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THE *BURSARII SUPER OVIDIOS*:
A MEDIEVAL “PHILOLOGICAL”
CATENA COMMENTARY ON OVID*

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Introduction

Years ago, studying the textual problems of Ovid’s *Heroides*, I was struck by the fact that various conjectures proposed by humanists such as Nicolaus Heinsius (1620–1681) were often present in the marginal commentaries of medieval manuscripts. Later, I found such conjectures annotated in medieval school commentaries, one of them being the *Bursarii super Ovidios*,¹ the subject of this article, written by the otherwise unknown Master William of Orléans between 1199 and 1204 AD. Thus, in the Middle Ages, attempts had been made to improve the transmitted text. Such conjectures were, however, seldom accepted in the text and the *textus receptus* continued to be copied without change (and with errors that, due to reading mistakes of scribes, accumulated) up until modern times.

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¹ This commentary was mentioned for the first time in 1937 at a conference in Dublin by the Irish scholar Ernest H. Alton as *Versus Bursarii*, the title also given to this commentary in COULSON – LEVY – ANDERSON 2022, 287–293. The Canadian scholar Hugues-Vincent Shooner (SHOONER 1981, 405–424), who was the first to identify the author of the commentary, used the title *Bursarii Ovidianorum*, the title mentioned in the manuscript Leipzig, UB, Rep. I. qu. 48 (fol. 104ra) in the heading of the *Heroides* commentary. The manuscript Leiden, UB, Lipsius 29 (fol. 18v) has *Bursarii Ovidii*. In this article, the title will be shortened to *Bursarii*.

The reason for this was, as Olga Weijers rightly points out,² that teaching was by and large oral and students possessed up until the end of the twelfth century hardly any texts of their own.³ Memorisation was therefore a fundamental feature of the teaching and the strong emphasis placed on this meant that the commented text in commentaries is mostly quoted by just a single word or even only the first letters of a verse.⁴ Commentators and teachers expected their students to know the text by heart. For this reason, the text was not changed as changes would have made it impossible to find the quote.

It was not until the invention of the art of printing in Europe that actual revisions of ancient texts became possible. Both *editiones principes* of Ovid's work, printed in 1471,⁵ were therefore based mainly on the one manuscript the editors had at their disposition, which was, in fact, the medieval approach.⁶ The first editor of Ovid who actually compared the different manuscripts was Andreas Naugerius in his 1515–1516 edition of Ovid's works for the renowned printer Aldus Manutius in Venice.⁷

Even where medieval scribes were forced to copy their texts manually, mostly without the possibility of comparing different manuscripts, one cannot deny that some of them employed a kind of philological approach. This article tries to demonstrate, by means of the *catena* commentary *Bursarii super Ovidios*, how “philology” was practised in Orléans in the early thirteenth century.

² WEIJERS 1996, 145.

³ As this was understandably considered a problem, the *pecia* system emerged during the twelfth century. We know from a 1228 contract from the University of Vercelli that certified copies of (parts of) texts were made. This system has been proved for a couple of important universities, including Paris. No traces have been found in Orléans, the city of importance for the *Bursarii*. Cf. DESTREZ 1935 and POLLARD 1978, 147–148.

⁴ WEIJERS 1996, 146.

⁵ The edition by Johannes Andreas printed by Konrad Sweynheim and Arnolf Pannartz in Rome, and that by Franciscus Puteolanus printed by Azzoguidi in Bologna. See STEINER 1951, 225.

⁶ See as well Paul Maas' remarks on contamination, MAAS 1950, 8–9.

⁷ RICHMOND 2002, 456–457.

1. Change of Reading Techniques

Almost a century ago, in 1927, the American historian and medievalist Charles Homer Haskins coined the term “Renaissance of the Twelfth Century”, stating:⁸

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.

He could have added the technique of silent reading, which became increasingly practised in that century.⁹ The great propagator of reading in general and of silent reading in particular was the twelfth-century scholar Hugh of St. Victor, who in the *Didascalion de studio legendi* “conceives reading as a comprehensive devotion and moral quest for wisdom”, as Matthias Bickenbach puts it.¹⁰

This changing technique reflected a turning point in the development of the readership. Education gradually passed from the monasteries to cathedral schools, that, in several cases, developed into the first universities. Contemporary Latin and vernacular literature developed, and literacy spread outside the clergy as well.¹¹ In a certain sense, Hugh of St. Victor was a typical epigone of that period. Probably of lower noble origin, he was educated in the convent of the regular Augustinian canons in Hamersleben near Halberstadt. Around 1115/1118, he entered the newly founded (1113) monastery of St. Victor in Paris. Here he became the leader of the school and library which soon became famous throughout Europe, and that stood at the cradle of the University of Paris. In his pedagogic treatise *Didascalion de Studio Legendi* (3,7–8; 771B–771D), he divided the art of reading into three parts:

Trimodum est lectionis genus: docentis, discentis, vel per se inspicientis. (...) In lectione maxime consideranda sunt ordo et modus. Ordo consideratur alius in disciplinis, (...),

⁸ HASKINS 1927, vi.

⁹ This by no means implies that people in ancient times would never have read silently. For the discussion on this matter, compare JOHNSON 2000.

¹⁰ BICKENBACH 1999, 91.

¹¹ REYNOLDS - WILSON 1991, 110–111.

alius in libris, (...), alius in narratione, (...), alius in expositione. Ordo in disciplinis attenditur secundum naturam, in libris secundum personam auctoris vel subiectam materiam, in narratione secundum dispositionem, quae duplex est; naturalis, videlicet quando res eo refertur ordine quo gesta est, et artificialis, id est, quando id quod postea gestum est prius narratur, et quod prius, postmodum dicitur, in expositione consideratur ordo secundum inquisitionem.

[There are three types of reading: that of the teacher, that of the student, and that of the independent reader. (...) In reading we must, above all, pay attention to order and method. The order is considered differently in the case of disciplines, (...), differently in the case of books, (...), differently in the case of narrative, (...), differently in the case of explication. We follow the order in disciplines according to their character, in books according to the personality of the author or the subject, in narrative according to the arrangement, which may be twofold: natural, i.e. if the facts are narrated according to the order of the action, and artistic, if what happened before is narrated, and what happened afterwards is narrated, and what happened before is narrated afterwards. In the case of explication, we pay attention to the order of the inquiry.]

This explication is done on three semantic levels (*Didascalion*, 3,8; 771D–772A):

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 praefert. Sententia est profundior intelligentia, quae nisi expositione vel interpretatione non invenitur. In his ordo est, ut primum littera, deinde sensus, deinde sententia inquiratur. Quo facto, perfecta est expositio.

[Explication has three elements: wording, sense and signification. Wording is the correct arrangement of words, which we also call construction. Sense is a kind of simple and clear sign that the wording provides at first glance. Signification is a deeper understanding that cannot be found without explication or interpretation. In this area, the order is to analyse the wording first, then the sense, and then the signification. Then the explication is complete.]

The three methods of working with the text correspond to three types of commentaries: *Glosae*, glosses, deal primarily with grammatical elements, i.e. the literal reading of the text. *Commentum*, commentary, deals with what the text wants to say, namely based on the sense of the written sentences, i.e. at a first, superficial level. *Integumentum*, hidden signification, or *allegoria*, veiled language, deals with the deeper meaning of the text.

Hugh warns (*Didascalion*, 6,9; 807B-C) that the text sometimes may be difficult to understand. Such places should be explained in the explication of the construction. This is what 12th-century commentaries such as the *Bursarii* did.

2. Change in Layout

As reading practices changed, so too did the appearance of the manuscripts. With the growing readership, the number of manuscripts considerably increased; in the twelfth century alone four to five times as many copies were made than in all previous centuries together,¹² but the enormous increase in manuscripts also meant an increasing number of unintended textual corruptions.¹³

In the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth century, a text written in three columns became the norm for commented manuscripts. In this “Drei-Spalten-Grundform” (three column basic form), as Gerhard Powitz named it,¹⁴ the authorial text to be commented on stands in the middle column in a larger letter type, and both side columns are reserved for glosses. One example is the twelfth-century Prague *Heroides* manuscript NKP VIII H 12 (fig. 1). In the course of the twelfth century, a type emerged which Powitz calls the “Glossenbibelform” (gloss bible form),¹⁵ used for text volumes glossed throughout. Most of the Ovid-manuscripts from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are of this type. The *Heroides* manuscript Tours BM Ms. 881, a thirteenth-century codex originally from the St. Gatien cathedral in Tours (fig. 2), shows that such manuscripts were often copied together with the commentaries as a whole. This particular codex was not completed; the last pages (ff. 29r, 29v and 30r, figs. 3-5) show how the scribe first copied parts of the annotated text, and then systematically added glosses and commentaries. John Ward¹⁶ and David T. Gura¹⁷ call this method of reproducing commentaries, together with the associated authorial text, the *scholion* type.

Alongside the gloss Bible form in the twelfth century, a commentary type also emerged, which Ward and Gura call the *catena* type.¹⁸ These were separate

¹² REYNOLDS - WILSON 1991, 114.

¹³ RICHMOND 2002, 443.

¹⁴ POWITZ 1979, 83.

¹⁵ POWITZ 1979, 84.

¹⁶ WARD 1996, 109.

¹⁷ GURA 2010, 172.

¹⁸ WARD 1996, 109; GURA 2010, 171. Ward notes that *catena* commentaries emerged as “a

“editions” of school commentaries on classical authors, in which the annotated verses were reduced to a few words or initial letters, forming, together with glosses and commentaries, a new continuous prose text. This text was usually written in two columns and transmitted in manuscripts of smaller dimensions which the reader could easily take with them. One example is the manuscript Berlin, SBPK, lat. qu. 219, in which there are two copies of the *Bursarii super Ovidios* on fols. 82r-118v and 119r-134v. With its small dimensions (22.7 × 14.2 cm) and very small font (up to 64 lines in one column), the second copy mentioned is a good representative of the *catena* commentary genre (fig. 6). This manuscript originated in France, where the humanist and second Rector of Erfurt University, Amplonius Ratinck de Berka (1363/1364-1435), acquired it, according to his 1412 library catalogue.¹⁹ Incidentally, Amplonius believed that the manuscript and the glosses came from Hugh of St. Victor.²⁰

In the case of the *catena* commentary on the *Metamorphoses* discussed by Frank Coulson,²¹ as well as in the case of the *Metamorphoses* commentary by Arnulf of Orléans discussed by Gura,²² it is noteworthy that *catena* commentaries were compiled in the late twelfth and the first half of the thirteenth century, and also copied in the fifteenth century. Coulson dates the period for which no manuscripts can be found for the *catena* commentary discussed by him as between 1250 and circa 1450.²³ This corresponds to the situation of the *Bursarii super Ovidios*, a selective overall commentary on the complete genuine oeuvre of Ovid,²⁴ where the manuscripts handed down as *catena* commentaries date from the first half of the thirteenth century or from the fifteenth century. That nearly no *catena* commentaries were written in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is a consequence of the declining interest in classical authors, who were increasingly being replaced by contemporary material in the universities at that time.

self-contained text unaccompanied by the classical text” (WARD 1996, 114) during the eleventh century. *Catena* commentaries were used, however, already since the sixth century for Bible commentaries.

¹⁹ LEHMANN 1928, 15.

²⁰ Since Amplonius was Dean of the Monastery of St. Victor near Mainz for several years (1417-1423), it cannot be ruled out that the manuscript came from the library of St. Victor in Paris. Of interest is the fact that the fifteenth century manuscript Paris, BnF lat. 15.136 originates from the Paris St. Victor monastery as well (OUY ET ALII 1983, 366).

²¹ COULSON 2010, 153-170.

²² GURA 2010, 171-188. For the commentary, see COULSON - LEVY - ANDERSON 2022, 271-279.

²³ COULSON 2010, 156.

²⁴ Description in COULSON - LEVY - ANDERSON 2022, 287-293.

3. Function of the *catena* Commentaries

The accumulation of learning, an increasing number of students and, additionally, the necessity for teachers to record their own material led to the compilation of complete commentaries.²⁵ The *catena* commentary represents what Olga Weijers calls “the interference between the oral and the written”.²⁶ *Catena* commentaries were often *reportationes*, the result of notations made by students during lectures, which were edited into a final form and checked or even authorised by the lecturer.²⁷ A typical example of the tendency to reduce the commented text to a few initial letters is visible at the end of the *Bursarii* in the manuscript Leipzig, UB Rep. I. qu. 48 (fol. 141va, fig. 7).

4. The *Bursarii super Ovidios*

The title *Bursarii super Ovidios*, mentioned in the *explicit* of this Leipzig manuscript at the end of the commentary on *Epistulae ex Ponto*,²⁸ is explained in the introduction to the commentary:²⁹

Rumpere, Livor edax, magnum iam nomen habemus. Quoniam in Ovidianis ex Bursariorum ambiguitate et continuatione sententiae difficultas invenitur, compendiose explanare decrevimus quid super hoc nostrae videtur opinioni. Et quia de Bursariis tractandum est, videndum est quid sit bursarius. Bursarius a bursa dicitur, quia in eo diverse inveniuntur replicationes, sicuti in bursa. Vel quia in bursa reponitur, ut si forte aliquem legentem invenerit, ipsius super hoc opinionem recognoscat. Vel Bursarius dicitur, quia potius in bursa, id est in memoriae abscondito potius quam alibi debet reservari.

[*Burst, gluttonous envy! We already have a great name (Remedia 389).* Since problems arise in Ovid’s writings because of the ambiguity of the *Bursarii* and the continuation of the sentence, we have decided to explain at length what our opinion is on this matter. And since we must speak of the *Bursarii*, first we should look at what a *bursarius* is. The term *bursarius* is so called after the *bursa*, because you

²⁵ WARD 1996, 116.

²⁶ WEIJERS 1996, 146.

²⁷ WEIJERS 1996, 147–148.

²⁸ See note 1.

²⁹ Text according to ENGELBRECHT 2003, 9.

may find in it various explanations, as in a pocket. Or because it can be hidden in a pocket, so that if someone should hear a lecturer, his opinion (during the *lectio*) can be recognised. Or it is called *bursarius* because it should be better stored in a pocket, i.e. in our memory rather than hiding it elsewhere.]

The *Bursarii* commentary explains selected difficult places, that were seemingly discussed by several lecturers, rather than offering a running commentary, as do the *catena* commentaries of Arnulf of Orléans.³⁰ According to this introduction, its function is to prepare students for the *lectio*, thus a kind of “reversed” *reportatio*.³¹

The commentary starts with the introduction quoted above on the term *bursarii*. The original order of the works commented on is not completely clear, as it is different in the two main codices, now both joined in ms. Berlin, SBPK Lat. qu. 219. The presumed oldest has the sequence *Heroides*, *Amores*, *Ars amatoria*, *Remedia amoris*, *Fasti*, *Metamorphoses* and *Tristia* (incomplete), and the other begins with the *Metamorphoses* commentary that starts with a life of Ovid, after which there follows *Heroides*, *Amores*, *Fasti*, *Remedia amoris*, *Tristia* and *Ars amatoria*, finishing with an incomplete copy of the commentary on *Ex Ponto*. The manuscript Leipzig, UB, Rep. I. qu. 48 has the order *Heroides*, *Amores*, *Ars amatoria*, *Remedia amoris*, *Fasti*, *Metamorphoses* and *Ex Ponto*. The damaged thirteenth-century manuscript Leiden, UB, Lipsius 39 was presumably re-bound and offers the order *Amores* (incomplete, first part lacking), *Tristia*, *Ex Ponto* (with *explicit*), *Remedia amoris* (incomplete, first part lacking) and *Ars amatoria*. The early fifteenth-century manuscript Paris, BnF, Lat. 15.136 has the order *Heroides*, *Remedia amoris*, *Ex Ponto*, *Tristia* and an abridged version of the *Metamorphoses* commentary with the *Vita*.

The sequence of commentaries in the *Bursarii* is analogous to the order in which Ovid published his books according to the *Vita* in the commentary. That this *Vita Ovidii* is added to the commentary of the *Metamorphoses* has its own logic, as this work was considered to be the most important. In the Middle Ages it was simply called *Ovidius Maior*, often transmitted separately.³² This was also the case with the *Bursarii*; the manuscript Copenhagen, KB Fabricius 29.2^o offers only the *Metamorphoses* commentary.

³⁰ Description in COULSON – LEVY – ANDERSON 2022, 267–268.

³¹ It is thus more like the “student guides” and “introductions to philosophy” discussed by LAFLEUR 1997, 345–372.

³² RICHMOND 2002, 469–474.

The *Bursarii* seems to divide Ovid's works into three bigger parts: the amatory poems, the so-called *maior* poems and the exile poems, devoting more or less the same space to each of the parts:

Work	Columns ³³	Signs in the edition	Norm pages ³⁴	Lines ³⁵	Commented
Amatory poems	62	194,899	108	8,970	788 (8.8%)
<i>Heroides</i>	18	65,787	36.5	3,408 ³⁶	206 (6.0%)
<i>Amores</i>	16	46,504	26	2,418	198 (8.2%)
<i>Ars amatoria</i>	16	45,850	25.5	2,330	207 (8.9%)
<i>Remedia amoris</i>	12	36,726	20	814	177 (21.7%)
Maior poems	62	197,361	109.5	16,967	846 (5.0%)
<i>Fasti</i>	21	69,968	39	4,972	247 (5.0%)
<i>Metamorphoses</i>	41	127,393	70.5	11,995	599 (5.0%)
Exile poems	54	164,820	91	6,770	915 (13.5%)
	[±62]	[±194,500]	[±108]		
<i>Tristia</i>	29	92,316	51	3,576	496 (13.9%)
<i>Ex Ponto</i>	25	72,504	40	3,194	419 (13.1%)
<i>Ibis</i> (?) ³⁷	[±8]	[±30,000]	[±16.5]	—	—

The total amount of 186 manuscript columns, or some 310 pages in print, would mean in my estimation approximately 25–30 hours of lecturing. Depending on the number of lectures per week, the lecturer could handle the commentary within one year or even one term.³⁸ The commentary has a relatively stronger

³³ The calculation is based on the columns in the Leipzig manuscript.

³⁴ This column concerns the number of pages in the commentary. A normal page has 1,800 signs including spaces.

³⁵ The number of lines in Ovid's original poem are counted according to our modern standard editions (Oxford Classical Texts/Teubner).

³⁶ This counting excluded *Heroides* 15 (the letter of Sappho to Phaon), *Her.* 16,39–144 and 21,14–250 that were unknown in the Middle Ages. In this counting, *Amores*, III,5 is excluded, as it had a separate transmission as *Ovidius de Somnio*.

³⁷ No *Bursarii* commentary on the *Ibis* has survived, but the *Vita* shows that William was familiar with this work and placed it after *Ex Ponto*. William also knew *De Medicamine faciei*, a work for which we find no extant commentaries. He was also aware that Ovid wrote a tragedy, but noted that it had been lost.

³⁸ Very little is known about the method of lesson planning. MAIERU 1997, 382–383, 387–391 has tried to draw some conclusions based on the regulations and calendars in Oxford and Paris.

emphasis on the *Remedia amoris* and both of the exile poems. This corresponds to the general preferences regarding Ovid in the twelfth and thirteenth century as reflected in the numbers of *accessus* (introductions) to the singular works of Ovid, with the exception that the *Bursarii* devote much less attention to the *Metamorphoses* than was usual in the medieval classroom.³⁹

5. The *Vita Ovidii*

The *Vita Ovidii*, as sketched in the *accessus* to the *Metamorphoses*, is largely based on the life as given in Arnulf of Orléans' *Metamorphoses* commentary. It follows the standard of the so-called "modern *accessus*", mentioning *intentio* (aim), *utilitas* (utility), *ordo* (structure), *nomen auctoris* (name of the author), *titulus* (title) and *pars philosophiae* (genre).⁴⁰ Nevertheless, as Frank Coulson remarked,⁴¹ in the *Bursarii* "the medieval reader is provided for the first time with a relatively scrupulous early life of Ovid supported by material drawn from the *Amores* and the poems of the exile." William here copies some of Arnulf's imprecisions, but his own comments on the quoted text *ad locum* show that he was able to provide the correct data. Thus, he states in his *Vita*:⁴²

Videndum est ergo, unde et quis fuerit Ovidius et quid composuerit. In Paeligno oppido natus extitit. Unde ait in Ovidio Sine Titulo: Hoc ego composui Paelignis natus aquosis. Tempore illo in quo fuit pugna inter Marium et Sullam, unde illud in Ovidio Tristium: Cum cecidit fato consul uterque pari, xiii^o Kalendas Apriles natus est.

[We should know from where and who Ovid was and what he composed. He was born in the city of Paelignum. Therefore, he says in Ovid's *Amores*: *This I have composed, being born in the watery Paelignum* (*Am.* II,16,1). In that time, there was a fight between Marius and Sulla (87 BC), as he says in Ovid's *Tristia*: *When death struck both Consuls in battle* (*Tristia*, IV,10,6), he was born on 20 March.]

For my inferences, I have relied on my own pedagogical practice and the fairly regular distribution of commentary in the *Bursarii*.

³⁹ ENGELBRECHT 2018, 108–109.

⁴⁰ SILVESTRE 1957.

⁴¹ COULSON 1987, 176.

⁴² Text in ENGELBRECHT 2003, 121.

But in his commentaries on the quoted lines he says:

Me pars Sulmo tenet. In hac epistula ostendit Ovidius amoenitatem natalis loci. (...) Dicit ergo: Me pars Sulmo etc. Construe: Sulmo, proprium nomen est villae Ovidii, tertia pars Paeligni ruris, id est Paeligni oppidi. Hoc dicit, quia Paelignum oppidum praeerat tribus villis, quarum una Sulmo tenet me, quia ibi moror (Commentary on *Am.* II,16,1).⁴³

[*Sulmo now keeps me.* In this letter the author shows the charm of his native land. (...) He says therefore: Sulmo, etc. Read it thus: *Sulmo*, that is the proper name of Ovid's city, *that third part of the Paelignian homeland*, i.e. of the region of Paelignum. He says this because the Paelignum area administered three cities, one of which, *Sulmo*, *keeps me*, because I live there.]

and in his commentary on *Tristia*, IV,10,6 he gives first the correct interpretation and copies once more Arnulf's comment:

Cum cecidit fato Consul uterque pari. Quasi dicat: Tunc natus fui, cum Hirtius et Pansa in Mutina vulneribus se interfecerunt. Vel Marius et Sulla.

[*When death struck both Consuls in battle.* As if to say: Then was I born, when Hirtius and Pansa were slain in Modena (43 BC) because of their wounds. Or Marius and Sulla.]

The second half of the *Vita* is devoted to Ovid's works. The *Bursarii* treat only the ten works that are today considered to be genuine, in the right order: *Heroides*, *Sine Titulo* (*Amores*), *De medicamine faciei*, *Ars amatoria*, *Remedia amoris*, *Fasti*, *Metamorphoses*, *Tristia*, *Ex Ponto*, and *Ibis*. In connection with this, it should be emphasised that the first medieval Life of Ovid, which considered pseudo-Ovidiana to be genuine as well, is the *accessus* in the manuscript Vatican, BAV Reg. Lat. 1559, fol. 2r-3v, written between 1389 and 1408.⁴⁴ Even this *accessus* is reluctant to acknowledge pseudo-Ovidiana, stating:⁴⁵

⁴³ Text in ENGELBRECHT 2003, 51.

⁴⁴ The often quoted early thirteenth-century codex Frankfurt am Main, SUB Bartholomaeus 110 has a large collection of pseudo-Ovidiana, but the scribe of that manuscript did not consider them to be genuine as they are separated from Ovid's original works, and the *accessus* on Ovid in that manuscript (fol. 91vb) does not mention any of them (ENGELBRECHT 2018, 110-111; cf. HEXTER 2011, 302-303).

⁴⁵ Text according to GHISALBERTI 1946, 50-51, App. I. My emphasis (WE). The whereabouts

(...) *Secundo fecit librum Amorum qui dicitur Sine Titulo, post quem libellos fecisse conicitur qui non cadunt in numero librorum suorum, sicut De Cuculo, De Philomena, De Pulice, De Somnio, De Nuce, De Medicamine Surdi et De Medicamine Faciei, De Mirabilibus Mundi. Tertio loco fecit librum De Arte Amandi. (...)*

[(...) Secondly, he made the *Book of Loves*, which is called *Without a Title*, after which he wrote little booklets that are not counted among his (genuine) works, such as *On the Cuckoo*, *On the Nightingale*, *On the Flea*, *On Sleep*,⁴⁶ *On the Walnut Tree*, *On Medicine for the Deaf*,⁴⁷ and *On Medicine for the Face*, *On the Wonders of the World*. Thirdly, he wrote the book *On the Art of Love* (...).]

6. Commentary Tendencies

In the concise scope of his commentary, William could not discuss all of the lines at length. Moreover, the *Bursarii* are often very basic. Consequently, the remark *construe* is present everywhere in the *Bursarii*. There is no tendency to allegorise the Ovidian text; rather, he explains grammar, sentence construction, and historical and practical circumstances. The focus of the commentary differs slightly from one work to another, a result of William's aim to use Ovid's works to explain grammatical and rhetorical features.

6.1 *Heroides*

The *Heroides* commentary focuses mainly on helping the reader construe the text, elucidating textual problems, a typical problem in the transmission of this work by Ovid. Ernest Alton consequently characterised the *Bursarii* commentary as a "Variorum Edition".⁴⁸ This part of the commentary was successful

of this pseudo-Ovidiana are discussed in HEXTER - PFUNTNER - HAYNES 2020, ix-xxv, from which the English translations of the titles have been copied here.

⁴⁶ This is the poem *Amores*, III,5 that was left out by William of Orléans in his *Amores* commentary as not being an original work by Ovid.

⁴⁷ Printed as *De medicamine aurium* in HEXTER - PFUNTNER - HAYNES 2020, 94-97; cf. HEXTER 2011, 301.

⁴⁸ ALTON 1960, 67.

and was copied in a large number of glossed *Heroides* manuscripts of the gloss Bible type. In Spanish and Catalan adaptations of Ovid, the term *bursario* even became synonymous with a *Heroides* commentary.⁴⁹ A good example is *Her.* 1,36, where the textual transmission is confused. William treats the verse thus:⁵⁰

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 obviatione sua terruit Hector Patroclum, quem miserat Achilles equos adaquatum. Vel aliter: Misos equos, ita quod ibi sit una littera s et erit vitium 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 is the pugnacious one.* This should be read as follows: *Hector the pugnacious*, that is, brave, *frightened here*, that is, in this place, *the horses*, namely those of Achilles, *sent* to water them. That is to say: In this place Hector frightened Patroclus, who was sent by Achilles to water the horses, with his appearance. Or else: *The horses from Mysia*, as there is only one letter “s” and that is the writer’s error, that is, the horses that Achilles had taken from Telephus, King of Mysia. Or alternatively: *Here the mutilated (scared) the excited (horses)*. Read it thus *The mutilated Hector*, because he had been drawn round the walls, *frightened* by the mutilation of his cadaver *the excited horses*, that is, quick horses.]

The *textus receptus* reads “*Hic alacer missos terruit Hector equos*”, as commented on first by William. The second version, rejected by him as a “writer’s error”, is in the noted text in the manuscript Frankfurt am Main, UB Barth., and is indeed treated there as a “writer’s error”: a later hand added a second “s” interlineary, with the comment *vel missos ad aquatum*. Most modern editions read with recentiores “*Hic lacer admissos terruit Hector equos*”.

The *Heroides* were very popular in medieval times as a kind of insight into the female psyche. The *Bursarii* treat them as letters by females and introduce every single letter with a short *accessus*. The aim of the work is stated in the *accessus* on the *Heroides*.⁵¹

⁴⁹ COULSON – LEVY – ANDERSON 2022, 287.

⁵⁰ Text in ENGELBRECHT 2003, 12.

⁵¹ Text in ENGELBRECHT 2003, 10.

Intentio sua commendare quasdam a licito amore sicut Penelopen, alias reprehendere ab illicito, sicut Phaedram que dilexit Hyppolitum privignum suum, alias etiam reprehendere a stulto amore sicut Phyllidem vel Oenonem. Stultitia enim est amare hospites sicut Phyllis. Unde illud: "Certus in hospitibus non est amor." Vel pueros diligere sicut Oenone, quia solent esse inconstantes secundum aetatis suae variationem. Haec est principalis intentio. Aliae secundum distinctiones exponentur.

[His aim is to recommend some women for lawful love, such as Penelope, to reject others for unlawful love, such as Phaedra who loved her stepson Hippolytus, and to reproach others for foolish love, such as Phyllis or Oenone. It is folly to love guests as Phyllis did. Hence this proverb: "With guests there is no sure love" (*Her.* 17,191). Or to love boys as Oenone did, because they tend to be unstable because of puberty. This is the main objective. The others will each be explained according to their nature.]

William sees love in its three manifestations as the theme of the work: *amor licitus*, lawful because of conjugal love; *amor illicitus*, unlawful because of extramarital or counternatural love, and finally, entirely in the spirit of the literary tradition of his time, *amor stultus*, foolish love. The last refers to the love between two persons of different rank or age, as the stories of Phyllis and Oenone clearly show. The first falls in love with Demophoon, although she knows that he will have to go home again in due course and, moreover, as a shipwrecked sailor, is far below her position as a king's daughter; the second falls in love with Paris when he is no more than a shepherd's boy, while Oenone, as an (older) nymph, is high above him. Young men – as the *accessus* to the Oenone letter points out – are still unsteady in their love.

6.2 *Amores*

The *Amores* posed a moral problem for medieval teachers and were less popular in the classroom than Ovid's other works, as can be seen from their frequency in the *libri manuales* and from the number of transmitted *accessus*.⁵² Many teachers remained silent about this work or rejected it outright as being unsuitable for

⁵² SANFORD 1924, 200; figures in ENGELBRECHT 2018, 109–110.

students.⁵³ The mood of the Orléans schools was different; commentaries written by all three major commentators of the twelfth/thirteenth century – Arnulf, Fulco and William – on the *Amores* have been identified.⁵⁴ William discusses the unusual title in his *accessus*, and states:⁵⁵

Exsecuto primo opere Ovidii de secundo exsequamur, de cuius titulo prius agendum est. A diversis diversi huic libro assignantur tituli. Quidam enim dicunt: "Incipit Ovidius Amorum," alii dicunt: "Incipit Ovidius Armorum,"⁵⁶ alii dicunt: "Incipit Ovidius Sine Titulo." Unusquisque rationem praetendit, quare apponi debet suus titulus. Illi enim, qui dicunt "Incipit Ovidius Amorum," Ovidio attestante probant quod talis titulus debet apponi, qui ait in libro De Arte: "Deque tribus libris, titulus quos signat Amorum, elige, quod docili molli-ter ore legas." Illi qui dicunt "Incipit Ovidius Armorum," non secundum auctoris materiam, sed secundum ipsius propositum suum librum volunt intitulari. Illi vero, qui dicunt "Ovidius Sine Titulo," acquiescunt sententiae illorum, qui dicunt "Incipit Ovidius Amorum." Illi vero dicunt, quod liber iste solebat ab amore intitulari, sed cum Ovidius De Arte damnatus esset, timens ne istud opus dam- naretur sicuti et illud, abstulit titulum et apposuit istum, qui adhuc dicitur "Incipit Ovidius Sine Titulo."

[Having finished Ovid's first work, we will continue with the second, whereby the title must first be discussed. Different people attribute different titles to this book. Some say: "Here begins Ovid on Love", others say: "Here begins Ovid on Weapons," others say: "Here begins Ovid Without a Title." Everybody pretends to have a reason why his own title should be used. Those, namely, who say: "Here begins Ovid on Love," point out, according to Ovid's testimony, that such a title must be used, because he says in the book *The Art of Love*: "Choose from the three books, which bear the title *Amores*, that which you can read with a practised voice" (*Ars*, III,343-344). Those who say "Here Ovid begins on Weapons," want

⁵³ ALTON 1960, 25-33; GLAUCHE 1970, 113.

⁵⁴ Fulco, see COULSON – ROY 2000, 48 (no. 94); Arnulf, see COULSON – ROY 2000, 72 (no. 201); and William, see COULSON – ROY 2000, 51 (no. 107).

⁵⁵ Text in ENGELBRECHT 2003, 10.

⁵⁶ This title is indeed mentioned in two *accessus*, see COULSON – ROY 2000, 30 (no. 15) and 115 (no. 394). It is the result of an interpretation of *Am.* I,1,1, "Arma gravi numero violentaque bella paravi". Cf. the text in HEXTER 1986, 224.

to entitle the book, not according to the author's theme, but according to his intention. Those, however, who say, "*Ovid Without a Title*," assume the opinion of those who say, "*Here begins Ovid on Love*." These, however, say that the book was indeed to be named after love, but that Ovid, when his book *The Art of Love* was condemned, for fear that this work would also be condemned, removed the title and placed this one on it, as it is now called: "*Here begins Ovid Without a Title*."

The *Bursarii* do not comment on *Amores*, III,5, as this poem had a separate fate in the Middle Ages under the title *Ovidius de Somnio* and was often considered to be no genuine work of Ovid.⁵⁷ In his commentary on the *Amores*, William does not avoid sexual issues completely, but carefully circumvents the most piquant passages. He interpreted the poems as short rhetorical letters and consequently gave all of them a short introduction about "the aim of the author".

The treatment of the *Amores* focuses on rhetorical elements by showing how the poet wants to convince his girlfriend or others. Poems in which "debates" are involved, as in the two "watchman" poems *Am.* I,6 and II,2, were considered suitable for explaining methods of persuasion. Until the twelfth century, rhetoric was seen as a part of grammar, to which the *auctores* also belonged. In the *Bursarii*, William refers to rhetorical elements throughout, but the *Amores* is, together with the *Remedia amoris*, the only work in which William regularly gives definitions of the figures used. His terminology is in line with Donatus' *Ars Minor* and *Maior*. William must also have used the short summary of the grammar in Book I of the *Etymologiae* of Isidorus of Sevilla, because he partly uses terms that do not occur in Donatus. To provide two examples, in *Am.* III,2,12 William comments on the hypallage as a typical figure of speech:⁵⁸

Nunc stringam metas interiore rota. Hypallage facienda est, id est stringam rotas ad inferiorem metam.

[Now again I lightly touch the end post with my inner wheel. Here a hypallage must be made, that is, I lightly touch the inner end post with my wheels.]

⁵⁷ RICHMOND 2002, 462.

⁵⁸ ENGELBRECHT 2003, 53. The other figures of speech discussed are accumulation, anaphora, antithesis, appositio, litotes, parenthesis and tmesis.

Among the tropes, he often mentions the metaphor, however without any explanation. A typical example is in *Am.* II,14,7:⁵⁹

Ut careat rugarum crimine venter, sternetur pugnae tristis harena tuae. Prius hic legendum est adaptatio metaphorae. Sciendum est ergo, quod dum mulier gravida est, est quasi in pugna.

[So that your belly lacks the crime of wrinkles, the sand of your sad fight will be thrown down. This must first be interpreted by adapting the metaphor. For one must know that when a woman is pregnant, she is as if in battle.]

William also uses rhetorical terminology, especially the five parts of speech, *prooemium*, *narratio*, *probatio*, *refutatio* and *peroratio*. A good example is his commentary on *Am.* I,11,1, in which he mentions the *captatio benevolentiae* as part of the prooemium.⁶⁰

Colligere incertos. In hac epistula monet Ovidius ancillam suam Napem, ut deferat tabellas ad dominam et eius captat benevolentiam laudando eam ab opere.

[To order the tangled (hair). In this letter, Ovid warns his chambermaid Nape to bring the note to her mistress and appeals to her benevolence by praising her for her work.]

Another term often discussed is the prosopopeia, defined in the *Bursarii* as a macrostructural figure, e.g. at the end of the *accessus* on the *Amores*:⁶¹

(...) *In istis primis quattuor versibus utitur auctor prosopopeia, quae est informatio novae personae, et tribus modis accipitur, scilicet quando res animata loquitur ad rem inanimatam, ut ibi: “Parve nec invideo”; vel inanimata ad animatam, ut hic; inanimata ad inanimatam, ut in Apologis Aviani.*

[In these first four verses the author uses prosopopeia, i.e. information about a new character, and he does so in three ways, namely, when an animate thing

⁵⁹ ENGELBRECHT 2003, 51. The other tropes mentioned in the commentary are antiphrasis, antonomasia, circumlocution, emphasis, epitheton, irony, metonymy and synecdoche.

⁶⁰ Text in ENGELBRECHT 2003, 46.

⁶¹ Text in ENGELBRECHT 2003, 41.

speaks to an inanimate thing, as here: “*My little (book), I do not envy you*” (Tr. I,1,1) or an inanimate thing to an animate thing, as here; inanimate to inanimate, as in the *Apologies* of Avianus (cf. *Apologi*, fab. 11)]

6.3 *Ars amatoria*

In the Middle Ages, *Ars amatoria* was considered the reason for Ovid’s exile. In early medieval times, the work was considered unsuitable for schools. Yet, in the thirteenth century, *Ars amatoria* suddenly became very popular, so much so that it became even one of the most important texts and was often imitated by contemporary poets.⁶² William comments mostly on rhetorical figures and interprets the sensual allusions more in the vein of courtly love, which was popular in the vernacular literature of his time. He comments, for example, on the verses *Ars*, 1,147–148 as follows by interpreting the *pompa circensis* as a kind of procession or entrance of knights at a tournament:⁶³

At cum pompa frequens certantibus ibit ephebis, Tu Veneri dominae plaude favente manu. Continuatio: Tu sedebis iuxta amicam, sed cum pompa, id est ordo euntium ad ludos, ibit frequens, id est plena, ephebis, id est iuvenibus, ab e quod est “valde” et phoebos quod est “splendens”, certantibus, id est certare volentibus, tu plaude, id est applaude, dominae, id est amicae, Veneri, id est veneriae, manu favente, id est applausu. Quod est dicere: Cum videbis iuvenes, debes amicae applaudere, ut ei complaceas et ne alios tibi praeferat. Vel alium potes assignare sensum: Cum sedebis iuxta dominam, non cognosces eam, sed cum iuvenes venient, poteris perpendere eam esse veneriam et, quia cognosces, applaude. Et hoc est, quod dicit. Vel aliter, et erit hec littera: Caelestibus ibit eburnis. Sed prius sciendum est quod, quotiens fiebant ludi in Circo, deferebantur imagines deorum ad ludos et unusquisque adorabat deum suae professionis, ut milites Martem, nautae Neptunum, pugiles Pollucem, amantes Venerem et sic de caeteris. Et hoc exigit littera. Construe: Sed cum pompa, sacerdotum scilicet, ibit frequens, id est plena, caelestibus eburnis, id est caelestibus imaginibus de ebore factis, tu plaude, id est assurge, dominae Veneri, id est sanctae Veneri ita quod dominae teneatur adiective, manu favente, id est ita quod manibus iunctis.

⁶² HEXTER 1986, 20–23.

⁶³ Text in ENGELBRECHT 2003, 61.

[But when the festive procession with the competing ephebes shall proceed en masse, Do clap your hands in favour of Lady Venus. To continue: You shall sit next to your girlfriend, but if the festive procession, that is, the procession of those who go to the games, shall proceed en masse, that is, fully, with the ephebes, that is, with the young men, from ε which means “very” and φοιβός which is “radiant”, competing, that is, wanting to hold a contest, you clap, that is, applaud, for the lady, that is, for your girlfriend, Venus, that is, sensual, with favouring hand, that is, with applause. This means: when you will see the young men, you should clap for your girlfriend to please her and so that she does not prefer others to you. Or you may ascribe it another meaning: When you sit beside the lady, you will not know her, but when the young men come, you will be able to determine whether she is sensual and, since you will know, clap for them. And this is what he says. Or else, and then here must be the following text: <The procession> will go forth with the ivory celestials. But first it should be known that, as often as games were held in the Circus, images of the gods were carried to the games and everyone paid homage to the god of his own profession, like the soldiers to Mars, the sailors to Neptune, the boxers to Pollux, the lovers to Venus, and so on. And this the text expresses. Read it thus: But when the festive procession, namely, of priests, shall proceed en masse, that is, fully, with the ivory celestials, that is, with the images of gods made of ivory, you must clap, that is, stand up, for lady Venus, that is, for the holy Venus (so that for the lady is adjectivally translated), with favouring hand, that is, that you hold each other’s hands.]

The commentary is here quoted at length to give an idea of his way of commenting. The *textus receptus* was *certantibus ephebis*, but William knew the reading *caelestibus ibit eburnis* which is currently considered the correct one. His explanation does not differ that much from e.g. the commentary of Adrian S. Hollis⁶⁴ on these lines.

As Haskins reports, the Crusades were an important reason for the Renaissance of the twelfth century. Thanks to them, the Latin West became acquainted with many Greek texts. Although knowledge of this language remained poor, one of the consequences was an interest in the etymology of Graecisms in Latin texts. Just at the exact time that William was producing his *Bursarii*, two manuals were published that would maintain an important influence during the Middle Ages, the *Graecismus* of Eberhard of Bethune (†1212) and the *Mag-*

⁶⁴ HOLLIS 1977, 60.

nae derivationes of Hugutio of Pisa (†1210). The first work was a versified grammar focusing on so-called *differentiae*, words easily confused that needed to be distinguished from each other. Eberhard gives much prominence to figures of speech, an issue which was also central to the *Bursarii*. The title of the book is derived from its eighth chapter, in which the author discusses Greek words.⁶⁵ The latter work was used as a kind of etymological dictionary throughout the rest of the Middle Ages. The *Derivationes* were, for William, the main source for the etymologies of Latin borrowings from Greek. Unfortunately, as Rita Copeland and Ineke Sluiter remark, Hugutio's "enthusiastic use of Greek betrays a virtually complete lack of knowledge of that language".⁶⁶

6.4 *Remedia amoris*

In contrast with *Ars amatoria*, *Remedia amoris* was particularly popular with teachers due to the nature of the work – a manual for getting rid of love. As the table above shows, it was also the work that William commented on most intensively. As was common since the twelfth century,⁶⁷ the *Bursarii* divided the work into two books, the second beginning with line 397. The medieval reader interpreted the "first book" as a manual to get rid of love and the "second book" to prevent one from falling in love again.

William focuses in this part more on the valency of the verbs, regularly quoting other handbooks, mainly mentioning *Graecismus* and the *Doctrinale* of Alexander of Villedieu (c. 1175–1240). One example is his commentary on *Remedia*, 3 concerning the *genitivus criminis* with *verba iudicialia*.⁶⁸

Damnare. Verbum est legale et ideo construitur cum genitivo. Unde Theodolus: "Corvum perfidiae damnant animalia quaeque," et ita hic dampnare sceleris. Alii dicunt: O, celeris Cupido, sed male dicunt. Non enim dicitur "hic" et

⁶⁵ COPELAND – SLUITER 2012, 584–585.

⁶⁶ COPELAND – SLUITER 2012, 343. One of the most remarkable examples of medieval problems with Greek is the known Platonic aphorism γνῶθι σεαυτόν, which became known as *not(h) is elitos* in the medieval West, the result of the wrong division of the words and a phonetic transcription of the Koiné pronunciation. Thus, it is quoted in the *Bursarii* as well, in the commentary on *Ars*, II,500: "*Littera*, id est *not(h)is elytos*, quod est recognosce te ipsum" (ENGELBRECHT 2003, 69). See COURCELLE 1962.

⁶⁷ HENDERSON 1979, xix.

⁶⁸ Text in ENGELBRECHT 2003, 78.

“haec celeris” et “hoc celere”, immo “hic celer, haec -ris, hoc -re”. Sunt enim decem nomina, que ita declinantur: Campester, ceber, alacerque saluber, equester / Silvester, volucer, acerque celerque pedester. / His in bis quinque tenet: hic -er et haec -is et hoc -e.

[*To condemn.* It is a legal verb and is constructed with the genitive. Hence Theodolus “*All the animals condemn the raven for his faithlessness*” (THEODOLUS, *Ecloga*, 81), and here, thus: *condemn the crime*. Others say “*O, rapacious Cupid*”, but they say this incorrectly. For it is not said “*hic*” and “*haec celeris*” and “*hoc celere*”, but “*hic celer, haec -ris, hoc -re*”. There are in fact 10 nouns that are thus declined: Campester (of the countryside), ceber (famous), alacer (lively) and saluber (healthy), equester (chivalrous), silvester (of the forest), volucer (winged), acer (sharp) and celer (rap) and pedester (on foot). *In these twice five words you should apply hic -er and haec -is and hoc -e* (ALEXANDER OF VILLEDIEU, *Doctrinale*, 583–585; EBERHARD OF BETHUNE, *Graecismus*, 13,153–155).]

As might be expected, moralising tendencies are strongest in this commentary. The most moralistic remark concerns *Remedia*, 232, where William explains that the value of the soul is far greater than that of the body:⁶⁹

At pretium pars haec corpore maius habet. Construe: At, pro certe, haec pars, id est animus, habet pretium maius corpore, quod est dicere: Plura sunt agenda pro salute animae quam pro salute corporis, sed tamen dixi superius, quod praecepta mea dura (RA 225) sunt, sed quamvis haec dixerim, ianua, id est introitus et principium nostrae artis, id est nostrorum praeceptorum quae artificiose dantur, est tristissima (vel strictissima), quia aliquis de facili non potest ingredi mea praecepta. Quod glosat in sequenti: Et labor, etc.

[*But this part has a greater value than the body.* Read it thus: *But*, for sure, *this part*, that is, the spirit, *has a greater value than the body*. Which is to say: More should be done for the salvation of the soul than for the salvation of the body, *but still*, I said above that *my precepts are hard*, but although I have said this, *the door*, that is, the entrance and the beginning *of our art*, that is, of our precepts which are artfully given, *is very sad* (or *very strict*), because no one can easily enter my precepts. As he glosses in the following verse *And the work*, etc. (*Rem.* 384).]

⁶⁹ Text in ENGELBRECHT 2003, 82.

6.5 *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses*

For his commentaries on *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses*, William was heavily dependent on the philological commentaries of his forerunner Arnulf of Orléans. Interestingly, precisely these parts of the *Bursarii* have been less transferred, as people seem to have preferred Arnulf's commentary. The commentary on the *Fasti* deals mainly with all kinds of issues regarding the calculation of time, the way the Roman calendar worked, the course of the planets and various Roman festivals.

One of the most interesting (and longest) pieces concerns the leap day, joined with the commentary on *Fasti*, III,163–166. The commentary in the *Bursarii* is a reflection of the discussion that took place in the thirteenth century about the calculation of the date of Easter. This date depends on astronomical factors and falls on the first Sunday after the full moon in spring. Thus, the date in the solar year changes constantly. Since Easter is the most important Christian feast, people have tried from the very beginning to find the most precise and effective method of calculating the correct date. A concise reflection of the general decisions of the Council of Nicaea (325 AD) is presented by Isidore of Seville in his *Etymologiae*, VI,17,21–32,10, but the calculation of the Easter date in Latin literature was only established on stronger foundations by Bede in his chronological writings. The exact division of an hour into 40 moments or 60 minutes (*bisse*) must have been rather theoretical in the absence of precise clocks.⁷⁰ We quote here only parts of the comment:⁷¹

Is decies senos. Hic tractandum est de bissexto, sed ut evidentius agatur de sole, prius agendum est de luna, quae, quia minorem habet circulum circulo solis, dicitur viginti et vii diebus et viii horis redire ad punctum, a quo accepit novilunium. Sed, quia ascendi non potest donec solem consequitur, qui iam fere spatium unius signi transgressus est, progreditur duobus diebus et iii horis et sole consecuto ad novilunium ascendit. Et ita de novilunio ad novilunium, non de puncto ad punctum. Sunt xx et ix dies et xii horae, et haec computatio lunatio dicitur. (...) Iulius vero Caesar annum emendavit, non secundum lunationes considerans, sed secundum moras in quibus sol moratur in un-

⁷⁰ It is known, however, that from about 1150 onwards experiments were increasingly carried out to achieve a more accurate measurement of time, although in 1271 a commentary on *De Sphaera* by John of Sacrobosco (fl. 1230) notes that, so far, the *artefices horologiorum* have not succeeded in producing a truly reliable timepiece.

⁷¹ Text in ENGELBRECHT 2003, 106–107.

quoque signo. Videndum est ergo, quod sol in unoquoque signo commoratur per triginta gradus, per triginta trientes, per triginta bisse momenti. (...) Sciendum est, quod quaeque hora in quattuor partes dividitur, quae dicuntur puncta. Unumquodque punctum decem efficit momenta, et ita in hora sunt quadraginta momenta. Bisse duae sunt partes momenti. Tres enim bisse duo faciunt momenta et ita in hora sunt sexaginta bisse. Sol in unoquoque signo moratur per xxx bisse, duodecies xxx bisse efficiunt ccc et lx, quae efficiunt duodecies xx momenta, ita quod de tribus bisse efficiantur duo momenta. Duodecies xx momenta efficiunt vi horas, xl enim momenta sunt in hora. Et ita inveniuntur in anno Iulii ccc et lxx dies et vi horae. Ille vero horae reservantur in primo anno usque ad secundum et tunc sunt duodecim de secundo usque ad tertium, et ita decem et octo in tertio usque ad quartum. Et ita xxiii, ex quibus constat dies, et ita excrescit unus annus uno die, qui dicitur bissextus, quia ex bisse, id est ex minutiis supradictis colligitur. Vel bissextus dicitur, quia bis sexto Kalendas Martii numeratur sextus dies. Et haec sufficient de bissexto. Redeamus ad litteram.

[*This ten times six.* Here we must speak of the leap day. But to be able to speak more clearly about the sun, we must first speak about the moon, of which it is said, because it has a smaller orbit than the sun, that after 27 days and 8 hours it returns to the quarter where the new moon begins. But, as it cannot rise as long as it follows the sun, which then has covered about the space of one constellation, it continues for two days and four hours and then, following the sun, rises in the new moon. And so it goes from new moon to new moon and not from a quarter of an hour to a quarter of an hour. This is 29 days and 12 hours, and this sum is called a *lunar month*. (...) Julius Caesar, however, improved the year, because he did not calculate according to lunar months, but according to the time periods during which the sun resides in one zodiac sign. It is true that in each sign, the sun stays for 30 degrees, for 30 *trientes* or for 30 *bissemomenti*. (...). We should know that each hour is divided into 4 parts called quarters. Each quarter is again divided into 10 moments and so there are 40 moments in one hour. The *bisse* (minutes) are parts of the moments. Three minutes make 2 moments and so there are 60 minutes in an hour. The sun stays in each sign for 30 minutes, twelve times 30 minutes make 360, which are again 240 moments, so that 3 minutes make 2 moments. 240 moments make 6 hours, because there are 40 moments in one hour. And so in a Julian year there are 365 days and 6 hours (cf. BEDA, *De temporum ratione*, 1–3). But these hours are reserved in the first year for the second, and so there are 12 in the second year until the third, and 18 in the third until the fourth. And so there are 24, from which a day is made up, and so that one year grows with one day which is called *bissextus*, leap day, because it is gathered from the bisse, the aforesaid minutes. Or it is

called *bissextus*, because the sixth day before the first of March (24 February) was counted twice. Let this be enough about the leap day. Let us return to the text.]

Otherwise, both the *Fasti* and the *Metamorphoses* are mainly used as a kind of manual for mythology and ancient history. William is careful not to repeat himself too much and from time to time refers to earlier commentaries. A good example is the deification of Caesar in *Met.* XV,745–851. In his *Allegoriae*, Arnulf makes the colloquial medieval connection with the star of the three magi announcing the birth of Christ:⁷²

Iulius in sidus. Cuius rei deinde occasio fuit, quia, cum Augustus funebres ludos faceret in honorem Iulii, de medio die visa fuit quaedam stella prius non visa, quam Iulii esse praedicavit Augustus. Quam stellam dicunt esse illam, que Magis visa eos duxit usque ad locum, ubi erat puer Ihesus Christus. Qui vivit et regnat Deus per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

[Julius into a star. And the circumstances of this transformation happened, when Augustus organised the funeral games in honour of Julius, a star was seen in the middle of the day which had not been seen before, and Augustus declared that this was the star of Julius. It is said that this is the star that, after its appearance, led the Magi to the place where the infant Jesus Christ was. God who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.]

William remarks in his introduction to the book that the eleventh story concerns “Deificatio Iulii” (the Deification of Julius),⁷³ but does not pay any special attention to it, as he had already discussed it in his comment on *Ars*, I,203–204, although without reference to Christ:⁷⁴

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

⁷² Text in GHISALBERTI 1932, 229.

⁷³ ENGELBRECHT 2003, 165.

⁷⁴ Text in ENGELBRECHT 2003, 26.

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 notitiam de deificatione ipsius, unde illud: Ecce Dionei processit Caesaris astrum.

[Father Mars and father Caesar, give the blessing to him who goes, for one of you is a god, and the other will be. Read it thus: O Mars, father of the Romans by Romulus, and o Caesar, that is, o Julius, father, give the blessing, that is, the favour of the deity, to him who goes, that is, to Augustus. Or: *The name*, that is, the glory due to the victory, and you can give it well, *because, one of you*, that is, Mars, is god, and *the other of you*, that is, Julius, will be. Some would object here that Julius was already a god, which is false, because we know that the Romans had no knowledge of his deification until he had been avenged by his son and until the Parthians had been conquered, as it says in the *Bucolica*, that to Augustus who was sacrificing in honour of the victory over the Parthians at noon a star appeared, by which he had knowledge of his deification, as this quotation says: “See here how the star of Caesar, son of Dione, has mounted” (VIRGIL, *Ecloga*, IX,47).]

This is quite typical of the *Bursarii*, in that it mostly makes no attempt to Christianise Ovid.

6.6 *Tristia* and *Ex Ponto*

These last two parts of the commentary are relatively poorly transmitted; from *Tristia*, I,9 onwards the commentary on the *Tristia* is transmitted only in the manuscripts Leiden, UB, Lipsius 29 and Paris, BnF, Lat. 15.136. For *Ex Ponto*, the situation is somewhat better; here, the main copies in the codex Berlin, SBPK, Lat. qu. 219 are present until *Ex Ponto*, III,5,17 and the Leipzig manuscript UB Rep. I. qu. 48 has the complete text of the *Ex Ponto* commentary.

In the introduction to the *Tristia*, William discusses the possible reasons for Ovid’s banishment:⁷⁵

Ovidius in itinere exilii existens, volens remedium aliquod malorum obtinere, opus istud tractare proposuit, in quo materiam habet exilium et amicos. Intendit enim exponere amicis suis mala que patitur et hortari eos, ut constantiam habeant in amore. Sed a diversis diversae assignantur causae, quare missus sit in exilium. Quidam enim dicunt,

⁷⁵ Text in ENGELBRECHT 2003, 171.

quod missus est propter Ovidium De Arte, in quo docuit non docenda, unde ipse in Ovidio De Ponto: "Neve roges, que sit, stultam conscripsimus Artem: Innocuas nobis haec vetat esse manus." Alii dicunt, quod propter hoc missus sit, quod vidit Caesarem puero abutentem. Unde in hoc libro habetur: Heu mihi, quid vidi? Cur noxia lumina feci? Cur imprudenti cognita culpa mihi? Alii dicunt, quod missus est, quia diligebat imperatricem, quam falso nomine Corinnam appellavit. Unde illud in hoc libro: Moverat ingenium totam cantata per Urbem nomine non vero dicta Corinna mihi. Utilitas quantum ad Ovidium in hoc opere est consequi malorum oblivium, unde illud: Consequor ex illis casus oblivia nostri, quantum ad legentes a simili errore sibi precavit.

[When Ovid was on his way into exile and wanted to find a cure for his misery, he decided to write this work of poetry, in which his exile and his friends are the theme. He intended to show his friends the misery he was suffering and to urge them to be steadfast in love. But different people indicate different reasons why he was sent into exile. Some say that he was sent away because of Ovid's *The Art of Love*, in which he had taught things that should not be taught, as he himself says in Ovid's *From Pontus*: "Don't ask me, what it is, we have written the *Ars* foolishly. This book forbids that my hands be without fault" (*Ex Ponto*, II,9,73-74). Others say that he was sent away for this, because he saw the emperor abusing a little boy. That is why this book says: "Woe to me, what have I seen? Why have I made my eyes guilty?" (*Tristia*, II,103-104). Others say that he was sent away because he loved the empress whom he called Corinna by an alias. Whence in this book it says: "She has aroused my talent and is sung all over Rome with the pseudonym Corinna, which I invented" (*Tristia*, IV,10,59-60). The point in this work, as far as Ovid is concerned, is to achieve oblivion from misery. That is why he says this: "With this I wish to achieve oblivion from my misfortunes," (*Ex Ponto*, I,5,55) with regard to the reader, the point is to beware of committing a similar mistake.]

The *Ex Ponto* is seen as a continuation of the *Tristia*, and its *accessus* is therefore extremely short:⁷⁶

Rebus idem, titulo differt, et epistula cui sit Non occultato nomine missa docet. Nihil enim differt inter hunc librum et Ovidium Tristium, nisi quod iste intitulatur a loco, ille vero a miseria. Et in hoc nominat amicos, in illo vero nulum nominavit.

⁷⁶ Text in ENGELBRECHT 2003, 203.

[“*In theme the same, in title different, and without hiding the name the letter openly shows to whom it is sent.*” For there is no difference between this book and Ovid’s *Lamentations*, except that this book is named after the place, the other after the misery. And in this book he mentions his friends, in the other he mentions nobody.]

William considers both works to be collections of letters and therefore gives each poem its own short *accessus*. This gave him the opportunity to talk about what he saw as Ovid’s poetics. Thus, he explains the letter to Perilla (*Tristia*, III,7) in this way:⁷⁷

Vade salutatum. Hanc epistulam scribit Ovidius ad Perillam discipulam suam, quae dimiserat studium pro dampnatione. Quam Ovidius monet, ne faciat, immo studio insistat ex quo provenit fama.

[*Go and greet.* Ovid writes this letter to his pupil Perilla, who has given up poetry because of damnation. Ovid exhorts her not to do so, but to continue with her poetry, which brings her fame.]

He finishes his commentary at the end of the part on *Ex Ponto* (IV,16,51) with the same quote with which he began his commentary in the introduction:

(...) Vel secundum aliam litteram: Ex quo mortuus sum, non debet mihi aliquis invidere. Vel aliter: Non habet in nobis iam nova plaga locus. Opere enim expleto non invidendum est magistro. Unde illud: Rumpere, Livor edax, magnum iam nomen habemus.

[Or in another reading: Because I am dead, nobody needs to envy me. Or alternatively: *There is no place on me for another blow.* After finishing the work, the master should not be envied. As the quote says: “*Burst, gluttonous envy! We already have a great name*” (*Rem.* 389).]

Immortal fame through poetry, is then, for William, Ovid’s reason for writing his works. Unlike before, the focus was on the person of the poet. In this, the commentary reflects what we may call “a Renaissance mood”.

⁷⁷ Text in ENGELBRECHT 2003, 121.

7. Conclusion

The *Bursarii* was a selective commentary written around 1200 AD for undergraduate students intended to prepare them for lectures on the Ovid text. For this reason, the author Master William of Orléans concentrates on passages that were seemingly frequently treated, citing different textual variants. The commentary has been handed down in *catena* form in easy-to-carry, small-format manuscripts. Incidentally, one of the explanations of the term *bursarius* is that it means “easy to be kept in a *bursa*, i.e. a pocket”. In each work by Ovid, the commentary focuses on other pedagogic features, ensuring that over the entire course grammatical and rhetorical issues were treated alongside knowledge from antique history, mythology and realia from ancient times.

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Summary

This article treats the commentary *Bursarii super Ovidios* by Master William of Orléans, written around AD 1200, as a typical example of a *catena* commentary from the early 13th century. First, the reading technique that changed in the 12th century and the layout of the manuscripts are discussed. After a discussion of the title “bursarii” and a short introduction to the commentary, the *Vita Ovidii* and its various parts are successively discussed. The focus of each section is illustrated with the help of examples from the text. Thus, insight is given into the way in which Ovid’s text was treated in the undergraduate phase of lectures.

Keywords: Ovid; *Bursarii super Ovidios*; *catena* commentary; philology; Orléans

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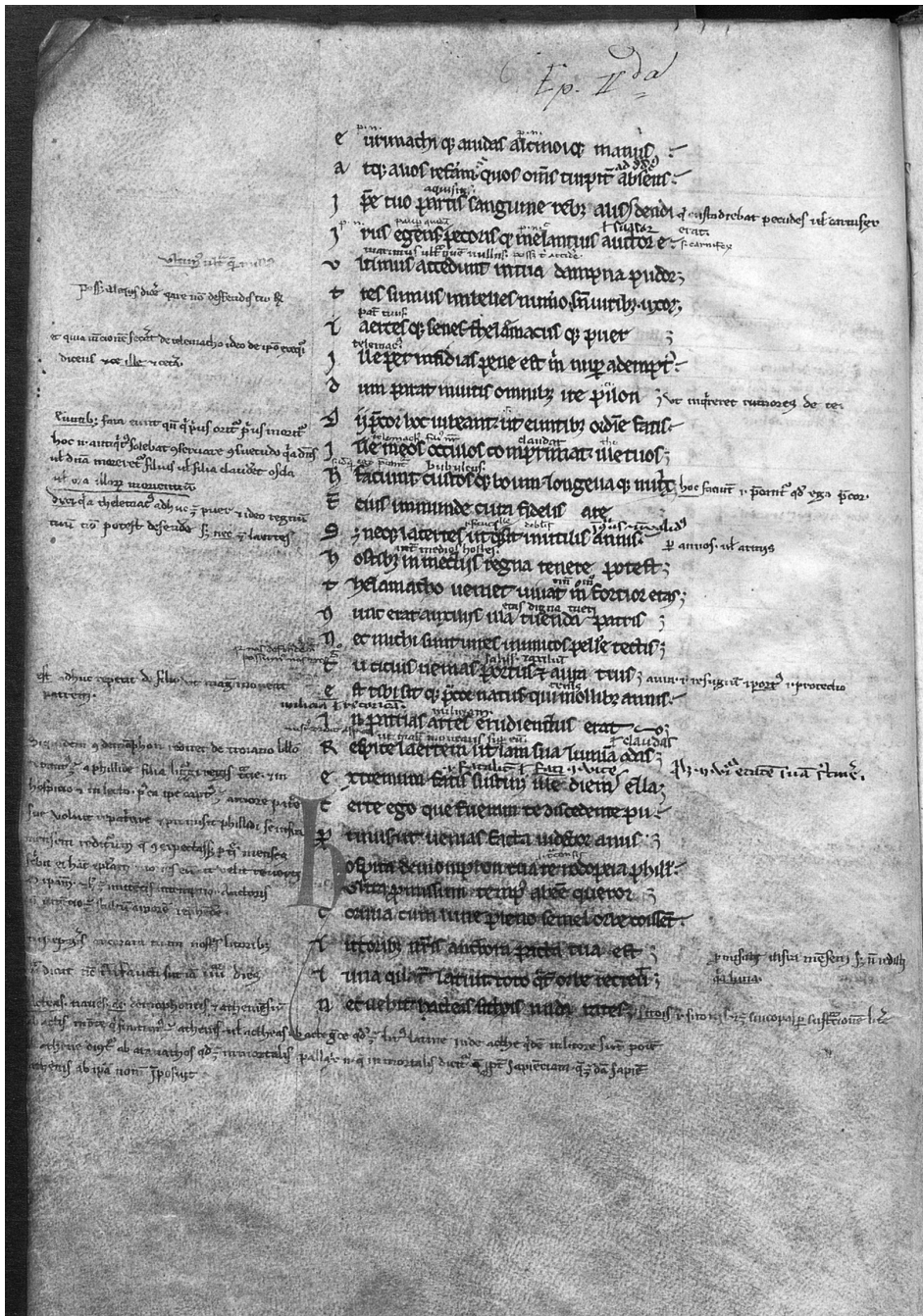


Fig. 1. Prague, NKP VIII H 12 (Ms. 1630), fol. 2v (OVID, Her. 1,92-16; 2,1-5).

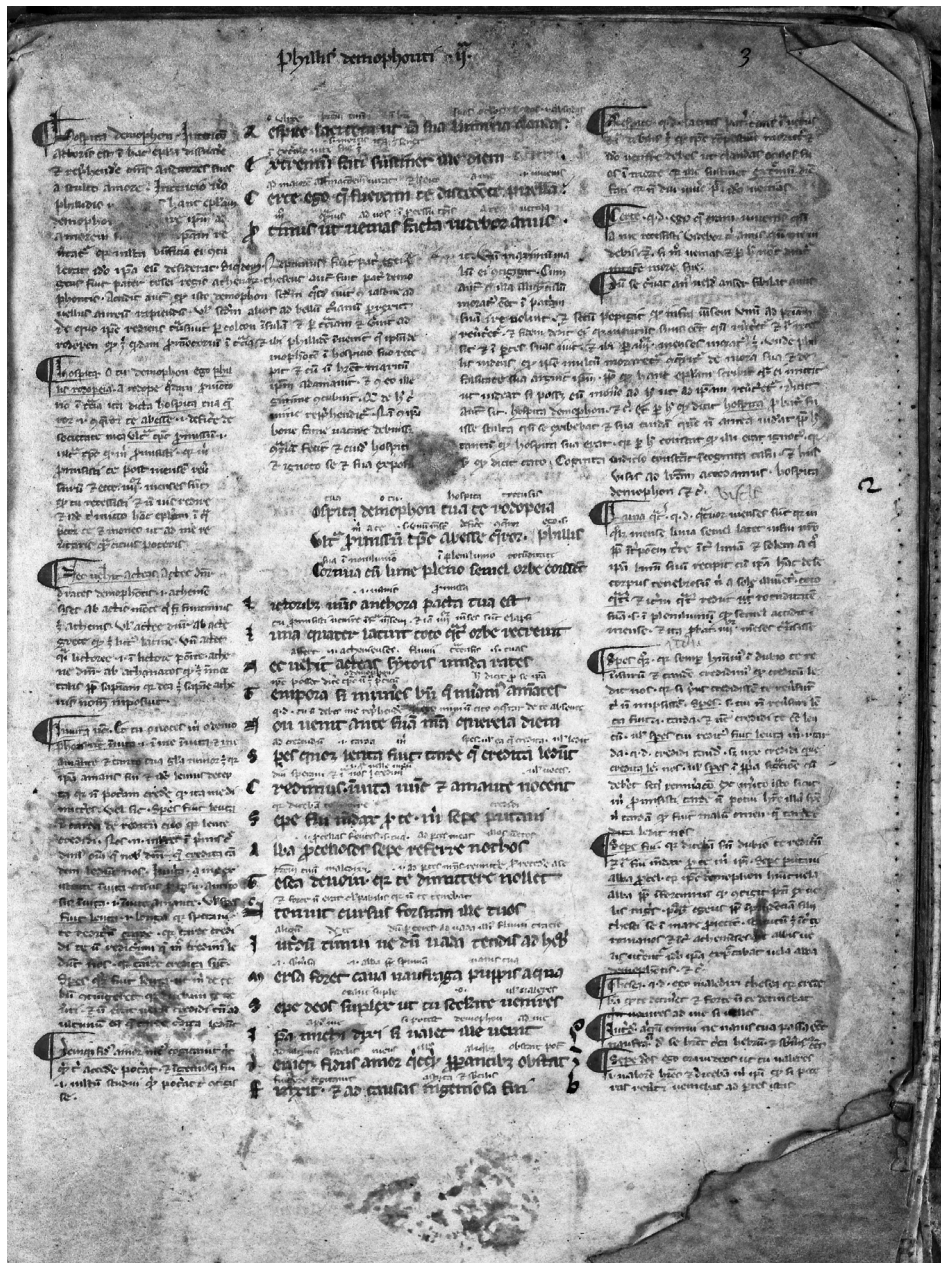
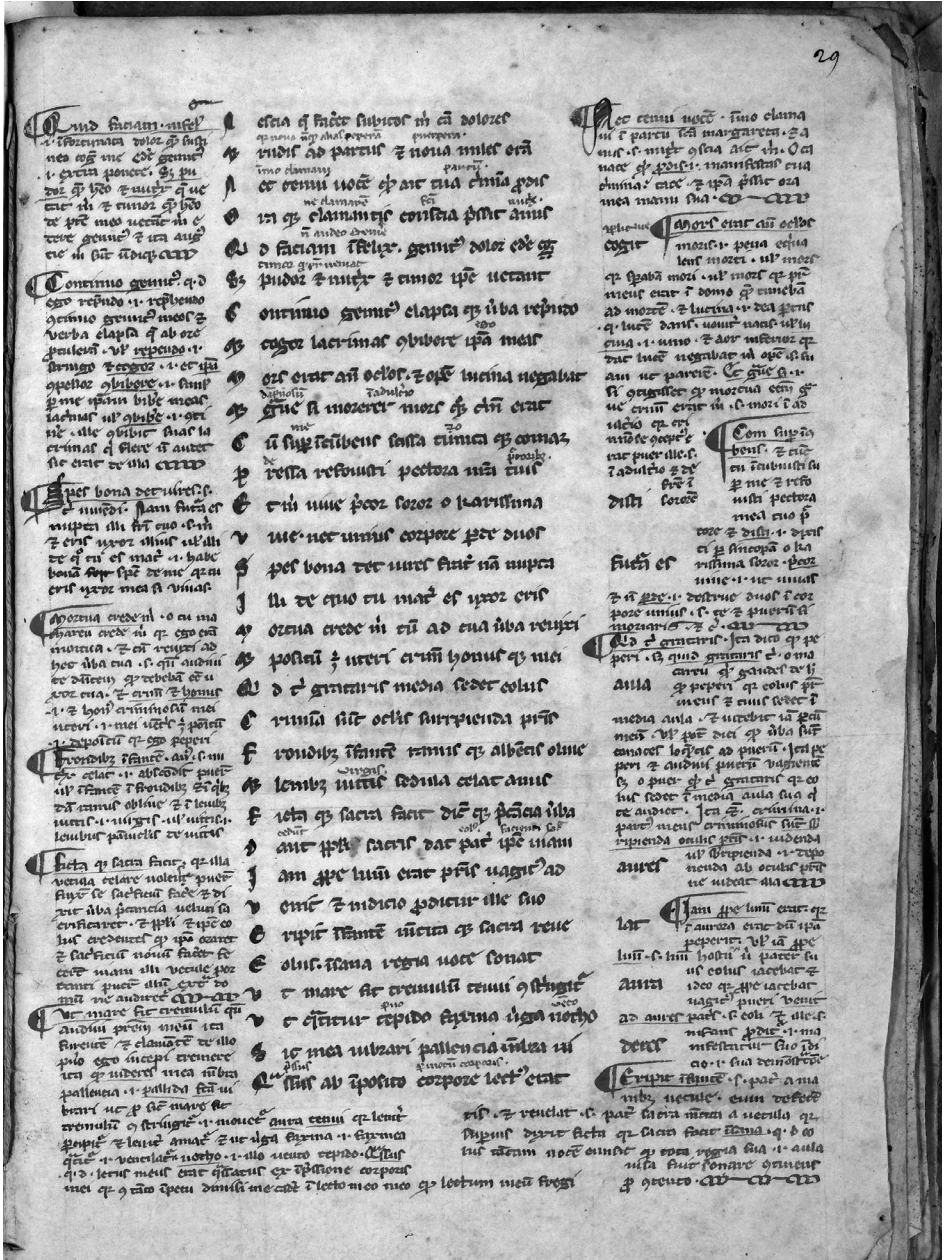
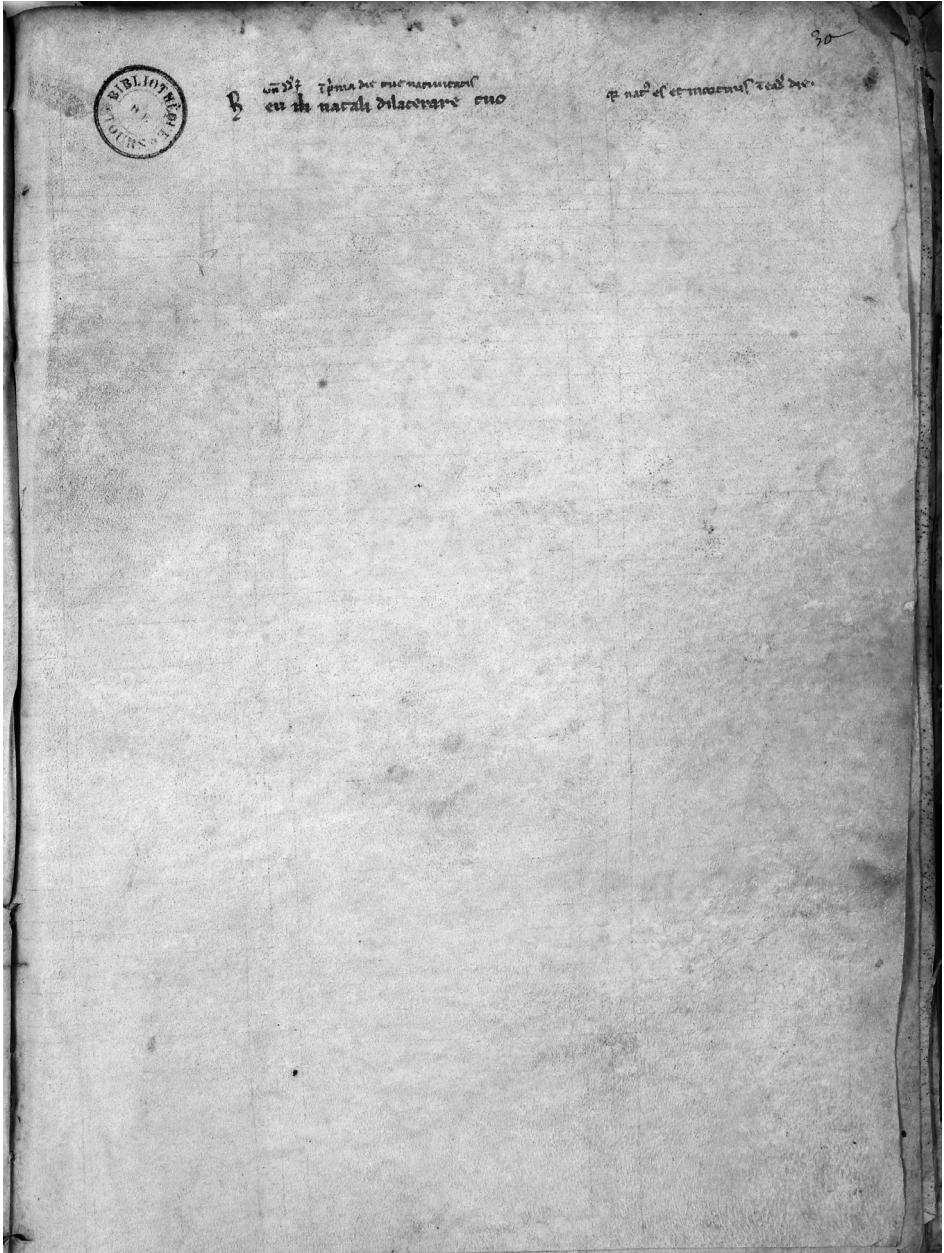


Fig. 2. Tours, BM Ms. 881, fol. 3r (OVID, Her. 1,113-116; 2,1-22).



Figs. 3-5. Tours, BM Ms. 881, fol. 29r (Her. 11,49-80), 29v (Her. 11,81-113) and 30r (only Her. 11,114).



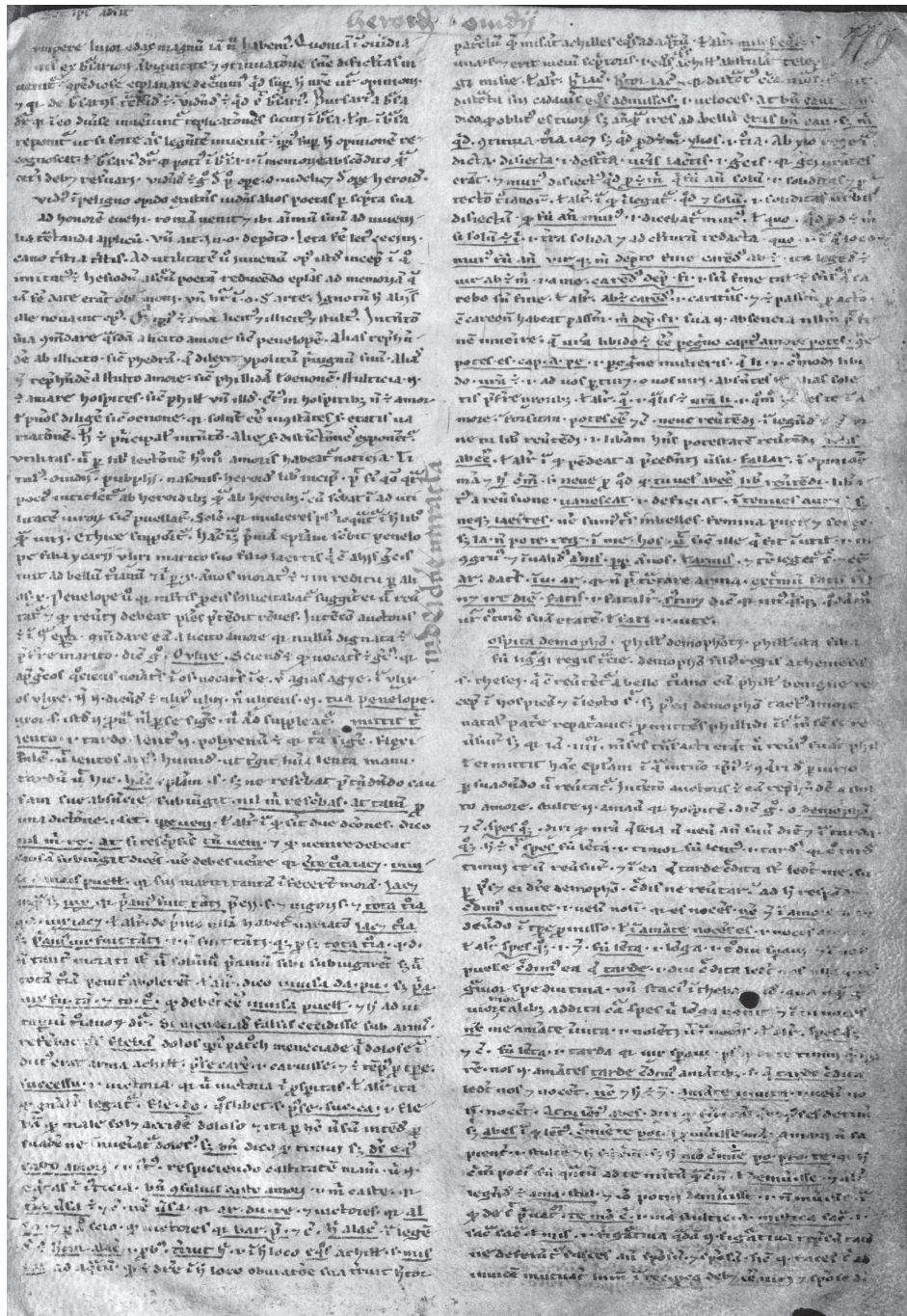


Fig. 16. Berlin, SBPK Lat. qu. 219, fol. 119r with *Bursarii*, *Heroides* (Accessus and commentary on *Her.* 1,1 bis 2,42).

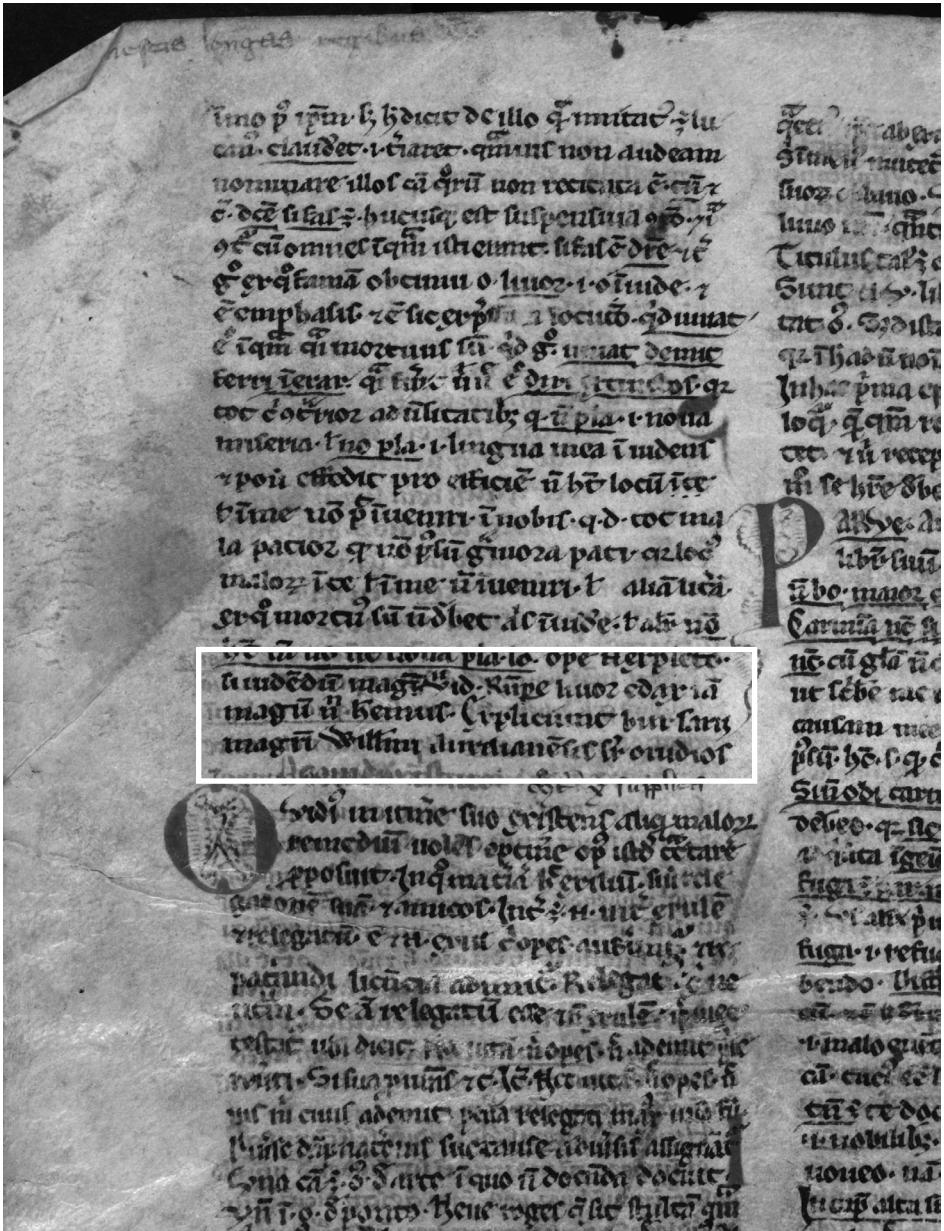


Fig. 7.
 Leipzig, UB, Rep. I. qu. 141va,
 end of the *Bursarii* on OVID, *Ex Ponto*, IV, 16, 23-51 with *Explicit*.

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