

**SOME ELIZABETHAN
OPINIONS OF THE POETRY
AND CHARACTER OF OVID**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649194728

Some Elizabethan opinions of the poetry and character of Ovid by Clyde Barnes Cooper

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

CLYDE BARNES COOPER

**SOME ELIZABETHAN
OPINIONS OF THE POETRY
AND CHARACTER OF OVID**

The University of Chicago

FOUNDED BY JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

Some Elizabethan Opinions of the
Poetry and Character of Ovid,

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND
LITERATURE IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

(DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH)

BY

CLYDE BARNES COOPER

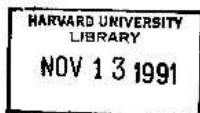
MENASHA, WIS.

THE COLLEGIATE PRESS

GEORGE BANTA PUBLISHING CO.

1914

L. 10.676



The literary fortunes of the Roman poet Ovid are little short of the marvelous. Accorded among his own people a rank second only to that of Virgil, distinguished for admirable narrative, tender elegy, and for at least one notable experiment in tragedy—the lost *Medea*, he received even in his own lifetime that striking mixture of praise and censure that has continued to the present.¹

Throughout mediæval literature his influence was potent and pervasive.² He appears in various ways in Italian, Provençal, Spanish, Bohemian, German, Icelandic, French, and English. He was a main source of inspiration for the first part of the *Roman de la*

¹For remarks of Seneca and of Quintilian on the character of Ovid, see Teuffel-Schwabe-Warr: *Hist. of Roman Lit.*, I, p. 495.

²The character and extent of the references to Ovid during the Middle Ages in England may be seen in part by consulting the carefully prepared indexes to the following: (Rolls Series.)

Warner, G. F.: *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*. VIII vols.

Haydon, F. S.: *Eulogium Historiarum*.

Anstey, H.: *Munimenta Academica*. II vols.

Riley, H. T.: *Chronica Monasterii S. Albani*.

Luard, H. R.: *Roberti Grosseteste Epistolae*.

Luard, H. R.: *Annales Monastici*.

Lumby, J. R.: *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden*. IX vols.

Wright, Th.: *Alexandri Neckham de Naturis Rerum Libri Duo*.

Madden, Sir F.: *Matthæi Parisiensis Historia Anglorum*. III vols.

Luard, H. R.: *Flores Historiarum*.

The most extensive collection of mediæval citations of Ovid is in Manitius: *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Ovid im Mittelalter*. Philologus, Suppl. VII (1899), pp. 721 ff.

No study of Ovid in mediæval literature such as Comparetti's *Virgilio nell medio ævo* has yet appeared. The following references are of value:

Bartsch, Karl: *Albrecht von Halberstadt und Ovid im Mittelalter*. Quedlinburg, 1861.

Belloni, Egidio: *Note sulle traduzioni dell' Arte Amatoria e dei Remedia Amoris d'Ovidio anteriori al Rinascimento*. Bergamo, 1892. Completed study, Turin, 1900 [*Romania*, 22, 339, and 29, 630].

Cloetta, W.: *Beiträge zur Litteraturgeschichte des Mittelalters und der Renaissance*. Erster Theil, Halle, 1890. P. 164 ff.

Dernedde, R.: *Über die den altfr. Dichtern bekannten epischen Stoffe aus dem Altertum*. Göttingen, 1887.

Kühlhorn, G.: *Das Verhältnis der Art d'amors des Jacques d'Amiens zu Ovids Ars amatoria*. Quedlinburg, 1908.

Rose,³ and he supplied a code of laws for the Courts of Love.⁴ The poem *Flamenca*, says Mr. Ker, "is really the triumph of Ovid over all his Gothic contemporaries."⁵ Monastic annalists frequently quote him,⁶ and the numerous manuscripts bear witness to his popularity.⁷ Dante makes some hundred references to Ovid, and ranks him third among the four great poets of the world.⁸ Chaucer and Gower knew him well, as did a host of lesser men.⁹ The mediæval mind, however, approached the classics in its own way. The schoolmen admired Virgil's Fourth Eclogue because they saw there a prophecy of the birth of Christ.¹⁰ Allegorizing was the recognized mode of interpretation; and the ingenuity that exercised itself on the mystic properties of numbers and the hidden significations of the parts of speech saw justifiable meanings in even the most licentious passages in Ovid, and insisted that here also were moral and religious lessons had one but the wit to find them.¹¹ As Canon

Neilson, W. A.: *The Origins and Sources of the Court of Love*. Harvard Studies and Notes—Vol. VI, pp. 170-212, The Ovidian Tradition.

Runge, O.: *Die Metamorphoseon-Verdeutschung Albrechts von Halberstadt*. Berlin, 1908. Palaestra—No. 73.

Sudre, L.: *Publii Ovidii Metamorphoseon libros quomodo nostrates medii aevi poetae imitati interpretatique sunt*. Paris, 1893. [Romania, 22, 242].

Sandys, J. E.: *History of Classical Scholarship*. Cambridge, 1906. Page 638.

Seldmayer, H.: *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Ovid-Studien im-Mittelalter*. Wiener Studien, VI. 1884.

³ E. Langlois: *Origines et sources du Roman de la Rose*, pp. 69-75.

⁴ L. F. Mott: *The Court of Love*, p. 55.

⁵ *Epic and Romance*, p. 361.

⁶ Indexes to the Rolls Series.

⁷ Teuffel-Schwabe-Warr: *Hist. of Roman Lit.*, I, sec. 249, note 3.

⁸ Scartazzini: *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, II, p. 1412.

Moore: *Studies in Dante*, pp. 206-228.
Inferno, Canto IV, line 90.

⁹ Skeat: *Chaucer*, VI, p. 387.

Lounsbury: *Studies in Chaucer*, II, 251-252.

G. C. Macaulay: *The Complete Works of John Gower*, IV, p. 369 ff.

¹⁰ Greenough: *The Greater Poems of Virgil*, notes, p. 27.

For the best account of the legend, see Comparetti: *Virgil in the Middle Ages*, Eng. trans. by Benecke.

¹¹ See below, note 46.

J. Janssen has shown, mediæval writers employed such Latin authors as they knew as aids toward a deeper knowledge of Christianity and as incentives toward a purer moral life.¹³

In the Renaissance also Ovid was a great favorite with painter, poet, and cultivated readers generally.¹⁴ To an astonishingly early reading of that poet Montaigne ascribed his love of literature, although in later life his fondness for Ovid left him.¹⁵ Clement Marot promised: "de tout mon pouvoir suyvre et contrefaire la veine du noble poëte Ovide."¹⁶ Of the whole Rhetorical School in France, M. Guy observes: "Le poete qu'ils prefèrent, c'est Ovide; viennent ensuite Virgile, Horace, Terence."¹⁷ During the same period, however, appeared also the note of disparagement or censure, as may be seen in the following opinions. Thus in 1450 Æneas Sylvius remarked in his *De Liberorum Educatione*: "Ubique tristis, ubique dulcis est, in plerisque tamen locis nimium lascivus."¹⁷ And Ludovicus Vives, whose writings were widely influential, observed in his *De Tradendis Disciplinis*, 1555: "Imo vero amissa sunt tot philosophorum et sacrorum autorum monumenta, et grave erit et non ferendum facinus, si Tibullus pereat aut Ars Amandi Nasonis."¹⁸ The latter statement is not, of course, to be interpreted as evidence of a special attack on Ovid. As will appear in the course of the discussion, it is really but a part of the prevailing attitude toward the claims of poetry. But it shows that in the very heyday of his fame doubt and censure were mingled with the praise of Ovid.

That Elizabethan poets and playwrights had a special fondness for the poetry of Ovid has long been a commonplace of English

¹³ J. Janssen: *History of the German People at the Close of the Middle Ages*. English trans., London, 1896. I, p. 63.

¹⁴ The painters of the Renaissance found Ovid a source of suggestion for mythological subjects. Cf. Schoenfeld, P.: *Ovids Metamorphosen in ihrem Verhältnis zur antiken Kunst*. Wunderer, W.: *Ovids Werke in ihrem Verhältnis zur antiken Kunst*.

¹⁵ Montaigne: *Essays*, trans. by Cotton, I, p. 204.

¹⁶ *Oeuvres de Clement Marot*, Lyon, 1870. II, p. 154.

¹⁷ *L'Ecole des Rhétoriciens*, p. 10.

¹⁸ Elyot: *The Governour*. Ed. Croft, I, p. 124, note.

¹⁹ *Ib.*

literary history.¹⁹ Mr. Alfred Dorrinck, in the conclusion of his dissertation, *Die lateinischen Zitate in den Dramen der wichtigsten Vorgänger Shakespeares*, p. 75, gives the following table of citations: Catullus 1, Cicero 11, Claudian 1, Gellius 1, Horace 16, Juvenal 3, Lucan 1, Martial 1, Ovid 54, Plautus 11, Pliny 1, Publilius Syrus 1, Seneca 7, Statius 1, Terence 14, Virgil 12. Herein he sees, "Die grosse Vorliebe der Elisabethaner für Ovid." This judgment is further supported by the investigations of Mr. Karl Frey.²⁰ In his essay, *Ovid and Shakespeare's Sonnets*, Sidney Lee has sketched the vogue of Ovid from 1200 to 1700, maintaining that the poet appealed to readers of all classes and was an educational manual in all schools and colleges of the Sixteenth Century.²¹ Here, as well as in his *Life of Shakespeare*,²² he points out the latter's indebtedness to Ovid, a view thoroughly confirmed by Mr. R. K. Root.²³ In the same way Mr. R. Bayley regards "ultra-classicism" as a characteristic of the Elizabethan drama, even of the plays destined solely for the popular stage. "To the plebeian crowd," he thinks, "fully one-half of the Elizabethan drama must have been caviare utterly beyond their reach."²⁴

Mr. McKerrow, however, in his edition of Nashe, reaches the conclusion that Roman authors were not the favorite reading of the average literary man of the period.²⁵ Hence, "the ultimate debt of Elizabethan literature to the classics is hardly at all a debt at first hand." The reason given for this latter view is that there were numerous collections of scraps of Latin, from which Nashe and others might have drawn. Numbers of illustrations and proverbs in Latin were current. Such books as Lilly's *Latin Grammar*, Erasmus's *Parabolae*, or the *Sententiae Pueriles* would serve as sources

¹⁹ *Cambridge Hist. of Eng. Lit.*, IV, p. 22.

²⁰ *Die klassische Götter- und Heldensage in den Dramen von Marlowe, Lyly, Kyd, Greene und Peele*. Karlsruhe, 1909.

²¹ *Quarterly Review*, No. 210.

²² Ed. of 1909, p. 262.

²³ *Classical Mythology in Shakespeare*, pp. 3-10.

Cf. H. R. D. Anders: *Shakespeare's Books*, pp. 21-30.

²⁴ *The Shakespeare Symphony*, Ch. 10.

²⁵ Vol. V, p. 133 ff.

for large numbers of the quotations of the time. "Interlarding one's work with quotations was a favorite practice." In the case of Nashe, his reading "seems to have been limited to Ovid, a play of Plautus, the Epistles of Horace, and perhaps some plays of Terence." Nashe has one hundred quotations from Ovid, twenty from Homer, and twelve from Virgil.²⁶ But so many of these are vague in character or had appeared in Lilly, that Nashe "need never have opened a volume of Ovid in his life."²⁷

The importance of the foregoing will escape no one. In any problem of classical influence in the Sixteenth Century it will not suffice merely to exhibit an array of quotations or allusions. An effort must be made to discover whether the author is depending on current collections of sayings or on his own reading of the classics.²⁸ Particularly does this condition apply to the work of so eminently quotable an author as Ovid. For citations from him appear in the school grammars of both Linacre and Lilly.²⁹ In the school curricula he has a prominent place. Thus Wolsey's plan of studies for Ipswich School (1528) directed: "The party in the seventh Form should regularly have in hand either Horace's *Epistles* or Ovid's *Metamorphoses* or *Fasti*."³⁰ Bishop Pilkington's Statutes of Rivington Grammar School (1566) recommended, among other Latin texts, *Epistolae Ovidii*.³¹ Brinsley translated *Tristia* and *Metamorphoses* according to his own special plan of instruction, and recommended versification on Ovidian models.³² Hoole recommended that *De Tristibus* be learned memoriter, "to impart a lively pattern of hexameters and pentameters."³³

To the Elizabethan reader, as to all others, a chief source of attraction in Ovid lay in his superb gift as a story-teller. And

²⁶ See Vol. V, p. 313, for Index of Allusions.

²⁷ *Ib.*, p. 134.

²⁸ Cf. M. B. Ogle: *Classical Literary Tradition in Early German and Romance Literature*. *Mod. Lang. Notes*, Dec., 1912.

²⁹ Watson, F.: *The English Grammar Schools to 1660*, p. 245.

³⁰ *Ib.*, p. 472.

³¹ *Ib.*, p. 472.

³² *Ib.*, p. 357.

³³ *Ib.*, p. 371.