

Minoan Crete on the European collective imagination by turning to literature, history and art. Momigliano emphasises the diversity of the responses the Minoan past attracted from the mid-twentieth century until 1949. These interpretations of Minoan Crete incorporated issues of race, colonialism, decadence, femininity, and otherness. Chapter 5 covers the third quarter of the twentieth century, suggesting that despite the continuing excavations in Crete and Thera as well as the decipherment of Linear B, the cultural responses to the Minoans continued to address the opposition between Mycenae and Minoan Crete. Chapter 6 focuses on the last quarter of the twentieth century, examining the suggestion that the Minoans practised cannibalism and human sacrifice, and discusses the considerable number of cultural responses to this unexpected suggestion. The author looks at examples from fiction, poetry, fashion, film, advertisements, and ballet performances amongst others. The twenty-first century responses to the Minoans are presented in the last chapter, demonstrating the everlasting influence of Minoan Crete in modern times.

The book's main contribution to Classics is the broad perspective it offers regarding the reception of Minoan Crete and its material culture across media by carefully considering the developments in archaeological excavations and the historical context of each period. Momigliano's examples of 'Cretomania' and thorough research on the archaeological finds immerse the reader into the narratives about Minoan Crete. The book would be suitable for teachers of Classical Civilisation, especially in the thematic study of Myth and Religion. It is a study rich in illustrations of archaeological finds and their modern interpretations, many of which could be used in both GCSE and A Level Classical Civilisation. Due to its writing style and level of critical engagement with archaeology, the book would be a welcome addition to a Classics Department library, and it would be valuable reading for undergraduate students in the field of Classics.

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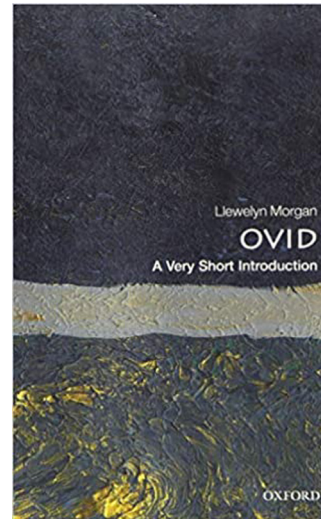
## Ovid – a Very Short Introduction

Morgan (L.). Pp. xx+120. Oxford University Press, 2020. £8.99. Paper. ISBN: 978-0-19-883768-8

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It has taken nearly 25 years for OUP to consider P. Ovidius Naso worthy of attention in their excellent series 'A Very Short Introduction'. There are now 18 of these pocket-size books devoted to Classical topics and persons, including 'Alexander the Great', 'Herodotus' and 'Homer'; there is, as yet, no 'Augustus', 'Horace', 'Julius Caesar' or 'Virgil'. So Ovid, in whatever nook of the Elysian Fields he has his stall, can claim bragging rights where Latin poetry is concerned. Perhaps this is only fair, given the impressive influence he has exerted on later writers and storytellers in many languages.



It has to be said immediately that the publishers have found a first-class writer-academic for the job of describing Ovid's character and range, and explaining the appeal of 'this scintillating Roman poet'. Llewelyn Morgan introduces the man concisely, then gives a chapter each, in chronological order so far as is known, to the major genres and works.

One of the author's themes is Ovid's 'intense interest in the creation of art'; this poet could justifiably be said to be the first in history to exhibit this characteristic, certainly to anything like the degree that he

demonstrates. It would be hard to improve on Morgan's description of *Metamorphoses*, for example, as billing itself 'as both the stereotypical epic – an uninterrupted account of great deeds – and as its precise opposite, a Callimachean-elegiac collection of short, loosely related compositions'. Classical academics and teachers will need no convincing that *Metamorphoses* stands as 'the authoritative encyclopaedia of Graeco-Roman folklore'; but that observation needs to be firmly stated in a work of this kind which seeks to reach out to the general reader.

There is no doubt that Ovid was steeped in the work of his older contemporary Virgil and, again with *Metamorphoses* especially in mind, Morgan finds him '[mining] Virgil's poetry for material that will suit his unorthodox poetics ... Ovid as literary hooligan'.

A valuable function of this book might well be to tempt existing paid-up Classicists to explore the less-frequented byways of Ovid's art. The *Fasti*, and how to read it/them, surely falls into this category. Morgan makes a good case for this work being in a way complementary to *Metamorphoses*, in dealing with time in an ordered cyclical sense; whereas *Metamorphoses*, in its own unique and necessarily loose way, purports to move from the time of creation to the poet's present day.

It is in discussing the *Fasti* that Morgan does well to draw the reader's attention to an especially vivid account (in Book 4) of the poet meeting, in the theatre, a veteran of Caesar's campaign in north Africa. This passage has the same vivid documentary feel as the well-known 'picking up a girl' poem from *Amores*, where the setting is another place of entertainment – but for such a different purpose.

In the final chapter, 'Exile poetry', the author makes well-balanced judgements on the age-old question of what exactly *duo crimina, carmen et error* cover, leaning (in the case of *error*) on the possibility of Ovid having 'witnessed the planning of some kind of plot against the emperor, and failing to share what he saw with the authorities'.

In *Remedia Amoris*, Ovid claims 'Elegy admits that it owes as much to me as noble epic owes to Virgil'. Neither neophyte nor 'old hand' will be able to find a better distillation of this poet's output, his place in Classical poetry, and his individual take on life and love, than in this little book.

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