marginalia, quisquiliae autour d'un colosse de milliers de pages. Cependant, elles peuvent illustrer que les interprétations de détail ne sont pas rendues superflues par les travaux érudits de M. Bömer. C'est ce qui vaut également pour les études et les commentaires littéraires au sens propre et pour les analyses narratives. Il ne faut que comparer l'instrument de travail de M.B. et l'instrument de lecture de W. S. Anderson pour les chants VI-X des Métamorphoses. Vis-à-vis de certains courants d'esthéticisme, de symbolisme ou de structuralisme littéraires, M. Bömer continue de faire preuve d'une austérité qui n'est pas même dépourvue d'une sorte de coquetterie (cf. tome III, p. 36: "Welche Absicht der Dichter dabei verfolgt hat, werden wohl nur die kongenialen Philologen unseres Jahrhunderts mit Sicherheit deuten können; ich wage nicht zu entscheiden ... "). Bien que les aspects structuraux et narratifs attirent peu l'attention de M.B., il faut avouer que par ex. la discussion récente sur la composition de Pyrame et Thisbé dans la périodique néerlandaise Lampas (10, 1977, 143-150 et 11, 1978, 218-225) aurait pu profiter des parallèles réunis par M. Bömer dans un aperçu sur "poetische Genauigkeit" et "logische Konsequenz" (tome II, p. 46-47).

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Once more Sir Ronald Syme has written a good book. The mere idea to scrutinize historical details in Ovid's works, deserves a compliment. According to Syme (pp. 37; 48) the last decade of Augustus' long reign is still very obscure to us, because the available historiographical sources show lacunae and are biased. "That being so", he says (p. 48), "evidence from the Augustan poets acquires an abnormal value, both for detail and for context and atmosphere" 1).

Syme's book is written in his famous Tacitean English and it is based on a thorough and wide erudition. All kinds of works by obscure poets and other unknown authors from all periods of Roman imperial history (p. 58 f.), and most of the modern Forschung are used. Syme has not only given an unforgettable description of the last fifteen years of Augustus' reign, his book is also an important contribution to a better understanding of the life, work, entourage, and mentality of Ovid.

The first chapter of the book contains a revision of the chronology of Ovid's works; in the chapters II and III historical evidence in Mnemosyne, Vol. XXXV, Fasc. 3-4 (1982)
the Fasti, the Tristia and the Epistulae ex Ponto is examined; and
the fourth chapter is a clever analysis of some forgotten campaigns
which were fought on the Rhine and the Danube in the last two
years of Augustus' principate (13-14 A.D.) 2). According to Syme,
serious fighting was going on the Rhine in 13-14, under the auspices
of Tiberius Caesar, by now the colleague of the old princeps, and
under the real command of Germanicus. If Syme is right, and he
seems to be so, the mutiny on the Rhine in Germania Inferior in
14 A.D. is easier to understand: serious campaigning had apparently
started, but without overdue substitutions and replacements of
troops. The veterans of several difficult campaigns were afraid
of a new round of bloody fighting, which could rob them of their
well-earned pensions. They had had to be evocati against their own
will ever since 6 A.D., and they mutinied now that fresh wars were
coming up after the triumph of Tiberius and now that the old
princeps was dead.

The analysis of forgotten campaigns is followed by a series of
prosopographical chapters, which seem to be a prelude to a new
book on the Augustan aristocracy (p. 125 n. 1). In these chapters
Ovid's friends—a theme which has been neglected since 1890
(p. 72 n. 1)—, the sons of Messalla, Paulus Fabius Maximus—one of
Ovid's most important patrons—, and Sextus Pompeius jr. are
dealt with. These elaborate, erudite and sometimes over-clever and
highly speculative chapters (pp. 140; 178 f.) are followed by the
last, and in my view the best, part of the book: the essays on 'Poetry
and Government', 'Legislation and the Morals', and on 'The Error
of Caesar Augustus'. How Augustus came to see Ovid as an ex-
ponent of the easy-going, hedonist jeunesse dorée, which shunned
obligations of all kinds (p. 182 ff.) 8) and which was loathed by Augus-
tus, is explained (pp. 188 ff.; 199 f.), and the much debated issue of
Ovid's or Augustus' error is elaborately treated (p. 215 ff.). Syme
seems to think that the scandals of 2 B.C. and 8 A.D. were in reality
conspiracies of the noble friends and relatives of the two Iuliae
(pp. 192 ff.; 206 ff.), but he does not prove it, and he does not
sufficiently explain why in both cases moral misbehaviour was so
heavily stressed. Moral misbehaviour was sufficient reason in
itself; private conduct of members of the dynasty was a public
issue. Besides, the banishments of 2 B.C. and 8 A.D. were perhaps
nothing more than preventive actions against undesirable candidates
for the succession and their cliques. Augustus needed experienced
and active viri militares and administrators, like Tiberius Caesar
and Germanicus, as his heirs, and he had to see to it that his system
did not fall prey to some extravagant nobles who had not been very
active in the emperor's service. Ovid saw the rising star of Germani-