# *Introduction*

Of all the classical *auctores* who were celebrated, circulated and emulated in the Middle Ages, none experienced so heady a mix of fame and infamy as Ovid (Publius Ovidius Naso, 43 BC–AD 17/18), the Augustan poet principally known for his *Metamorphoses*, amatory works and poems written while in exile. The designation of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as the *aetas Ovidiana* by Ludwig Traube has lingered in the scholarly imagination in a way that his parallel appointments of the *aetas Vergiliana* and the *aetas Horatiana* have not; and this 'age of Ovid' has swelled beyond its original chronological and technical boundaries to encompass the flourishing of Ovid and Ovidiana in multiple forms, extending far beyond the two centuries appointed by Traube.[1] Of the various and intertwined strands which comprise the medieval reception of Ovid, this book explores medieval responses to Ovidian exile, focusing on twelfth- to fifteenth-century scholastic and literary responses in England (broadly speaking, both chronologically and geographically). By 'Ovidian exile' I mean two things: the poetry written by Ovid in exile (primarily the *Tristia*, *Epistulae ex Ponto* and *Ibis*) and Ovid himself as the figure of the exiled poet, who is irrevocably embedded into the exilic works. Medieval responses to Ovid's exile are varied and creative, ranging from responses formed in the medieval schoolroom, to the impulse to Christianise the pagan poet via his exile, to the poets of the late fourteenth century who *become* the Ovidian exile in their own poetry. Examining a cross-section of these diverse responses demonstrates the prominence and importance of Ovid and his exile across various medieval contexts, and I seek to bring his exile to the centre of Ovidian reception studies, alongside

[1] Traube (1911: 113) was referring specifically to Latin versification when he termed the eighth and ninth centuries the *aetas Vergiliana*, the tenth and eleventh the *aetas Horatiana*, and the twelfth and thirteenth the *aetas Ovidiana*.

the mythographer-Ovid and the lover-Ovid about whom we are used to reading.[2]

What is it about Ovidian exile in particular which speaks to the later Middle Ages, and which prompted a proliferation of responses? Across the responses that this book explores, I highlight several important aspects of the exile poetry which other works by Ovid, and works by other classical authorities, could not offer. The exile poetry has particular character as a collection of letters from and about exile, with musings on abandonment, lament, desire and so on, which medieval respondents used to express these same woes (whether individual marginalisation or external affairs, such as *contemptus mundi*-style laments on vice in the world). Ovid's model of exile is so effective in its affect that often it was preferred to the models of other famous exiles (most notably Cicero, Boethius or exiles in Christian Scripture).[3] The epistolary form in itself prompted responses in the absence of any known or extant letters back to Ovid from Rome, speaking to the later medieval penchant for the *ars dictaminis* and the dialogue form. Secondly, the tone of the exile poetry (nominally contrite and repentant, although as I discuss in Chapter 1, also full of Ovidian play and irony) enabled one of the most fundamental shifts in Ovidian reception throughout its long history: the edification and Christianisation of an immoral, salacious poet, in which the exile poetry transforms into spiritual, penitent works from a poet who was exiled for writing erotodidactic filth. This medieval paradigm builds on a penitential arc which Ovid himself had suggested in his pleas to be recalled from exile, which justified engaging with not just the exile poetry but all of Ovid's poetic corpus. A crucial connection was formed, therefore, between the exilic Ovid and the various other 'Ovids' of the Middle Ages (such as the mythographer-Ovid, the lover-Ovid, and several other Ovids, all of whom I discuss later in this introductory chapter). This connection between the pre- and post-exilic Ovid respected the functions which only the exile poetry could perform at the same time as rendering it inextricable from the whole.

Thirdly, later medieval respondents also focused on the special and intense relationship between the two aspects of Ovid's exile, the exiled poet and his exilic poetry: it is through the exile poetry that Ovid cultivates how he intends

[2] There is no chapter dedicated to the exilic Ovid, for instance, in Clark, Coulson and McKinley (2011), which is now an essential account of the sprawling influence of Ovid across the European Middle Ages.

[3] Ovid's exilic model competed and intersected with other models of exile which were available in the Middle Ages. Cicero and Boethius are perhaps the two most important classical and late antique models of exile besides Ovid, and exile features prominently in the Bible, from Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden in Genesis to Babylonian or Egyptian exile. Relatedly, the spiritual exile of *peregrinatio* was an important concept (see Brito-Martins 2004).

to be remembered in his *Nachleben*, and in the exilic works Ovid is intensely focused on how to be a poet. Some medieval responses test this bond, while others embrace it; and late medieval poets, similarly prioritising the questions of how to articulate their poetic selves and poetic afterlives, as well as their interest in writing from real or poeticised margins, turn to Ovidian exile to answer these questions. In this respect, I focus on fourteenth-century English poets who were especially interested in inhabiting Ovidian exile in some way. And finally, there is the sheer *Ovidianness* of responses to Ovid's exile. I begin this book by arguing in Chapter 1 that Ovid creates a model of response in his exile poetry, one which simultaneously centres Ovid as an ultimate authority while also embedding a licence to creatively exploit the ambiguities surrounding Ovid's exile. The medieval responses which follow in the remaining chapters take up this model, following Ovid's conception of how he might be remembered, even in the wild speculations and Christian conversions which abounded. This proactiveness of Ovid, and the receptiveness of medieval readers to Ovid's directions, make for a genuinely interactive form of reception, and on a broader scale this book intends to argue strongly for a highly dynamic theory of classical reception (in conjunction with current notions of active readership and response theory).[4]

This book proposes, in short, that Ovid's exile was well known in the later Middle Ages, and that it had a widespread and powerful effect on medieval scholastic and literary thought. While the exilic Ovid was insuperably connected to the wider understanding of Ovid in the Middle Ages (often in messy and multitudinous ways), it was a discrete and distinct type of Ovid who could be alternately distanced from and connected back to other manifestations of Ovid. Ultimately, Ovidian exile informed teaching, preaching, reading and writing – among a host of activities I term 'responses' – in the later Middle Ages, offering a mode of voicing exile, marginalisation and poethood itself.

## Ovid and His Exile

In AD 8, at the age of fifty, Ovid was relegated to Tomis in the Black Sea, a town at the outermost limits of the Roman Empire.[5] Although largely referred to as an exile (including by Ovid himself), he was technically relegated, meaning that he was physically banished from Rome but

[4] As the final section of this Introduction, 'Responses and Respondents', explores.

[5] Tomis is located in modern-day Romania. Ovid tells us that he is fifty years old at the time of the *Ibis*' composition (*Ib.* 1), and he is in his fifties at *Tr.* 4.10.95–96. The brief overview of Ovid's exile which follows here is covered in more detail in Morgan (2020: 96–112).

retained Roman citizenship.[6] His crime, famously, was twofold: 'a poem and a mistake' (*carmen et error*, *Tr*. 2.207), according to Ovid himself.[7] The *carmen* is agreed to be the *Ars amatoria*, a premise corroborated both by the content of the *Ars* and by the fact that Ovid says as much throughout the exile poetry.[8] The *Ars*' teachings of immorality and infidelity likely incurred the wrath of Augustus, who had elsewhere been enacting increasingly stricter laws on morality in the years leading up to Ovid's exile. Augustus had already exiled his daughter and granddaughter, both on the grounds of adultery.[9] The *error* is less certain – but perhaps no less salacious – than the *carmen*, and it is made all the more mysterious by Ovid's equivocations on the topic.[10] His most explicit reference to any mistake appears in *Tristia* 2, where he bewails:

> Why did I see anything? Why did I make my eyes guilty? Why was I so thoughtless as to harbour the knowledge of a fault? Unwitting was Actaeon when he beheld Diana unclothed; none the less he became the prey of his own hounds.[11]

[6] An *exul* ('exile') would have had their Roman citizenship revoked. Ovid alternately describes himself as an *exul* and a *relegatus* throughout the poetry: for instance, we find 'I am an exile' (*exul eram*) at *Tr*. 4.1.3, but he is 'relegated Naso' (*relegatus Naso*) at *Pont*. 4.15.2, and in the *Ibis* he uses both terms in quick succession (*relegatum . . . exilio*, *Ib*. 11–12). The term *exul* carries implications of heavier punishment and was perhaps used to emphasise Ovid's suffering; or, as Claassen (1999b: 150–51) argues, 'A Roman citizen would, however, lose his citizenship if he settled permanently in another locality, so, although he was technically not exiled by imperial decree, Ovid's permanent relegation implied loss of civic rights.' In the *Tristia*, Ovid does explicitly explain that he is relegated rather than exiled (*Tr*. 2.131–38, 5.2.55–62, 5.11.21–22), even rebuking a detractor who calls him an *exul* rather than a *relegatus* (*Tr*. 5.11.29–30). Alongside exile and relegation there existed the punishments of inscription and proscription, and medieval commentators used Ovid to illustrate the differences between the four types of banishment (see Chapter 2).

[7] The assertion that the cause of his exile was a mistake rather than a crime is repeated throughout the exile poetry (see, for instance, *Tr*. 4.10.89–90: 'the cause of the exile decreed me is an error, and no crime', *causam . . . errorem iussae, non scelus, esse fugae*; and see also *Pont*. 1.6.25–26). I discuss the ambiguity surrounding the *error* in Chapter 1.

[8] Particularly vivid evidence of this is in *ex Ponto* 3.3, in which Ovid relates Love appearing to him in a dream. Ovid reproaches Love for leading him away from epic poetry (*Pont*. 3.3.29–38, with reference to *Am*. 1.1–4), and references the *Ars* ('by my "Art"', *Artibus*, *Pont*. 3.3.38), 'for which the reward of exile was meted out to wretched me' (*pro quibus exilium misero est mihi reddita merces*, *Pont*. 3.3.39).

[9] On the development of Augustus' political views, see Feeney (1992). Rudd (1976: 12) speculates that Augustus was angry not only that Ovid had written about sex but also that he had done so in a way which mocked his regime.

[10] The riddle of the *error* is by now well-rehearsed in scholarship: the best overview remains Thibault (1964). The mystery of Ovid's exile continues to capture our imagination: one fringe theory posits that Ovid was not exiled at all, and the exile poetry is a poetic exercise, as suggested by Fitton Brown (1985) and J. J. Hartman (see Van der Velden 2020). The question is debated in Little (1990).

[11] *Cur aliquid vidi? cur noxia lumina feci? | cur imprudenti cognita culpa mihi? | inscius Actaeon vidit sine veste Dianam: | praeda fuit canibus non minus ille suis*, *Tr*. 2.103–6. See also *Tr*. 3.5.49–50 for a direct reference to Ovid unwittingly witnessing a crime.

There is enough here to indicate that the reader should not necessarily take these lines as unaltered historical fact, with its overwrought rhetorical devices and the grandeur of a mythological comparison. Whatever Ovid saw, whatever crime or mistake he committed, he was relegated, and despite penning his exile poetry and begging for an imperial pardon, he remained there until his death in AD 17 or 18. The succession of Tiberius upon Augustus' death in AD 14 was not enough to recall him, and there is no evidence that Ovid ever returned to Rome.[12]

The only contemporary witnesses to Ovid's exile are the poems which he wrote while in Tomis, namely the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto* (collections of letters from Ovid in exile in five and four books, respectively) and the *Ibis* (a curse-poem addressed to an enemy).[13] Several points here form an overview of the aspects which are particularly relevant to medieval responses to Ovid in exile: their epistolary form and central concerns; Ovid's contradictions and ambiguities, as well as the question of the truth of the poetry and Ovidian sincerity; how the exile poetry relates to the genre of autobiography; and the exile poetry's links with his pre-exilic works, especially the *Heroides*.

The *Tristia* and *ex Ponto* are both collections of letters in verse, each epistle a *sermo absentis* which emphasises Ovid's distance from his homeland, friends and family. Their epistolary form is important, and medieval writings on the *ars dictaminis* also highlight the absence embedded in letters: John of Salisbury, for instance, writes in the twelfth century that letters 'communicate, without emitting a sound, the utterances of those who are absent'.[14] Ovid's two collections of letters are formally, stylistically and thematically extremely similar.[15] Ovid himself remarks in the first poem of *ex Ponto*, addressed to Brutus, that:

> You will find, though the title implies no sorrow, that this work is not less sad than that which I sent before – in theme the same, in title different.[16]

[12] In Chapter 3, I explore some medieval accounts in which Ovid does return to Rome, although these do not appear as frequently as other theories about his exile.

[13] The earliest external references are by Statius and Pliny the Elder in the first century AD. Stat., *Silv.* 1.2.254–55 (Shackleton Bailey 2003a: 60–61) refers to Ovid in Tomis, and Plin., *HN* 32.152 (Jones 1963: 558–59) refers to Ovid writing from the Black Sea at the end of his life. As well as these explicit references, Hinds (2011: 61–66) explores the '*im*plicit life of Ovid's exile in the first-century imagination' (Hinds 2011: 61, emphasis in original), especially in Seneca and Martial.

[14] John of Salisbury, *Metalogicon* 1.13 (McGarry 1955: 38), where John is drawing on Isidore, *Etym.* 1.3.1 (Barney et al. 2006: 39). On the epistolary form in the Middle Ages, including the influence of Ovid's *Heroides*, see Spearing (2005: 211–47).

[15] On the stylistic overlap between the two collections, see Nagy (2023: 1187).

[16] *invenies, quamvis non est miserabilis index,* | *non minus hoc illo triste, quod ante dedi.* | *rebus idem, titulo differt*, *Pont.* 1.1.15–17.

In the *ex Ponto*, the addressees of each letter are named, while in the *Tristia* they are not. The ultimate addressee behind all of these letters is the emperor Augustus, who alone can grant Ovid reprieve from his exile.[17] Ovid often asks the recipients of his poetry to petition Augustus on his behalf (for instance, with detailed instructions at *Pont.* 1.2.101–50), while at other times he dispenses with an intermediary and addresses the emperor directly (as at *Tr.* 2.27, where he addresses 'merciful Caesar', *mitissime Caesar*).[18] One medieval *accessus* to the *Tristia* summarises that 'the title [*Tristia*] was given to the work for the reason that its author was living in sadness' (*huic operi titulus a causa inponitur, eo quod eius auctor in tristicia versabatur*).[19]

The *Tristia* and *ex Ponto* focus largely on Ovid's plight in exile, from the perilous journey taken to reach Tomis (described throughout *Tristia* 1) to Ovid's various hardships, including the cold weather, the barren land, his barbaric neighbours, the decline of his proficiency in Latin and so on.[20] These adversities suffered by Ovid and his loathing of Tomis are often compared with the Rome which Ovid misses – so Ovid asks, 'What is better than Rome? What worse than the cold of Scythia?' (*quid melius Roma? Scythico quid frigore peius?*, *Pont.* 1.3.37), two questions which might be said to encapsulate the exile poetry. Recurring topics throughout are Ovid's pleas for imperial clemency, the act of writing in exile, his exile as a living death and reflections on his past.[21] He frequently appeals to posterity, and for the positive and eternal reception of his works,

[17] Martelli (2013: 193) takes the alternate view that Augustus is the implicated *author* of the *ex Ponto*, since Ovid suppresses his own authorial identity.

[18] Medieval *accessus* also framed the recipients of these poems as intermediaries between Ovid and Augustus, as in one typical *accessus* to the *ex Ponto*: 'its utility is very great, if he can secure Augustus' pardon by the intervention of his friends to whom he sends these epistles' (*utilitas est maxima, si possit misericordiam consequi apud Octavianum Cesarem intercessione amicorum suorum quibus mittit ipsas epistolas*, Huygens 1970: 35).

[19] Found in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 19475 (saec. XII, Tegernsee), fol. 6$^{v}$, text reproduced here as found in Huygens (1970: 35). There is a more recent edition and translation of Munich Clm 19475 in Wheeler (2015).

[20] Ovid's journey to Tomis and his representation of storms at sea are discussed in Bate (2004) and Ingleheart (2006). His complaints about Tomis are particularly numerous in *Pont.* 3.8, where he bemoans Tomis' barrenness and lack of culture. Many of Ovid's claims, including those listed here, are exaggerated, and I discuss the function of such distortions in Chapter 1.

[21] Ovid pleads for Augustus' mercy, for example, at *Tr.* 2.27–28. He writes even during his perilous journey to Tomis (*Tr.* 1.11.17–18) and reflects on why he writes at *Pont.* 1.5.29–52. On Ovid's exile as a living death, see Nagle (1980: 22–32) and Grebe (2010), and for examples in the exile poetry, *Tr.* 1.4.27–28 and *Pont.* 3.4.75–76. Ovid's reflection on his life and works before exile are most sustained in *Tristia* 2, an extended defence of his works, and *Tristia* 4.10, an account of his life from birth to exile.

a feature particularly important for later medieval poets articulating their own desires for literary immortality.[22]

The tone of the exile poetry is difficult to pin down, not least because Ovid actively encourages contradictions, ambiguities and ironies in his works. Is he, for example, the suppliant Roman citizen, deferential before Augustus' wrath, power and mercy?[23] Or is he the masterful *praeceptor*, authoritative and proud of his poetry, masking this pride with empty humility? At the end of *Tristia* 3.7, Ovid boldly declares that Augustus has no power over his genius (*Tr.* 3.7.47–48), but at the beginning of the very next letter, Ovid encourages himself to worship Augustus, who is divine and powerful (*Tr.* 3.8.13–14). In *Tristia* 2, Ovid is further put in a position which continually threatens to contradict itself, in his extended case for his return to Rome. He defends his amatory poetry but must defer to Augustus' choice to exile him; he therefore only criticises the grounds for his exile, not the authority of the emperor.[24] These contradictions are partly due to the competing functions and audiences of the exile poetry. On the one hand, Ovid must attend to his current situation, addressing his friends and the emperor in an effort to ensure his recall from exile: in this sense, he must be politically sensitive and subservient. On the other hand, he is intent on establishing his poetic immortality and moulding his future reception, requiring a direct address to posterity ('listen, posterity', *accipe posteritas*, *Tr.* 4.10.2) and an emphasis on the quality of his work.

Two questions related to the shifting tone of the exile poetry emerge here, often debated and particularly relevant to this book: how sincere is Ovid in the exilic works? And how *true* is the exile poetry? Edward Kennard Rand memorably claimed that 'There is genuine grief and repentance beneath the badinage' in the exile poems, although scholarship has since found such trust in reading clear authorial feelings and intentions behind a literary work rather unfashionable.[25] Many of Ovid's complaints, lamentations and even his references to geographical locations are deeply

[22] This is often by way of the conventional *sphragis*, an authorial appeal to eternal renown, and through extended questions about his immediate and future audiences.

[23] Augustus is at times a tyrant full of divine wrath (hurling down lightning bolts upon his subjects at *Pont.* 1.2.126 and an angry, wounded god at *Tr.* 1.5.84) but at other times a merciful ruler with a great capacity for clemency and a reputation for mildness (as at *Tr.* 1.9.23–26, 2.27–28, 4.4.13, 5.8.25–26). See Dowling (2006: 105–22) on Ovid and the *Clementia Augusti*. On the representation of Augustus in Ovid's exile poetry, see McGowan (2009: 63–92).

[24] On reading the tone of *Tristia* 2, see Gibson (1999).

[25] Rand (1925: 94). A recent turn in medieval scholarship is seeing a relaxation of the stringent distinction between author and poetic persona: Sobecki (2023: 540), for instance, reads Thomas in Hoccleve's *Series* as 'an extension of Hoccleve's biological, indexical self . . . the former must represent the identity of the latter'.

conventional, as are his appeals to posterity.[26] But this conventionality does not have to negate possible sincerity. The notion that only originality can engender sincerity is a more modern idea than any found in ancient or medieval literature, and conventional does not necessarily mean impersonal or negating the autobiographical.[27] For instance, in medieval literature – and I am thinking especially here of medieval lyric poetry – we find that artifice can represent a type of sincerity, and even further, that convention might better articulate sincerity than originality.[28] Ovid's exile poetry might not represent Ovid's personal sincerity, but it '*creates the effect* of sincerity intertextually', as Paul Allen Miller has perceptively argued.[29] Mary H. T. Davisson has also argued that the very use of convention in Ovid's exile poetry serves to underscore the uniqueness of Ovid's situation.[30] Ovid himself implicitly poses the question of whether the sincerity he articulates is a poetic or personal type of authenticity, as much as those categories can be distinguished: he simultaneously suggests *and* displaces the connection between the emotions expressed in the exile poetry and the historical individual. The second part of this book in particular explores how medieval poets approached and absorbed Ovid's capacity for linking, but never conclusively defining, the poetic and the personal. With respect to the question of Ovidian sincerity, medieval poets (especially Geoffrey Chaucer) seem less concerned with whether Ovid 'actually meant it' and more invested in the practice of producing an evasive authorial presence. The ambiguity of Ovidian sincerity is appealing in itself.

On the truth of Ovid's exile, we arrive at the question of the exile poetry as 'autobiography'. Ovid as a real poet and his poetic persona clearly blur in his exile poetry: in Chapter 3, I discuss Ovid's insistent linking of his life and work and medieval responses to this connection. His mode of life-writing, however, does not fit with modern terminologies of selfhood. 'Autobiography' does not fit, a modern term which carries connotations of some form of truth, or at least an awareness from the author that the truth matters.[31] We could attempt to find moments of verifiable truth in

[26] See Davisson (1983).

[27] Burrow (1982: 393) famously argued in the context of medieval literature that 'convention and autobiographical truth [do not need] to be taken as incompatible alternatives'.

[28] Spearing (2005: 35) notes the paradox of the *dit*, for instance, which 'purports to be the utterance of a single speaker, expressing his own experience, yet it incorporates much material originating outside that experience, and it exists only in writing' (and see also Spearing 2004, 2005: 174–210).

[29] Miller (2004: 213, my italics).

[30] Davisson (1983).

[31] On autobiography up to the present day, see Wagner-Egelhaaf (2019), including a chapter on Ovid, autobiography and the *Tristia* (Möller 2019). Kaufmann (2022) has compared the ways in which Latin poets represented themselves, including Ovid in the *Tristia*.

the exile poems. For example: if we accept that Ovid was in fact relegated to Tomis, then there will be some genuine aspects to the poems. He must have made a journey to Tomis, as he relates in the *Tristia*; but was there a storm? How fierce? And which route did he take?[32] Asking these questions is no longer particularly fashionable: it is clearly not Ovid's intention to relate a factual account of his exile, nor is he bound by a modern binary between truth and fiction.[33] The point is neatly articulated by P. A. Rosenmeyer, who argues that 'truth and fiction . . . function less as polar opposites and more as points on a continuum' in the exile poetry.[34] The more neutral (albeit more vague, and less emphatic) terms 'life-writing' and 'self-writing' have since come into vogue as a way of describing how ancient and medieval authors thought about the versions of their selves in their work.[35]

Of the ways in which we could write about writing the premodern self, Nora Goldschmidt's work on 'biofiction' is most applicable to Ovid, not least because much of her work is tested against him and his poetry.[36] Roman poets, Goldschmidt argues, established a mode of writing in which they 'inscribed their own self-consciously constructed life narratives into their works', thus demanding that their works be read in terms of their life.[37] The concept is particularly fruitful for a medieval reading of Ovid's exile poetry since they *did* read classical works in terms of their authors' lives, in the *accessus* which preceded ancient texts and in the genre of the *vita auctoris*, both of which are examined in Chapter 2. In Chapter 1, I explore how Ovid wrote about himself and his experience, modes of sincerity and literary tradition, the exile poetry's relation to truth and its particular voice. Part II of this book is concerned with how medieval poets revoiced such a complex personal voice, especially within the medieval constructs of authority and experience.

While Ovid's exile poetry is deeply connected to the entirety of his poetic corpus (to the *Ars* as a palinode, to the *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti* through his textual revisions, and so on), the poems from exile are most linked to his *Heroides*, Ovid's collection of letters written as though by

[32] Maps of Ovid's journey into exile were made in the Middle Ages: Hiatt (2012) identifies one fifteenth-century map which traces Ovid's itinerary in *Tristia* 1.10 and describes such maps as 'visual glosses to the text' (Hiatt 2012: 33), a fascinating and unusual medieval response to Ovid's exile.

[33] This binary is increasingly being tested in modern biography, as with Turner's (2023) biography of Chaucer's Wife of Bath, a fictional character.

[34] Rosenmeyer (1997: 51).

[35] On life-writing, see Winstead (2018), and Zak (2012: 486–88) writes on Ovid's self-writing in *Tristia* 4.10.

[36] Goldschmidt (2019). [37] Goldschmidt (2019: 3).

famous female figures who have been abandoned by their male lover (in *Her*. 1–15), and in the 'double letters' (*Her*. 16–21), paired letters between male abandoner and the woman abandoned. The connections between the exile poetry and the *Heroides* were particularly important for medieval respondents and are therefore deserving of mention here. For starters, the 'double letters' were likely written in exile, immediately blurring the boundaries of what we term the 'pre' and 'post' exilic poetry, since the *Heroides* are usually considered with the pre-exilic corpus.[38] More importantly, however, the *Heroides* are epistolary, formally connecting them to the *Tristia* and *ex Ponto*; and in the exile poetry, Ovid consciously casts himself in the mould of an abandoned Heroidean woman, particularly from the single letters.[39] While he makes frequent comparisons between himself and other historical and mythological figures (especially Ulysses), the more fundamental comparison is in Ovid adopting personae, tone and forms of expression from the *Heroides*.[40] Across the *Heroides*, the female narrators weep as they write – Briseis, for instance, opens her letter to Achilles with 'whatever blots you shall see, her tears have made' (*quascumque adspicies, lacrimae fecere lituras*, *Her*. 3.3).[41] The similarities with the opening of the *Tristia* are clear, as Ovid encourages his book: 'do not be ashamed of blots; he who sees them will feel that they were caused by my tears' (*neve liturarum pudeat; qui viderit illas, | de lacrimis factas sentiet esse meis*, *Tr*. 1.1.13–14), and as in the *Heroides*, the theme recurs throughout both poetry collections from exile, typically at the beginning of each letter.[42] Many of the overlapping aspects from the *Heroides* to the exilic works, like the 'weeping as I write' convention, intersect with Ovid's

[38] Both the authorship and the dating of the double *Heroides* have been debated. Most now conclude that they are genuinely Ovidian and were composed in exile. Heyworth (2016: 143–48) summarises the scholarly shift in the last twenty years in reading the double epistles as authentic and written in Tomis, and Nagy (2023: 1196) concludes from stylometric analysis that the double *Heroides* were written in exile.

[39] On these connections, see Rosenmeyer (1997).

[40] In the *ex Ponto*, Ovid lists other historical and mythological figures of exile (*Pont*. 1.3.61–80), concluding that even if he listed every exile, 'none in any age has ever been assigned to a more forbidding place so far from his native land' (*nulli datus omnibus aevis | tam procul a patria est horridiorve locus*, *Pont*. 1.3.83–84). He compares himself to Ulysses at *Tr*. 1.5.57–84, 3.11.61; elsewhere, he compares himself to Homer (*Tr*. 1.1.47) and Bacchus (*Tr*. 5.3.25–28). Forbis (1997: 259–62) also argues that Ovid writes himself as Philomela from the *Metamorphoses*. On Ovid's self-mythologising, see Claassen (1999a: 68–72) and McGowan (2009: 169–201).

[41] Other examples of the 'weeping as I write' trope can be found in *Her*. 4.175–76, 7.185–86, 15.7–8, 15.97–98.

[42] See also *Tr*. 1.3.4, 3.1.15–16, 4.1.95–96, 5.1.5–6, 5.4.3–6, and *Pont*. 1.9.1–2, 4.11.9–10. Claassen (1999b: 157–59) lists examples of Ovidian exilic vocabulary which derive from the *Heroides*, several of which depict Ovid and the Heroidean women as tearful.

authorial presence in the exile poetry. When medieval authors then came to revoice Ovid, they were therefore confronted with a voice which was already actively revoicing itself, and the embedded connections between Ovid's pre- and post-exilic poetry meant that Ovid's exile poetry had to be considered a fundamental aspect of Ovid in the Middle Ages.

Ovid's self-modelling as a female figure from his previous poetry – and mythologising himself in the same moment – is complex, with various implications for the medieval responses it engendered. In Chapter 5, I examine how John Gower inhabits Ovidian exile, including those aspects which derive from the *Heroides*. In Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, which I discuss in Chapter 6, the central figure of Criseyde is ultimately derived from Briseis in *Heroides* 3 – and yet it is Troilus who inhabits an Ovidian mode, lamenting and weeping after Criseyde's abandonment. The *Prologue* to *The Legend of Good Women* takes its cues from Ovid's exile poetry, I argue, while the tales comprising the *Legend* are directly adapted from the *Heroides* (with the epistolary form removed): the *Legend* as a whole, therefore, demonstrates Chaucer's sophisticated understanding of the relationship between the exile poetry and the *Heroides*. Overall, while Ovid's intertextual allusions in the exile poetry all filter through to the Middle Ages in some way, it is the links to the *Heroides* which are most fundamentally felt in later Middle English poetry.

I have not yet mentioned the *Ibis*, which of Ovid's exile poetry is altogether different, in style a stand-alone Callimachean curse-poem attacking a single, unnamed enemy. The title refers to the Egyptian bird – one medieval *accessus* calls the ibis 'a most foul bird' (*avis sordidissima*), where the common interpretation of the ibis as an unhygienic animal reflects the curse-poem's distaste for its subject.[43] In the *Ibis*, Ovid hurls invective after invective against his enemy in a poetic onslaught, expressed by way of complex and abstruse allusions to mythological figures and events (the Callimachean style of ambiguity or convolutions, *ambages*, *Ib*. 59). The tone of the poem is therefore notably different from the *Tristia* and *ex Ponto*, although there are thematic overlaps in their focus on wrongs committed against Ovid, as well as a certain playfulness in the *Ibis*' insistence on the reader solving the poem's puzzles.[44] The *Tristia*, *ex*

[43] La Penna (1959: 3). Medieval *accessus* drew several connections between the ibis and Ovid's subject matter. In Paris, BnF, MS lat. 7994 (saec. XIII), an *accessus* to the *Ars*, an extended introduction to the *Ibis* compares the envy embodied by Ovid's enemy with the ibis's distinctive red, white and black colouring, as well as its habit of using its beak to clean (Ghisalberti 1946: 48).

[44] Bing (1995) terms the game of supplementation *Ergänzungsspiel*, a mode familiar from Hellenistic epigrams.

*Ponto* and *Ibis* are linked by the fact that they were all written in exile, and on at least one occasion in the Middle Ages they are confused. In one early fourteenth-century manuscript, the title 'the first book of Ovid's *Ibis*' (*liber primus Ouidii in imbiim*) appears above the *Tristia* rather than the *Ibis*.[45] Of all Ovid's exile poetry, the *Ibis* has been least discussed in relation to its medieval responses, despite the abundant and rigorous late antique and medieval scholia which it attracted.[46] Although I consider all three poems Ovid's 'exile poetry' and demonstrate that they all impacted the medieval reception of Ovid, in this study I generally treat the *Ibis* separately.[47]

These three texts are the primary corpus of what we call Ovid's 'exile poetry'. Scholarly attitudes to the exile poetry have changed dramatically, in both classical and medieval literary studies. Historically, the exile poetry suffered the labels of repetitiveness and tediousness.[48] Like the medieval responses which I discuss in this book, these attitudes can be traced back to Ovid himself. Pre-empting his readers' complaints, he declares: '"but", [you say], "they [the poems] are poor stuff". I admit it' (*'at mala sunt'. fateor*, *Tr*. 5.1.69), although he implies that this is due to unworkable conditions ('they are not more barbarous than the place of their origin', *non sunt illa suo barbariora loco*, *Tr*. 5.1.72).[49] 'It has been common practice', R. J. Dickinson summarised in 1973, 'to regard the *Tristia* as poor stuff, the long melancholy complaint of a poet whose vitality had flagged when he was exiled, but whose capacity for self-pity had grown proportionately'.[50] This can no longer be said to be the case, and Ovid in exile has benefited from the continued interest in Ovidian poetry, the emergence of reception studies and the interest in the medieval perception

[45] Transcribed as found in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. F.1.17 (saec. XIV$^{in}$), fol. 193$^{v}$. The work is the *Tristia* as far as *Tr*. 4.3.82 (fols 193$^{v}$–207$^{v}$). The manuscript also contains, in the same hand, Ovid's *Heroides*, a partial *ex Ponto*, the *Amores*, *Ars* and *Metamorphoses*: Ovid was clearly a known entity to the scribe. In Chapter 6, I propose this manuscript as an example of the type of manuscript to which Chaucer would have had access.

[46] I discuss the *Ibis* primarily in Chapters 2 and 3, and see further Menmuir (2021).

[47] There is scant evidence, for instance, that Gower or Chaucer (the subjects of Chapters 5 and 6) read the *Ibis*. Given the nature of its circulation, I find it unlikely that either would *not* have known or had access to the *Ibis*, but they do not draw on it as they do the *Tristia* and *ex Ponto*. The *Ibis* does stand alongside the other exile poetry in the commentary, glossing and *accessus* traditions: see Chapter 2.

[48] This has not been universal opinion throughout the ages: Walahfrid Strabo (d. AD 849), for instance, opines that Ovid *perfected* his poetic gift in exile, although Hexter (2002b: 420) suggests that Strabo may have been idealising Ovid's exile from a perspective favouring monastic withdrawal.

[49] Elsewhere, Ovid draws attention to the fact that 'I write so often of the same things' (*totiens eadem dicam*, *Pont*. 3.9.39).

[50] Dickinson (1973: 186). See, as an example, Wilkinson (1955: 360), who views the poems as monotonous.

of the classics over the last fifty years, meaning that the exile poetry is treated as complex and worthy of study, if still underrepresented in studies of Ovid and the Middle Ages.[51]

## Which Ovid? An Overview of Ovid(s) in the Middle Ages

Throughout late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, Ovid remained known, if not widely read and transmitted.[52] The ascension of his star began in earnest from the twelfth century onwards, and by the fifteenth century, his texts and life staked an enormous claim to the Western medieval imagination. Alongside increased production of Ovid's works, a vast body of Ovidiana was created and circulated: commentaries, *accessus*, Lives, moralisations and pseudo-Ovids, all of which came to influence how Ovid and his poetry were perceived, and which shaped the medieval responses I explore in this book. Here, I outline the various types of Ovid that a medieval audience would expect to encounter in the later Middle Ages, as well as the complexity of the medieval Ovidian tradition. While Ovidian exile forms just one part of this tradition, it is intrinsically linked to the wider understanding of Ovid in the Middle Ages, and responses to his exile often combine, collaborate or compete with references to other aspects of medieval Ovidiana.

The increasing interest in Ovid in the twelfth century coincided with, and was propelled by, the 'twelfth-century renaissance'.[53] During this time, both in England and on the continent (with significant literary and intellectual networks between the two), there was a significant increase in the production of manuscripts, centres of learning emerged, universities developed and new forms of disseminating and interpreting knowledge evolved. *Accessus*, *florilegia*, commentaries and omnibus editions grew in popularity, fragmenting and altering the dynamic between text and respondent (as I explore in Chapter 2). Along with an upsurge in interest in Ovid and classical Latin writers, new translations of Greek and Arabic texts into Latin became available, including Aristotle, Avicenna and

[51] These categories converge, I would argue, in Hexter (2006), which illustrates the uses of reception using Ovid as the central example. Important scholarship on Ovid's exile poetry includes Hexter (1986), Williams (1994, 1996), Claassen (1999a), McGowan (2009) and Ingleheart (2011).

[52] I sketch a history of the material transmission of Ovid before the twelfth century in Chapter 2 and discuss some pre-twelfth century poets who engage with the exilic Ovid in Chapter 4.

[53] On the twelfth-century renaissance, see Benson and Constable with Lanham (1982).

Maimonides, all of whom came to dramatically change intellectual thought and culture in the Western Middle Ages.

In this context, the growing interest in Ovid from the twelfth century onwards might be seen as a feature of the general intellectual changes and increasing engagement with the classics in an expanding variety of forms. And yet Ovid was in many ways the centre of the literary scene of the European twelfth century, or as Jeffrey M. Hunt, R. Alden Smith and Fabio Stok argue, 'Literary culture in the late medieval period was . . . characterized by a desire for the works of Ovid'.[54] Kathryn L. McKinley has demonstrated the proliferation of Ovidian manuscripts in England between AD 1100 and AD 1500, often with as many manuscripts of the exile poetry in circulation as the amatory poetry.[55] As well as the increase in individual manuscripts of Ovidian works, Ovidian anthologies began to be formed. The great collection of *accessus* found in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 19475 (saec. XII, Tegernsee) contains more Ovidian *accessus* than those of any other authority included in the anthology, with ten different *accessus* to the seven major elegiac works of Ovid.[56] Munich Clm 19475 is the earliest extant anthology of *accessus* of its kind, and subsequently it became common to anthologise Ovidian *accessus*.[57] Excerpts from across Ovid's poetry are found in the popular form of the *florilegium*, especially in the *Florilegium Angelicum* and *Florilegium Gallicum*, and omnibus editions of Ovid's poetry became popular by the end of the twelfth century.[58] From the twelfth century onwards, in short, Ovid was in high demand, from the pulpit to the schoolroom, and was circulated in several forms.

As well as these formal differences in encountering Ovid in the Middle Ages, there is also the question: which *type* of Ovid?[59] Typically, Ovid has been divided into three parts: the mythographer, the lover and the exile. These boundaries, however, were extremely porous, and moreover there are other types of Ovid which do not fit in any of these three categories. Ralph Hexter, who wrote on Ovid as the tripartite 'exile, mythographer, lover', later commented that he 'somewhat arbitrarily constructed a triple focus . . . Perhaps the best that can be said about this strategy is its very arbitrariness.'[60] It is not possible or even particularly desirable to disentangle one 'Ovid' from the other, and it is my intention here to demonstrate

[54] Hunt, Smith and Stok (2017: 135). [55] McKinley (1998). [56] Edited in Wheeler (2015).
[57] Wheeler (2015: 10). [58] *Florilegia* and omnibuses are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.
[59] The question of 'which Ovid?' has been asked elsewhere, most recently by Van Peteghem (2020) in her study of Ovid in medieval Italy.
[60] Hexter (2002b) writes with this triple focus, and the quotation is from Hexter (2006: 31).

that the exilic poetry is an important connecting link between the various types of Ovid found throughout the Middle Ages.[61]

Of the three types of Ovid enumerated here, the mythographer is the author of the *Metamorphoses*, commonly referred to as *Ovidius maior* or *Ovidius magnus* in the Middle Ages for its total pre-eminence in the medieval construction of the classics.[62] While this book is about the exiled Ovid, it must be noted that the *Metamorphoses* eclipses Ovid's other poetry in terms of transmission and related Ovidiana (in particular, its commentaries and moralisations).[63] This aspect of Ovid – learned, encyclopaedic, edifying – was particularly useful in the schoolroom, in the world of glossing, commenting and learning about classical civilisation and mythography.[64] The lover-Ovid is the *praeceptor amoris* (or *magister amoris*) of the *Ars* and *Amores* especially, the salacious, harmful, infamous erotodidact who inspired so much ire in the Middle Ages.[65] And there is the Ovid of exile, the subject of the present study, often framed as repentant (and, as such, the *Remedia amoris* is sometimes grouped with the exile poetry) and as a model for writing both sorrow and the self.

Other Ovids still abounded in the later medieval period, eschewing this tripartite structure. There are allegorised and moralised Ovids, which (as Jamie C. Fumo accuses of Pierre Bersuire's *Ovidius moralizatus*) '[stretch] Ovid in moralistic directions he has no business going', also putting pressure on the category of the 'mythographer'.[66] *Ovidius philosophus*, the philosopher Ovid, is related to the mythographer but is also a distinct entity, and Paule Demats has further divided this version of Ovid into three smaller parts (the ethical, the philosophical and the theological).[67] The Middle Ages further saw an explosion of pseudo-Ovidiana, ranging from imitations of Ovid to full-blown forgeries.[68] Pseudo-Ovids are woven into the genuine Ovidian

[61] The exilic Ovid has been linked with other types of Ovid in criticism, as in Lyne (2002), who connects Ovid in exile with the amatory Ovid.

[62] On the *Metamorphoses* and the works it inspired in the medieval schoolroom, see Zeeman (2009), Coulson (2011) and Wetherbee (2012). *Ovidius maior* is presumably based on Ovid's description of the *Metamorphoses* of his 'greater work', as in *Tristia* 2 where he directs Augustus to 'examine the greater work' (*inspice maius opus*, *Tr.* 2.63). The title *Ovidius magnus* is more commonly found in medieval catalogues, as in the AD 1247 inventory in Cambridge, Trinity College R.5.33 (saec. XIII/XIV), fol. 104$^{r}$ (see McKinley 1998: 56).

[63] McKinley (1998: 80) lists fifty-two known manuscripts of the *Metamorphoses* in England from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries (including glosses, commentaries and moralisations), compared with seventeen of the *ex Ponto* and ten of the *Tristia*.

[64] For instance, the only Ovid listed in the AD 1358 bequest to the Almonry school at St Paul's is the *Metamorphoses* (see the full inventory in Rickert 1931–1932: 265–70), and see also Zeeman (2009).

[65] See Desmond (2014). [66] Fumo (2014: 122).

[67] Demats (1973: 107–77). On Ovid and philosophy, see Williams and Volk (2022).

[68] See Hexter, Pfuntner and Haynes (2020) for an edition and translation of medieval pseudo-Ovidiana, as well as Knox (2009) and Hexter (2011). Of these pseudotexts, I discuss only the *Nux*

canon in medieval catalogues and omnibus editions of Ovid which incorporate these texts, and the tendency of the pseudonymous works to cite genuine Ovid further complicates our understanding of who Ovid is, and what he represents, in the period.[69]

Ovid in exile, and his exile poetry, is another strand of the medieval Ovid, and a particularly important one since it helped to reconcile the different strands of his career throughout the Middle Ages. With the exile poetry, medieval respondents were able to arrange an Ovid coherent in himself and cohering with a medieval Christian approach (the latter of which enabled medieval audiences to read even the most immoral Ovidian poetry as edifying). Ovid is, after all, the author of provocative verses which offended Roman women (according to medieval *accessus*) and caused his exile – enough cause for him to be struck off medieval reading lists, as he was at the University of Oxford in the fourteenth century.[70] But, crucially, the fact of his exile means that he was punished for these crimes during his lifetime, and the exile poetry is a testament to the suffering Ovid experienced (or reports that he experienced) in Tomis. I argue in this book, particularly in Chapter 3, that this life narrative creates a powerful penitential arc which enabled medieval respondents to assimilate Ovid into a contemporary Christian framework and to connect the different versions of Ovid. His exile, and his exile poetry, is a necessary aspect of the entire Ovid which completes the life of the author and could even justify the use of his poetry. The exile poetry, then, was placed in the 'good' category of Ovid's works, but it also intrinsically links the good and the bad, since the 'good' (the exile poetry) could only emerge as a result of the 'bad' (the amatory poetry which forced his relegation).

The question of 'which Ovid?' is complicated by the complexity, vastness and non-linearity of the medieval Ovidian tradition, making it

and *De vetula* in any detail, since both are directly concerned with Ovid's exile: see Chapter 2 and the Epilogue.

[69] Genuine and pseudo-Ovidian works are listed together, for instance, in Cambridge, CUL, MS Ii.3.12 (saec. XII, AD 1170), a listing of the 'Old Catalogue' at Christ Church, Canterbury, which includes the *Ibis*, the *Heroides*, and an incomplete *Tristia* – but also the pseudo-Ovidian *De nuce* (*Nux*), *De pulice* and *De sompno*. *De vetula* often refers to genuine Ovidian texts: see, for instance, *DV* 3.42–43, when 'Ovid' directs the reader to consult 'in my greater book' (*in maiore meo . . . libro*, that is, the *Metamorphoses*), and cites *Met*. 1.72–73 at *DV* 3.44–45 (Hexter, Pfuntner and Haynes 2020: 246). *De vetula*'s tendency to cite Ovid is discussed further in the Epilogue.

[70] The speculation that Ovid offended Roman women is a common reason given for his exile in medieval *accessus* (see, for instance, Huygens 1970: 35). Ovid's *Amores* 1.8 and the Ovid-inspired erotic comedy *Pamphilus* were banned from the University of Oxford in AD 1344, although they continued to be read and used (see Gibson 1931: 173 and McKinley 1998: 43).

impossible to concretely disentangle one Ovid from the other. At its root this is encouraged by Ovid himself, a profoundly intertextual poet who often referred to and revised his other works, fond of redefining one poem in another one, and with a propensity for listing his other works in his poems.[71] Perhaps given licence by this invitation to plurality of interpretation, the later Middle Ages saw such a boom in Ovid and related Ovidiana that these texts became reflexive, authenticating Ovidian texts even as Ovid remained the ultimate *auctor* of the medieval works. Manuscripts of Ovid were cumulatively glossed over the centuries, adding multiple layers to Ovidian exegesis; moralised rewritings became the immediate sources for poets such as Chaucer and Gower; and *accessus* read before the text shaped how Ovid's poetry would be interpreted.[72] In particular, commentaries and allegories indelibly altered how Ovid's poetry was read. Parts of John of Garland's *Integumenta Ovidii* found their way into 'virtually every glossed manuscript of the [*Metamorphoses*] during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries', according to Frank T. Coulson.[73] The idea of 'Ovid' was necessarily shaped by what a medieval audience *wanted* Ovid to be as much as what he actually presented in his writing. This reflexivity is best articulated by Christopher Baswell in his study of Virgil in medieval England:

> [S]o Virgil escaped *his* writings in the Middle Ages, and there arose manifold versions of 'Virgil', and manifold versions of his works, which in turn came to precondition any reading of the prior Latin text.[74]

In the same way, these multiple versions of Ovid (both in the sense of the mythographer, lover, exile paradigm and in the differing forms of Ovid) came to influence each other and Ovid himself. 'Which Ovid?' can easily be answered in this book as 'the exilic Ovid', but the question itself encourages a fragmentation which medieval respondents may have attempted – as numerous examples in this book show – but which was not wholly possible.

[71] In *Tristia* 2, for instance, Ovid insists that Augustus has misinterpreted his work, and that it must be understood as an encomium for the emperor (*Tr.* 2.63–65). Such revisions are discussed further in Chapter 1.

[72] The Ceyx and Alcyone passage in Chaucer's *The Book of the Duchess*, for instance, draws from the *Ovide moralisé* more than it does from *Metamorphoses* 11 (see Minnis 1982: 17–19, and on Chaucer and the *Ovide moralisé* see Meech 1931 and Delany 1968). Gower's use of Bersuire's *Ovidius moralizatus*, particularly in the *Confessio Amantis*, is discussed in Mainzer (1972).

[73] Coulson (2011: 64), and see Gervais (2022). Harbert (1988: 83) envisions an Ovid who arrives to his medieval readers 'disguised beyond recognition, encrusted in an integument of allegorisation'.

[74] Baswell (1995: 16).

## Ovid's Ethical Credentials

In almost every *accessus* to Ovid of the Middle Ages, the question will be asked: under which branch of learning is the work placed (*cui parti philosophiae subponitur*)? Invariably, the answer will be that the work belongs to ethics (*ethicae subponitur*), as was the answer for several classical works.[75] But how could Ovid's work, especially the *Ars* and *Amores*, be considered ethical, or otherwise relate to ethics? No other classical poet, with the exception of perhaps Horace, posed such a threat to the conventional justification of ancients work as ethical in the later Middle Ages.[76] Ovid's paganism and his erotic poetry – his unchristian life and immoral works – were distinctly at odds with medieval Christian teachings, and his works were criticised and even banned on these grounds; and yet medieval audiences read Ovid, medieval teachers taught using Ovid and medieval poets thought via Ovid. Over and over again, we see respondents striking a fine balance between condemning Ovid and the continued justification of engaging with him (while covertly, it seems, enjoying the very texts they denounced).[77] The edification of Ovid is in part made possible by his exile, since the exile poems were considered moral and the very fact of his relegation demonstrated punishment and the possibility of redemption. We often find the classification of Ovid as ethical stated explicitly in scholastic texts, but the impact of the moral habilitation of Ovid and his poetry is seen – and challenged – in poetry, too, as we find in Christine de Pizan's responses to Ovid.[78]

Ovid's poetry was overwhelmingly co-opted as both edifying and ethical in the intellectual tradition. As Fumo summarises:

> The transmission of Ovid's works in the medieval period was far from a neutral or purely mechanical enterprise: it necessitated a wholesale moral recalibration of the sometimes salacious pagan poet in conformance with the medieval classification of literary texts under the ethical branch of philosophy.[79]

So Ovid's poetry became assimilated into an ethical, moral tradition and was even included in 'ethical reading lists', as in Hugh of Trimberg's

[75] On the medieval classification of *ethicae subponitur*, see Ginsberg (1998) and Gillespie (2018).
[76] The difficulty of accommodating Horace's life in an ethical reading of his work is discussed in Reynolds (1996: 14) and Gillespie (2005: 165), and on the reception of Horace through the lens of his poetic career, see Harrison (2010).
[77] Or, as Hunt, Smith and Stok (2017: 135) argue, the 'balance between a certain ethical relativism and the perceived need to bring Ovid under the sway of Christian morality'.
[78] See Chapter 3. [79] Fumo (2014: 114).

*Registrum multorum auctorum* (AD 1280).[80] Perhaps more surprising is his incorporation into later medieval sermons: Siegfried Wenzel has demonstrated the firm presence of Ovid in late medieval preaching, most often in references to the *Metamorphoses* but also from the exile poetry and the pseudo-Ovidian *De vetula*.[81]

This moral recalibration saw Ovid reconstituted either as straightforwardly moral or as an example of what *not* to do. His intention (*intentio*) in the *Ars*, according to one medieval *accessus*, is 'to teach young men about love, and how they ought to conduct themselves in love affairs with girls' (*intentio sua est in hoc opere iuvenes ad amorem instruere, quo modo debeant se in amore habere circa ipsas puellas*).[82] The work, in the same *accessus*, is 'placed under ethics, because it tells us about girls' characters' (*ethicae subponitur, quia de moribus puellarum loquitur*).[83] Elsewhere, the *Heroides* became a handbook of virtues and vices via *accessus* which identify the different types of love that Ovid demonstrates through his female speakers ('the legitimate, the illicit and the foolish, the legitimate through Penelope, the illicit through Canace, the foolish through Phyllis', *de legitimo, de illicito et stulto, de legitimo per Penolopen, de illicito per Canacen, de stulto per Phillidem*).[84] When this mode of reasoning became too strained under the pressure of the actual content of Ovid's poetry, Ovid is justified as a negative example. The *Remedia amoris* teaches men and women, in this formulation, 'how they should arm themselves against illicit love' (*qualiter contra illicitum amorem se armare debeant*), and the techniques Ovid describes are therefore not to be followed.[85]

Moralised Ovids and allegorical interpretations also realigned Ovid with medieval ethics, particularly in their transformations of the *Metamorphoses*. The anonymous *Ovide moralisé* (c. 1320) and Pierre Bersuire's *Ovidius moralizatus* (c. 1340) both rewrite the *Metamorphoses* to morally explicit ends, rehabilitating the often ambivalent versions found in Ovid.[86] These works are multiple times the length of their source text and are examples of

[80] On Ovid in the medieval schoolroom, see Chapter 2. In Hugh of Trimberg's work, Ovid's poems are listed in the order usually given in medieval *accessus*: the *Heroides*, *Amores*, *Ars*, *Remedia*, *Fasti*, *Metamorphoses*, *Tristia*, *ex Ponto* and *Ibis* (Langosch 1942: 164–65), and see the reference to *Pont.* 1.5.35 on l. 42 of Hugh's *Prologue* (Langosch 1942: 161). Copeland and Sluiter (2009: 657) refer to the text as an '"ethical" reading list'.

[81] In Wenzel's study (2011: 161, 161 n. 5), the *Metamorphoses* is cited in the pulpit fifty-nine times (often as *De transformatis*), the *Tristia* four, the *ex Ponto* three and *De vetula* six.

[82] Huygens (1970: 33). [83] Huygens (1970: 33). [84] Huygens (1970: 30).

[85] Huygens (1970: 34), and this *accessus* is cited in Ginsberg (1998: 71 n. 14). See also the negative Ovidian example in the *Nolo Pater Noster* anecdote and in later medieval poetry, which I discuss in Chapter 3.

[86] See Harf-Lancner, Mathey-Maille and Szkilnik (2009) and Biancardi et al. (2018).

the phenomenon of medieval reworkings competing with Ovid's poetry for authority: in the monasteries, James G. Clark demonstrates, the *Ovidius moralizatus* 'was regarded by some readers as a substitute for the text of the *Metamorphoses* itself'.[87] Just as there were multiple Ovids, 'There were multiple *Ovides moralisés*', in the assessment of Hexter.[88] The allegorising of John of Garland's *Integumenta Ovidii* and Arnulf of Orléans' commentaries on the *Metamorphoses* similarly brought Ovid into the ethical sphere, providing medieval respondents with an apparatus with which they were able to justify near enough anything that Ovid had written.[89]

Did these ethical interpretations work, and was Ovid actually seen as edifying? Ovidian *accessus* treat his subordination to ethics as a given, but the question of Ovid's propriety to the Christian Middle Ages was often debated. The fourteenth-century English friar John Ridevall denounces Ovid as a tempter ('many poets have made many poems tempting men to carnal pleasures, such as the poet Ovid', *multi poete fecerunt multas poeses inducentes homines ad delectationes carnales, sicut poeta Ovidius*).[90] And the *Antiovidianus* provides perhaps the most strident opposition to Ovid, objecting to all of his works.[91]

Other considerations of Ovid's ethical credentials are presented as a debate, in which the various works by Ovid are either celebrated or condemned. In his *Dialogus super auctores*, Conrad of Hirsau (c. AD 1070–c. 1150) encourages reading the more 'serious' works but emphatically rejects the amatory poems:

> *Pupil*. Why should the young recruit in Christ's army subject his impressionable mind to the writing of Ovid, in which even though gold can be found among the dung, yet the foulness that clings to the gold defiles the seeker, even though it is the gold he is after?
>
> *Teacher*. Your aversion to the error of falsehood is grounded in good sense. Even though some of the writing of that same author Ovid might have been tolerated up to a point, namely the *Fasti*, *Epistulae ex Ponto*, *Nux*, and some others; who in his right mind would endure him croaking about love, and his base deviations in different letters?[92]

[87] Clark (2011: 188, 188 n. 70).
[88] Hexter (2006: 28), theorising what a reception study of the *Ovide moralisé* might look like (26–28).
[89] See Gervais (2022) on John of Garland, Ghisalberti (1932) on Arnulf of Orléans and Born (1934) on Ovid and medieval allegory.
[90] Text in Smalley (1960: 319). [91] See Kienast (1929).
[92] *D[iscipulus]: Cur ovidianis libris Christi tyrunculus docile summittat ingenium, in quibus etsi potest aurum in stercore inveniri, querentem tamen polluit ipse fetor adiacens auro, licet avidum auri?*

The *ex Ponto* is singled out as edifying alongside the *Fasti* and the pseudo-Ovidian *Nux*; Ovid's erotic poetry is decisively not even named. Similar views are expressed by Alexander Neckham in the twelfth century, in his reading list for students: here, the *Metamorphoses* and elegies of Ovid (the latter is perhaps the *ex Ponto* or the *Heroides*) are welcomed but the amatory poetry is rejected (and, contrary to Conrad of Hirsau, the *Fasti* is also discouraged).[93]

Even in the most fervent anti-Ovidian declarations, as these examples show, the exilic works are consistently approved as texts which conform to Christian ethics and morals. They did not require intense adaptation, as with the moralised and allegorised versions of Ovid, to be considered acceptable for use, and *accessus* are content to assign the exile poetry as pertaining to ethics for the brief reason that they deal with morals (*quia in unaquaque epistola agit de moribus* for the *ex Ponto*, or *quia de moribus tractat* for the *Tristia*).[94] The point of debate is often whether the morality of the exile poetry – and the punishment which Ovid receives by being exiled – is enough to justify the use of Ovid's other poetry. For commentators in the mould of Conrad of Hirsau, the exile poetry is not enough to rehabilitate Ovid 'croaking about love' in other poems, and the love poetry continued to be fiercely denounced across medieval texts, even as they were still read and used.

Despite this, the fact of Ovid's exile did mean that Ovid's life (and so, the texts which he wrote during his lifetime) could be mapped onto Christian paradigms of redemption, and the exile poetry *is* enough to redeem Ovid as an interconnected whole. The concept of Ovid being exiled for his crimes is amenable to the Christian notions of *peregrinatio* and exile, and even influenced these ideas: Hexter has observed that Hugh of St Victor invokes a distant echo of the *ex Ponto* to illustrate man's exile from the 'true homeland (*patria*) in heaven'.[95] It seems remarkable for

*M[agister]: Rationabili spiritu duceris mentem avertens ab errore falsitatis, quia etsi auctor Ovidius idem in quibusdam opusculis suis, id est Fastorum, De Ponto, De nuce et in aliis utcumque tolerandus esset, quis eum de amore croccitantem, in diversis epistolis turpiter evagantem, si sanum sapiat, toleret?* (Huygens 1970: 114, translation after Minnis and Scott 1991: 56).

[93] Neckham refers to the 'Elegies of Ovid' (*elegias Nasonis*, text in Hunt 1991: 269–70 and translation in Copeland and Sluiter 2009: 537). Copeland and Sluiter (2009: 537 n. 23) translate *elegias* as the *Heroides*, whereas Hexter (1986: 18, 18 n. 12) translates it as the *ex Ponto*, even noting that 'the omission of mention of the [*Heroides*] is odd'. Munk Olsen (1995: 84–85) argues that it is probably the *Heroides*, but possibly the *ex Ponto* or even *Tristia*.

[94] Respectively, 'because in each letter he deals with morals' (Huygens 1970: 35) and 'because Ovid treats morals' (Huygens 1970: 35).

[95] Hexter (2002b: 420 n. 18). Hugh of St Victor writes that 'He is soft, to whom his fatherland is sweet; he is already strong, to whom every land is a fatherland; but he is perfect, for whom the whole world

Ovid to lend authority to Christian matters – and yet other such crossovers are extant from the Middle Ages, mostly involving Ovid's conversion to Christianity. In one memorable anecdote which forms part of Chapter 3, Ovid meets John of Patmos and becomes *Sanctus Naso*. Ovid's exilic work was co-opted for Christian use just as his exilic life was transformed into a narrative ending with Christian salvation. Through Ovid's exile, the Christianisation of a pagan poet was facilitated in a way that was not possible for other ancient authors, and thus Ovid was subjected to the highest form of edification.

## Responses and Respondents

In this book, I describe textual engagements with Ovid's exile as 'responses' and the medieval subjects who write these engagements 'respondents'. These responses I define largely as a text which engages with Ovid's exile poetry or the figure of Ovid in exile: this might be refracted through the language of Ovid's exile poetry, by adopting the persona of Ovid in exile or otherwise by evoking distinctive features of Ovid in exile. 'Respondent' refers to both readers and writers, acknowledging that these were often overlapping groups in the Middle Ages.

A response is a more active expression of reception (where audiences 'receive'), which itself is a more active iteration of the older concepts of 'classical influence' or 'classical tradition'. The paradigm shift from 'tradition' to 'reception' in classics has established 'the *active* role played by receivers', in Charles Martindale's words.[96] As a recent study of classical reception summarises:

> Classical texts, it is now argued, are never simply handed over, but are transformed as they are passed along – indeed we now have a new word, 'reception,' that emphasizes the *active cooperation of later readers* in helping to create the meaning of classical texts.[97]

*Active* is the basic precept of this book, arguing that the respondents to Ovid's exile – first, Ovid himself, and then later medieval audiences – respond as well as simply receive. In addition, while the active participation

is a place of exile' (*delicatus ille est adhuc cui patria dulcis est; fortis autem iam, cui omne solum patria est; perfectus vero, cui mundus totus exsilium est*), with Hexter linking this to *Pont*. 1.3.35–36. *Didascalicon* 3.19.13–15 (Buttimer 1939: 69). The translation is Hexter's (Hexter 2002b: 420–21 n. 18).

[96] See Jauss (1982), Iser (1978), Fish (1980) and Martindale (1993, 2006). The quotation is Martindale (2006: 11).

[97] Hunt, Smith and Stok (2017: 2, my italics).

of audiences is no longer a contested concept in classical reception studies, my use of 'responses' and 'respondents' is a particular gesture to the exile poems as letters and to the dialogue in which Ovid and his later respondents engage. The epistolary form of Ovid's exile poetry fundamentally expects and invites a response, and many of the medieval respondents in this book enact some sort of sending-back, whether back to Ovid or outwards to their circles or to the wider medieval world. This distinctive feature of Ovid's poetry is another reason why the exile poetry is particularly important for our understanding of Ovid's medieval reception, and more broadly for reception studies as a whole.

There are some methodological complications to the binaries enacted by 'text and response' and its corollary 'author and respondent'. Firstly, 'text and response' implies a sharp separation between an originary text and its later readers and respondents, and perhaps also a stable version of that text from which every reader responded (an original, authentic or authorially approved version of Ovid's poems). In reality, these readers and respondents were responsible for changes to the texts as they were transmitted, which were in turn considered part of the authoritative text. The instability of the textual transmission of ancient works is a well-worn consideration in deeming any text authoritative. Respondents across the chronological and geographical scope of this work (the twelfth to fifteenth centuries, primarily in England but also on the continent, especially in France and Germany) did not have access to one single edition of Ovid's exile poetry. These are common caveats in reception studies. With all this being said, there have not been doubts as to the authenticity of the exile poetry thus far, with editions primarily acknowledging the complexity of the textual tradition rather than disputing entire poems.[98] The 'author and respondent' binary is disturbed by Ovid himself, who firmly establishes that he is both author and respondent in the exile poetry. By reflecting on his exile in the exilic works and by revising his past works, Ovid invites future audiences to respond to the source material he provides. This invitation is enthusiastically taken up in the later Middle Ages, with diverse and creative approaches to reading, rewriting and even *becoming* Ovid in exile. It is precisely by taking Ovid's example to heart which allows for a text like *De vetula* to be created, including the perception of Ovid peering over a book (possibly even his own book) which is on the front cover of this book.[99]

[98] On the manuscript tradition and transmission of the exile poetry, see Richmond (2002: 475–82) and Tarrant (1983a: 262–65, 273–75, 282–84).

[99] See further this book's Epilogue.

The medieval responses to Ovid's exile which this book explores are primarily produced between the twelfth and the fifteenth centuries, loosely covering the *aetas Ovidiana* which later medieval audiences experienced and contributed towards. The medieval Ovid patently did not appear suddenly in AD 1100, and so at points I have found it necessary to explore the relevant textual and poetic Ovidian traditions leading up to the twelfth century (particularly in Chapter 2, on manuscripts of Ovid's exile poetry before AD 1100, and in Chapter 4, where figures such as Modoin and Baudri of Bourgueil inaugurate the concept of 'becoming the exile' in the Middle Ages).

The geographical centre of this book is England: Chapters 5 and 6 take John Gower and Geoffrey Chaucer as their subjects, two London-based Ricardian poets, and as such the textual and literary examples I develop in the preceding chapters are aimed towards developing the environments which shaped how these two poets encountered Ovid in exile. I therefore centre England, but I do not exclude the continent, not least because English responses are foundationally influenced by the responses which were being produced on the continent, especially in the compilatory and scholastic traditions emerging there, and in the poetry of Christine de Pizan, Guillaume de Deguileville and Guillaume de Machaut, all of whom I discuss at length in this book (in Chapters 3 and 6). The reception of Ovid in medieval Italy has been admirably treated by Catherine Keen, Robert Black and Julie Van Peteghem.[100] Dante, one of the most famous medieval exiles, has also been considered in the light of Ovid's exile, where Ovid's model of exile is often compared with the model provided by Brunetto Latini, Dante's mentor.[101]

The variety across responses in this book is in some sense unsurprising: they are determined by the particular configuration of Ovid which respondents knew, by the various contexts in which they were writing and by the specific ways in which they wanted to portray their *auctor* and their own poetic selves. These responses can in part be understood as products of several changes across the period and the speed at which these changes occurred in different communities. Between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, the practices of reading and the authority of the

[100] Keen (2014), Black (2011) and Van Peteghem (2020).

[101] See Marchesi (2007), Ginsberg (2011) and Zambon (2011). Particularly relevant for Part II of this book is Ginsberg's (2011: 150) assessment that the omission of Ovid's exile poetry in Dante is 'a refusal to acknowledge, except in the faintest way possible, the increasing coincidence between the Roman exile's biography and his own', since neither Gower nor Chaucer name Ovid in their most Ovidian exilic moments.

written word changed dramatically; there were fundamental shifts in medieval schooling and how Latin and classical cultures were taught and understood; and vernacular languages developed across Europe as new vehicles for expressing authority. The sheer proliferation of Ovid's exile in the *aetas Ovidiana* also prompted diffuse responses, and together they are a testament to the popularity and importance of Ovidian exile in the later Middle Ages.

However, there are similarities and trends which can be observed across the examples in this book, and so I have grouped them by the proliferation of Ovidian exilic forms (in Chapter 2) and by their desire to resurrect Ovid in some way (in Chapter 3). Chapters 4, 5 and 6 then explore various poets who are linked in their inhabitation of Ovidian exile. Across all these responses, the most persistent similarity is a type of playfulness in engaging with Ovid and his exile – perhaps surprising given the central misery of the exile poetry. Even in the most serious of responses, we often see a ludic desire to outdo Ovid at his own game – a game in which he has invited them to engage in the playfulness of his own writing.[102] Hexter refers to the medieval impulse of 'out-Oviding Ovid': the invitation to posterity proffered by Ovid in the exile poetry was enthusiastically taken up by medieval respondents, responding to Ovid's playfulness in asking, as well as the content of his life and poetry.[103] Imitation bleeds into inhabitation, in the poets who become Ovid in exile in some way, adopting his exilic persona to articulate their own poetic authority. The Epilogue brings the 'outdoing' of Ovid to its logical endpoint, in an examination of a forgery of Ovid which inhabits Ovidian exile to the point of creating a new text entirely (the thirteenth-century *De vetula*).

*Medieval Responses to Ovid's Exile*, then, explores a medieval reception of Ovidian exile which is not any one thing, a natural outcome of responding to a diverse author who himself is diffuse and contradictory. Ovid might have been surprised by the sheer profusion and variety in these responses, although he may well have been rather pleased about the appointment of two centuries as the 'age of Ovid' (the *aetas Ovidiana*). With the caveat of diversity standing, these responses are consistent in one further unifying way: they are constantly shaped by Ovid himself, in the model which he

[102] On Ovid and play, see Holzberg (2006) and, in reference to the *Tristia*, Williams (1994: 168–79).
[103] Hexter (1999: 340), and on the 'one-up' approach of Ovidian reception, see also Gervais (2022: 25) on metrical one-upmanship and Rand (1925: 27) on the authenticity of the Heroidean double epistles ('if they are not from Ovid's pen', Rand says, 'an *ignotus* has beaten him at his own game').

provides for responding to his poetry, the pressures he places on understanding the truth or fiction of his works, his deservedness of a place in libraries and in the minds of readers, and the particular themes which Ovid foregrounds and to which medieval respondents duly direct their attention. If the letters comprising Ovid's exile poetry went unanswered in his own lifetime, they receive such an enthusiastic and engaging set of responses in the Middle Ages that they must be considered when we read the *Tristia*, *ex Ponto*, *Ibis* or indeed any of Ovid's poetry.