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THE BEGINNING OF THE RENAISSANCE? PHILOLOGICAL BEHAVIOUR IN EARLY FRENCH PRE-UNIVERSITIES*

The article will demonstrate how early French pre-universities in the Loire valley began to look at texts written by Roman writers such as Horace, Ovid and Virgil with the aim of interpreting and explaining the text as Roman texts, without trying to search for 'hidden meanings'. The article will focus on the philological Ovid-commentary by William of Orléans (c1200), this being a clear example of this philological way of thinking. This approach to classical 'pagan' texts provoked a strong reaction that finally resulted in an allegorising interpretation of the classical texts and often the elimination of such texts from the school curriculum. This was the situation which early humanists protested against.

Keywords: Renaissance, Twelfth century, Ovid, Commentary, William of Orléans, Philology

A reneszánsz kezdete? Filológiai viselkedés a korai francia előegyetemeken. A tanulmány azt vizsgálja, hogyan kezdtek el foglalkozni a Loire-menti kora francia előegyetemeken római írók, például Horatius, Ovidius, Vergilius munkáival, abból a célból, hogy a szövegeket római szövegként mindenféle „rejtett értelem" nélkül magyarázzák. Jelen tanulmány Orléans-i Vilmos (1200 körül) Ovidius filológiai kommentárjaival foglalkozik, amely a filológiai gondolkodás kiváló példáját adja. Az ilyen klasszikus „pogány" szövegekhez való visszanyúlás heves indulatokat váltott ki, és a klasszikus szövegek allegorikus magyarázatához, majd pedig gyakran a szövegek iskolai tananyagból való eltüntetéséhez vezetett. A korai humanisták tiltakoztak ezen helyzet ellen.

Kulcsszavak: Reneszánsz, 12. század, Ovidius, kommentárok, Orléans-i Vilmos, Filológia

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Introduction

The Middle Ages owe their name among others to the renowned Italian Renaissance poet and humanist Francesco Petrarch (1304–1374) who stated in his *Rerum memorandarum libri* (Letters on Memorable Things) written in the years 1343–1345:[1]

> "Sed quot praeclaros vetustatis auctores, tot posteritatis pudores ac delicta commemoro. Quae, quasi non contenta propriae sterilitatis infamia, alienis fructus ingenii ac maiorum studiis vigiliisque elaboratos codices intolerabili negligentia perire passa est."

[But how many world-famous ancient authors I can name, how many shameful acts and errors of later authors are associated with them. It as if they were not merely satisfied with the shame of their own sterility, but idly watched as the results were lost through inexcusable neglect of the talents of others and the manuscripts which the ancients had so laboriously produced.][2]

After his remarks, Italian humanists coined the term *medium aevum,* "middle period" or even *media tempestas,* "middle time".[3] Celebrated medievalists such as Ludwig Traube (1861–1907) emphasised, in contrast, the so-called "Renaissance of the Twelfth Century":

> "Es ist auch wieder die Zeit gekommen, in der den lateinischen Dichtern der Reim trivial und vulgär schien. Schon im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert enthalten sich die Dichter wieder der Leoniner, die sie im 10. und besonders im 11. Jahrhundert ganz ausnahmslos verwandten. Es ist das Zeitalter, das ich die *aetas Ovidiana* nennen möchte, die Zeit, die der *aetas Vergiliana,* dem 8. und 9. Jahrhundert, und der *aetas Horatiana*, dem 10. und 11. Jahrhundert folgt. Denn so könnte man ungefähr die Jahrhunderte abgrenzen nach den Dichtern, die ihnen die nachahmenswertesten schienen."

[The time has also come again when the Latin poets found rhyme trivial and vulgar. As early as the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the poets again abstained from using the leonines, which they used without exception in the tenth and especially in the eleventh century. It is the age that I would like to call *aetas Ovidiana,* the time that follows *aetas Vergiliana,* the eighth and ninth centuries, and *aetas Horatiana,* the tenth

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[1] *Rerum memorandarum libri* 1,19, quoted after Horst Rüdiger: "Die Wiederentdeckung der antiken Literatur im Zeitalter der Renaissance," in *Die Textüberlieferung der antiken Literatur und der Bibel,* red. Herbert Hunger et Otto Stegmüller et al. (München: DTV, 1988), 537.

[2] Unless otherwise stated, the English translations are by the author of the article.

[3] Note that *tempestas* also means "stormy weather" or "unruly time" and has thus a clear negative connotation.

and eleventh centuries. One could roughly delimit in this way the centuries according to the poets who seemed to them the most worthy of imitation.]

In the Middle Ages themselves, many intellectuals viewed their period as the *modern era,* a time of progressive progress. Even the term *modernitas*, modernity, was coined in the eleventh century by Berthold of Reichenau (c1033–1088).[4] The question is, of course, how these diametrically opposed opinions can be reconciled.

An allegorical approach

Why did Petrarch find the period just before and of his day as so barbaric? A glance at one of the most famous commentaries on Ovid, written around 1342 by the Benedictine monk Petrus Berchorius (Pierre Bersuire, c1290–1362) makes this clear. Berchorius was in his day a famous preacher, who apart from his sermons and some historical works also wrote an enormous morally founded encyclopaedia *Reductorium Morale* (Moral Guide) in 16 books, of which the fifteenth book was a moralisation of Ovid's work, specifically of the *Metamorphoses*. Petrarch must have been familiar with Berchorius's work, the two men corresponded, and in 1361, when Petrarch was diplomat of Galeazza II Visconti at the court of John II of France, he and Berchorius also met in person.[5] Whether or not Petrarch had Berchorius's commentary in mind, which had just been edited, when he himself wrote his *Rerum memorandarum libri,* is unknown. A small excerpt from Berchorius' Ovidian commentary does make it clear why Petrarch wrote down his remark.

In the seventh book of the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid describes how Jason and the Argonauts acquired in Colchis with the help of Princess Medea for the Golden Fleece. To obtain the Fleece, Jason had to perform three tasks imposed by Medea's father Aeëtes: to plough a field with fiery oxen, to slay a dragon and to sow its teeth in a field. Thanks to the help of Medea, endowed with supernatural powers, Jason succeeded and then the couple fled from Colchos with the Fleece. Medea later ensured that the life of Jason's father Aeson was extended. The daughters of Jason's uncle Pelias consequently asked her to do the same for their father. Medea had already anticipated this request and, under the pretext of a marital quarrel, had fled to the court of Pelias. She promised to do it, but the daughters had to first kill their father. They did so, but Medea did not keep her promise and fled to Athens instead. In the *Metamorphoses,* Ovid does

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[4] See Wilken Engelbrecht, "On *Modernus* and *Modernitas* in Medieval Latin", *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 50, no. 2 (2015): 241–251. Some Medieval scholars of Roman literature, however, considered previous eras, especially classical antiquity, to be superior to their own and defined 'modern' rather negatively.

[5] See the remarks in question by Leopold Pannier, "Notice biographique sur le bénédictin Pierre Bersuire, premier traducteur français de Tite Live", *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 33 (1872): 350–351.

not elaborate on the rest of Medea's history. For this he used the twelfth letter of his previously written *Heroides*, the Letters of the Heroines.

Berchorius did not comment on the book verse by verse, but summarised the main lines of the book in several *fabulae*, in which he dealt with the individual stories that Ovid tells in succession. He thus arrived at 33 stories, of which the first 8 concern Jason and Medea, roughly verses 1–470 of *Metamorphoses* VII. To provide an idea of how his allegorisation functioned, we will give two highlights from Berchorius's interpretation.

After a longer introduction about the Golden Fleece and King Phineus the Blind of Thracia, who is compared to Adam, Berchorius characterises the Golden Fleece, Jason and Medea as follows:[6]

> "Per vellus aureum possumus intelligere divitias temporales et maxime divitias Ecclesiae. Iste enim sunt vellus, id est possessio arietis quod ordinatum est ad tunice pauperum faciendas. Per Iasonem intelligo bonum praelatum qui id vellus vult acquirere: id est ad ecclesias praebendas pervenire. Per bovem flammigeros intelligo crudeles tyrannos: per draconem vigilem intelligo diabolum, per regem Deum patrem, & per eius filiam Virginem gloriosam vel etiam sapientiam cunctis artibus eruditam. Dico igitur, quod Iason, id est quicumque praelatus qui vellus aureum, id est bona que sunt in templo regis, id est in Ecclesia, debite cupit acquirere, debet primo cum filia eius, id est Beata Virgine vel sapientia, familiaritatem habere & amicitiam per devotionem. *Proverbia VII: »Dic sapientiae 'soror mea' es & prudentiam voca amicam tuam.«* […] Vel dic, quod Iason est Christus, qui assumpta uxore Medea, id est nostra humanitate, boves, id est tyrannos iugo fidei subire coegit & protervos & obstinatos domuit, sicut patuit in Paulo. Et ipsos terram praedicando sulcare coegit, draconem diabolum superavit. Dentes eius, id est peccatores in ecclesia seminatos per fidem milites suos fecit, quorum tamen instigante diabolo alter contra alterum per detractionem et invidiam nunc insurgit. *Matth. X: »Tradet frater fratrem in mortem.«* Sic igitur vellus aureum, quod draco servabat, id est sanctorum patrum collegium, sustulit in patriam, unde venerat, id est in paradisum."

[Through the Golden Fleece we are able to perceive temporal riches and especially the riches of the Church. These are the fleece, that is the possession, of a ram which is ordered to make tunice for the poor. Through Jason I perceive a good prelate who wants to get that fleece, that is to supply churches. Through the fire-breathing oxen

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[6] Text according to the edition of Josef ENGELS, *Reductorium morale Liber XV, cap. ii–xv: Ovidius moralizatus. Petrus Berchorius naar de Parijse druk van 1509: Metamophosis Ovidiana Moraliter a Magistro Thoma Walleys Anglico de professione praedicatorum sub sanctissimo patre Dominico explanata. Venundatur in aedibus Ascensianis & sub Pelicano in vico Sancti Iacobi Parisiis.* (Utrecht: D. van Nes, 1962), 109–110. The subsequent English translation is by William D. REYNOLDS, *The 'Ovidius Moralizatus' of Petrus Berchortius: An Introduction and Translation.* (Diss. University of Illinois, Urbana, 1971), 270–271. This is the second part of the second story in Berchorius' text.

I perceive cruel tyrants, through the dragon guard the devil, through the king [Aeëtes] God the Father, and through his daughter [Medea] the glorious Virgin or wisdom, learned in all arts. I say that Jason, that is a prelate, who justly desires to get the golden fleece, that is the goods, in the temple of the king, that is in the Church, should first have familiarity with his daughter, that is the Blessed Virgin or wisdom, through devotion. *Proverbs* 7:4: *"Say to wisdom, 'You are my sister' and call prudence your friend."* […] Or say that Jason is Christ who after he married Medea, that is after he took on our humanity, forced oxen, that is tyrants, to go under the yoke of faith and tamed violent and obstinate man, as was clear in Paul's case,[7] and by preaching forced them to plow the land. He conquered the dragon, that is the devil, and sowed his teeth, that is the sinners in the Church through faith. He created soldiers, one of whom at the instigation of the devil sometimes rises against another through detraction and envy. *Matthew* 10: 21: *"The brother will deliver a brother to death."* Thus he bore away to the land he had come from, that is to Paradise, the golden fleece, that is the assembly of the holy fathers, which the dragon guarded.]

Our second example is the fifth story of this book, where Medea renewed Aeson's youth:[8]

> "Medea in Thessaliam ducta patrem Iasonis dictum Aesonem antiquissimum ad annos iuveniles reduxit. Fecit autem ei quandam confectionem herbarum mirabilem. Et adiunctis carminibus simul commiscuit, que dum commisceret super ignem in lebete, & vellet temptare, si esset bene paratum, virgam siccam apposuit: que continuo floruit. Silla etiam in terra cadens herbas crescere statim fecit. Antiquus etiam aries occisus & impositus statim agnus iuvenculus exiit. Aesonem igitur occidens &veterem sanguinem extrahens in lebete posuit. Et cum artus eius succis herbarum imbuti essent, vitam recuperavit & iuvenis magis quam fili factus fuit. […] Talis Medea incantatrix videtur etiam praedicator qui incantare videtur audientes inquantum ipsos induxit ad credendum & faciendum contra propositum voluntatis. Ps. »Audiet vocem incantantium.« Iste enim est qui herbis & carminibus, id est verbis & exemplis homines senes iuvenes esse facit, inquantum scilicet illos qui sunt vitiis antiquati per paenitentiam moraliter renovat & ad virtutem reducit. Iste enim super omnia debet habere herbas bonorum verborum: lebetem paenitentiae attendere, sanguinem veterem, id est antiqua peccata per confessionem expellere & succo paenitentiae & lachrymarum artus pietatis imbuere. Et sic pro certo faciet ipsum ad spiritualis iuventutis gloriam revenire. Sic enim mutantur arietes in agnos, id est peccatores in iustos, virge sicce in florentes, antiqui in iuvenes, iniqui in innocentes. *Ps. »Renovabitur ut aquile iuventus tua.«*"

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7 This refers to the conversion of the apostle Paul as told in the *Acts of the Apostles* 9.
8 ENGELS (ed.), *Reductorium morale…,* 111–112 and REYNOLDS, *The 'Ovidius Moralizatus'…,* 274–275.

[When Medea had been taken to Thessaly, she restored Jason's old father Aeson to youthful years. She made for him a miraculous potion of herbs and mixed it while adding spells. After she had mixed it in a pot over a fire, she wanted to test whether it was well-prepared. She put a dry stick in and at once it bloomed. A drop fell on the ground and made the plants grow at once. An old ram was killed and put in and a young lamb immediately came out. She killed Aeson and having drawn out his old blood she put it in the pot. When his limbs had been soaked in the liquid he regained life and became younger than his son. […] Such a Medea seems to be a preacher who seems to enchant his hearers because he leads them to believing and to acting against the desire of the will. *Psalm* 57: 6: *"He will hear the voice of the singers."* He it is who with herbs and spells, that is with words and examples, makes old men young because he morally renews through penitence those who are old in sin and leads them to virtues. Above all, he should have the herbs of good words, pay attention to the pot of penitence, expel the old blood, that is old sins through confession, and moisten the limbs of piety with the liquid of penitence and tears. Thus, he will certainly make him return to the glory of spiritual youth: thus rams are changed into lambs, that is sinners into just men, dry sticks into blooming ones, the old into young, and the evil into the innocent. *Psalm* 102: 5: *"Your youth will be renewed as the eagle's."*]

Jason can therefore be interpreted as 'a prelate', or Christ, Medea as a sorceress, wisdom or even the Blessed Virgin Mary or a preacher. These are rather contradictory interpretations and one wonders how Berchorius could have them in one commentary. Berchorius' *Moralised Ovid* is certainly one of the most exponential versions of the allegorised commentaries, but his *allegoresis* is by far not the only one. Nevertheless, his *Metamorphoses ad usum praedicatorum* (the *Metamorphoses* explained for preachers), as Ralph J. Hexter aptly called it,[9] was a kind of close reading with the eyes of a preacher, systematically interpreting the Ovidian text with the help of numerous biblical quotations (and here and there of Church fathers as well) in a Christian framework.

Another type of allegorisation

About twenty years earlier, Dante Alighieri's friend Giovanni del Virgilio, who taught in Bologna in the years 1319–1327, also wrote an allegorical commentary on the *Metamorphoses,* the *Allegorie librorum Ovidii Metamorphoseos*.[10] Del Virgilio, unlike Berchorius a university lecturer, commented on the same passages as follows, in quite another way:[11]

[9] Ralph J. HEXTER, "The 'Allegari' of Pierre Bersuire: Interpretation and the 'Reductorium Morale'", *Allegorica* 10 (1989): 54.

[10] The text is edited by Fausto GHISALBERTI, "Giovanni del Virgilio, espositore delle 'Metamorfosi', *Il Giornale Dantesco* 34, no. 3., NS 4 (1931): 3–110.

[11] GHISALBERTI, "Giovanni del Virgilio…", 76.

"Secunda transmutatio est de vellere aureo, nam Ovidius sub quadam fictione veritatem hystorie exprimit in hunc modum. Nam verum fuit quod Frixus et Heles fictione noverce exulaverunt a patre. Quibus apparuit mater et dedit sibi arietem cum vellere aureo. Id est accepta dote matris que mortua erat, recesserunt in navi que habebat arietem pro signo. Ex quo Heles cadens submersa est et mari nomen dedit. Dictum enim est mare Helespontiacum. Frixus autem incolumis appulsus in Colcho insula dedicavit arietem Marti, id est aurum quod habebat imposuit turri in regno Oete, ad cuius custodiam erat draco pervigil, id est custos prudens ut serpens. Et erant ibi duo tauri indomiti, id est duo comites illius custodis qui ore flammas vomebant, id est qui erant deputati ad consulendum illi principali. Per dentes intellige stipendiarios quos habebant. Sed venit Iason armata manu ut raperet illud. Domuit ergo illos tauros, od est corripuit denariis illos comites. Postea seminavit dentes, id est denariis etiam decepit stipendiarios. Sed ipsi irruerunt in eum, quia non habuerunt quantum fecerunt. Sed postea sopivit, id est veneno aspidis venenavit principalem custodem. Et hoc mediante Medea. Et postea rapuit quod erat in turri, et recessit cum Medea. […]

Tertia transmutatio est de Aesone iuvene facto, Quod sic debet intelligi: Aeson videns filium rediisse sospitem cum tantis divitiis et tam pulchra uxore, ita laetificatus est, quod visus est iuvenis factus esse. Vel potest esse quod ipse Aeson manebat in bona aetate. Nam hoc sciunt facere medici. Unde dictum est: *»Arte nurus magice vixit iocundior Aeson, / Et redit in iuvenem prosperitate senex.«*"

[The second transmutation is the one of the golden fleece, for Ovid expresses a real story in a kind of fiction in this way. For it was true that Phrixus and Helle were banished by their father because of their stepmother's deceit. Their mother appeared to them and gave them a ram with a golden fleece. This is that having received the dowry of their mother who had died, they went away in a ship carrying the ram as a sign. Helle fell overboard and drowned, and thus gave the sea her name. It is called Hellespont. Phrixus, however, landed unharmed on the island of Colchos and gave the ram to Mars, that is he stored the gold he had in Aeëtes's kingdom in a tower. To guard it there was a waking dragon, this is a guard sharp as a serpent. And there were there also two indomitable bulls, that is, two companions of that guard, who spat flames, that is, they were deputed to counsel their principal. By the teeth should be understood the mercenaries they had. But Jason came to steal this by force of arms. So he tamed those bulls, that is he bribed those companions with money. Then he sowed the teeth, that is, he bribed the mercenaries with money as well. But they rose up against him because they did not get as much as they wanted. But later he intoxicated, that is he poisoned with a poisonous lance the head-guard. And this thanks to Medea's intervention. And then he stole what was in the tower and went away with Medea […]

The third transmutation is that of Aeson who is made young. This is to be understood as follows: when Aeson saw that his son had returned safely with so much treasure

and such a beautiful wife, he became so delighted that he seemed to be rejuvenated. However, it is also possible that Aeson was in good health. For medics know how to bring this about. That is why it is said: "Thanks to the art of his daughter-in-law, Aeson magically lived more cheerfully / and the greybeard was transformed into a youth by prosperity."]

Del Virgilio's approach is thus quite different: he tries to explain Ovid's mythical metamorphoses in a natural way, a method that is somewhat reminiscent of that of modern theologians who want to explain Biblical miracles in a similar manner. Del Virgilio remains of course a child of his Christian age, as can be seen from the concluding commentary, in which he discusses the deification of Caesar:[12]

> "Decima et ultima mutatio est de Iulio Caesare in sidus converso sive deificato. Quod Caesar deificatus sit, debet intelligi quod fuit valentissimus et probissimus in bellis et in aliis mundanis, ita quod opera sua reluxerunt quemadmodum sidus per totum mundum eo quod subiugavit Romae. Unde habet fabula quod conversus sit in sidus. Sed quod apparuerit sidus Augusto sacrificanti hoc bene fuit verum. Unde cogitavit quod sidus patris sui, et ita fecit dici per totum mundum. Sed catholici tenent quod fuerit sidus annunciationis Christi quod apparuit Magis et duxit eos in orientem. Nam Christus vera et sancta conversione convertit se in hominem, ut lavaret et purgaret nostra crimina. Quibus purgatis nos a simili convertemur in deum, hoc est participaremus divinitatem. Nam participatione beatitudinis omnes beati dei sunt teste Boetio."

[The tenth and last change is that of Julius Caesar changed into a star or his deification. That Caesar was deified is to be understood that he was the most skilful and the bravest in wars and in other worldly affairs, so that his works shone as if they were a star in all the world because he subjugated it to Rome. Thus arose the story that he was turned into a star. But that a star appeared to Augustus when he sacrificed, this is really true. Whence he thought that this was the star of his father, and had it told all over the world. But the Catholics assume that this was the star of the announcement of Christ that appeared to the Magi and led them to the East. For Christ, by a true and holy transformation, changed himself into a man to wash away and cleanse our sins. After being cleansed, we too shall likewise be changed into a god, that is, we shall partake of divinity. For according to the testimony of Boëtius, all will be as gods through participation in blessedness.]

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[12] Ghisalberti, "Giovanni del Virgilio…", 106–107.

The Renaissance versus 'the Renaissance of the Twelfth Century'

Del Virgilio and Berchorius lived in the fourteenth century, at the transition from the Middle Ages to the early Renaissance that is represented here by their contemporaries, the two Italian poets Petrarch and Dante. The main difference between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance is, as said by the celebrated humanist Erasmus: *"Sed in primis ad fontes ipsos properandum, id est Graecos et Antiquos."* (Above all, one must hasten to the sources, this is to the Greeks and the Ancients).[13] The second difference is the *humanitas* of the Renaissance, its clear anthropocentric orientation. But why did Charles Homer Haskins (1870–1937) in his famous and controversial book *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* coin this idea of a Twelfth Century Renaissance? Does it make any sense? Haskins stated the following in his preface:[14]

> "This century […] was in many respects an age of fresh and vigorous life. The epoch of the Crusades, of the rise of towns, and of the earliest bureaucratic states of the West, saw the culmination of Romanesque art and the beginnings of Gothic art; the emergence of vernacular literatures; the revival of the Latin classics and of Latin poetry and Roman law; the recovery of Greek science, with its Arabic additions, and of much of Greek philosophy; and the origin of the first European universities. The twelfth century left its signature on higher education, on scholastic philosophy, on European systems of law, on architecture and sculpture, on the liturgical drama, on Latin and vernacular poetry."

The difference between the Renaissance and the so-called Renaissance of the Twelfth Century lies first and foremost in technical possibilities. Petrarch and Dante still belonged to the pre-Renaissance, a period in which the Middle Ages were by no means ended. It was only with the invention of the printing press around 1450 that the conditions were created for the rapid distribution of texts in an unaltered form. This also made it possible to revise texts and adapt the editions of those texts accordingly. This by no means implies that serious philology did not exist before. To understand this, a short excursion on what a Medieval university actually looked like will be needed.

Medieval Universities

As is generally known, the oldest still existing university is that of Bologna, founded in 1088 as a corporation of students and teachers, called *universitas*. The first universities

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[13] ERASMUS, *De ratione studii ac legendi interpretandique auctores* 119, 76., ed. Jan H. WASZINK et al., *Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami Opera omnia Vol. I, 2* (Amsterdam: North Holland Company, 1969), 120.11.

[14] Charles Homer HASKINS, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1927), vi.

emerged spontaneously, without any formal consent.[15] Their forerunners were often cathedral schools but the difference was that universities were not *per se* – or rather were *per se not* – ecclesial bodies. It was the *Studium Generale,* an attempt to catch all knowledge, that was important. In a somewhat later phase, from the middle of the twelfth century onwards, more clearly defined programmes emerged. Generally speaking, the arts formed the basic education, and after a bachelor's or possibly master's degree in the arts, one could study further in legal studies, medicine or theology.

Within the arts, the study of texts by classical Latin authors, especially Virgil, Horace and Ovid, had a fixed place. These were usually taught by masters. The basic methods were *lectio* (reading), *disputatio* (discussion) and *quaestio* (questioning about the deeper meaning of the text discussed).[16] The lectio took the form of a recitation by the master of the whole text to be treated in such a way that the students could remember it. Parchment was far too expensive to ensure that all students had their own text, so the students were forced to memorize the text. After the reading, the teacher would go through the entire text, explaining grammatical problems, mentioning interesting facts and providing background information if necessary. This method had already become established by the eleventh century. In order to remember the text and explanations better, students often chose among themselves a reporter who wrote down a summary of the lecture or even reproduced it word for word.[17] For this method, a philological approach was essential.

The *disputatio* took the form of an independent debate between students led by a master who usually decided on the themes. For students, this was the way to learn to argue independently. In Paris, students in the bachelor's phase had to regularly discuss *sophismata* over one academic year, difficult issues or difficult textual passages.[18] At the bachelor examination, the candidate was presented with a *determinatio,* an exercise in which he had to respond to a thesis and then systematically refute this thesis with logical arguments. In a higher phase of study, the licenciate, students had to regularly argue about *quaestiones* over two years, whereby they were the respondents at determinations of bachelor candidates.[19]

The *quaestio* was originally part of the *lectio* and concerned the clarification of unclear textual passages. As of the second half of the thirteenth century, it became a

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[15] Hastings Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages, Vol. I. Salerno-Bologna-Paris* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1895), 17–18.

[16] This threefold division was presented in this manner by the scholastic Petrus Cantor (c1130–1197) in his *Verbum abbreviatum* 1. Compare Olga Weijers, *Le maniement du savoir. Pratiques intellectuelles à l'époque des premières universités (XIIIᵉ–XIVᵉ siècles)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), 77.

[17] Jacqueline Hamesse, "la technique de la reportation", in *L'enseignement des disciplines à la Faculté des arts,* ed. Olga Weijers & Louis Holtz (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), 405–421.

[18] See e.g. Irène Rosier, "Les sophismes grammaticaux au XIIIᵉ siècle", *Medioevo* 17 (1991) : 175–230.

[19] Concerning the system, cf. Sten Ebbesen & Irène Rosier, "Le *trivium* à la Faculté des arts", in *L'enseignement des disciplines à la Faculté des arts*, ed. Olga Weijers & Louis Holtz (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), 97–128, especially pp. 112–114 and Olga Weijers, *La 'disputatio' à la Faculté des arts de Paris (1200–1350 environ): Esquisse d'une typologie* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1995).

separate genre of academic work. Such *quaestiones* concerned themes that had been touched upon in the *lectio,* but had not been dealt with in the *disputatio*. They were dealt with by the master in the form of a dialogue, after which he arrived at a certain conclusion together with the students.[20]

The form of the texts

The fact that, for practical reasons, students were forced to learn texts by heart should be emphasised. This explains the philological approach of that time. There are thousands of manuscripts left from the Medieval period (and certainly more have been lost), as well as of texts by classical authors. These types of commentaries were already quite strictly distinguished at that time, including *glossae* or *glosulae*, glosses, *commentarii* or *commenta*, commentaries, and *allegoriae* or *integumenta*, allegories. The glosses systematically dealt with the entire text, usually in a rather basic way. Commentaries usually provided background information and paraphrased the text. The allegories focused on the deeper meaning of the text. This corresponds to what one of the most important pedagogues of the twelfth century, Hugo of St. Victor (1096–1141), considered a good way of explaining during the lectio:[21]

> "Expositio tria continet: litteram, sensum, sententiam. *Littera* est congrua ordinatio dictionum, quod etiam constructionem vocamus. *Sensus* est facilis quaedam et aperta significatio, quam littera prima fronte prefert. *Sententia* est profundior intelligentia, que nisi expositione vel interpretatione non invenitur. In his ordo est, ut primam litteram deinde sensus, deinde sententia inquiratur."

[Interpretation has three elements: sound, meaning and sense. *Sounding* is the correct arrangement of words, which we also name the sentence construction. *Meaning* is a kind of simple and clear sign that the wording provides at a glance. *Sense* is a deeper understanding that cannot be found without explanation or interpretation. In this area, the order is to analyze the wording first, then the meaning, and then the sense. Afterwards the interpretation is complete.]

In the eighth century, the habit of dividing the page space of manuscripts into several columns emerged. The original text was written in larger letters in the middle column and glosses and comments on both sides in smaller letters. As the number of commentaries increased, the page level was adjusted accordingly. At the end of the twelfth century and the beginning of the thirteenth century, a type of manuscript layout emerged that was characterised by the late Frankfort librarian Gerhard Powitz

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[20] See Weijers, *La disputatio…*, 25–40 with the literature mentioned therein.

[21] Hugo de Sancto Victore, *Didascalion* 3.8 (771D–772A). used edition: Charles Henry Buttimer, *Hugonis de Sancto Victore Didalscalion de Studio Legendi. A Critical Text* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University, 1939), 58.

(1930–2020) as *Glossenbibelform*, a form of biblical glosses.[22] It looked something like this (on the left the layout scheme after Powitz, on the right a thirteenth century manuscript of Ovid's Heroides (Tours, Bibliothèque municipale Ms. 881, fol. 28ʳ):
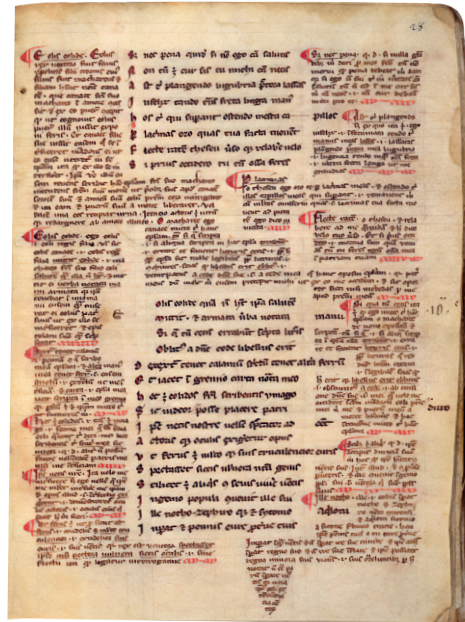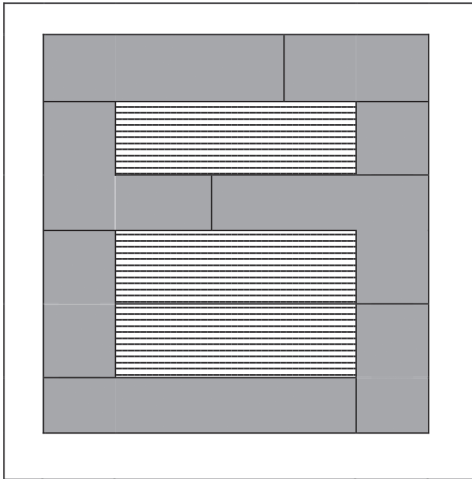

The central part was also reserved in this layout for the original Ovidian text, with or without interlinear glosses; the margins were for various commentaries on the text. From the thirteenth century onwards, such commentaries also came into circulation independently, as so-called *catena commentaries*. The name stems from the appearance of the commentaries, in which literal citations of the original text were directly linked to the commentary. An apt example of such a commentary, intended for study, is the so-called *Bursarii super Ovidios*, written around 1200 in Orleans by the otherwise unknown Master William of Orleans.[23] The image from the manuscript lat. qu. 219 (fol. 95ᵛ), originally from France, possibly from the monastery of St.-Victor in Paris, shows what is meant. The piece depicted hereafter is the beginning of the commentary on Ovid's Heroides.

A *catena* commentary assumed that the user had a complete Ovidian text next to the commentary, or knew it by heart. The original text was often abbreviated to only a few letters. Such commentaries were intended for practical use by teachers or

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[22] Gerhard Powitz, "Textus cum commento.", *Codices manuscripti* 5 (1979): 80–89. Schemes on p. 89. Our graph is a combination of the types 3, 6 and 7 of Powitz.

[23] About Master William, see Wilken Engelbrecht, "Fulco, Arnulf and William: Twelfth-Century Views on Ovid in Orléans", *Journal of Medieval Latin* 18 (2006): 52–73.

students and were therefore often written on cheap parchment and in as small a script as possible. An example of the same commentary of another manuscript, today bound together in the same volume Lat. qu. 219 (fol. 119ᵛ) written around 1200 on sheets of 22,7 × 14,2 cm with 62 lines on two columns is showed below.[24] The perforations in the parchment are original, as the copyist wrote around them. This kind of parchment was, of course, not used in decorative manuscripts.
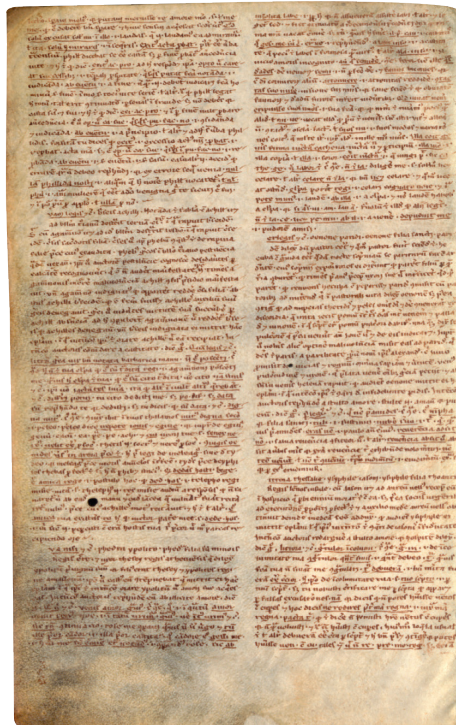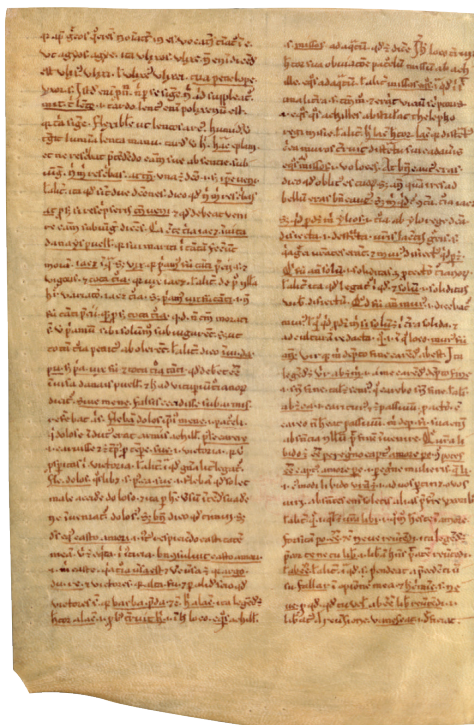
Most commentaries of this type have been handed down anonymously. Thanks to the systematic work of Frank T. Coulson and Bruno Roy,[25] a fairly good overview exists of the commentaries on Ovid. If there is nevertheless an idea that most commentaries were allegorical, this is because they were intended for higher study.

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[24] The other manuscript, pictured on the left, has an average of 49 lines in two columns on sheets of 20 × 11 cm and dates from the first quarter of the thirteenth century.

[25] Frank T. Coulson & Bruno Roy, *Incipitarium Ovidianum. A Finding Guide for Texts Related to the Study of Ovid in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000) (Publications of the Journal of Medieval Latin 3).

Philological features

Petrarch's main complaint was that the manuscripts of the classics were being neglected. Was this true? Some commentaries, such as the one by the *Bursarii super Ovidios* already mentioned, compare and discuss manuscripts quite systematically at problematic places in the text. An example is the commentary on Ovid, *Heroides* 1, 36. The version generally accepted today reads: *"hic lacer admissos terruit Hector equos."* (Here it was, that Hector, torn to shreds, frightened the chased horses). The medieval *textus receptus,* the generally accepted text, reads, however: *"hic alacer missos terruit Hector equos"* (Here the impetuous Hector frightened the sent horses). The *Bursarii* commentary reads:[26]

> "Hic alacer. Ita legendum est: Hector alacer, id est probus, terruit hic, id est in hoc loco, equos, Achillis scilicet, missos adaquatum. Quod est dicere: In hoc loco obviacione sua terruit Hector Patroclum, quem miserat Achilles equos adaquatum. Vel aliter: Misos equos, ita quod ibi sit una littera *s* et erit vicium scriptoris, id est equos quos Achilles abstulerat Telepho regi Misiae. Vel aliter: Hic lacer admissos. Construe: Hector lacer, quia distractus circa muros terruit distractu sui cadaveris equos admissos, id est veloces."

[Here the impetuous. It should read like this: The impetuous Hector, this is the brave, frightened here, this is in this place, the horses of Achilles sent to the wateringplace. This means: In this place Hector, by appearing, frightened Patroclus, who was sent by Achilles to water the horses. Or, The Mysian horses, so that there is only one letter *s*,[27] and it is the scribe's error, this is the horses which Achilles took from Telephus, king of Mysia. Or so: Here torn to shreds. Construe: Hector torn to shreds, because he was dragged round the walls, frightened by the dismemberment of his corpse, chased horses, this is swift horses.]

William starts his comment with the *textus receptus,* logically, as this was the text usually noted in the manuscripts or that what his students knew by heart. He then discusses a variant mentioned in manuscript Barth. 110 in the Frankfurt University library, a well-known twelfth-century codex that provides, along with the genuine Ovidian texts, an extensive choice of so-called pseudo-Ovidian texts, texts written mostly in the twelfth century by younger scholars as imitations of Ovid's style but in later centuries considered genuine Ovidian texts.[28] William marks this possibility as

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[26] *Filologie in de dertiende eeuw: de Bursarii super Ovidios van Magister Willem van Orléans (fl. 1200 AD). Deel 2. Teksteditie,* ed. Wilken ENGELBRECHT, (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 2003), 12. To give an idea of the Medieval layout, the underlining of quoted words from the Ovidian text has been maintained here. In modern editions of Medieval commentaries, small caps are usually used in such cases.

[27] In Latin: *missos* versus *Misos*.

[28] This feature is extensively discussed by Ralph J. HEXTER, "Shades of Ovid: Pseudo- (and para-) Ovidiana in the Middle Ages", in *Ovid in the Middle Ages,* ed. James G. CLARK, Frank T. COULSON & Kathryn

"a scribe's error". The currently accepted reading, present only in a few manuscripts, with which William ends his comment, seems to have been considered the right one.

William regularly uses this approach in his commentary. The question then arises as to why the variants that were apparently considered better were *not* included in the text. The reason is most likely that the text would not be retrievable. Thus, textual variants, which important philologists knew to be correct at the time, remained unchanged in the manuscripts. This only changed substantially after the advent of printing that made memorising by heart superfluous.

William's commentary was intended for undergraduate students. It is not known what the title *Bursarii super Ovidios* means exactly, but we can freely translate it as "an aid for the preparation of exams". Unlike many other commentaries, the text does not focus only on a few special places, but on all of Ovid's works. This included lexical explanations, such as this one:[29]

"Graminis herbis. Hoc distat inter gramen et herbam, quod *gramen* dicitur herba quae provenit ex grano, *herba* que provenit ex radice. Ergo graminis herbae, id est segetis. Alii dicunt quod *gramen* est proprium nomen herbae."

[Grass plants. The difference between a grass and a plant is that a *grass* is a plant that grows from a seed, whereas a *plant* grows from a root. Therefore, grass plants are grain. Others say that *grass* is the proper name of a plant.]

Of course, even factual information that was unclear to the students had to be explained. For example, in Roman times it was customary that the doors of the Temple of Janus were closed in times of peace. William explains this when discussing a verse in the *Epistulae ex Ponto:*[30]

"Clausit et aeterna civica bella sera. Quia terminavit usque in perpetuum civile bellum. Sed sera dicit, quia templum Iani in tempore guerrae aperiebatur, in pace vero claudebatur. Sub Augusto vero semper clausum fuit, unde Ianus in Ovidio *Fastorum: Caesareoque diu numine clausus ero*."

[Who's placed an eternal bar on civic war. Because he ended the civil war forever. But he says bar, because the temple of Janus was opened in time of war, but closed again in peace. Under Augustus it was always closed, therefore Janus says in Ovid's Fasti: *During the godness of Caesar I will be closed* (*Fasti* 1, 282).]

The commentators tried to comment on the texts from a Roman point of view. For example, William treats the deification of Caesar in his commentary on the *Ars amatoria*, where it first appears with Ovid, thus:

L. McKinley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 284–309, as well as by Wilken Engelbrecht, "*Ingenium acuitur ad imitandum eaque audiebant*. K funkci tzv. 'pseudo-Ovidiana' ve středověkém školství", *Sambucus* 2 (2007), 116–127.

[29] Commentary on *Metamorphoses* 10, 87. Engelbrecht (ed.), *Filologie in de dertiende eeuw…*, 151.

[30] Commentary on *Epistulae ex Ponto* 1. 2, 124. Engelbrecht (ed.), *Filologie in de dertiende eeuw…*, 206.

"Marsque pater Caesarque pater, date numen eunti, Nam deus e vobis alter est, et alter erit. Construe: O Mars pater, Romanorum per Romulum, et o Caesar, id est o Iuli pater, date numen, id est favorem numinis, eunti, id est Augusto. Vel: Nomen, id est famam ex victoria, et bene potestis dare, nam, quia, alter e vobis, id est Mars, est deus, et alter e vobis, id est Iulius, erit. Quidam super hoc volunt opponere, dicentes quod Iulius iam deus erat, quod falsum est, quia nos habemus quod Romani non habuerunt notitiam de deificatione ipsius donec ultus est a filio et donec Parthi devicti fuerunt, ut habetur in *Bucolicis* Augusto sacrificante pro victoria habita de Parthis apparuit ei circa meridiem stella per quam habuit noticiam de deificatione ipsius, unde illud: *Ecce Dionei processit Caesaris astrum* [Vergilius, *Ecloga* 9, 47]"

[Mars father and father Caesar, give to the one who is coming divine power, For one of you is already a god, the other will become one. Construe: O father Mars, father of the Romans through Romulus, and O Caesar, this is O father Julius, give divine power, this is divine favour, to the one who is coming, this is to August. Or, Name, this is the glory of victory, and this you may well give, for, because, one of you, this is Mars, is god, and the other, this is Julius, will become one. Some want to counter by saying that Julius was already a god. This is not correct, for we know that the Romans had no knowledge of his deification until he was avenged by his son and until the Parthians were defeated, as it says in the *Bucolics*: When August sacrificed in thanksgiving for the victory over the Parthians, a star appeared to him about noon, through which he gained knowledge of Julius's deification, as the verse says: *"See the star of Caesar, born of Dion, appeared."* (Virgil, *Bucolica* 9, 47).]

The practical and ideological decay of the Classics

This way of explaining classical Latin texts was especially popular in the Loire Valley and in northern France. It is therefore no coincidence that the largest numbers of high-quality manuscripts of these texts are found in France, as well as in Italy, where Roman culture originated. The great emphasis on classical Latin literature evoked an ideological reaction from people who considered such pagan literature and its extensive explanation harmful for students. Thus, the chronicler Hélinand of Froidmont (c1160-c1230) observed: *"Ecce quaerunt clerici Parisiis artes liberales, Aurelianis auctores, Bononie codices, Salerni pyxides, Toleti demones et nusquam mores…"* (See, the students look in Paris for the liberal arts, in Orléans for the classical authors, in Bologna for the manuscripts, in Salerno for the pillboxes, in Toledo for the demons and nowhere for morals…).[31]

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[31] Quoted by Louis Paetow, *The Arts Course at Medieval Universities with Special Reference to Grammar and Rhetoric* (Champaign (Ill.): Diss. University of Pennsylvania, 1910), 14 note 12.

Without proper alternatives, however, it was impossible to eliminate classical Latin literature from the teaching programmes and maintain at the same time a standard of Latin knowledge needed from the perspective of international communication. For this reason, several authors wrote alternative textbooks that were 'politically correct' from the point of view of their time. The best-known and most successful of these were the *Ars Versificatoria* (Treatise of Verses) by the French teacher in Tours Matthew of Vendome (c1130-after 1185), the *Poetria Nova* (New Poetry) by the Norman poet Geoffrey of Vinsauf (†c1210/1215) and especially the *Doctrinale* (Textbook) by the Norman grammarian Alexander of Villedieu (c1160-c1240). Especially the latter, a very voluminous work, was so successful that it enjoyed several editions in the sixteenth century. Each of them clearly stated what they were concerned about. Villedieu wrote, for example, in the introduction to the *Doctrinale:*[32]

"Scribere clericulis paro *Doctrinale* novellis,
pluraque doctorum sociabo scripta meorum,
iamque legent pueri pro nugis Maximiani
Quae veteres sociis nolebant pandere caris.
praesens huic operi sit gratia Pneumatis almi;
me iuvet et faciat complere quod utile fiat."

[I'm about to write the *Textbook* for new students, / I'm going to connect many of the scientists' writings with my own. / So far, the students are reading Maximian's puns, / which the ancients did not want to open to their young friends. / May the blessing of the Holy Spirit be present in the work, / to help me and to give me the strength to finish what is to be of use.]

Matthew of Vendôme remarked as follows:[33]

"Antiquis siquidem incumbebat materiam protelare quibusdam diversiculis et collateralibus sententiis, ut materiae penuria poetico ficmento plenius exuberans in artificiosum luxuriaret incrementum. Hoc autem modernis non licet. Vetera enim cessavere novis supervenientibus."

[For the poet in antiquity was inclined to overload his theme with various embellishments and minor clauses, in order to mask the lack of theme with exuberant poetic creation and revel in artistic luxury. This, however, is not allowed to the moderns. The old things end with the coming of the new.]

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[32] Alexander DE VILLA DEI, *Doctrinale* 1–6. in *Das Doctrinale des Alexander de Villa-Dei. Kritische-exegetische Ausgabe mit Einleitung, Verzeichniss der Handschriften und Drucke nebst Registern,* ed. Dietrich REICHLING (Leipzig & Berlin: A. Hoffmann, 1893), 7.

[33] Matthaeus VINDOCINENSIS, *Ars Versificatoria* 4, 5. in *Mathei Vindocinensis Opera Vol. III. Ars Versificatoria,* ed. Franco MUNARI (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1988), 195.

Apart from such ideological objections, which became stronger over the course of the thirteenth century, there was also the problem of the strong growth in the number of valuable new works. A good idea about this is provided by the *Registrum multorum auctorum* (Survey of Many Authors) by Hugo of Trimberg (c1230-after 1313), a late thirteenth-century didactician. From 1260 to 1309, Trimberg was rector of the St. Gangolf foundation in the Bamberg suburb Theuerstadt. He wrote this 'register' as an introduction to Latin literature whcih could be taught in schools in his time. In his work he treated about eighty authors who he divided into three large groups, which he called *distinctiones*. The first group included the *Ethici maiores,* which included the most important classical authors such as Ovid and Virgil, as well as contemporary 'classics' such as Walther of Châtillon and the already mentioned Matthew of Vendôme. The second group concerned ecclesiastical authors, further subdivided into *Theoretici* (Theoreticians), *Katholici auctores* (Catholic authors) and *Auctores theologiae* (Theological authors). Finally, the third group included the *Ethici minores,* authors he considered suitable for younger students. These were works such as Aesopus, a collection of fables, Avianus, another fourth-century fabulist, the Disticha Catonis and similar works. Most works were identified by the first two lines. The first three works of Ovid serve as an example:[34]

"Sequitur Ovidius laetus et facetus,
Sententiarum floribus multimodis repletus
Cuius librorum ordinem si quis scire quaerit,
Perlectis hiis initiis ipsorum certus erit.
Incipit Ovidius *Epistolarum:*
        Hanc tua Penelope lento tibi mittit, Ulixe;
Nil michi rescribas, at tamen ipse veni! etc.
Incipit Ovidius *Sine Tytulo:*
        Qui modo Nasonis fueramus quinque libelli,
        Tres sumus: hoc illi praetulit auctor opus etc.
Incipit Ovidius *De Arte Amandi:*
        Si quis in hoc artes populo non novit amandi,
Me legat et lecto carmine doctus amet!" etc.

[Here follows Ovid, cheerful and witty, / Full of sentences with many flowers, / If someone would know the order of his books, / He will be sure after reading these initial lines.

Here begins Ovid's *Heroides:* "Your Penelope sends you this, Ulysses, the so-long-delayed. Don't reply to me however: come yourself."

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[34] Hugo Trimbergensis, *Registrum multorum auctorum* 124–127j. in *Das Registrum Multorum Auctorum des Hugo von Trimberg. Untersuchungen und kommentierte Textausgabe*, ed. Karl Langosch (Berlin: Verlag Emil Eberling, 1942), 164–165.

Here begins Ovid's *Amores*: "We, who were once five books, are now three. / The author preferred the work this way."

Here begins Ovid's *Ars amatoria:* "Should anyone here not know the art of love, / read this, and learn by reading how to love."]

One of the ways to manage the enormous mass of possibly interesting literature was to make choices and read selections from the others next to shorter works. It is no coincidence that in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries so-called *florilegia* became popular. These were anthologies of the most popular quotations from classical authors which, however, resulted in students reading these anthologies rather than the classical authors themselves.[35] This was fiercely criticized by John of Garland (c1195-between 1252 and 1270). The *accessus* or introduction to his *Ars lectoria Ecclesie* (Art of Reading for the Church, 1246/9), a treatise explaining the principles of metrics, summarises why Garland wrote the work:[36]

> "Causa principalis est duplex: una scilicet amicitia, alter moderni temporis ignorantia, propter lapsum autorum. Quia ut evitarentur vitia in Greco sermone et vitia soloecismi, conati sunt duo moderni autores, videlicet *Grecismus* et *Doctrinale,* tradere doctrinam declinandi, construendi breves et longas, cognoscendi figuras ad grammaticam pertinentes. Qui tamen omnia insufficienter fecereunt, unde ad eorum suppletionem artifex huius operis, quod pre manibus habemus, quoddam opus composuit, quod *Compendium* intitulavit et hoc presens opus ab ipso dependens et aliud opus quod et *Clavem compendii* intitulavit."

[The main reason for writing this work *Ars lectoria* Ecclesie (Art of Reading for the Church) is twofold, this is friendship and ignorance of modern times due to the demise of the authors. For in order to avoid errors in the common language, the two modern writers of [the writings of] the *Grecismus* and *Doctrinale* endeavored to impart the doctrine of writing, sentence structure, the knowledge of short and long syllables, the correct pronounciation according to accent, and to define grammatical turns of phrase. All this, however, they did inadequately, and therefore the author of the present

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[35] However, the interpretation of this development varies. Alastair J. Minnis tends to think in his *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism c. 1100–c. 1375* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 6–9, that scholars in these centuries further developed their knowledge on the basis of anthologies and commentaries published in that period. They applied moralising more systematically and thus adapted classical texts to the needs of scholasticism. In my opinion, the result was the same as contemporary critics of this development cited below have suggested: the original texts were no longer read. I discussed this with Ralph J. Hexter in connection with his preparation of an edition of pseudo-Ovidiana. Hexter reminded me of our discussion in his *Shades of Ovid* (2011), 290. The edition was finally published not long ago: *Appendix Ovidiana. Latin Poems Ascribed to Ovid in the Middle Ages,* ed. Ralph Hexter, Laura Pfuntner & Justin Haynes (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2020).

[36] The accessus stems from the manuscript Bruges, Stadsbibliotheek 546, fol. 53ᵛ, and is printed here according to the edition of Elsa Marguin-Hamon, *L'Ars lectorie ecclesie de Jean de Garlande. Une grammaire versifiée du XIIIᵉ siècle et ses gloses* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 207.

work before us wrote, as a supplement to them, a work which he called *Compendium* (Concise Grammar), and also this treatise, which is connected with it, and another work which he called *Clavis Compendii* (Key of the Concise Grammar).]

To some extent, the commentary *Bursarii super Ovidios* is also an example of the new trend of reading only a selection of works by classical authors. This led to the fact that many people no longer knew exactly which works an author like Ovid had written, nor were they familiar with his style. For this reason, from the late thirteenth century onwards, pseudo-Ovidiana were increasingly seen as works written by Ovid, even by a humanist like Bernardo Moretti who was a professor of rhetoric in Bologna around 1459.[37] It was exactly this ignorance which Petrarch criticised.

Conclusion

Humanists such as Petrarch assessed the Middle Ages from the point of view of their own time, reacting to the situation as it had arisen in the fourteenth century. With this situation, in which allegorical commentaries became the standard which tried to give classical texts a Christian interpretation in every possible way, and where modern grammars and textbooks were supposed to replace 'pagan' literature, the image of Latin literature drastically changed. Many teachers even downright condemned the reading of classical authors as being 'immoral'.

In addition, students and scholars at that time generally stopped reading complete works by classical authors, which was in fact an unintended consequence of the so-called Renaissance of the Twelfth Century, when the teaching of classical texts had been so successful that many authors began to write in the vein of classical Latin poets. In this way, the quantity of qualitative texts increased enormously, threatening to overload school curriculums. The transition from the study of complete texts to a knowledge of selections of texts resulted in many pseudo-classical works gradually being regarded as original classical Latin writings – a consequence of insufficient knowledge of the complete works and of the style of classical authors due to fragmentary study.

Nevertheless, a few individuals such as John or Garland remained faithful to the philological approach and tried to resist it. On the basis of their works and attempts, a movement was born at the end of the fourteenth century, from which the Renaissance would emerge in the fifteenth century.

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[37] Frank T. Coulson, "Hitherto Unedited Medieval and Renaissance Lives of Ovid (I)", *Mediaeval Studies* 49 (1987): 167–168 (about Moretti) and 190–200 (text).