say about poetics and genre. Propertius responded with a second book of elegies whose mythical exempla challenge Vergil's poetics, particularly the Mantuan's characterisation of elegy through Orpheus as solipsistic. Finally, as Vergil was composing the *Aeneid* in the 20s, Propertius penned a third book of poetry whose embedded myths and intertextual references took direct aim at laudatory epic poetry (ch 6: Ennius Redivivus). With some thirty poems subject to close intertextual readings, H.'s study amounts to no less than a complete reading of Propertius' first three books as a charged and focused apology for love elegy. Propertius emerges victorious as the Roman Callimachus.

It is a convincing book, written with mastery of mythological intertexts and clarity of purpose and expression. H. offers satisfying analyses of individual poems, but the chief strength of the book is the cumulative effect of minutiae across the range of Books 1–3. The sustained exploration of Orpheus as a figure for poetic debate is especially powerful. Across the rivalry, Orpheus stands in for the 'beautiful and tragic but self-absorbed and undisciplined' elegist Gallus (*Eclogues* 6; H. 223); for Propertius, whose own elegy is irresistible and powerful (*Elegy* 1.9) or futile and solipsistic (*Georgics* 4) or immortalising (*Elegy* 2.27); or for Vergil, who had sadly renounced love and love poetry (*Elegy* 3.2). These roles are elaborated in the poetry by contrast with Amphion as epic poet, Adonis resurrected by love, instructive Aristaeus and trans-generic Polyphemus.

The book is not for the newcomer. H.'s very premise — that Propertius' mythical references go against the grain of the surface reading of any poem — inevitably and rightly makes little space for the surface reading. The reader must be able to track a complex and subtle plot that involves the two poetic stars and two supporting players (Gallus and Ennius) plus a host of mythological intertexts, particularly for those poems in chs 1–3 that involve Propertius and Greek myth, but not Vergil. H.'s clear and engaging prose is a great help in this respect, as are superb paratexts in the form of sub-titles, indices, and prefaces and conclusions.

Two aspects of the book leave a lingering disquiet. First, Propertius reacts not only to the poetry Vergil wrote, but also to what he thought or pretended Vergil was writing. Though H. cautions his readers to set aside our hindsight about the magnificence of the *Aeneid*, it is difficult to embrace the argument of ch. 6 (Ennius Redivivus) that Propertius relentlessly characterised the epic-in-progress as a disaster of Ennian proportions — not least because Propertius' scorn for Ennius was not the prevailing opinion of his day. Second is the seductive pull of having a hermeneutic key to Propertius' poetry. All the details make sense and confirm each other in this book, but if we take any one poem and add the surface reading, political implications, gender inversions and non-mythological intertexts, the rivalry with Vergil is harder to see.

But make no mistake, the disquiet is productive in both cases. H. has uncovered something remarkable: poetry in the making, rather than poetry made. His book is an invitation for others to recontextualise Propertius' — and Vergil's — poetry in the political, social, and philosophical landscape of the 30s and 20s B.C.E. I am eager to reread this book with Horace's *Satires* by my side, for example, to explore how Epicureanism contributes to notions of poetry as socially productive or solipsistic, and to revisit other pre-publication nods to the *Aeneid*. This book has changed the interpretive landscape.

University of Kansas TARA S. WELCH
tswelch@ku.edu
doi:10.1017/S0075435821000216

© *The Author(s), 2021. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies.*

ANNE ROGERSON, *VIRGIL'S ASCANIUS: IMAGINING THE FUTURE IN THE* AENEID (Cambridge classical studies). Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. viii + 237. ISBN 9781107115392. $99.99.

The cover of Anne Rogerson's excellent book reproduces the Pompeian fresco showing Iapyx removing an arrowhead from Aeneas' thigh, as the hero looks away, grimly, from his weeping son Ascanius by his side. The image (almost) perfectly represents the scene in *Aeneid* 12.398–400: 'Aeneas is standing there, grumbling loudly and bitterly, leaning on his huge spear, with a great gathering of men around him including the grieving Ascanius, unmoved by tears.' As R. notes,

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0075435820001318 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Virgil's description here unavoidably recalls the earlier Aeneas, 'immovable' in the face of Dido's grief: as with Dido, the hero must pay no heed to wound and weeping boy to continue on his destined path. What repeatedly emerges from the scenes between Ascanius and Aeneas is the contrast between the *vir*'s exemplary fortitude, verging on the inhuman at times, and the all-too human vulnerability of his *puer*. R. shows how, despite his efforts to grow up throughout the poem, Ascanius must remain a child, innocent and full of unrealised potential, in order for his father to be the hero he needs to be. As many have noted, one of the questions the *Aeneid* asks is what is lost when great destinies are fulfilled, and the corpses that litter its latter half are the most harrowing embodiments of this, youths who will never to grow up to fulfil their potential. But the peculiar dynamic of sentimentality and impassivity in the Ascanius-Aeneas relationship hints another aspect to this: is something also lost, or forgotten, when children *do* grow up to emulate their fathers and succeed to their 'destiny'?

R.'s study fully articulates this complex tension at the heart of the *Aeneid*, which so celebrates the paternal-filial relation as a model for the progress of both epic and empire, yet cannot let its young hero grow up to be like his dad. Often referred to as *parvus* or *puer,* the poem stresses his diminutive size and childishness, yet as the future of Rome he has also been dubbed its 'most important character' (M. Petrini, *The Child and the Hero* (1997), 87), even if his role is 'peripheral' to the narrative and a foil to his father, the real hero. R.'s book, the first monograph on Ascanius, lays out the fascinating complications to this view revealed by an Ascanius-centred reading of the poem. In her sensitive account, Trojan past and Roman future do not so much unite as clash in the body of this *puer*: potentially 'too Trojan' for the proto-Rome imagined by the poem, the future that Ascanius embodies is both divinely predestined and worryingly uncertain, vulnerable to 'different desires and competing agendas' (1). Forever a boy within the text, never to become a man, Ascanius also foregrounds the flipside of epic's 'aspirational masculinity' (4) — its vulnerability, palpable not only in the fact that he is the one of the few youths to get out of the *Aeneid* alive, but also in the very precarity and fragility of hope itself, an emotion which powers Virgil's narrative towards its goal of an idealised future Rome, but which often eludes or deludes its characters. Ascanius carries the burden of the hope of both dynastic succession and also the survival of the young into adulthood, since the poem's emotional charge largely emanates not from its hero's exploits or labours but from its powerful evocations of premature death, making implicit links between fictional doomed youths such as Pallas and Euryalus and the precarious existence of children in first-century B.C. Rome. R. shows well how Ascanius functions symbolically within these structures of collective grief and affect: he *must* survive Virgil's fantasy history as a sort of corrective to the real-life loss of Marcellus, yet he must also remain a Peter Pan-like figure of unfulfilled potential.

Ascanius is malleable, replicable, a blank screen: R. shows how he is set up as a solution to the epic's problem of its future and a problem in himself, since he cannot but suggest other outcomes, other stories. Virgil trims down to a single son the array of Trojan offspring attributed to the mythic Aeneas but ironically, as the narrative progresses, this makes Ascanius' projected role in the succession more uncertain, and by extension undermines confidence in the way the poem yokes its narrative momentum to a secure genealogical line. One of the biggest problems is that Virgil states Ascanius will have a younger, Italian half-brother, born from Lavinia, and both sons are differently implied to be founder of the line which ruled Alba Longa. Ascanius is thus simultaneously 'heir' and 'spare', a victim of Roman 'genealogical opportunism', the manipulation of genealogies to fit political and narrative needs (S. Nakata, *Phoenix* 66 (2012), 335–63). Although Virgil lends validity to the Julian claim by making his Iulus-Ascanius son of Creusa, ironically, Lavinia's son Silvius, not Ascanius, will unite Trojan and Latin blood (6.762), the future blending of the two nations towards which the poem works. R.'s thesis is that Virgil's inconsistency is more than tactful fudge or playful Alexandrianism: rather, the implicit rivalry between sons haunts Ascanius' progress, generating anxiety around the future and foreshadowing Roman fraternal-civil strife.

R.'s readings are detailed and erudite without losing sight of bigger questions the poem is using Ascanius to ask or obscure. It opens up numerous avenues of enquiry, especially about how the paternal-filial relationship is projected as a model for conceiving other Roman power relations, such as between past and present, ethnic identities and ruler and state. Ascanius' fate is both predestined and unclear, and R. shows powerfully how, through him, Virgil makes a larger point about the tendency 'to see what we want in such symbols of the future' (36). Her Ascanius does not resolve but further complicates binary optimistic/pessimistic perspectives, as she shows how he

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0075435820001318 Published online by Cambridge University Press

becomes a 'figure for the progress of the *Aeneid*' (13), poised on the brink of achievement but left hanging, like the ending of the poem itself. This is an excellent book, a model of careful, sensitive interpretation. Its diminutive subject belies its valuable contribution to contemporary Virgilian scholarship, through densely constructed readings and suggestive, capacious conclusions.

University College London MAIREAD MCAULEY
mairead.mcauley@ucl.ac.uk
doi:10.1017/S0075435820001318

© *The Author(s), 2021. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies.*

MARTINA BJÖRK, *OVID'S* HEROIDES *AND THE* ETHOPOEIA (Studia Graeca et Latina Lundensia 22). Lund: Lund University, 2016. Pp. 353. ISBN 9789188473004. €49.95.

Björk's offering is fundamentally her dissertation exploring *Heroides* 1–15 (i.e. the single letters) and their relationship with the *ethopoeia*, the school exercise that requires students to impersonate a historical or fictional figure and so speak in someone else's character. Björk argues that Ovid's single *Heroides* are not only influenced by this form, but they should be read as *ethopoeiae* in their own right.

The book falls into six chapters, of which four serve as prologue: (1) an introduction to the *Heroides*; (2) an exposition of the *ethopoeia* in education; (3) *ethopoeia* in ancient literature; and (4) *ethopoeia* in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The last two chapters focus on the *Heroides*: ch. 5 on formal aspects of the *ethopoeia*, 'how the concept, structure, motifs and loci of the ethopoeia are visible in the *Heroides*' (15). The final chapter consists of close readings of selected *Heroides* 'focusing on the characterization of the writing women' (15).

A dissertation is not the same as a monograph per se, and it would be unjust to review the one as if it were the other. Nevertheless, the pursuit of knowledge through research and analysis and the lucid presentation thereof are the essential purpose of both. In that vein, Björk's dissertation work is both a dutiful if occasionally flawed demonstration of her academic bona fides and also an earnest engagement with some of Ovid's *Heroides*.

The book's organisation seems heavy on background and light on actual *Heroides* analysis. Out of six chapters, only the last two are specific to it. This is not to say that the preceding chapters are superfluous: ch. 1 offers some necessary context to these poems and ch. 2 carefully situates the *ethopoeia* as part of the *progymnasmata*, assignments given to students of rhetoric. A crucial part is exploring Ovid's own attested experience of rhetorical training. Equally important is the reminder that rhetoric, oratory and poetry are not sealed off from each other and that these genres are dynamic and flexible, even permeable and porous; it behoves us to study their interrelationships.

Chs 3–4, however, are more of a mixed bag. Ch. 3 samples *ethopoeiae* in ancient literature, with a heavy emphasis on Greek tragedy. When Björk asserts 'I have found that *ethopoeiae* existed in Greek tragedy' (116), one wonders whether the term has become too conflated with theatre's dramatic monologue for which the actors are naturally in character. Ch. 4 collects *ethopoeiae* in the *Metamorphoses*, and while the selection is interesting, I fail to see how this immediately affects the analysis of the *Heroides*. Ovid composed the *Metamorphoses* some two decades after the *Heroides*, so that epic cannot be a precursor; if the real conversation is about how Ovid treated *ethopoeia* afterwards, such a discussion should probably follow the analysis of those *Heroides*.

Ch. 5 focuses on formal aspects of *ethopoeia* in the single *Heroides*. This is promising, though Björk makes sometimes bemusing, even quixotic choices of what to gloss over and what to dive into. For instance, in her discussion of the *tria tempora* motif of the *ethopoeia*, Björk chooses two *Heroides* to examine, one that adheres to pattern (Canace) and one that does not (Hypsipyle). Attempting to follow Ovidian use of a fundamental motif by examining only two out of a total of fifteen single *Heroides* seems a bit superficial.

This continues in ch. 6 on Ovid's ethopoetic impersonations. Björk proceeds with group comparisons of *Heroides* featuring similar circumstances. She chooses, rather arbitrarily, women socially inferior to their partners (Briseis, Oenone, Medea), banished daughters (Canace, Hypermestra) and women who fall in love with visiting sailors (Phyllis, Hypsipyle, Dido). The last group is conspicuously missing Ariadne, whom Björk leaves out 'for reasons of delimitation'

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0075435820001318 Published online by Cambridge University Press