

vertalings is met sensitieweitek gemaak. Min vertalers is daarvoor opgewasse. Dit lees pragtig vloeiend en natuurlik. Die vertaler het die Griekse versreëls sover as moontlik gehandhaaf. Lakunes in die Grieks word aangedui. Die leser van Grieks kan enigeen van hierdie fragmente met die oorspronklike vergelyk om te sien hoe vindingryk die vertaling gemaak is. Henderson beweeg op die grense van wat die Afrikaanse taal moontlik maak en verryk die taal deur talle nuutskeppinge. Dit is te verstane dat hierdie boek vir die prys vir vertaalde werk van die Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns benoem was. Die fynproewer sal besef wat die meriete van hierdie vertalings is. Die spelling van Griekse name in Afrikaans was nog altyd 'n probleem. Daar bestaan wel die riglyn vir spelwyses wat deur die Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie uitgegee is maar Henderson maak beslis 'n bydrae om die spelwyse van Griekse eiename en terme in Afrikaans te standardiseer.

Die werk is aan die einde van 'n omvattende bibliografie voorsien. Dit is duidelik dat die skrywer naastenby alle beskikbare sekondêre literatuur onder oë gehad het, dikwels in moeilik toeganklike vorm wat ongetwyfeld heelwat tyd in die buiteland geveerg het.

Die geheelindruk van hierdie boek is dat dit 'n eersterangse stuk navorsing is wat deur 'n deurwinterde wetenskaplike met 'n fynsinnige gees geskryf is.

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Katharina Volk, *Ovid*. Malden, Mass. & Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell (Blackwell's Introductions to the Classical World), 2010. Pp. 148 + xii. ISBN 978.1-4051-3642-6.

Volk's unpretentious contribution to Blackwell's well-known series of *Introductions* is a *tour-de-force* of apparent simplicity veiling profound scholarship and thorough familiarity with current trends in Ovidian scholarship, engagingly presented.

Volk avoids the more usual work-by-work and generic approaches to the Ovidian *corpus*, choosing to discuss the whole *oeuvre* in a series of eight topical chapters that, between them, cover it adequately. An 'Introduction' is followed by a chapter on Ovid's 'Work' with four main sections: *Love poems*, *Longer poems*, *Exile poems* (*sic*) and *Lost or spurious works*. This approach allows Volk to group as a unit amatory elegies, didactic poems and elegiac monologues and, as a second unit, the hexameter *Metamorphoses* with the elegiac *Fasti*.

Throughout Volk approaches the various books as products of a creative and hard-working poet, presenting the poet as a person within his own works. The section on his exilic poems covers both the content of the poems and the psychological experience of alienation of their author. Equally, the section on conjectural Ovidian works combines information with critical description, including a warning about the vast remove between modern readers and ancient authors that affects both the physical appearance of works and the limitations of reception.

Chapter Two, 'Life,' starts with the dearth of sources other than Ovid himself. The reader is again reminded that Ovid is presenting a persona who 'is clearly not the historical Ovid but a literary construct, and while we may wish to take certain references to his life as historical truth, we should be skeptical of others' (pp. 20-1). The problem of belief lies central to our understanding of, in particular, the exilic poems, but also Ovid's purportedly autobiographical *Amores*. Different sections distinguish between 'Ovid's Biography' (referring to *Tristia* 4.10) and 'The Story of Ovid' (discussing narrative elements as they unfold in the *Amores*). Here Volk also covers the 'conundrum' of exile (the problem of interpretation of the exilic poetry). An analysis of the largely discredited theory of Ovid's exile as fictional precedes discussion of various theories about the reasons for his banishment. Volk's sound conclusion is that the exilic poetry reverses the poet's habit of fictionalising his life: here he 'makes his own life into poetry' (p. 33).

Chapter Three, 'Elegy', covering the nature of elegy, generic possibilities and Ovid's 'deconstruction' of its traditional content, is balanced by a fourth chapter, not on epic, but rather on 'Myth'. Here the pervasive use and influence of myth throughout Ovid's *oeuvre* is thoroughly reviewed, with emphasis on the *Metamorphoses*. Myth can serve as both narrative content and rhetorical shorthand (where a single name brings a vast tradition of stories into a poem). Next follows a brief exploration of 'Epic and Intertextuality': Ovid engages very deliberately and creatively with his poetic predecessors, constantly inviting us to discern multiple literary layers within each work. This chapter includes discussion of Ovid's charm as a story-teller, in particular his manner of retelling the same basic plot in different tales. Finally, Ovid's nuanced use of time is succinctly discussed: ostensibly static (but ranging both backward and forward) within the *Heroides*, versus the dynamic onward sweep of narrative in the *Metamorphoses*, from primeval chaos up to 'his own time'.

Next comes discussion of 'Art' (Chapter Five) as central to Ovid's compositional technique. Topics covered vary from 'Rhetoric', to the manner in which 'verbal art can influence the perception of reality' (p. 71), to differences and similarities between 'Artifice and Artificiality',

indicating how poetic (self-)deception can create a more palatable reality for both reader and artist.

Chapter Six, on Ovid's 'Women', treats a fraught subject with delicacy. Volk gives a concise overview of conflicting critical interpretations of Ovid's attitude to women. Our poet offers an ambiguous 'female perspective', which may or may not cloak extreme male chauvinism. Volk carefully outlines the modern critical view of a lack of awareness of 'sexual identity' in the ancients, contrasting to this Ovid's own apparently sharply aware heterosexual approach, but showing how, with Ovid, gender relations are very much a 'performance art'.

Chapter Seven examines the poet's attitude to the city itself (ranging from playful description of its potential for amatory trysts to his longing for his lost home when in exile), but also to Augustus, warning the reader carefully about the danger of assuming any one, canonical interpretation of another contentious issue.

The final chapter, on 'Reception', rapidly runs through Ovid's great influence in the Middle Ages, pausing on the visual interpretation of his more famous myths in the Renaissance (with three illustrations: Bernini's *Apollo and Daphne*, Coreggio's *Jupiter and Io* and Titian's disturbing *Diana and Actaeon*). The chapter ends with Ovid's ubiquity within modern filmic media and the two main types of novelistic exploration of his exile (either offering plausible explanations for it or using it to depict the alienating effect of isolation).

An excursus offers up-to-date information on 'Further Reading', arranged both traditionally ('General Works', 'Individual Works') and by the topics covered in Chapters Two to Eight. This is followed by a single page of 'Notes', nearly three pages of 'Passages Cited' and a brief Index.

Although Volk constantly emphasises the lightness of Ovid's touch, this reviewer would have liked a separate chapter on Ovidian humour, an aspect that has recently come into its own, after centuries of imperception. That quibble aside, this is an admirable book, suitable as both an up-to-date introduction for tyros and as a refreshing overview of matters Ovidian for advanced scholars.

Jo-Marie Claassen

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