

ADRIAN RADULESCU, *Ovid in exile*, Las Vegas; Palm Beach: Vita Histria, 2019, 186 pp., \$39.99, ISBN 978-1-59211-019-3.

This earnest, but flawed, book offers the general reader interesting historical information about the Pontic region of Ovid's exile. The Romanian author, an archaeologist and researcher in the prehistory of his country, seems to have written this book mainly with the patriotic goal of claiming Ovid as a native poet, a "precursor" of the Romanians and their literature ("the poet whom Romanians today rightfully consider to be the first bard of their land by the sea" 116). The tone is often more panegyric than scholarly. Exiled by Augustus to ancient Constanța, the former Tomis, Ovid in fact never stopped complaining bitterly about his exilic location and its people, however unfair and false he is widely acknowledged to have been ("We repeat, some of Ovid's information concerning the Getae is not true" 131). The book does provide fascinating details about the early history of Constanța, with its strata of ancient civilizations, including Geto-Dacian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Genoese, Ottoman, and Romanian. The general reader will enjoy the vivid prose and learn much about the region, but should exercise caution. For the most part, Roman history is simplified and presented naively, with no questioning of the ancient sources or citations of modern scholarship. For example, the Roman historians' negative portrayal of Livia is presented as fact (her "terrible animosity" and "domination of Augustus" carry the blame for Ovid's exile), as is much of what Ovid says in his poetry ("documentary material"). Ovid's earlier amatory poetry is labeled superficial, but the author expresses great (uncritical) admiration for the *Metamorphoses* and the exile poetry ("poetical creations of undeniable quality"). He wrongly claims that Ovid wrote a poem in Greek entitled *Haliutica* (137-8; a fragmentary Latin poem of that name survives, but is not generally considered to be a genuine work of Ovid).

This edition is an (anonymous) translation of the author's 1998 Romanian-language *Ovidiu la Pontul Euxin* (Constanța, Ex Ponto Publishers) and suffers from numerous inconcinnities in English and spelling errors, as well as mistakes in nomenclature. However, the author does succeed in bringing to life the geography and culture of Ovid's exilic locale. The final chapters on Tomis and the Getae survey the archaeological evidence from the Neolithic Age for the early Geto-Dacians, the seventh century Greek colonization, the sixth century founding of Tomis (later Constanța), and the Roman expansion into the area. The final chapter swiftly follows the history of Tomis up to the Romanian War for Independence in 1877, which restored the name of Constanța, instigated a search for Ovid's grave, and led to the erection of the statue of Ovid in 1887 by the Italian sculptor Ettore Ferrari.

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