recommend Andrew Nichols' new translation and commentary on the fragments of the *Indica*.[24]

MALCOLM HEATH
M.F.Heath@leeds.ac.uk
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Latin Literature

'Reading Ovid is a joy': it is hard for a seasoned Classicist to think back to a life Before Ovid, but Katharina's Volk's new introduction (published in Blackwell's Introduction to the Classical World series)[25] – where this claim rings out (ix) – is designed to draw into the circle those who have not yet experienced the pleasures of initiation. Aimed at the general reading public and at newcomers to Ovid, her book is also a delight for experienced Ovidian scholars, providing an engaging, attractive, and thoughtful overview of the poet and his works that shows why his oeuvre remains intellectually valuable as well as an enjoyable read. Fluent and accessible, the volume covers a great deal of ground with lightness of foot. Volk takes a thematic approach that cuts across individual works in productive ways, but the simple titles of the chapters – 'Work', 'Life', 'Elegy', 'Myth', 'Art', 'Women', 'Rome', 'Reception' – do not adequately convey a sense of the treasures that lie within their pages. Chapter 5 on 'Art', for instance, tackles issues of rhetoric, the relationship between art and reality and art and artifice, truth and lies, deception, and 'desirable lies' in a mere fifteen pages, in a way that genuinely engages one critically and philosophically. Throughout, big ideas are artfully clarified with brief pointed discussions of moments in the poems. The volume is very light on scholarly endnotes (ten in total), yet richly informed by up-to-date scholarship – a section on Further Reading points the reader in all the right directions. For a student, Volk's introduction provides a wealth of starting points for further study. For those reading Ovid for pleasure, it will give a wonderful context for enhanced appreciation of Ovid's poetry. Volk's enthusiastic and nuanced engagement with the poetry is communicated on every page. Ovid dominates the landscape of recent publications: besides Volk's introduction, my latest box of books includes two monographs on the *Metamorphoses*, as well as commentaries on books of the *Tristia* and the *Amores*. One highlight is an accomplished debut monograph by Marie Louise von Glinski that looks at the *Metamorphoses* from a new angle, by skilfully exploring not merely the many roles of similes in the poem (which would in itself have made for a valuable, if perhaps less sophisticated, study) but also the idea of metamorphosis *as* simile and the relation of this to the central theme of identity.[26] A core idea, articulated in full in Chapter 1, is that the figure of the simile – where closure is resisted because both comparanda retain their individual identities – resonates with the openness and lack of resolution in the metamorphoses that Ovid

[24] *Ctesias. On India*. Translated with an introduction and commentary by Andrew Nichols. London, Bristol Classical Press, 2011. Pp. 189. Paperback £16.99, ISBN: 978-1-853-99742-6.

[25] *Ovid*. By Katharina Volk. Blackwell Introductions to the Classical World. Chichester and Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. Pp. x + 147. Hardback £70, ISBN: 978-1-405-13642-6.

[26] *Simile and Identity in Ovid's Metamorphoses*. By Marie Louise von Glinski. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. vi + 173. Hardback £55, ISBN 978-0-521-76096-6.

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describes. Von Glinski shows how Ovid's use of simile intensifies the mysteries surrounding the process of metamorphosis, raising questions about the relation between perception, truth, and human identity. Chapter 2 explores the themes of disguise and true nature in divine identity, Chapter 3 generic identity, and Chapter 4 fictionality; in other words, each chapter uses discussion of Ovid's deployment of simile in various passages of the poem in order to engage with scholarly issues of wide relevance. Von Glinski appreciates and takes up the challenges posed by previous scholarship, and her analyses consistently engage productively with those of others. Her readings of individual passages are rich and insightful; they also add up to a satisfying holistic reading of the poem through the focus of Ovid's experimentation with a single literary figure. The book is characterized by delicate minimalism: the slimness of both the volume and the bibliography, the sleek footnotes, and the concise discussions of the text all speak of confidence and control. This is an elegant and appealing book, which all Ovidian scholars will want to read. Lee Frantuono's study of the *Metamorphoses* is of a very different kind.[27] Designed for readers of all levels, including those without any Latin at all, it aims to take the reader on an introductory romp through the *Metamorphoses* from start to finish. Like his 2007 study of Virgil's *Aeneid*, *Madness Unchained*, this 'sequel', *Madness Transformed*, is designed to encourage a sequential reading of the poem as a whole, and it works through the poem metamorphosis by metamorphosis, with one chapter dedicated to each book. It is a running commentary – a sprinting commentary, perhaps – with plenty of interesting things to say about individual episodes, but not much to say about the poem as a whole; the running theme of the *Metamorphoses* as Ovid's response to the *Aeneid* does not really add up to an overarching argument. Like the *Metamorphoses* itself, each chapter is a seamless construction, without section divisions or other markers, which by turns paraphrases, describes, and comments upon the poem as we move forward. It may be problematic – especially for a reader who is not already familiar with the poem – that there is usually no way of distinguishing Fratantuono's description of the poem from his (sometimes contentious) interpretation of it without constant recourse to the work itself, and this need to flip backwards and forwards disrupts the flow and generates confusion. The style is easy-going and accessible, if at times bordering on clichéd: for instance, on Semele: 'The hapless girl is burnt to a crisp' (71; and she is not the only 'hapless girl' in the book). Particular attention is given to the tradition surrounding the myths that Ovid relates and their appearance and divergence in other texts, and this is a valuable feature of the work. I was left unsure, however, about the effectiveness of the methodology. On the one hand, Fratantuono has an engaging down-to-earth approach (though he does not have much truck with literary critical analysis, it seems) and the format of the book certainly works against the usual fragmentation of the poem into individual stories. On the other hand, the traditional commentary format – which a reader can consult as they wish when they run up against something perplexing – seems a much more efficient way of enabling a fluent reading of the poem. And once you have worked diligently through the poem, whether in English or Latin, would you really want to

[27] *Madness Transformed. A Reading of Ovid's Metamorphoses*. By Lee Fratantuono. Lanham, MD, Lexington Books, 2011. Pp. xxv + 487. Hardback £59.95, ISBN: 978-0-7391-2943-2; paperback £29.95, ISBN: 978-0-7391-2944-9.

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start all over again with Fratantuono's massive shadow-*Metamorphoses*? Ovid also crops up in a new work on Prudentius' *Hamartigenia*,[28] appearing alongside Virgil, Horace, Lucretius, and Persius as an important classical Latin author on whose works this fourth-century Christian poet drew to enrich his theological treatise on sin and human responsibility. The blurb on the back begins with the audacious (one might even say misleading) claim that 'Prudentius is one of the major Latin poets of antiquity', and one of the aims of this book is to squeeze him into the canon. Of course, he is an important Christian and late antique poet, and a gifted, innovative, and influential writer, whose better-known *Psychomachia* was the inspiration for medieval allegorical writing. (The insertion of the word 'late' before 'antiquity' would, I think, mitigate my unease with this claim, which is perhaps more revealing of my own prejudices than of anything else.) The book's argument is more or less summarized in the lengthy title and subtitle: Dykes argues that the message of Prudentius' poem is that sin in the world is created by human beings ourselves, that we must take responsibility for it, and that the poem calls therefore for the responsible reader of the title, who must recognize the impact of human sin upon the world and learn how to read this 'text' of the world in the right way. One of Prudentius' strategies for 'ensnaring' (25) the reader, Dykes argues, is through complex and often deliberately confusing allusions to classical literature, as well as through his reworking of his biblical sources. As a Latinist with interests in the erotic and in sexual morality, I homed in particularly on the section entitled 'Erotic content', where Dykes sets out his arguments about the sexualization of sin in the poem. Here I was somewhat disappointed, finding the arguments strained and awkward (in the case of the sex change of Loth's wife) or laboured and unproductive (the erotic connotations of *frater*, for instance). I couldn't escape the impression that the author was not entirely at home with the classical material discussed; at times the readings – and even translations – did not quite hit the nail on the head. The identification of allusions to classical material is often compelling – as in the discussion of Loth's wife in Chapter 2 – but my feeling is that more could be done to explore the significance of these intertexts. Nevertheless, this is a detailed and careful study, always clearly argued. In particular, the ability to combine discussion of the theological content of the poem with both analysis of biblical texts and allusion to classical literature makes this a valuable introduction to the poem. The source of the notorious phrase '*carmen et error*' (at v. 207), the second book of Ovid's *Tristia* may on that account be the most widely referenced of his entire oeuvre. The book contains a single 578-line poem cast as his defence of his erotic poetry, especially the *Ars Amatoria* (his *carmen*, for he will remain silent about the nature of his *error*), which is addressed to the censorious Augustus, who has sent him into exile as punishment for this transgressive writing. A poem of great interest on a number of levels – including its potted literary and cultural history of the erotic, and its response to Augustan moral legislation – it is well served by Jennifer Ingleheart's extensive new commentary, which also contains a parallel

[28] *Reading Sin in the World. The Hamartigenia of Prudentius and the Vocation of the Responsible Reader*. By Anthony Dykes. Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pp. xx + 273. Hardback £65, ISBN: 978-1-107-00453-5.

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English translation of the whole poem.[29] In an elegant opening paragraph, Ingleheart positions her commentary within the emerging breed of 'interpretative' commentaries that engage with recent scholarship and offer their own interpretations of the text, rather than seeking to rise above the critical and political concerns of the day, as had been traditional in previous decades. Interpretation is the name of the game; one of the dominant themes of the *Tristia* 2 is that of the relative responsibilities of the author and the reader when it comes to determining the meaning and impact of a literary work. Ingleheart rightly says that, with this poem in particular, there is no shying away from questions of sincerity and irony in Ovid's relations with Augustus – one of the sticky areas of current Ovidian scholarship – and she comes down broadly on the side of a 'subversive' reading, although her readings are always careful and rooted in the poetry itself (for instance, on vv. 509–14: 'Ovid now makes explicit the insinuation that Augustus promotes adultery' [373]). This is a welcome contribution to scholarship on an intriguing poem. From now on, I think no further apology is needed for scholarship on Silius Italicus' *Punica*; perhaps Joy Littlewood's excellent new commentary on Book 7 can be the last publication that feels it must cite in its cover blurb D. R. Dudley's 1972 line about this being the 'worst epic ever written'.[30] This commentary is bang up to date with the scholarship – incorporating, for instance, insights from the recent collection of essays edited by Antony Augoustakis – and nicely conveys a sense of how much is currently going on there. Book 7 is Fabius Maximus Cunctator's book, in which he pursues his increasingly unpopular strategy of 'delay' in the aftermath of Rome's dreadful defeat at Trasimene, resists Hannibal's provocative attempts to draw him into battle, rides out the criticism back at home, delegates command to Minucius, and is ultimately vindicated when the over-confident Minucius falls into Hannibal's trap and Fabius must ride to the rescue. This overarching narrative is interspersed with digressions such as the Myth of Falernus, Hannibal's spectacular incineration of the Italian oxen, and the 'Flavian morality tale' of Proteus and the Nereids. Littlewood's lengthy and engaging introduction starts by providing a vivid biography of Silius as political player in a turbulent era, wealthy man of culture with a well-stocked library, seasoned commentator on imperial politics through his account of the Punic War, and playful poetic rival to Statius. She goes on to introduce the reader to Silius' abundant and productive intertextuality, examining in turn the poet's engagement with his most important models: Livy and Polybius, his epic predecessors, Ovid's *Fasti*, and Virgil's *Georgics*. The commentary is well structured, with helpful summaries of the content of each passage, and is informative and illuminating about the significance of the poem throughout. As scholarly commentaries go these days, Littlewood's is modest in length and unusually portable; not so Gareth Schmeling's new commentary on Petronius' *Satyrica*, at a hefty 700 pages.[31] This densely written commentary is not for the beginner and I fear that a

[29] *A Commentary on Ovid, Tristia, Book 2*. By Jennifer Ingleheart. Oxford Classical Monographs. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010. Pp. xii + 448. Hardback £84, ISBN: 978-0-19-959042-1.

[30] *A Commentary on Silius Italicus, Punica 7*. By R. Joy Littlewood. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. xcix + 276. 6 b/w illustrations, 2 maps. Hardback £75, ISBN: 978-0-19-957093-5.

[31] *A Commentary on The Satyrica of Petronius*. By Gareth Schmeling. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. xlix + 681. Hardback £115, ISBN: 978-0-19-956771-3.

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novice would be more likely to be repelled than seduced by the abundance of scholarly detail (as well as unnecessary abbreviation and untranslated phrases), which is not situated within a bigger picture where the novel might be appreciated and the individual passages and comments obtain their meaning; it is hard to find the wood for the trees. On the other hand, for old hands and those prepared to hack their way through, the commentary will be a useful resource on individual passages, with references to relevant scholarship, ancient parallels, historical background, and interpretative issues. Although I fear that their commentary may indeed have 'diminished the brilliance of Petronius', this was perhaps inevitable and I do not share the authors' own judgement (Schmeling has collaborated on this commentary with Aldo Setaioli) that they should therefore be condemned to a special place in hell. Very different in kind are the two latest introductory linguistic commentaries in the Oklahoma Series in Classical Culture; these are designed to support students in reading unabridged texts in the early stages of Latin language learning – Intermediate Latin in the case of the first book of Ovid's *Amores*[32] and Advanced in the case of the extracts from Caesar's *Gallic War*.[33] These contain Latin text with no translation and commentaries aimed primarily at providing linguistic support for the novice translator. Both also include useful tools such as a glossary of critical terminology and an extensive Latin vocabulary list. In the case of the *Amores*, the introduction to metre is accessible and to the point – in fact it is one of the most lucid and helpful I have seen – and this clarity and good judgement is characteristic of the whole commentary; it is an excellent replacement for Barsby's of 1973. Whereas Ryan and Perkins can include the whole of *Amores* 1, Benario has made four fairly lengthy excerpts from the *Gallic War*: the description of Gaul (1.1–7), Caesar's invasion of Britain (4.24–36), the revolt and defeat of Gallic chieftains in 54 BCE, and Caesar's ethnographic description of German and Gallic life, including the druids (6.13–20). These are nice juicy passages; they have been specially chosen to stage a comeback for a work that was once a staple of school-age Latin learning, more recently has fallen from fashion, but is now back on the curriculum – at least for American high-school students. Despite this, the commentary has a distinctly dated feel to it, and could easily have been written fifty years ago; there is a fairly up-to-date bibliography at the front but no attempt to integrate scholarship into the notes or the general approach of the commentary. Benario makes little effort to pitch the commentary to the twenty-first century student, and the brief introductory material is positively jarring in its failure to express the excitement and relevance of Caesar's material. In fact, I would almost go so far as to say that it detracts from the reader's ability to appreciate its significance. The page and a half on 'The history of Rome' tells us that the Gauls 'even sacked Rome in the year 390 (a date now generally changed to 387)' (3). What is someone who knows little or nothing about ancient Roman history to make of this nugget of 'information'? The manifold questions that arise about what it means for the date to be changed and why it might have been changed and who by can only be distracting, and the pedantic

[32] *Ovid's Amores Book One. A Commentary*. By Maureen B. Ryan and Caroline A Perkins. Oklahoma Series in Classical Culture 41. Norman, OK, University of Oklahoma Press, 2011. Pp. xi + 186. Paperback £15.69, ISBN: 978-0-8061-4144-2.

[33] *Caesar's Gallic War. A Commentary*. By Herbert W. Benario. Oklahoma Series in Classical Culture 46. Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2012. Pp. x + 103. 5 b/w illustrations, 1 map. Paperback $19.95, ISBN: 978-0-8061-4252-4.

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detail is utterly unimportant in the broader scheme of the commentary. Similarly, the claim that Caesar 'traced his ancestry back to goddess Venus' (5) needs more context and explanation in order to avoid confusion. The impression is – as in the case of Schmeling's *Satyrica* – of a scholar who is so immersed in his material as to be unable to step back and gain the perspective needed to see what a less experienced reader might need. What does it avail a novice reader of Latin, who in this day and age is unlikely to have had a thorough training in grammar and linguistic style, to be told in the notes that an '*itinera…itineribus*' is a pleonasm (26), and then to discover, turning to the glossary, that pleonasm means 'redundancy of expression' (12)? For this to be worth anything, we want more explanatory context, more guidance on how to appreciate the work as literature: why might Caesar be employing pleonasm here? How might it be serving the purpose of the text? Useful though it will no doubt be, this commentary does suffer by comparison with its companion on the *Amores*; one might argue that Ovid's *Amores* is inevitably easier to render palatable than Caesar, but I think this is a missed opportunity to rebrand a gripping author for a new age.

Two final publications to which I draw your attention. Robert Kaster's critical edition of Macrobius' *Saturnalia* for the Oxford Classical Texts series follows hard on the heels of his three volumes of Loeb translations and is a most welcome addition to the OCT library, providing a sound foundation for future scholarship on a work that is generally drawn on as a historical source rather than studied for its own sake.[34]

The Centre for Early Modern Studies at Oxford University has generated from its project on Lucy Hutchinson (1620–81) two fat books that constitute Volume 1 of a projected four volumes of *The Works of Lucy Hutchinson*. I have to confess that I had not heard of Lucy Hutchinson before, but it seems that she has long been well known to historians of the seventeenth century for her biography of her husband, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, and now for her theological poem *Order and Disorder*, which is a spirited challenge to Lucretius' *De rerum natura*. Before composing this, however, she had been the first person to translate Lucretius' poem into English. She therefore plays an important role in the early modern rediscovery of that influential work, and the two-part volume under review contains (in Part 1) an introduction and her translation of Lucretius alongside the seventeenth-century Latin text that she used, and (in Part 2) the commentary, bibliography, and index.[35]

REBECCA LANGLANDS
r.langlands@exeter.ac.uk
doi: 10.1017/S0017383512000125

[34] *Macrobii Ambrosii Theodosii Saturnalia*. Edited by Robert A. Kaster. Oxford Classical Texts. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. lvi + 540. Hardback, £50, ISBN: 978-0-19-957119-2.

[35] *The Works of Lucy Hutchinson. Volume 1. Translation of Lucretius Part I. Introduction and Text. Part II. Commentary Bibliography and Index*. Edited by Reid Barbour and David Norbrook. Oxford, Oxford University Press. Pp. cxlvi + 796. 9 b/w illustrations. Hardback £200, ISBN: 978-0-19-924736-3.

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