Philip Hardie (H.) brings the Fondazione Lorenzo Valla series of commentaries on Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* to a highly satisfying conclusion with the sixth and final volume, covering Books 13–15. The involvement of H. with this series is only one of its many promising features: the general editors, Alessandro Barchiesi and Gianpiero Rosati, are two of the most influential scholars shaping scholarship in Latin poetry today, and the members of the team of commentators they have chosen for each of the six volumes in the series (besides themselves and H., this team includes E.J. Kenney and Joseph Reed) have all made fundamental contributions to literary studies in Latin. The text throughout is based on the 2004 OCT by Richard Tarrant (although each of the commentators revisits alternate readings in the notes, and includes a helpful list of deviations from Tarrant’s text in the front-matter of his individual volume); each volume also includes a bibliography. In addition, this volume concludes with two valuable indices covering the entire series, an ‘indice dei nomi’ and an ‘indice delle cose notevoli’, both compiled by Caterina Lazzarini. The volumes taken together also provide a full Italian translation of the poem (the volume under review, like the three preceding it, is the work of Gioachino Chiarini) that is strong and pleasant to read, and – at least as far as my non-native-speaker’s ear can tell – hits just the right tone, allowing Ovid himself to dominate but providing welcome clarity when needed. Finally, the treatment of the last three books of the poem in a single volume has the distinct virtue of inviting readers to take on these three somewhat challenging books as a unit that moves the narrative across space from Greece to Italy as it moves across time from the distant past of the Trojan War to the present of Julius Caesar’s apotheosis – with, indeed, harbingers of more than one further apotheosis in the near future, those of Augustus and of the poet himself.

Of course, one might well argue that, in the case of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, we are already well-served with scholarly commentary: the monumental project of Franz Bömer, who in eight volumes assembled a remarkable compendium of verbal and stylistic parallels, literary sources, syntactical analysis, and textual criticism (1969–2006), is evidence of immense, if sometimes unfiltered, learning; for Book 8, A.S. Hollis’ 1970 Oxford commentary wears its 45+ years extremely well; the Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics series (widely known as the Green-and-Yellows) has recently produced commentaries on two individual books of the *Metamorphoses* (13 and 14, about each of which I shall say more below) and has at least one other in development; and for Book 1, A.G. Lee’s 1953 commentary is still of great value. For readers needing more support with Latin and fewer scholarly distractions, Donald Hill has written four well-informed volumes with translation and commentary in the Aris and Phillips series aimed primarily at students (1985–2002); and W.S. Anderson has furnished the first ten books of the *Metamorphoses* with abundant and discursive commentary, again welcome to students, in two volumes (Books 6–10, 1972; Books 1–5, 1997). The Valla series nonetheless makes a distinctive and valuable contribution, combining comprehensiveness and scholarly acumen with a distinctly literary

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sensibility. The result is a fine balance of essential critical support and creative reading guidance, activated by a sophisticated and selective focus on Ovid’s remarkable poem. Indeed, it even bears up well under comparison with the Oxford *Odyssey* commentary of Heubeck, West, Hoekstra, et al. (1988), likewise begun as a multivolume series published through Valla but significantly more limited by pressures on space. Like that earlier commentary, it allows its commentators to develop their fine observations, if not at length, then certainly in nuce; in the case of the volume by H. under review here, it is clear that its author has a lot to say and has taken every opportunity to nurture his particular interests (this volume comes in at 628 pages, far longer than its closest competitor among those with a scope of three books, E.J. Kenney’s Books 7–9, at 484 pages).

I return briefly to a comparison with the Cambridge commentaries on Books 13 and 14, by Neil Hopkinson and K. Sara Myers, respectively, since H. is one of the general editors of the Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics series and helped to guide both of these books to completion. (He himself has also authored another volume in the series, the 1994 commentary on *Aeneid* Book 9.) One might well wonder, therefore, how the volume under review differs from the Cambridge series, aside from the packaging. It is clear in the first place that there has been a great deal of cross-fertilization, of a highly productive sort: H. cites Myers with particular frequency, and sometimes allows her more discursive notes to provide the details of matters treated with greater economy here. The difference is really one of quantity rather than of quality: the Cambridge series is pitched at a slightly broader audience, including (as a series blurb notes) «advanced undergraduate and graduate students», while H.’s work (aside from the language barrier that would keep most Anglophone undergraduates away) is denser, assumes greater knowledge of alternative versions and backgrounds, and concerns itself with grammar and syntax on only very rare occasions. Thus, on the difficult lines 14.66–67 *subiectaque terga ferarum | inguinibus truncis uteroque extantе coercet*, Myers offers a translation followed by an explanation of the unusual construction: «An example of the idiom by which a transitive verb (coerсet) refers not to what the subject ‘does’ but to what the subject ‘has happen to him or her’», and cites parallels. H. ad loc., on the other hand, does not attempt to explain the construction, but simply identifies it as «un’altra espressione bizzarra», and discusses the reasons for and against Heinsius’ emendation *cohaerent* for *coercet*. Both comments are valuable; the difference in pitch, however slight, makes me appreciate the availability of both. The single greatest difference, in fact, lies in the absence of any sort of introductory essay in H.’s commentary; whereas the introductory essays in the Cambridge series have come to be essential reading, as their authors can expand on historical, structural, narrative, intertextual, and thematic concerns relevant to the Latin text, the Valla series has a substantial introduction only in the first volume (an essay by Charles Segal, written shortly before his death). E.J. Kenney provides a briefer introduction to his volume, and J. Reed’s is briefest; H., on the other hand, incorporates all of what we might otherwise seek in an introduction into the notes – another subtle way in which this volume will make it of less use to ‘students’, but not a significant obstacle for the scholarly audience to whom it is primarily addressed.
In the scope of this review, I can hardly do justice to the many superb features of this commentary; instead, therefore, I turn now to a brief catalogue of highlights that resonate with echoes of H.’s career-long focus on Latin poetry:

1. Textual matters. While H.’s deviations from Tarrant’s text offer a worthwhile reminder of the complex transmission of the *Metamorphoses*, his open-ended discussions of the merits of alternate readings are particularly welcome. A few examples: 13.254; 13.262 (casts doubt on a conjecture of Heinsius that is not in Tarrant’s apparatus); 13.312 (a strong endorsement of Bentley’s conjecture *praesto*; Tarrant prints *pretio*); 13.684; 13.694 (another Bentleian conjecture, this time involving wordplay on *tela/telum*); 14.574; 14.671 (support for Postgate’s conjecture *tardre meantis*); 14.813; 15.355. In addition, H. offers insightful discussion of lines sometimes (or always) bracketed, explaining the reasons for and against each exclusion.

2. Wordplay. H.’s notes are packed with suggestions of wordplay (and sound-play) of all sorts in Ovid – hardly unplowed terrain, but delightful nonetheless. Some instances have appeared elsewhere, and H. acknowledges the work of others with regularity; but their inclusion in the commentary invites the reader to react, sometimes with laughter, other times with hesitation, but always with an impulse to reread Ovid. Favorite examples include: 13.38, *Palam-medes*; 13.268–74, repetition of *refer*; 13.551, *arti-fex* and *Poly-mestor*; 14.91–100, words with *sim*- hinting at the ancient etymology of *simia*; 14.406, *exsiluere* and *siluae*; 14.659–60, *cura ... autumni* as an acrostic for Vertumnus’ name; 13.652–54 and 15.12, *dines* and *diuus*; and 15.361–62, *fides* and *uides*. In the same spirit I offer a few others: at 13.427 *canum de  hertex crinem*, Ovid describes Hecuba at the tomb of Hector; she takes his ashes with her into exile, but leaves a lock of her white hair there. The adjective *canum* playfully anticipates another idea, however: her eventual transformation into a dog, *cânis* (see 13.567–69). And at 14.360–61, Ovid describes Picus’ encounter with an amorous Circe in the woods as he hunts for boar, in a tour-de-force scene dense with echoes of earlier epic and elegy, emphasizing the density of the forest: *in densum ... nesmus ... plurima qua silua est*. The forest in which this encounter occurs is composed of literary echoes as well as of trees.

3. Themes. In the absence of an introductory essay, H. packs the notes that introduce major episodes with thematic suggestions. In many of these, the reader will find ideas long a part of H.’s scholarly repertoire. Rarely does H. develop these themes at length, presumably because he is attentive to concerns of word-count and the like (and in some cases, because he has already presented his ideas at length elsewhere); but one also suspects that he offers these suggestions as tantalizing tidbits meant to allow the reader to pursue his or her own thread of thematic connections. Particularly productive examples I encountered include the theme of succession, both intertextual and metatextual, broached in the introduction to the *armorum iudicium* (Book 13) but present throughout the following books; that of limits/boundaries and their absence, particularly surrounding the deaths of Hecuba’s children and their mother’s response; and two modes of transcending boundaries, resurrection (Memnon, Asclepius, Turnus, the phoenix, Troy itself, Julius Caesar) and apotheosis (Romulus, Hersilia,
Aeneas). H.’s several observations on Ovid’s interest in fictionality establish this as a theme in itself and also lead me to my next category of comment-types.

4. Intertextuality and metatextuality. H. is a superb observer of the ways in which Ovid both interacts with other poets and their poems and comments upon his relationship with them. The commentary is rich with such observations; I offer a few here as a sample of the treasures to be found within the notes. On 13.219–24, H. succinctly notes the Homeric intertext, a relationship generally given too little attention even in the ‘Homeric’ part of the Metamorphoses; cf. also his notes on 13.262–67 and 415–17. Ovid’s engagement with Virgil is in evidence everywhere, often in conjunction with Virgil’s own intertexts; H. finds a nice instance of Ovid’s complex intertextuality with both Homer and Virgil on the winds at 14.223–32. On 14.662–71, H. offers a nuanced look at the model of Propertius for Ovid’s Vertumnus and Pomona episode; and in his lengthy note introducing 15.60–478 (the Pythagoras episode), H. compresses more than 30 years of scholarship – most of it written or directly influenced by H. himself – on the central role of Lucretius’ scientific epic in the formation of Latin poetic discourse on natural history, cosmogony, and even the nature of myth (note the understated phrase «una coloratura lucreziana» at 15.168). H. is also attentive to Ovid’s intratextuality, i.e., his drawing of connections between otherwise unconnected stories in the Metamorphoses, e.g., 13.540–41, Hecuba and Niobe; 13.764–67, Polyphemus and Narcissus; 14.62–63, Scylla and Actaeon; 14.463–64, Anaxarete and the statue sculpted by Pygmalion. Many of the instances in which the intertextual dimension is important also serve a metatextual purpose: at 15.18 hic locis urbis erit, for example, H. argues that this repetition of Aen. 8.46, itself often challenged by textual critics as an unnecessary repetition of Aen. 3.393, may itself entail an assertion by Ovid of the tendency of the verse to migrate from one context to another, and H. provides several parallels. And on 15.871–79, H. does a superb job of untangling the dense fabric of Ovid’s epilogue, woven as it is of the finest intertextual and metatextual threads.

The production values of the volume, as of the series, are remarkably high. I noted only one slip, and that, of no importance (the Italian translation of a Latin quote precedes the quote rather than following it at 14.841–42). References in the notes to «Hardie 2010» are also puzzling, since there is no entry for a book or article by H. in 2010 in the chronologically organized bibliography; it took me some time to discover that the article in question is listed under the publications of Alex Hardie, rather than those of his fellow countryman Philip Hardie. (This sort of confusion exists for other names, too, e.g., D. West vs. M.L. West, but is particularly misleading when the author himself is involved; if the author-date form of citation is to be used, the addition of first initials would help immensely in such situations.) The high standard set by the earlier contributors to this series is amply met by H.’s conclusion. Together with them, this volume merits a place in the library of every Ovid scholar at work now and for decades to come.

Brunswick

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