

REVIEW

FRANCA ELA CONSOLINO (Ed.), **After Ovid: Aspects of the Reception of Ovid in Literature and Iconography**. Turnhout: Brepols, 2022. Pp. 374, illus. ISBN: 9782503592503. €75.00.

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This collection derives from a conference held at the University of L'Aquila in the wake of Ovid's bimillennial celebrations. It addresses a rich variety of Latin texts from the fourth century to the eighteenth, as well as late medieval and Renaissance works of art and book illustrations. All fourteen contributors are Italian, but all but one of the essays are in English, allowing Anglophone readers to access a rich range of Italian scholarship of the past half-century.

The volume is organised diachronically, beginning with S. Filisini's study of the *Psychomachia* of the Late Antique poet Prudentius, whose description of the dazzling chariot of Luxuria owes much to Ovid's description of the doors of the Palace of the Sun at the start of *Met.* 2. Ovid's narratives of the fall of Phaethon and Hippolytus from their respective chariots underpin the imagery of Luxuria's demise. More surprising is Filisini's demonstration that Sobrietas' speech admonishing her errant troops owes much to Pentheus' impotent address to the Theban citizens at the end of *Met.* 4. While the *Aeneid* has been generally assumed to be Prudentius' main model, Ovid's poetry clearly plays important narrative and didactic functions as a text highly adaptable to new historical and epistemological circumstances. M.-P. Piere turns to a lesser-known author, the fifth-century North African poet Reposianus, author of the *Concubitus Martis et Veneris*; analysing the ecphrasis of the beautiful, Ovidian-style grove in which the two lovers meet, she argues that Ovidian influence blends with a North African culture where classical theatre in the form of pantomime remained popular. D. de Gianni addresses Ovidian allusions in the sixth/seventh-century author Isidore of Seville, including Ovid's account of the Creation at the start of the *Met.* While often indirect, such references, De Gianni argues, inform Isidore's integrationist ideal of classical and Christian thought. Moving into the Middle Ages, F. Marzella's study of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Vita Merlini*, a long hexameter poem composed around 1150, reframes it as resting on Ovidian models as much as on Welsh sources for the Arthurian legend, anticipating a new age of experimentation, the *aetas Ovidiana*.

The following two essays on metrics and linguistics will be of particular interest to specialists in these fields. L. Ceccarelli studies the metrical technique of medieval Roman comedy in comparison with Ovid's elegiac distich (offering valuable insight into Ovid's handling of the elegiac metre); while L. Corona presents ongoing work exploring the usefulness of early Italian translations of the *Metamorphoses* for tracking the development of the Italian vernacular.

The next four essays consider Ovidian themes in late medieval and early modern art. G. Zanichelli discusses the innovative tradition of illumination that accompanied

Pierre Bersuire's *Ovidius Moralizatus*. Three codices indicate a shift from the didactic schoolroom towards a proto-humanist movement in which patrons had increasing influence over design; courtly, secular models were used for illustrations rather than classical ones, such as Jupiter dressed up as a medieval university professor. G. Capriotti's article addresses the impact of translations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* upon art in early modern Italy and Spain; artistic censorship was exercised upon the woodcuts that illustrated Ovid's erotic myths as well as upon the parallel tradition in ceramics. Beginning with Caravaggio's 'Narcissus', M. Maccherini considers examples of Ovid's narrative in painting and sculpture through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, while C. Barbieri analyses the Ovidian imagery of the Loggia di Galatea in the Palazzo Farnese, inspired, she argues, by the major edition of the *Metamorphoses* published with Raphael Regius' commentary in Lyons in 1510. All these essays make the point that artists enjoyed creative licence in their responses to Ovidian myth, just as did the literary 'translators' such as Giovanni Bonsignori, whose popular vernacular version of the *Metamorphoses* (1375–77), Capriotti notes, included myths not found in Ovid. The final section considers early modern literature. F. Bartolucci examines possible Ovidian references in the macaronic description of a tempest in Folengo's early sixteenth-century poem *Baldus*. F. Consolino explores the *Heroides* of the Scottish poet Mark Alexander Boyd, published in the late sixteenth century as a supplement to Ovid's collection. The volume concludes with E. Botta on George Sandys' (1632) translation of the *Metamorphoses* — arguing, somewhat tenuously, that Ovidian reference drives the imperialism evident in its conclusion — and V. Merola on the Ovidian Myrrha in early Italian literature.

The volume has two over-arching themes: first, that citations of Ovid appear in unexpected texts and in unexpected authors, and second, that medieval and early modern authors and artists made free and creative use of his poetry, particularly the *Metamorphoses*, often relying on adaptations rather than the work itself. Illustrated translations and commentaries provided a more accessible route to the world of classical mythology than Ovid's 15-book Latin poem. When we think about the reception of 'Ovid', therefore, we should think 'which Ovid?' and 'whose Ovid?'

The volume confirms the importance of Ovid's poetry from antiquity to the early modern period, in a variety of genres and media. However, many of the individual essays suffer from a lack of historicisation and cultural contextualisation, seeming content to identify a source myth for the text or work of art being examined but not to explore its new context and meaning. For example, Filosini's analysis of the conflict between Luxury and Sobrietas in Prudentius' *Psychomachia* emphasises the poet's skilled 'literariness', but ignores the tensions involved in using Ovidian poetry for both the Vice and the opposing Virtue. Capriotti's essay raises the fascinating topic of Ovidian censorship in his study of the series of woodcut illustrations accompanying the *editio princeps* of Bonsignore's *Ovidio Metamorphoseos Vulgare*, but does not extend the discussion beyond this single example. Consolino's essay on Boyd's *Heroides* offers a detailed analysis of the poetic allusions, but does not explore the work's cultural status and significance as Scottish neo-Latin poetry written in a humanist environment in France.

The volume's emphasis upon the *Metamorphoses*, moreover, means that it neglects the broader intertextual world of Ovidian poetry. Ovid's elegiac works are mentioned in only a few papers, the exile poetry not at all. The *Fasti*, too, an important mythological and aetiological text in the late medieval and early modern period as a companion piece to the *Metamorphoses*, is rarely cited. For instance, Barbieri fails to observe that the myth of Ariadne's Crown, depicted in the Loggia of Galatea, is told most fully in the third book of the *Fasti* (459–516), and her claim that the final lunette showing two clouds of breath depicts Apollo and the Cumaean Sibyl from *Met.* 14.101–51, rather than Flora and Zephyr from *Fasti* 5.183–230, rests on the observation that the latter story is not

told in the *Metamorphoses*, although Flora and her myth were well known. Capriotti claims that the myth of Priapus and Lotis 'is only mentioned by Ovid' (with reference to *Met.* 9.347), but the story is told at length in the *Fasti* (1.399–440).

To sum up, there is much that is new and exciting to be discovered in *After Ovid*. Inevitably in such a collection, the level of scholarship is not uniformly high and there is sometimes a narrowness of vision not representative of Italian literary criticism today. Despite the diachronic structure and the papers' origin at a conference, the essays do not communicate with one another. Moreover, the volume could have been more carefully edited; there are mistakes of transcription in Latin texts and in spellings (e.g. 'yolk' for a chariot 'yoke'), and some abstracts might have been more intelligible if published in Italian. The images are appealingly reproduced in colour, but unfortunately with poor resolution so that details are hard to decipher. An index would have been helpful. However, the volume's aim to reach out to the Anglophone world is admirable, and *After Ovid* provides valuable new avenues for further research into the post-classical reception of Ovid's poetry.

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