Following only ten years after the publication of R.P.H. Green's comprehensive commentary on all the works of Ausonius, it is quite understandable that N.M. Kay's work would be far less ambitious in scope and rather seek to provide a more detailed commentary on only a part of this poet's œuvre.

In an introductory chapter, Kay first discusses issues relating to the arrangement of the epigrams and the literary tradition. He convincingly disputes (Alan) Cameron's claim that the 'crudity' of Ausonius' epigrams can be ascribed to the fact that the poet was actually inexperienced in adapting his Greek models. Compared to Martial, the author argues, Ausonius' aims in this regard were more modest, being limited almost exclusively to translation. However, Kay immediately notes that the poet's use of translation was quite varied, ranging from the purely literal to a form of 'translation' in which only seminal traces of the original are present.

In any discussion of the influence of the Latin tradition on Ausonius' epigrams, the work of Martial deserves pride of place. The extent of the influence of the latter on the former even prompts the author to observe (on p. 20) that 'Ausonius could not have written some of his epigrams in the way he did without a good knowledge of his predecessor [Martial]. An interesting aspect of this influence is Ausonius' use of obscenity, a prominent feature of the work of Martial. As to the reason for the fact that there seems to be significantly fewer primary obscenities in Ausonius' epigrams, Kay is of the opinion that it may be the consequence of a number of factors, including a change in literary tastes and moral values.

A brief section of the introduction is devoted to a survey of the tradition of the epigram (Greek and Latin) that spans the period between Martial and the end of Late Antiquity. According to Kay, the only names worthy of attention, at least in the Latin tradition, belong to the 5th and 6th centuries. They are Claudian, Luxorius and Pope Damasus.

The poet's life is dealt with on pp. 22-24. Kay mentions the intriguing question regarding the absence of any reference to Ausonius in Ammianus Marcellinus' history, yet ventures no solution. Ausonius' Christianity has been the subject of debate for some time. The author suggests that when it came to the conflict between paganism and Christianity in the 5th century, Ausonius steered clear of extremism on either side. Given the complexity of

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the relationship between religious conversion and traditional loyalties in Late Antiquity, Kay’s view is probably the least contentious.

For the manuscript tradition and the text of Ausonius’ epigrams, Kay relies on Green’s edition in the OCT, published in 1999. A survey of the manuscript families is provided on pp. 25-27. Kay forewarns the reader (p. 26) that where textual discrepancies among the principal families (mainly V and Z) occur, his general preference is to ascribe it to editorial rather than authorial intent. Also included in the introduction are a concordance between Green’s and other editions, and a note on the sequence in which the epigrams appear in the manuscripts V and Z.

Kay has chosen to place the complete Latin text in a separate section, followed by the commentary which occupies the major part of the book. The commentary on each epigram is preceded by an English translation. Throughout, the notes are far more extensive than in Green’s commentary. In instances where there is clear evidence of the poet’s use of a particular Greek model, Kay would provide the text of the latter in full, with an English translation, as well as a discussion of the literary influence. In the case of epigram 12, for example, Green remarks (p. 384) that it ‘resembles a poem in which Posidippus describes a statue of kairos by Lysippus [...] but the imitation is not close.’ Kay, on the other hand, takes a more nuanced view of Ausonius’ use of the Greek original. The striking differences between the two poems, he argues, indicate a deliberate effort on the part of the poet to ‘describe something similar, particularly in allegorical terms, but nevertheless different’ (p. 99). There are numerous other occasions on which Kay considers it necessary to complement his commentary with a comprehensive discussion of the (Greek) literary influence. It is especially in this area where Kay’s book makes an important contribution to current scholarship on Ausonius’ création littéraire, as well as provide us with a better understanding of the techniques of literary imitation in Late Antique poetry.

A few times, the author presents facts which, although not entirely germane to the topic, are nevertheless interesting and make Ausonius and his age seem less distant. For example, in a note on the reference to one of Ausonius’ estates in epigram 33, Kay remarks (p. 146) that although the exact location is no longer known, it ‘was in what is now prime claret country.’ Apparently the wine produced in the area is rather exclusive and the author even quotes from a recent wine guide’s evaluation of an 1874 vintage, tasted in 1995, as evidence of this.
The meticulous and exhaustive research that went into this book recommends it as the standard commentary in English on the epigrams of Ausonius for many years to come.

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This very useful and long-awaited commentary (Latin text with Italian translation) by Ciro Monteleone is a welcome addition for scholars with a particular interest in Cicero’s *Philippics*. With this work the author joins the recent trend in Ciceronian scholarship that concerns itself with the nature and significance of the political content of Cicero’s speeches, especially those delivered during the remaining months of his life when he openly returned to the Roman political arena. 2

Monteleone (M.) begins with a brief introduction (pp. 9-12) to the historical background and circumstances of the *Third Philippic*, closing with a quotation from *Phil.* 3.29. 3 This gives an indication of the direction of Cicero’s activity in Roman politics during the final months of 43 BC when he frequently stated that, having endured enough, the time had finally come to stand firm and rid the Republic of tyranny, once and for all. It relates to the period from late 47 BC to late 45 BC, a time during which Cicero’s actions and the ideas expressed in his philosophical writings paved the way for the

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3 Multa quae in libera civitate ferenda non essent tulimus et perpessi sumus, alii spe forsan recuperandae liberatis, alii vivendi nimia cupiditate: scilicet, si illa tulimus quae nos necessitas ferre coegit, quae tuis quaedam paene fatalis – quae tamen ipsa non tulimus – etiamne huibus impuri latrionis feremus taeterrimum crudelissimumque dominatum?
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