congratulated for this solid and indispensable contribution to the study of Augustan elegiac poetry.

University of Wisconsin, Madison J. C. McKEOWN

OVID THE ILLUSIONIST

P. HARDIE: *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion*. Pp. viii + 365, ills. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Cased, £47.50. ISBN: 0-521-80087-0.

Philip Hardie has long since established himself as one of the most masterful interpreters of Latin poetry, and his recent study of Ovid, at once compendious and essayistic, is every bit as accomplished as his earlier volumes on Roman epic and every bit as authoritative as the *Cambridge Companion to Ovid* he edited (also 2002). If the author had been inspired by Virgil to subtitle his first book 'Cosmos and Imperium', perhaps it was the witty spirit of Ovid who urged understatement on him for this outing, for *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion* is not merely an investigation into the irreverent Augustan's illusionism. It is that, of course, but it is much more, for around the broad theme of illusion and related threads such as intertextuality, the play of absence and presence, poets' ambitions to gain immortality, and readers' and perceivers'—and lovers'—desire, H. has in fact fashioned a book on all of Ovid—or virtually so, for only the *Medicamina* and the *Halieuticon* go unmentioned. It is not a straight-on survey, like Hermann Fränkel's *Ovid: A Poet between Two Worlds* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1945), but if that highly influential vision, respectfully invoked by H., spoke, like the even broader contributions of Auerbach and Curtius, to the immediately post-war world of 1945, H. presents a turn-of-the-millennium Ovid. H. distills, refines, and develops the insights of many of those who, over the past fifteen or so years, have foregrounded the linguistic, figural and literary (i.e. intertextual) games of the ingenious Ovid; H. gives credit and frequently cites dozens of other scholars, so that even as he himself puts his own original stamp on the material, allowing a whiff of the postmodern but no more, one can take his vision as to a certain extent representing Ovid as he is read by our generation.

The historicity of response itself is thematized in H.'s book by his recurrence, at irregular intervals, to moments in Ovidian reception, from Petrarch, Shakespeare, and Jonson in the Renaissance to Malouf and Ransmayr in the late twentieth century. H. does not in any way attempt a full account of Ovidian 'reception'. While the recent novels that present very different fictions about the end of Ovid's days in Tomis serve as the book's endpiece, the other literary figures, and the nineteenth-century visual artists Ingres and Gérôme, pierce the focus on Ovid's poetry, each illuminating a particular aspect of Ovidian illusionism. This is actually of a piece with H.'s proceeding even when focused on Ovid, for though he moves in a generally chronological way through Ovid's *oeuvre*—major foci are *Amores*, *Heroides*, *Metamorphoses*, and the exile poetry, in that order—he is neither held hostage to that scheme nor bound to follow strict order within any given work. Rather, not unlike Ovid himself, he progresses thematically, instancing now, say, cenotaphs, now *paraklausithyra*, now the pastoral—nor are these, as my examples are meant to show, even of the same order. When it serves his interpretive purpose, he will jump ahead or backward within Ovid's poetic career, and likewise include a reading of Catullus or Lucretius, Virgil, Horace, or Lucan, if that will be illuminating. For a time, I found

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myself mildly frustrated (though always entertained) by what seemed a highly arbitrary sequence of topics and even examples, but quite quickly I came to appreciate that H.'s mode of criss-crossing and weaving was the key to his strategy of giving us a sense of the whole of Ovid's poetry, at least along the parameter of the poetics of illusion. There are no doubt other (re)weavings of the tapestry that would be possible, but surely—at least *c*. 2000—Anglo-American, and many continental, scholars would be most likely to privilege the illusionist tapestry as a truly indispensable version of the Ovidian *oeuvre*.

I would suggest that this tantalizing—'illusive'?—picture of an Ovidian totality may come at the cost of the reader feeling that he/she has never been given a very precise definition of what 'illusion' is, but I would also submit that it is a price well worth paying, as perhaps it must be. 'Illusion' emerges clearly enough as the art of seeming: of the artist's craft of representing 'reality' in words (or in another medium, and sometimes also in words); of the necessary falseness always inherent in such representation; of the artist's sly or seductive revelation of that falseness; then, often, of viewer's (or reader's) recognition of that falsity, which can come at various speeds and with various emotional responses; and, finally, even more generally, their understanding of the truth of that falsity and the falsity of truth. Which is, of course, the ultimate truth—from the perspective of illusionism at least.

H. displays his mastery not only of Ovid and Latin poetry and prose (and, where relevant, Greek) but also of recent scholarship, deploying the latter wisely and, as I noted, generously. He is also more than merely conversant with recent and not-so-recent critical trends, from Freud to Lacan. H. appreciates the insights of theoretical approaches, especially from psychoanalysis, that are more often at home in modern literary studies; when he sees that there are limits to their applicability to the interpretation of Ovid, it is not a response of ignorance. 'In our post-modern and post-structuralist age we perhaps focus too exclusively on the emptiness of the linguistic or imagistic signifier, on Ovid as the post-modern ironist, the self-conscious manipulator of fictions. The Renaissance felt the force of the irony, but it also knew about the magic' (p. 23). I must say the constant reiteration of the vocabulary of 'absence' and 'presence', 'absent presences', etc., becomes tiresome—H. himself notes that 'The phrase "absent presence" has become a cliché of post-Derridan and post-Lacanian criticism' (p. 24)—but I must also admit that, as H.'s citations of numerous passages from Ovid establish, this dichotomy and this very vocabulary is Ovidian through and through. Perhaps Ovid would have reconsidered if he had spent much time as a graduate student in Comparative Literature in the 1970s and 1980s.

Ovid's Poetics of Illusion is essential reading for all scholars and serious students of Roman poetry, and will profit all readers with interest in literature. (The English translations of all Latin passages notwithstanding, it will be hard to follow all the argumentation without a little Latin; less Greek is required.) As is often the case, no reviewer can begin to give a sense of all that he or she appreciated; the margins of my copy are studded with checkmarks. There are naturally some places where I would add some examples, a few places where I have some reservations, a very few places where I would proffer a correction. Though, in the way of reviewers, I include some of these in what follows, it should be clear that they in no way detract from the strongly positive opinion I have of H.'s masterful study, brilliant in overall conception and design as it is brilliant in execution and its many individual readings.

The opening two chapters ('Introduction' and 'Impossible objects of desire') are preparatory in many ways. The second focuses largely on the *Amores*. Why, I wonder, in his analysis of *Am*. 2.15, does H. (not alone among critics) avoid reasoning that if it

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is Corinna's finger and Ovid is the ring, it is Ovid who is penetrated? Granted, the poet too struggles with the oddity of the logic he has got himself into, but this denial and illogic must be part of the poem itself and thus attended to.

Chapter 3, the essayistic 'Death, Desire and Monuments', is more successful, particularly in the sections 'Tombs and Metamorphosis' and 'The Cenotaph' (pp. 81–91). H. emphasizes the rôle the name ('nomen') of the deceased has as the essential remainder. What I think might bear further thought emerges when he aptly cites (p. 88) the Greek of Callimachus *Epigr*. 17 (Pfeiffer). As he shows, one must often think of the Greek behind Ovid's Latin; the word for 'tomb' is 'sêma'. In the name-bearing tomb we come to the ground zero of semeiosis. Words are the tombs of significations.

To my mind, H. really hits his stride in Chapter 4, 'The *Heroides*', with rather unusual focuses on *Her*. 20–1 (Acontius and Cydippe) and 13 (Laudamia). For me, the last pair of the double epistles has always epitomized an author's fantasy of writer-reader relations—the author's dream of power over a reader along with the (ideal?) reader's less obvious desire to credit the author with power. This seems to be the thrust of H.'s judgement that the pair constitute 'an apotheosis of writing, a demonstration of the power of the poet's own craft' (p. 119). First, H. works through many levels of the contest between writer and reader beginning with the 'chain of desire' (p. 114) at play in the case of this particular pair of lovers, along the way revealing Euripides' *Hippolytus* as a deep subtext of the pair of epistles. (Cydippe seems to channel Hippolytus at 21.135–6, expressing in her own words his distinction between swearing with the mouth and with the heart.) On p. 121, H. suggests that this concluding pair 'forms a ring with *Heroides* 1'; I am more inclined to look for structural patterns within each of the two sets of *Heroides*, 1–15 and 16–21. Yet there is no question that there are thematic links that criss-cross through all the 'heroick' epistles. To his comments on pastoral touches of the story more evident in Callimachus, in particular that Ovid's version 'edge[s] out' (p. 122) Acontius' inscription of Cydippe's name on the bark of trees, I would add the observation that the theme is treated elsewhere in the *Heroides*, namely, in Oenone's recollection of Paris's pastoral period (5.21–30), a passage well worth adducing in the context of *Her*. 20–1, since Oenone wants the particular text she cites—intended, when inscribed, to have, via its *adynata*, the force of oath—to bind Paris. (One of the very few moments where H. nods: on p. 133, the 'Dardanidae' of *Her.* 13.79 are Trojans, not Greeks. A proofing error occurs on p. 134: in *Met*. 12.41, 'qaumus' should be 'quamuis'.)

Chapter 5, 'Narcissus. The Mirror of the Text', offers a close reading of an episode that turns, in multiple ways, on illusion. H. stays wonderfully close to Ovid's Narcissus; this is not an occasion for Lacan. Odd, then, that it begins with some kind of slip on H.'s part: 'Narcissus' inability to satisfy his desire for his own reflection is punishment for his refusal to respond to the desire of Echo . . .' (p. 150). While there is indeed a wonderful correspondence (and linkage) between the fruitless desirings and mutual dissatisfaction of the two figures, Narcissus is, to speak precisely, only punished after one of the men who desire him is spurned and calls for divine justice: 'inde manus *aliquis despectus* ad aethera tollens/"sic amet ipse licet, sic non potiatur amato!"/dixerat: adsensit precibus Ramnusia iustis' (*Met*. 3.404–6). The elision of homosexual desire in critics' accounts is an old story, and it fits in with other small blindnesses elsewhere in H.'s text. (A clearly related blindness emerges when H., discussing Horace, *Epistles* 1.20, seems to attribute 'sexual desire' to the 'manicured slave-boy anxious to go out into the world and prostitute himself', p. 298, the figure Horace uses for his book itself. This bespeaks an all-too-common male fantasy about the agency, especially erotic agency, of prostitutes of either gender. More relevant is the

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sex worker's need to arouse desire in customers/readers.) As some kind of recompense, we more than once encounter Fanny's heaving bosom—I refer to a passage from Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* that H. cites for its mention of Narcissus. I particularly appreciated the effective use H. makes of Lucretius in opening out the Narcissus episode (esp. pp. 152–63).

In Chapter 6, 'Pygmalion. Art and Illusion', H. visits another key episode in not merely the Ovidian but the European cabinet of illusion. Here he develops more intensively the links between the illusionist aspects of poetic creation and metamorphosis itself. In this chapter, he 'opens up' 'a longer temporal perspective' (p. 198) by adducing Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* as well as (as noted above) two nineteenth-century visual artists, Ingres and Gérôme. The spectator and reader's perspective is not dropped from sight: explicating a minor metamorphosis (*Met*. 5.203–6), he writes, 'Astyages turned to stone is a dreadful warning of the consequences of too intense an identification with a work of art or literature: once inside, you may never escape, a fantasy with a long history in later literature and cinema' (p. 181).

Both Chapters 7 and 8 are, in different ways, intended to round out and sum up the central place the *Metamorphoses* has in H.'s entire project. In the first of the pair, 'Absent Presences of Language', H. continues his examination into the linkages of metamorphosis and illusion with a deeper investigation of the way Ovid's poetic language itself records change and even effects transformation. Apropos H.'s observation (p. 229) that

> The first regular tale of human metamorphosis in Ovid's poem is that of Lycaon (*Met*. 1.209–43), which, as the first such narrative, invites us to accord it a paradigmatic status within the poem as a whole. Here the metaphor 'man is a wolf' becomes the occasion for a story about a savage man whose figurative wolflikeness finally turns him into a wolf.

I would note—to add a temporal perspective otherwise absent from H.'s (one swift reference to Dante apart)—that Lycaon's metamorphosis had a strikingly similar paradigmatic function in the most standard medieval list of types of shape changes (Frank Coulson [ed.], *The 'Vulgate' Commentary on Ovid's* Metamorphoses. *The Creation Myth and the Story of Orpheus* [Toronto, 1991], p. 27):

> Moralis [mutacio] est que attenditur circa mores, uidelicet cum mores inmutantur, vt de Licaone dicitur quod de homine mutatus est in lupum, quod est dicere de benigno in raptorem, et sic de consimilibus que in moribus attenduntur.

In Chapter 8, 'Conjugal Conjurings', after expounding the stories of Tereus, Procne, and Philomela, H. uses a closer examination of the story of Ceyx and Alcione to prepare a transition to his treatment of Ovid's exile elegies, in which it is the poet himself who is absent from his loved ones in Rome. That transitional function is made quite explicit in the second subsection of Chapter 9, 'The Exile Poetry'. As one who has long meditated (of course not alone) on the irony that the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto* present, namely, that Ovid, the master of the fictional persona, must now persuade readers that this time his persona is the real poet, I admire H.'s formulation:

> That coincidence of life and literature [i.e. in the *Amores*] may have been an elegant fiction; now, Ovid claims, we are to take the matching of literature to life as something deadly serious, even to read the poetry *as* life, not literature. The exile poetry shouts out 'this *is* for real'; but Ovid knows, and knowingly exploits the fact, that he has cried wolf too often for the reader

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> ever to take him quite at face value. Reality, in Ovid's and his reader's shared experience of his poetry, long ago fused too intimately with the text to emerge now in its pristine and pretextual innocence. (pp. 284–5, original emphasis)

This is the fate of the illusionist.

The overlap of the exiled Ovid writing epistles to Rome with the bereft and desiring letter writers Ovid ventriloquizes in the *Heroides* led to the creation by Baudri of Bourgueil (to add a second medieval perspective) of fictional letters between one 'Florus' in Rome and Ovid on the Black Sea. H.'s treatment of both the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto* is drenched with moments from the *Metamorphoses* as well, and it was at this point that, even without looking ahead, I knew that Ransmayr's *The Last World* had to be H.'s endpoint. In the tenth and final chapter, 'Ovid Recalled in the Modern Novel', H. ties off the ends of his thematic threads with, first, the Australian novelist David Malouf's *An Imaginary Life* (1978), and, finally, the Austrian Christoph Ransmayr's *Die letzte Welt* (1988). H. cites Malouf in his 'Afterword', where the novelist writes that 'the fate I have allotted him, beyond the mere fact of his relegation to Tomis, is one that would have surprised the real poet, since it attributes to him a capacity for belief that is nowhere to be found in his own writings' (p. 154, cited by H. on p. 327). To offer a third and final medieval note, this trope goes at least as far back as the thirteenth-century pseudo-Ovidian *De vetula*, an outrageous fiction wherein Ovid advances (after many adventures that, yes, a Fielding might appreciate) to Christian insight and prophecy. (For a brief summary, see my 'Ovid in the Middle Ages: Exile, Mythographer, Lover', in Barbara Weiden Boyd [ed.], *Brill's Companion to Ovid* (Leiden, 2002), pp. 413–42, esp. pp. 439–42.) Malouf's *An Imaginary Life* has always seemed to me to owe something to Hermann Broch's *Der Tod des Vergil* (1945), though it is neither magisterial nor Joycean, and more 'new age' than mystical. Ransmayr's is, in my view, the more powerful fiction. '*The Last World*', H. observes, 'is Ovidian in its obsession with issues of interpretation and authority' (p. 332). To H.'s description of it as a 'magic realist novel' (p. 337), I would add the adjective 'Kafkaesque'. The novel's conclusion, word-bearing banners fluttering in the strong breeze and 'an empty "name" ' (ibid.)—the name of the reader *that is not there*—forms a fitting conclusion to H.'s study of the now less elusive poetics of illusion.

University of California, Berkeley RALPH HEXTER

CANACE, LAODAMIA, HYPERMESTRA

J. REESON: *Ovid:* Heroides *11, 13 and 14. A Commentary.* (*Mnemosyne* Suppl. 221.) Pp. xii + 357. Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 2001. Cased, €78/US$91. ISBN: 90-04-12140-4.

Ovid's *Heroides* have enjoyed a resurgence of scholarly interest since the publication of an important article by Duncan Kennedy (*CQ* 34 [1984], 413–22), in which the potential richness of Ovid's intertextual play was duly emphasized: we were encouraged to treat the source from which each mythical heroine has been lifted as an 'objective' and 'truthful' account of events; against this 'factual' backdrop, we were invited to assess the subjectivity of Ovid's female speakers, especially when they err in detail from the source original. It is very much in the spirit of Kennedy that James Reeson takes up the intertextual challenge with a new text and commentary on three epistles—11 (Canace to Macareus), 13 (Laodamia to Protesilaus), and 14

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