

CHIARA BATTISTELLA (ed.), *P. Ovidii Nasonis "Heroidum Epistula" 10: Ariadne Theseo. Introduzione, testo e commento. Texte und Kommentare Bd 35*, Berlin - New York: De Gruyter, 2010, pp. viii + 135, ISBN 9783110240856.

In the past twenty years or so scholarly interest in Ovid's *Heroides* has risen tremendously. A great number of articles, monographs, and commentaries have been published, placing this work at the centre of Ovidian studies. Chiara Battistella's (henceforth B.) commentary on *Heroides* 10, Ariadne's letter to Theseus, is a new link to the chain of commentaries on the single and the double *Heroides* which have appeared recently.¹

B.'s book is a revised version of her doctoral thesis in the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa under the supervision of G.B. Conte. It contains: a) an Introduction (pp. 1-31), b) the Latin text of *Heroides* 10 with a facing Italian translation (pp. 32-41), c) the Notes (pp. 43-107), d) Bibliography (pp. 109-21), and e) Indexes ["Latin words" pp. 123f., Index rerum ("Cose notevoli") pp. 124f., and "Passages cited" pp. 127-35].

As B. herself admits (p. vii) the Introduction is "particolarmente selettiva". It does not contain either an account of the poet's life and works, or any analysis of Ovid's language, style, metre, use of etymology. A brief outline of the letter is not to be found either. B. takes the authenticity of *Her.* 10 for granted and does not discuss any chronological questions. In her Introduction she mainly deals with aspects of genre, literary background, and intertextuality, following the current, mainstream interpretive approaches to the *Heroides*, but further providing some fresh and interesting ideas. It consists of the following chapters: 1) "Memoria e memorie", 2) "Resistere a Catullo", 3) "Arianna e il Ciclope: pa-

¹Commentaries on the *Heroides* include A. Palmer (*P. Ovidii Nasonis Heroides with the Greek translation of Planudes*, Oxford, 1898 (= Hildesheim 1967) [= *Ovid: Heroides*, edited by Arthur Palmer, with a new introduction by Duncan F. Kennedy, Bristol Phoenix Press, 2005. Volume 1: Introduction and Latin Text, with Greek Translation by Maximus Planudes, Volume 2: Commentary], A. Barchiesi (*P. Ovidii Nasonis Epistulae Heroidum 1-3*, Florence, 1992), S. Casali (*P. Ovidii Nasonis Heroidum Epistula IX*, Florence, 1995), M. Beck (Paderborn, 1996) and G. Rosati (*P. Ovidii Nasonis Heroidum Epistulae XVIII-XIX*, Florence, 1996) on *Her.* 18-19, as well as the admirable smaller commentaries by P.E. Knox (*Ovid, Heroides: Select Epistles* Cambridge, 1995) and E.J. Kenney (*Ovid, Heroides XVI-XXI* Cambridge, 1996), on selected single Epistles and the double Epistles respectively. See also the commentaries by F. Bessone (*P. Ovidii Nasonis Heroidum epistula XII. Medea Iasoni*, Florence 1997), T. Heinze (*P. Ovidius Naso, Der XII. Heroidenbrief: Einleitung, Text und Kommentar*, Leiden 1997), J. Reeson (*Ovid Heroides 11, 13 and 14. A commentary*, Leiden 2001), A.N. Michalopoulos (*Ovid Heroides 16 and 17: Introduction, Text and Commentary*, Cambridge, 2006), C.N. Michalopoulos (*Ovid's Heroides 4 and 8. A Commentary with introduction*, Diss. Leeds 2006), and L. Piazzì (*P. Ovidii Nasonis Heroidum Epistula VII*, Florence 2007).

linsesti odissiaci. Una proposta di lettura”, 4) “ ‘E ora io...’ ”, 5) “Arianna e l’eco: un (poco) astuto negoziato con la secondarietà”, 6) “Intermezzi catulliani. Quale Catullo?” (I) and (II), 7) “Intermezzi (super)elegiac”, 8) “*Elegy lost?* La ‘decostruzione’ dell’elegia”, and finally, 9) an Appendix.

In her Introduction B. shows great care and attention to Ovid’s use of sources, allusion and intertextuality. The following points are worth noting:

- B. offers an interesting metapoetic reading of lines 19–20 (p. 5f.) claiming that Ariadne’s run here and there corresponds to her metaliterary run between different genres and text-models.

- In ch. 3 of the Introduction B. attempts an original and challenging reading of Ovid’s Ariadne as an “Odyssean palimpsest”, arguing that she displays discernible features of the Homeric Polyphemus (intertextuality and parody, play with both genre and gender). This is an interesting and persuasive approach, backed up with arguments from the text (10.5–6, 11–12, 35).

- In ch. 4 of her Introduction B. discusses the authorial voice of the female writers of the *Heroides*, as well as the two temporal aspects of the work (the historical time of the letters’ composition by Ovid and the dramatic time of the letters’ composition by the legendary heroines). She focuses on lines 10.79–80 and in particular on the somewhat problematic use of the verb *recordor* with a future participle. Following Rosati² she defends the genuineness of the distich, which Knox had suggested to excise assuming that it originated in a comment in the margin.

- On p. 12 B. rightly notes that the references to tigers (10.86) and the *simulacra deorum* (10.95) constitute the most typical examples of ironical prefiguration and of the unmistakable literary memory of Ovid’s Ariadne.

- In ch. 6 of the Introduction B. detects more Catullan models for *Her.* 10, which go beyond the well-established connection between *Her.* 10 and *Catul.* 64 (e.g. *Her.* 10.112 – *Catul.* 5.5–6 // *Her.* 10.73–5 – *Catul.* 5.1 and 72.1–2).

- Particularly interesting is B.’s association of Ovid’s Ariadne with Plautus’ Palaestra from the *Rudens* through Catullus’ own Ariadne (pp. 16f.).

- On pp. 19f. B. makes a very good point about the apparent innocence of lines 10.41f., where Ariadne makes gestures so that Theseus can see her. B. detects specific allusions to Aegeus’ instructions to his son Theseus, which the latter forgets to his father’s predicament. B. also rightly emphasizes the voyeuristic and exhibitionist motives of Ariadne’s stripping (pp. 20f.).

- In ch. 8 B. raises interesting points on the ‘deconstruction’ of elegy in *Her.* 10 (following Verducci), as Ovid’s Ariadne often echoes Homeric models (e.g. Odysseus at *Od.* 5.151–8).

- In the Appendix of her Introduction B. first acknowledges the well-established analogies between Ariadne and Dido and then points out that one of the literary figures also shaping the personality of Ovid’s Ariadne is indeed Vergil’s Aeneas (she produces specific examples and references on p. 29).

² G. Rosati, review of P.E. Knox, *Ovid Heroides, Select Epistles*, Cambridge 1995, *Gnomon* 71, 1999, 409.

The Latin text that B. prints is based on earlier editions (p. 31). No doubt, it is dependable and usable, however it is not the product of new collation of manuscripts and it is not accompanied by a critical apparatus. B.'s main editions of reference ('edizioni di riferimento') are those of Palmer³ and Dörrie.⁴ She only makes occasional use of the editions of the *Heroides* prior to Palmer, although her text would have benefited considerably had she consulted them. Oddly enough Peter Knox's edition⁵ is not listed among B.'s editions of reference, although she states that it is the most recent commentary on *Her.* 10. On p. 31 B. presents a comparative table of readings adopted by Palmer, Dörrie and herself (again, not by Knox), and a short list of *sigla* of the main manuscripts mentioned in her discussions on textual matters.

Such discussions in her notes are kept to a minimum; in general, they are judicious and balanced. B. makes sure to be clear and concise in outlining the textual problems. Her editorial choices are rather conservative and for the most part follow those of previous editors, mainly Knox. For example, at 10.16 she convincingly explains her choice of *rupta* instead of *rapta* (following Knox but further producing more parallels). She wrongly notes, however, that *Her.* 3.15 is not mentioned by Knox; it is actually quoted in his note ad 5.141, duly referred to in his note ad 10.16. At 10.96 B. sensibly follows Knox in choosing the reading *rabidis* of *G* and ζ instead of *rapidis* of *P* and ω, based on the Homeric model of the passage (*II.* 1.4f.). The same goes for *relecta* at 10.104, Heinsius' correction of the corruption *recepta* found in most MSS. At 10.75 she persuasively defends her choice of *vivit* (ζ) instead of *vivis* (*PG*ω, adopted by Dörrie), without mentioning, however, that it is already found in Knox's text.

At 10.86, a problematic line (actually a problematic couplet along with 85, which Bentley athetized), B. offers a stimulating and informed discussion, but then, rather conservatively, decides to print it *inter cruces*. Knox "for lack of a better alternative" prints Heinsius' *quis scit an et saeva tigride Dia vacet?*, but thinks that it is "open to objections since it is unexpected for Ariadne now to name the island which she has just called *ista tellus*". I would rather think that it is not possible for Ariadne *not* to know the name of the island. Calling it first *ista tellus* and then stating its name is typical Ovidian irony. Moreover, as B. herself rightly notes, on a metapoetic level Ariadne already knows the name of the island from other texts, most importantly from *Catul.* 64, the main model of *Her.* 10. Hence, in my opinion Heinsius' proposal is plausible.

Other points include: at 10.31, another vexed line, B. persuasively defends the *aut...aut* construction as fitting the indecisive character of Ovid's Ariadne and prints the text of ζ (*aut vidi aut fuerant quae me vidisse putarem*), a plausible choice. At 10.149, however, I feel that B. wrongly decides to print the reading *vento* of the MSS., although she admits that *velo* – Burman's emenda-

³ A. Palmer, *P. Ovidi Nasonis Heroides with the Greek translation of Planudes*, Oxford 1898 (= Hildesheim 1967).

⁴ H. Dörrie, *P. Ovidii Nasonis Epistulae Heroidum*, Berlin 1971.

⁵ P. E. Knox, *Ovid, Heroides: Select Epistles*, Cambridge 1995.

tion adopted by Palmer, Rosati, and Knox – is more attractive because of its implications of dramatic irony. I am not convinced either by B.'s restoration of lines 131f. to their originally transmitted position. Birt had transposed these lines after line 110 (B. wrongly attributes this transposition to Knox), because they did cohere with neither the preceding nor the following lines. Knox rightly adopts this transposition and argues that the omission of the lines may be explained by the similarity of the opening words of the pentameters *illi-* (110) and *fili-* (132) in capital script.

B.'s prose Italian translation of Ariadne's letter is vivid and accurate, and it does not follow a word by word logic. It thus manages to do justice to Ovid's wit and poetic virtues.

I now move to the main body of B.'s book, her notes on Ariadne's letter to Theseus. B. produces a line by line commentary (occasionally the lemmata are in blocks of two or three lines), which is solid, lucid, and informative, with numerous strengths and a few weaknesses. Introductory pieces on individual sections of the letter would have been much appreciated. In her notes B. offers the meaning of separate words and basic guidance on style and metre (this is not her forte though). She only has a few things to say on syntax and grammatical constructions, and there is little on etymological wordplay. Textual matters are discussed when necessary.

B. is especially good at intertextual readings, literary background, and issues of genre. She also makes sure to avoid listing too many parallels without good reason and explanation. Inevitably, a good deal of her comments can be found in Knox, however B. has a lot of new material to offer. Out of B.'s many rich and intelligent notes I have chosen to single out the following, which I hope will be indicative of her ability as a commentator:

- B. opens her commentary with a rich and detailed note on the beginning couplet of the letter (1-2), highlighting its association with the first lines of Ariadne's lament in Catullus (64.137f.) and arguing that it sets the proper mythological and genealogical background of the heroine.

- 3-4: B. convincingly states that *ex illo litore* picks up the model of the letter, Catul. 64.

- 9-10: B. points out the sexual implications of *languida* and *semisupina*.

- 11-2: B. throws light on the Odyssean connotations of the phrase *nullus erat*, which frames the couplet. Ariadne's model here is Polyphemus. B. rightly notes that a number of features and phrases bestow cyclopic features on Ovid's Ariadne, who does not always correspond to her elegiac role or to her Catullan model; Ariadne also needs to deal with the wiliness of an "Odyssean" Theseus, who manages to escape in the end. Similarly, B. successfully detects an Odyssean subtext at lines 10.60-6 (see her note ad 10.60, p. 71), where the hypothetical *nostos* of Ariadne (with comrades and winds) is modeled on Odysseus' *nostos*. I am not convinced, however, by Ariadne's association with other Odyssean characters, the Sirens, suggested by B. ad 10.39. Nor would I agree that there is a reference to the Cyclops at line 44 (Ariadne's *genae*).

- 41: B. cleverly considers that the white clothes which Ariadne uses to signal to Theseus pick up the white sails that he should have lifted on his ship's mast.

- 47-50: B. supplies some very good notes on Ariadne's self-description as a Maenad who is running, sitting down or becoming petrified, and on her association with Propertius' Calypso (1.15.10-2) and with her future place on the throne of Dionysus.

- 87: This is a very good point on the literary implications of the animals mentioned by Ariadne as potential dangers. B. notes that they come from different literary sources, thus bestowing a literary function on this catalogue: Horace (wolves), Catullus (lion), and Homer (seals).

- 89-90: B. cleverly points out that Ariadne's fear lest she becomes a *serva* (90) will not be realized. Not only that, but she will also be called *Libera*, being the wife of the god *Liber*.

- 98 (*externos didici laesa timere viros*): Very good point on the association between Medea and Ariadne and on the anachronistic paradox that Ovid's Ariadne has learned her lesson from Euripides' and Apollonius' Medea, although her story with Theseus antedates that of Medea and Jason.

- 118 (*proditum sum causis una puella tribus*): B. cleverly picks up the intertextual link with another famous betrayed literary heroine, Vergil's Dido.

- 121 (*spiritus infelix peregrinas ibit in auras?*): B. rightly notes that this is a prefiguration of the catastrophe of Ariadne's garland and of her own apotheosis.

- 125 (*ibis Cecropios portus*): I agree with B. on the ominous and threatening connotations of *ibis*.

On the other hand, a few notes of B.'s have not convinced me:

- 20 (*alta puellares tardat harena pedes*): although B. rightly claims that the choice of the adjective *puellares* for the feet of a *puella* such as Ariadne is logical, I would think that her metaliterary reading of the phrase is an over-interpretation. B. argues that the phrase is a hint at the new metre (elegiac couplet) and the new poetry (elegy) in contrast with the famous model of the story, Catul. 64; I am not convinced this is the case here.

- 123 (*ossa superstabant volucres inhumata marinae?*): I find it a bit far-fetched that *volucres* here may be an ironic prefiguration of Ariadne's future, picking up the wings of Love (p. 97).

- In her note ad 10.30 B. wrongly states that *notus* is the east wind. *Notus* is the south wind, whereas *Eurus* is the east wind. *Notus* is exactly the kind of wind that Theseus needs in order to sail up the Aegean towards Attica.

B.'s Bibliography is up-to-date but fairly selective. A great number of older editions of the *Heroides* is not listed, along with useful titles such as (to name but a few): B. Axelson, *Unpoetische Wörter. Ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis der lateinischen Dichtersprache*, Lund 1945 / A. R. Baca, "The themes of *querela* and *lacrimae* in Ovid's *Heroides*", *Emerita* 39, 1971, 195-201 / J. Booth, "Aspects of Ovid's language", *ANRW* II.31.4, 1981, 2686-700 / R. Pichon, *Index Verborum Amatoriorum*, repr. Hildesheim 1966 / A. F. Sabot, "Les *Héroïdes* d'Ovide: Préciosité, Rhétorique et Poésie", *ANRW* 2.31.4, 1981, 2552-636 / A.

Skiadas, “*Periuria amantum. Zur Geschichte und Interpretation eines Motivs des augusteischen Liebesdichtung*”, in *Monumentum Chiloniense* (Festschrift für E. Burck), Amsterdam 1975, 400-18 / F. Verducci, *Ovid's toyshop of the heart: Epistulae Heroidum*, Princeton 1986 (frequently cited by B., but not listed in her Bibliography).

The Index rerum is not very generous, however it is useful for quick reference to the main themes of the commentary.

There are only a few minor typos, but they do not cause much trouble: ‘visualizaton’ for ‘visualization’ (p. 96), ‘Aegei’ for ‘Aegaei’ (p. 97), ‘trasmitted’ for ‘transmitted’ (p. 100). The book is carefully produced and the binding is first-rate.

To conclude: This book is a solid and valuable contribution to the study of Ovid’s *Heroides*, and a notable addition to the series of commentaries on this work. It contains useful information, interesting observations, thought-provoking discussions, and fresh ideas on Ariadne’s letter to Theseus. It is a readable, well-presented, and easily used book, which has much to offer to the reader of *Her. 10*. Anyone interested in Ariadne’s letter to Theseus should consult it along with Knox’s green and yellow commentary. I believe that it will prove most useful for both teaching and research, so I would gladly recommend B.’s commentary to students and scholars alike.

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