CHAPTER 10

Ovid and Ovidianism

SUZANNE CONKLIN AKBARI

This chapter addresses the medieval reception of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and his writings on love, especially the *Ars amatoria* and *Heroides*.[1] Through the reception of the *Metamorphoses* (in commentary, translation, and adaptation) we can trace developments in medieval philosophical conceptions of change. Similarly, developments in the reception of Ovid's works on love shed light on changing attitudes toward gender and sexuality, with responses to the *Heroides* providing especially poignant insights into the feminine voice in literature and the symbolic weight of the epistolary form. In the first part of this chapter, I will provide a brief overview of the Latin commentary tradition on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* before turning to a closer examination of the vernacular circulation and adaptation of the text. I will focus particularly on the early fourteenth-century *Ovide moralisé*, which was tremendously important as a source not only within the French-speaking regions that would become the modern French nation but also throughout northern Europe more widely.[2] I will give an account of the Middle English reception of Ovidian myth, especially as it was mediated through the *Ovide moralisé*, which was widely read in medieval England, used by both Gower and Chaucer, and finally translated by William Caxton for the printing press in the late fifteenth century. My account of the medieval English reception of the *Metamorphoses* as mediated through the *Ovide moralisé* includes an examination of the Prologue to Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*, along with selected episodes from *Troilus and Criseyde*.

While the medieval reception of Ovid was predominantly centred on the *Metamorphoses*, Ovidian writings on love were also popular, especially in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This period witnessed the production of multiple vernacular French translations as well as a range of texts that adapted Ovid's framework of the art of love, including the *De arte honesti amandi* of Andreas Capellanus and the widely influential *Roman de la rose* of Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun. Several of Ovid's writings on love were available to medieval readers, including the *Ars amatoria*, the *Amores*, the *Remedia amoris*, and the *Heroides*, through the *Amores* and

Remedia amoris were less widely circulated than either of the other two. The *Heroides* circulated independently to some extent, but its constituent letters by unhappy lovers were often inserted as individual epistles within larger compendia. The second part of this chapter will provide an account of the Old French and Middle English reception of Ovidian works on love, especially as seen in the adaptation of individual narratives from the *Heroides* in the *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César*—a universal history widely read throughout northern Europe, including England—and in Chaucer's episodic *Legend of Good Women*.

Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women* provides a particularly useful text through which to analyse the late medieval English response to Ovid, because it draws upon not only Ovidian texts on love (the *Ars amatoria* and, especially, the *Heroides*) but also the *Metamorphoses*, as mediated through the *Ovide moralisé*. By turning to a consideration of how sorrow is connected to the absence of speech, I will suggest that the silencing of voice engendered by loss can be read not only in the multiple medieval redactions of the Philomela myth, but specifically in Chaucer's idiosyncratic—and much noted—omission of the payoff of Ovidian metamorphosis, that is, the final bodily transformation. I will argue that the lack of final metamorphosed forms, in all of Chaucer's direct adaptations of Ovidian myth, is a manifestation of this silencing. In the multiple narratives of suffering women that comprise the *Legend of Good Women*, we find the dead letter of the epistle itself taking the place of the metamorphosed body. Just as in the original Ovidian text—and, in amplified form, in the *Ovide moralisé*—the metamorphosed form continues to express the fundamental essence of the one who has been transformed, in Chaucer's writing the remainder of the letter/epistle is the analogue to the metamorphosed form.

Medieval Metamorphoses

During the earlier Middle Ages, there is little evidence of the reception and circulation of Ovid before the late eleventh century. Commentaries on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* were abundant, however, in the later Middle Ages, from the twelfth-century commentary of Arnulf of Orléans (*c.*1180), to the thirteenth-century *Integumenta Ovidii* of John of Garland (*c.*1234), the anonymous Vulgate prose commentary, the fourteenth-century commentary of Giovanni del Vergilio (*c.*1321-26), and the *Ovidius moralizatus* of Pierre Bersuire (*c.*1350).[3] The revival of interest in Ovid's myth went hand in hand with a broader investigation, particularly in the schools of northern France, of how the fabulous narratives of antiquity might be interpreted to reveal deeper truths—scientific, philosophical, and theological. Arnulf's commentary, in particular, can fruitfully be read in the context of the twelfth-century commentary on Virgil's *Aeneid* attributed to Bernardus Silvestris, which expounds the first six books of the ancient Latin epic to unfold a range of allegorical interpretations.[4]

William of Conches's commentaries on Plato's *Timaeus*, Macrobius' *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, and Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, composed during the mid-twelfth century, show a similar eagerness to expound poetic language allegorically. William articulates this practice more explicitly than perhaps any other twelfth-century author in his account of how the 'integumentum' or 'involucrum'—a veil, covering, or wrapping—hides within it deeper truths that can be expounded by the acute reader.[5]

What these Latin commentaries have in common is the level of learning that would have been required to read them. With the rise of vernacular adaptations of Ovid's myths in the twelfth century, a wider audience became more familiar with the linked narratives contained in the *Metamorphoses*, and even with the moralizations that might be associated with individual myths. During the twelfth century, French verse translations began to appear of selected myths, including Narcissus, Pyramus and Thisbe, and Philomela ('Philomena'). Like the roughly contemporary *romans antiques*—romance adaptations of the ancient epics of Rome, Troy, and Thebes—these French renditions of Ovidian myth brought the Latin texts of the schools to a more diverse set of readers. While these twelfth-century vernacular renditions of Ovid were probably read for the most part by a courtly audience, by the later Middle Ages an increasingly wide range of audiences had access to vernacular versions of Ovidian myth. The *Ovide moralisé*, an allegorical exposition of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* written in the early fourteenth century and surviving in twenty-one manuscripts, is one of the main vehicles for the transmission of Ovidian myth during the later Middle Ages.[6] Major writers of the period, including Chaucer, Gower, and Christine de Pizan, read the *Ovide moralisé* not just for its individual presentations of classical myths in a vernacular language, but for the broader perspectives it offered on the meaning of change. In addition, the *Ovide moralisé* is structured within a framework of categories that could be used to define the nature of distinctive states of being. This section of the essay will sketch out one framework for understanding the medieval reading of the *Metamorphoses* as philosophical allegory or integument: that is, the Aristotelian categories of being—animal, vegetable, and mineral.

Though it is a commonplace to identify the three-part division of 'animal, vegetable, and mineral' as an Aristotelian construct, this distinction is more implicit than explicit in Aristotle's own writings. In the *Historia animalia*, he describes a kind of hierarchy that structures living things, rising up from simpler to more complex forms; the life of plants is simpler than that of animals, while the material being of soulless matter—stone, water, wood—is simpler still. Man is at the top of the hierarchy, being part of the animal world but distinct from it, as Aristotle makes clear in his *De anima* (2.3): all living things, Aristotle writes, have souls. Plants have a vegetative soul, which enables them to grow and reproduce; animals have not only a vegetative soul but also a sensitive soul, which enables them to feel and move; human beings

have not only a vegetative soul and a sensitive soul but also a rational soul, which allows them to think and, importantly, to express their thoughts through language.

To some extent this Aristotelian framework of being is at work in the Ovidian text, though it is intensely problematized by the Pythagorean philosophy of the transmigration of souls explored in Book 15 of the *Metamorphoses*. In the *Ovide moralisé*, however, the Aristotelian framework is made more explicit through the anonymous poet's close attention to the role of *sens* (that is, sensation) and *son* (that is, sound) in bridging the gaps that separate the rational soul, the sensitive soul, and the vegetative soul. Here it is useful to summarize, on the terms of the *Ovide moralisé,* the consequences of metamorphosis with respect to the tripartite soul. Human beings who are transformed into matter (such as Niobe, whose pride causes her to be changed into stone) lose all three parts of the tripartite soul—vegetative, sensitive, and rational. Therefore, Niobe is said to lose the facility of motion that is essential to the sensitive soul (she 'ne pot remouvoir ca ne la' ('could move neither here nor there', 6.1368)) and, ultimately, life itself: 'La vie et la parole pert' ('she loses both life and speech', 6.1365).[7] Human beings who become plants retain the vegetative soul that provides for growth and reproduction, but lose the sensitive and rational souls. For example, when Daphne flees from the erotic advances of Apollo and is transformed into the laurel, she is said to change from being 'agile' to being 'firmly placed': 'Li piez isneaus de la meschine | Fu tenus a ferme racine' ('The agile feet of the maiden became firmly placed roots' (1.3033–4)). Human beings who are metamorphosed into animals, however, retain the quality of agility, as when Actaeon becomes a stag following his forbidden look at Diana, and flees 'plus isnelement' than he had ever done before (3.473). Similarly, Alcione's transformation takes place when the woman running 'isnelement' suddenly becomes the bird in flight (11.3758).

An apparent violation of this phenomenon appears in the story of the sisters Leucathoë and Clytie, the former beloved by the sun god and the latter suffering the pains of unrequited love for Phoebus. After their metamorphoses into plants, the 'encens' and the heliotrope (or 'flor d'amors'), both are 'enracinee', rooted to the ground (4.1449, 1482). Curiously, however, immediately after each is said to be 'enracinee', she seems to continue to display the quality of motion: the 'vergete | D'encens' that is Leucathoë 'dou cors sort hautete' ('emerges upward out of the body' (4.1451–2)), while Clytie, as a flower, 'Tous jours a sa face tournee | Vers le soleil, quel part qu'il aille' ('always has her face turned toward the sun, whichever way he goes' (4.1483–4)). Their movement is still intelligible within the definitions of the tripartite soul, for Leucathoë's apparent motion is simply the motion of vegetable growth, while that of her sister Clytie is heliotropism, the involuntary movement generated in plant life by the vivifying power of the sun.

Sens, in the French vernacular, denotes sense in both aspects of the modern English term. It refers both to the sensitive quality of the soul (what we perceive

through our senses) and the intellect (to be sensible, or have good sense). We see this term repeated throughout the *Ovide moralisé*, referring to the loss suffered by those who, through metamorphosis, have come to lack the sensitive soul. Niobe, when she is turned to stone, loses all qualities of soul, because she 'la vie et la parole pert' ('loses both life and speech' (6.1365)). Even as stone, however, Niobe continues to weep: 'plore et encore vait plorant | Li marbre et de larmes corant' ('the marble weeps and continues to weep, running with tears' (13.77–8); cf. Ovid, 'et lacrimas etiam nunc marmora manant' (6.312)).[8] Those transformed into plants, however, specifically lose the quality of *sens*. For example, when the jealous Clytie is transformed into a heliotropic flower, she is said to lose her 'sens' (4.1476); similarly, when Myrrha is transformed into a myrrh tree, she loses 'le sens' (10.1955). In the story of Myrrha, however, the loss of *sens* in the transmuted plant appears as the culmination of a long meditation on the role of Myrrha's concealed unnatural 'sens' (that is, her feelings of sexual desire for her father) and her fear that her father will discover Myrrha's 'sens' through his own 'sens' (that is, his intellect). Myrrha says to herself:

> Ce m'esbahist et desconforte
> Que mes peres est sages hom.
> Tant a de sens et de raison . . .
> Mout m'est grief que tant le voi sage,
> Quar trop chier comperrai son sens.
> S'il sentist le mal que je sens
> Plus tost m'otroiast mon voloir.
> Trop me fet ses grans sens doloir.
>
> (It makes me abashed and ashamed
> that my father is a wise man.
> He has so much sense and reason . . .
> It is a great sorrow to me that I see well that he is wise,
> For I will pay for his sense all too dearly.
> If he were to perceive the ills that I feel
> He would very soon grant my desire.
> His great wisdom makes me all too sorrowful.)
>
> (10.1267–9, 1273–7)

Here, Myrrha's father's abundance of 'sens' and reason is precisely the problem: it threatens to reveal the forbidden passion that Myrrha feels ('sens') and that she wishes he would also feel. The father's 'sens' makes his daughter sorrowful, because it is capable of unveiling the erotic longing of her senses. The wordplay on this term reappears later in the narrative, with Myrrha's metamorphosis into the tree: 'Li sans en seve se mua . . . Le cors et le sens a perdu' ('The blood changed into sap . . . She lost both body and intellect' (10.1943, 1955)) Here, Myrrha's transformation results in her loss of 'sens', as in the case of others changed into vegetation, such as Clytie. In addition, however, the loss of 'sens' is mirrored in the language of bodily change, in

which 'sans' (blood) becomes 'seve' (sap). The loss of 'sens' is concomitant with the alteration of 'sans' into the precious drops of myrrh that flow from the tree.

While those transformed into animals do not lose the sensitive soul they had as human beings, it does seem to be diminished. For example, as Alcione begins her transformation into a seabird following the loss of her beloved Ceyx, she is said to be lacking in 'sens': 'Plus se deult et mains de sens a' ('The more she mourns, the less sense she has' (11.3742)). The loss suffered by those changed into animals is not *sens*, but *son*: that is, not sense but intelligible sound. We see this in the case of Actaeon, who—seeing his horned face reflected in the water—cries out in anguish:

> 'Las mescheant' se deïst,
> S'il ëust loisir de mot dire.
> D'angoisseuz cuer gient et souspire,
> C'autrement ne puet mot soner,
> N'il ne set autre son doner.
> Lermes li corent par le vis,
> Qui trop est changes, ce m'est vis.
>
> ('Alas, all is lost,' he would have wished to say,
> If he had been able to say a word.
> With a heart full of anguish he whimpers and sighs,
> Because otherwise he cannot sound a word.
> Nor does he know how to make any other sound.
> Tears stream down his face,
> He who is very much changed, it seems to me.)
>
> (3.478–84)

Ovid merely says that Actaeon lacks 'voice' ('vox' (3.201–2)). For the author of the *Ovide moralisé*, however, Actaeon's reduction to the level of the sensitive soul results in enforced muteness. He literally does not know ('ne set') how to make intelligible sound. While Ovid emphasizes Actaeon's retention of his rational faculty, stating that 'only his mind remains unchanged' ('mens tantum pristina mansit' (1.203)), the author of the *Ovide moralisé* instead conforms more closely to the Aristotelian framework. He renders Ovid's line concerning Actaeon's intact, pristine intellect as a reduction of thought to its most basic, primitive level: Actaeon is left with only 'le corage | E la premeraine pensee' ('the heart/and the most basic thought' (3.468–9)).[9] Like Myrrha, he is able to express himself only through the natural signs of tears.

In the *Ovide moralisé*, as we have seen, the Aristotelian framework serves to firm up the boundaries separating the different forms of being—vegetable, animal, and human—intermingled throughout Ovid's great poem. At the same time, however, even while the author of the *Ovide moralisé* emphasizes the restrictions upon communication experienced by those who are metamorphosed, he

reveals the paradoxical fecundity of language unleashed by the metamorphosis itself. To put it another way, in the *Ovide moralisé*, through the polysemous nature of the allegorical narrative, the muteness of the transformed being is rendered loquacious. This phenomenon appears, for example, in the *Ovide moralisé*'s account of Ceyx and Alcione. Alcione urges her husband not to make his ill-fated voyage across the sea, punning on the repeated terms 'amie' (beloved), 'amer' (to love), and 'mer' (the sea):

> Vous volz lessier votre amie,
> Moi, que tant soliez amer,
> Por vous metre em peril de mer?
>
> (You wish to leave your beloved,
> Me, whom you used to love so much,
> In order to place yourself in peril on the sea?)
> (11.3029–31)

Similar terms reappear near the end of the narrative, when Alcione is finally confronted with the image of her husband's dead body and laments his failure to listen to her warnings. Here, however, the wordplay is centred not on the terms 'mer' and 'amer', but on the term 'mors' (death), which is coupled with 'amoie'—that is, love in the past tense:

> Mors est Ceyx, que trop amoie.
> Mors est et je sui morte o soi.
>
> (Ceyx is dead, whom I loved too much.
> He is dead, and I am dead with him.)
> (11.3687–8)

Although their bodies cannot be laid to rest together, the lovers can be united through the power of the word. Ovid says simply that their names can be placed together on their funerary monument: 'nomen nomine tangam' ('still shall I touch you, name with name' (11.707)). For the author of the *Ovide moralisé*, however, the union of the lovers takes place through the play of words, gathered together even though nature attempts to tear them apart:

> Nos nons ne seront mais disjoint,
> Ains seront ensamble assamblé.
>
> (Our names will never be separated
> But rather will be gathered together.)
> (11.3703–4)

Similar wordplay, often involving *mors* and *amors*, appears throughout the *Ovide moralisé*, as in the tale of Philomela and Procne, and the tale of Pyramus and Thisbe. Significantly, such wordplay already appears in the twelfth-century vernacular

renditions of these myths adapted by the author of the *Ovide moralisé* into his text, suggesting that he is elaborating a much older literary convention.

The influence of the *Ovide moralisé* was felt in northern European literary tradition on two levels: in the dissemination of the Ovidian myths in vernacular form, often stripped of some or all of the allegorical signification; and in the dissemination of the system of thought we have observed in the text, which participates in the fundamentally Neoplatonic epistemology of the integument, or allegorical veil. Later writers of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries would both adapt the individual myths recounted in the *Ovide moralisé* and draw upon the systems of thought integrated in the text—but often not at the same textual moment.[10] The adaptations of Ovidian myth by Gower and Chaucer are particularly interesting to read in tandem, because these two poets tend to refract the same myth in radically different ways.[11] One striking difference that separates these two, however, is Chaucer's often-noted habit of omitting the climax of the Ovidian narrative: that is, the metamorphosis itself. A close reading of the *Ovide moralisé*, such as that which we have carried out above, helps to illuminate the nature of Chaucer's engagement with the *Metamorphoses*. While he frequently adapts the narrative thread of the individual Ovidian myth, he omits the transformative integumental moment that we have observed in the *Ovide moralisé*, the climactic shift that is marked by an outpouring of polysemy. Instead, he shifts this integumental moment to other contexts, which lack the straightforward recounting of the Ovidian narrative, but instead obliquely allude to the mythographic context. For example, the story of Ceyx and Alcione—recounted in hauntingly poetic terms in the *Ovide moralisé*, as we have seen—serves a very different purpose in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*. Recounted as part of the preface to the dream-vision that follows, the narrator offers a summary of his bedtime reading that stops short of the climactic transformation of Alcione's weeping body into the seabird in flight. Instead, Alcione's revelatory dream ends abruptly, with the prophetic sight of the Ovidian text replaced by blindness and death:

> With that hir eyen up she casteth [*eyes*]
> And saw noght. 'Allas!' quod she for sorwe, [*nothing*]
> And deyede within the thridde morwe. [*third morning*]
> (212–14).[12]

Similarly abrupt refusals of the transformative moment appear throughout the stories of the *Legend of Good Women*, such as that of Philomela. Stopping short not just of the metamorphosis itself but also of the hideous feast that precipitates it, Chaucer's Philomela remains eternally in her sister's embrace: 'In armes everych of hem other taketh, | And thus I late hem in here sorwe dwelle' (2381–2). Here too, the immersion into 'sorwe' halts the narrative, leaving the transformative

moment—undoubtedly familiar from the widely available Ovidian textual tradition of the late fourteenth century—to be supplied by the reader.

Elsewhere, however, Chaucer gives full rein to the integumental moment of metamorphosis, adapting the *Ovide moralisé*'s eruption of polysemy into a different poetic register. We can see this illustrated in the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*, where the myth of Clytie and Leucathoë serves as an Ovidian intertext to the narrator's triangulation between his own desire for the daisy, the daisy's desire for the sun, and the intense gaze shared by the great 'eye of day' in the sky and the little 'day's eye' on the grassy turf.[13] Ovid's narrative tells how 'even the Sun' falls in love, recounting the union of Phoebus Apollo with Leucathoë, the jealousy of Clytie, whose love for the Sun is unrequited, and Leucathoë's death. Buried alive by her furious father, Leucathoë re-emerges from the soil as fragrant incense, as we saw recounted in the *Ovide moralisé*. Clytie is also metamorphosed into vegetable form, but in the form of the heliotrope, her gaze endlessly following the rays of the Sun. Appropriately, the narrator's encounter with the daisy evokes a second Ovidian intertext, that of Jupiter clothed in the form of the bull. He arises early and goes:

> With dredful herte and glad devocioun, [*fearful*]
> For to ben at the resurecciouun [*be resurrection*]
> Of this flour, whan that yt shulde unclose [*flower when it should open*]
> Agayn the sonne, that roos as red as rose, [*against rose*]
> That in the brest was of the beste, that day, [*breast beast*]
> That Agenores doghtre ladde away. [*daughter led*]
>
> (F Prol. 109–14)

This complex web of Ovidian intertextuality connects together the narrator, the daisy, and the sun in a three-part union that includes not only Clytie, Leucathoë, and Phoebus but also Europa and Jupiter, as the sun's presence in the constellation Taurus (marking the May Day setting of the encounter, 'the firste morwe [morrow] of May', F 108) links multiple encounters of the divine and human. For the narrator to encounter the doubled object of desire found in the mutual gaze of the sun and the daisy is to enter the integumental moment as it unfolds across time, manifested not only in the myth of Clytie, Leucathoë, and Phoebus, but also in the myth of Europa and Jupiter.

Similar integumental moments can be found in *Troilus and Criseyde*, where the myth of Philomela—while never recounted in full—appears twice in the poem. Philomela appears first allusively (and ominously) at the opening of Book 2, as Pandarus sets briskly about his amorous errand to his niece (2.64–70), and second in the ecstatic union of the lovers in Book 3, where Criseyde, assured of the 'trouthe and clene entente' [truth and honest intent] (3.1229) of Troilus's love, 'Opned hire herte' to him just as the 'newe abaysed [startled] nyghtyngale,' reassured, lets

'hire vois [voice] out rynge' (3.1233–39). As in the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*, the integumental moment of Book 3 of *Troilus and Criseyde* adds an additional Ovidian intertext at this crucial moment:

> And as aboute a tree, with many a twiste,
> Bytrent and writh the swote wodebynde, [*encircles wreathes sweet honeysuckle*]
> Gan ech of hem in armes other wynde. [*began*]
>
> (3.1230–2)

This additional intertext, referring obliquely to the myth of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis, but more generally evoking the multiple vegetable metamorphoses of Ovid's poem, comes immediately prior to the allusion to the 'nyghtyngale'. As with the multiplication of the Ovidian referent in the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*, the integumental moment is intensified; like the daisy that undergoes a daily 'resurrecioun' (Legend F 110), Troilus 'from his deth is brought in sykernesse' (3.1243). In each case, the fulfilment of desire results in a moment of stasis, linked across linear time by a whole series of comparable moments of bliss, conveyed through the veil of the Ovidian integument. The annihilation of hope and the frustration of desire, conversely, generates a moment of frantic motion—again expressed through Ovidian integument. When Troilus learns that Criseyde is to be exchanged, separated from him by the besieged walls of Troy, he undergoes a metaphorical metamorphosis:

> And as in winter leves ben biraft, [*stripped away*]
> Ech after other, til the tree be bare,
> So that ther nys but bark and braunche ilaft, [*is nothing left*]
> Lith Troilus, byraft of ech welfare, [*stripped good thing*]
> Ibounden in the blake bark of care,
> Disposed wood out of his wit to breyde, [*In a state to go mad out of his mind*]
> So sore hym sat the chaungynge of Criseyde.
> He rist hym up, and every dore he shette [*arose shut*[
> And wyndow ek, and tho this sorwful man [*also then*]
> Upon his beddes syde adown hym sette,
> Ful lik a ded ymage, pale and wan;
> And in his brest the heped wo bygan [*heaped up*]
> Out breste, and he to werken in this wise [*to burst out act in this way*]
> In his woodnesse, as I shal yow devyse. [*madness describe*]
> Right as the wylde bole bygynneth sprynge, [*wild bull begins to spring*]
> Now her, now ther, idarted to the herte, [*pierced*]
> And of his deth roreth in compleynynge, [*roars*]
> Right so gan he aboute the chaumbre sterte, [*began to leap up*]
> Smytyng his brest ay with his fistes smerte. [*beating painfully*]
>
> (4.225–43)

Like Myrrha, who begs for transformation so that she will offend 'neither the living nor the dead' and willingly plunges her face to meet the rising bark, Troilus plunges into his state of 'woodnesse' (4.238), bound in the black bark of care. The woe 'out breste' from 'his brest' (236–7), in an effervescence of polysemy that recalls the integumental moments we noted in the *Ovide moralisé*. The metaphorical metamorphosis of Troilus shifts from the tree of Myrrha to the flesh of the bull, in which Jupiter clothes himself to encounter humankind. This moment, too, is ecstatic; Troilus stands outside himself, pushed to the extreme limit of human experience by sorrow just as he was, in the paradise chamber of Book 3, pushed to that limit by the experience of blissful union with Criseyde. But while in the earlier moment Troilus was 'from his deth . . . brought in sykernesse' (3.1243), here he is 'ful lik a ded ymage, pale and wan' (4.235). As we will see, the extremity of sorrow expressed through Troilus's metaphorical metamorphosis is also Chaucer's focus in the other Ovidian text that plays a key role in his works: that is, the letters written in the voices of women that comprise the *Heroides*.

Arts of Love and Dead Letters

The Ovidian legacy to the Middle Ages included a range of texts on love: the *Ars amatoria*, the *Amores*, the *Remedia amoris*, and the *Heroides*. Of these, the *Ars amatoria* and the *Heroides* were the most widely circulated, both in Latin and, from the thirteenth century onward, in vernacular translations.[14] Beyond the circulation of the Latin texts of these works and their vernacular translations, their influence was felt indirectly through the adaptation of Ovidian writing on love in some of the most widely disseminated texts of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, including Andreas Capellanus' *De arte honesti amandi* and Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun's *Roman de la rose*, both of which draw explicitly upon the *Ars amatoria*. Ovid's literary production concerning the art of love is often described in terms of an evolving sequence, although the actual dating of the works is less than certain: the elegiac metres of the *Amores*, declaring the poet's love for Corinna, and the epistolary *Heroides* give way to the didactic field manual to love that is the *Ars amatoria*, which in turn inspired the production of a kind of anti-art of love in the form of the *Remedia amoris*, a book of counsel to the lover warning him on how best to avoid the negative effects of eros.[15] There is ample evidence of the use of both the *Ars amatoria* and the *Remedia amoris* in school curricula during the twelfth century, though the *Ars amatoria* steadily gained in popularity as the period went on.[16] Students were encouraged to learn Latin prose and verse composition through imitation of ancient authors, which was an important aspect of the use of these Ovidian texts on love.[17]

The popularity of the *Ars amatoria* is attested both by the number of surviving Latin manuscripts (twenty-three from the thirteenth century)[18] and by the proliferation of vernacular translations of the text: several Old French translations and adaptations were produced during the thirteenth century, including no less than four verse translations and one in prose.[19] The four verse translations survive in fourteen manuscripts, while the prose translation survives in four, with evidence of five more copies found in library catalogues of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[20] There is evidence of still other translations that are now lost—most tantalizingly, in the prologue to *Cligés*, Chrétien de Troyes alludes to his own translation of Ovid's *Ars amatoria*. What is striking here is not simply the number of surviving manuscripts of the translation, but the number of different versions of the text: clearly, the *Ars amatoria* inspired a range of responses, in verse as well as prose, loose adaptations as well as careful renditions.

In addition, major literary works of the period explicitly allude to their engagement with or even appropriation of the *Ars amatoria*. In his opening portion of the *Roman de la rose*, Guillaume de Lorris identifies his work as 'li roman de la rose | ou l'art d'amors est tote enclose' ['The Romance of the Rose | where the Art of Love is entirely enclosed'].[21] The Ovidian art of love thus serves as the foundation of a court centred on service to the 'dieu d'amors' or 'god of love'; for Guillaume, however, this Ovidian amatory framework is closely integrated with the Ovidian discourse of metamorphosis, particularly through the doomed figure of Narcissus.[22] Jean de Meun's continuation of the poem maintains both of these Ovidian frameworks, countering Guillaume's mythic figure of Narcissus with that of Pygmalion, thus replacing an emblem of sterile, self-directed love with an emblem of exuberant fertility, and shifting the focus of the *Ars amatoria* intertext from the notion of a handbook of love practices to a central focus on the role of the go-between—Jean's 'Vielle', the old nurse who is charged with guarding the vulnerable beloved, but who might be persuaded to serve as a valuable aid to the lover who follows the erotic handbook of the *Ars amatoria*.[23] Chaucer's reception of the *Ars amatoria* was both direct and mediated through his reading of the *Roman de la rose*, a text that he himself translated. The Canterbury pilgrim who is universally thought to be Chaucer's most lifelike and original invention, the Wife of Bath, is paradoxically a literary construct arising from the Ovidian figure of the old nurse, as filtered through Jean de Meun's Vielle.[24]

The *Heroides* can also be seen as part of the Ovidian constellation of works on love, but its impact on medieval literary history goes beyond the view of love conveyed in the letters. The epistolary format of the *Heroides* imbued the individual letters with a quasi-documentary status, so that an epistle extracted from Ovid's text could be taken as testimony concerning historical events recounted in chronicle form. In addition, each individual letter—often written just prior to the writer's violent death—has the status of an epitaph, or perhaps even a relic, providing mute witness to the intense emotions of love and loss that engendered the letter. The

Heroides have a rich tradition of reception; perhaps some of the most interesting manifestations of this reception appear in universal chronicles, in which these letters written in the voice of sorrowful women are interwoven within the Troy story. The letters serve two purposes in this setting: first, they provide a kind of feminized 'mirror for princes', counselling medieval women on what to do and—more often—what to avoid; second, they provide moments of punctuation marking the seemingly endless series of battles that lead inexorably, step by step, to the climactic destruction of Troy.

Medieval manuscripts of the Latin text of the *Heroides* date from the eleventh century. Beginning in the thirteenth century, however, vernacular translations began to be produced, including the Castilian text included in the *General estoria* commissioned by Alfonso X, and the French text included in the second redaction of the *Histoire ancienne jusqu'á César* produced in the fourteenth century. (One letter, that of Penelope, also appears in the first redaction of the text.) In each case, the letters survive not as a compilation but rather as interleaved epistles that mark significant moments in a larger vision of history. As Javier Puerto Benito points out in his study of the *General estoria*, these 'women's' letters' are presented as part of the historical evidence, as 'historical letters that were originally composed by actual noble women'.[25] In part, this is in keeping with an effort to euhemerize myth, to assimilate materials associated with poetic fiction to the historian's task, recounting the past in order to serve the moral imperatives of the present day. Helen, Paris, and the neglected shepherdess Oenone become part of the history of Troy, while women deceived by the gods (such as Semele, seduced by Jove and then tricked by Juno) demonstrate clearly that 'one should not take advice from an enemy'.[26]

Something similar takes place in the *Histoire ancienne*, a universal chronicle that has its origins in the early thirteenth century but whose major second redaction, carried out in the latter half of the fourteenth century, demonstrates in the most vivid way the extent to which literature and historical chronicle can sometimes intersect.[27] This universal history, whose basic structure is patterned on the early fifth-century chronicle of Orosius, orders the history of the world into a series of ages, beginning with the account of creation found in Genesis and moving sequentially through the various empires that have ruled the world—Babylon, Macedonia, Carthage, Troy, Rome—and ending with the northern European military expeditions of Julius Caesar. The second redaction, however, replaces the history of Troy included in the original text with a romance: namely, a prose redaction of Benoit de Saint-Maure's *Roman de Troie*.[28] Within this romance, itself embedded within the framework of the universal history, are further embedded a series of letters from the *Heroides*. The letters, thirteen in all, begin with two examples widely separated from the main cluster (Oenone ['Cenona'] to Paris, fols 53–5, and Laodamia to Prothesilaus, fols 64–5); these two letters set the stage for the first battle in a long series of Trojan military engagements. After that, a series of five letters appear in quick succession

(across twenty-three folios, fols 80–103), marking significant moments in the ongoing siege of the city: these letters, however fictional, are presented as though they were historical documents, missives sent out from a city under siege. They include letters sent to Greek warriors by wives waiting at home, such as those of Ariadne to Theseus and Phyllis to Demophon, as well as those exchanged within Troy, such as the letters that pass between Paris and Helen.

After the ninth battle, another quasi-historical letter appears, this one sent to Achilles by his former lover Briseis after the Greek warrior falls in love with the Trojan princess Polyxena (fol. 118). From this point on, a series of three letters follow that are attached to the Trojan War only in the most superficial way, by means of a perfunctory fiction that associates one of those named in the letter with the events of the siege. The first two of these three letters, exchanged between Hero and Leander, comprise a male–female pairing that echoes the earlier exchange of letters in the *Heroides* between Paris and Helen. The third of these three letters is from Canace to her lover (and brother) Machaire ('Machareus'). Like the letters of Hero and Leander, the letter of Canace is only superficially and artificially attached to the story of Troy; these three therefore serve a rather different function from the more specifically Trojan letters than precede them. The extracts from the *Heroides* embedded in the *Histoire ancienne* come to an end with two more letters that, like the two letters by Oenone and Laodamia that begin the group, are separated from the central sequence. Here, after a gap of more than forty folios, we find two letters marking the aftermath of the fall of Troy: one letter from Penelope to Ulysses, and another from Hermione to Horaste.

It should be clear from this overview that the inserted letters serve a vital function within the account of Troy: in addition to providing moral precepts to govern women's behaviour, as was also the case in the Castilian *General estoria*, they underpin the narrative of the siege of the city, providing a kind of affective punctuation to the inevitable fall of Troy. Siege poems such as the *Roman de Thebes* and the *Roman de Troie* include detailed accounts of funeral monuments whose elaborate ekphrastic descriptions serve to momentarily slow down the forward movement of the military conquest.[29] The sequence of battles, punctuated by these ornamental tombs, marks an incremental movement toward the inevitable end of the city; concurrently, the forward movement of *translatio imperii* takes place, as imperial power moves from one metropolis to another—in this case, from Troy to Rome. These interpolated letters from the *Heroides* function in a way that is similar to the tomb ekphrases of the *Roman de Thebes* and the *Roman de Troie*: they too momentarily slow down the flow of narrative, causing the reader to pause over a kind of portrait or epitome of the human, affective engagement that is normally effaced by the tides of war.

The function of the individual letter in the sequence can be usefully analysed through a close look at the sequence of three extracts from the *Heroides* that are, as noted above, only very superficially attached to the Troy narrative. It is easy to see

why we might find letters by Helen, Paris, and Briseis; it is less clear why we find letters from Hero, Leander, and Canace. As noted above, the interpolator briefly justifies his inclusion of these letters by associating one of the figures named in them with the siege of Troy: as Luca Barbieri puts it in his edition of the interpolated letters, the adaptation of Hero and Leander's exchange is 'totally generic and could be adapted to the description of any couple separated as a result of war'.[30] The adaptation of Canace's letter to her brother Machaire has a similarly superficial (and artificial) connection with Troy: the letter is introduced with the statement that Machaire was a warrior on the Greek side. The position of the letter, however, seems less gratuitous: Canace's letter, which is the last of the main cluster of extracts from the *Heroides*, appears immediately before the death of Troilus—an event which, in the *Histoire ancienne* as in the *Roman de Troie*, marks the last barrier to the inevitable collapse of the Trojan defences. Canace's letter thus marks a moment of despair that is at once an end and a beginning, a moment of closure that simultaneously signals an opening up to a new phase of imperial succession. This paradoxical quality, fundamental to the process of *translatio imperii*, is aptly epitomized in the plight of Canace, whose love relation is equally paradoxical—her brother is both father and uncle to the child she carries—and whose offspring endures a brief life span whose beginning is almost co-terminous with its ending. As Canace puts it, in the medieval French translation, speaking to her child, 'This day is your first day, and your last' ('Ce jour t'est premier et derrenier').[31]

The French translation of the letter of Canace included in the *Histoire ancienne* differs in several ways from the Latin original. From the opening lines of the letter, the French translation modifies the scenario to remove the looming prospect of suicide that is so conspicuous in Ovid's text. Canace's death, in the French text, *is* foreshadowed; but instead of facing the prospect of a self-inflicted death, she anticipates the time when she, like her infant child, will be devoured by the wild beasts of the forest. The term 'bestes sauvages' is repeated several times in the text, in an innovative departure from the Latin original, as Canace describes how she will go into the woods to look for 'les os de mon enfant', 'the bones of my infant': there, 'the same beasts who devoured him, will devour me along with him' ('les bestes meïsmes qui l'ont devoré, qui me devoreront avec lui').[32] Canace goes on to request that her remains and those of her infant be housed in the same 'sepulture', in a detail that corresponds to the Latin original; the French text's emphasis on the 'bestes sauvages', however, creates a sense of repetition, as Canace first anticipates being bodily reunited with her child within the belly of the beast, and then being reunited once again within the 'sepulture' that will remain as a permanent monument.

Other changes arising in the course of the translation of the Canace letter include several elements that reinforce romance conventions, notably the role of the nurse: while in the original epistle, Canace describes conversations she had before childbirth with her brother, in the translation these conversations are instead carried on

with her nurse ('nourrice'). This change not only conforms to romance conventions but also recalls the central role of the nurse as go-between in the Ovidian art of love text. In addition, the exchanges between Canace and her nurse consistently echo corresponding passages in the *Metamorphoses* concerning Myrrha and her father, who were similarly brought together by a helpful nurse, with similarly tragic results. More subtle but still significant alterations introduced in the French translation highlight the extent to which the letter of Canace might function as a moral guide. Nowhere is this cautionary aspect of the letter so conspicuous as in a moment of direct address in which Canace speaks to her female readers: 'And for this reason', she writes, 'I beg you all, sisters and female friends, that you take an example from me, and that you take a husband before you do any kind of foolish act as I have done' ('Et pour ce vous prie je toutes, sorelles et amies, que vous aiés exemple de moy, et que vous praigniés mari avant que vous faciés semblable folie comme je ai fete').[33] As in the Castilian *General estoria*, the historical account has embedded within it moral counsels for women, creating what Javier Puerto Benito characterizes as a '*speculum princeps* for women' along the lines of Giles of Rome's *De regimine principium* or Alfonso X's own *Libro de los doze sabios*.[34]

The French text of Canace's letter makes it clear that she will be memorialized—not only in the material monument that she begs her brother to provide for her bones and those of their child, but also in the letter itself, which serves as a kind of relic that remains behind as a reminder or memorial. But a memorial of what? In the French text, there is no mistaking what is memorialized along with the bones of Canace: it is shame, 'honte' or 'vergoigne', roughly synonymous terms that are repeated several times in the French text. The emphasis on shame functions on two levels: in terms of the guide to feminine deportment conveyed through these vernacular *Heroides*, it reminds young women of the dangers of imprudent love; in terms of the historical account in which the letter is embedded, it accomplishes something rather different. In the context of the fall of Troy and the onward transmission of *translatio imperii*, from one metropolitan centre of power to another, shame serves as a transitional marker, revealing the flip side of desire. It is expressed not only on the level of the individual but on the level of the population, as the power of Troy wanes and *imperium* moves on to another national capital. Shame is rooted in loss, in the interplay of desire, fulfilment, and punishment.

The importance of the medieval transmission of the *Heroides* extends far beyond the basic significance of the inclusion of letters from the *Heroides* in the universal chronicle of the *Histoire ancienne*. The circulation of the letter of Canace as an element in the Troy story provides a particularly important context for the general depiction of Canace in late medieval English literature. Chaucer alludes to the story in the *Prologue to The Legend of Good Women*, a text which also provides a series of 'women's' voices—not in the form of letters, as in the *Heroides*, but in the form of 'saints' legends of Cupid'.[35] In the *Prologue*, within the inset ballade 'Hyd, Absolon,

thy gilte tresses clere', which names many figures of the past—of the Bible, of history, of classical myth, and of medieval romance—who were unhappy in love, Chaucer mentions Canace in a *Heroides* grouping:

> Herro, Dido, Laudomia, alle yfere, [*Hero all together*]
> And Phillis, hangyng for thy Demophoun,
> And Canace, espied by thy chere, [*disclosed expression*]
> Ysiphile, betrayed with Jasoun, [*Hypsipyle*]
> Maketh of your trouthe neythir boost ne soun; [*boast nor sound*]
> Nor Ypermystre or Adriane, ye tweyne: [*Hypermestra Ariadne you both*]
> My lady cometh, that al this may dysteyne [*who may disdain*]
>
> (F Prol., 263–9)

Here is a memorializing, not only of the 'good women' who will form Chaucer's 'saints' legends of Cupid', but of the desperation and savagery of love itself. Chaucer invokes Canace's guilt, as revealed painfully in her expressive face ('espied by thy chere'), with an obliqueness that is almost heavy-handed.[36] Yet it also opens out to the transformative history of Canace, from Ovid to her vernacular incarnations, as a figure of the impossibility of resisting sexual desire which, paradoxically, must be resisted. Even as the narrator invokes Canace and her fellow tragic heroines in order to silence their claims to 'trouthe' in the presence of his own lady's superior virtue, Canace's image will haunt the *Legend of Good Women* as a sign of the self-destructiveness of love, her shame and punishment the inevitable obverse of desire.

John Gower gives a strikingly powerful version of this story in *Confessio amantis* (3. 143–360), where he shows Canace, like the poet himself, writing with the ink of her own tears, an image that profoundly informs the *Confessio amantis* as a whole. Gower's extraordinarily poignant version of the Canace story seems to have been a provocation to Chaucer. In the Introduction to the 'Man of Law's Tale', the narrator praises 'Chaucer' for having carefully eschewed the story of Canace.

> But certainly no word ne writeth he
> Of thilke wikke ensample of Canacee, [*this wicked*]
> That loved hir owene brother sinfully— [*her own*]
> Of swiche cursed stories I sey fy!— [*such say fie*]
>
> (II.77–80)

The careful exclusion of the 'ensample of Canacee', used to such strong effect in the *Confessio amantis*, testifies to the ongoing intertextual resonance of the Ovidian writings on love at the close of the Middle Ages in England. Chaucer's engagement with the Canace story from Ovid's *Heroides* is mediated through his engagement with Gower, just as his engagement with the figure of the old nurse from Ovid's *Ars amatoria* is mediated through his engagement with Jean de Meun and his memorable character of 'La Vielle'.

The inclusion of letters from the *Heroides* in the Troy story presented in the *Histoire ancienne* also provides a stimulating context for the letters exchanged by the lovers—or ex-lovers—in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, especially the poignant last sequence of letters described in Book 5 (5.1317–421; 5.1590–631). In some ways, the letters in Chaucer's poem conform specifically to the exchange of Paris and Helen in the *Heroides*; in other ways, the letters reflect more generally on the fall of the city and the inexorable forward march of *translatio imperii* as it is punctuated by the sequence of letters featured in the central cluster within the *Histoire ancienne*, at the height of the siege of Troy. The paired letters of Troilus and Criseyde, which mirror the paired letters of Helen and Paris, and Hero and Leander, in the *Heroides* (reproduced in the *Histoire ancienne*, as we have seen), serve as documentary witness to the history of Troy they narrate, as well as to the personal histories of their writers. They document the casualties of the siege of Troy, not just those who die in battle but those who are divided by the wall that separates Greek from Trojan. Ending as they do with an alphabetic letter—'Le vostre T' (5.1421), 'La vostre C' (5.1631)—these epistolary letters are signs of those who have sent them, the terminus of the intention that generated the letter. They serve, like the letters of the *Heroides*, as epitaphs that memorialize a time that is now irrevocably in the past. It is no wonder that Troilus, looking at the letter, sees it as a 'kalendes of chaunge' (5.1634).

In the *Legend of Good Women*, we encounter a sequence of such epitaphs for women whose experience of love has not only ended; that experience of love has also ended them. Each 'legend' concludes with a woman embracing her death, from Cleopatra leaping into the pit filled with serpents (697), to Thisbe burying the knife, hot with her lover's blood, in her own heart (915), and so on. Chaucer frequently draws attention to the abrupt withdrawal of his narrative, gesturing toward the Ovidian source: 'who wol al this letter have in mynde, | Rede Ovyde' (1366–7); 'Wel can Ovyde hire letter in vers endyte' (1678); 'In hire Epistel Naso telleth al' (2220). This move is very much like the abrupt withdrawal from the moment of transformation in Chaucer's adaptations of individual myths from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (such as Ceyx and Alcione in the *Book of the Duchess*). In each case, the reader is obliged to supply the ecstatic moment, whether experienced as transformation or experienced as death, when the voice of the metamorphosed subject is stilled or when the epistolary voice of the letter writer goes silent. In Ovid's Latin text, and perhaps even more emphatically in the *Ovide moralisé*, the metamorphosed form continues to express an enduring truth concerning the one who has been transformed and the circumstances that led to the event. Similarly, the remainder of the letter—itself transformed from epistle, in Ovid's *Heroides*, to relic, in Chaucer's *Legend*—survives as an enduring epitaph of blissful love and bitter death.

Notes

[1] There is a large bibliography on the medieval Ovid. On European reception in general, readers can consult *Ovid in the Middle Ages*, eds James G. Clark, Frank T. Coulson, and Kathryn L. McKinley (Cambridge, 2011), which has comprehensive articles and bibliographies. See also Kathryn L. McKinley, *Reading the Ovidian Heroine: Metamorphoses Commentaries 1100–1618* (Leiden, 2001). On Ovid in England, see Kathryn L. McKinley, 'Gower and Chaucer: Readings of Ovid in Late Medieval England', in *Ovid in the Middle Ages*, eds Clark et al., pp. 197–230; Jamie C. Fumo, *The Legacy of Apollo: Antiquity, Authority, and Chaucerian Poetics* (Toronto, 2010); Marilynn Desmond, *Ovid's Art and the Wife of Bath: The Ethics of Erotic Violence* (Ithaca, NY, 2006); Winthrop Wetherbee, *Chaucer and the Poets: An Essay on Troilus and Criseyde* (Ithaca, NY, 1984), pp. 87–110; John Fyler, *Chaucer and Ovid* (New Haven, 1979). On other Ovidian manifestations in England see Chapters 7, 8, 20, and 21 in this volume by Zeeman, Copeland ('Academic Prologues to Authors'), Galloway, and Minnis.

[2] On the reception of Ovid's writings in Italy, see Robert Black, 'Ovid in Medieval Italy', in *Ovid in the Middle Ages*, eds Clark et al., pp. 123–42.

[3] For an overview of this tradition, see Chapter 7 on mythography by Zeeman in this volume. For a detailed account of the history of Latin commentaries on the *Metamorphoses*, from Arnulf to the anonymous Vatican commentary, see Frank T. Coulson, 'Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in the School Tradition of France, 1180–1400: Texts, Manuscript Traditions, Manuscript Settings', in *Ovid in the Middle Ages*, eds Clark et al., pp. 48–82. For studies of the Latin commentaries, see Frank T. Coulson and Bruno Roy, *Incipitarum Ovidianum: A Finding Guide for Texts Related to the Study of Ovid in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Turnhout, 2000), on the *Ovidius moralizatus*; on the Vulgate commentary, see Frank T. Coulson, *The 'Vulgate' Commentary on Ovid's Metamorphoses*: *The Creation Myth and the Story of Orpheus* (Toronto, 1991).

[4] See the discussions of medieval Virgilian commentary in Chapters 7 and 9 by Zeeman and Ziolkowski in this volume.

[5] For an overview of the concept of the integument, see Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Seeing Through the Veil: Optical Theory and Medieval Allegory* (Toronto, 2004), pp. 57–62. For the seminal study of the concept, see Édouard Jeauneau, 'L'Usage de la notion d'integumentum à travers les gloses de Guillaume de Conches', *AHDLMA* 24 (1957), 35–100.

[6] A survey of the work's circulation can be found in Ana Pairet, 'Recasting the Metamorphoses in Fourteenth-Century France: The Challenges of the *Ovide moralisé*', in *Ovid in the Middle Ages*, eds Clark et al., pp. 83–107. Useful studies include Paule Demats, *Fabula: Trois études de mythographie antique et médiévale* (Geneva, 1973) and Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Reading Myth: Classical Mythology and its Interpretations in Medieval French Literature* (Stanford, Calif., 1997). The only monograph solely devoted to the text is Marylène Possamaï-Perez, *L'Ovide moralisé: essai d'interpretation* (Paris, 2006).

[7] All quotations from the *Ovide moralisé* are from the edition by C. Boer, *Ovide moralisé. Poème du commencement du quatorzième siècle*, 5 vols, Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandsche

Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeeling Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks, 15 (1) 21, 30 (3) 37, 43 (Amsterdam, 1915–38).

[8] Quotations of Ovid's text from *Metamorphoses*, ed. and trans. Frank Justus Miller, rev. G. P. Goold, 2 vols, 3rd edn (Cambridge, Mass., 1977; repr. 1994).

[9] 'Premeraine' corresponds to 'pristina', but connotes 'basic', 'early', as opposed to 'pure'. Cf. 'matières premières', 'raw materials', in the opening passages of the *Ovide moralisé*.

[10] A very loose adaptation of the tale of Orpheus, extending only to the names of the poet and his beloved companion ('Orfeo' and 'Heurodis') and the theme of the underworld, can be found in the late medieval romance *Sir Orfeo*. The allusion is so general that it is impossible to tell if it was inspired by the Latin text of Ovid, the *Ovide moralisé*, or the retelling of the Orpheus myth in Boethius' *De consolatione philosophiae*, 3m12. For an account of the mingling of romance conventions with elements of classical myth, see 'Sir Orfeo: Introduction', in *The Middle English Breton Lays*, eds Anne Laskaya and Eve Salisbury (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1995), pp. 13–14. On the relationship of *Sir Orfeo* to late medieval Scottish versions of the narrative, see Joanna Martin, *Kingship and Love in Scottish Poetry, 1424–1540* (Farnham, 2013), pp. 79–102, especially pp. 84–5.

[11] On Gower's use of Ovid, see in this volume Chapter 21 by Galloway.

[12] All quotations from Chaucer are from *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson (Boston, 1987).

[13] On the function of vision in this scene, both in terms of the gaze and in terms of medieval theories of optics, see Akbari, *Seeing Through the Veil*, pp. 179–85.

[14] On the Latin textual reception of Ovid's works on love, see Marie-Noëlle Toury, 'La *Métamorphose* d'Ovide au XIIe siècle', in *Lectures d'Ovide publiées á la mémoire de Jean-Pierre Néraudau* (Paris, 2003), pp. 175–87; Peter L. Allen, *The Art of Love: Amatory Fiction from Ovid to the Roman de la rose* (Philadelphia, 1992); John W. Baldwin, '*L'Ars amatoria* au XIIe siècle en France: Ovide, Abélard, André le Chapelain et Pierre le Chantre', in *Histoire et société: mélanges offerts à George Duby*, 4 vols (Aix-en-Provence, 1992), 1, 19–29. A useful survey of the vernacular versions of the *Ars amatoria* and the *Heroides* can be found in Marilynn Desmond, 'Gender and Desire in Medieval French Translations of Ovid's Amatory Works', in *Ovid in the Middle Ages*, eds Clark et al., pp. 108–22.

[15] On dating, see Niklas Holzberg, *Ovid: The Poet and his Work*, trans. G. M. Goshgarian (Ithaca, NY, 2002), pp. 16–20.

[16] On use in the schools, see E. H. Alton, 'Ovid in the Medieval Schoolroom', *Hermathena* 94 (1960), 21–38, esp. p. 22; Ralph Hexter, *Ovid and Medieval Schooling: Studies in Medieval School Commentaries on Ovid's Ars amatoria, Epistulae ex Ponto, and Epistulae Heroidum* (Munich, 1986), pp. 3–4, 14.

[17] Hexter, *Ovid and Medieval Schooling*, p. 23; Alton, 'Ovid in the Medieval Schoolroom', pp. 27–8.

[18] On the number of Latin manuscripts, see E. J. Kenney, 'The Manuscript Tradition of Ovid's *Amores*, *Ars amatoria*, and *Remedia amoris*', *Classical Quarterly* 12 (1962), 1–31, esp. pp. 1–5.

[19] An overview of the translations can be found in Desmond, *Ovid's Art*, pp. 75–9. The verse adaptations of Jakes d'Amiens and Maître Elie can be found in *Artes amandi: da Maître Elie ad Andrea Capellano*, ed. A. M. Finoli (Milan, 1969), pp. 31–121 (Jakes d'Amiens), and 3–30 (Maître Elie). The prose text can be found in *L'Art d'amours*, ed. Bruno Roy (Leiden, 1974); trans. Lawrence B. Blonquist, *The Art of Love* (New York, 1987).

[20] *L'Art d'amours*, ed. Roy, pp. 17–18 and 25.

[21] Lines 37–8, *Le Roman de la rose*, ed. Félix Lecoy, 3 vols (Paris, 1965–70). On how the role of the 'handmaid' of the *Ars amatoria* is adapted to the masculine Bel Acueil in Guillaume's *Rose*, see Akbari, *Seeing Through the Veil*, pp. 71–3.

[22] On the figure of Narcissus in Guillaume's Rose, see Daniel Poirion, 'Narcisse et Pygmalion dans *Le Roman de la rose*', in *Essays in Honor of Louis Francis Solano*, eds Raymond J. Cormier and Urban T. Holmes (Chapel Hill, NC, 1970), pp. 153–65; David F. Hult, *Self-Fulfilling Prophecies: Readership and Authority in the First Roman de la rose* (Cambridge, 1986).

[23] On Narcissus and Pygmalion, see Akbari, *Seeing Through the Veil*, pp. 83–8; on la Vielle, see Alastair J. Minnis, *Magister amoris: The Roman de la rose and Vernacular Hermeneutics* (Oxford, 2001), esp. ch. 2: 'Lifting the Veil: Sexual/Textual Nakedness in the *Roman de la rose*', pp. 82–117.

[24] On the intertextuality of Chaucer, Ovid, and Jean de Meun, see Desmond, *Ovid's Art*, p. 127.

[25] J. Javier Puerto Benito, 'The *Heroides* in Alfonso X's *General estoria*: Translation, Adaptation, Use, and Interpretation of a Classical Work in a Thirteenth-Century Iberian History of the World', Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kentucky, 2008. <http://uknowledge.uky.edu/gradschool_diss/611> 94.

[26] 'se deue guarder de sonseio de enemigo a enemigo'; GE II, 115v, quoted in Puerto Benito, 'The *Heroides* in Alfonso X's *General estoria*', 94.

[27] The second redaction of the *Histoire ancienne* dates from 1364–80, according to Paul Meyer, 'Les Premières Compilations françaises d'histoire ancienne', *Romania* 54 (1885), 1–81, at p. 75; Desmond gives a date of 'the middle of the fourteenth century' ('Gender and Desire', p. 111). At present there is no complete modern edition of the *Histoire ancienne.*

[28] On Benoit de Saint-Maure, see Chapter 13 in this volume by Desmond on the medieval Troy tradition.

[29] Suzanne Conklin Akbari, 'Erasing the Body: History and Memory in Medieval Siege Poetry', in *Remembering the Crusades: Myth, Image, and Identity*, eds Nicholas Paul and Suzanne Yeager (Baltimore, 2012), pp. 146–73.

[30] Luca Barbieri, *Le 'epistole delle dame di Grecia' nel Roman de Troie in prosa: la prima traduzione francese delle Eroidi di Ovidio* (Tübingen, 2005), p. 174n.

[31] Barbieri, *Le 'epistole'*, p. 237.

[32] Barbieri, *Le 'epistole'*, p. 237.

[33] Barbieri, *Le 'epistole'*, pp. 236–7.

[34] Puerto Benito, 'The *Heroides* in Alfonso X's *General estoria*', p. 95.

[35] Chaucer also assigns the name 'Canacee' to the heroine of the 'Squire's Tale', although without apparent connection with the name of the Ovidian figure.

[36] On the figure of Canace in the Absolon balade and the Ovidian intertext, see the sensitive reading of Helen Phillips, 'Literary Allusion in Chaucer's Ballade, "Hyd, Absalon, Thy Gilte Tresses Clere"', *Chaucer Review* 30 (1995), 134–49, esp. pp. 138–41. For a more general account of Chaucer's practice of interpolating lyrics into his narrative poetry, see Bruce Holsinger, 'Lyrics and Short Poems', in *The Yale Companion to Chaucer*, ed. Seth Lerer (New Haven, 2006), pp. 179–212, esp. pp. 179–93.