

following generation. Yet K. relegates this influence to the realm of ‘ideas’, enabling Virgil to provide the ‘form’. I see, however, a fruitful application for the *form* of Cicero’s philosophy. Is not Cicero’s scepticism – a commitment to ‘live from day to day’ (*vivimus in diem*, Cic. *Tusc.* 5.33) that he writes into the form of his dialogues – a manifestation of the ‘dialectic of solitude’? Could we not use this connection to trace the reformation of Imperial-era philosophy as K. does with poetry? Or, taking a different tack, what possibilities does K.’s work hold for non-canonical readers and writers, as of epigrams or graffiti? Could this shift help us to read – exemplified, for instance, in the bilingual ‘alone, together-ness’ of the Pietrabbondante roof-tile (cf., e.g., J. Webster, ‘Routes to Slavery’, in: H. Eckardt [ed.], *Roman Diasporas* [2010]) – the writings of enslaved individuals within the same solitary sphere where K. locates Virgil?

At its most ambitious, K.’s study suggests a way to understand not just the solitude of the poet in Augustan Rome, but the dynamics of individuation beyond public and private assumptions of personhood across time.

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A COMMENTARY ON OVID’S *HEROIDES*

ΒΑΪΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ (Β.), ΜΙΧΑΛΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ (Α.Ν.), ΜΙΧΑΛΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ (Χ.Ν.) (trans.) *Οβίδιος: Ηρωίδες (1–15)*. Pp. 637. Athens: Gutenberg, 2021. Paper, €35. ISBN: 978-960-01-2239-8.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X22002761

Greek students of Classics may no longer deplore the scarcity of secondary literature on Latin in their native language. Even though recently published work is focused mostly on Augustan poetry, it undoubtedly represents a substantial contribution both to Greek and international scholarship. This is the case with this generous volume, which provides a translation and a full literary and textual commentary on the single epistles of Ovid’s *Heroides* (*Her.* 1–15).

The editors are justifiably considered among the most dedicated readers of this problematic collection of Ovid, which may still lack a solid critical edition, but has received growing interest over the last two decades. A. Michalopoulos has previously published an English commentary on the paired letters of Paris and Helen (*Heroides* 16–17 [2006]) and one in Greek on those of Acontius and Cydippe (*Ηρωίδες* 20–21 [2014]), whereas C. Michalopoulos’s dissertation dealt with the single letters of Phaedra and Hermione (*Heroides* 4 and 8 [2006]). Most recently, Vaiopoulos published a thorough commentary on the epistles of Leander and Hero (*Ηρωίδες* 18–19 [2021]).

Such a long-time engagement with the *Heroides* now culminates with this μέγα βιβλίον, which undoubtedly constitutes a μέγα καλόν for both Greek and international scholarship. The volume begins with a comprehensive introduction divided into two parts. In the first one there is an extensive account of Ovid’s life and his works fused with many autobiographical references from his exile poetry (pp. 19–48). One may find the amount of biographical information in this section a bit superfluous for a typical commentary. The mystery of Ovid’s exile, for instance, extends to four pages (pp. 24–7),

rather unnecessarily, since the footnotes may direct readers to the relative bibliography on this unresolved issue. Considering the speculation (p. 26) that Ovid's disgrace was somehow related to that of Augustus' granddaughter Julia, who was banished on a charge of adultery in the same year as the poet (8 CE), I believe G.P. Goold (*JCS* 8 [1983]) deserves a quote. Bibliographical references do not abound here as the authors' obvious purpose is to provide a summary of Ovid's works for students not familiar with the poet's corpus as well as a general overview of its sociopolitical, literary and intertextual background. A minor misinterpretation, in my view, lies in the citation of *Pont.* 4.10.51–2 *Vergilium vidi tantum: nec avara Tibullo | tempus amicitiae fata dedere meae* (p. 23 n. 18), since Ovid's grievance that he did not have the chance to develop a long friendship with Tibullus does not mean or imply that 'he never got to meet him' (or Virgil) before his untimely death (note his ἐπικλήθειον for Tibullus in *Am.* 3.9).

The second part of the introduction (pp. 49–88) has a predominantly scholarly scope as it extends from common issues of content, chronology and authenticity (regarding the *Epistula Sapphus*) to a critical appreciation of Ovid's collection, which is fittingly distinguished as the most characteristic example of the 'Kreuzung der Gattungen' (p. 58). The generic, thematic and literary assonances of the *Heroides* are fully traced in Hellenistic poetry (*Carmen Grenfellianum*, *Helenaë Querimonia*), the monologues of Euripides' tragic heroines and the epyllia of the Roman Neoterics and, of course, in Roman Elegy. The authors are right to express their reservations concerning the ultimate influence of Ovid's rhetorical education on the construction of these letters as *suasoriae* and *controversiae* (in the case of double ones). Similarly, they prefer to attribute Ovid's fondness of epistolarity to its multi-generic form and flexibility (p. 64), following D.F. Kennedy's (*Cambridge Companion to Ovid* [2002]) ingenious comparison of the *Heroides* with Jacques Derrida's *La Carte Postale*. The point where they are joining their academic skills is the subchapter on the 'female voices of Ovid's heroines, their subjectivity, intertextual irony and multiple recipients' (pp. 68–83). Moving beyond the conventional formalistic approaches based on intertextuality and allusion, they build upon H. Jacobson's monograph (*Ovid's Heroides*, 1974), in terms of the function of memory in the collection, and elaborate on Kennedy's (see above) insightful remarks on the double destination of these letters, his distinction between the internal and the external reader (i.e. the mythical lover and Ovid's reader whom these epistles may 'speak to') and his emphasis on the importance of the time of reading to the perceived meaning of the text. On the contrary, the authors, rightly in my opinion, do not seem to endorse (neither here nor in their commentary) the Lacanian notion of gendered desire introduced by S.H. Lindheim (*Mail and Female* [2003]) nor are willing to adopt L. Fulkerson's distinctly feminist approach like that in her reading of the single letters (*The Ovidian Heroine as Author* [2005]). Instead, taking the cue from E. Spentzou (*Readers and Writers* [2003]) and J. Farrell (*HSCP* 98 [1998]), they read the epistles as early examples of *écriture féminine*, brilliantly employing the perspective of Hélène Cixous, the 'mother' of poststructuralist feminist theory, who has shown that a woman's writing is directly tied to the female body.

It is regrettable that in such a nicely produced volume there is no apparatus criticus below the Latin text or at least a series of critical notes based on the most recent editions of H. Dörrie (1971), G. Showerman/G.P. Goold (1977), G. Rosati (1989) and P.E. Knox (2005). Given the limitations commonly imposed by Greek publishers due to copyright issues, the authors had to resort to the decent web text provided by *The Latin Library*, making a few changes and omitting several couplets *passim*. These are all gathered in the comparative table of pp. 83–5 and discussed in the commentary *ad loc.*

This shortcoming is counterbalanced by a vivid and emotional verse translation, which follows the elegiac couplet as closely as possible thanks to the authors' choice to render

each verse separately using a loose iambic meter shifting from 23 to 21 or 19 syllables. Readers with good taste in modern Greek will appreciate their fine poetic flavour, whereas deviations from the original text are astonishingly rare and entirely justified.

Undeniably, the main scholarly contribution of such volumes lies in the commentary. A comparison with Knox's medium-sized commentary on selected letters (*Ovid: Heroides* [2005]) in the 'green-and-yellow' Cambridge series will show that the writers acknowledge their debt where necessary. J. Reeson's copious commentary (*Ovid, Heroides 11, 13 & 14* [2001]) is slightly disregarded (mentioned only at pp. 559, 567), but an updated overview of all related scholarship in five languages is regularly offered (in the introductory notes to each letter and the scholia). In their commentary the authors never miss a chance to observe some fanciful sexual puns like that of *ancora* in Phyllis' letter to Demophoon (*Her. 3.4: litoribus nostris ancora pacta tua est*) or come up with original metaliterary readings of the subjective speech of the Ovidian heroines. See, for instance, how Penelope's rhetoric at *Her. 1.37–8, 75–6 ad loc.* is shown to undermine the 'mythological truth' of traditional epic (cf. *Her. 3.91–8 ad loc.*). As for the metapoetic connotations of Briseis' references *fama est* and *res audita mihi* (*Her. 3.57, 93, p. 337*), these could also be registered as Alexandrian footnotes (cf. *Her. 4.173–4*, where S. Hinds's *Allusion and Intertext* [1998] might be included in the relevant bibliography). Ovid's declamatory techniques are commonly displayed as well (the rhetorical construction of *Her. 2*, pp. 310–11, is interesting), whereas the infusion of dramatic and elegiac elements (particularly in the motif of 'post-factum' wish) is wonderfully demonstrated (see *Her. 1.5–6, 2.59–60, 7.91–2, 12.5–6 ad loc.*). However, some stories of famous mythological heroes could be abridged as these suggest common knowledge for classical readers, for example the patronymic epithets of Patroclus (*Her. 1.17: Menoetiaden*) and Meleager (*Her. 3.92: Oenides*). Once again, the needs of contemporary students are understandably prioritised.

The book is free from typographical errors and finishes with an index of ancient Greek and Latin terms and names and a general index. An *index locorum* would be particularly helpful as well, even though this would add many extra pages to the publication. Be that as it may, the book exceeds its objectives and constitutes an excellent resource for the students of Classics in Greece as well as every Ovidian scholar.

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A COMMENTARY ON SENECA'S LETTERS

SOLDO (J.) *Seneca, Epistulae Morales Book 2. A Commentary with Text, Translation, and Introduction*. Pp. xxxviii + 346. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021. Cased, £120, US\$155. ISBN: 978-0-19-885434-0. doi:10.1017/S0009840X22001883

This commentary is an unpretentious piece of work, demonstrating an impressive degree of scholarship, good sense and – given that this is the book version of S.'s 2018 Ph.D. thesis – maturity. S. aims to be useful to her readers and succeeds admirably, but also presents original research and an interpretative agenda of her own. She explains her selection of letters to comment on with a desire to address Seneca's artful composition at the level