

BOOK REVIEW

Ovid: Metamorphoses X. Edited by LEE FRATANTUONO. New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015. Pp. x + 278. Paper, \$25.95. ISBN 978-1-4725-2290-0.

Fratantuono's goal, as he writes, is "deceptively simple: to provide a commentary for student and scholar on the tenth book of Ovid's epic" (preface vi). Fratantuono serves the academic community by focusing solely on *Met.* 10 and advancing its unity of theme, character, and narrative design beyond the larger commentaries of Anderson, Bömer, and Reed.¹ In particular, Fratantuono marshals much of his insight to reveal how Ovid presents his characters, (retelling of) myths, and principal narrator as interconnected mechanisms which support his tripartite division of the *Metamorphoses* (Bks. 1-5, 6-10, & 11-15). Accordingly *Met.* 10, argues Fratantuono, concludes the middle section of Ovid's epic.² In this goal, Fratantuono succeeds admirably.

His short introduction (1–17) places less emphasis on Ovid's biography, literary output, and his place in Roman literature. More to his structural understanding of the epic, Fratantuono outlines how *Met.* 10 is organized through its chosen myths and their narration to fit Ovid's literary framework. *Met.* 10 holds a transitional position as it concludes the middle section of the epic (Bks. 6-10) and recalls *Met.* 5 and prefigures the Ovidian themes of *Met.* 15, respectively the concluding books to the 1st and 3rd sections of the epic). For example, the survival of death or challenge to death Fratantuono sees as a *leitmotiv* which creates a unity among books 5, 10 & 15. *Met.* 5 covers the story of Persephone's abduction/recovery, *Met.* 10 narrates the loss of Eurydice and the failed attempt of her recovery at the hands of Orpheus, the principal narrator of this book, while *Met.* 15, advances the survival of death motif through its narrator Pythagoras, by ex-

¹ Anderson, W., *Ovid's Metamorphoses: 6-10* (Norman 1972); Bömer, F., P. *Ovidius Naso Metamorphosen: Kommentar X-XI* (Heidelberg 1980); Reed, J., *Ovidio Metamorfosi Volume V (Libri X-XI)* (2013).

² On the tripartite division see N. Holzberg "Ter Quinque Volumina as Carmen Perpetuum: The Division Into Books in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*," in *Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici* 40 (1998), 77–98.

ploring other eschatological or liminal characters from Aeneas to Caesar, Augustus, and, most importantly, Ovid and his *Metamorphoses*. Because his text reads more like a literary commentary, Fratantuono's linear commentary succeeds better than most inasmuch as there is a unified literary exegesis which binds together many of his comments and larger digressions.

The Latin text (19–42) is largely that of Tarrant's *OCT*. Fratantuono, however, prints the text, as Ovid doubtless intended, as a continuous series of verses without indentations or quotation marks, "so as to provide a clean text that allows for different interpretations of certain passages (preface vii)." For first time readers (and others) the absence of quotation marks for direct speech may impede reading efficiency.

The format of his commentary (43–261) is likewise unconventional inasmuch as each entry is prefaced by the entire verse to promote seeing the whole verse to which the note applies and reduces the need to flip back and forth between commentary and text. Fratantuono's comments range, as expected, from syntactical/grammatical constructions, verbal double-entendres, mythic explanations, manuscript readings, intertextuality (Vergil and Lucretius, primarily), verbal echoes within the *Metamorphoses*, and metrics. Yet the strength of this commentary is to set forth the verbal evidence and thematic ebb and flow which support Fratantuono's literary interpretation of the *Metamorphoses* and the role of Book 10 in the architecture of the whole poem. Furthermore, Fratantuono persuasively shows the verbal play which connects the series of stories by recalling elements of the previous and foreshadowing the next.

Fratantuono has included a select bibliography (263–267), largely Anglophone, and an index (269–276) to help navigate his thematic approach to his commentary. *Ovid: Metamorphoses X* is strongly recommended for first time readers of Ovid and advanced scholars. Students of Ovid may need to refer to Bömer's commentary on individual verses, but Fratantuono's work merits a close reading from cover to cover. This work is a highly valued addition to the rich collection of Bloomsbury Latin Literature series.³

CLIFFORD S. BROENIMAN

Patrick Henry High, Ashland, VA, cbroeniman@juno.com

³ Two minor quibbles: 208–209 (v. 566) *te* is reflexive pronoun; p. 240 (v. 674) *quo* = "by which" (purpose construction).