A COMMENTARY ON OVID'S *METAMORPHOSES*

GENERAL EDITOR
ALESSANDRO BARCHIESI

VOLUME 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION
AND BOOKS 1–6

ALESSANDRO BARCHIESI
GIANPIERO ROSATI

TRANSLATED BY ERIN BRADY AND THERESA DAVIS

A COMMENTARY ON OVID'S *METAMORPHOSES*

Volume 1: General Introduction and Books 1–6

Comprising fifteen books and over two hundred and fifty myths, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is one of the longest extant Latin poems from the ancient world and one of the most influential works in Western culture. It is an epic on desire and transgression that became a gateway to the entire world of pagan mythology and visual imagination. This, the first complete commentary in English, covers all aspects of the text – from textual interpretation to poetics, imagination, and ideology – and will be useful as a teaching aid and an orientation for those who are interested in the text and its reception. Historically, the poem's audience includes readers interested in opera and ballet, psychology and sexuality, myth and painting, feminism and posthumanism, vegetarianism and metempsychosis (to name just a few outside the area of Classical Studies).

ALESSANDRO BARCHIESI is a professor of Classics at New York University, after teaching at Stanford and the University of Siena. He has been visiting professor at Berkeley and Harvard, and his activity as a lecturer includes the Sather Classical Lectures at Berkeley (2011), the Nellie Wallace Lectures at Oxford (1997), the Gray Lectures at Cambridge (2001), the Jerome Lectures (AAR/University of Michigan, 2002), the Housman Lecture at UC London (2009) and the Martin Lectures at Oberlin (2012). His work combines close reading of Roman literary texts (poetry and fiction) with interest in contemporary criticism, literary theory, and reception history. He is author of *inter alia* a commentary on Ovid's *Heroides* 1–3 (1992) and the Ovidian volumes of essays *The Poet and the Prince* (1997) and *Speaking Volumes* (2001), and co-editor with W. Scheidel of the *Oxford Handbook of Roman Studies* (2nd ed. 2020). His forthcoming work includes *The War for Italia* and *Apuleius the Provincial*.

GIANPIERO ROSATI is Emeritus Professor of Latin Literature at the Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa, where he has also served as Dean of the Faculty of Humanities. He works on Augustan poetry, in particular on Ovid (with essays, editions and commentaries), the

literature of the Neronian and Flavian ages, and Latin narrative. His early book *Narciso e Pigmalione. Illusione e spettacolo nelle Metamorfosi di Ovidio* (1983; English translation 2021) has influenced more recent developments of Ovidian criticism, such as the emphasis on illusion and the Roman culture of spectacle and the relationship between art, landscape, and text. He is also a leading scholar of the *Heroides*, having published various studies and a commentary on the letters of Hero and Leander (1996). He has written on all the most important Augustan poets (and some minor), on Petronius and on Apuleius. His more recent research concerns the poetry of Statius, particularly the poetics of occasional lyric in the *Silvae*. He is currently working on a commentary on Statius' *Silvae* in the Fondazione Valla series.

A COMMENTARY ON OVID'S *METAMORPHOSES*

Volume 1: General Introduction and Books 1–6

ALESSANDRO BARCHIESI
New York University
GIANPIERO ROSATI
Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa

Books 1–3 translated by Erin Brady
Books 4–6 translated by Theresa Davis

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,
a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of
education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521895798

DOI: 10.1017/9781139047272

First published 2024

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ Books Limited, Padstow Cornwall

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

A Cataloging-in-Publication data record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

Volume 1 ISBN 978-0-521-89579-8 Hardback
Volume 2 ISBN 978-0-521-89580-4 Hardback
Volume 3 ISBN 978-0-521-89581-1 Hardback

Contents

Contents of Volume 1

Preface

Alessandro Barchiesi

This commentary on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is a revised version of the work published in Italian by the Fondazione Lorenzo Valla (5 vols., between 2005 and 2015), with five commentators covering three books each. The original work also included a facing Italian translation by Ludovica Koch and Gioachino Chiarini and a fascinating essay by Charles Segal ('Il corpo e l'io nelle "Metamorfosi" di Ovidio'). We dedicate this publication to him (he did not live to see the publication of the Italian first volume) and to Ted Kenney, who passed away in December 2019 (the last month before the current plague). They are both, in their own different ways, examples of resilience and true humanism.

The commentaries have been revised and updated, although one of them on a limited scale: I did not dare to alter Kenney's work after his death, but his notes and introduction on books 7–9 incorporate a number of revisions he made subsequent to the publication of the Italian volume (2011). The other four commentators have engaged in a more extensive rewriting.

The Valla project was based on the important OCT critical edition by Richard Tarrant (2004): the Latin text is not included in this publication since readers may want to use our work as a companion to that widely available critical edition. At times the commentators here diverge from the text printed by Tarrant, and their choices are recorded in a 'Note on the Text' introducing every triad of books.

The goal has not changed: we hope to offer guidance on the poem as a literary work to many different readers, keeping in mind the exciting reality that many people today are coming to the *Metamorphoses* from the most diverse backgrounds and paths. Whether they are interested in the history of Latin poetry or in the lush Caribbean myths of Chris Ofili, in mutations of gender and species or the transmigration of souls, we hope to have provided some orientation.

I thank my companions on this long journey for their patience and inspiration.

Bibliographical Note

Alessandro Barchiesi

Useful points of entry for the study of the poem, and Ovid's works in general, are Hardie 2002b and Boyd 2002; there are a number of online resources, among which the most lasting one at the time of writing seems to be that curated by Ulrich Schmitzer, www.kirke.hu-berlin.de; note also the Oxford Bibliographies online resource by K. S. Myers (2010). The writings of Italo Calvino have been especially influential on contemporary responses to Ovid (see Calvino 1988, 2000; see also Pianezzola 1992).

A history of English translations is in itself very instructive; one should begin with John Dryden's translation, edited in 1717 by Sir Samuel Garth (reprinted in 1998 with a preface by G. Tissol; see Hopkins 1988). Very influential translations have been produced by George Sandys (*Ovid's* Metamorphoses *Englished, Mythologiz'd, and represented in figures* (1632)) as well as Arthur Golding (1565–7; modern editions: *Shakespeare's Ovid*, ed. W. H. D. Rouse (London, 1961); *Ovid's Metamorphoses: The Arthur Golding Version*, ed. J. F. Nims (New York, 1965)). There is an impressive number of recent English versions, some of them very stimulating: A. D. Melville, *Ovid: Metamorphoses* (Oxford, 1986, repr. 1998); A. Mandelbaum, *The Metamorphoses of Ovid* (New York, 1993); D. R. Slavitt, *The Metamorphoses of Ovid Translated Freely into Verse* (Baltimore, 1994); M. Simpson, *The Metamorphoses of Ovid* (Amherst, 2001); and C. Martin, *Ovid: Metamorphoses* (New York and London, 2004); D. Raeburn, *Ovid: Metamorphoses* (London, 2004), with an important foreword by D. Feeney. A new classic for a postmodern Ovid is the anthology by various poets edited by M. Hofmann and J. Lasdun, *After Ovid: New Metamorphoses* (London, 1994), followed by the powerful personal anthology by Ted Hughes (*Tales from Ovid* (London, 1997)). The impressive dramaturgical adaptation by Mary Zimmerman is accessible also as a text: M. Zimmerman and D. R. Slavitt, *Ovid: Metamorphoses*, Evanston, 2002. A Spanish translation with a rich

introduction: C. Alvarez and R. M. Iglesias, *Ovidio. Metamorfosis* (Madrid, 1995).

In addition to the Companions edited by Hardie 2002a and Boyd 2002, helpful compact introductions to the author are Schmitzer 2001 and Holzberg 2002 (a revised English version of the German original, *Ovid. Dichter und Werk* (Munich, 1997)), both with a rich bibliography; Fantham 2004 (a clear and accessible guide to the epic); Volk 2010; L. Fulkerson, *Ovid: A Poet on the Margins* (London and New York, 2016); L. Morgan, *Ovid: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2020). For orientation on recent Ovidian research, one could start with Hardie, Barchiesi and Hinds 1999; Knox 2006; V. Rimell, 'After Ovid, after Theory', *IJCT* 26 (2019), 446–69.

The Pauly-Wissowa entry by Walter Kraus is re-edited and updated in von Albrecht and Zinn 1968: 67–166. In Italian, there is a clear and helpful profile of Ovid by S. Mariotti written in 1957 and reprinted in Mariotti, *Scritti di filologia classica* (Rome, 2000), 123–53; exemplary, too, is Hinds' short entry on Ovid in the third edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*; among short articles that have had a major impact (dealing with the poem and also its reception history), I would pick Eliot 1985, Hinds 1987, Richlin 1992 and Morgan 2003. On the poet as editor of his own work, see F. K. A. Martelli, *Ovid's Revisions* (Cambridge, 2013).

Among short compact introductions to the poem one should single out E. J. Kenney's prefatory essay in the World's Classics edition (Oxford, 1986) (Kenney's notes are also thought-provoking, despite the shortness of the text); in German, a helpful compact edition is in the Tusculum series, with full index, bibliography and a postface by N. Holzberg 2017. In the older generation of general introductions note especially E. K. Rand, *Ovid and His Influence* (London, 1926); L. P. Wilkinson, *Ovid Recalled* (Cambridge, 1955); J. Barsby, *Ovid* (Oxford, 1978); Mack 1988. As a detailed introduction to the poem, Galinsky 1975 has not really been replaced, and should be reprinted; see also the detailed reading and companion by L. Fratantuono, *Madness Transformed* (Lanham, 2011).

Methodologically important monographs include Fränkel 1945; Due 1974; Solodow 1988; Fabre-Serris 1995; Wheeler 1999; I. Ziogas, *Law and Love in Ovid* (Oxford, 2021). A list of books that have changed the course of Ovidian studies should include at least Segal 1969a and 1991; Rosati 1983; Ahl 1985; Hinds 1987; Pianezzola 1999; and Hardie 2002b. The short papers by one of the leading figures in Ovidian studies, Michael von Albrecht, are mostly accessible in the collection *Das Buch der Verwandlungen. Ovid-Interpretationen* (Düsseldorf and Zürich 2000) (it

would be good to have a similar collection for another leader in the re-evaluation of Ovid, E. J. Kenney). The impact of feminism and gender studies has been felt especially since Richlin 1992 and Keith 2000; one angle that is becoming important in recent studies is the related issue of 'the gaze', cf. Salzman-Mitchell 2005; H. Lovatt, *The Epic Gaze* (Cambridge, 2013). Another is space: cf. S. Bach, *Espace et structure dans les* Métamorphoses *d'Ovide* (Bordeaux, 2020).

Specific studies of models and sources: A. Zingerle, *Ovidius und sein Verhältnis zu den Vorgängern und gleichzeitigen Römischen Dichtern* (Innsbruck, 1896) (= Hildesheim 1967); Hinds 1987 and 1998 (various poetic models); Ziogas 2013; Baldo 1995 (Virgilian echoes); Boyd 2017 (Homer).

In the history of learned editions, turning points are marked by N. Heinsius (Amsterdam, 1652 and 1659) and P. Burman (Amsterdam, 1727). Modern research on the text first found a platform in the rich critical apparatus provided by Hugo Magnus (Berlin, 1914). Instantly criticised, the edition by Magnus was superseded only much later, by the Teubner edition constructed with impressive speed and energy by W. S. Anderson (Leipzig and Stuttgart, 1977; second edition 1982; revised reprints: 1993, 2001 (Munich and Leipzig)). This edition, too, has been much criticised, and a stronger working text is now provided by Tarrant 2004, to which the present commentary is intended as a companion. Discussions will of course continue: the text of Tarrant, his choices and his apparatus, are helpfully discussed in review articles by Galasso 2006, Possanza 2005, Liberman 2004 and Heyworth 2007, who offer material useful for this commentary.

Text without apparatus, but based on critical choices and revisions, is offered by G. P. Goold (Loeb, 2 vols., Cambridge, MA and London, 1977–84), and by Galasso 2000.

Galasso 2000 (in Italian) is probably the best complete commentary on the poem by a single scholar, for clarity and selectivity. The richest is of course the omnivorous commentary by F. Bömer (6 vols., Heidelberg, 1969–86), a work both fundamental and eccentric, thorough in collection of data, reactionary and unpredictable in its cultural orientation. Updates and rich indexing are provided by U. Schmitzer (Heidelberg, 2006): Bömer's work is not superseded by any competitor for its wealth of mythological and linguistic comments. The notes on books 1–5 and 6–10 offered by Anderson 1997 and 1972, respectively, are always worth consulting: the work is fortunately complementary to Bömer, not so rich in its scholarly apparatus, but relevant for those interested in teaching the

text. Anderson provides very little on Greek models, for example, but unlike some of his predecessors, he shows a genuine interest in the poem as a work of literature, particularly with regard to issues of character, psychology and morality. Looking back to the tradition of early modern commentaries, one work that offers a recuperation of the entire exegetical tradition, often with original contributions, is the German commentary initiated by Moriz Haupt and later reworked many times until the final revision by Michael von Albrecht (von Albrecht 1966). Indispensable commentaries on individual books, often with significant general introductions, are Lee 1953 on book 1, Hollis 1970 on book 8, Hopkinson 2000 on book 13 and K. S. Myers, *Ovid: Metamorphoses Book XIV* (Cambridge University Press, 2010) on book 14.

Some of the richest collective volumes, conference proceedings and bimillenary volumes include Herescu 1958; *Atti del convegno internazionale ovidiano* (Rome, 1959); von Albrecht and Zinn 1968; Binns 1973; Papponetti 1997; W. Schubert, *Ovid. Werk und Wirkung. Festgabe für Michael von Albrecht* (Frankfurt, 1999); Hardie, Barchiesi and Hinds 1999. We are beginning to see the results of the bimillenary of Ovid's death, for example, P. Fedeli and G. Rosati (eds.), *Ovidio 2017: prospettive per il terzo millennio: atti del Convegno Internazionale (Sulmona, 3–6 aprile 2017)* (Teramo, 2017); Luis Rivero García et al. (eds.), *Vivam! Estudios sobre la obra de Ovidio. Studies on Ovid's Poetry* (Huelva, 2018); L. Galasso (ed.), *La fortuna di Ovidio.* Aevum antiquum n. s. 18 (Milan, 2018); F. Ghedini, *Il poeta del mito. Ovidio e il suo tempo* (Rome, 2018); F. Ghedini (ed.), *Ovidio. Amori miti e altre storie. Catalogo della mostra* (Naples, 2018); F. Bessone and S. Stroppa (eds.), *Lettori latini e italiani di Ovidio* (Pisa and Rome, 2019); L. Nicolini and A. Bonandini (eds.), *Omnia mutantur* (Genoa, 2019) (particularly welcome for its renewed emphasis on style, a rather marginal issue in recent Ovidian studies).

The area with the most intensive growth is that of reception, influence and survival. Ovid's poem has become a test case for the methods and interests of reception and translation studies. Collective volumes, in addition to those cited in the previous paragraph (and to most of the bimillenary volumes), include R. Chevallier (ed.), *Présence d'Ovide* (Paris, 1982); J. M. Frécaut and D. Porte (eds.), *Journées ovidiennes de Parménie* (Brussels, 1985); Martindale 1988 (a real watershed in reception studies); G. Papponetti, *Ovidio, poeta della memoria* (Rome, 1991); M. Picone and B. Zimmermann (eds.), *Ovidius redivivus* (Stuttgart, 1994); H. Walter and H. J. Hörn, *Die Rezeption der Metamorphosen Ovids in der Neuzeit* (Berlin, 1995); I. Gallo and L. Nicastri (eds.), *Aetates Ovidianae* (Naples,

1995). A good collection of reception moments can be found in the anthology by W. Stroh, *Ovid im Urteil der Nachwelt* (Darmstadt, 1969). Note also R. Brewer, *Ovid's Metamorphoses and European Culture* (Boston, MA, 1933–41); M. Giebel, *Ovid. Mit Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten* (Hamburg, 1991); K. Smolak, 'Der verbannte Dichter. Identifizierung mit Ovid in Mittelalter und Neuzeit', *Wiener Studien* 14 (1980), 158–91. It is enough to look at Ziolkowski 2005 to realise the importance of Ovid in the twentieth and early twenty-first century: very few classical authors, figures such as Homer, Thucydides, Plato and Virgil, could have been the subject of such a rich overview. After Ziolkowski, the new impulse has come from antagonistic revisions of Ovid by women authors, cf. F. Cox, *Ovid's Presence in Contemporary Women Writers* (Oxford, 2020).

Introductions to basic aspects of the manuscript tradition: the updated overview in the introduction to Tarrant 2004, and the Ovid chapter, also by Tarrant, in L. D. Reynolds (ed.), *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics* (Oxford, 1993); note also J. Richmond, 'Manuscript Traditions and the Transmission of Ovid's Works', in Boyd 2002: 443–83, and the rich examples from Ovid's textual transmission in R. Tarrant, *Texts, Editors and Readers* (Cambridge, 2016). Manuscript catalogue: F. Munari, *Catalogue of the MSS of Ovid's Metamorphoses*, BICS Suppl. 4 (London, 1957) (with supplements in F. Coulson, 'Addenda to Munari's catalogues of the Manuscripts of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*', *RHT*, 25 (1995), 91–127; more references in Tarrant 2004: vi n. 7).

On the problem of the so-called Lactantian summaries, B. Otis, 'The Argumenta of the So-Called Lactantius', *HSCPh* 47 (1936), 131–63; R. J. Tarrant, 'The *Narrationes* of "Lactantius" and the Transmission of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*', in O. Pecere and M. Reeve (eds.), *Formative Stages of Classical Traditions* (Spoleto, 1995), 83–115; Cameron 2004.

On the important role of N. Heinsius in shaping the modern text of Ovid, see especially E. J. Kenney, *The Classical Text* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1974), 57–63; M. Reeve, 'Heinsius' Manuscripts of Ovid', *RhM* 117 (1974), 133–66 and 119 (1976), 65–78; R. J. Tarrant, 'Nicolaas Heinsius and the Rhetoric of Textual Criticism', in Hardie, Barchiesi and Hinds 1999: 286–300.

On other general questions about transmission and survival: R. Sabbadini, *Le scoperte dei codici latini e greci ne' secoli XIV e XV*, 2 vols. (Florence, 1967); D. A. Slater, *Towards a Text of the Metamorphosis of Ovid* (Oxford, 1927); R. T. Bruère, 'The Manuscript Tradition of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*', *HSCPh* 50 (1939), 95–122; F. W. Lenz, *Ovid's*

Metamorphoses: Prolegomena to a Revision of Hugo Magnus' Edition (Dublin and Zürich, 1967); G. Luck, *Untersuchungen zur Textgeschichte Ovids* (Heidelberg, 1969).

On the impact of the poem on Roman imperial culture and imagination: in addition to the many collective volumes and companions quoted above, see also G. Mazzoli, *Seneca e la poesia* (Milan, 1970), 238–47; R. Jakobi, *Der Einfluss Ovids auf den Tragiker Seneca* (Berlin, 1988); Degl'Innocenti Pierini 1990; O. Zwierlein, *Die Ovid- und Vergil-Revision in tiberischer Zeit*, Vol. 1: *Prolegomena* (Berlin, 1999) (a controversial study on interpolations); J.-M. Claassen, *Displaced Persons: The Literature of Exile from Cicero to Boethius* (Madison, WI, 1999); the special issue of the journal *Arethusa* 35 (2002); S. Hinds, 'Martial's Ovid/Ovid's Martial', *JRS* 97 (2007), 113–54; Hinds 2011 (Senecan tragedy).

On Ovid and medieval culture, a starting point is F. Munari, *Ovid im Mittelalter* (Zürich and Stuttgart, 1960); fundamental, too, is B. Munk Olsen, *L'étude des auteurs classiques latins aux XI et XII siècles*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1982–9); Munk Olsen, *La Réception de la littérature classique au Moyen Age* (Copenhagen, 1995); a good first introduction is M. von Albrecht, *Storia della letteratura latina*, Vol. 2 (Turin, 1995), 818–25.

On the whole medieval tradition, with special emphasis on *vitae*, *accessus* and schooling: S. Battaglia, 'La tradizione di Ovidio nel medioevo', *Filologia Romanza* 11 (1959), 185–224; B. Bischoff, 'Eine mittelalterliche Ovid-Legende', *Historische Jahrbücher* 71 (1952), 268–73; F. Coulson, 'Hitherto unedited Medieval and Renaissance Lives of Ovid (I)', *Mediaeval Studies* 49 (1987), 152–207; Coulson 1991; F. Coulson and B. Roy, *Incipitarium Ovidianum* (Turnhout, 2000); F. Ghisalberti, *Giovanni di Garlandia, Integumenta Ovidii, poemetto inedito del secolo XIII* (Messina and Milan, 1933); F. Ghisalberti, 'Medieval Biographies of Ovid', *JWCI* 9 (1946), 10–59; G. Glauche, *Schullektüre im Mittelalter* (Munich, 1970); R. Glendinning, 'Pyramus and Thisbe in the Medieval Classroom', *Speculum* 61 (1986), 51–78; Hexter 1986; Hexter 1987; Hexter, '*Medieval Articulations* of *Ovid's Metamorphoses*: From *Lactantian Segmentation* to *Arnulfian Allegory*', in M. Desmond (ed.), *Ovid in Medieval Culture* (Binghamton, 1988), 63–82; Hexter, 'Ovid's Body', in J. L. Porter (ed.), *Constructions of the Classical Body* (Ann Arbor, 1999), 327–54; R. B. C. Huygens (ed.), *Accessus ad auctores* (Leiden, 1970); P. Klopsch, *Pseudo-Ovidius: De vetula* (Leiden, 1967); R. Levine, 'Exploiting Ovid: Medieval Allegories of the *Metamorphoses*', *Medioevo Romanzo* 14 (1989), 197–213; R. H. Lucas, 'Medieval French Translations of the Classics to 1500', *Speculum* 45 (1970), 225–53; M. Manitius,

'Beiträge zur Geschichte des Ovidius und anderer römischer Schriftsteller im Mittelalter', *Philologus* Suppl. 7 (1900), 723–68; J. McGregor, 'Ovid at School: From the Ninth to the Fifteenth Century', *CF* 32 (1978), 29–51; K. J. McKinley, *Reading the Ovidian Heroine: Metamorphoses Commentaries 1100–1618* (Leiden, 2001); A. J. Minnis and A. B. Scott, *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism* (Oxford, 1991); G. Pansa, *Ovidio nel medio evo e nella tradizione popolare* (Sulmona, 1924); W. D. Reynolds, 'Sources, Nature, and Influence of the *Ovidius moralizatus* of Pierre Bersuire', in J. Chance (ed.), *The Mythographic Art* (Gainesville, 1990), 83–99.

Single authors and phases in the literary production of medieval Europe (a selective list, with emphasis on important approaches): *Ovide moralisé*, ed. C. de Boer (Amsterdam, 1954); P. Bersuire, *Ovidius moralizatus*, ed. J. Engels (Utrecht, 1962); T. Walsingham, *De archana deorum*, ed. R. A. van Kluyve (Durham, NC, 1968); G. Boccaccio, *Genealogie deorum gentilium*, ed. V. Romano (Bari, 1951); A. Arrathoon (ed.), *Chaucer and the Cult of Fiction*, (Rochester, NY, 1986); C. Baswell, *Virgil in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1995); G. A. Bond, '*Locus amoris*: The Poetry of Baudri of Bourgueil and the Formation of the Ovidian Subculture', *Traditio* 42 (1986), 143–93; R. Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Reading Myth: Mythology and Its Interpretations in Medieval French Literature* (Stanford, 1997); T. Bouché, 'Ovide et Jean de Meun', *Le Moyen Âge* 83 (1977), 71–87; H. Braet, 'Note sur Marie de France et Ovide', in J. de Caluwé (ed.), *Mélanges Jeanne Wathelet-Willem* (Liège, 1978); V. Branca, 'L'Atteone del Boccaccio fra allegoria cristiana, evemerismo trasfigurante, narrativa esemplare, visualizzazione rinascimentale', *Studi sul Boccaccio* 24 (1996), 193–208; K. Brownlee and W. Stephens (eds.), *Discourses of Authority in Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (Hanover and London, 1989); P. Cheney and F. De Armas, *European Literary Careers* (Toronto, Buffalo and London, 2002); M. Desmond (ed.), *Christine de Pizan and the Categories of Difference* (Minneapolis and London, 1998); K. Eisenbichler and A. A. Iannucci (eds.), *Petrarch's Triumphs* (Ottawa, 1990); A. G. Elliott, 'Orpheus in Catalonia: A Note on Ovid's Influence', *CF* 32 (1978), 3–15; A. G. Elliott, '*Accessus ad auctores*: Twelfth-Century Introductions to Ovid', *Allegorica* 5 (1980), 6–48; J. M. Fyler, *Chaucer and Ovid* (New Haven, CT and London, 1979); F. Ghisalberti, 'Arnolfo d'Orléans, un cultore di Ovidio nel sec. XII', *Memorie Reale Istituto Lombardo di Scienze e Lettere* 4 (1932), 157–234; P. Godman, *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance* (London, 1985); P. Godman and O. Murray (eds.), *Latin Poetry and the Classical Tradition* (Oxford, 1990);

R. W. Hanning, 'Courtly Contexts for Urban *Cultus*: Responses to Ovid in Chrétien's *Cligès* and Marie's *Guigemar*', *Symposium* 35 (1981), 34–56; Hardie and Moore 2010 (on literary careers); M. P. Harley, 'Narcissus, Hermaphroditus, and Attis: Ovidian Lovers at the Fontaine d'Amors in Guillaume de Lorris' *Roman de la Rose*', *PMLA* 101 (1986), 324–37; E. Hicks (ed.), *Le Débat sur le Roman de la Rose* (Paris, 1977); R. Hollander, *Boccaccio's Two Venuses* (New York, 1977); L. J. Kiser, *Telling Classical Tales: Chaucer and the 'Legend of Good Women'* (Ithaca, NY and London, 1983); K. Knoespel, *Narcissus and the Invention of Personal History* (New York and London, 1985); W. D. Lebek, 'Love in the Cloister', *CSCA* 11 (1978), 109–25; F. W. Lenz, 'Einführende Bemerkungen zu den mittelalterlichen Pseudo-Ovidiana', *Altertum* 5 (1959), 171–82; C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (London, 1938); S. B. Meech, 'Chaucer and the *Ovide moralisé*: A Further Study', *PMLA* 46 (1931), 182–204; A. J. Minnis, 'A Note on Chaucer and the *Ovide moralisé*', *Medium Aevum* 48 (1979), 254–7; E. Panofsky and F. Saxl, *La Mythologie classique dans l'art médiéval* (Paris, 1990); D. Poirion, 'Narcisse et Pygmalion dans le *Roman de la Rose*', in R. J. Cormier and U. T. Holmes (eds.), *Essays in Honor of L. F. Solano* (Chapel Hill, 1970), 153–65; W. Schrötter, *Ovid und die Troubadours* (Halle, 1908); E. F. Shannon, *Chaucer and the Roman Poets* (Cambridge, MA, 1929); Simpson 1995 (on Alain de Lille, Gower); J. Simpson, 'Breaking the Vacuum: Ricardian and Henrician Ovidianism', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 29 (1999), 325–54; S. Spence, *Texts and the Self in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1996); M. E. Steinle, 'Versions of Authority in the *Roman de la Rose*: Remarks on the Use of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun', *Mediaevalia* 13 (1989), 189–206; A. Stackmann, 'Ovid im deutschen Mittelalter', *Arcadia* 1 (1966), 231–54; S. Sturm-Maddox, *Petrarch's Metamorphoses* (Columbia, MO, 1995); S. Viarre, *La Survie d'Ovide dans la littérature scientifique des 12*e *et 13*e *siècles* (Poitiers, 1966); J. Whitta, '*Ille ego Naso*: Modoin of Autun and the *Renovatio* of Ovidian Poetry', *Latomus* 61 (2002) 703–31; J. A. Wisman, 'Christine de Pizan and Arachne's Metamorphoses', *Fifteenth Century Studies* 23 (1997), 138–51. Note also R. Hexter, L. Pfuntner and J. Haynes, *Appendix Ovidiana: Latin Poems Ascribed to Ovid in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA, 2020).

Dante: T. Barolini, *Dante's Truth* (Princeton, 1984); T. Barolini, 'Arachne, Argus and St John: Transgressive Art in Dante and Ovid', *Mediaevalia* 13 (1989), 207–26; L. K. Born, 'Ovid and Allegory', *Speculum* 9 (1934), 362–79; K. Brownlee, 'Ovid's Semele and Dante's

Metamorphosis', *MLN* 101 (1986), 147–56; G. Brugnoli, 'Forme ovidiane in Dante', in I. Gallo and L. Nicastri (eds.), *Aetates Ovidianae: lettori di Ovidio dall'Antichità al Rinascimento* (Naples, 1995), 239–59; G. Brugnoli, *Studi danteschi*, 3 vols. (Pisa, 1998); F. Ghisalberti, 'Giovanni del Virgilio: espositore delle *Metamorfosi*', *Giornale dantesco* 34 (1931), 3–110; R. Palgen, 'Dante e Ovidio', *Convivium* n. s. 27 (1959), 277–87; C. A. Robson, 'Dante's Use in the *Divina Commedia* of the Medieval Allegories on Ovid', in *Centenary Essays on Dante by Members of the Oxford Dante Society* (Oxford, 1965), 1–38; J. Freccero (ed.), *Dante: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1965), 78–101; R. Jacoff and J. T. Schnapp (eds.), *The Poetry of Allusion* (Stanford, 1991) (includes a rich bibliography on Dante and Ovid); W. Ginsberg, 'Dante, Ovid, and the Transformation of Metamorphosis', *Traditio* 46 (1991), 205–33; E. Paratore, 'Ovidio', in *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, Vol. 4 (Rome, 1970–5), 225–37; J. Pucci, *The Full-Knowing Reader* (New Haven, CT and London, 1998); W. J. Kennedy, 'Irony, Allegoresis and Allegory in Virgil, Ovid and Dante', *Arcadia* 7 (1972), 115–34; M. Picone, 'Dante, Ovidio e la poesia dell'esilio', *Rassegna europea di letteratura italiana* 14 (1999), 7–23; M. U. Sowell (ed.), *Dante and Ovid: Essays in Intertextuality* (Binghamton, 1991); R. Wilson, 'Exile and Relegation in Dante and Ovid', *Annali di Italianistica* 20 (2002), 55–72.

Renaissance and early modern Europe: D. C. Allen, *Mysteriously Meant*, Baltimore 1970; G. Agamben, *Stanze* (Turin, 1977); J. Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford, 1994); M. Beissinger, J. Tylus and S. Wofford (eds.), *Epic Traditions in the Contemporary World* (Berkeley, 1999); Brown 2002; C. Burrow, 'Spenser and Classical Traditions', in A. Hadfield (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Spenser* (Cambridge, 2001), 217–36; P. Cheney, *Spenser's Famous Flight* (Toronto, Buffalo and London, 1993); P. Cheney, *Marlowe's Counterfeit Profession* (Toronto, Buffalo and London, 1997); P. Cheney and F. De Armas, *European Literary Careers* (Toronto, Buffalo and London, 2002); F. A. De Armas (ed.), *Ovid in the Age of Cervantes* (Toronto, 2010); R. J. Durocher, *Milton and Ovid* (Ithaca, NY and London, 1985); L. Enterline, *The Rhetoric of the Body from Ovid to Shakespeare* (Cambridge, 2000); P. Garland-Hallyn, *Le Reflet des fleurs* (Geneva, 1994); T. M. Greene, *The Light in Troy* (New Haven, CT and London, 1982); B. Guthmüller, *Ovidio Metamorphoseos Vulgare* (Boppard, 1981); B. Guthmüller, *Studien zur Mythologie in der italienischen Renaissance* (Weinheim, 1986); Hardie and Moore 2010; M. N. Holahan, '*Iamque opus exegi*: Ovid's Changes and Spenser's Brief Epic of Mutability', *English Literary Renaissance* 6

(1976), 244–70; D. Javitch, 'Rescuing Ovid from the Moralisers: The Liberation of Angelica, *Furioso* X', in A. Scaglione (ed.), *Ariosto 1974 in America* (Ravenna, 1976), 85–98; D. Javitch, *Ariosto classico* (Milan, 1999); Keith and Rupp 2007; Kilgour 2012 (on Milton); R. Lyne, *Ovid's Changing Worlds: English Metamorphoses 1567–1632* (Cambridge, 2001); P. Mack and J. North (eds.), *The Afterlife of Ovid* (London, 2015); C. May, *D'Ovide à Racine* (Paris, 1949); M. Moog-Grünewald, *Metamorphosen der Metamorphosen* (Heidelberg, 1979); J. D. Mulvihill, 'Jonson's *Poetaster* and the Ovidian Debate', *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* 22 (1982), 239–55; L. Pearcy, *The Mediated Muse: English Translations of Ovid, 1560–1700* (Hamden, 1984); R. Schevill, 'Ovid and the Renaissance in Spain', *University of California Publications in Modern Philology* 4 (1913–16), 1–268; J. Seznec, *La Survivance des dieux antiques*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1980); A. B. Taylor (ed.), *Shakespeare's Ovid* (Cambridge, 2000); H. Taylor, *The Lives of Ovid in Seventeenth-Century French Culture* (Oxford and New York, 2017); J. M. Velz, 'The Ovidian Soliloquy in Shakespeare', *Shakespeare Studies* 18 (1986), 1–24; E. Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, 2nd ed. (London, 1968).

Modern and postmodern rediscoveries and adaptations: M. von Albrecht, *Rom – Spiegel Europas* (Heidelberg, 1983); von Albrecht 2000; M. Beck and B. Simons, 'Ovid und Benjamin Britten', in M. Baumbach (ed.), *Tradita et inventa* (Heidelberg, 2000), 531–48; Barchiesi 2011; B. W. Boyd and C. Fox, *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Ovid and the Ovidian Tradition* (New York, 2010); J. Brodsky, *On Grief and Reason* (New York, 1995); Brown 2002; L. Feder, 'Pound and Ovid', in G. Bornstein (ed.), *Ezra Pound among the Poets* (Chicago, 1985), 13–34; S. Coelsch-Foisner and W. Görtschacher, *Ovid's Metamorphoses in English Poetry* (Heidelberg, 2009); L. Florman, *Myth and Metamorphosis: Picasso's Classical Prints of the 1930s* (Cambridge, MA, 2002); C. Formicola, *Figure ovidiane, controfigure rushdiane* (Pisa and Rome, 2019); D. Garrison, 'Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in E. L. Doctorow's *Ragtime*', *CML* 17 (1987), 103–15; R. Glei, 'Ovid in der Zeit der Postmoderne', *Poetica* 26 (1994), 409–27; E. M. Glenn, 'Pound and Ovid', *Paideuma* 10 (1981), 625–34; F. Harzer, *Erzählte Verwandlung. Eine Poetik epischer Metamorphosen (Ovid, Kafka, Ransmayr)* (Tübingen, 2000); Hinds 2004 (from Petrarch to *Pulp Fiction*); N. Kossman (ed.), *Gods and Mortals: Modern Poems in Classical Myths* (Oxford, 2001); D. Lateiner, 'The Epigraph to Joyce's *Portrait*', *CM* 4 (1983–4), 77–84; H. Laurenti (ed.), *Ovide chez les Scythes* (Montpellier, 1997); C. Lichtenstern, *Metamorphose: vom Mythos zum Prozessdenken*

(Weinheim, 1992); G. Liveley, *Ovid: Love Songs* (London, 2004); B. R. Nagle, 'Ovid: A Poet Between Two Novelists', *Helios* 12 (1985), 65–73; D. Roessel, '"Like Ovid in Thrace": D. H. Lawrence's Identification with a Roman Poet', *CML* 10 (1989–90), 351–7; J. Solomon, *The Ancient World in the Cinema* (New Haven, CT and London, 2001); P. Terry (ed.), *Ovid Metamorphosed* (London, 2000); H. Walter and H. J. Hörn, *Die Rezeption der Metamorphosen Ovids in der Neuzeit* (Berlin, 1995); E. Zinn, *Viva vox: römische Klassik und deutsche Dichtung* (Frankfurt, 1994); Ziolkowski 2005.

A number of diachronic studies of single myths or characters have a substantial bearing on the study of Ovid. See, for example (but really for example): H. Anton, *Der Raub der Proserpina* (Heidelberg, 1967); M. E. Barnard, *The Myth of Apollo and Daphne from Ovid to Quevedo* (Durham, NC, 1987); M. Beller, *Philemon und Baucis in der europäischen Literatur* (Heidelberg, 1967); F. Schmitt-von Mühlenfels, *Pyramus und Thisbe* (Heidelberg, 1972); H. Dörrie, *Pygmalion* (Opladen, 1974); A. Dinter, *Der Pygmalion-Stoff in der europäischen Literatur* (Heidelberg, 1979); J. Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* (Berkeley and London, 1981); Knoespel 1985; L. Loseff and V. Polukhina (eds.), *Brodsky's Poetics and Aesthetics* (London, 1990); Rosati 1983 (on the myths of Narcissus and Pygmalion); Segal 1989 (on Orpheus); L. Vinge, *The Narcissus Theme in Western European Literature up to the Early 19th Century* (Lund, 1967).

Specifically on Ovid and the visual arts: H. Bernsdorff, *Kunstwerke und Verwandlungen* (Frankfurt, 2000); H. Casanova-Robin and G. Sauron (eds.), *Ovide, le transitoire et l'éphemère* (Paris, 2019); L. Freedman, *Classical Myths in Italian Renaissance Painting* (Cambridge, 2011); F. Ghedini (ed.), *Ovidio. Amori, miti e altre storie* (Rome, 2018); F. Ghedini and I. Colpo (eds.), *Il gran poema delle passioni e delle meraviglie. Ovidio e il repertorio letterario e figurativo fra antico e riscoperta. Atti del Convegno* (Padua, 2012); E. W. Leach, *The Rhetoric of Space* (Princeton, 1988); E. W. Leach, *The Social Life of Painting in Ancient Rome and on the Bay of Naples* (Cambridge, 2004); B. Sciaramenti, *Paesaggi del dramma nelle 'Metamorfosi' di Ovidio e nella pittura romana coeva* (Rome, 2019); G. Sena Chiesa and F. Giacobello (eds.), *Gli dei in giardino* (Florence, 2016).

Broader studies of metamorphosis (anthropology, visual art, history of religions, history of ideas): O. Kern, 'Die Metamorphose in Religion und Dichtung der Antike', in J. Walter (ed.), *Goethe als Seher und Erforscher der Natur* (Leipzig, 1930), 185–204; P. Brunel, *Le Mythe de la métamorphose* (Paris, 1974); I. Massey, *The Gaping Pig: Literature and*

Metamorphosis (Berkeley, 1976); Skulsky 1981; Forbes Irving 1990; Kilgour 1990; F. Harzer, *Erzählte Verwandlung* (Tübingen, 2000); Warner 2002; Frontisi-Ducroux 2003; Buxton 2009; Barchiesi 2015; Bettini 2012 and 2015; Sharrock, Malm and Möller 2020 (with updated bibliography).

Music and theatre. It would be difficult to offer a comprehensive bibliography here, but for Ovid in musical history, P. Isotta, *La dotta lira. Ovidio e la musica* (Venice, 2018) is unrivalled for breadth and engaging style; among theatrical adaptations, an impressive example remains the work of Mary Zimmerman, documented in M. Zimmerman, *Metamorphoses: A Play* (Evanston, 2002), whose performance onstage soon after 9/11 is often singled out in collective memory as a catalyst of New York's rebound.

Abbreviations

Anderson	W. S. Anderson (ed.), *Ovid's* Metamorphoses, 2 vols. Norman, OK and London, 1972 and 1997.
Anth. Gr.	*The Greek Anthology*, with an English translation by W. R. Paton. London, 1927.
Anth. Lat.	A. Riese, F. Buecheler, and E. Lommatzsch (eds.), *Anthologia Latina*, ed. (1869–1926); ed. D. R. Shackleton Bailey, 1: *Carmina in codicibus scripta*. Stuttgart, 1982.
Astbury	R. Astbury (ed.), *Marcus Terentius Varro, Saturarum Menippearum fragmenta*. Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana. Leipzig, 2002.
Austin	R. G. Austin (ed.), *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos liber secundus*. Oxford, 1964.
Bentley	R. Bentley in *Edmundi Hedickii Studia Bentliania*, V: *Ovidius Bentlianus*. Freienwalde, 1905.
Bernabé	A. Bernabé, *Poetae Epici Graeci*, Vol. 1. Leipzig, 1988.
Bethe	E. Bethe (ed.), *Pollucis onomasticon*. Leipzig, 1900–67.
Blänsdorf	J. Blänsdorf, 'Entstehung und Kontamination der Doppelfassung Ovid, *Metam.* I, 544–547a', *RhM* 123 (1990): 138–51.
Bömer	F. Bömer (ed.), *P. Ovidius Naso.* Metamorphosen. *Buch I–III*. Heidelberg, 1969.
Bothe	J. H. Bothe, *Friderici Henrici Bothe Vindiciae siue annotationes in P. Ovidii Nasonis Metamorphoseon libros XV*. Göttingen, 1818.
Bubel	F. Bubel, *Euripides.* Andromeda. Stuttgart, 1991.
Buecheler	F. Buecheler (ed.), *Petronii Satirae et liber priapeorum. Adiectae sunt Varronis et Senecae satirae similesque reliquiae*. 3rd ed. Berlin, 1882.

Burman	P. Burman, *P. Ovidi Nasonis opera omnia IV uoluminibus comprehensa. Tomus II: P. Ovidi Nasonis Metamorphoseon libros XV.* Amsterdam, 1727.
*CIL*²	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, consilio et auctoritate Academiae litterarum regiae Borussicae editum*. 2nd ed. Berlin, 1863–.
Courtney	E. Courtney (ed.), *The Fragmentary Latin Poets*. Oxford, 1993.
Crugnola	A. Crugnola, *Scholia in Nicandri Theriaka cum glossis*. Milan and Varese, 1971.
Dangel	J. Dangel (ed.), *Accius. Œuvres (fragments)*. Paris, 1995.
Davies	M. Davies (ed.), *Poetarum melicorum Graecorum fragmenta (PMGF)*. Oxford, 1991.
Denniston	J. D. Denniston, *Euripides:* Electra. Oxford, 1939.
Diggle	J. Diggle (ed.), *Euripides:* Phaethon. Cambridge, 1970.
D–K	H. A. Diels and W. Kranz (eds.), *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. Berlin, 1951–2.
Dodds	E. R. Dodds, *Euripides:* Bacchae. Oxford, 1960.
EM	T. Gaisford (ed.), *Etymologicum magnum*. Oxford, 1848; repr. Amsterdam, 1965.
EO	S. Mariotti (ed.), *Orazio. Enciclopedia Oraziana*, 3 vols. Rome, 1996–8.
Ernout–Meillet	A. Ernout and A. Meillet (eds.), *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine. Histoire des mots*. 4th ed. Paris, 1959.
EV	F. Della Corte (ed.), *Enciclopedia Virgiliana*, 6 vols. Rome, 1984–91.
Faber	T. Faber, *Epistolae. Liber secundus*. Saumur, 1665.
Fantham	E. Fantham, *Ovid:* Fasti, *Book IV*. Cambridge, 1998.
FGrH	F. Jacoby (ed.), *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, 15 vols. Berlin, 1923–59.
Fordyce	C. J. Fordyce, *Catullus*. Oxford, 1961.
Fowler	D. Fowler, *Lucretius on Atomic Motion: A Commentary on* De rerum natura *2.1–332*. Oxford, 2002.
Gentili–Prato	B. Gentili and C. Prato (eds.), *Poetae elegiaci*, 2 vols. Berlin and Boston, 1988 and 2013.
Geymonat	M. Geymonat (ed.), *P. Vergili Maronis Opera*. Corpus Scriptorum Latinorum Paravianum. Paravia, 1973.

Gibson	R. K. Gibson, *Ovid's* Ars Amatoria *III*. Cambridge, 2003.
Gierig	G. E. Gierig (ed.), *P. Ovidii Nasonis Metamorphoses. Recensuit varietate lectionis notisque instruxit G. E. Gierig*. 2 vols. Leipzig, 1804–21.
Goold	G. P. Goold, revised edition of F. J. Miller, *Metamorphoses*. Cambridge, MA, 1977–84.
Gow	A. S. F. Gow, *Bucolici Graeci*. Oxford, 1952.
Graevius	J. G. Graevius (ed.), *Catullus, Tibullus et Propertius*. Utrecht, 1680.
Harder	M. A. Harder (ed.), *Callimachus:* Aetia, 2 vols. Oxford, 2012.
Hartman	J. J. Hartman (ed.), *De Ouidio poeta commentatio*. Leiden, 1905.
Haupt	M. Haupt, *Opuscula III*. Leipzig, 1876.
Haupt–Ehwald	M. Haupt, O. Korn and R. Ehwald, *P. Ovidius Naso.* Metamorphosen, rev. M. von Albrecht, 2 vols. Zürich, 1966.
Heinsius	N. Heinsius (ed.), *Operum P. Ovidii Nasonis editio noua*. Amsterdam, 1659.
Helm	R. Helm, 'Vindiciae Ovidianae', *RhM* 56, 1901, 340–68.
Henry	W. B. Henry, '*P.Oxy.* 4711: Elegy (Metamorphoses?)', in N. Gonis et al. (eds.), *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Vol. 69. London, 2005, 46–53.
Hertz	M. J. Hertz (ed.), *Prisciani grammatici Caesariensis institutionum grammaticarum libri XVIII*. Hildesheim and New York, 1981.
Hirschberger	M. Hirschberger, *Gynaikon Katalogos und Megalai Ehoiai*. Munich and Leipzig, 2004.
Hollis	A. S. Hollis (ed.), *Callimachus:* Hecale. Oxford, 1990.
Hopkinson	N. Hopkinson, *Ovid:* Metamorphoses*, Book XIII*. Cambridge, 2000.
Housman	A. E. Housman (ed.), *Belli Civilis libri decem*. Oxford, 1958.
IG XIV	G. Kaibel (ed.), *Inscriptiones Graecae*, XIV: *Inscriptiones Siciliae et Italiae, additis Galliae, Hispaniae, Britanniae, Germaniae inscriptionibus*. Berlin, 1890.

ILS	H. Dessau (ed.), *Inscriptiones Latinae selectae*. Berlin, 1892–1916.
Jocelyn	H. D. Jocelyn (ed.), *The Tragedies of Ennius*. Cambridge, 1967.
Keil	H. Keil, *Grammatici Latini*, 8 vols. Leipzig, 1855–1923; repr. Hildesheim, 1961.
Kinkel	G. Kinkel, *Epicorum Graecorum Fragmenta.* Leipzig, 1877.
Korn	*P. Ovidius Naso* Metamorphosen *Buch 1–7*, ed. M. Haupt and O. Korn. Dublin and Zürich, 1878.
Kroll	W. Kroll (ed.), *Historia Alexandri Magni (Pseudo-Callisthenes)*. Berlin, 1926.
LIMC	*Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae*. 10 vols. Munich, 1981–99.
Lindsay	W. M. Lindsay, 'Festus', in J. W. Pirie and W. M. Lindsay (eds.), *Glossaria latina*, Vol. 4: *Placidus, Festus*. Paris, 1930, 71–467.
Livrea	E. Livrea (ed.), *Apollonii Rhodii Argonauticon liber quartus*. Florence, 1973.
Maehler	H. Maehler (ed.), *Pindari carmina cum fragmentis*. Leipzig, 1980.
Magnelli	E. Magnelli, *Alexandri Aetoli testimonia et fragmenta*. Florence, 1999.
Magnus	H. Magnus, *P. Ovidi Nasonis Metamorphoseon libri XV: Lactanti Placcidi qui dicitur Narrationes fabularum Ovidianarum*. Berlin, 1914.
Malten	L. Malten, *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 8.1. Stuttgart, 1912.
Marx	F. Marx, *C. Lucilii Carminum reliquiae*, 2 vols. Leipzig, 1904–5.
Massimilla	G. Massimilla, *Callimaco,* Aitia. *Libri primo e secondo*. Pisa, 1996.
Merkel	R. Merkel (ed.), *P. Ovidius Naso,* Metamorphoses. Leipzig, 1881.
Mette	H. J. Mette, *Supplementum Aeschyleum*. Berlin, 1939.
Morel	W. Morel (ed.), *Fragmenta poetarum Latinorum*. Stuttgart, 1963.
Müller	L. Müller (ed.), *Nonii Marcelli de compendiosa doctrina*. Leipzig, 1888.

M–W	R. Merkelbach and M. L. West (eds.), *Fragmenta Hesiodea*. Oxford, 1967.
Norden	E. Norden (ed.), *P. Vergilius Maro.* Aeneis *Buch VI*. 3rd ed. Stuttgart, 1970 (= Darmstadt, 1989).
OCT	Oxford Classical Texts
OLD	P. G. W. Glare (ed.), *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, 2 vols. Oxford, 1968–82.
Owen	S. G. Owen (ed.), *P. Ovidii Nasonis Tristia liber secundus*. Oxford, 1924.
PCG	R. Kassel and C. Austin (eds.), *Poetae Comici Graeci*, 8 vols. Berlin, 1983–2001.
Perutelli	A. Perutelli (ed.), *C. Valeri Flacci Argonauticon liber VII*. Florence, 1997.
Pfeiffer	R. Pfeiffer (ed.), *Callimachus,* 2 vols. Oxford, 1949–53.
P.Herc.	*Papyri Herculanenses*
P.Med.	*Papyri Milanesi*
PMG	D. L. Page (ed.), *Poetae Melici Graeci*. Oxford, 1962.
PMGF	M. Davies (ed.), *Poetarum melicorum Graecorum fragmenta*. Oxford, 1991.
P.Mich.	*Michigan Papyri*. Ann Arbor, 1931–.
Postgate	G. M. Edwards (ed.), *Corpus poetarum Latinarum a se aliisque denuo recognitorum et breui lectionum uarietate instructorum edidit I. P. Postgate. Tom. I quo continetur Enni fragmenta, Lucretius, Catullus, Vergilius, Horatius, Tibullus, Propertius, Ouidius Metamorphoseon libri XV*. Rev. ed. London, 1905.
Powell	I. U. Powell (ed.), *Collectanea Alexandrina: reliquiae minores poetarum Graecorum aetatis Ptolemaicae 323–146 A.C.* Oxford, 1925.
P.Oxy.	B. P. Grenfell, A. S. Hunt et al. (eds.), *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*. London, 1898–.
P.Rainer	H. Bernsdorff (ed.), *Das Fragmentum Bucolicum Vindobonense (P. Vindob. Rainer 29801). Enleitnung, Text und Kommentar*. Göttingen, 1999.
RE	A. Pauly and G. Wissowa (eds.), *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*. Stuttgart, 1894–1980.
Ribbeck	O. Ribbeck (ed.), *Scaenicae Romanorum poesis fragmenta*, Vol. 2: *Comicorum Romanorum Fragmenta: praeter Plautum et Terentium*. Leipzig, 1873.

Riese	A. Riese (ed.), *Ovidi Carmina II. Metamorphoses*. Leipzig, 1889.
Rothstein	M. Rothstein, *Propertius. Die* Elegien. Berlin, 1898.
SH	H. Lloyd-Jones and P. Parsons (eds.), *Supplementum Hellenisticum* (Texte und Kommentare 2). Berlin and New York, 1983.
SHA	Scriptores Historiae Augustae
Shackleton Bailey	D. R. Shackleton Bailey, 'Ovidiana', *CQ* n.s. 4 (1954), 165–70.
Skutsch	O. Skutsch (ed.), *The Annals of Quintus Ennius*. Oxford, 1985.
Slater	D. A. Slater, *Towards a Text of the* Metamorphosis *of Ovid*. Oxford, 1927.
Snell	B. Snell (ed.), *Tragicorum Graecorum fragmenta recensuit Augustus Nauck. Supplementum continens nova fragmenta Euripidea et adespota apud scriptores veteres reperta adiecit Bruno Snell*. Hildesheim, 1964.
Snell–Maehler	B. Snell and H. Maehler (eds.), *Pindari carmina cum fragmentis*. 2 vols. Leipzig, 1984–9.
Soubiran	J. Soubiran (ed.), *Cicéron.* Aratea*, fragments poétiques*. Paris, 1972.
Strzelecki	W. Strzelecki (ed.), *Cn. Naevii Belli Punici carmina quae supersunt*. Leipzig, 1964.
SVF	H. von Arnim (ed.), *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta.* Leipzig, 1903–.
Swoboda	A. Swoboda (ed.), *Nigidii figuli operum reliquiae.* Vienna and Prague, 1889.
TGF	B. Snell (ed.), *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, Vol. 1. Göttingen, 1971; II, ed. R. Kannicht and B. Snell, Göttingen, 1981; III (Aeschylus) ed. S. Radt, Göttingen, 1985; IV (Sophocles), ed. S. Radt, Göttingen, 1977; V (Euripides, I–II), ed. R. Kannicht, Göttingen, 2004.
TLL	*Thesaurus Linguae Latinae.* Leipzig, 1900–.
TRF^{3}	O. Ribbeck (ed.), *Tragicorum Romanorum Fragmenta*, 3rd ed. Leipzig, 1897.
Vahlen	J. Vahlen (ed.), *Ennianae poesis reliquiae*. Leipzig, 1928.
Verheykius	H. Verheykius (ed.) *Antonini Liberalis Transformationum congeries*. Leiden, 1774.

Voigt	E.-M. Voigt (ed.), *Sappho et Alcaeus. Fragmenta*. Amsterdam, 1971.
Wendel	C. Wendel (ed.), *Scholia in Theocritum vetera*. Leipzig, 1914.
Wilamowitz	U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (ed.), *Isyllos von Epidauros*. Berlin, 1886.
Williams	R. D. Williams (ed.), *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos liber tertius*. Oxford, 1962.
Wright	M. R. Wright, *Empedocles: The Extant Fragments*. New Haven, CT, 1981.

Introduction

Alessandro Barchiesi

Territories of Grace, Theatres of Calamity

The gods, as we all know, used to be (or not be) everywhere. The environment of the Mediterranean area was filled with promises and dangers. Its geography is completely segmented. Everywhere there are niches, broken pieces and views enclosed or constrained by obstacles: rocks, mountains, trees, crags, promontories, ravines, grottoes, gulfs, thickets, rivulets, springs and lagoons. The landscape itself appears in episodes.

Individual landscapes offer what have been defined as 'territories of grace'[1] which are also theatres of misadventure: the gods protect the very areas in which they inflict punishment. The sacred inhabits these enclosures and may reveal itself at any time: at first (as we continue to say with irremediable anachronism), everything was pagan. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* invites us to imagine an invisible and disturbing force in these landscapes – one that is prone to show itself capable, in extreme situations, of transfiguring human bodies.[2]

In truth, the Greeks and the Romans were well aware that poetry did not coincide with religious cults or even with the imagination of the sacred. It is not by chance that heroic poetry is usually concerned with periods of the world in which encounters between the human and the divine were frequent and easier. The stories Ovid takes up and transforms are in large part shared, and at times have the social relevance typical of Greek myth, but they are not really binding. They are not objects of faith or orthodoxy and do not foster religious practice in any direct way: rather, they border upon it. The poem comprehensively illustrates the paradox that what we inherit from the past is not so much experience but

[1] In the ecological history of Purcell and Hordern 2000: 403–12.

[2] In the primitivistic view of Jacob Burckhardt, so important for European historicism, metamorphosis is a stage that precedes the religious history of the Greeks (Burckhardt 1971: 7–19; his *Griechische Kulturgeschichte* appeared posthumously in 1898–1902).

a sort of 'unlived reality', an imaginary time and place that no one has truly lived through.

Through a series of historical events that Ovid could not have predicted, his work became a major gateway – at times the only one – to the 'mythological' as a state of mind and a physical space accessible to the artist's eye,[3] as well as the vehicle for what we might in general call the aestheticising of myth.[4] His epic opus is a fundamental contribution to the modern European invention of the classical as a 'second identity' or 'alternative identity'. (This is not, however, the only possible interpretation. It is easy for us to overlook the fact that in the late Middle Ages the poem was considered an instrument of the 'science' of nature, a collection of stories that guaranteed access to the phenomena of the physical universe.) For Western readers who cultivate their own classical heritage, the *Metamorphoses* has a double advantage. It has the dimensions of an *opera-mondo*, an artificial universe in which it is possible to lose one's way; and it also converts the whole physical space of the Mediterranean world (not just the city of Rome with its population of statues and ruins) into a territory of grace and a theatre of misadventure.

Today it is not easy to distinguish the contributions of various historical contexts and different sensibilities. In the minds of modern readers, Ovid is to some extent defined by Titian, Rubens, Poussin and Bernini, as well as by Picasso and Francis Bacon, and by certain avant-garde artists.[5] However, we should also be aware of what kind of world – both imaginary and real – existed prior to the publication of Ovid's text. We shall see that the transformation of 'myth' into 'art' is also an essential part of the *Metamorphoses*, even though for Ovid neither myth nor art had exactly the same meaning that they would have for European artists in the modern and contemporary age.

We might even ask ourselves whether the present-day category of myth *could have existed* without Ovid.[6] Looking at the most useful introductions to Greek myth available today leads to the impression of a substantial continuity with the forms of systematic narration of myth as it developed in Greece, from Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women* down to the *Library* of Apollodorus. Contemporary works like *The Marriage of*

[3] See Segal 1991: 9, who refers to Barkan 1986, and to his own important discussion of landscape as a central aspect of the poem in Segal 1969a.

[4] Cf. e.g. Knoespel 1983.

[5] See, for example (but this is a vast topic), the work on Ovid initiated in the early twenty-first century by Chris Ofili, first in dialogue with Titian, later involving an appropriation of *Metamorphoses* in a Caribbean, postcolonial setting. See Gioni 2014.

[6] Cf. D. C. Feeney's introduction to the poem (Feeney 2004: xxix).

Cadmus and Harmony by Roberto Calasso or Timothy Gantz's *Early Greek Myth* effectively mimic – to the advantage of the modern reader – a total immersion in the Greek tradition. They make no allusion to the life of the myths in the Roman or Romanised worlds, except when Gantz concludes his impressive work by describing the sole descendant of the immortals with decisive political importance for the Romans: Ascanius, the son of Aeneas, from whom Augustus and Rome are descended (in contrast, the compendium of the *Library* concluded with Telegonus, the last son of Odysseus and a hero who, unlike Aeneas, has neither divine parents nor Roman descendants). What these texts do not say is that the classical myth that survives in our collective imagination is a Graeco-*Roman* myth: transnational, transposed and at times simplified or vulgarised, often out of context. It is a myth enjoyed as a spectacle or an aesthetic phenomenon, a myth that descends as much from the world of Roman villas as from Greek traditions. Ovid's poem is essential for understanding how Greek myth was reinvented long before Western culture was ready to emerge.

Traditions and Models

The poem's unitary form,[7] fifteen books of continuous narrative in hexameter, makes it the longest Latin epic preserved (with the exception of the much less frequently read Silius Italicus). It encompasses about 250 stories, a number that varies depending on how we distinguish them. Each one is, either wholly or in part, an episode of transformation that crosses the boundaries between well-defined areas of the natural cosmos (stone, plant, animal, human, god) but also between works of art (such as statues) and real life: they can be the result of transformations, or even be animated and so come alive. It is immediately apparent that no one figure, no matter how privileged, can ensure continuity of action in a poem of this type: not even Jupiter, the supreme god, who appears in several episodes, and is also the first and last to serve as narrator, is present at the beginning and the very end of the narrative in books 1 and 15. In its lack of a figure with a dominant position, the *Metamorphoses* differs significantly from the epics of Homer, Apollonius and Virgil, who were fundamental points of reference for Ovid. None of these poets was bound to any 'unity of action' centred on a single hero, yet in practice

[7] On the programmatic value of the ideas about continuity, cf. the notes on the proemium of book 1.

their poems were often imagined as the exploits, or even 'lives', of Achilles, Odysseus, Jason and Aeneas.

There were, however, some poems in the Greek narrative tradition that could be defined as 'collective' or universal, or catalogue, poems.[8] Historically, the most important of these was Hesiod's *Theogony*, a collection of stories on the origins and genealogy of the gods, which contains various autonomous episodes unified by a continuing attention to the power of Zeus over the divine world and over the cosmos. In Ovid's time there was a tradition (historically an arbitrary one, but functional in teaching and in the memorialisation of the Greek past) of reading this poem as the first in a large saga, which continued with the so-called *Catalogue of Women*, a collective poem centred on the genealogies of Greek heroes and their origins, often resulting from sexual encounters between gods and women of ancient times. In its turn the *Catalogue*, which may have been read as a narrative development of the *Theogony*, concluded with a sort of epilogue that sounded like a prologue to the Trojan War, the traumatic event that put an end to the coexistence of gods and men and concluded the heroic age. This paved the way to what is known as the Trojan cycle, which gave exceptional prestige to Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

Ovid was not only familiar with 'monographic' poems like the texts of Homer and Virgil and the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes, but also larger constructions of plural and multiple poems. Some of them were in fact catalogues of brief episodes: they were still narrative works, but disjointed ones. The *Metamorphoses* occupies an ambiguous position *vis-à-vis* these two traditions. It certainly inhabits a space closer to the *Theogony* and the *Catalogue* than to the *Odyssey* or the *Aeneid*, but it is also true that Ovid is more concerned (sometimes to paradoxical effect) with connections between the various stories: a sense of continuity, even a chronological one,[9] is fundamental to the poem.[10] In addition, the texts of Homer and Virgil – much more than the others – were considered canonical, obligatory references, and were therefore essential for Ovid as he embarked on his attempt to write a new epic. The other great Latin

[8] It is not easy to take a systematic view of the various transformations: Tronchet 1998 is a useful reference. The poet clearly presupposes the existence of mythological repertories in prose (see below), and in fact readers of the *Metamorphoses* have always had recourse to this type of aid. Among the current works of reference, Gantz 1993 and the excellent edition of the *Library* of Apollodorus by Scarpi 1996 are especially noteworthy.

[9] We will return to the problem of chronology later.

[10] On the importance of this dimension for Ovid, see esp. von Albrecht 2000: 302–3; he recalls the notion of 'macro-architecture' as an analogy taken specifically from Roman urban culture.

epic besides Virgil's, the *Annales*, had already been overshadowed by the *Aeneid* when Ovid began to write epic poetry, and Ennius' style was already largely out of fashion. Yet the importance of Ennius to Ovid should not be disregarded, though it often is.[11] Like Ennius, Ovid creates a vast narrative structure that moves from the origins – here, of the natural world, rather than of Rome – to his own time. It begins with a robust naturalistic and cosmological treatment that he takes up again (we do not know whether there was an Ennian precedent) in book 15 (Pythagoras' discourse), accentuating the theme of reincarnation that we know was important in the prologue of the *Annales*. The very number of books in the *Metamorphoses*, unusual in the epic-heroic tradition (normally characterised by four or multiples of four), may have been influenced by the fifteen books of the first edition of the *Annales*. Above all, we must admit that while our knowledge of Ennius is insufficient to prove structural similarities, we cannot exclude them either. If we think of the *Annales* as a chronicle of Rome in verse, year by year, battle by battle, parallels are not immediately evident; but it is probably a great mistake to view Ennius in this way. We use Livy and similar historical texts to place the fragments of the *Annales* in a temporal *continuum*, but this does not mean that the poem had the regular and systematic pace of a historical work.[12] If we compare the episodes that are preserved for us with a hypothetical but reasonable estimate of the total number of lines in the *Annales*, we understand that entire generations must have been passed over in a few words to concentrate on significant moments, or to become lost in digressions of a scientific, theological or philological nature. Ovid's poem does not share this aesthetic, but the two works have at least one common trait that is not found in Homer or Virgil: like Ovid, Ennius combined a collective and totalising project with a series of idiosyncratic and at times openly personal choices. Homer and Virgil tell 'great' stories, but these are also well-defined and of a limited compass; they reveal a global and cosmic ambition chiefly because of the mytho-poetic and symbolic power unleashed by the narrative. In contrast, Ennius and Ovid each created a global, cyclic and collective work, and then inserted a pervasive and ambitious individualism.

The relationship with Homer and Virgil is important but ambivalent. Like all other epic poets that follow in the Roman tradition, Ovid could not avoid these models, which were welded in a sort of imitative matrix,

[11] The best analysis is Hardie 1995.
[12] Elliott 2013 now demonstrates the need for this revisionist approach.

at once individual and generic.[13] Ovid's response is subtle:[14] he incorporates the mythological plots of the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid* into the narrative of his own poem, and they take up a clearly defined space within its vast structure – a long section of books 13 and 14. (Naturally, however, imitations of Homer and Virgil are present and recognisable in the rest of the work, both because these models were incorporated into epic style by Ovid's time and because Ovid practices extensive contamination of models, instead of following the 'official' model for a single episode. The poet never allows a topic or character to restrict and preselect his intertexts: for instance, Euripides' *Medea* is not present exclusively in the Ovidian story dedicated to the figure of Medea, and Catullus 64 is not an intertext that comes into play only when Ariadne is the subject of the narrative.) Rather than dissimulating and watering down his relationship with Homer and Virgil, Ovid constructs a sort of meta-*Odyssey* and his own toy *Aeneid*, creating a new relationship with these epic texts. The reader can now use Ovid to 'access' Homer and Virgil, but in doing so must accept Ovid's imperialism over all of the earlier tradition.

It is natural to wonder whether more specific precedents may have been linked to the theme of 'metamorphosis'. Scholars today know that collections on a similar topic were already circulating in Greek literature before Ovid. We only have indirect or fragmentary information about Hellenistic poets who composed catalogues of mythological metamorphosis. Specifically, we know the names of Nicander[15] (*Heteroioumena*), Boio or Boios (*Ornithogonia*) and Parthenius (*Metamorphoses*).[16] There are

[13] On the difference between individual and generic aspects of literary models, see Barchiesi 2015.

[14] Here there is a vast bibliography, but for an overview see Baldo 1995; Hinds 1998: 104–22 (with further bibliography).

[15] Our information on Nicander depends in good part on a rather controversial reference: the so-called *manchettes*, indications of sources entered by different hands found in the manuscript that preserves the mythological treatise of Antoninus Liberalis (see the edition of M. Papathomopoulos, Paris 1968). It now seems there is a good possibility that the indications are reliable (up-to-date discussion in Lightfoot 1999).

[16] The text of Boio(s) is thought to have influenced Aemilius Macer's poem dedicated to ornithological metamorphoses. At issue is a Latin author whom Ovid knew personally and presumably recalls. Parthenius was a Greek grammarian and poet who worked in Rome during the generation of the Neoterics and the early Augustan era, and who had demonstrable influence on Catullus, Cornelius Gallus and Virgil. Unfortunately, though, the title *Metamorphoses* is not accompanied by certain fragments (but see below). Lightfoot 1999 is essential reading on Parthenius; see also Francese 2001. Today there is in general a growing interest in the Greek poetry of the second and first centuries BCE, as shown especially in the final chapter of Fantuzzi and Hunter 2004, which gives hope for a better understanding of the transition that links the great Alexandrian authors, Apollonius and Callimachus, to the Hellenistic cultural context of Ovid's generation in Rome.

remarkable thematic coincidences with Nicander, although the question of possible compositional and structural similarities remains unresolved. An important difference seems to be Ovid's reduction of the aetiological aspect, or of the localisation of the myth in relation to specific local traces, an element that must have been central for Nicander and would have represented a link of continuity with Callimachus' *Aitia*.[17] As we shall see, Ovid's minimisation and transformation of aetiology can be interpreted as a sort of aggressive Romanisation or de-Hellenisation. As for the mysterious Boios or (fem.) Boio (neither the name nor the gender is certain), we can deduce that s/he had a specific interest in ornithomancy, was less aetiological than Nicander,[18] and seemed less interested in locations (understandably, considering his/her avian poetics).[19] We know even less of Parthenius, who worked in Rome and directly influenced Catullus and Virgil: the metre of his *Metamorphoses* is not certain, nor is it clear that it was, strictly speaking, a poem. The question was reopened with the publication of a surprising fragment of an elegiac papyrus (*P.Oxy*. 69) that preserved mythological stories with recurring themes of metamorphosis. The attribution to Parthenius suggested by the first editor seems destined to be a controversial one,[20] yet the discovery makes us realise once again how large a textual repertory, for us inaccessible, was present in Ovid's library. In any case, all of these Greek poetic works from the second and first centuries BCE are a continuation, in various forms, of the great tradition (somewhat ignored by modern scholars) that opens with the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* and runs without much interruption down to the Augustan era, parallel to the heroic epic and never completely sidelined by the latter's canonisation. Ovid might have had recourse to this tradition as an alternative to the triumphant model of the military epic. It suffices to note the constant importance of women in his narrative (in an almost pre-Ariostan perspective) to show that Ovid needed an alternative tradition to the 'masculine' epic.[21] It is also clear

[17] Forbes Irving 1990: 29–30.

[18] Forbes Irving 1990: 33–6.

[19] Of all the kinds of metamorphosis tales, human-into-bird stories are the ones that usually show less interest in local traces or tokens of the transformation: the core aetiology is typically about a new bird species, or a certain behaviour, and the 'first time' element is normally the first sighting of a new bird.

[20] Henry 2005; see the discussions by Hutchinson 2006; Bernsdorff 2007.

[21] This generalisation is only provisional, and would soon need to be limited in two ways. On the one hand, Homer and Virgil are models of the 'masculine' epic only if the texts are simplified in a rather tendentious way (something that Ovid has a certain interest in doing). On the other hand, as we shall see, the 'functional' role of women in Ovid's poem is rather different from that assigned

that the catalogue and aetiological poems of the Hellenistic era are a reference that only a very sophisticated public would have been able to appreciate, and Ovid certainly wished to avoid presenting himself as a sort of 'new Nicander' or Nicander *redivivus*. His own epic thus openly renounces the role of offering a 'response' to an individual Greek model endowed with perennial and indisputable authority.

Regarding Metamorphosis

It is more difficult to speak in general of metamorphosis 'in the Greek manner', but the attempt to contrast Ovid with an overall image of what metamorphosis represented for Greek poets uncovers two important innovations.[22] The first is an increase of interest in the relationship between transformation and language, and the second the emphasis on a moral problem, either explicitly highlighted or hinted at through an exploration of the boundaries between life and death, and divine punishment and protection.[23]

Paradoxically, Ovid's poetics combines an oblique, Alexandrian Hellenistic[24] approach and the ambition of an *opera-mondo*, a modern epic that nonetheless does not seek to be a handbook on mythography. The interest in passions and perversions is typical of Neoteric poetry, but here it is wedded to a cosmic approach: fostered by natural observation (with recurring use of Lucretius and Empedocles) and comparable in its grandiosity to Virgil's *Aeneid* but also the *Georgics*. This explains how the poem has enjoyed great success even though its complex cultural mix has lost some direct efficacy. In some historical periods, it served primarily to recover an encyclopaedia of myth; in others it was a way of rediscovering the classical 'body'.[25]

It has, understandably, proved very difficult to define the unifying factor or cypher of the *Metamorphoses*.[26] A synthetic definition might be

them in the *Catalogue of Women*. Recent readings of the Ovidian poem from the perspective of gender studies have shifted attention from the construction of an image of women to the construction of masculinity (here reflecting the constructivism of authors like Judith Butler). The most mature study in this direction is Keith 2000. On gender and vision in Ovid's epic see also Salzman-Mitchell 2005.

[22] Cf. Barchiesi 2014 and 2020. Other recent bibliography on metamorphosis includes the groundbreaking Forbes Irving 1990; Frontisi-Ducroux 2003; Hutchinson 2006; Buxton 2009.

[23] Forbes Irving 1990: 37.

[24] On the Alexandrian influence, see Murray 2004; van Tress 2004.

[25] Barkan 1986 eloquently illustrates this evolution.

[26] The alternative is to consider metamorphosis as an external narrative stratagem (as Galinsky 1975 does, but this approach has no traction in more recent scholarship).

that it is a universal mythological history narrated from the perspective of change.[27] However, there is then the challenge of defining these changes in the eyes of the reader. It is possible to read the poem as an explanation of the origins of the reality in which we live, but a systematic approach immediately appears excessive.[28] There is indeed a lot of aetiology,[29] but this seems different from the interpretations that are given by authors such as Euripides, Callimachus and Virgil. The narrator's authority can captivate, but it does not establish a permanent, causative relationship between the transformations and the 'real' world of the reader; the result is rather that of proclaiming the natural world to be magical and the magical world to be natural.[30] However, the selection of stories does respond to a recognisable project: the poet is interested above all in situations in which human existence is pushed to its limits and one must live *in extremis*, driven by passion, violence or suffering. The rhetorical and narrative technique that meets these specific conditions is one that the ancients called *inuentio*:[31] the capacity for 'finding' (finding in a repertory, not creating by innovation) and attributing feelings and words to characters that are adequate for the 'demanding' narrative scenarios, which require reliable and characteristic choices. Given that many of the characters belong to a consolidated mythological tradition, each choice of 'invention' is a competitive act that relates to other versions or scenarios, traditional or potential, of the same myth. (Today this type of work calls to mind script adapters in the film industry – who convert material already available in narrative form, preparing the way for an actual screenplay – rather than resembling the poetics of fiction in realistic European novels). Ovid is the master of ancient narrators when it comes to the selection of material and the *inuentio*, given the difficult rules that he has established. His artistic tendencies suggest a close meditation on models like Euripides,[32] in his attention to the development of feelings and desires, and Callimachus, in his ability to combine the epic tradition with the constant awareness of a narrator who controls the unfolding of the narrative.[33]

[27] So Schmitzer 2001: 92. For an attempt to define the poem as an 'anthropological' project, see also Schmidt 1991.

[28] Such as Holzberg 2002: 119 proposes.

[29] Cf. the important discussion of Myers 1994: a systematic study of aetiology in the Graeco-Roman world in cognitive terms would be very useful.

[30] See Barkan 1986: 19.

[31] As Kenney 1986: xxiii explains.

[32] For a full discussion of the importance of tragedy as a model in Ovid, see Curley 2013.

[33] For some examples of the narrator's presence in the narrative, see Kenney 1986: xxvii–xxviii; Wheeler 1999; Barchiesi 2002b: 181–6; Rosati 2002. All provide examples for the extension of this

The Narrative

The stories all exist on the same plane: none is privileged over the others, even if some are lengthier and more developed, or more memorable. Since there is no hierarchical structure that informs the reader how to organise their perceptions of the relationships between the parts and the whole, each reading of the poem becomes a new exercise in association.[34]

The narrative structure, which requires the poet to engage in an ongoing exercise in narrative 'authority' but absolves him of moral and political 'responsibility',[35] entails a profound reform of the *status* of the characters. Given that the prevalent references in the poem, in terms of style and imagery, point towards Homeric and Virgilian epic, the divergences with regard to heroic figures and their actions become more conspicuous. The figures are more passive than active, and their actions tend not to be finalised. Their destinies provoke limited involvement on the part of the reader, and their objectives never coincide with a tension or a teleology that the narrator imposes on the story: we are thus at the antipodes of Achilles, Odysseus and Aeneas.[36] Actions often culminate in a catastrophe that has a random cause, and diverges from the point of interest of a single story: a hunter loses his way in the woods, a girl decides to pick a flower, a stranger appears at a door, a dog invites a strange curiosity. Not only does it become clear that each single story can wear itself out suddenly, but also that individual identities can be erased with the stroke of a pen. This contrasts with the epic tradition, in which the epic singer wishes to achieve the hero's eternal identity and fame. Traditionally, the singer self-referentially sees his own poetic success in the construction of the hero's lasting fame, and the hero in turn aspires to a *performance* that will itself fulfil a poetic celebration; but in the *Metamorphoses* no one character (with the possible exception of the emperor Augustus) can aspire to a similar privilege. The moments that truly express the poet's ambitions are those, impossible and paradoxical, of metamorphosis, in which the poet is not engaged with an individual or an action that he can render immortal. Instead, he self-reflexively indulges in his own artificial ability to uncover the hybrid, the paradoxical

principle to secondary, intradiegetic narrators. One of the best studies dedicated to the poem's style, von Albrecht 1964, is rich in linguistic observations documenting the active presence of the narrative voice in the poem.

[34] Hopkinson 2000: 9.

[35] Cf. Barchiesi 1999: 113.

[36] Segal 1991: 23–5, 62–3.

and the incredible in a creative and sensual way. This is why Ovid scatters throughout his poem creative figures who are in possession of and possessed by their own art, and who reflect the narrator in various ways, often in an ironic or self-ironic fashion. Striking examples of this include: the labyrinthine, genial and innovative, but also disloyal and plagiarising Daedalus; the sculptor Pygmalion, who is in love with his own work; the virtuoso musician yet perverse lyric poet Orpheus; the necromancer Medea; the visionary scientist Pythagoras; the weaver Arachne, a rebellious and obsessive perfectionist; the garrulous and forgetful, scrupulous and dishonest narrator Nestor; the treacherous phantasmatic impersonator who goes by the name Morpheus;[37] and the frightening and grotesque Medusa,[38] whose female power a hero harnesses to turn his enemies into statues.

The problem that arises from this is evident to readers from all time periods, and even has a cognitive dimension. Each metamorphosis, usually placed at the end of a narrative transition, forces us to re-examine the meaning of that particular story; but the violation of the principle of verisimilitude tends to create a sort of 'shortfall' at the interpretative level – resulting in a variety of responses, allegories being the most difficult to control or dismiss. It is not enough to say that this is a 'medieval' rather than classical response, given that figures with an explicitly allegorical status (such as Envy, Rumour and Dreams) circulate within the poem, and it is hardly a surprise that Ovidian versions of myths (such as those of Narcissus, Pygmalion, Daedalus and Myrrha) continue to feed readings that involve psychological or sexual interpretations.[39] Of secular texts, only Greek tragedy proves to be as fertile for readings that transcend culturally and historically ascertainable expectations.

And Again, Metamorphosis

As we have seen, the whole poem is based on the intuition that above the features that form the usual texture of the natural cosmos (presented in a didactic and 'normalised' way in *Met.* 1.5–79), there exists an invisible force that is always ready to appear. While in exile, Ovid himself placed

[37] His name survives even in the hallucinatory film trilogy *The Matrix*, a fusion of the mass culture of electronic games and a distant absorption of Platonic and Ovidian themes. On the presence of 'creative' figures that lend themselves to auto-allegorical or auto-reflexive tendencies, see esp. Rosati 1979; Rosati 1983; Hinds 1987; Harries 1990; Oliensis 2004.

[38] On Medusa and her central role in Ovid's imagination, see Rimell 2006.

[39] E.g. Janan 2009.

his project in the realms of paradox and fantasy: *inspice maius opus, quod adhuc sine fine tenetur, | in non credendos corpora uersa modos* (*Tr.* 2.63–4, in an apostrophe to that most authoritative reader, Augustus). It is thus possible to establish a connection with the genre of paradoxography, a tradition that would develop for the most part in the prose of the Graeco-Roman imperial era, often viewed as a literature of entertainment and a literature of curiosity rather than authority.[40] At this point, a question of prestige arises: the mythological stories had great cultural relevance, given that the Romans considered knowledge of the Greek pantheon and the biographies of heroes and nymphs to be central to their education, but at the same time the modality of metamorphosis does not enjoy indisputable authority. Its role in Homer, the Athenian tragedies, Plato and Virgil is limited, perceived almost with suspicion or sometimes as excessive fantasy,[41] while it is an important aspect of folklore, in magical tales and 'low' narrative that no Roman poet could recall without self-degradation. After all, Ovid almost never includes stories that do not have a certain Graeco-Roman pedigree; his is a controlled openness to what is alien. Strabo's *Geography*, a great encyclopaedia of the Augustan age, is a worthy parallel. Strabo's treatment of places becomes deeper each time Hellenic culture guarantees a connection between names, landscapes and myths; but when he describes the less-Hellenised lands of Western Asia or North Africa, his geographical discourse becomes rather flat, without myths and aetiologies.[42] With a few exceptions, the *Metamorphoses* includes only stories of Greek ancestry,[43] even when the geographic canvass is expanded thanks to the mythical flights of Phaethon, Medea, Perseus and Daedalus.

Ovid has thus adopted an ambiguous approach: he invites his audience to be fascinated and captivated by the stories but also to exercise forms of self-distancing and even superiority. Under the variety of narrative textures, the poetic discourse appeals to the profound and stable conditions of human life, ultimately the same that form the base of Graeco-Roman religion: to be human means to live with animals, to live under the gods, to live among statues and images. Metamorphosis teaches the reader to project themself and their fantasies into the interstitial areas

[40] Gabba 1981 is an excellent introduction to the whole question.

[41] See e.g. the discussion in Fantham 2004: 7–14. On the Platonic zoogony in the *Timaeus*, see von Albrecht 2000: 324–5.

[42] Clarke 1999: 324–5.

[43] This does not mean that one has to neglect the rich comparative possibilities that West Asian tradition offers, even when there exists no direct mediation or specific path of transmission. There is urgent need for a study of the Latin poem from an Orientalist's perspective.

between these divisions of reality: between the human and the animal, the human and the god, the human and the artificial. Less frequently, understandably, the transitions unite the divine with the animal and the divine with the artificial: the gods are able to impersonate humans, or transform humans into animals, while men create images or remain trapped within them. Man is thus at the centre of the dynamic of metamorphosis. There is significant resistance to the idea of transformation between the divine and the animal: the fusion of gods and animals occurs in only a few very unusual stories, such as those of the changeable Proteus and the exotic figure of Isis, or the story of Europa with Jupiter-as-bull. It is not by chance that the idea of a constant confusion between divine and animal attaches to fantasies about the Egyptian world, beyond the cultural limits of the poem. Furthermore, the Olympian gods hastily condemn the rebel narrators who collect tales of divinity in animal form, female narrators such as the weaver Arachne or the poetess Pierides. Ovid remakes the nocturnal world of the dead, which has an important place in Homer and Virgil, as a realm reserved for impersonators and bogeymen, a sort of underground theatre that is not so different from the parallel world in which the allegorical figures Envy, Hunger, Sleep and Rumour dwell.

Ovid's narrative art exploits a dynamic principle that can be described as lightness and levity (Italo Calvino 1988: 3–30) or incoherence and infantilism (an idea that appears already in ancient criticism).[44] The title *Metamorphoses* is a self-reflexive description of the text's ability to absorb and transform its models.[45] The world of metamorphosis questions the opposition of external and internal; the apparent form has to be violated, or integrated by an incredibly different past to which only the poet has access. The result is that this poem extends the field of the epic to places hitherto little frequented, which in the future would become important to the novel: not only to the erotic but also to the malignant and the mean, to pretence, to random misunderstanding, to gossip, to madness as degradation, to obsessive lust, to illusion and regression.

The most evident proof that Ovid has taken the concept of metamorphosis to its utmost limit is that the rules of the game change as the reading proceeds, and the poem enters into conflict with its own guiding principles. Do souls transmigrate (Pythagoras' discourse in *Met*. 15 with its universal revelations) or do bodies and forms change (the mythological poem)? Can the four elements that constitute reality guarantee order

[44] Morgan 2003.
[45] Kilgour 1990: 28–45.

or does their instability make them sources of unpredictable flux? Does time bring about change in things little by little, *nec species sua cuique manet*, or can an instant of absolute intensity dissolve one form into another, as in the typical metamorphosis related in this poem? This is not the same interpretation of reality: even if it is true that Empedocles – an influence that Ovid's critics at times forget, despite his influence on Hellenistic epic, notably Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica*[46] – had combined a physical world based on the four elements and a metamorphic vision of reality, with sublime and grotesque visual effects that in some places anticipate Ovid's vision. The frequent evocations of Lucretius[47] have an unsettling effect, given that the rational theory that should unify and motivate the variety of phenomena is absent. Ovid thus takes up the ability to observe the real world and the intensity of sensations from Lucretius, but then removes the scientific argumentation that should explain and control the miraculous and the fantastic. Lucretius' usual gesture when faced with the wondrous is to challenge it ('be not surprised that … I will show you the reason, and guide you beyond your fears'), whereas Ovid's choice is a challenge or transgression in the face of the daily routine: 'you all know the plant sacred to Apollo – I will show you that it used to be a girl in extreme danger'.

Metamorphosis offers an emotive analogy with the creative process: in working with ancient poetry, we should never forget that the origin of our term 'poet' – Latin *poeta*, Greek *poiētēs* – expresses a strong unity between poetry and 'making'. Given that in the poem metamorphosis appears as 'making' in a profound sense, producing new objects and artefacts or new species and natural formations, the effect is to confuse the boundaries between natural and artificial, and between poetic representation and its object. Even from this perspective, we discover analogies between the poet as narrator/creator of metamorphosis and the artist who transforms material reality (the famous stories of Daedalus, Pygmalion and weavers such as Arachne).[48]

Given that the theme of the poem is transformation of what has been created, we can also describe the process of reading it as a 'journey of

[46] Hardie 1995 rediscovered the importance of Empedocles for Ovid, without knowing the impressive texts of the 'new Empedocles', discovered later and edited by Martin and Primavesi 1999.

[47] There is still no systematic study. Hardie 2002b: 150–63 is fundamental for his methodology, which develops certain aspects of his study on Lucretius in Virgil (Hardie 1986); see also Hardie 2009; Schiesaro 2014.

[48] On the poem's self-reflection see the systematic study in Spählinger 1996; Zgoll 2004. For the methodology, see esp. Hinds 1998.

words through the person' of the reader,[49] as though the book were reading our body while our mind reads the book. Few literary works appeal with such energy to the assumption, elsewhere inert or underused, that we as readers have a body and read with it – with all of the body, not just the eyes and mind, or just the ears, eyes and mind.[50]

Metamorphosis allows perception of the creative process in two senses. It teaches the reader to perceive the young girl Daphne being transformed into a tree as a crisis of narrative verisimilitude. In addition, it teaches the reader to perceive nature as produced by stories, and thus the laurel tree as the result of Daphne's story. In sum, Ovid has chosen a theme for this work that involves both the creative process and its reception. Here it is possible to explain why 'metamorphosis' has now become a sort of cliché in avant-garde art of the modern era, even beyond specific allusions to Ovid or without any awareness of an Ovidian precedent.

The treatment of metamorphosis is mimetic.[51] A large part of ancient literature depends on mimesis of the natural world but, paradoxically, what is at issue here is the mimesis of metamorphosis (i.e. of an 'unnatural' nature), so that nature is apprehended in strange and incredible transitional forms. The fundamental paradox is that the narrator is able to involve his readers in a realistic way, even eliciting a physical identification in addition to a relatable point of view, at the crucial points of the story where credibility and verisimilitude come into crisis: the moments of actual metamorphosis. It *can* seem that this conflict is only a projection due to our modern culture, given that concepts like 'realism' and 'natural law' are essentially more modern than ancient. Nevertheless, if one examines how metamorphosis is treated in ancient literature and literary theory, it is worth noting that this is the moment most commonly identified as 'fantastic' *par excellence*. This is the fantastic marked by suspension of verisimilitude, the gap between natural and supernatural. It is treated with diffidence or responded to with 'defensive' strategies in the great classics of epic and tragedy,[52] and classified as a theme neither heroic enough for high literature nor believable enough for many kinds of artistic representation. Despite the obvious differences of period and culture, the effect

[49] Calvino 1981: 169.

[50] Note also Segal 2005, a stunning essay available in Italian as the preface to the first Italian edition of our commentary.

[51] For a view of the whole, see esp. Feldherr 2002; Barchiesi 2020. For a comparative perspective, see esp. Barkan 1986; Skulsky 1981; Warner 2002; Kilgour 1990. All of these are works of considerable theoretical sophistication and interdisciplinary character.

[52] Cf., with considerable differences of point of view among them, Griffin 1977; Hardie 1992; Feeney 1993; Laird 1993; Zgoll 2004.

of this conflict between antagonistic conventions of reading is not really so different from what we generally call 'magic realism' (a literary trend that furthermore often shows careful attention to the Ovidian model).[53] As in contemporary magic realism, the balance between these forces is often achieved through re-enforcing the presence of the narrator in the text. The narrator becomes indispensable precisely because his art as manipulator and tightrope walker is the sole instrument that the reader has to bring order to a world unregulated by stable and shared conventions. It is not by chance that magic realism often employs cosmopolitan or postcolonial settings, which bring with them a sense of bewilderment and loss of identity. By establishing that metamorphosis is the sole structural law of his poem, Ovid does not let his readers forget how much metamorphosis, by its very nature, is not subject to laws.

This results in the extraordinary adventure of Ovid's text: the poem is a producer of readings that often appear deviant but are motivated by a dynamic that began to arise from the poem's composition and its first readings. As we have seen, the resistance of the narrated world to rationalisation and to predictability functions as a trigger for new readings that 'regenerate' the text in different historical contexts, and at times add a remarkable degree of political ambiguity in addition to poetic ambivalence. The essential revelation that reality is fluid and changeable invests the reader with a potentially liberating and subversive message; but the poem also has a harsh, objective vision of power relations that teaches acceptance of the resulting stability and submission to order after each metamorphosis.[54] Even if we shift our attention to the divine, we do not obtain any unequivocal answers. The gods in Ovid are absolute masters but they are also irresponsible, and the poem does nothing to justify their rule of the world with any law or shared convention.

Bodies in the *Metamorphoses* are usually very beautiful and attractive, even when not described, due to the pervasive analogy with the expressive conventions of Greek art. The words 'god', 'goddess', 'nymph' and 'hero' are sufficient to denote an admired and desirable physicality, although in this poem the revelation often occurs in situations of precarious balance or metamorphic distortion: their shape is revealed during transition to other forms. The world of the ugly and the grotesque has

[53] Space allows me only to mention Salman Rushdie, Lawrence Norfolk, Christoph Ransmayr, David Malouf and Alex Shakar. On these narrators, see e.g. Kennedy 2002; Ziolkowski 2005; Hinds 2004 (esp. on Shakar, who is perhaps the sole significant contemporary author to have escaped the surprising 'Ovidian gazeteer' of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries by Theodore Ziolkowski).

[54] Habinek 2002: 54–5 sees only one side of the ambiguity.

considerable space in Ovid, in contrast to the canonical epic, where it is usually relegated to a sort of marginal mythological *intermundia*: the world of Hunger and Envy and certain minor, comic divinities.

Romanising, Hellenising

As we have noted, some phenomena arising from the poem's reception are independent of the work's original significance, such as the genesis of 'the pagan' and 'the classical'. But not all. Some have roots in the cultural conditions of Augustan Rome: ideas and constructs of Hellenising and Romanising are fundamental for an interpretation of this work. Precisely because this Graeco-Roman unity is at the foundation of our construction of the classical, through schooling and through the study of antiquity, we must beware of it. Contributions by authors such as Virgil, Ovid and Cicero direct us towards this Graeco-Roman synthesis, but they are also mystifications of the world around them, idealised worlds in which reconciliation, translation and assimilation replace conflict, disharmony and lack of mutual understanding. In reading Ovid, it is essential to remember that 'Greek' and 'Roman' (both, *inter alia*, artificial and troubled constructs) are not two stable essentials set in a kind of reciprocal osmosis: rather, the poem itself invites the reader to work on the analogies and the differences, never forgetting how much still divides the two cultures.[55] From this perspective, it might be possible to understand the root of one of the most negative critiques of the poem ever shared. On the momentum of the new national and popular taste in Germany at the time, Herder, who did not share Goethe's deep interest in the metamorphic world and its natural 'science', scornfully declared that Ovid was unbearable, neither Greece nor Rome: 'There is no immediate truth in this poem: here there is neither Greece, nor Italy, neither a primitive world, nor a civilised one; rather, everything is mannerism, imitation of what already existed, what you would expect from a mind educated in excess'.[56] As has often been the case, the most aggressive criticism of Ovid attacks what lies at nothing less than the heart of Ovid's poetic art and intentions: he is an infantile poet (Quintilian), offers neither Greece nor Italy (Herder), only humiliation of the human condition (Hegel).[57] With enemies like this, who needs friends?

[55] See the important observations in Blumenberg 1996 (cited by Schmitzer 2001: 140).
[56] Johann Gottfried Herder, qtd. in Goethe 1957: 413.
[57] Hegel 1970: 39.

The poem marshals mythical material that the Romans did not fully conceive of as their own and original, and for this reason an 'aesthetic distance' arises *vis-à-vis* the 'internal' experience that has been attributed, not without idealisation, to the Greeks and to their 'open air museums'. This disconnect between Greek myth and contemporary exploitation is one of the matrices of what we might call 'the European fantasy'. It becomes clear that the element of Ovid's work that has often been incriminated and dismissed by supporters of serious and engaged literature (i.e. the systematic 'aestheticisation' of the real) has its roots in a very precise historical condition. Like other poetics, it mystifies and inevitably produces mannerism and convention; but it is also capable of expressing social and material conditions that call for space and attention. It is no surprise that Ovid's cosmos, with its aesthetics of pleasure and cruelty, of nature and artifice, has been so fruitful for the European conception of a 'second identity' to juxtapose with the Christian one: a public reserve of symbols and images alongside the continuity of religious and national traditions. In the modern world, this reserve was then used to implement trends in art, spectacle and psychoanalysis, with their attempts to reshape the collective imaginary.

Scholars of Greek myth know only too well that these stories are only officially ways of imagining an immeasurable and distant past; they are also, in fact, ways of giving meaning to a changeable present.[58] Ovid adopts this double functionality with an important modification: now the changing present no longer belongs to the same culture that fostered the myth. At issue now is the Rome of Augustus, not the Athenian *polis*: myth should continue to act and interact while maintaining awareness of its uprooted and translated nature. It is significant that the treatment of space in the *Metamorphoses* is an illustration of this same logic: the human world 'begins in Greece', and there are no Italian stories until halfway through the poem's third pentad. At this point, there is a series of narratives of journey and dislocation (Aeneas, but also Circe, Glaucus, Virbius, Pythagoras and Aesculapius), which shows how Greek culture was transferred to Italy and Rome and transformed. In short, Hellenisation and Romanisation are not only historical contexts that need to be recreated, but also active functions of the poem's structure.

With notable irony, the text addresses and consults readers who are masters of the Greek language, and shows them how it is still possible

[58] Cf. e.g. Buxton 2004: 129.

for details that no longer work linguistically (due to the passage from Greek to Latin) to function on a narrative level. The stones of Deucalion become people even if in Latin the linguistic connection between 'stones' and 'people', essential to the Greek narrative of the Flood, no longer exists (see the note on *Met.* 1.400). Lycaon becomes a *lupus*, and the natural linguistic connection between Lykaon and *lykos* ('wolf') is no longer necessary (see the note on 1.216–19). The poetics of the *Metamorphoses* allows a self-sufficient perspective, entirely Latin, of the narrated phenomena, just as it authorises the well-read reader to ponder *in absentia* upon whatever was 'lost in translation'. In this light, it is important to take the strange nature of the title *Metamorphoses* seriously. It is not a coincidence that the poem appears with not only a Greek title, but also a Greek title that does not have a stable correspondent in Latin, certainly not in poetic language. In short, the title already contains the very tension that Ovid seeks to establish between the necessity for Greek models and the desire to supplant them.[59] The first lines of *Met.* 1 are revealing: the title itself reappears 'metamorphosed' in a new type of Latin vocabulary, *in noua … mutatas … formas | corpora.* This language is simple and clear in appearance, but subject to a grammatical twisting that highlights the presence/absence of the Greek model.[60] A few lines later we discover that beginning a story of the world's origin requires a Greek word, a word that can only exist in Latin through paraphrase and that someone used in the past (but when? Certainly not at the time of primeval chaos), which then remained definitive: *quem dixere Chaos*.[61]

We are then faced with the intriguing question of whether and how the coordinates of narrative change when the episodic plot of the poem is transferred from Greece to Italy. As we shall see shortly, the question can better be confronted when we consider the chronology to which the whole poem is subject, including the earliest human eras and the more recent chronicles of the Roman state. For now, we may observe that metamorphosis does not seem indifferent to change of place. It has been noted that only in the part of the poem set in Italy does metamorphosis

[59] As Ziolkowski 2005: 75 observes.

[60] The key word, *forma*, is not only a translation but also a sort of anagram (Ahl 1985: 59) of the Greek word inscribed in the title, *morphe*.

[61] In truth this kind of bilingual gloss is not at all typical of Ovid's poem, which rather employs the strategy of 'as the Greeks say'. Perhaps it is not incidental that the bilingual gloss, with insertion of a Greek lexeme and a Latin explanation, is typical of the now antiquated epic of Ennius.

embrace positive, upward change.[62] Following the great variety of Greek stories, often treated in terms of dehumanisation, humiliation and transgression, there is a selection of episodes apparently dominated by the idea of transition to a higher entity, with a growing appeal to the idea of apotheosis.

Metamorphosis allows the poet to pass from an ideal of static variety, Alexandrian *poikilia* (collection, anthology, books made of separate contrasting sections), to one of dynamic, cinematic transformation in which each story can be read as a transformation of other stories.

In *Met*. 1.32 an unknown primary creator establishes a network of boundaries. However, immediately following this initial foundation, which corresponds to a sort of centuriation of the cosmos, a violation of these boundaries pervades the entire work. The text is not really a linear sequence. The metaphor of metamorphosis proliferates through the text, creating relationships that a continuous and progressive plan could not control. Pythagoras' discourse in *Met*. 15, a discussion of metamorphosis that is itself a non-linear narrative, is final proof of this.[63] Water circulates everywhere and wrecks everything, as in a flood, and the stories bleed into, feed and 'poison' other stories.[64] Stories are full of other stories, and the idea of individual identity itself frequently becomes problematic in this poem. Perhaps the human mind is truly like a palimpsest of reincarnations (as Pythagoras argues in *Met*. 15). And yet, while change comes to sweep everything away, the poet guarantees no single transcendent truth. As has often been observed, his own final metamorphosis into a fiery spirit that flies higher than the stars actually means that the final outcome is the transformation of Ovid himself into his own books.[65] To the extent, however uncertain, that the poem guarantees the permanence of the past, only the authority of the mythological past can represent a stable value to be preserved.

It is useful to make a shortlist of these violated boundaries, which in practice corresponds to a sort of analytical (or pathological) index of the whole poem. An analysis of Ovid's myths leads to a crisis of the most elementary oppositions that arise in any culture: divine and human, human and animal, nourishment and consumer, I and another, subject and object, false and authentic, masculine and feminine, living and dead, incest and love, family relationship and alienation, marriage and war,

[62] Porte 1985: 175–98.
[63] Kilgour 1990: 28–9.
[64] Kilgour 1990: 32.
[65] Barkan 1986; Feeney 1991: 249.

artifice and nature. This is not a question of a search for perversion for its own sake, nor of occasional choices, for the same transgressive dynamic occurs in the work's poetics. At a literary level, the most refined repercussion of this tendency is a calling into question of the line that divides imitator and model: the new poet sets himself up as the model of his own predecessors. All in all, the poem makes a strong contribution to the discovery of literature as a virtual dimension in which the transgression of borders can be explored, and leaves the task of controlling the border between literature and the order of reality to others. We find ourselves facing two modes of thinking about the imaginary in literature, one that is familiar to us – 'in this world, anything can happen' – and one that is rather typical of the mentality of antiquity – 'only what happened in the past is worthy of being handed down at any price'.

Erudite Composition

The *carmen perpetuum* progressively supplants its own models, and the perception of a text that transforms its own models becomes the perception of a text that transforms itself.[66] After reading the *Metamorphoses*, it is difficult to return to single canonical models, since Ovid has successfully given us a world-encompassing work in which Medea and Circe are now Ovidian Medea and Ovidian Circe, providing intertextual references to each other.

In truth, the work is saturated with scholarly learning, even if it aspires to substitute its own models. Ovid uses precise and detailed mythographic sources, and needs them much more than most other poets do. Seeing the dimensions of his project and the constant recourse to chronological, geographical and genealogical cross-references, we might think that he did not disdain using prose manuals and epitomes.[67] On the other hand (this should be clearly stated, as scholars often shun formulating a general principle, even a negative one), the poet does not 'follow' *any one source* for *any individual story*. He treats individual sources with absolute freedom, and seeks accredited versions from his sources but also variants that conflict with them.[68] He may well have consulted something systematic and not very different from the *Library* of Apollodorus, which

[66] Not by chance does the *Metamorphoses* provide the inspiration for the analysis of Hinds 1998: 104–22, which concludes that this poem can be posited as a provocative inversion of imitation and model: Ovid's *Aeneid* and Virgil's *Metamorphoses*.
[67] Hinds 1996 highlights this auto-referential tendency.
[68] Cameron 2004: 269–70.

is the best of what has survived down to us in its complete vision of Greek mythology, and used this 'textbook-like' model as a framework. As we shall see more clearly shortly, however, it is not Ovid's goal to impose upon himself mythography's typical baggage – namely Greek genealogies with all their cultural significance.

It is a mistake to scorn erudite and didactic production when trying to understand Ovid's project. His style and artistic interests certainly have nothing in common with mythographic treatises, but his poem does presume a world where real repertories or dictionaries of metamorphosis circulate. These include a Greek papyrus that preserves fragments of a repertory of metamorphosis,[69] as well as hypomnemata, scholia, commentaries, mythographical periphrases, catalogues and registers, and selections of categories and questions, which may seem odd to us but are useful for teaching and symposiastic conversation: Which gods turned into animals? Which women were raped by which gods?[70] The reinscribing of Ovid in the delirious poetic of Lawrence Norfolk's novel *Lemprière's Dictionary* (1991) seems at this point almost an obligation.[71] In his own time, the poet anticipated and manipulated the type of erudite and professional curiosity that acted as an intermediary for 'cultivated' reading of Greek models such as Callimachus and even Homer himself.[72]

Like Callimachus and other Hellenistic poets, Ovid has a passion for narrative voices embedded in the primary story. This is also a significant trend in the *Odyssey* and in the *Aeneid*, but in Homer and Virgil the structural and functional control exercised by the primary narrator on the narrating figures is much greater. There is usually some important integration for the development of the action, or at least a flashback that serves to cover an earlier episode in the story's development. In Ovid, however, the proliferation of internal narrators escapes a centralised logic. Given that the poem at least potentially embraces any event from the origin of the cosmos to the catasterism (placement among the stars) of Julius Caesar, the use of narrative recuperations, or analepsis, has no functional justification. The poet has a clear interest in the act of narrating and places it at the centre of the epic action, while the distinction between the main plot and episodic digressions becomes blurred.

[69] The papyrus was edited by Timothy Renner, cf. Cameron 2004: 42–3.
[70] Obbink 2004; Cameron 2004: 238 ff., 261 ff.
[71] On Lawrence Norfolk's remarkable novel, see e.g. Ziolkowski 2005: 190–2.
[72] The titles of two papers by Sergio Casali are significant here, also for other Ovidian texts: 'Ovidio e la pre-conoscenza della critica' (1998); 'Apollo, Ovid and the Foreknowledge of Criticism' (1997–8).

For an overall sense of the poem's development, it is necessary to have a kind of double vision, looking at the variety of themes and transitions against a sort of erudite *apparatus* that nonetheless remains implicit.

Genealogy, Chronology: Order and Disorder

The attempt to discover an underlying order in what has always appeared a capricious and irrational interweaving of stories itself has a history that is representative of a certain evolution of classical studies. In its first phase, straddling the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there were very simple attempts to identify a single ancient source for Ovid, using exactly the same methods that were being used with histories, mythographies and Atthidographies. Though later long disregarded, the result of these studies was not insignificant and was in any case better than those of certain works that followed (which tended to divide up the text according to type of 'literary' models or dominant tone). This kind of study led to an initial understanding that Ovid – and probably any Roman interested in the past – was greatly influenced by the type of chronological and synchronic construction articulated by Castor of Rhodes (in the second quarter of the first century BCE), which was in turn promptly welcomed, in a decisive moment for Roman culture, perhaps by Cornelius Nepos and certainly by Varro. If this important discovery[73] was then received with a certain coldness, it was probably due to three separate difficulties. The first was the reluctance of modern scholars to understand the scale[74] of a 'multicultural' chronological system, which allows for continuity between myth and history and bridges diverse civilisations with various calendars and systems of annual calculation, as well as how complicated it is to achieve (we can get an idea of the effort involved through the comparative tables of Jerome and his version of Eusebius' *Chronicon*). The second is that the approach to Ovid's poetry had shifted from source criticism to a formal and often formalistic evaluation of the text: the tonal and emotional connections between episodes counted for more than the erudite framework. The third problem, less easily dismissed, is that all evidence points to the narrator of the *Metamorphoses* 'scoffing' at such a chronological framework: for example, by offering the reader false indications; by

[73] On the history of research in this area, see the careful re-examination of Cole 2004 (which I use also in the following part of this discussion) and Cole 2008.

[74] Feeney 2007 operates a definitive re-evaluation of this research and of its importance for Roman culture.

introducing inversions, bifurcations and contradictions; and by frustrating the attempts of various characters to bring order and clarity to the past of their own world and genealogy.

This last consideration, however, should not be insurmountable, if we begin by accepting its validity. To start with, scholars no longer attempt to grant source criticism a weight that it cannot bear. Just as no one episode in Ovid has a single poetic source, the entire structure of the work does not *depend* on any one master source, handbook or recognisable reference text. If anything, Ovid's work incorporates and supplants these models. What is recognisable is rather an 'empty' structure that could be appropriated and transformed in various ways: chronological and synchronic tables. If we start from the idea that Castor of Rhodes and Varro provide the poem's framework, we can develop a sort of ideal structure of the work, although this could also lead us to take this structure somewhat too seriously and attribute it an explicative power that it does not have.[75] It should, however, then be legitimate to start off from Ovid's numerous ironies and focalise his deconstruction of the chronographic tradition. The analysis of the structure of the *Metamorphoses* then becomes the analysis of an unravelling, of the transformation of order into dissonance. In this sense, more recent studies of the problem of time in Ovid[76] have shown themselves to be superior to their positivistic predecessors. These more recent scholars *do* work on reconstructing the 'respectable' chronology that underlies the poem, but they are just as interested in the poet's disrespectful manipulation of this framework. The important conclusion is not that Ovid is imprecise with or indifferent to history and myth *because he is a poet*, but that he is interested in using a global reconstruction of human chronology, and in bringing his readers to participate in this sense of time, because this interest ties in with the project of narrating stories that introduce chaos and illusionism to a world of parallelisms and correspondences laboriously mastered by ancient scholars.

The reader's task is therefore twofold. He or she should participate in an idea of a global chronology that weaves together myth and history,

[75] Here the 'serious' attempt of Ludwig 1965 has not had stable results, even if it provides useful comparisons between Ovid and the strategy of 'universal histories', a genre that was widely expanding in the first Augustan period. It is not by chance that Ludwig's attempt was followed by the structural proposition of Otis 1970, which was much more attentive to the poetic fabric and rather indifferent to the historical-mythographic plot.

[76] Feeney 1999 opened the way, showing by example the importance of Varro's *De gente populi Romani*; more recently, see research by Cameron 2004, Cole 2008 and Farrell's forthcoming work on mythography and chronology in Ovid, *Ovid the Mythographer*.

Greeks and Romans, but should also appreciate the multiple ironies generated by the narrative's progression. Both of these positions reflect the pride of a civilisation that perceives itself as mature: on the one hand, the laborious control of time through a multinational mytho-history, and on the other the condescension of someone able to pass through a narrative labyrinth where chronological signals appear and disappear in an instant.

Even the most ancient project available to Ovid that attempted to consolidate mythical memory, Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women*, was not at all the simple, repetitive and linear composition that we might initially imagine. Studies of the *Catalogue* have recognised for some time that genealogical organisation inevitably leads to a marked narrative complexity. Each tree of a great family originates from mythological rapes committed by gods on women of heroic times, but in progressing along a rectilinear path, bifurcations, diagonal fastenings, backward turns and digressions arise.[77] The *Catalogue* was read not only as a repertory of family relationships among the Greek clans and their gods, but also as a narrative laboratory, a source of inspiration for Hellenistic poetry. Regarding this tradition, it is already possible to discern an antagonistic and ironic aspect of Ovid's re-elaboration: a certain surprising hostility against the 'natural' theme of birth and reproduction circulates throughout his poem. As one scholar has wittily noted,[78] when reading his stories of gods, heroes and men from the world's origins to the present, we have trouble imagining how on earth families and peoples have been able to propagate and proliferate. What we are offered is a sort of catalogue of women stripped bare of regular births and genealogies. The royal dynasties appear shattered and overwhelmed by abnormal events. Their pregnancies are undermined by transformations and prodigies, and their loves lead to incest, hermaphroditism, transsexuality, homoeroticism, violence, vows of chastity, conjugal tragedies and flights into the imaginary. Entire peoples are born of stones, dragons' teeth, ants and giants' blood. Nothing in this poem seems to be of greater interest than the anomalous, and family fertility usually leads to extermination and solitude.[79] This is certainly a choice in favour of the marvellous and

[77] For the history of the recognition of these structural complications on the basis of papyrus fragments, see esp. West 1963: 75 ff.; West 1985: 34–5; Rutherford 2000; Hunter 2005. The importance of this fragmentary poem for Ovid is now fully recognised in Ziogas 2013.

[78] Burrow 1999: 99–100.

[79] For a few observations on how the expectation of a continuous genealogy is avoided or made the subject of irony, see the notes on *Met*. 1.163–239, 400, 481–2, 568–746, 658–60, 748–50.

the paradoxical, but it is also a way of reversing the positive tally of the genealogical tradition.

An important example is offered by a human character of prodigious longevity who straddles different heroic generations and acts as a link between them. In *Met.* 12.193–5 the very aged Nestor no longer remembers the exact chronology of the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, although he is the long-lived hero (cf. *Met.* 12.186–8 *nunc tertia uiuitur aetas*) whose testimony connects *Met.* 8 and 12. And yet the wedding of Peleus and Thetis is the decisive event for the relationships among gods, heroes and mortals.[80] So the fallibility of human memory results in the need of a handbook that encompasses the whole mesh of heroic genealogies.

Castor's five royal lists – Assyrian (2123–862 BCE), Sicyonian (2123–1162), Argive-Mycenaean (1856–1105), Athenian (1556–1069) and Trojan-Latin (1181–509) – represent a scientific, motivated attempt to tie together both the heroic age and human history (and chronology) and the entire transformation of space and power in the Mediterranean. Working in light of Pompey's ambitious reshaping of Asia through conquest, and under the pressure of triumphant Roman imperialism, Castor managed to offer the Romans a synthesis that made it possible to immediately start new work – as Nepos and Varro but also, in a certain sense, Virgil, Ovid and even Augustus did. Its construction was welded to the *annales* of the Roman state and to the *fasti consulares*, offering a graphic demonstration of how a plurality of times and nations was fed into the Roman appropriation of time and space, which thus became truly (through imperial annexation) common to various peoples. Of Castor's lists, two stand out as truly tendentious, because they were not found either in legends or in traditional imagination. These are the list of Sicyon, necessary for practical reasons but without earlier occurrences in heroic Greek myth, and which Ovid in fact avoids, and the Trojan-Latin list, an artificial and fraudulent product of the need to insert the origins of Rome into the main fabric of 'common, universal' chronology, and to reconcile the by then vested dates of the destruction of Troy and the foundation of the Urbs. In a twist of fate caused by political destiny, the second list soon became not filler but a foundational ideological element when the Julian family rose to prominence after Pompey the Great, placing the political regime in Rome and the Roman world under the sign of the 'Trojan

[80] On the importance of the connection between Catullus 64 and the *Catalogue*, cf. Pontani 2000; specifically on Ovid and the ironies of memory, cf. Musgrove 1998, which on page 226 recalls the conflict between Apollonius, Callimachus, Ennius and Catullus; Zumwalt 1977.

dynasty'. Furthermore, in a spectacular intercultural coup, Castor had written his lists to engage directly with the Roman *fasti consulares*, which allowed for identification 'in the Roman manner' of the years from 508 BCE[81] down to the point of chosen arrival, the 'Pompeian' deadline of 61 BCE. The political significance of this revival of Greek chronography should not be undervalued. Castor of Rhodes' objective was to bring history from the royal chronicles of Assyria to Greece and ultimately to join these to the consular lists and Roman *fasti*. In his late work *De gente populi Romani*, Varro synthesised parts of Castor's work in four books, and we know that in his view the transfer of knowledge and customs from one people to another was important (Serv. *Ad Aen*. 7.176 *quid a quaque traxerint gente per imitationem*). Judging from its fragments, the content of the treatise denotes an interest in reckless temporal connections, such as those made by leaping over entire epochs and connecting Rome with the most diverse civilisations. Furthermore, we can discern a hardly innocent interest on the part of its author, who was writing between the periods of Caesar and Octavian: the fragments mention the apotheosis of exceptional monarchical figures from earlier Greece and Rome, reviving the tradition of attributing divine honours to those who had founded or regenerated a community.[82] One particularly significant fragment (Arn. *Adv. nat.* 5.8) allows us to understand that Varro mentioned not only the chronology of the past in his work, but also the moment of his work's publication: 43 BCE, the year of the consuls Hirtius and Pansa, is thereby measured against the date of Deucalion's flood. A remarkable coincidence links this same date to the chronology of Ovid's work, given that the poet promises to lead us from the world's origins to 'his own' time (*Met*. 1.4), and that the final event represented in the epic is the appearance of the Julian comet in the year 43 BCE, which is also, in a further interesting coincidence, the year of the birth of Publius Ovidius Naso.

In Ovid's poem, kings and genealogies appear and disappear in a capricious way, but their connection with the 'semi-divine' families arisen

[81] The one datable event of Roman history included in the poem, the transfer of Aesculapius to Rome, is ironically preceded by an appeal to the Muses, the only one in the whole work; and the calendar date of the temple's foundation, 1 January, acts as a trigger for the start of the great work of Ovid's mature period, the *Fasti* (cf. Barchiesi 1994a: 254).

[82] Ross Taylor 1934, in showing *en passant* that Ovid, like Varro, gives space to traditions of Pythagoreanism that connect Greek and Roman cultures, has shown that Ovid, like Varro, proposes a unique combination of Greek and Roman elements in the unitary space defined by Castor's chronography (cf. Cole 2004).

from the passions and rapes that bind gods to mortal women remains significant. This implicit fabric of genealogical relations becomes more tendentiously central as Ovid moves from negotiating with Varro to the *Aeneid*, now treating Italy, Rome and the Julian family.

We need to see the extent to which Ovid's treatment of genealogies and chronology is directed towards a sort of comparative appropriation of Hellenism.[83] As we have already noted several times, the Greeks reorganised their mythological patrimony according to geographical and temporal categories, not only to empower their control of time and space, but also to offer a stable framework for their growing (and laborious) sense of global 'Hellenicity'. Ovid's adaptation of these structures cannot be considered a choice that functions only for artistic or explanatory purposes. What is lost in the new structure is the yield of each individual story in terms of an overall genealogy of the Greek peoples. Ovid imports the most significant names of the Greek genealogical system (founders such as Deucalion, Inachus, Io, Europa, Perseus, Theseus and Heracles), but also regularly shows a will to renounce the community-oriented value of these episodes. It bears repeating that we are discussing a specifically Greek communal value, not a universal one. Transposing these stories into Latin works not just on a stylistic and cultural level but also from a genealogical and aetiological standpoint. The reader of the *Metamorphoses* is transported from a rather expansive Greek world, which embraces a large part of the Mediterranean, to Italy and Rome. Throughout this narrative journey, the reader regularly sorts myths and heroic figures according to quite diverse categories unrelated to their genealogical value, which usually include the spectacular, the exemplary and what might be generalised as the 'human' factor. This operation should be seen not only as a work of intercultural mediation, but also as a systematic deconstruction of the Hellenicity of Greek myth. This explains the frequent irony and the omissions that affect both the genealogy and the aetiology. True genealogical sequences are rare in the long 'Greek' part of the epic, while there *does* appear, with scrupulous (this too ironic) emphasis, a Roman-Italic genealogical list of the Alban kings,[84] equivalent to the laborious

[83] Joseph Farrell's *Ovid the Mythographer* (forthcoming) is an important work on this subject, and a few of my remarks are indebted to him. See also, for similarity of formulation in the analysis of one particular case, Gildenhard and Zissos 2004.

[84] *Met*. 14.609–23: Aeneas, Ascanius, Silvius, Latinus, Alba, Epytus, Capetus, Capys … rather, Ovid clarifies, Capys came first, then Capetus, Tiberinus, Remulus, Acrota, Aventinus, Proca. By another type of irony, not uncommon in Ovid's relations with the Principate, this list of kings depends completely on the name of Aeneas' son, who is *not* the head of the 'Julian' branch, Silvius rather than Ascanius-Iulus.

royal lists typical of Greek historical-mythological erudition. Additionally, in contrast to others, this list not only creates a bridge from the heroic past to the communal present, but also functions as a *pedigree* of the one person who is decisive for the state of present affairs, namely Caesar Augustus. Ironically, this is the most fanciful and impoverished of the royal lists, when the genealogical trees of the Heraclids and Aeacids were rather crowded with myths and legendary memories, and excellent sources for this voracious epic narrator.

It has been noted that in Greek myth there is more interest in the origins of the various Hellenic communities than in those of the entire human race.[85] Ovid thus depends on a construction of the past from which there derived a particular value in being, for example, Thebans or Arcadians, Athenians or Spartans, and the advantage of being able to imagine themselves, as Greeks, as more or less related. In Ovid's narrative, this genealogical continuity is then submerged or stalled in frames of rape and metamorphosis that have no 'generative' end, such as to balance or at least mitigate the cruelty of some of these events. Conversely, the global movement of the narrative from Greece to Rome does not even attempt to explain the identity of the Roman citizens of the new Empire, namely *who are they and where do they come from*? All that is offered is a vision – an ironic one, moreover – of genealogical continuity from Venus to Augustus. The Greeks are in some way all related; the Romans are defined above all by their belonging to a world empire that has divine origins and that winds up monopolising the very idea of metamorphosis.

In this context, several anomalies that we have noted in various instances come together: the disinterest in an explanation of the world based on the origins of the gods and of their power, as we see from the treatment of models such as Hesiod's *Theogony* or the Homeric hymns; the deconstruction of heroic genealogies, as documented in the aggressive rewriting of models such as the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* and mythological Greek texts (Atthidographies, chronographies, mythological manuals); the loss of interest in aetiologies and localisations, such as were offered by Nicander and Callimachus' influential *Aetia*; and the irony that often strikes self-reflexively at temporal borders and demarcations, divisions in large narrative blocks and book boundaries (i.e. everything that had helped the Greek treatises to bring order and organisation to the

[85] Cf. Buxton 2004: 60. On the genealogies and ethnicities of archaic and classical Greece, see e.g. Hall 1997.

mythological material).[86] The cumulative effect has been unclear to many scholars only because, to modern Europeans, the *Metamorphoses*' most significant influence seems to be the perpetuation of a Hellenic tradition in other languages and cultures. This image of Ovid as transmitter and mediator of Greek culture is at the root of the modern European conceptualisation of classical culture as a single, coherent unit, a unified Graeco-Roman culture, and of the Romans as a whole as transmitters and mediators rather than exploiters and appropriators of Greek culture. It is an idea that continues to shape the approach of Classics departments.

On the other hand, the conventional vision of the poem as the apogee of the process of the Hellenisation of Roman culture is not in contradiction with the line we have followed thus far. The idea of a Hellenising poem is a response to another important cultural condition and constraint that is necessary for the development of this new work. In Rome, Hellenisation was always a practice, and at times a myth, that was bolstered by internal competition. Despite their differences, all authors from Livius Andronicus onwards – not excluding Cato, Ennius or Catullus – staked their own cultural or aesthetic privilege on their own ability to give new directions and forms of control to the Hellenising process. From this perspective, Ovid operates on a continuum with Republican competition. His own poem offers more Greek 'cultural capital' than do those of his predecessors, and makes these earlier authors appear insufficiently Hellenised.[87] As we have seen, the operation involves an active and aggressive rewriting of the Greek models. The mark of this rewriting is in the poet's treatment of time and space, and the complementary mark of Hellenisation is found in his ironic treatment of Virgil's *Aeneid*. It is when the new poem measures itself against this latter, the 'charter myth' of the passage from Greece to Rome, that the story becomes crowded with Greek figures. Wandering out of their Hellenic context, monstrous and paradoxical, they contend with Aeneas for primacy of passage to the West, and distract the reader: Glaucus, Circe, Scylla, Odysseus' companion Diomedes, and later Hippolytus/Virbius and Pythagoras. The poet has no need of a Virgilian and Roman keynote, as he is himself the arbitrator of the passage from Greece to the new Latinised world.

[86] On this last point, see e.g. Fowler 2000: 258–9 (on the book's boundaries); Barchiesi 1994: 246–7 (on auto-reflexivity, transitions emphasised in an ambiguous way and images of non-linear or non-geometrical order, such as the labyrinth, the river Maeander and the rainbow); and the clarifications of Morgan 2003.

[87] A clear overview can be found in Hinds 1998: 52–83.

Justice and Morality

The expulsion of the medieval Christian imaginary from the poem's reception, a process that characterised the early modern age in Europe, led to a decline in allegorical interpretations (which nonetheless returned through other means) and also to concealing possible readings of the poem in a 'moralising' (even if only implicit) key. Given that these changes are normally experienced in almost an automatic way by modern readers,[88] it is worth asking not only what was revealed, but also what was lost in this transformation.

This is how a certain image of Ovid was formed. The idea of a cynical, worldly, frivolous and amoral author has alienated some readers but won over others: allowing, for example, a rediscovery of the work in decadent and postmodern settings. The keywords at this point are 'art for art's sake' and detachment of the imaginary from morality. If one considers contemporary reality, the factors that continue to keep interest in the work alive are not so much decadent and postmodern poetics as the presence of trends in material life and technology, which appear (though this can seem anachronistic) to connect Ovidian metamorphosis to an ultramodern world, rather than just a modern one. These trends are all related to transformations and corrections of the body and of individual identity: aesthetic surgery, drugs and psycho-drugs, cyborgs, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, genetic engineering, cloning, manipulation of images and biotechnology. (This might seem a pathetic attempt to solicit interest in the text under discussion, but it would not be difficult to point to at least one Ovidian episode that creates the mythological model or manifesto for each of these innovations). If this is, for now, the context of the poem's reception, it is worth pausing and reconsidering for a moment; it does not appear that the questions raised by the new interaction of human and artificial will result in a total eclipse of moral problems. If there were one category of modern intellectuals who in the future might have some personal motivation for rereading Ovid, it would likely be bioethics scholars.

It may indeed be premature to banish morality from interpretations of the poem. Metamorphosis changes significantly, by the author's choice, according to narrative perspective. Metamorphosis can be seen from the perspective of the agent, usually a divinity, or from that of the one undergoing the process, usually a human. In the first case, the result may be a

[88] W. S. Anderson's commentary is one of the few modern readings of the poem that tend to emphasise a sort of moral vigilance in the narrative and its figures.

corrosive sense of complicity, for example, during descriptions of sexual violence. In the second, we perceive a sense of anxiety when we as readers align ourselves with the victims of arbitrary or hidden power. The perspective becomes complicated even if we begin by examining the status of the gods in the poem. The first part of the poem is dominated by divine interventions that follow a logic of sexual violence, punishment, vengeance or amnesty, or occasionally of a piety that is not always beneficent. But then stories such as that of Tereus emerge, where desire and initiative are exclusively human and the metamorphosis appears at the breaking point of an untenable equilibrium. The gods retain the power of self-transformation – they can impersonate or become natural (Jupiter, Mercury) – but there are also changeable beings, shape-shifters and human figures who seek to cross the borders of their identity and even of the real. As in Greek tragedy, where humans not only act or suffer but also question, principles of hermeneutics and moral evaluation,[89] which contrast with the incontrollable variety of cases and contingencies, are built into the poem's narrative.

Plato (*Resp*. 379a–383c) posited two principles of responsibility as the basis of an ideal city: the new law forbids saying – and in particular forbids poets from saying – that the gods (a) are unjust and (b) can change themselves at will or wish to do so. These principles are effectively violated throughout the *Metamorphoses*, though they are, provocatively, taken for granted. The matter is usually resolved from the perspective of decorum in the representation of the divine, and taking into account restrictions that the literary genre imposes upon the narrator.[90] But we must also ask why the poem, in spite of all its ingenious humour and embellishment, has not placed a moratorium on this proliferation of moral doubt, which involves both the characters and the narrator and ends up affecting the problematic distinction between the fantastic and the real. (As we have seen, the morality of metamorphosis seems to be the last of the Greek authors' preoccupations). One conclusion (a provisional one, at least) is that the Ovidian anthropology constructs a world in which it is no longer possible to live. In a world where individual identity is not guaranteed stability, laws can be ignored. On the other hand, in a world where not only the animal can be a reincarnation (which would be

[89] Cf. Feeney 1991, the richest study on the connection between epic poetics and representation of the divine.

[90] The analysis of Heinze 1960 (1919): 382–5, on divine dignity being preserved by Ovid, only shows that Ovid is aware of those constraints; but there are a number of voluntary infractions of the 'epic decorum' in the representation of the divine apparatus.

the more usual Pythagoreanism), but even a tree may have consciousness and be capable of suffering, every action is potentially culpable. In other words, not even the aesthetic pleasure that emanates from poetry seems to have silenced the possibility of a more responsible reading.

Style, Genre, Career

The poem is metamorphic not only in subject but also in style,[91] though in a different way. Ovid has actually created a style that is uniform in rhythm (quick and light, more homogenous than Virgil's symphonic construction), in its use of narrative voice, in its adaptation of elegiac sensibility, and in lexical tendencies; in fact, his metrical and lexical choices are surprisingly regular. What is metamorphic here is Ovid's ability to readapt different models and genres, leaving only hints of the diverse stylistic matrix. For this reason the *Metamorphoses* has been called an 'anthology of genres',[92] a good definition in the sense that the presence of certain registers goes beyond allusion to a specific text and refers to 'genres' (bucolic, elegiac, hymnic, epigrammatic), but perhaps this is too static a description. There can certainly be no limits set on the narrator's virtuosity when the text signals to the reader affiliations with the epic, love elegy, lyric, tragedy, epigram, bucolic, short neoteric epic, didactic poetry, declamation, comedy, mime, hymn, fable, catalogue, paradoxography, annalistic history, epistle, epyllion and funerary lament (to cite only some examples). However, it is important to capture the dynamic meaning of this play of registers and genres: the single and coherent voice of the narrator passes from one register to another following a spectacular logic,[93] with constant attention to the requirements of the narrative.

If we look to heroic epic as the norm, the fusion of what epic typically keeps separate is important. In Homeric epic, the hero dominates the action and the simile[94] is a space dedicated to animals or nature. In the *Metamorphoses*, the barrier that separates the hero from nature is not formal but thematic. At any given moment, tensions may rise as the acting characters cross into the natural world and the narration merges into description. The poetics of this new epic crosses the conventional

[91] E.g. Segal 1991: 10.

[92] Kenney 1986: xviii.

[93] On the poem as an 'exhibition and performance' kept together by the relationship between narrating voice and audience, see Barchiesi 2001: 49; Wheeler 1999.

[94] For a fine comparative analysis of Ovid's similes and their models, in the context of a poem centred on identity, note von Glinski 2012.

boundary between narrated action and descriptive comparison. Similarly, Ovid reworks the elegiac tradition by traversing the border between action and mythological *exemplum*. In other words, the 'epic' border between heroic action and animal similes is transgressed, as is the 'elegiac' one between 'modern' sensibility and the mythological. The elegiac love poets (Catullus, Propertius) used micro-narratives or mythological images as *exempla*; now it is instead the elegiac sensibility that saturates the narrative and bleeds into the *exempla*, giving them autonomous lives. The personality of the elegiac poet, expelled from epic conventions, re-enters 'from within'.

Although epic and elegy have been fundamental for readings of the poem with respect to genre,[95] there are other, non-literary genres to be kept in mind: those of spectacle, performance and material culture. First, however, we should mention other literary genres that are fundamental to Ovidian epic. The first is tragedy. At a time when Roman theatre was facing a complex transition,[96] Ovidian epic offered itself up as an outlet and a mouthpiece for all of Greek and Latin tragedy. Rather than analysing individual quotations and adaptations,[97] it is useful to limit ourselves here to a general reflection. The poem's dimensions are such as to offer a sort of global and comparative reading of the various tragic myths incorporated into it. The effect is remarkably 'modern', as it presupposes readers who are both habitual spectators of the stage (as are the ideal readers of Horace's *Ars poetica*), and also readers of tragic texts, already trained by the cumulative effect of the *corpora* of authors such as Sophocles and Euripides. Following a trend that is already important in Hellenistic poetry,[98] this new narrative poetry provokes a confrontation not only with individual models from tragedy, but also with the experience of comparing and contrasting a great number of tragic texts apprehended in the form of a series of books. This type of experience provokes a moral reflection of a somewhat vertiginous quality; a crowd of figures is measured against the individual rise and fall of each, or individual fall and salvation, while questions are raised about the relationships between

[95] The major chapters of this discussion are Heinze 1960 (the essay appeared in 1919), Otis 1970, Knox 1986, Hinds 1987.

[96] Before transitioning from elegy to epic, the poet had shown an interest in the recuperation of tragic theatre with his lost major drama, *Medea*.

[97] Several important episodes, which are discussed in the commentary, are the allusions to drama contained in the stories of Phaethon, in the entire Theban cycle of *Met.* 3–4, in the myths of Andromeda, Tereus, Meleager and Hecuba. A general treatment of Ovid's tragic intertexts remains a useful project (a good start is Curley 2013).

[98] Heyworth 2004: 156–7 notes this with regard to Callimachus' *Hymns*.

justice and violence that bind the human and divine worlds together. The poem's narrative continuity encourages the reader to compare the destinies that individual tragic works to some extent keep distinct, and to reconsider the relationship between human action and divine domination. In this sense, it is difficult to deny a moral dimension to the *Metamorphoses*, one that reaches its limit only in the fantastic dissolution brought about by the concluding metamorphoses.

The other component of the poem that deserves consideration is hymn. Scholars have often drawn attention to the importance of Greek models that are framed in the genre of hymn, but this has generally been limited to single episodes. It is possible to broaden this approach[99] if we keep one general principle in mind. The type of narrative Ovid prefers entails an intertwining of human and divine actions that can be compared, in general, to those of Homeric and Virgilian epic. However, the attention he gives to the world of the gods, to their motives and psychologies and even their daily lives, is often greater than the space devoted to them in heroic poetry. Especially in the first books of this work, it is clear that Ovid was interested in hymns as a genre, as exemplified by the Homeric hymns (and later Callimachus). This genre of narrative (or semi-narrative) poetry had the task of defining and bearing witness to the individual stories and fields of action of single divinities. In Ovid, not only the narrator but also the gods, who tirelessly promote and claim their own prerogatives, seem to have access to a sort of theological repertory with an inbuilt function of celebration and admonition. Here, too, in short, as in the case of tragedy, the serial and cumulative quality of epic narrative has interesting consequences for the way in which a whole tradition of 'genre' is recapitulated and transformed.

The relationship established with Lucretius' didactic epic is also important, and contradictory. Ovid evokes the scientific language of materialism in paradoxical contexts that need Lucretius' visionary precision but do not respect his tenets and assumptions about reality. Virgil already uses Lucretius in a conflicting way, using sublime Lucretian language to restore the apocalyptic visions that the latter had combatted.[100] In the *Metamorphoses*, the effect is more surreal and at times

[99] Extensive imitations of the Homeric hymns to Demeter, Apollo, Hermes and yet others have now been recognised. For a brief survey, with methodological observations, see Barchiesi 1999, also for the possibility that Ovid knew the collection and not just the hymns taken singly. It is natural to think that a stabilised collection would have had consequences for the reception of these models. See Syed 2004.

[100] See e.g. Hardie 1986; Gale 2000.

'cold'. Unlike Virgil, Ovid is not attempting to restore a fantastic dimension that also creates fear and unsettling doubts, but to combine alternative choices without blending them. The world of the *Metamorphoses* is ironical and conscious of the illusions it creates, often in a play of names, appearances and absences,[101] and the presence of Lucretius keeps open the alternative possibility of a scientific analysis of natural phenomena.

Similarly ambivalent is the reception of the branch of poetry with no proper ancient label that we tend to call 'epyllion'. Among the models of single episodes, 'brief' Hellenistic or Neoteric epics have a very significant presence. These include Callimachus' *Hecale*, Catullus 64 (the only one of these texts to have come down to us in its entirety: the others are reconstructed from fragments and conjectures), Calvus' *Io* and Cinna's *Zmyrna*. Part of this tradition is combined in a famous passage of Virgil's sixth *Eclogue* (31–86), often said to present the most precise precedent of Ovid's project.[102] In a few lines, as if in a poetic laboratory, Virgil sketches a fabulous chronicle that takes off from the origins of the world and embraces several myths of passion and transgression. The grandiose framework, albeit ironically miniaturised in Virgil, makes us think of Ovid, and the absorption of a certain type of Greek myth presupposes Neoteric poetry. It is difficult to give an overall view of these relationships, but two general coincidences might be noted. From this tradition Ovid appears to have taken up a certain way of making myth present, in addition to distancing it. For the first aspect, it is enough to say that these 'epyllia' are distinguished by the pathos of the narrative and the development of subjective points of view: for example, through an expansion of monologues and emotional discourse, an attention given to women and private life, and a delving into unconventional psychologies. For the second aspect, in part antithetical to the first, what seems to interest Ovid most is the treatment of time typical of this kind of poetic narrative. If, for example, we consider Catullus 64, a work whose whole structure is known, we can see it as a sort of distortion of mythical time. The relationships between past and present and the vision of the heroic age are deliberately distorted and problematised. Ovid takes up this artistic quest on an incomparably vast scale. The temporal distortions must live together in a kind of chronicle-based, but paradoxical, system. The digressions, which in epyllion rebel against

[101] Rosati 1983; Hardie 2000b *passim*.
[102] Cf. Otis 1970: 48–9; Knox 1986: 10–14.

traditional narrative hierarchies, are now hardly distinguishable from the main line of the narrative, given that there is no longer an operative distinction between what is essential and what is incidental. The narrator finds space to catalogue the names of all of Actaeon's dogs (or at least thirty-six of them), but dedicates only a single hexameter to the foundation of Rome. Ovid's relationship with the experimentation of epyllion is particularly important, as his poem does not make a clean break with the grand structure of traditional epic. In this respect, as in others, his poem offers itself up as a *summa* of all earlier poetry, even and especially when the relationship with the tradition generates contradictions and asymmetries.

In sum, Ovid's poetics presupposes an already formed and stable system of genres. His text takes for granted the formation of a Roman literature that by now is competing with the canonicity of Greek models.[103] Ovid is the first Latin poet in the canon who neither declares nor insinuates that he is a 'new Homer' (or new Alcaeus, Callimachus, Menander, Theocritus or Hesiod). If anything, his agenda sounds like a declaration that he can compete on the same level as a plurality of other authors; it also indicates Virgil, not a Greek author, as an epitome of literary success. Moreover, in all of his work, Ovid can, and wants to, be singled out as the first Roman poet who has cultivated a direct connection with the vast public of his readers[104] without initially having a model relationship with patrons or restricted circles of select recipients.

The historical importance of the *Metamorphoses* is not removed from the place it occupies in its author's poetic career. Rather, the very idea of such a career is in part an Ovidian invention,[105] dependent on Virgil and Horace but more self-conscious in its organisation of works into an oeuvre. Ovid has dynamically constructed a career of a Virgilian type. The sequence *Bucolics* – *Georgics* – *Aeneid* is imitated in his progression from 'light' works on an erotic theme, *Amores* and *Heroides*, to a didactic poem, the *Ars amatoria* completed by the *Remedia* (i.e. four books of leisure literature that respond ironically to the *Georgics*), to a mature epic that is the first anti-*Aeneid*. The exilic poetry modifies this rising sequence, and provides European literature with an example of 'decadence' that can be seen as an alternative to the canonical, Virgilian-style *cursus honorum*.

[103] Labate 1990a, esp. 960–2.
[104] As becomes clear in the systematic discussion of Citroni 1995.
[105] Hardie and Barchiesi 2010.

Poetic Rhetoric

The vast topos of Ovid the decadent poet arises especially as a function of the role that rhetoric assumes in his poetic work. The importance of rhetoric has been evaluated as a positive and enabling factor only in a few phases of the Ovidian afterlife. Now, however, it seems right to accept the role of rhetoric without minimising it or seeing it as a price to pay, as the result of a constrictive education. If we have learned to understand the aesthetics of the Homeric formula, there should be no difficulty in accepting that rhetoric is a constitutive factor of Roman culture – rhetorical articulation of discourse is a necessity of style but also of thought, just as is repetition in Homeric language. Although it is true that declamation provides Ovid with a catalogue of perversions that corresponds exactly to his favourite themes, it is equally important to understand that the rhetorical system on which declamation was based was not only a collection of borderline cases and picturesque exaggerations.[106] It was a system of discourse construction that was introduced from primary education onwards, and aimed to teach individuals how to impersonate others in order to empower and discipline their capacity for communication and persuasion. To this we should add that throughout Ovid's poem the practice of persuasive discourse is self-ironically thematised as a failure. The figures that exercise verbal art for practical ends are condemned to defeat or to misunderstanding, with the significant exception of the individual who functions as the bridgehead for the infiltration of rhetoric into epic: Odysseus.[107]

In Ovid, as a demonstration of how profound this dimension of language is, there also exists a rhetoric at the narrative level. The stories themselves enter relationships of rhetorical transformation, and the principle of rhetorical variation goes beyond the level of phrasing: it governs the relationships of one story to another. When compared with another, a tale may be considered a metonym and metaphor, a syllepsis, a zeugma and polyptoton.[108] Or even an ellipsis: of all the Theban tales in *Met.* 3, one is conspicuous in its absence, that of Oedipus. And yet the two great metamorphoses that hold our interest in the central part of the book are

[106] Cf. e.g. Russell 1983: 1–3 (also on the limits of the perspective provided by Seneca Rhetor).

[107] On the failure of rhetoric as a major Ovidian theme, cf. Tarrant 1995. Barchiesi 1997b observes that of all the poem's narrators (and there are quite a few) the only ones who succeed are those who do not aim for the result of an immediate advantage, with a strong emphasis on the 'delightful' over the 'useful', and a contradiction between pleasurable narrative and practical oratory.

[108] Hopkinson 2000.

the story of a man who is happy only so long as he does not know himself, and that of another who discovers, to his cost, that the gods do not distinguish error from crime. Narcissus and Actaeon share the role of Oedipus between them; Oedipus appears only through ellipsis, but continues to exercise his baneful power over Thebes.

The comparison of metaphor and metamorphosis[109] reveals the other main avenue for the recovery of rhetoric. Due to its affinity with the rhetorical figure of metaphor, metamorphosis allows the cyclical passage from form to content to form (in this sense also with markedly Lucretian seriousness) and deals not only with aetiologies but also with analogies.

Art and Spectacle in the Epic Landscape

If we decide to read the text in the context of Roman culture, the most striking analogies are with the world of public spectacle[110] that pervades Augustan Rome. These analogies can be seen at many levels. Hardly any critics would deny that the taste for the visual and for spectacle that pervades the poem justifies assumptions about its readers and their taste, and is the result of an urban development of visual arts in Rome in the generations between Catullus and Ovid. It is equally instinctive to look for verbal equivalents of spectacle, in its various forms, while reading the poem. The great animal hunts in the arena are recalled in the wild beasts of the zodiac that Phaethon encounters, in Perseus' struggle with the sea monster, in the theatrical heroism of Meleager's expedition against the wild boar, in the confusion between human and animal during the gory and extravagant centauromachy. The passion for the chariot race in the Circus finds an extreme and cosmic charioteer in Phaethon himself. The analogy that can be glimpsed in the comparison with the newest of the forms of spectacle in Augustan Rome, the pantomime, is perhaps even more effective.[111] In pantomime, scenarios based on famous myths, and often familiar through 'spoken' theatre, are brought to the stage in mythological tableaux, where the choreography and bodily expression, together with the music, act as a substitute for poetic communication. The most articulate discussion (albeit much later) of this theatrical genre, Lucian's treatise *On the Dance*, allows a glimpse of several analogies with Ovid's poetics. Metamorphosis is a major ingredient of the mythological themes

[109] Pianezzola 1999.
[110] Rosati 1983.
[111] Important points in Galinsky 1996: 265–6; Habinek 2002: 51–3. A fundamental treatment (full of interest for readers of Ovid) is now Lada-Richards 2007.

Lucian indicates, and a great part of the characters also recur in Ovid. The need for choreographic expression seems important for the particular type of physical and emotional dynamics characteristic of Ovidian narrative. The frequency of sexual and transsexual themes connects the poem with the 'effeminate' and 'eroticised' poetics of pantomime dance, which was often the object of moralistic attacks. Finally, the immense mythological competence required of the *librettisti* and performers of pantomime seems almost to recall the structure of the Ovidian poem: 'from Chaos and the first origins of the world, the artist should know everything, up to the story of Cleopatra of Egypt' (Luc. *Salt.* 27).

The admiration for monuments and works of art is an element so constant as to need no examples. It connects the characters in action, the narrative voice and the readers of the poem. However, in considering figurative art, it is possible to make rather more detailed observations and to discover prospects that lead in different directions. Beginning with landscape, which is an active force in the poem and not only a decorative background, we can establish connections with what is known from Pompeian wall painting. In the evolution of pictorial styles in domestic architecture, we should single out one style in particular. This consists of separate tableaux that contain implicit references to each other (relying on the viewer's mythological competence), and a certain illusionistic ambivalence between centres and frames, between decorative elements internal and external to a single tableau. The poem's narrative strategies, with mythological tableaux separated but also united by landscape transitions, clearly recall the techniques and settings of painted decorations in private spaces; and the taste for symmetry and variety establishes analogies between narrative and figurative programmes. The narrative's dynamic, with its mobility from one 'tableau' to another, can be better understood by considering the importance assumed by 'viewing in motion' in modern studies of Roman art. This dimension has recently been enhanced for us through instruments of cybernetic vision and even of virtual reality (technological developments that contribute to our current interest in Ovid).

We lack sufficient information about other developments in painting. It might be said that the taste for the bird's-eye view and the frequent appearance of flying figures (Mercury, Perseus, Medea, Daedalus) is simply a predilection of Ovid; but the discovery on the Oppian Hill[112] of

[112] La Rocca 2000 offers a first point of entry to the discovery, but I have not been able to locate a definitive publication.

a fresco presenting an urban panorama suggests that Ovid was working within an established tradition, which would help to frame this visual dimension in a less adventurous way. The entire comparative approach is certainly ready for a more articulate discussion.[113]

Even more promising is the study, also synthetic, of the visual space that more than any other offers a counterpoint to Ovid's poetic imaginary. This is the sculpture garden, found in villas or in carefully planned urban parks.[114] It is important to understand that the sculpture garden served as a material context for exactly the type of mythological imagination that Ovid's whole poetics awakens. Literature provided mythological scenarios to identify with, while these artificial, planned landscapes offered scenes in which to visualise these same stories:[115] nymphs being chased in a woodland setting, goddesses bathing half-naked, heroines chained to crags, the adventurous Odysseus threatened in a grotto by the Cyclops, galleries of warriors changed into statues, Ino at the moment she dives into the sea. In Ovid, the two mythological elements, space and narrative, enter into a reciprocal relationship, but this relation is just as fundamental for the visual culture of Roman *flâneurs* and cognoscenti.

A natural landscape can be seen as the product of a great mythical action, a sort of natural monument to the story that incorporates it – an island that was a mass hurled down by a god or hero, a rocky crag with a spring that was once a woman in mourning, a brook that had been a gentle boy. Landscapes can be associated with monuments that celebrate the fame of the heroes' genealogy: the bronze she-wolf in the grotto of the Lupercal or the statue of Heracles on Mount Oeta. All of this is Ovid but also the culture of authors like Pausanias and certain rhetors of the imperial era. The poem bears witness to the transformation of natural locations into special spaces: some of these places were already monumentalised in Ovid's time and had become touristic-religious attractions. In both these spaces themselves and Ovid's handling of myth

[113] A growing integration between the study of art and of Roman poetry emerges, for example, from the studies of Eleanor Winsor Leach: see Leach 1988; Leach 2004.

[114] I am indebted here to the work (published and unpublished) of Ann Kuttner, historian of Roman art and culture. For a fascinating example of her methodology, see Kuttner 2003. For current approaches to studying visual culture in the poem, see esp. Hinds 2002.

[115] After the publication of a first Italian version of this essay, the traces of a suburban villa identifiable as the villa of Messalla Corvinus (an influential friend of Ovid), brought to light in 2013 and only provisionally explored, seem to suggest precisely this scenario: the location of the statues of dying Niobids alongside a swimming pool suggests an intriguing counterpart to the Ovidian constellation of nature, eroticism, artificial nature, narrative, myth and pathos (cf. the first report in Calandra, Betori and Lupi 2015).

in landscape, an authoritative narrative is attached to a place and helps in its recognition and celebration.

But on another level, even more elementary, this strange epic poem is a true catalogue of the whole material culture of the Empire. No materials, artefacts or consumer goods fail to appear,[116] and some have their mythological genealogy celebrated: coral, amber, the lyre, peacock feathers, stone statues, marble and ivory, frescoes, friezes and *trompe-l'œil* illusion, metallurgy and metalwork; gardening, parks and fountains, rustic villas, caves and seas; art galleries and porticoes, arches, temples, stairways, tombs, cenotaphs, cameos, tapestries, fabric and yarns, bas-reliefs, goldwork, brick architecture and (even) water pipes, theatres, windows, pediments, artificial and natural grottoes, altars, doors, atria and bedrooms, inscriptions, ships, chariots, wicker baskets, swimming pools and above all – the great unifying space of the whole poem – landscape with figures. The magical vitality of manufactured objects already brings to mind the descriptions found in the rhetorically inspired Greek novel. For example, see Ach. Tat. 2.3.2: 'Vines seemingly growing from within encircled it, and their clusters hung down all around; as long as the goblet remained empty each grape appeared unripe and green; but no sooner was the wine poured in than each grape began to redden, and assumed the hue of ripeness; and among them was represented Bacchus himself as dresser of the vineyard' (trans. Rowland Smith). Of course, the particular charm of Ovid's descriptions is not only in their ecphrastic (albeit illusionistic) quality, but in their capacity to show the simulacrum in the course of its coming into being, as though it were a product of narrative and not only an inert prop of the latter. More precisely, the dynamics of metamorphosis can produce not only definitive statues, but also *temporary* ones, when movements of the body and definitions of their contours are described in order to break down – but only for unrepeatable moments – the border between individual and artistic simulacrum.[117]

[116] It may be no accident that terracotta and wood, materials considered primitive or archaic by Ovid's time, are less favoured in the poem than other materials. The presence of choroplastic art in terracotta, typical for the Augustans of the Etrusco-Italic and archaic Roman past, seems limited to the analogy that appears in the simile in *Met.* 1.78–83 (see the note on *Met.* 1.82–3), which not by chance concerns the most ancient of human metamorphoses, the first creation of man from clay. The statue of Picus in Circe's villa is a modern marble simulacrum (*Met.* 14.313–15), not, as was the case in the Virgilian model, a 'primitive' idol hewn in wood (cf. *Aen.* 7.177–92: ancient cedar wood, which obliquely anticipates Ovid's taste for statues as celebrations of metamorphosis). Cf. also the archaic idols in wood (*Met.* 10.693–5) that are profaned by the sexuality of two lovers.

[117] The idea of a human being modelled on an artificial one may seem a modernising or even postmodern development of Ovid's poetics, but the thesis of a man being in some way a 'temporary

These transitory statues, on occasion impossible to realise in visual art at Ovid's time, exist only in the temporality of narrative and serve as a stimulation for future generations of Renaissance and Baroque artists. Yet, on another level, Ovidian narrative presupposes not only a world of simulacra, but also problems of artistic interpretation: how to read the images; how to explain them; what combinations existed of art and power, representation and divinity, localisation and image. The poem describes and fosters not only the development of art and aesthetics, but also the interaction between fiction and art criticism, a combination that anticipates the experimentations of Petronius, Apuleius and the Greek elite novel.

Power, Ideology, Reception

Another type of historicism, the attempt to read the *Metamorphoses* in light of the politics of the Augustan era, yields a different result. To many, the poem has seemed a work of evasion into Greek myth, without the political engagement that characterises Virgil's epic. We have already seen, however, that the problem of the relationship between 'Greek' and 'Roman' is not only a question of aesthetics – unless the purpose is to limit the political in a Roman text to the pure and simple relationship to imperial power. In any case, it must be admitted that this epic does not offer constructive responses comparable to the intense historiographical crafting of the *Aeneid* or of Livy.

The relationship of the poet to Augustus is an endless source of discussion. First of all, there is the problem of viewing the text in the light of the poet's exile, as Ovid himself came to do shortly after completing (or even while completing) his epic. It would perhaps be better not to do this, given that the Ovid writing the *Tristia* has a conflict of interest as an interpreter of his own epic poem. However, it is a thorny issue to decide how much of an anti-conformist there was already in the *Ars amatoria* and in the *Remedia amoris.* The proem at the middle of the latter poem, after all, is a sort of challenge to authority and to tradition, which has left important traces in writers like Boccaccio.[118] We do not know, in short, whether we can isolate the Augustus of the *Metamorphoses* from the political context of Ovid's elegiac texts. The argument can be made that the epic poem by its very nature requires a certain image of the principate, a celebratory poetry, but it should also be recalled that even in this poem

statue' of himself has been proposed as an interpretation of the most traditional of Roman ceremonies, the triumph, by historian of religion Jörg Rüpke 2006.

[118] Hardie and Barchiesi 2010.

Ovid has neither privileged patrons nor supreme addressees. The one direct apostrophe to the *princeps* comes at a rather special point in the poem (*Met*. 1.204–5) where the focus is the *pietas* of Octavian's supporters versus (the narrator mentions with questionable tact) the threat of conspirators and opponents. The point of reference here is the angered Jupiter who punishes Lycaon and destroys the human race. Jupiter's house on Olympus is like the Augustan Palatine, a fine hyperbole, but also a double-edged comparison. How can we disassociate the praise 'Jupiter is like Augustus' from its logical complement 'so Augustus is like Jupiter as he appears in this poem'? The standard response is that the language of encomium has its own conventions, and the problem is that we, under the illusions of our modern ideologies, keep searching for illusory consolations in phoney images of poets who are always ready to challenge dominant authority. This criticism is not unfounded, but it is also true that when we begin to historicise we do not then have the right to unilaterally put an end to the discussion. If it is true that encomium is now becoming the obligatory way of approaching the emperor and representing him, does it perhaps mean that the language of encomium is always already standardised and without nuance? On the contrary. In imperial culture, panegyric – precisely because it has no alternative – is charged with remarkable responsibility. Each and every one of its details can be anxiously scrutinised, each intonation and nuance can be indicative, and the message involves not only the imperial addressee but also a much wider public.

Others attempt to resolve the problem with a sort of 'generational' shortcut. The argument goes that Ovid was, due to his date of birth, the first Augustan literary figure without experience of a regime other than that of Augustus, awash in the attendant tranquillity that followed the Civil Wars. The Augustan Principate, however, was a troubled, experimental period, loaded with tensions and improvisations. Given the state of our sources, we will never know how many diverse positions and interests collided under the aegis of the Augustan age. This is not, however, a good motive for inferring an already acquired consent, nor is it a good way of writing history. The nervous concentration with which Ovid dedicates the end of his poem to the theme of succession[119] and the renovation of power is a good example of how Augustan literature is more interesting and less preconfigured than the prose of many historians.

[119] Cf. Hardie 1997.

Were a generational model to be useful, we would have to agree not to limit its importance to a pure and simple immersion in the *pax augusta*. It is true that for Ovid's generation there existed a new and particular horizon. Born in 43 BCE, the poet was among the first of the Romans to grow up without having known a figure of power other than Octavian. Through an anomaly of rare historical importance, the founder of imperial power was also (until Theodosius II) the longest holder of that power. When the *Metamorphoses* was published, in 8 CE, the *princeps* was over seventy and four or five out of six citizens in the Empire could not remember a time before him. When the future emperor had married Livia in 38 BCE, the couple were respectively twenty-five and twenty years old. Given life expectancy in the period, of sixty couples of this age who were married in this same year, only one would have still been together fifty years later. In 13 CE, Augustus and Livia were this single couple.[120] It would be more correct to say that Ovid belonged to the first generation that had always known Octavian *and Livia*. Before the middle of the 30s BCE, when Livia and Octavian appeared on the Roman public scene, there was no woman with an official image in Rome, consecrated with statues, inscriptions, monuments and public appearances. Nor was there a 'family' or 'house' that held power. Before Ovid, there was no secure, shared way of measuring time: the Julian reform of the calendar had come into force a few months prior to his birth. Little real attention was given to representing space: cartography and geography experienced an almost sudden development under Augustus. Finally, there was no separation of military and citizen activity. Only in Ovid's generation did whole social strata of the Roman citizenry begin to truly perceive war as an external phenomenon, as an activity delegated to others; it was no longer an obligatory means to career advancement but far removed and marginal, destined for representation and symbolic re-enactment. To reflect on the relationship between power and consensus in Ovid's time, it is best to have a broader view of these long-term phenomena: control of time and space, the professionalisation of war, the emergence of women in the public arena. To us these changes evoke ideas of security and stability, but this is a typical retrospective illusion. The image of power reflected in the *Metamorphoses* is anything but reassuring.

A similar ambiguity arises in the explicit treatment of the dynasty and the legitimisation of power in book 15 of the poem. No Augustan poet had gone so far with the appropriation of typically Alexandrian

[120] Cf. Scheidel 1999.

encomiastic language in illustrating and mystifying the nature of Augustus' seizure of power. Bodies of famous Roman commanders are translated to heaven, souls severed from their bodies. Female divinities like Venus manipulate bodies and souls with perfumed ambrosia and give life to flaming stars that take up the Ptolemaic tradition of catasterism. A sort of feminisation of grand Roman politics[121] runs through book 15, in tune with the allusions to refined court poetry, the works of Callimachus, Bion and Theocritus. Ovid's operation could be viewed as a sort of modernisation of Augustan ideology, but we have good reason to suspect that a Ptolemaic representation of imperial power was not yet well received by many. Augustus, from what we can understand of his often changeable and at times opportunistic strategies, had no intention of representing himself as a Hellenistic monarch, even and especially when his innovations went beyond the references and precedents that the Greek world could offer him.

This is tantamount to admitting that the poem's political ambiguities cannot be resolved, not only by us, but perhaps not even by its original readers. It should be immediately added that this completely political way of reading Ovid's representation of ideology is only one interpretation of the poem. There are other ways, even more important, of looking at ideology in a work of fiction. Why look for it only in overt public communication? If we look beyond what the poem has to say explicitly on Augustus, it is worth noting that a hard and objective sense of power relations pervades the entire plot.[122] Almost all the tales pivot on conflicts of power and inequality of status. The narrator appears at times powerful and capricious like a god or sovereign, but also continues to remind us forcefully that the narrative account of events is a function of power relations. The imperial dimension of the work goes well beyond explicit pronouncements, and even beyond the narrator's self-awareness. Ovid's poetics responds to this ideological horizon by producing a constant ambiguity of identification with victors and victims. Often discussed in the politicised terms of Augustanism and anti-Augustanism, this double reading is a real component of the Roman world: exhibitions of supremacy and triumph together with vulnerability, suffering and humiliation. Effects of this kind dominate figurative art, in victory monuments, circus games, triumphal spectacles, sacrifices – in

[121] Cf. Barchiesi 1999: 117–23.

[122] Worth noting in particular are the results obtained from a semiotic study of reported speeches, which shows how power relations can exert an influence over the surface structures of the narrative: Laird 1999.

all the shared actions that found the collective identity.[123] Ovid has created a distinctive style for this Rome of conquerors and conquered; the audience participates equally in humiliation and suffering and in enjoyment and domination. The moral questions that arise from this duality can be set aside or reactivated at the reader's choice, or the contingent situation: distanced aesthetic enjoyment or anxious captivity in the narrative webs.[124]

[123] It cannot be true that ancient spectators were indifferent to the suffering of sacrificial animals, that they perceived immolation as an automatic act devoid of pathos. It is enough to consider the simile in *Met.* 2.623–5 to illustrate this obvious reality (see also the note ad loc.). On the spectacle of games and sacrifices in Augustan Rome as a context for understanding Ovid's narrative, see the important paper Feldherr 1997. See also Feldherr's 2010 book-length reading, and the important case study by Oliensis 2004.

[124] This duplicity also characterises the representation of sexual difference in the poem: for an important debate on its episodes of sexual violence in light of different ideas of masculine and feminine identity and of ways of historicising them, see especially Curran 1978; Richlin 1992. In short, Ovid's poem is the ancient text that gives the most space to the feelings and suffering of rape victims – not only in the scenes explicitly concerning violence against women and girls, but also precisely where metamorphosis appears metaphorically as predation and domination in the erotic sphere – and, at the same time, it carries forwards an unethical aestheticising of these images. This contradiction or ambiguity is one of the main reasons for Ovid's fame in figurative art in the modern period. Interpretations of the poem which uniquely emphasise irony and self-reflection obscure the fact that for the Romans the Greek myths are in large part 'stories of sexual identity' and can be seen, depending on context, as disturbing or ridiculous, repugnant or enjoyable. Exaggerating Ovid's control over his own creations, following an invitation that arises from his own narrative structures, does a disservice to a poem that has often suffered from facile or mechanical oppositions between the passionate and the superficial, the serious and the frivolous, engagement and evasion.

Note on the Latin Text

Books 1–3

Divergences from Tarrant's OCT (2004)

locus	Tarrant	Barchiesi
1.92	*ligabantur*	*legebantur*
1.190	*temptanda*	*temptata*
1.235	*uertitur*	*utitur*
1.344	[deleted]	[in the text]
1.638	[deleted]	[in the text]
2.226	[deleted]	[in the text]
2.278	*fractaque*	*siccaque*
2.366	*spectanda*	*gestanda*
2.400	[deleted]	[in the text]
2.518	†*est uero quisquam*†	*et uero quisquam*
2.520	[deleted]	[in the text]
2.611	[deleted]	[in the text]
2.792	*cacumina*	*papauera*
3.200	[deleted]	[in the text]
3.230	[deleted]	[in the text]
3.415	[deleted]	[in the text]
3.417	[deleted]	[in the text]
3.447	*'tantus tenet error amantem'*	*tantus tenet error amantem*
3.576	[deleted]	[in the text]

Books 1–3