CHAPTER 1

Ovid's Response

The fact that Ovid is the author of his exile poetry, and the only extant contemporary writer on his exile, makes him the first respondent to his exile by default. The *Tristia*, *ex Ponto* and to a lesser extent the *Ibis* are full of information about Ovid and Tomis, and in the absence of other accounts from the period these poems are our on-the-ground responses: missives sent back to Rome with Ovid as an experiential authority on the matter.[1] It is not my intention in this chapter to survey every theme and topic of the exile poetry or the details of each letter, nor to list every self-reflexive or 'biofictional' moment which could constitute Ovid's 'response' to his exile.[2] Instead, this chapter explores some of the ways in which Ovid creates a model for responding to his poetry and life in exile and demonstrates how the medieval respondents of this book subsequently took up Ovid's model; the following chapters examine these medieval responses in more depth.

Ovid's model of response rests on two core axes which informed medieval approaches to Ovidian exile. Firstly, in exile Ovid asserts himself as the authority on his texts and life, directing interpretations on how the various addressees of his works (the letters' recipients, Augustus and posterity) ought to read his pre- and post-exilic poetry and life. In exile there is a renewed emphasis on authorial control, and so Ovid rewrites several aspects of his life and works in the light of his exile – and with an eye on his poetic *Nachleben*. His focus on the interpretation of his works in

[1] This chapter primarily focuses on the *Tristia* and *ex Ponto*, which exemplify the model I discuss here. The *Ibis* also provided a model for responding to Ovid in exile (and responding to one's detractors) in the Middle Ages, albeit of a different kind: I discuss this further in Chapter 3. The *Ibis* also attracted scholia from late antiquity onwards: see Chapter 2.

[2] Excellent overviews of the exile poetry include Nagle (1980), Williams (1994, 1996, 2002a, 2002b) and Hardie (2002). On Ovid as an author in the context of authorship in classical Rome, see Badura and Möller (2019: 68–70). Newlands (1997), Hinds (2006), Martelli (2013) and Myers (2014) have examined Ovid as a respondent to his exile. See Goldschmidt (2019: 28–55) on the 'biofictional' Ovid, and this book's Introduction on the tone of the exile poetry.

Rome and in the future sees him insisting on particular and correct meanings, while the wide array of textual revisions upon which he embarked in exile declare an authoritative and final version of his works. Medieval respondents to Ovid's exile accepted Ovid as an *auctor* with *auctoritas* and wrote about Ovidian exile in ways which had been circumscribed by Ovid, filling Lives, glosses and commentaries with details emphasised by Ovid in the exile poetry and emending Ovid's pre-exilic texts with post-exilic additions. Ingrained in Ovid's focus on presenting an authoritative version of the self is his presentation of how to *be* a poet and an exile: what does the figure of the poet, and the exiled poet, look like? The configuration which emerges also informed medieval responses. Ovid's hybrid role as author, reader, commentator, editor and poetic persona, all of which coalesce to articulate the self and the work, created a model by which later medieval poets could express their authorship, whether or not they actually experienced exile.[3]

Secondly and simultaneously, the exile poetry is defined by its ambiguities and equivocations. The texts, life and career presented by Ovid in exile are suffused with lacunae and contradictions, both those which are consciously incorporated by Ovid (such as the repeated mystery of the *error*) and those which are beyond his knowledge or control (such as the circumstances of his death). As such, the exile poetry repeatedly invites reinterpretation even as Ovid stakes a claim to its meaning, giving future respondents a licence to play with, diverge from and reframe what Ovid has set out in these poems. The textual revisions upon which Ovid embarks in exile in fact present the Ovidian text as malleable and open to further adaptations, and Ovid's foregrounding of the processes of writing and editing presents future respondents with a model for forming new revisions to Ovid's work. So medieval responses exploited the possibilities presented by the exile poetry.

In short, Ovid in exile creates a model which is both authoritative and ambiguous, a model which could be followed both in responding to Ovid's exile and for medieval poets fashioning their own poetic selves. Medieval audiences could follow his carefully circumscribed construction of his reception while exploiting the inbuilt *and* unintended ambiguities of the exilic works. Thus Ovid became not only the first respondent to his exile but the model for future responses, too.

[3] 'Becoming the exile' forms the basis for Chapters 4, 5 and 6 in Part II of this book.

How to Interpret Ovidian Exile: A Guide by P. Ovidius Naso

Throughout the exile poetry, Ovid demonstrates that he is keen to control the interpretation of his life and works. He frequently imagines how his texts are being received in Rome, how they might be received by future audiences and above all whether readers are interpreting them *correctly*. Does Augustus really understand the *Ars*? Do audiences in Rome believe the extent of his suffering? Will his poetry be read in the generations to come, and will they react properly, with the appropriate exegesis? Ovid returns over and over again to these matters, modelling what responses to his life and works should look like. And yet, as I have already outlined, these directions for interpretation are not always clear, nor is the exile poetry consistent in Ovid's methods. I have noted in the Introduction that Ovid ensures that his life and works are irrevocably connected in exile, and in Chapter 3 I return to the medieval focus on Ovid's physical and textual *corpora*; but the authority of this connection is thrown into disarray by Ovid's acknowledgement of the depravity of the *carmen* of his works while defending the innocence of his life's *error*. His multiple strategies of appealing to the emperor create ambiguities, and various gaps in his biography or works open up spaces which cannot be so conclusively understood.

Ovid often imagines his texts being read by his contemporaries and in posterity, but bold, sweeping claims about the longevity and interpretation of his poetry are intermingled with speculations, uncertainty and ambiguity. It is clear that he desires not only an audience but also a sympathetic one (despite claiming that 'great poets need no favouring reader', *non opus est magnis placido lectore poetis*, *Pont*. 3.4.9). He therefore directs his texts to seek out those who sigh over his exile (*Tr*. 1.1.27), and often brings up how – and how much – his works are being read in Rome. In the earlier letters of the *Tristia*, Ovid's conception of his immediate audience and reception tends to be more speculative and aspirational, sending his books to be read, to learn whether any still remember him or ask how he is (*Tr*. 1.1.17–18), while the Ovid who remains in exile wonders whether his poetic self can have any legacy at all ('if there are still any there who remembers banished Naso, if my name without me still survives in the city', *siquis adhuc istic meminit Nasonis adempti, | et superest sine me nomen in urbe meum*, *Tr*. 3.10.1–2). In these letters Ovid generally emphasises the sense that his life and works will fade without a recall to Rome, and Augustus is therefore damaging his physical and poetic health by maintaining his punishment. He betrays little sense of the reception of his poems from

exile and rests his reputation on the fading memory of his physical and poetic vitality in Rome.[4]

By the *ex Ponto*, Ovid's later set of letters from exile, Ovid's immediate reception is described more concretely: this reception is fuelled by reports he receives on public opinion in Rome (although it is important to note that no letters to Ovid are extant, or even definitively existed).[5] While Ovid's desire for a favouring audience in the *ex Ponto* is expressed in a characteristically aspirational tone ('suppose it [my work] is read, and – marvellous indeed – suppose it finds favour', *finge legi, quodque est mirabile, finge placere*, *Pont*. 1.5.77), this is mixed with Ovid's reactions to his reception and the interpretation of his works. He praises Salanus, the recipient of *ex Ponto* 2.5, for his kindness towards Ovid's verses, which helped Ovid's poetry and therefore Ovid himself (*Pont*. 2.5.9–10). At other times, he expresses dismay that there are those who do not believe Ovid's reports from exile (*Pont*. 4.10.35), or that he has heard reports of complaints from Rome on the repetitive quality of his poetry (retorting with 'ah, how the critic seizes on but one of many shortcomings!', *o, quam de multis vitium reprehenditur unum!*, *Pont*. 3.9.5).[6] Dealing with individual epistles written over the course of Ovid's exile means that Ovid is responding to an unstable and changing reception.

Ovid's conception of his poetic afterlife is necessarily speculative but nevertheless far more confident than when he broaches the topic of how he is being read by contemporary audiences. His approach oscillates between deferential speculation on whether he will be read at all and blunt, clear assertions that he will assume poetic immortality through his texts. Following on from his statements at the end of his pre-exilic poetry (*vivam* at the conclusion of the *Metamorphoses*, or *legar* and *vivam* ending *Amores* 1), Ovid declares that he will be read: 'when I am dead my fame

[4] As is often the case, there are instances in which Ovid contradicts his aim to demonstrate his fading glory: when presenting his defence in *Tristia* 2, he paints a picture of the continuing popularity of his works and name ('yet my name is great throughout the world; a throng of the cultured are well acquainted with Naso and venture to count him with those whom they do not despise', *grande tamen toto nomen ab orbe fero,* | *turbaque doctorum Nasonem novit et audet* | *non fastiditis adnumerare viris*, *Tr*. 2.118–20).

[5] We can reasonably speculate that Ovid did receive letters from Rome, since he is aware of political and personal developments from the capital (although often late, as Ovid notes at *Pont*. 3.4.51–56; the process of exchanging letters takes a year in *Pont*. 4.11.15–16, and see also *Pont*. 3.4.60). There is no physical evidence of these letters nor of any contemporary responses to Ovid's exile poetry.

[6] Ovid writes that Brutus has reported a complaint from Rome, that Ovid's poetry contains 'nothing ([the detractor] says) but petitioning that I may enjoy a land nearer home, and talk of the throng of enemies encircling me' (*nil nisi me terra fruar ut propiore rogare,* | *et quam sim denso cinctus ab hoste loqui*, *Pont*. 3.9.3–4), directly followed by *Pont*. 3.9.5, just quoted here.

shall survive . . . I will be read' (*me tamen extincto fama superstes erit . . . legar*, *Tr*. 3.7.50, 52).[7] The *sphragis* (an authorial appeal to eternal fame) is a conventional turn, particularly in envoys, and is not unique to Ovid's exile poetry; but these appeals take on both urgency and hesitation in the exilic works, with Ovid reaffirming his claim to posterity multiple times while questioning its possibility.[8] Thus when promising eternal renown via his poetic immortality to Cotta in *ex Ponto* 3.2, a conditional mars the assertiveness of his statement:

> So then will my gratitude for your merit die when my body shall be consumed to ashes – I am wrong: it will outlive the span of my life, *if after all posterity shall remember and read me*. The bloodless body is destined for the mournful tomb; name and honour escape the high-built pyre . . . bright shall be your fame by reason of my writings.[9]

These asides – *if* I will be read, *should* I be remembered – make any claims Ovid has to posterity contingent on any number of intervening factors, whether the imposition of banishment onto his life or unforeseeable conditions in the future. These moments are also conventional in their use of humility tropes, albeit with clear links here to the subservience his life has to Augustus' power, as he both makes clear and fights against.[10] It is in the exile poetry, more than anywhere else in Ovid, that such ambiguity is presented as a fundamental part of Ovid's conception of his reception.

Medieval audiences made good use of these conflicting self-presentations in their responses to Ovid's exile. It is clear that Ovid's poetry has survived beyond the limitations of his physical body: medieval

[7] The last word of the *Metamorphoses* is 'I will live' (*vivam*, *Met*. 15.879), discussed further in Chapter 3. The concluding verses of *Amores* 1 place 'I will be read' (*legar*, *Am*. 1.15.38) and 'I will live' (*vivam*, *Am*. 1.15.42) in emphatic terminal positions, and Ovid declares a familiar sentiment in the final couplet: 'even when the final fires have eaten up my frame, I will live on, and the great part of me will survive my death' (*ergo etiam cum me supremus adederit ignus,* | *vivam, parsque mei multa superstes erit*, *Am*. 1.15.41–42; compare *Met*. 15.875, 'in the better part of me, however', *parte tamen meliore mei*, or the *superstes erit* of *Tr*. 3.7.50, just cited).

[8] See Badura and Möller (2019: 68–69) for Roman precedents to Ovid's *sphragis* at the end of the *Metamorphoses*, Peirano (2014) on the *sphragis* as Roman paratext, and Kyriakidis (2013) on the interplay between the *sphragides* of *Tristia* 1.7 and the *Metamorphoses*.

[9] *Tunc igitur meriti morietur gratia vestri,* | *cum cinis absumpto corpore factus ero.* | *fallor, et illa meae superabit tempora vitae,* | *si tamen a memori posteritate legar.* | *corpora debentur maestis exsanguia bustis: effugiunt structos nomen honorque rogos . . . claraque erit scriptis gloria vestra meis*. *Pont*. 3.2.27–32, 36 (my emphasis).

[10] So in the exile poetry Augustus is paradoxically all-powerful, but without any power over Ovid's genius: Augustus is a 'present and manifest deity' (*praesentem conspicuumque deum*, *Tr*. 2.54), but Ovid also declares that 'my genius is nevertheless my comrade and my joy; over this Caesar could have no right' (*ingenio tamen ipse meo comitorque fruorque:* | *Caesar in hoc potuit iuris habere nihil*, *Tr*. 3.7.47–48).

manuscripts of his works and biographies of his life endured through late antiquity and the early Middle Ages and flourished in the later medieval period. We see Ovid's model especially in the medieval poets who were used to conventional reliance on the humility topos, typical for addresses to real or fictional patrons, but who nevertheless assert some control over their poetic *Nachleben*. And the presence of the exilic Ovid is overwhelmingly clear in those poets who, in real or poeticised circumstances, were banished, forced to flee their home or otherwise marginalised, and therefore were faced with the additional burden of directing their texts to posterity but with more pressing anxieties over the possibility of such a feat (as I discuss in Chapter 4). For Gower and Chaucer especially, the model of Ovidian exile gives the construction of their own legacy extra poetic weight, lending the urgency of exile to two poets contemplating their afterlife who were neither out of favour with their ruler nor exiled.[11]

For Ovid in exile, it is not enough to learn and speculate that he is being and will be read, and so in exile he presents an authoritative interpretation of his entire corpus. The exegesis of his *Ars*, for example, does not lie with any enemy of his who might read the offending poems to Augustus (as in *Tr*. 2.77–78) but with Ovid himself. These directions for reading Ovid's poetry correctly are often framed as a direct address to the poems' targets: a command to *inspice* ('examine'), sometimes followed by *invenies* ('you will find'). 'Examine the title' (*inspice . . . titulum*, *Tr*. 1.1.67), Ovid instructs his book to inform any critics; 'examine what I bring' (*inspice quid portem*, *Tr*. 3.1.9), his exilic book instructs his Roman audience. After each instance, the book must make its content clear: 'I am not love's teacher' (*non sum praeceptor amoris*, *Tr*. 1.1.67), 'you will see nothing here but sadness' (*nihil hic nisi triste videbis*, *Tr*. 3.1.9). The presence of exilic texts of Ovid's in the capital must be justified by an immediate account of its contents, demanding that they be read as moral and even sincere (the phrase I have just cited, for instance, that there is 'nothing here but sadness', demands a surface-level reading of the texts only).

The case for controlling readerly interpretations is most urgent in Augustus' reading of the *Ars*. After commanding Augustus to 'examine the greater work [the *Metamorphoses*]' (*inspice maius opus*, *Tr*. 2.63), the following couplet begins both lines with *invenies* ('you will find praises of your name there, you will find sure pledges of my loyalty', *invenies vestri praeconia nominis illic, | invenies animi pignora certa mei*, *Tr*. 2.65–66). The *Ars* is repositioned as a text which brings glory rather than shame, a text

[11] See Chapters 5 and 6.

intended for Augustus' praise instead of any erotodidacticism. Whether referring to his exile poetry or the works which caused his exile, Ovid follows a similar pattern, instructing the sceptical audience to assess the works for themselves (*inspice*!), before prescribing a description or interpretation of its contents and meaning. Such arguments seemed not to have been successful for Augustus since Ovid remained in Tomis well after the composition of *Tristia* 2, where his defence is most sustained.

Undermining Ovid's insistence on controlling the interpretation of his works is his inconsistency about these interpretations, especially with regards to the criminality of his *carmen* (the *Ars*), one half of the *carmen et error* which led to his exile. Throughout the exile poetry (*Tristia* 2 is a flashpoint), Ovid employs multiple defensive strategies, defending the *Ars* from several different – and contradictory – angles. Although he has accused an enemy of reading the *Ars* to Augustus, he later insists that Augustus must have not heard any of the *Ars* at all; if he had, Ovid now argues, he would not have perceived any kind of crime (*Tr.* 2.237–40). The *Ars* is reframed as explicitly lawful, and Ovid quotes four lines from the *Ars* verbatim (*Ars* 1.31–34, at *Tr.* 2.247–50) as evidence that he did not aim the poems at Roman matrons. This is despite an overwhelming number of moments in the exile poetry when Ovid does admit the crime of the *Ars*.[12] Elsewhere, he argues that although the *Ars* was damaging, it was not intended to be so by its author ('Naso thoughtlessly imparts the art of love and the teacher has the harsh reward of his teaching', *Naso parum prudens, artem dum tradit amandi, | doctrinae pretium triste magister habet*, *Pont.* 2.10.15–16). He returns to total denial in *ex Ponto* 3.3, when Love reassures Ovid that there is no crime in his *Ars* (*Pont.* 3.3.65–70). Medieval commentators such as Conrad of Hirsau, discussed in the Introduction, therefore weighed in on whether Ovid's poetic corpus could be separated into acceptable and unacceptable works (for Conrad, it could), or whether one poem's wrongdoings implicated the author and all his works (as supported by the tellingly titled *Antiovidianus*), and so a myriad of responses emerged, with differing opinions and which viewed differing combinations of Ovid's life and works as acceptable.

A similar balance of authoritative statement and a fuelling of ambiguity is found in Ovid's handling of his *error*. There is little deviation from the party line that Ovid's role was innocent, and he returns to the formulation of 'mistake, not crime' over and over again in the *Tristia*

[12] As, for instance, at *Tr.* 2.10 ('I lay the charge of guilt at my verse', *acceptum refero versibus esse nocens*).

and *ex Ponto*.[13] 'Stupidity is the proper name for my crime', he elaborates, 'if you wish to give the true title to the deed' (*stultitiamque meum crimen debere vocari, | nomina si facto reddere vera velis*, *Tr.* 3.6.35). In stark contrast to Ovid's loose usage of both *exul* and *relegatus* to refer to himself, his terminology for his mistake is unchanging and clear.[14] And yet for all this control over one aspect of the *error* (Ovid's innocence), Ovid deliberately obfuscates another, namely what the *error* actually entailed. While his insistence on his innocence appears more frequently, there are longer elaborations on what this mistake might have been and the fact that he cannot divulge any details. There is the declaration that he saw something that he should not in *Tristia* 2 (*Tr.* 2.103–6), with its comparison to Actaeon, and elsewhere Ovid explains why he deserves imperial mercy:

> [T]he cause of my punishment involves no stain of blood . . . I have said nothing, divulged nothing in speech, let slip no impious words by reason of too much wine: because my unwitting eyes beheld a crime, I am punished, and it is my sin that I possessed eyes.[15]

Ovid is able to both emphatically maintain his innocence and create intrigue by emphasising the severity of the crime which he saw but did not commit. He describes the crime as evil (*Tr.* 3.6.28), and one which might even pose a danger should Ovid reveal its nature ('it is neither brief nor safe to say', *nec breve nec tutum . . . dicere*, *Tr.* 3.6.27). Its speculative quality is enhanced even further by Ovid's repetition of 'whatever it is' in the *ex Ponto* (*quicquid id est*, *Pont.* 1.6.25, 2.9.77, 3.3.73) to refer to the *error*.

The medieval reaction to Ovid's *error* has been well documented in scholarship.[16] Multiple theories abounded, many of which I relate in Chapter 2, ranging from scandalous to unbelievable. What is interesting is medieval commentators' tendency to retain the central mystery which Ovid had emphasised but refused to clarify in the exile poetry. While several contrasting reasons are often proffered, they rarely settle on which reason is the most likely or probable. The habit of offering balanced opinions follows Saint Jerome's conception of commentaries and their

[13] For example: 'a fault, not a crime' (*culpa ne scelus*, *Tr.* 1.3.38); 'error, not a crime' (*errorem . . . non scelus*, *Tr.* 4.10.90); 'whatever that is, though it does not deserve the term "crime", yet it should be called a "fault"' (*quicquid id est, ut non facinus, sic culpa vocanda est*, *Pont.* 1.6.25).

[14] See the Introduction.

[15] *Cum poenae non sit causa cruenta meae . . . non aliquid dixi, velandave lingua locuta est, | lapsave sunt nimio verba profana mero: | inscia quod crimen viderunt lumina, plector, | peccatumque oculos est habuisse meum* (*Tr.* 3.5.44, 47–50).

[16] Most extensively in Thibault (1964).

authors: commentators 'quote the opinions of many individuals and they say: "Some interpret this passage in this sense, others, in another sense"', therefore offering a range of possibilities.[17] In the case of Ovid's exile, this formulation for providing as much information and as many interpretations as possible means that commentators follow Ovid's example by speculating wildly on the *error*, leaving it open for speculation, while not ascribing the blame to Ovid in the majority of the reasons suggested.[18]

Ovid also attempts to present an authoritative version of his life and career in exile. *Tristia* 4.10 is a neat and tightly organised overview of Ovid's life from birth to his current relegation, a *vita auctoris* which was exceptionally popular in populating medieval *accessus* and Lives of Ovid. In addition to *Tristia* 4.10, Ovid provides specific accounts of his appearance – in *Tristia* 4.6, he describes how 'my thin skin scarce covers my bones' (*vix habeo teneum, quae tegat ossa, cutem*, *Tr*. 4.6.42), and in *ex Ponto* 1.4 Ovid describes how he has aged, with white hair, wrinkles on his face and a weakened frame (*Pont*. 1.4.1–3).[19] I discussed Ovid's writing of the self, and its relation to autobiography, in the Introduction, and while we cannot call even these portions of the exile poetry 'autobiography' for its relation to historical truth or accuracy, *Tr*. 4.10 is the definitive version of the truth which Ovid presents *as* truth.[20] Maggie Kilgour notes that:

> Even as the poet complains that his career is over – crushed by the *princeps*'s power – he is subtly putting himself back together and reinventing himself. In exile, he reviews and indeed rewrites his entire career, giving it a unifying shape.[21]

This is achieved, Kilgour argues, by circling back around to elegy, the form of his first poems, and by returning to the themes of the amatory poetry.[22] Ovid forming a type of autobiography as well as a definitive interpretation of his work works towards the construction of authority. Despite the lack of control Ovid had over his exile – even his requests to be relegated

[17] *Multorum sententias replicant, et dicunt: Hunc locum quidam sic edisserunt, alii sic interpretantur*. Jer., *Contra Rufinum* 1.16 (text in Lardet 1983: 44, translation in Hritzu 1965: 79).
[18] There is one outlier which does offer an opinion on which reason is the most likely cause of Ovid's exile, in an *accessus* to the *ex Ponto*: see Chapter 2 and Hexter (1986: 103).
[19] See also *Tr*. 4.8.1–2, where Ovid describes his hair turning white.
[20] On the autobiography of *Tristia* 4.10, see Fredericks (1976) and Fairweather (1987).
[21] Kilgour (2010: 182).
[22] Kilgour (2010: 182), and on Ovid's exilic elegies in the context of his elegies throughout his career, see Harrison (2002: 89–93).

somewhere else were seemingly ignored – he ultimately gives his career 'the illusion of authorial organization'.[23]

There are aspects of Ovid's life, however, which Ovid cannot organise or for which he cannot provide a final interpretation, and it is these aspects to which medieval respondents turned along with other Ovidian exilic mysteries.[24] There is no way for Ovid to authoritatively provide the details of his death, the location or presentation of his tomb or whether he was ever recalled or moved from Tomis at all. Ovid attempts to fill these lacunae himself, perhaps doubly as a record of his wishes and to conclude his autobiographical rendering of the *vita auctoris*. He asks if he is destined to be buried in exile (*Tr.* 3.3.37–38, *Pont.* 3.1.5–6) and asks for his bones to be sent back to Rome (*Tr.* 3.3.65–66, *Pont.* 1.2.108). The centrepiece of the *Tristia* is arguably *Tristia* 3.3, Ovid's letter to his wife which meditates heavily on his death in exile. He begs for his bones to be returned to Rome so that he might be buried in his native soil (*Tr.* 3.3.65–66, 69–70) before designing his own tomb and epitaph (*Tr.* 3.3.70–77).[25] These instructions, however, are clearly only Ovid's speculations and wishes, despite his careful construction of a template for his death: it is self-evident that he will not be able to write after dying.[26] Despite Ovid's careful planning, the inconclusion created a lasting lacuna in Ovid's life (perhaps all the more noticeable for the detail provided in *Tristia* 4.10 and throughout the exile poetry). Chapter 3 examines the notably active strand of Ovidian exilic responses which engaged with the lacunae intentionally and unintentionally left by Ovid, particularly in the (re) construction of his tomb.

Finally, the case of the *Fasti* provides an example of a mystery in which it is not clear whether Ovid is the architect, but a mystery which nevertheless intrigued medieval respondents. Ovid remarks in *Tristia* 2:

> Six books of *Fasti* and as many more have I written [i.e. twelve], each containing its own month. This work did I recently compose, Caesar, under your name, dedicated to you, but my fate has broken it off.[27]

[23] Kilgour (2010: 183). [24] I detail these medieval responses in Chapter 3.
[25] See Chapter 3, and Chapter 6 for Chaucer's rendering of *Tr.* 3.3 in *Troilus and Criseyde*.
[26] The scenario echoes *Her.* 7, which breaks off after Dido's final line: 'Dido killed herself by her own hand' (*ipsa sua Dido concidit usa manu*, *Her.* 7.196). Dido is instructing her sister, and the reader, to write the final couplet on her tomb (*Her.* 7.193–94), mirroring Ovid's own requests at *Tr.* 3.3.72.
[27] *Sex ego Fastorum scripsi totidemque libellos, | cumque suo finem mense volumen habet, | idque tuo nuper scriptum sub nomine, Caesar, | et tibi sacratum sors mea rupit opus*, *Tr.* 2.549–52.

As Carole E. Newlands asks, does Ovid here mean that he wrote six months in six books, or twelve books, of which only six survive?[28] His wording seems deliberately ambiguous. Or, perhaps, is Ovid using his poetry as a political bargaining chip, offering the completion of the *Fasti* as an incentive for the emperor to recall him from exile?[29] Like other mysteries surrounding Ovid's exile, this was an issue which interested medieval commentators: in the margins of a twelfth- or thirteenth-century copy of the *Fasti*, a commentator claimed that the last six books of the *Fasti* were lost in the fourth century, having been burnt by none other than Saint Jerome.[30] In a thirteenth-century *accessus* to the *Fasti*, the commentator similarly links the *Fasti* to Ovid's exile, claiming that Ovid destroyed the poem before leaving Rome, and that he later attempted to write it once more but was interrupted by his death.[31] Here is a mystery presented first by Ovid in the exile poetry and compounded by later interpretations and reinterpretations.

There is a controlling and deliberately prominent authorial hand, then, constructing an authoritative version of Ovid's life and works, which at the same time allows space for further engagement with his exile in the form of speculation and ambiguity. Medieval respondents were provided with the opportunity to follow Ovid's authoritative statements on his texts and life, both of which authenticate the other, *and* to exploit the threads of inconclusion left by Ovid and his death. Several medieval poets drew specifically on Ovid's balance of asserting control over his life and works versus his creation of spaces for equivocation and ambiguity, using this model to furnish their own poetic self-presentations.

Ovid's Revisions

The same model of response is present in Ovid's revisions of his poetic corpus in exile. While the *Tristia*, *ex Ponto* and *Ibis* are Ovid's poems composed solely in exile, Ovid embarked upon a number of revisions to his pre-exilic works.[32] Some are relatively minor interpolations and insertions: three passages of *Fasti* I, for instance, must date from after Ovid's relegation as they refer to events after AD 8.[33] Others are far more extensive, and

[28] Newlands (1995: 4). See also Peeters (1939: 64–65), and on Ovid's references and revisions to the *Fasti* see Martelli (2013: 104–44).

[29] As suggested by Newlands (1995: 4). [30] Peeters (1939: 67). [31] Ghisalberti (1946: 48).

[32] These revisions are in addition to the double *Heroides*, which were likely also written in exile.

[33] These are *Fast.* 1.285–86, 536, 637–50 (see Martelli 2013: 106 n. 4). It is worth noting that the dating of the *Fasti* was questioned in the Middle Ages: in one *accessus* to the *Fasti* (the twelfth-century Munich Clm 19475), the commentator states that some believe that Ovid wrote the text in exile, whereas others hold that he wrote it before his exile (Huygens 1970: 38).

so in exile Ovid reimagines his entire poetic corpus from the perspective of his exile. These processes intersect with his approach to his life, work and legacy which I have described thus far in this chapter, particularly in his suggestions on how to read his pre- and post-exilic poems. In his alterations, additions, modifications, repetitions and edits, Ovid proposes a definitive version of his works, but in the process exposes the mechanisms of making new meaning out of his texts, paving the way for the proliferation of new forms of exilic Ovidiana in the Middle Ages.

It is important to note that Ovid's revisions and edits are not covert operations. His role as an editor is one which he highlights in the exile poetry, often linked to the impossibility of his writing anything of value in Tomis. In exile, Ovid presents an environment where writing, especially in Latin, is difficult (Ovid even turns to composition in the Getic language!), as is the process of editing and correcting his work.[34] While he complains about losing his Latin and poetic skill throughout the *Tristia* and *ex Ponto*, it is especially in the latter collection that he foregrounds the editing process. He muses at length on why he writes at all (*Pont.* 1.5.29–52) and whether to edit his work or not (*Pont.* 1.5.15–18), and later describes erasing some work at a friend's suggestion (*Pont.* 2.4.17–18) before describing the process of trying to write (*Pont.* 2.5.27–30). The letters of *ex Ponto* 1–3 were not conceived of as one poetic unit, but Ovid later collects them as a single collection (as he explains at *Pont.* 3.9.51–54). *Ex Ponto* 3.9, the last of this collection, goes into great detail about editorial choice and action:

> Often when I am desirous of changing some word I leave it, and my strength forsakes my judgment. Often – why should I hesitate to confess to you the truth? – it irks me to emend and endure the burden of long toil.[35]

Revision is an important and prominent aspect of Ovid's exilic experience, and he professes a desire from Tomis (despite his complaints and reluctance) to get the words *right*, to not waste the long journey from Tomis to Rome with unpolished writing, nor to allow uncorrected or unfinished versions of his work to be circulated.

It is the *Metamorphoses* which Ovid reassesses and revises the most from exile. His relegation in AD 8, he insists, has cut short the editorial process,

[34] Ovid admits – or surreptitiously boasts? – that he has written of Caesar's renown in the Getic tongue, bringing his fame to new audiences, at *Pont.* 4.13.17–38, having written at *Tr.* 5.12.58 that he has learned to speak Getic and Sarmatian. As with other claims by Ovid in the exile poetry, the truth of this is in doubt: see especially Williams (1994: 91–99).

[35] *Saepe aliquod verbum cupiens mutare reliqui, | iudicium vires destituuntque meum. | saepe piget (quid enim dubitem tibi vera fateri) | corrigere et longi ferre laboris onus*, *Pont.* 3.9.17–20.

and he laments that the *Metamorphoses* is out in the world unfinished and unpolished:

> And yet they [the verses of the *Metamorphoses*] cannot be read in patience by anybody who does not know that they lack the final hand. That work was taken from me while it was on the anvil, and my writing lacked the last touch of the file.[36]

The sentiment is repeated in *Tristia* 2 ('I sang also, though my attempt lacked the final touch, of bodies changed into new forms', *dictaque sunt nobis, quamvis manus ultima coeptis | defuit, in facies corpora versa novas*, *Tr.* 2.555–56) – and again in *Tristia* 3.14, where the *Metamorphoses* has been released 'unrevised' (*incorrectum*, *Tr.* 3.14.23) and the security of its poetic immortality is thus jeopardised.

Ovid's response to the lack of conclusion in his greatest work is to add an authoritative revision, the 'final hand' or 'final touch' which he often declares it is lacking. *Tristia* 1.7 contains the famous declaration that Ovid burnt the *Metamorphoses* before leaving for exile (*Tr.* 1.7.15–22), either because he hated his Muses or because of the work's unrevised state; indeed, these descriptions of burning unfinished books may have fuelled the medieval speculation which I have already mentioned, that the missing books of the *Fasti* were burnt.[37] Having established the *Metamorphoses*' unfitness for circulation in its current form, Ovid directly appears to the *lector* (the reader, *Tr.* 1.7.32), asking them to place the following six lines in copies of the *Metamorphoses*, 'at the head of the first book' (*in primi fronte libelli*, *Tr.* 1.7.33):

> All you who touch these rolls bereft of their father, to them at least let a place be granted in your city! And your indulgence will be all the greater because these were not published by their master, but were rescued from what might be called his funeral. And so whatever defect this rough poem may have he would have corrected, had it been permitted him.[38]

These lines intersect with several exilic themes: Ovid is the father of his works and they his children (as elsewhere at *Tr.* 3.14.8–16); they stand in for

[36] *Nec tamen illa legi poterunt patienter ab ullo, | nesciet his summam siquis abesse manum. | ablatum mediis opus est incudibis illud, | defuit et scriptis ultima lima meis*, *Tr.* 1.7.27–30.

[37] Ovid refers to burning the *Metamorphoses* again at *Tr.* 4.10.63; he writes that he burns what he composes in exile at *Tr.* 5.12.61–66; and wishes that his *Ars* had been burnt too, at *Tr.* 5.12.67–68. There are, of course, other famous depictions of authorial book burning: Ovid's assertions are likely imitations of Virgil's deathbed wish that his manuscript of the *Aeneid* be burnt (see Krevans 2010).

[38] *Orba parente suo quicumque volumina tangis, | his saltem vestra detur in urbe locus. | quoque magis faveas, haec non sunt edita ab ipso, | sed quasi de domini funere rapta sui. | quicquid in his igitur vitii rude carmen habebit, | emendaturus, si licuisset, erat*, *Tr.* 1.7.35–40.

him in his absence, going where he cannot (a compression of *Tr.* 1.1); his exile is a type of death (*Tr.* 1.4.27–28); and references to the smoothing-over of his poem (a process famously not afforded to the *Tristia*, *Tr.* 1.1.11–12). These six lines are the *Tristia* thus far in miniature, even as they supposedly should be read in the light of the *Metamorphoses*. As K. Sara Myers says of Ovid's self-reception in exile, 'Ovid encourages the reader . . . to reconsider his earlier work in the light of his current exilic state', a process which Ovid enacts throughout the exile poetry but which is articulated compactly here.[39]

Tristia 1.7 and its edits of the *Metamorphoses* have been analysed in detail, but its direction for revision has been linked less often to the material impact of such instructions in the Middle Ages.[40] In ten medieval manuscripts of the *Metamorphoses*, medieval copyists and annotators followed Ovid's directions, adding the six lines of *Tristia* 1.7 to the *Metamorphoses*.[41] Birger Munk Olsen notes that the *Tristia* excerpts sometimes follow and sometimes precede the main text (therefore not always following Ovid's direction to place the verses at the head of the main book).[42] The additions are usually not given a title, adding to the sense that these verses should be subsumed into the *Metamorphoses*: Munk Olsen adds that they often received the subscription *Explicit liber Ouidii metamorphoseon* ('Here ends the book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*'), 'as if it were an integral part of the poem' (*comme s'il faisait partie intégrante du poème*).[43] Indeed, in one manuscript which adds *Tristia* 1.7 to the *Metamorphoses* (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. lat. 11457, saec XII, Germany, fols 2^{v} and 135^{v}), two extracts from the *Fasti* have been added (*Fast.* 4.29–68 and 4.69–80) 'which detail Augustus' lineage and whose connection with the *Metamorphoses* is less clear' (*qui exposent la lignée d'Auguste et dont le rapport avec les Métamorphoses est moins évident*).[44] While the connection of these passages to the *Metamorphoses* is not clear, their relevance to the *Tristia* is: they glorify Augustus in just the way that the *Tristia* endeavours to repeatedly praise him, suggesting that the *Tristia* addition casts a reading of the entire work in the context of Ovid's exile. In the *Tristia* 1.7 revision, therefore, we see a material example – and a material impact – of Ovid staking an authoritative claim to his poetry, its structure and intertextuality, a major

[39] Myers (2014: 8). [40] See Kyriakidis (2013) on the *Metamorphoses* and *Tristia* 1.7.
[41] Munk Olsen (2014: 342) lists the ten medieval manuscripts of the *Metamorphoses* and their additions from *Tristia* 1.7: almost all are from Italy, and all are copied from the end of the eleventh century onwards.
[42] Munk Olsen (2014: 342). [43] Munk Olsen (2014: 342). [44] Munk Olsen (2014: 342).

reinterpretation of one work in the light of the exilic text, and medieval respondents following his model of response.

This major revision of the *Metamorphoses*, and the continual declaration that the *Metamorphoses* are unfinished, had a broader impact on responses to Ovid in the Middle Ages (both in their treatment of Ovidian exile and in the wider Ovidian landscape). Implicit in Ovid's revision is a licence – or even a mandate – to change Ovid's works, alongside Ovid's instructions for how segments of his poetry in one context could be transplanted into another. So Ovid appeared, fragmented, in medieval sermons, in poems on virtue and vice and in a wide variety of new forms and in new combinations.[45] Viewed from another perspective, the culture of excerption, compilation and newly formed versions of classical authority which emerged around the twelfth century was particularly well-suited to the poetry of Ovid, who in exile had provided templates and a kind of authorial permission for forming his works in precisely those kinds of modes.

Another instance of Ovidian revision, less conspicuous than the explicit directions in *Tristia* 1.7 but more persistent across Ovid's exile poetry, is in his repetitions and modifications of his work. Ovid is well known for his intertextuality: he is 'unique in ancient literature', Alessandro Barchiesi and Philip Hardie write, 'for the sheer number and quasi-systematic regularity of autographic situations', meaning the number of times that Ovid either signs his name in his works or refers to another Ovidian text.[46] The exile poetry is full of linguistic autoreferences to the pre-exilic poetry, prompting the audience to simultaneously reconsider his pre-exilic work in the light of his relegation (as Myers argues) and to encourage reading the exile poetry as a sorrowful inversion of his earlier work.[47] These are often not subtle revisions: Ovid's famous declaration that 'I am the teacher of love' (*ego sum praeceptor amoris*, *Ars am.* 1.17), a phrase which prompted Ovidian fame as the *praeceptor amoris* in the Middle Ages, is revised in the *Tristia* as 'I am *not* the teacher of love' (*non sum praeceptor amoris*, *Tr.* 1.1.67, my emphasis).[48] The claim in the *Tristia* seems to demarcate a total

[45] On Ovid in medieval sermons, see Wenzel (2011), and on Ovid in poems on virtue and vice, see Menmuir (2023: 77–78).

[46] Barchiesi and Hardie (2010: 59), adding that Ovid had 'the historical privilege of being next in line and the first to react to what had been the boom in poetic self-reference and auto(bio)graphy in the times of Catullus, Virgil, Propertius and Horace' (Barchiesi and Hardie 2010: 59).

[47] Myers (2014). Nagle (1980: 14) argues for Ovidian continuity between his pre- and post-exilic works, and further demonstrates that much of the exilic vocabulary used by Ovid is in fact an erotic elegiac vocabulary which Ovid has adapted to his circumstances (Nagle 1980: 61–68, and see also Claassen 1999b).

[48] Compare, too, *Tr.* 3.11.25: 'I am not what I was' (*non sum ego qui fueram*).

shift from the *Ars*: the phrase is voiced by the book of the *Tristia*, after telling the reader to 'examine the title' (*inspice . . . titulum*, *Tr.* 1.1.67), as though physically gesturing to the cover to prove that 'Ars amatoria' is not on the cover. The linguistic echoing, on the other hand, places the *Tristia* and the exilic corpus in an Ovidian lineage, simultaneously reminding the reader of the *Ars* and asserting its status as something new.

A similar revision of meaning by way of repetition is Ovid's reuse of the opening couplet of the *Ars*, with its opening word *siquis* and the focus on his target audience. The *Ars* opens with the unabashed 'if anyone among this people does not know the art of loving, let him read my poem, and having read be skilled in love' (*siquis in hoc artem populo non novit amandi,* | *hoc legat et lecto carmine doctus amet*, *Ars* 1.1–2). Compare the corresponding exhortation at the commencement of the *Tristia*:

> If there is anyone there, as is natural in so great a crowd [*siquis, ut in populo*], who still remembers me, if there is anyone [*siquis*] who might by chance ask how I fare, you are to say that I live, yet not in health and happiness.[49]

The repetition and inversion of the *Ars* are compounded by two more repetitions of *siquis erit* ('if there is anybody', *Tr.* 1.1.65, 1.1.95) in the first poem of the *Tristia*. The relationship between Ovid and the *populus* is so fragile in exile that when the phrase is repeated in *ex Ponto* 4.5, Ovid encourages his works to lie: 'if any, as may happen in the crowd, asks who you are and whence you come, beguile his ear with any name you will' (*siquis, ut in populo, qui sitis et unde requiret,* | *nomina decepta quaelibet aure ferat*', *Pont.* 4.5.11–12). Ovid's revisions are functionally similar here to his additions to the opening of the *Metamorphoses* from exile: the *Ars*, from its beginning, is embedded with exilic ramifications, ensuring that the medieval respondents who followed understood the amatory Ovid in tandem with the exilic.

We can read these textual repetitions as Ovid's way of tying himself back to Rome, yoking his new and unknown texts to the fame – and infamy – of his previous works. We can also perceive the impact of continuous revisions of meaning on future audiences who arrived upon Ovid's corpus as a whole, like those readers with access to omnibus Ovids from the twelfth century onwards. There are several other examples of such repetitions and modifications, from across the fissure in Ovid's career pre- and post-exile, and even from his first poems in Tomis to the last: the two examples I have

[49] *Siquis, ut in populo, nostri non inmemor illic,* | *siquis, qui, quid agam, forte requirat, erit,* | *vivere me dices, salvum tamen esse negabis . . .*, *Tr.* 1.1.17–19.

given are individual examples which are representative of Ovid's self-referencing throughout the exile poetry.[50] I would like to emphasise the cumulative effect of such revisions for the medieval respondents to whom I turn in the remaining chapters of this book. In these repetitions and emendations, Ovid redefines his poetry: he asserts micro-influences over particular lines of his poetry and insists that they be reinterpreted as part of a teleological path to his relegation. This model, as with the other examples I have provided in this chapter, opens Ovid's poetry up for further reinterpretations, providing a variety of ways that Ovid's poetry could be redefined in the face of entirely new and unexpected circumstances (for Ovid, his relegation; for the Middle Ages, Christianity in particular). His metatextual comments on his editorial process moreover offer some kind of template for edits and revisions. For medieval respondents, following Ovid's model could even mean reinterpreting his words in ways which he did not originally mean.

The Severity of Exile

The two broad categories with which I have organised this chapter – Ovid's approaches to interpreting his life, texts and career and his textual revisions – characterise a key model where Ovid stakes a claim to authority but embeds these claims with ambiguities or equivocations, or opens up these aspects to extra-authorial revisions and interpretations. The dynamics of this model are visible across medieval responses, meaning that the medieval Ovid is authoritative but also, crucially, malleable, giving rise to the multiple Ovids which permeate the Middle Ages.

At the same time, it is not the case that every exilic utterance of Ovid's was imbued with a contradiction, or that medieval respondents acknowledged Ovid's authority and undermined it in every instance of their reception of Ovidian exile. The proliferation and variety of medieval responses to Ovid's exile mean that responses include these mechanisms in diverse arrangements. I therefore end this chapter with a fundamental thread of Ovid's exile which was taken up relatively straightforwardly by

[50] One example of modified lines within the exilic corpus is 'there is scarcely space upon me now for a new wound' (*vixque habet in nobis iam nova plaga locum*, *Pont*. 2.7.42) to 'there is no space on me now for a new wound' (*non habet in nobis iam nova plaga locum*, *Pont*. 4.16.52), where the sentiment intensifies from the earlier instance to the latter. This line is notable for appearing in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, with a medieval manuscript citing Ovid in the margins of the relevant section: see Chapter 6.

medieval respondents despite the presence of distortions and exaggerations: Ovid's description of Tomis and its effect on his mind and body.

Ovid continuously draws attention to the severity of his fate in the *Tristia* and *ex Ponto*. He nearly dies in storms at sea in his journey to Tomis (throughout *Tristia* 1), and the image of Ovid the *naufragus* recurs frequently throughout the exile poems.[51] Tomis is bitterly cold (*Tr.* 3.10.25–50), the land is barren (*Pont.* 3.8.13–16) and Ovid suffers from the proximity of his Getan and Sarmatian neighbours who are often at war (*Tr.* 4.4.59) – even fearing that he will be caught in the crossfire of Scythian arrows (*Pont.* 4.9.81–83).[52] Ovid declares that he is losing his skills in Latin (*Tr.* 5.7.58) and the ability to compose poetry (*Tr.* 5.12.21–22). The land's materials and its people's skills are primitive (the animals produce coarse clothing material, and Tomitian women have not learned to weave, *Pont.* 3.8.9–12). Ovid loathes Tomis:

> I care not whither I am moved from such a land, because any land will please me better than this upon which I look . . . The tilled field feels less hate for the grass, the swallow for the cold, than Naso hates the region near the war-loving Getae.[53]

The picture painted by Ovid in these poems is an evocative view of the land of an exile and the exile's response to being stuck there. Moreover, Ovid periodically reminds his audience that he is telling the truth and providing an accurate account of his exile, despite the inconceivability of the extent of his suffering. 'I may scarce hope for credence', he declares in *Tristia* 3, 'but since there is no reward for a falsehood, the witness ought to be believed' (*vix equidem credar, sed, cum sint praemia falsi | nulla, ratam debet testis habere fidem*, *Tr.* 3.10.35–36), followed by a list of the extreme weather which he has witnessed and experienced in Tomis (*Tr.* 3.10.37–50). In the *ex Ponto*, he welcomes Vestalis' visit to Pontus so that another person will be able to corroborate his reports (*Pont.* 4.7.1–4). These reports throughout the exile poetry develop Ovid's account of his exile as an unarguable account of his suffering.

And yet we know that Ovid was not telling the unaltered truth, least of all through the medium of poetry.[54] The trope of a hero experiencing

[51] Exemplified in *Pont.* 2.2.126: 'I am a shipwrecked man who fears every sea' (*timeo naufragus omne fretum*).

[52] Ovid describes what the inhabitants of Tomis are like in more detail at *Tr.* 5.7.9–24.

[53] *Nulla mihi cura est, terra quo muter ab ista, | hac quia, quam video, gratior omnis erit . . . gramina cultus ager, frigus minus odit hirundo, | proxima Marticolis quam loca Naso Getis*, *Pont.* 4.14.7–8, 13–14.

[54] See the Introduction for sincerity and truth in the exile poetry, and further in McGowan (2009: 17–36).

a storm at sea is so well-worn as to be immediately recognisable in *Tristia* 1.[55] Ovid's Latin does not significantly decline in exile, and there is not the decline in artistry of which he often complains, as Gareth D. Williams has demonstrated.[56] He even learns to compose poetry in the Getic tongue (a fact which brings him shame but nevertheless might be read with a touch of false humility, *Pont.* 4.13.17–38), translating Augustus' glory for new audiences. Tomis was cultured: as Thomas N. Habinek notes, it boasted a gymnasium and civic building and was the 'religious and civic center of the five Greek city-states' of the surrounding area.[57] The tribes which Ovid calls his neighbours were in fact many miles away.[58] The distortions of the realities of exile are unsurprising given Ovid's desperation to garner an imperial pardon: we might read these exaggerations alongside moments in which Ovid instructs his addressees on how to appeal to Augustus and his circle (such as coaching his wife to weep before Livia to incite sympathy, at *Pont.* 3.1.149–50), or the elevation of his exilic persona to the stuff of myth.

Medieval responses to Ovid's depictions of Tomis and the debilitating effects of his surroundings are perhaps the most straightforward in following Ovid's authority. In fact, the responses demonstrate little interest in fact-checking his exaggerations. On the contrary: the memorable and vivid quality of Ovid's suffering proved excellent material for describing the plight of an exile and were transplanted into compilations on virtues and vices, or on states of being. So the section of *ex Ponto* 3.8 describing the barrenness of Tomis appears in a *florilegium* in London, British Library, MS Burney 357 (saec. XII), a manuscript I discuss in more detail in Chapter 2. Poets wishing to emphasise their fate found in Ovid ready-made articulations of their suffering in grand terms.[59] Medieval *accessus* moreover deviate very little in their understanding of Ovid's intention in the *Tristia* and *ex Ponto*, which is inevitably to secure a return to Rome by appealing to the emperor and to his friends and family to intercede on his behalf. While Ovidian equivocation and ambiguity is at the heart of his exile poetry, therefore, it does not mean that medieval respondents uniformly took up the charge to drastically reimagine his works.

I have attempted, in this chapter, to demonstrate that Ovid is the starting point for his own reception and for medieval responses to Ovid's

[55] Perhaps the most famous example for both medieval and modern readers is the storm at sea in book 1 of Virgil's *Aeneid*.
[56] Williams (2002b: 359), and on Ovid exaggerating his hardships in general, see Williams (2002a: 235).
[57] Habinek (1998: 158, with further references at 219 n. 15). [58] See Videau-Delibes (1991: 164).
[59] In Chapter 4, for instance, I note the example of several poets who describe their own exile or misfortune in language reminiscent of Ovid's exile.

exile. Ovid is acutely aware of his *Nachleben*, particularly the possibility of poetic immortality; in the words of Nancy Freeman Regalado (referring to the medieval construction of the modern reader), 'We can see them as they peer ahead to see us, their future readers, anticipating the voyage of their text through time toward us, seeking to manage, to construct our reading'.[60] So too can we see the ways in which Ovid peers ahead to posterity while addressing his immediate circumstances on another front, curating the image of a respondent which incorporated the roles of poet, commentator, editor and persona. The model I have outlined sees Ovid constructing an authoritative hold over his life and works but nevertheless forming a response which allowed for ambiguities that could be embedded into that authority. This double model allowed medieval respondents great freedom in their reinterpretations of Ovid's exile and presented a way to incorporate both equivocation and authority into their own poetic self-presentation. In the following chapters, I explore the textual and bodily forms of Ovid (in Chapters 2 and 3, respectively) which circulated in the Middle Ages, drawing largely on this Ovidian model, and in the second half of this book, the model's opportunities for a literary mode of self-fashioning come to the fore.

[60] Regalado (1999: 84).