



Review: [Untitled]

Reviewed Work(s):

Ovid's "Metamorphoses" and the Traditions of Augustan Poetry by Peter E. Knox
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(*GL* 7. 453 = *An.* 639 [+ Π^b]; 7. 472 = *Ad.* 786), with δ (7. 464 = *Hec.* 203 *militiam* [D only]; 7. 488 = *Eun.* 883; 7. 508 = *Hec.* 199 [+ γ *aliquot*]), with $\gamma\delta$ (7. 481 = *Ad.* 320; 7. 497 = *Hec.* 393; 7. 511 = *Ad.* 316), and possibly with A (7. 503 = *Eun.* 300). Priscian shares errors with A (*GL* 3. 376 = *Eun.* 750 [cf. G]), with $A\gamma$ and part of δ (*GL* 3. 50 = *Eun.* 98), with γ (*GL* 2. 344 = *An.* 923; 3. 34, 115 = *Eun.* 468 [+ L]; 3. 107 = *An.* 922; 3. 156 = *An.* 484; 3. 425 = *An.* 485 [+ δ *aliquot*]), with δ (*GL* 2. 152, 335 = *Phorm.* 179; 2. 244 = *An.* 361; 3. 51 = *An.* 287 [+ $E\nu\eta$]; 3. 119 = *Ad.* 706; 3. 191 = *Phorm.* 621 [+ γ *pler.*]; 3. 250 = *An.* 143 [the best δ -MSS are missing, however]; 3. 375 = *Phorm.* 351; 3. 415 = *Phorm.* 229) and with $\gamma\delta$ (*GL* 2. 70 = *Ad.* 585; 2. 247 = *Heaut.* 1065[?]; 2. 574 = *Phorm.* 759; 3. 98 = *Phorm.* 989; 3. 107 = *An.* 922; 3. 139 = *Phorm.* 148[?]; 3. 338 = *Eun.* 145). The greater the evidence, the less of a stemma we have.

In general, we are on firmer ground with the medieval tradition than with the ancient; I find correspondingly less to question in the two chapters concerned principally with medieval phenomena. It should be noted that a great many individual passages receive attention in passing, and the observations offered are of high quality. G. is thorough in collecting parallels and judicious in choosing variants. I especially like his repunctuation of *Andria* 921 (p. 89).

An appendix displays the results of spot-collations in tabular form. Data are drawn from well over a hundred manuscripts, including nearly all the more or less complete manuscripts of the twelfth century or earlier. It is now possible, before one examines a manuscript not reported in the printed editions, to tell roughly what sort of text it contains. This feature of the book should encourage and facilitate study of the sources.

This is an important book for the information assembled, and for the exemplary chapter on the δ -class. The rest must be used with the understanding that much is debatable.

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Ovid's "Metamorphoses" and the Traditions of Augustan Poetry. By PETER E. KNOX. Cambridge Philological Society supplementary vol. 11. Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1986. Pp. vi + 98. £10.00 (\$24.00) (members), £12.50 (\$30.00) (nonmembers) (paper).

Critical treatments of the influence of Alexandria on Latin literature have tended to converge on Horace's *Odes* and on Vergil's *Aeneid* as the crowning achievements of learned poetry at Rome, with the works of Ovid typically relegated to a postscript. Rather than waste any time in quibbling about such teleologies, and the negative valuation of Ovid that they can seem to imply, Peter Knox forges ahead and writes Ovid into the main narrative of Roman Alexandrianism as if his right to be there had never been in doubt. This is properly generous scholarship. K. concentrates throughout on asking what existing studies in this area can tell us about Ovidian poetry, rather than grumbling

about what they actually have told us thus far. His treatment of the *Metamorphoses*, with its strong literary-historical perspectives and its careful observation of significant detail, sets Ovid firmly and unanxiously in the mainstream of Augustan poetry, and of Augustan criticism.

K.'s study (based on a Harvard Ph.D. dissertation, and self-consciously located in the fine tradition of Harvardian Alexandrianism) addresses two main areas: the poem's literary-historical background; and its diction and style, which K. seeks to align more closely with elegy and neoteric epyllion than with "traditional epic verse." In both areas he makes major contributions to the understanding of the *Metamorphoses*: his monograph will be of lasting value to all readers of Ovid.

First, some samples of K.'s literary history.

Vergil's sixth *Eclogue* has often been cited for its formal and thematic prefiguring, in miniature, of the *Metamorphoses*; from K.'s discussion (pp. 10–14) it emerges that Ovid's interest in this *Eclogue* is more concentrated, self-conscious, and sustained than has been suspected. Elegiac resonances in the story of Apollo and Daphne, and specifically an evocation of *Amores* I. 1, have been noticed before; but now (pp. 14–17) a fascinating essay in literary archaeology complicates the picture by linking Apollo's powerlessness here as healer of his own love-wound with Propertian and Gallan uses of the *medicina amoris*-motif, and then with a possible Hellenistic source behind all these Augustan passages, the Apollo in Euphorion's *Hyacinthus*. Ovid's Myrrha episode must allude to the *Zmyrna* of Cinna; K. now puts forward the delightful suggestion (p. 55) that Ovid actually puns on the name of his neoteric source in the catalog of aromatic plants that introduces the story: 10. 307–10 "sit dives amomo, / *cinnamaque* costumque suum sudataque ligno / tura ferat floresque alios Panchaia tellus, / dum ferat et *murrām*." I have recently put forward an equally audacious suggestion concerning a punning attribution to Calvus of the digression on Io in *Heroides* 14—so I shall stand firm with K. on this one. The tale of Atalanta and Hippomenes, told in the course of Orpheus' treatment of the Venus and Adonis story, emerges (p. 60) as a classic piece of Alexandrian self-commentary: Ovid's Orpheus uses this inset to point to an important literary model for his enclosing story of Venus and Adonis, viz., the *other* version of the Atalanta myth, involving Milanion. Ovid's source for the foundation-myth of Croton in *Met.* 15 is obscure; K. carefully argues (pp. 67–69) for some Callimachean influences. An important essay (pp. 70–72) discusses the debts of Ovid's Pythagorean episode to the *somnia Pythagorea* at the opening of Ennius' *Annales*; included are some admirable observations on the nature of Ennius' own allusion to the beginning of Callimachus' *Aetia*, in which (a welcome emphasis) K. gives full credit to the early Roman poet's sophisticated reception of Alexandrianism. *Desinet ante dies . . .*: let me end this catalog of literary-historical samples with Ovid's deification of Julius Caesar, convincingly related by K. (pp. 75–76) to the *Coma Berenices* at the conclusion of the *Aetia*. K. argues that Ovid's phrase *stellam . . . comantem* (15. 749) "footnotes" this connection—a deft touch.

As emerges again and again from his monograph, one of K.'s great strengths as a Latinist is his unusual attentiveness to the entire *oeuvre* of Callimachus. Not all will agree, however, with one incidental conclusion for the reading of *Metamorphoses* I and 15 that K. draws from Ovid's close engagement with third-century B.C. Alexandria: that the literary precedent of Callimachus' encomiastic references to the Ptolemies should persuade us to see Ovid's encomiastic references to the Caesars as (equally) unproblematic. Literary allusion here must raise issues of cultural translation. Would not some Romans have been given pause by the very ease with which the rhetoric of Hellenistic court poetry

could be adapted to the circumstances of the “restorer” of the Roman Republic? As Augustus himself was well aware, these are difficult waters.

Now some samples from K.’s other main area of interest, diction and style.

K. carefully describes the contribution to the *Metamorphoses* of elegy and epyllion, as embodied at the level of the word and the phrase; and he convincingly catches the tone of a number of episodes in the poem in which these influences are paramount. Ovid is found to be sensitive to the neoteric effect available in exclamatory *a!* (pp. 31–32: students of stylistics will recognize a graceful tribute to a scholarly predecessor here). The *Metamorphoses* embraces the word *capillus*, avoided in the *Aeneid* in favor of *coma* and *crinis*, but admitted also in the elegies of Propertius and Tibullus (p. 33). *Formosus*, which does not occur in the *Aeneid*, is used twenty-three times in the *Metamorphoses*, only slightly less often than the epic “equivalent” *pulcher* (pp. 53–54). *Puella*, rare in epic, is used thirteen times in the *Metamorphoses*, specifically in contexts where elegiac *color* is appropriate (p. 54). The nonepic *deliciae* helps to set the tone of Polyphemus’ pastoral-elegiac speech in *Met.* 13 (p. 34).

Besides looking at vocabulary characteristic of elegy as opposed to epic, which category may include elements shared by elegy and colloquial speech, K. offers a valuable and properly wary discussion of “words and phrases not ordinarily classified as poetic” at all (pp. 37–39). And, at the other end of the scale, he shows some ways in which the language of the *Metamorphoses* can raise itself above the language of Ovid’s elegiac works by the use of distinctive epicisms. K. argues that Ovid’s use of epic diction in the *Metamorphoses* is notably restrained: “in no case does Ovid overwork an epicism, or employ a word to such an extent that the tone of the narrative is definitively altered” (p. 30). There are good discussions of the employment in the *Metamorphoses* of *fari* and *adfari*, and of the absence from the poem of the genitive plural *virum* (pp. 29–30).

K. is never mechanical in his application of Axelsonian methods. He strikes a good balance between consideration of “raw” statistics and close attention to the particular contexts of the words being counted—as is essential when the numbers involved in such analysis are generally so small, and the pull of each word’s individual textual environment so strong. One learns a great deal from K.’s discussions. Occasionally, however, he succumbs to the temptation to show his less tidy data to better advantage than they deserve. Admittedly, all literary criticism is a rhetoric of persuasion. Only on one page (p. 29), but there thrice, do I feel excessively manipulated. Writing on Ovid’s use of *ast*, K. makes the following statement: “Ovid uses the word six times in the *Metamorphoses*, but excludes it from his elegiac verse.” Then, in a footnote keyed to the end of the sentence, we read: “The unsurprising exceptions are *Fast.* 4. 637 and *Pont.* 4. 12. 3. . . .” Should a footnote do this job? The exceptions *are* unsurprising: K. is right to give more weight here to his own sense of style than to the detail of his statistics. But his presentation of the point does tend to mislead. A similar criticism applies to the information tucked away in n. 15 farther down the page; and, in the same discussion, to the omission of the figure for the occurrence of *sed enim* in the *Aeneid* (four times, to set against the nine reported instances in the *Metamorphoses*). These are small quibbles, however, worth recording only because K. is elsewhere such a reliable guide. Through his sensitive discussions of well-chosen linguistic features, he succeeds in telling us more in a few pages about the diction and style of the *Metamorphoses* than we will learn from days of plowing through the reports of *TLL* in the standard commentary.

From K.’s searching study we emerge with a clearer picture than ever before of the great influence on the *Metamorphoses* of the traditions of elegy. His should now be regarded as the standard treatment of this important aspect of the poem. At many points in the monograph, however, K. complements his invaluable findings in the area of elegy and epyllion with polemic against those

who seek to measure the *Metamorphoses* in terms of the traditions of epic. Probably wrongly, some readers of K. may get the impression that they are being asked to reject the epic affiliations of the *Metamorphoses* altogether. Since I myself have something of a vested interest in this matter, perhaps I may be forgiven for appending a short excursus here, in order to outline some of the arguments for keeping epic terms of reference in mind—even while acknowledging the elegiac influences that are so integral to Ovid's hexameter style.

First, it is important to realize that for the Alexandrian and the Augustan poet alike the label "traditional epic" (as commonly understood) does not describe the way in which any learned poet actually writes epic. Rather, that label defines a theoretical norm against which actual epic poets measure their own experiments in the genre. Ovid takes delight both in observing and in transgressing the stereotyped bounds of the epic genre; so, in their own ways, do Apollonius and Vergil. This is in the nature of epic writing—at least after Callimachus.

The sequence of stories sung by Orpheus in Book 10, which K. selects as representative of the content of the *Metamorphoses*, is strongly elegiac in flavor. This is not, however, equally true of all the stories in the poem.

As K. acutely notes (pp. 50–51), Orpheus prefaces his "lighter" tales (10. 152) with a reversal of the conventional *recusatio*. Instead of announcing to his audience of trees and animals that he will treat "weightier" themes later, or not at all, Orpheus announces that he has *already* treated them: 10. 150–51 "cecini plectro graviore Gigantas / sparsaque Phlegraeis vitricia fulmina campis." Whatever Orpheus may or may not have sung in the past (K. has a good discussion of this aspect of the matter), surely his distinctive proem hints self-referentially at a truth about the *Metamorphoses* itself? Ovid's poem (if not this particular internal narrator) has already grappled with the weighty epic subject of Gigantomachy—not once, indeed, but twice (1. 151–62, 5. 318–31). The stories narrated by Orpheus show one side of the *Metamorphoses*, perhaps its dominant side; but what of more epical tales such as the Calydonian Boarhunt, and more "inflated" narrators such as Achelous and Nestor? Even within the Orpheus-sequence itself, the traditions of epic contribute to the polytonality. Myrrha's passion is neoteric and elegiac, as K. demonstrates (pp. 54–56); but her character also owes much to tragedy (Euripides' Phaedra), and to the complex heroines of Alexandrian epic (Apollonius' Medea and Vergil's Dido). The narrative of Atalanta and Hippomenes "incorporates elements of neoteric epyllion and amatory elegy" (p. 60); but Hippomenes introduces himself like an epic hero (10. 602–8), and his and Atalanta's running action recalls Vergil's Camilla (10. 654–55; cf. *Aen.* 7. 808–11).

To me (*contra* K., pp. 10–12), the natural philosophy of the *Metamorphoses'* opening cosmogony offers a strong initial alignment with norms of epic weightiness. Ancient rhetorical theory, in which natural philosophy belongs at the top of the hierarchy of grand themes, has rightly been felt to be suggestive in this matter (see D. C. Innes, "Gigantomachy and Natural Philosophy," *CQ* 29 [1979]: 165–71). Ovid's sustained allusion to Lucretius in this first episode points in the same direction. Lucretius' own engagement with Ennius, and the subsequent reception of the *De rerum natura* in the *Aeneid*, surely testify to a close

conceptual association between cosmology and epic in the Latin poetic tradition (see now P. Hardie, *Virgil's "Aeneid": Cosmos and Imperium* [Oxford, 1986]). The subsequent development of the *Metamorphoses* reveals the high epic pretension of its opening episode to be more than a little disingenuous. As K. has shown so well, the poem's hexameters betray their elegiac affiliations at every turn. But, for all that, a definite pretension remains: the meter, bulk, and proclaimed scope of the poem ensure that it must. One cannot write in the style of Alexandrian epyllion for twelve thousand lines without producing something that will invite assessment as Alexandrian epic.

Finally in this excursus, I should like to comment at (asymmetric) length on an important point raised by K. in connection with the four-line proem of the *Met.* In Ovid's request to the gods in l. 4 to inspire a *perpetuum carmen*, readers of Latin poetry have long recognized an implied alignment of the *Met.* with the ἐν ἄεισμα διηγεκῆς that Callimachus claims to be criticized for *not* writing in *Aet.* frag. 1. 3—and they have taken the Greek and the Latin phrase alike to refer to a stereotype of epic writing. As K. quite rightly points out, however, they (or, more honestly, we) have failed to worry about the fact that, as the prologue addressed to the Telchines develops, Callimachus seems not to be talking about epic poetry at all. K.'s conclusion from this is a bold one: the phrase ἐν ἄεισμα διηγεκῆς at *Aet.* frag. 1. 3 does not refer to epic composition; and neither does Ovid's translation of it, the *perpetuum carmen* at *Met.* 1. 4. According to K., the subject of genre and of generic differentiation just does not come up in *Aet.* frag. 1: "Callimachus is careful not to distinguish between the epic and elegiac forms. . . . The only poets named in the Prologue are elegists, Mimnermus and Philetas (fr. 1. 9–12). . . . And Callimachus' most celebrated target [elsewhere in his poetry] was not an epic, but the elegiac *Lyde* of Antimachus. In the polemical setting of the *Aetia* Prologue διηγεκῆς is a neutral term" (p. 10). There is food for thought here, and K. deserves our thanks for bringing a new attentiveness to bear on the discussion of Roman allusion to the Callimachean prologue.

It does indeed emerge, on Pfeiffer's interpretation of the papyrus commentary, that all the writings mentioned in *Aet.* frag. 1. 9–12, "long" as well as "short," are elegiac. So is the subject of epic composition wholly irrelevant to *Aet.* frag. 1, and, as K. suggests, to the proem of the *Met.*, too? I am not so sure. K. shows that the interpretation of the prologue as a *straightforward* anti-epic programme does scant justice to the subtlety of Callimachus. But it is surely an overreaction to deny any epic reference here at all. Even if the phrase ἐν ἄεισμα διηγεκῆς . . . / . . . ἐν πολλαῖς . . . χιλιάσιν is itself generically neutral, as K. claims, how can it remain so when the song's subject matter is specified as pertaining to kings, βασιλιῆ, and heroes, ἥρωας (frag. 1. 3, 5)? How can Callimachus' readers avoid associating this formulation with the meter known as the ἠρωϊκόν? When, a few verses later (frag. 1. 9–12), Callimachus begins to talk about different kinds of elegy, this is certainly a shift—but it does not cancel the effect of the earlier description. In Alexandrian poetry, influenced as it is by learned εἰδογραφία, the "mixing" of genres is never neutral or inert but always operates as active tension. This is not the place to embark on a full-scale analysis of nuances of generic reference within *Aet.* frag. 1. Roughly, however, Callimachus begins by reporting a criticism made of him for not writing a certain kind of epic poem; what he then goes on to show is that one's views on epic composition can be related to one's preferences within other kinds of writing, too.

In this, as in other respects, the prologue is no more easy to pin down than a literary policy statement from Callimachus might be expected to be. Take the matter of the preference suggested in *Aet.* frag. 1. 9–12 for short elegies over long ones: weighing in at more than four thousand verses, Callimachus' own *Aet.* (to which, directly or indirectly, this prologue is prefixed) evidently belies any simple adherence by the poet to the aesthetic

of the [ὄλ]υγόςστιχος (frag. 1. 9). There is more than one way in which our reading of frag. 1. 3 is colored by the later development of the prologue's argument. But the primary reference in Callimachus' ἐν ἄεισμα διηνεκέες remains an epic reference—as the use of the prologue by Ovid's Augustan predecessors in their *recusationes* has always tended to suggest. And Ovid's *perpetuum carmen* at 1. 4 remains a label for epic writing—albeit a less straightforward label than we had realized. Evidently, the last word has not yet been written on these matters. K.'s contribution will prompt some serious rethinking of basic positions and will inaugurate a new wave of debate on Ovid's highly compressed and allusive proem.

As the scope of this review may have suggested, the wealth of material packed into the one hundred brief pages of K.'s monograph is quite extraordinary. His argument is marked throughout by concentration, precision, and discrimination—appropriately Alexandrian virtues. Even where I found myself in disagreement with K., I still learned from him. This is one of the most valuable and stimulating studies of Ovidian poetry to appear in years: no reader who takes the fun of the *Metamorphoses* seriously should be without it.

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Culture and Society in Lucian. By C. P. JONES. Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 1986. Pp. xvi + 195. \$25.00.

This book is a major contribution to the long-standing controversy about the nature of Lucian's work, which it examines thoroughly in the perspective of social history. At the same time it is another element in a program of historical study that Jones has been conducting for many years, devoted to Greek culture in the early Roman Empire (other elements include his *Plutarch and Rome* [Oxford, 1971], *The Roman World of Dio Chrysostom* [Cambridge, Mass., 1978], and a series of articles). On both fronts it marks an important advance in scholarship, utilizing recent historical work and itself opening the way for fresh literary study.

The focus of the book is Lucian and his corpus. For over a century now scholars have debated, sometimes hotly, the question of how closely Lucian reflects his own times, and the associated question of how much attention should be paid to him. Some influential studies, most notably those of Helm (Leipzig, 1906; repr. Hildesheim, 1966) and Bompaire (Paris, 1958), have held that his writings are largely detached from contemporary life and are concerned mainly with Greek cultural tradition—that he is playing a literary game, in other words, rather than talking about his own society. J. seeks to show, on the contrary, that Lucian is closely involved with his own social scene, and his argument deploys, to this end, evidence of several kinds—archaeological, epigraphic, prosopographic, numismatic, and papyrological. In this examination he makes considerable use, as he did in his book on Dio, of the vast amount of such material accumulated in the past half-century by Louis Robert and others. Few scholars are so well equipped with a comprehensive knowledge of this field and period,