

with a review of the major scholarly secondary sources and is followed by passage analysis and conclusion, which can, at times, make the book repetitive. The bibliography is quite extensive, although a number of major commentaries on Ovid and some studies on Empedocles are omitted (importantly, S. Trépanier, *Empedocles: an Interpretation* [2004] and *Dictynna* 11 [2014]).

Chapter 1 re-examines Ovid's opening cosmogony and anthropogonies, arguing for Empedoclean influence and underlining the frequent recurrence of chaos. Humans are to be understood as microcosms, embodying a similar *discors/concordia* and a mixture of elements (cf. D.O. Ross, *Virgil's Elements* [1987], p. 120: 'The most convenient characteristic of the four elements and their qualities is how easily and thoroughly they lend themselves, in various mixtures, to balances and imbalances, to be found in microcosm and macrocosm alike, in the universe, on earth, and in the human body'). Chapter 2 looks at the continuation of these cosmogonic and chaotic forces into the next book, with the twin disasters of fire and flood. Underlined again is the tension between mythical and philosophical discourses, which suggests both the fluid boundaries between the two, while calling into question the truth claims of natural philosophy. The 'myth of ages' is shown to be a moral manifestation of the inevitable and recurrent returns to chaos, connecting human passions and natural disorder. Chapter 3 turns to the amatory episodes of the first pentad with the goal of showing that in these episodes the cosmic powers of chaos and *deus* (disorder and order) are still important. Within these stories *amor* has a destructive function quite different from Empedoclean thought ('Liebe als chaotische Kraft'), but it ultimately leads to a new order in metamorphosis (metamorphosis is cosmogony in miniature). The stories in the next pentad (Chapter 4) represent metamorphosis caused by inner conflict rather than divine power. In the stories of Medea, Scylla, Byblis and Myrrha the chaos is psychological, as these women struggle with the conflict between their *furor* and *pietas*. Chapter 5 highlights the elemental nature of metamorphosis in stories involving stone and water transformations. Chapter 6 examines a number of passages that have already been identified as combining myth and natural science (such as Narcissus and Echo, the plague at Aegina), raising the question again of parody of natural philosophy. Chapter 7 looks in detail at the speech of Pythagoras, who serves as a 'Reflexionsfigur', and suggests that his narrative reflects on the relative truth claims of the vatic figures of poets and philosophers.

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OVID AND SPATIAL NARRATOLOGY

BACH (S.) *Espace et structure dans les Métamorphoses d'Ovide*. (Scripta Antiqua 130.) Pp. 245, fig., maps. Bordeaux: Ausonius, 2020. Paper, €19. ISBN: 978-2-35613-340-3.

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Deriving from a 2017 Sorbonne dissertation, the book under review is, to my knowledge, the first attempt at a methodical application of 'spatial narratology' (see, e.g., R. Tally, *Spatiality* [2012]) to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as a whole (other approaches are not

completely excluded, though). Like other scholars before her (cf. p. 15), B. does not conceive space merely as an inert backdrop for individual tales, but as an important narrative feature. Furthermore, she analyses it as a system where relationships between beings are established and even contends that space is a crucial factor in shaping the structure of the poem.

In terms of scholarship it is preferable for any serious literary study on ancient texts to be founded on the best possible critical editions available. Even if B.'s choice of edition does not seem to have major implications, it is regrettable that she uses G. Lafaye's Budé (cf. p. 225) instead of R. Tarrant's much superior *OCT*. She thus prints and translates some inferior readings such as *Met.* 1.2 *illas*, 7.469 *at non* (which spoils a catalogue of isles) or ignores, for instance, the authenticity issues of 15.426–30 (p. 68; cf. *Gnomon* 91 [2019], 506–7) (also, text and translation do not always seem to be in full agreement [e.g. 10.184, 10.518 on pp. 193–4]). However, more troubling is B.'s propensity for a somewhat unfocused and vague style as well as for establishing links between ideas (or between various myths in the poem) with very few explanatory remarks, assuming that these connections will appear natural and obvious to readers. In other words, some ideas that work well in a certain episode (or in a series of episodes) seem to be forced upon other tales, surely in the quest for overall informing principles. In this way, sometimes B.'s argumentations appear as either too one-sided or impressionistic. I will try to illustrate this further while delving into each of the book's three main sections.

The first section, after a generic introduction, focuses largely on the cosmogony and the myth of ages, so as to show how Ovid imagines and organises *his* world, every region thereof being distinctive for its inhabitants. It becomes increasingly clear that B., in a rather rigid conception of Ovid's narrative, understands this cosmic order as a more or less closed scheme with permanent ontological value for the rest of the poem. Affinities and discrepancies with other ancient authors are mentioned, although in an uneven way. In this section B. clings perhaps too closely to the etymological sense of certain words, disregarding consolidated poetic usages (for instance, there is nothing 'shocking' in the use of *unda* meaning 'water' [p. 35]: cf. *OLD* s.v.), or, as elsewhere, jumps to conclusions from flimsy evidence (e.g. it is scarcely convincing that *postquam* in 1.24 'marque l'entrée en chronologie du récit' [p. 41; and what about *ante* in 1.5?]) or that the perfects in 1.69–71 'marque[nt] l'entrée soudaine du monde dans le temps' [p. 42], especially when many others are to be found in the previous lines). B. also addresses the well-known thematic links between Books 1 and 15, and argues that the Augustan Age could be seen as a sort of return to the mythical Golden Age, enabling a spiral structure (pp. 57–61). Although this would not substantially alter her results, it is regrettable that B. does not even raise the point of the ambiguity of Augustus' glorification at the end of the poem, limiting herself to a literal reading.

The second section, written in an especially unfocused style, surveys the poem's conspicuous progression from the East to contemporary Rome, which in turn assumes an oecumenical role. B. tries to single out for each pentad a centre or certain myths that in some way contribute to this overall flow (namely Thebes, Athens and Troy/Rome, with Sicily working throughout as a perhaps too obvious 'cultural bridge'; B. has overlooked Myscelos' trip from Argos to Croton [15.49–54], which might also have some part to play in this dynamic). However, a more detailed discussion of the 'spatial' role of these centres and why they bear pivotal force (both within their pentads and in the poem's entirety) would be useful. In fact, B. is admittedly (and understandably) unable to integrate into a 'spatial' macro-structure most tales, places and trips occurring in the poem, and unconvincingly ends up arguing that they 'undermine' the motion westwards, threatening to 'exploder la narration' (p. 223). At some point in the section B. starts to

analyse some episodes in terms of what we might call ‘cosmic borders’, which is the main object of the third and final section.

In section 3 B. studies the relationship between power, beings and spaces. The continuous movements of the *animalia*, especially humans, often imply transgressions of the places in which, according to the initial cosmogony, they should naturally reside. These trespasses may jeopardise the cosmic harmony, challenging the subordinate role of humankind. In some cases even divine intervention is required to maintain cosmic order and avoid ‘going back to chaos’. This is most evident in a wonderful tale of *hybris* such as that of Phaethon’s wanderings, but it becomes much harder to recognise in many other episodes analysed. For example, I have trouble accepting that, solely in virtue of an alleged wordplay with *umbra* in 10.88–90, which appears within a traditional catalogue of trees (F. Bömer ad loc.: ‘keine Anspielung auf die *umbra* der Eurydice’), Orpheus is ‘mixing spaces’ and conjuring up ‘une force du chaos’ (p. 214); I also wonder how the address *uates Apollineus* at 11.8, even if taken from a strictly genealogical point of view, could possibly fit into this interpretation (see also Nisbet–Hubbard on Hor. *Carm.* 1.12.7–12). On the other hand, B. observes that a change of nature can sometimes involve a change of space, but it might be a bit too contrived to claim, for instance, that Lycaon’s transformation is ‘la simple conséquence de son changement d’espace’ (p. 197). Be that as it may, grey areas (such as the dwellings of minor gods or the powers of sorceresses such as Medea or Circe) are of course numerous, and B. duly tries to take them into account. On the whole, though, it would have been helpful to have at least a cursory discussion of how Ovid uses these border transgressions as compared to other ancient narratives.

The book ends with some straightforward, and very welcome, conclusions (pp. 221–4). Useful indexes are included as well.

B.’s greatest achievement is the application of space narratology to a multi-layered and extremely complex text. Since B.’s book intends to set a starting point (p. 224), perhaps in the future others will be able to show in a more straightforward conclusive way how space contributes to the overall disposition and structure of Ovid’s immortal *carmen perpetuum*.

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TRANSFORMATIONS AND METAMORPHOSES

SHARROCK (A.), MÖLLER (D.), MALM (M.) (edd.) *Metamorphic Readings. Transformation, Language, and Gender in the Interpretation of Ovid’s Metamorphoses*. Pp. xii + 254. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. Cased, £65, US\$85. ISBN: 978-0-19-886406-6.

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The postmodernity of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* has been an echoing theme of literary criticism since the heyday of postmodernism. The concept was enshrined and distilled in *Ovidian Transformations: Essays on Ovid’s Metamorphoses and its Reception* (edited by P. Hardie, A. Barchiesi and S. Hinds [1999]), which marked the culmination of the ‘third wave’ of the poet’s revival in the twentieth century (see T. Ziolkowski, ‘Ovid in the Twentieth Century’, in P.E. Knox [ed.], *A Companion to Ovid* [2009], pp. 455–68).