general or military history is explained as \textit{Wissenschaftsgeschichte} and \textit{Protopography} (\textit{Wissenschaftlergeschichte}). Of course the numerous quotations from classical authors integrated into the text of the letters are also elucidated. This commentary fulfills extremely well its aim ‘to make the text intelligible to an educated reader without recourse to other books’ (‘
\textit{Sed Serviendum Officio . . . }’, p. x; ‘The Wilamowitz in Me’, p. viii). I wish that an Index Rerum Memorabilium had been included in addition to the Index Locorum and Index Nominum; we would learn so much about social life, the history of ideas and professorial psychology.

We learn, however, a great deal about the innermost feelings of these three outstanding men, their scientific theories and research methods, their thoughts concerning translation, transmission, transformation, and the situation of Classics then in general. Of course there is also much about their daily life, their teaching and examining routine, details we are not concerned with any more. But even if there is some sand, there is also gold in abundance.

\textbf{OVID AT THE END OF THE MILLENNIUM}

Anne Gosling
Department of Classics, University of Natal
Durban 4041


In a century that has swept from confident capitalist imperialism through world wars, totalitarianism, military dictatorships, social, cultural, political, economic and technological revolutions, nationalism, globalisation, existentialism, anger, angst, flower power and new age syncretism, Augustan scholarship has mirrored contemporary experience. The splendid leader of the imperial adventure story gave way to the propagandist figurehead of the party; his poets have gone from positive propagandists to pro-, anti- or un-Augustan voices; perceived dissent has been explained away, denied or, conversely, underlined in terms of genre and Alexandrianism. \textit{Quot homines, tot sententiae}—and ‘the anxiety of influence’ hounds philologists no less than poets.\footnote{Random examples: John Buchan’s \textit{Augustus} (London 1937) and Sir Ronald Syme’s \textit{Roman Revolution} (London 1939), as far apart ideologically as they are in scholarly purpose (and for a more extreme construction in the latter vein see C. Ransmayr (tr. J. Woods), \textit{The Last World with an Ovidian Repertory} (London 1991), published earlier as \textit{Die Letzte Welt} (Nördlingen 1988), one of three novels discussed by Barchiesi in his ‘Introduction’, pp. 1-4). The bibliography for literary (as for historical) studies of the period is too vast to attempt to cite here, but see, for example, R. Marache, ‘La Revolte d’Ovide contre Auguste’, in N. I.
and amid the intensively canvassed hopes and fears associated with the ‘new millennium’, we are acutely aware that no institution, political, intellectual or domestic, is immutable or monolithic and, as always, current concerns have affected the way we construe and construct the past. It is no coincidence that the last decade or so in Augustan studies has seen a synthesis of literary, historical, socio-political, archaeological and cultural insights, together with an insistence that the character of the age and of the man from whom it takes its name is neither static nor unitary. Barchiesi’s contribution to this process has been considerable and influential.

At the same time there has been a comprehensive re-evaluation of Ovid’s Fasti and exile poems.² The Poet and the Prince both reflects and furthers these interactive


approaches, as the ‘Introduction’ (pp. 1-11) indicates. Barchiesi offers a useful survey, outlining the interplay of considerations—political and aesthetic, public and private—necessary for interpretation: ‘In short, scholars who study the subject of “Augustus and the poets” are generally highly aware of the ambiguities, tensions and nuances that belong to poetic discourse; but they are not sufficiently aware of the ambiguities, tensions and nuances that belong to the category “Augustus”’ (pp. 8f.). His sense of the delicate balancing act between revolution and restitution, change and continuity, crisis and stability, which informs the Augustan age, and of the connotations of ‘Augustus’ and ‘Augustan’ for subsequent ages, leads him to emphasise the importance of symbols in the Augustan discourse. Nor are the paradoxes of continuity and revolution to be found only in the political sphere. In the preface to this second, translated, edition Barchiesi explains his interest in the synthesis of formalist/structuralist and historicist readings and in the contrast of the ‘perpetuum’ of the Metamorphoses and the digesta of the Fasti: ‘. . . I began to look for ways in which the meaning of the poem is constituted—in a cultural context, I guess—through its peculiar, fragmented and Callimachean format’ (p. x). And here is a further essential recognition of what is comprised in the definition ‘Augustan’: the continuum embraces Alexandria no less than Caesar. This is the framework on which Barchiesi’s study of the Fasti is built.

Like his chosen poet, Barchiesi’s text is learned, witty, elegant, allusive, resonant with imagery and wordplay, and open to multiple interpretations (though he is kinder to his readers than Ovid, for he is lucid and unambiguous where Ovid is elusive and equivocal). The very title of part I (‘Arma Virumque in the Mirror of the Black Sea [Featuring Observations on Politics and Poetry]’, pp. 13-44) points to reflections, as it were, on reflections. And in and through this speculum we are led to reflect on Ovid’s life-long engagement with Vergil, on literal and literary realities, on Ovid in exile as ‘a vir surrounded by arma’ (p. 24), on the elegiac rejection (and subversion) of militarism (‘The Fasti is the Augustan poem that both dissociates itself most completely from arma and accounts for this dissociation and dislike most exhaustively’, p. 19), on Tristia 2 as a lesson in how to read poetry. Barchiesi is not alone in reading the letter to Augustus as a criticism of the princeps, a challenge rather than an apology, but his approach is arresting. His close reading shows how Ovid uses literary form to expose Augustus. The epistolary form conventionally addresses an individual, but Ovid makes Augustus both addressee and subject and intends a wider and more literate readership to judge them both. As he shows how even the most unimpeachable writing can be open to double and doubtful interpretation, reminiscences of Horace’s literary epistles thrust home: ‘Horace had invited Augustus to do something about his fellow citizens’ cultural backwardness, but here the prince’s ideas on poetry are held up to public inspection’ (p. 29). In a nice reversal ‘the dismissed poet’ becomes ‘the delator, that formidable instrument of imperial power, comes back into play to write careful reports on the dangers represented by Virgil, Euripides and even Homer’ (p. 30). As he had formerly used the buildings of Augustan Rome, Barchiesi argues, so Ovid also uses literature. In depicting both as subservient to amatory purposes, he ‘offers us a clear key for our reading: every work
of art is open to deviant interpretations’ (p. 33). So Ovid exploits genre for irony and paradox: his complaints about conditions of life in exile are realised through literary associations with the type of poetry he had always refused to write.

The message here is how the late twentieth century, sensitised to flux and mutability and interconnections, reads the late Augustan age. ‘[Ovid’s] political discourse has constructed an Augustus who is a changeable figure, fluctuating as need be between the Roman citizen and the god on earth’ (p. 43). And here my casual comparisons must cease, for on the level on which I am making them, the modern era can be seen as eclectic, intellectually undisciplined, momentarily captivated by successive fleeting fancies, whereas Barchiesi’s application of recent approaches to reading literature and culture are anything but that. We have rightly learnt to regard dogmatic pronouncements on poetry with reservations imparted by an increased awareness of the interaction of author and audience in the constructedness of understanding and interpretation and the instability of texts, but this does not mean that reasonable and substantiated judgements are impossible to achieve. And since Barchiesi’s critique is grounded in close, contextualised and informed reading of Ovid’s text, he may be permitted occasional indulgences, such as his Ahl-ian play at the end of this chapter, alluding to the Fasti as ‘a text in which (to recall a symbolic square) the loftiest of subjects (ROMA) contends with the legacy of light Callimachean verse (AMOREs and, if we like, also MetAMORphoses), while the exigencies of celebration and the reconstruction of Augustan values are continually postponed (MORA), and the poet retraces and contests the work of his inescapable predecessor, the author of arma virumque (MARO)’ (p. 44). If this is not provably Ovidian in intention, it is certainly an Ovidian conceit. Having delineated the contexts within which he will read the Fasti, Barchiesi turns to the poem itself in part 2, ‘Ovid Writes Rome’. He begins with ‘Calendar and Poetic Form’ (chapter 1, pp. 47-78), drawing attention to the function of a calendar as a vehicle for national identity and to Augustus’ interest in the calendar and religious festivals. Some scholars have seen Ovid as constrained and so poetically impoverished by the calendar form, but Barchiesi rightly insists that the poem’s form is ‘Alexandrian, unstable, corrosive’ (p. 48) and questions the import of harmony, or conflict, between form and content (p. 48); moreover, his observations on, for example, movable feasts remind us that the calendar was not fixed, but was in many respects subject to interpretation, not to say manipulation. I for one find it hard to resist the impression that surprising or dissonant aspects of genre and form urge the reader to be open to the possibility of irony and subversion, though I fully agree with Barchiesi’s assertion that ‘black-and-white alternatives, such as “conformism” versus “subversion,” [are] inadequate’ (p. 44).

In the section ‘Programs without Polemics’ (pp. 51-53) Barchiesi looks at the poetic aims expressed in the Fasti poem, noting ‘the absence of tensions and polemics. For the first time in the history of Roman poetry, poetic objectives on the Alexandrian model . . . are unproblematically applied to a celebratory and official function’ (p. 52). For a moment, Barchiesi seems to be adopting the view that Ovid undertook the Fasti as a serious attempt to please and praise. But Barchiesi, like Ovid, is expert at revealing his matter in partial and circuitous stages by which he entices the
reader to consider a range of possibilities before surprising him with the (often open-ended) conclusion; and so we soon learn that 'the constitution of the Fasti is bifocal and highly ambiguous. The poem is permeated by a continual tension between the realm of elegy and that of epic' (p. 53). Barchiesi explores this tension in 'Venus' Army and the Disarming of Mars' (pp. 53-65). Typical of his findings is the statement: 'This Venus is a prism—an ambiguous signifier that concentrates in herself a plurality of literary influences, as well as of ideological issues, as is typical of the Fasti; she is at once erotic and elegiac, didactic and Julian. It is up to the reader to decide whether to attempt a synthesis or to accept the irreconcilable nature of the different voices that the poet keeps in play' (p. 60). Yet the 'genre crossing' critics love to notice is too facile for the Fasti, where Ovid is not so much crossing genres as drawing attention to the problems of 'creating a dialogue between them' (p. 66, in the section 'The Crossing of Literary Genres: Old and New Solutions', pp. 65-67). One result of Ovid's explicit and constant concern with programme and genre is, paradoxically, 'political', in that it forces us to notice the Fasti's borderline stance between opting out and engaging with the public sphere.

'Augustus Rewrites Rome' (pp. 69-73) sees the princeps as both theme and example, rewriting history and writing himself into city's life and its calendar. Augustan 'order' is contrasted with the flexibility of the pagan calendar, leading on to 'Order and Variation' (pp. 73-78), in which (predictably, since Barchiesi emphasises that both the poet of the Fasti and his emperor are fictions) the instability of 'order' is exposed: 'The poet makes use of the pressure exerted by the calendar to trigger contradictions' (p. 75).

In chapter 2, 'Syntagmatic Tensions' (pp. 79-104), Barchiesi addresses the structure of the Fasti, which he describes as paratactic, with syntactic links, at once 'continuous' and 'discontinuous' (p. 86). As before, this way of reading allows the critic to encompass and reconcile apparent conflicts of interpretation and reject inferences of poetic ineptitude: so far from being the slave of calendar form and content, or incapable of sustaining classically ordered structure on a grand scale, Ovid positively exploits formal problems. And again, the reading may be pressed for ideological implications: was Ovid celebrating Augustan order or drawing attention to the disintegration of traditional values? Certainly his ordering of material by combination and by selection (whether inclusion or omission) can be suggestive, as Barchiesi goes on to demonstrate in chapter 3, 'Paradigmatic Effects' (pp. 105-40). He first takes issue with suggestions that Ovid's choice and treatment of subject matter reflects Augustus' aetiological and antiquarian religious concerns, offering readings of passages that emphasise disruption rather than continuity or exploit fortuitous juxtapositions: the Lares (Fast. 5.139-46), the Salii (3.259-392), the Quirinalia (2.475-532), the Lemuria (5.451-92), the Ides of March and Anna Perenna (3.523-710), the Fordicidia followed by the conferring of the title of imperator after Mutina (4.629-

---

3 For the latter view see Newlands [2], which appeared after Barchiesi's first edition but which he (p. x n. 2) notes as 'quite compatible with [his] approach'.

76), the self-conscious postponement of the poet’s audience with the sensuous, pleasure-loving Flora to give precedence to Vesta (4.946-49). A quotation from Barchiesi’s discussion here of the apotheosis of Romulus will illustrate his thesis and his figured but lucid (Ovidian) style: ‘Sed Proculus Longa veniebat Iulius Alba (‘But Julius Proculus was coming from Alba Longa’, Fast. 2.499) echoes the official voice of the Augustan Apollo in a political poem by Propertius: O Longa mundi servator ab Alba / Auguste (‘Augustus, saviour of the world from Alba Longa’, Prop. 4.6.37). Right from the very foundation of Rome, it is made clear, a Julian was concerned in the process of apotheosis and Romulus is a god because one must believe what he says (his descendant Augustus will repeat this pattern: as divi filius he will make Caesar’s divinity plausible and his ascent to the heavens too will be vouched for by a single witness, well rewarded for this service). After a similar exercise in credulity, the reader is immediately informed that the day that commemorates all this is also called All Fools’ Day. Naturally there can be no malice in the calendar: but a narrator who decides to tell this controversial story of apotheosis on the very day of the Quirinalia—and not on 7 July, the generally accepted date for Romulus’ mysterious disappearance—could appear far less innocent, if required to answer for this insidious combination of elements‘ (p. 118).

Another theme of the poem is considered in chapter 4, ‘Genealogies’ (pp. 141-80): ‘Augustus is in the singular position of having constructed his own genealogy in two directions, both forward into the future and backward into the past’ (p. 141). But here again Ovid’s ‘syntagmatic’ and ‘paradigmatic’ technique informs his relation of heroic narratives. Romulus, Acneas, the Fabii are problematic. ‘Ovid allows his readers to share the distancing awareness, so typically Alexandrian, that the narrative could also have gone differently . . . ‘ (p. 168). Tracing the changes in the responses of early and later Augustan writers to the founders and traditions appropriated by Rome’s new founder, Barchiesi continues to interrogate context and style: if the way in which Romulus is presented repeatedly raises a quizzical eyebrow, what is the critic to make of Augustus, the new Romulus? The ongoing and ultimately inconclusive Augustan search for an ideal ruler has generic implications: the ultimate failure to reconcile what Romulus and Numa stand for is reflected in the impasse between epic and elegy.

By this stage the reader has been alerted to a number of strategies by which Ovid subverts superficially obvious interpretations, suggesting variant and multiple meanings. But can we trust our poet? Chapter 5, ‘Guarantors and Self-Destroying Information’ (pp. 181-213), examines the problems of poetic authority and divine and human sources of inspiration. Callimachus’ and Ovid’s reflections of Hesiod show that even the father of didactic poetry sanctioned by the Muses can be read in different ways; Propertius’ Vertumnus takes what Barchiesi calls the ‘metamorphosis of an informant’ (pp. 186-89), a stage nearer the position in which ‘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’ (p. 191). (Here and throughout, Barchiesi’s stress on the role of the reader and the sense of fun that can be inferred from the admittedly double-edged expression ‘mischievous’—and which is too often sidelined in recent critiques of Ovidian wit—is what distinguishes his treatment of Ovid’s informants from that of Newlands, who sees the increasing undermining of the informants as a more sinister strategy; but for both Barchiesi and Newlands, poetic authority in the Fasti is yet another way in which Augustan values are opened to interrogation.

Chapter 6, ‘The Causes and Messages of Rites: Recuperation of the Antique’ (pp. 214-37), considers the implications of etiological poetry’s exploration and explication of origins in the light of the Augustan discourse, in which the interplay of concern to preserve traditions and to define the identity of a people is potentially political. By incorporating Greek sources Ovid raises questions of variant and possibly malicious interpretation in this aspect of the poem, as well, as Barchiesi demonstrates in readings of Terminus (2.639-84), Venus (4.1-162), the veiled statue (6.569-636) and Janus’ programmatic speech (1.101-288).

In chapter 7, ‘The Satyrical Element’ (pp. 238-51), Barchiesi moves from ‘that authoritarian voice that is supposed to make itself heard through the means of poetic celebration’ to ‘the opposite pole’ of the Fasti, the phallic (p. 238). Noting first the domains of Roman public life and literature, in which phallic display is tolerated, he shows how the repeated farcical sexual elements of the Fasti (whose inclusion is hardly justified by the calendar) are similarly demarcated and associated with the popular stage. Even so, they pose a further destabilising generic problem: ‘Augustan culture did not envisage... a [literary] form so open and various that it could combine the Prince’s Parthian victories with ithyphallic misadventures.’ Viewed in the light of the princeps’ revival, not to say appropriation, of state religion, and in the light of contemporary ideals of literary decorum and order (witness Horace’s Ars Poetica, discussed on pp. 246-51), Ovid’s recuperation of the satyrical, Dionysiac element gives pause for thought. Barchiesi duly pauses, in chapter 8 (pp. 251-56), to consider where all the debate on the Fasti is leading. He is adamant that recognition of the poem’s irreverent, disruptive aspects must not replace interpretations that see it as official homage (however reluctant), but must be combined with them. By the end of Augustus’ reign and the beginning of Tiberius’, ‘propaganda’ has become the unifying ‘discourse’ of a culture that imprises on every facet of public and private life, so that it is hard to define terms of ‘opposition’. The ‘fractured and Callimachean form of the Fasti’ (p. 256) resists the identification of princeps and Rome.

Part 3, ‘The End’ (pp. 257-72). Barchiesi’s ‘end’ engages with the apparent end-lessness of the Fasti. Ovid blamed Augustus (rumpit opus, ‘[my fate] interrupted the task’, Trist. 2.552; cf. Trist. 1.14, referring to the Metamorphoses), but Barchiesi, with other recent critics, asks: ‘Are we so sure that the Fasti are just an interrupted

---

6 Newlands ([2] 209-36; ‘The Ending of Ovid’s Fasti’, in A. J. Boyle [ed.], The Imperial Muse: Ramus Essays on Roman Literature of the Empire [Bendigo 1988] 129-43) treats the extant books of the Fasti as a complete(d) work, with the ending raising problematic
utterance and that the interruption cannot be a communicative “gesture”? ’ (p. 262)
Metaphorically, ‘the time of Ovid’s life is severed like the structure of the poem’, 
while the last ten days in book 6 have ‘a recurrent sense that time is escaping’ (p. 
262). In these entries Barchiesi draws attention to several indications of closure, to 
the vexed issue of the omission of the adoption of Tiberius, to Julian and Augustan 
commemorations excluded by the non-survival, or non-existence, of the missing six 
books. Like Newlands, 7 he pays detailed attention to the final entry of the poem as we 
have it, with the complex of connections and associations surrounding the temple of 
Hercules of the Muses, its first founder, Numa, its builder, L. Marcius Philippus, 
Philippus’ daughter Marcia, the wife of Paulus Fabius Maximus. Both Barchiesi and 
Newlands foreground dynastic issues and conjectures of opposition to Tiberius, 
exploring a complex of intertextual resonances in the process. Barchiesi offers a sense 
of poetic resolution, in which the (Horatian) lyre reconciles the generic stresses of the 
Fasti and allows the poem to become a genuine celebration of Augustan peace, only 
onto destabilise it (evidencing, not for the first time, an intensely Ovidian ‘narrative 
indirection’ 8). In the end, Barchiesi’s ‘end’ is as inconclusive as Ovid’s—no 
weakness, but a powerful recognition of the intricacies of this poem and this poet. 
Brief but important remarks on the politics of closure, reminding us that Ovid’s poem 
coincides with an unprecedented political expropriation of the Roman calendar by 
Augustus, brings us back to the unavoidable but essentially inadequate ‘Anti-
Augustan’/‘Augustan’ dichotomy. ‘To bring something to an end is a clear sign of 
power’ (p. 271). Symptomatically and tellingly, Barchiesi’s own final remark is 
disingenuously minimised in a footnote on the antithesis: ‘I would not know how to 
place myself outside this contradiction’ (p. 272 n. 20). My own feeling is that the 
admission of concepts of open-endedness, multivalency, multiple layering of meaning 
into the classical literary criticism of the last two decades has been a positive and 
liberating move, especially when—as is the case with Barchiesi’s writing—tolerance 
of variability and multiple ‘truths’ does not result in inconclusive or unclear argument. 
In part the clarity derives from Barchiesi’s constant dialogue on ‘Questions of Method’ (p. 99), as well as from his lucid expression; he commands theoretical 

questions about issues of Augustan succession and ideology. See too A. Barchiesi, 
Fowler (edd.), Classical Closure: Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature (Princeton 
1997) 181-208’. In The Poetics of Exile: Program and Polemic in the Tristia and ex Ponto of 
Ovid (Brussels 1980) Betty Rose Nagle suggests that ‘Ovid’s decision to write elegies from 
xile rather than to finish the Fasti is intended as a symbolic representation of the 
discontinuity . . . [confirming] Ovid’s explicit insistence that his style declined in exile’ (pp. 
19f.). Disillusionment, combined with intellectual isolation, are often suggested as reasons 
for the abandonment of the work; see particularly W. R. Johnson, ‘The desolation of the 


8 The phrase is derived from Tissot [2] 10: ‘the characteristic indirection and 
unpredictability of Ovid’s narrative’.
discourse without being a slave of jargon. Moreover, he is skilled at presenting succinctly the gist of critical issues that have extensive bibliographies. He does not—as we used to—mine the texts for political evidence, but lets the potential for political import emerge from the reading in the cultural context.

Aristophanes of Byzantium famously asked, ‘O Menander and Life, which of you copied the other?’ We have reached a stage in Ovidian studies at which we must begin to ask a similar question in two different ways. The first might begin ‘O numerous current critics of the Fasti . . .’, and I do not intend the obvious conclusion to be offensive, for it is not ‘copying’ but a welcome interactive evolution, through a number of conferences and publications, of an important understanding of Ovid’s poem in its time. My one qualm about the current productive focus on the ‘Augustan discourse’ is that it appears to neglect the many continuities—not least in calendar and religious reform—between the programmes of Julius Caesar and Augustus. For instance, on p. 110 Barchiesi writes: ‘Augustus has presented an image of himself as a brake on the excesses of modernity and as a guarantor of the past. His role as the nation’s restorer and archaeologist is exemplified by the attention he gives to the oldest religious cults. By means of a complex and gradual procedure of recuperation, rewriting and correction, the prince places his own figure, as pontifex and member of all the most important priestly colleges, in a dramatically central position’. This is true and it is essential to Barchiesi’s presentation of the ‘Augustan discourse’, but is not in all aspects unique to Augustus. And this leads me on, or back, to the second ‘O Menander’ question: ‘O critics and Ovid, which of you constructed each other?’

This is not to say that I do not find Barchiesi’s constructs of Ovid, Ovid’s Fasti and the ‘prince’ to be a most fruitful and satisfying approach, its scholarly depth enhanced by its engaging style. Readers who are familiar with recent work on the Fasti will find the work an intriguing advance in the field; those who are not could hardly get a better introduction.

---

9 This is well documented in S. Weinstock, Divus Iulius (Oxford 1971).

10 I am not competent to judge the Italian, but the English translation reads extremely well and betrays very few signs of its translatedness.

11 I noticed very few errors in the text. On p. 155 a cross-reference is missing (‘see p. 000 above’). On p. 267 I would expect ‘Marcii’ rather than ‘Marci’, Aemilius rather than Emilius. On p. 268 a missing comma complicates a long sentence: ‘. . . the current of political tensions that accompany the entire period of succession[,] a period in which the Fasti . . .’. The bibliography, however, has not been checked as carefully as might have been expected. On p. 274 (no doubt because the work was still in preparation at the time this bibliography was compiled) there are no pages given for Barchiesi’s ‘Endgames: Ovid’s Metamorphoses 15 and Fasti 6’, in D. H. Roberts, F. M. Dunn and D. Fowler (edd.), Classical Closure: Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature (Princeton 1997); the volume is cited erroneously as Reading Classical Closure and the editors are listed in reverse order of that actually appearing on the title page. The last page reference for Braun (1981) on p. 274 should be 2383, not 2385. The publication date of the 1985 seminars that appeared in PLLS 5 (cited for Hofmann on p. 277) was in fact 1986. The pages given for Miller (1983) on p. 278 should be 156-92, not 56-92. The second part of the title of Newlands (1995) p. 279 is ‘Ovid