

BOOK REVIEW

Ovid: Metamorphoses. By ROLFE HUMPHRIES, tran., and JOSEPH D. REED. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2018. Pp. xi + 520. Paperback, \$10.00. ISBN: 978-0-253-03359-8.

Joseph Reed's annotation of Rolfe Humphries' translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* strikes an impressive balance between accessibility for general readers with no Latin and detailed analysis for advanced Classics students and researchers. This review takes into account first Humphries' translation and then Reed's annotation.

Humphries' translation, touted by Indiana University Press as the first major modern verse translation of the *Metamorphoses*, has been used ubiquitously in classrooms and scholarship since its first publication in 1955. Humphries uses iambic pentameter to create an aesthetically pleasing flow in English. The translation lacks line numbers; each page does, however, include a header for the line numbers of the original Latin to which the English on the page corresponds. Subtitles for inset narratives usefully divide up each book, and a table of contents usefully catalogues these subtitles.

A few discrepancies between Ovid's Latin and the translation, although they do not detract from Humphries' overall polish and flow (aspects which have afforded the translation its enduring quality), are nevertheless worth noting. Indeed, such discrepancies can prove useful in a classroom discussion or a scholarly analysis. Although faithful in many instances to the spirit of the Latin, Humphries loses some formal or narrative characteristics that could generate important discussions or insights. For example, he renders one of Tereus' only two instances of direct speech in Book 6 with an observation by the narrator: "Tereus, the savage, / Knew he had won, having, as passenger, / His heart's desire" (145; compare this with the original Latin: "*vicimus!*" *exclamat "mecum mea vota feruntur,"* 6.513). The narratological rarity of hearing Tereus' voice is made even rarer by Humphries' modification of it into indirect report.

In addition, at times Humphries inserts outright inventions into the translation, ones that cannot be traced to anything comparable in the Latin. When

Pygmalion's statue comes to life in Book 10, Humphries portrays the statue as responding to Pygmalion's kisses: "The lips he kisses / Are real indeed, the ivory girl can feel them, and blushes *and responds*, and the eyes open / at once on lover and heaven" (243, emphasis mine). The Latin, however, gives the statue no such agency (an observation for which I am indebted to Sharon James): *dataque oscula virgo / sensit et erubuit timidumque ad lumina lumen / attollens pariter cum caelo vidit amantem*, "And the kisses that he gave, the maiden felt, and she blushed, and raising her fearful gaze towards his eyes she saw her lover together with the sky" (10.292-294, translation mine). Humphries' creation of a response by the newly animate statue undercuts the one-sided objectification at play in this narrative. Reed comes tantalizingly close to noting this invention when he asserts that "The text says she can 'feel' and 'blush' in response but does not follow up these hints of her potential agency; she is a subject only insofar as she is an object" (466).

The reproduction of Humphries' translation includes asterisks to mark terms or phrases discussed in Reed's annotation. Its lemma system uses page numbers followed by Latin line citations in square brackets (e.g., "124 [5.551-63]"). This system can become confusing. Because there are often multiple entries listed under the same page number (itself reproduced for each lemma), some flipping back and forth may be required to see where the term or phrase in question falls relative to other glossed items on the page.

Reed's annotations occupy a liminal position between a commentary on Humphries' translation and a commentary on Ovid's original Latin, and indeed, annotations in which he points out discrepancies between the two are among the most valuable. For example, Reed notes (399) the shift in tone in the programmatic first four lines of the poem from Ovid's prayer and modesty (*di coeptis ... aspirate*, 1.2-3) towards Humphries' declarative "the gods, who made the changes / Will help me", hedged as it is with a concessive "or I hope so", and the attribution of "much more agency and decisiveness" to the author in Humphries' "My intention is to tell ..." than is present in the Latin's *fert animus ... dicere* (1.1). In the annotations, Latin is usually accompanied by appropriate and faithful translations, and full citations of secondary scholarship in line obviate the need for a bibliography. The only back matter in the book is a glossary and index of proper names expanded from Humphries' original. Reed's glossary totals 250 entries, versus Humphries' 231; the balance of 19 comprises both new entries and disambiguations of existing entries (for example, Ammon the spring in Book 15 versus Ammon the Egyptian god identified with Jupiter in Books 4 and 5). The front matter

preserves Humphries' 1954 introduction and table of contents (with appropriate changes to page numeration).

Throughout his annotations, Reed cross-references related narratives both within Ovid's corpus and external authors, explains obscure turns of phrase or proper names and shows sensitivity to Ovid's and Humphries' language. He impressively straddles the line between academic erudition and accessible explanation and creates a work from which many students, scholars and general readers can benefit. In sum, Reed's edition of Humphries' translation is a valuable addition both to translations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and to scholarship on the poem and its reception. It would serve well in any number of contexts: a reader for a course in translation, reading material for an interested general audience, even a commentary for graduate students and advanced scholars in Classics.

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