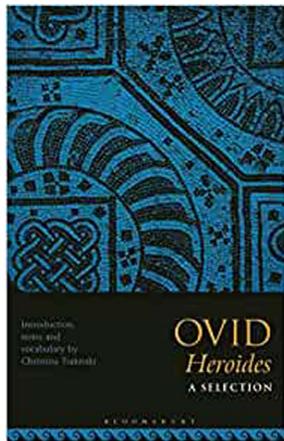


Ovid, *Heroides*. A Selection

Tsaknaki (C.) (ed.) Pp. viii + 96. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. Paper, £12.99. ISBN: 978-1-350-06026-5.

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Christiana Tsaknaki's volume of Ovid's *Heroides* serves the 2023 and 2024 prescription for OCR A Level Latin. As such, the text in the volume constitutes the first 68 lines only from *Heroides* 1 (Penelope) and the first 140 lines from *Heroides* 7 (Dido).

The Bloomsbury volumes in this series, endorsed by OCR, always carry with them the assurance that the text you are reading is the same one that your students will be examined on. This is also very helpful when using other texts or commentaries.

These Bloomsbury volumes are structured similarly. This copy provides a helpful introduction to Ovid, the genre of the *Heroides*, a generic discussion of the individual set texts themselves, including the prescribed English text (*Heroides* 3), a useful introduction to

the elegiac metre and some excellent suggestions for further reading. The next section presents the Latin text.

The Latin text itself occupies only eight pages. The printed text is small, so as a workbook this is not ideal for pencilling in notes, although the left margin is of a reasonable size. Only the Latin is presented here, so there is no English text supplied for the prescribed *Heroides* 3. Nor is there any English translation supplied for the rest of *Heroides* 1 and 7, which is also required by the specification.

Detailed commentary and erudite notes follow which, as Tsaknaki explains in her introduction, not only support with the more abstruse vagaries of Ovidian grammatical structure, but also provide interpretative insight, connecting with Aeschylus, Virgil, Homer and other writers. I very much appreciate the fact that Tsaknaki includes the specific line references for these to allow for looking up and demonstration. Her analysis and commentary are succinct, compelling, and so clear that I read them aloud to pupils without any alteration.

The vocabulary list that follows is, joyously, alphabetical which saves the misery of having to look up specific sections and the words appertaining. Words that coincide with the OCR A/S defined vocabulary list are marked with an asterisk, which also is helpful for teaching.

This short volume is expensive for a school to use for only two years, particularly given that it is not a one-stop-shop for a pupil or a teacher but would need to be supplemented with a workbook where a pupil can write comments and additional vocabulary round the text; a running vocabulary that relates to the section being worked through; and an additional English translation for the prescribed English text. This is a frustrating aspect of the format of these volumes that have limited use after the exam period is over, given the truncated text. For me, however, the commentary, notes and vocabulary justify buying at least one copy.

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