investment in the land (intellectually and physically) speaks to issues of Roman identity, and indeed how seminal pieces of Classical scholarship such as Nicholas Purcell’s ‘Town in Country and Country in Town’ (1987) might speak to the wealth of recent work on horti and their sculpture, and on Roman wall painting. From the outset we follow a heavily theorized route, driven by the ‘Spatial Turn’ more broadly.

By way of navigation, the book opens with a preface of «key terms». Amounting to almost four pages, these coordinates range from fairly indispensable terms of reference such as «aesthetic», «ethnography», «iconography», and «ekphrasis» (limited to «the literary description of a work of art» rather than defined more expansively as it was in ancient rhetorical treatises) to the more aggressively methodological «chronotope», «fat (convex) space», and «voyant-visible», the usefulness of which relies on a working knowledge of Mikhail Bakhtin’s work, Gaze Theory and so on. The editors would no doubt claim that this is provided by the introduction which highlights its use of these same words in bold and genuflects to a wealth of theorists from Henri Lefebvre and John Berger to the anthropologist Marc Augé. But the pace is such as to make getting inside any of these theories impossible: these strategies run the risk of being a barrage of names rather than signposts to ease the journey.

The theoretical glare aside, S. is at her best when close reading Pliny’s writing about his villas, or the landscape-painting in the corridor of the Villa ‘Farnesina’. She continues to move fast, dancing from Theocritus’ Idylls to the Argonautica to the Eclogues to Horace’s Odes with a lightness of touch that is as potentially disorientating as it is dazzling. For anyone who knows these poems as well as she does, the flow of ideas and allusiveness of argument is often extremely suggestive. But for the target audience of the ‘New Surveys’ series (students, teachers, and beyond into a general audience), there is a real possibility of getting lost. As she moves in chapter 3 from pastoral to the agricultural landscape, S. talks about «reading Varro» without enabling her readers to do this. When she does quote original text, her translations fizz, but here too such decisions as rendering «…terra universa cernatur» (Cic. Nat. D. 2.98; p. 16) as «…the whole world is subject to our gaze» make the Latin beholden to the theory without flagging that manipulation.

Chapters 4 and 5 settle into their stride and are willing to spend a little more time taking the reader through a sophisticated exegesis of the relevant passages. In the first of these, S. puts Aeneas’ famous walk with Evander next to sections of Statius’ Silvae, Varro, and Ovid’s Fasti to explore how sequences of places create spaces that make it possible for landscape to do narrative that then creates a structure for plotting the passage of time, over the course of the year, and across the yawning chasm that separated the Augustan and proto-cities. For S., the notorious problems faced by anyone attempting to plot Aeneas’ route are the passage’s virtue, as their real-time wandering is so interrupted so as to make observation impossible. Instead, an emphasis on key sites allows the reader to zoom in across the centuries and fill in the gaps, and for Evander’s Rome to remain proto and mythological. In Silvae 4.3 meanwhile, the construction of the new Via Domitiana is praised for collapsing time and space to different effect. In
S.’s reading, the cries of ‘siste viator’ from the roadside tombs are silenced by a high-speed link that bypasses them, and the rivalry they represent, to speak only of the emperor.

Chapters 5 and 6 are the strongest in the book. The first of these, on ‘Italy and the Villa Estate’ is a satisfying segment on Cicero, Columella, Statius and Pliny the Younger which builds on recent work by such scholars as Carol Newlands, Katharine von Stackelberg and especially, Spencer’s doctoral supervisor John Henderson. It is debatable whether the chapter’s modern illustrations (reconstructions of Pliny’s Laurentine villa and the villa of the Papyri as re-imagined in the Getty Villa at Malibu, eighteenth-century visions of the waterfall at Tivoli and a photograph of Powerscourt Gardens in Ireland) with their lengthy captions, add anything very much. But as a taster of the kinds of thinking that has shaped the Anglo-American field of Latin Literature in the last twenty years, its preoccupations and discussions of the poems work very well. These pave the way for Christopher Whittom’s commentary on the second book of Pliny’s Epistles (Cambridge University Press, 2013) and for ongoing work by Spencer herself on Varro, and by another of Henderson’s students, Victoria Rimell.

Chapter 6, which gives us the Villa ‘Farnesina’ paintings, and the book’s ‘envoi’ on Hadrian’s Villa at Tivoli, brings material culture properly into the mix. In chapter 6, it is the ‘Farnesina’ frescoes and their interaction with the view of Rome afforded across the river by the curved corridor which they decorated, that work best for S., enabling her to examine the relationship between the old city and the settlement across the Tiber, and the forum and the recent development of the Campus Martius from a new angle. Anyone studying the Campus Martius through Lothar Haselberger’s ‘Urbem adornare: die Stadt Rom und ihre Gestalt-umwandlung unter Augustus/Rome’s Urban Metamorphosis under Augustus’ (not in S.’s extensive bibliography) (Portsmouth, R. I., 2007), or indeed through Strabo, would learn something complementary from S.’s discussion. The garden room from Prima Porta, the gardens of Sallust and the Portico of Pompey complete the picture but are covered in far less detail. Although there is much to be gained from making the Urbs the chapter’s focus, Pompeii and Herculaneum are curiously underrepresented in the book as a whole. This seems a shame given pertinent material like that from the House of the Golden Bracelet at Pompeii, now in the Naples Archaeological Museum, and the excellent Pompei: Pitture e mosaici publications.

The ‘envoi’ pays an evocative, if tentative, visit to Hadrian’s Villa at Tivoli. Here, as in the previous chapter, the archaeological, still visible nature of the material lends itself to a rather different style of writing, as the playfully allusive and often difficult prose of literary analysis cedes to something more akin to a travel guide: «to find evidence [of the Villa ‘Farnesina’’s decoration] (at the time of writing), visit the Palazzo Massimo» (p. 143) or «If one has not got Chiappetta in hand, or a copy of Adembri (2000), a conjectural model of the estate in its heyday (located near the modern entrance) helps. Prefacing one’s visit with a trip to nearby Tivoli for a stroll through the Villas Gregoriana and d’Este helps to flesh out the ancient villa’s potential use of landscape, and its likely sensory and intellectual qualities» (p. 174). S. is right to flag the insurmountable divide between Hadrian’s experience and experiencing the villa today, but is perhaps over-
ly cautious in choosing not to think more than she does about how the Silenoi and caryatid combination of the Canopus area worked visually and intellectually, or about the wealth of the site’s other sculpture (for example, centaurs, satyrs, gods, Amazons). What kind of magic do they weave, and exactly what kind of relationship with Greece do they embody? Before we know it, we are out of Arcadia into the book’s concluding paragraphs and its hopes «to encourage further reflection on how understanding Roman identity went hand in hand with exploring, inhabiting, and cultivating the landscape in the widest possible sense».

Will this happen? Unlike many of the other volumes in the ‘New Surveys’-series (‘Homer’, ‘Virgil’, ‘Roman Religion’, even now the ‘Second Sophistic’…), ‘Roman Landscape’ is not an established field – at least not as staple fodder for undergraduate courses –, but a potpourri of scholarship on Roman art and literature brought together under a borrowed heading. Approaches from Cultural Geography that S. hopes could turn Roman landscape studies into a burgeoning field in its own right threaten the accessibility of the project where a prose style which at times is difficult to grasp and fragmented by the jargon of theory comes close to choking the helpfulness of well-chosen case-studies, a detailed apparatus, including a «webography» (pp. 219–220) and of-the-moment footnotes referring, for example, to children’s fiction-writer Caroline Lawrence’s ‘Roman Mysteries’ series (p. 109). It is hard to disagree with S. when she claims, «At Rome in particular, defining the environment and mapping one’s place within it, metaphorically or literally, was part of a more-or-less explicit and ongoing process of self-fashioning» (p. 181). But what about her book’s self-fashioning? It seems unresolved as to what kind of product it is. It is certainly rich in ideas, but is the survey nature and concision demanded of the Classical Association’s series the most fruitful environment for them?

Cambridge

Caroline Vout


Es wirkt immer etwas peinlich, wenn einem Rezensenten im Vorwort des zu besprechenden Buches gedankt wird. Aber da es sich hier lediglich um die Lieferung von Abbildungen handelte, dürfte keine Interessenkollision zu befürchten sein.

In den letzten zehn Jahren sind einige Handbücher zur (lateinischen) Epigraphik erschienen, so daß man sich fragt, warum noch eines erscheinen muß.1 Alison E. Cooley geht in ihrem Manual jedoch, im Gegensatz zu den üblichen Handbüchern, die vor allem die technischen Aspekte im Fokus haben, anders an die Materie heran: Sie bespricht als einleitenden Schwerpunkt Neapel und die nähere Umgebung, um so vom geographisch Speziellen zum Allgemei-