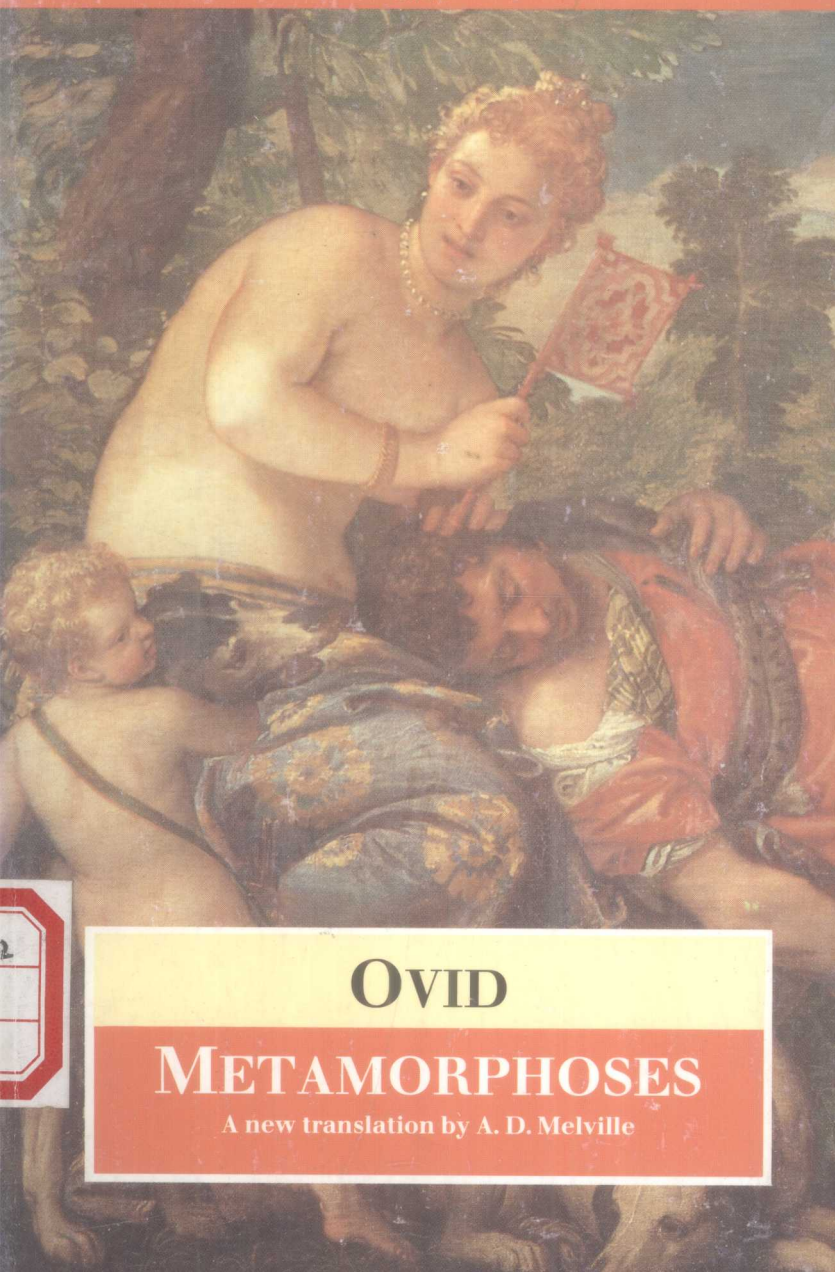


WORLD'S CLASSICS



OVID

METAMORPHOSES

A new translation by A. D. Melville

THE WORLD'S CLASSICS

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Translated by
A. D. MELVILLE

With an Introduction and Notes by
E. J. KENNEY

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HISTORICAL SKETCH

OVID (Publius Ovidius Naso) was born on 20 March 43 BC at Sulmo (now Sulmona) in the Abruzzi. The year of his birth was long remembered as that in which both consuls fell fighting Antony at Mutina, leaving Octavian (the future Augustus) in a position of strength which he exploited to become Triumvir and eventually sole ruler of the Roman world. In view of Ovid's fate at his hands it is not surprising that in the poem which is our chief source for his life (*Tristia* iv. 10) he lays some stress on these circumstances—more especially as there was a contemporary report that the deaths of both consuls had in fact been compassed by Octavian (Tacitus, *Annals* i. 10. 2, Suetonius, *Augustus* 11). By the time that Ovid came to manhood the combined forces of Antony and Cleopatra had been routed at Actium (31 BC) and the Roman Republic had been transformed into an (ostensibly) benevolent despotism.

Ovid's family was prosperous, and he was sent to Rome to study under the leading teachers of the day. For Roman boys education then and for centuries to come was verbal, literary and rhetorical, its principal aim the production of fluent and convincing extempore speakers. The reminiscences of the elder Seneca (*Controversies* ii. 2. 8–12, ix. 5. 17) illustrate vividly the effects of this kind of training on Ovid, in whom it encouraged and developed an obviously innate delight in words, their metrical arrangement and artistic manipulation. Possibly the encouragement went too far: Quintilian thought that he would have been a better poet 'if he had controlled his genius rather than letting it control him' (*Institutio Oratoria* x. 1. 98). His education was rounded off in the manner usual for the governing class, by the then equivalent of the Grand Tour through Greek lands. There followed on his return to Rome some minor judicial posts, but he soon decided (in spite of his father's discouragement) that his true vocation was poetry and abandoned his official career to dedicate himself to literature.

His earliest work, the *Amores* (Loves) appeared in its original (five-book) form when he was a very young man, perhaps as early as c.25 BC. There followed a second edition in three books; the *Heroides* (Letters of Heroines); the *Ars Amatoria* (Art of

Love) i-ii and (later) iii; the *Remedia Amoris* (Remedies of Love), all extant; and the lost tragedy *Medea*. There is great uncertainty as to the chronology and sequence of these works, but even supposing a more even spread of activity than has been generally assumed, extending possibly from c.15 BC to AD 2, the *terminus post quem non* of the *Remedia*, this is an extraordinary feat of literary productivity.

From about AD 1 onwards Ovid was simultaneously working on the *Metamorphoses* and the *Fasti* (Calendar), a long elegiac poem in twelve books on Roman festivals and cults, an aetiological work inspired by Callimachus' *Aetia* (see Introduction, p. xxii). This was half completed and the *Metamorphoses* (so, in spite of Ovid's disclaimers, we must believe) substantially ready for publication, when disaster struck. In AD 8 Ovid, who was by then, since the deaths of Virgil and Horace, indisputably the premier poet of Rome, was suddenly sent into exile at Tomis (now Constanța in Romania) on the Black Sea. The sentence was decided and pronounced personally by Augustus, the two causes of offence being *carmen*, a poem, the *Ars Amatoria*, and *error*, an unspecified indiscretion. The mystery surrounding this episode has never been cleared up; though Ovid in his exile poetry is sometimes surprisingly bold in pleading his case, and many of his contemporaries must have been in the secret, he nowhere allows a clear inference as to the nature of the *error*. The picture that emerges from such hints as he does give is that of involuntary complicity in some scandal, in which politics and morals were interlocked, affecting the Imperial house and Augustus in particular.

Of the poetry written by Ovid at Tomis the five books of *Tristia* (Sorrows) and the four of *Epistulae ex Ponto* (Letters from Pontus) were devoted to pleading his case, ostensibly before the Emperor, really before the bar of public opinion, to which he can be seen repeatedly appealing over Augustus' head. Tone and theme are constantly varied, but central to the whole campaign is Ovid's consciousness of his poetic vocation and his confidence in his identity as a poet. The second book of the *Tristia*, a single long elegy, is a witty and at times astonishingly outspoken defence of himself and his poetry. Standing apart from these works is the *Ibis*, a curse invoking many dire fates culled from Greek myth on an unidentified (and probably fictitious) enemy; its purpose was

in all likelihood to uphold his reputation as a learned poet and so his claims to special consideration by the public and by posterity. Public and private pleading alike proved powerless to appease Augustus or Tiberius, who succeeded him in AD 14, and Ovid spent the rest of his life at Tomis, dying there in AD 17.

He was three times married, and had one daughter.

INTRODUCTION

The elation of comedy is saying hooray for life in its own terms, however incongruous and absurd. *Donald Davie*

I

WHEN the present writer was at school, the proposition that Ovid was a better poet than Virgil, or even that the *Metamorphoses* was fit to stand alongside the *Aeneid*, would not have been generally entertained. It had not always been so. In 1873 James Henry, the great commentator, who devoted his life (to say nothing of the life of his daughter Katharine) to the explication of the *Aeneid*, could write of Ovid that he was 'a more natural, more genial, more cordial, more imaginative, more playful poet . . . than [Virgil] or any other Latin poet'. Few more comprehensive tributes have come his way. In 1799 Gilbert Wakefield, writing to Charles James Fox from Dorchester gaol (where he was undergoing imprisonment for seditious libel), called Ovid 'to my fancy, the first Poet of all Antiquity'; and half a century earlier than that the young Edward Gibbon had 'derived more pleasure from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*' than from the *Aeneid*. The word 'pleasure', of course, gives the game away: in Gibbon's day and for long afterwards English boys were not sent to school to enjoy themselves, and the *Metamorphoses* is not in any obvious sense edifying literature. It is only in recent years that critics, having conceded that the poem is, after all, entertaining, have also turned to enquire seriously what, if anything, it is about. Some of the obstacles encountered by such an enquiry are of Ovid's making, for his love of teasing is almost Nabokovian.

The quality in which Wakefield thought that 'no poet of antiquity seems capable of supporting the contest with Ovid' was *invention*. This is a technical term of classical rhetoric meaning, not the faculty of making things up, but that of finding them: the art of discovering and combining the materials from which an argument could most effectively be constructed. This faculty Wakefield bracketed with 'copiousness of thought' as the 'first endowment' of a poet, in which he judged Ovid pre-eminent. The resources of material at Ovid's disposal for this undertaking were immense—the whole field of Greek and (what

there was of it) Roman myth and legend, so far as it was available in written form—and he exploited them with a combination, truly professional, of profusion and economy. Economy is apparent from the beginning in the apportionment of material, where it might suit either poem, between the *Metamorphoses* and the *Fasti*;¹ profusion in the repeated 'throw-away' references to stories or variant versions which for one reason or another he did not choose to include or to tell in full.² A hint of how much Ovid must have read only to discard for the purposes immediately in hand is offered by his *Ibis*. This poem, his swan-song as a learned poet, was written in the early years of his exile, we may guess in order to demonstrate to his enemies and detractors that his powers were not exhausted. Tomis had no libraries, and Ovid had brought few books with him into exile. The mythological learning of *Ibis*, as extensive as it is obscure, is a sample of what was surplus in his reading to the requirements of the two long poems, material which at the time of his sudden banishment was in his notebooks or his head. A lesser artist might have been overwhelmed by this *embarras de richesses*. Ovid's 'copiousness of thought' was equal to the copiousness of his materials and to the scale of his undertaking. The *Metamorphoses* is without doubt the most witty and ingenious book that has come down to us from the ancient world.

II

In one sense there is no mystery as to what the *Metamorphoses* is 'about', because the author tells us: it is about metamorphosis, transformation, change. So much emerges from the brief Proem (i. 1-4). Yet the very brevity and allusiveness of that introduction should put us on our guard. There is one striking ambiguity in Ovid's Latin with which no translator can be expected to cope. The first four words of the poem, *In noua fert animus*, can and indeed must be read as an autonomous statement as well as part of the whole sentence: 'My inspiration carries (me) on to new things'. The fourth verse underlines this pronouncement by

¹ Occasionally a story figures in both poems, e.g. Callisto (ii. 401-530, *Fasti* ii. 155-92), Proserpine (v. 332-571, *Fasti* iv. 417-620); see on the latter the Explanatory Notes, v. 341-571. Subsequent references to the Explanatory Notes are in the form 'v. 341-571 n.'

² See, e.g., ii. 589-90 n., iv. 55-168 n., 276 n., vii. 362 n., 465 n., viii. 261 n., x. 65-71 n., 729 n., xiii. 715 n., 717 n.

declaring a paradox: *ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen*, 'Bring down to my own times a continuous song'. This is to be a 'continuous' poem in the innocuous chronological sense, but *perpetuum*, in this context, must also be read in the technical literary sense as connoting orthodox epic.³ That, however, contradicts the further implication of *deducite*, that the poem, when 'brought down', that is finished, will be a *deductum carmen* in another sense, the 'fine-spun', unpretending—in a word, *unepic*—kind of poetry written by Callimachus, the Alexandrian scholar-poet to whom Catullus and subsequent Latin poets had, with varying degrees of explicitness, pledged allegiance. What sort of a poem is this which thus, obliquely and by way of verbal paradox, apparently subscribes to two incompatible poetics, will remain to be seen. At least the lines serve as a warning not to take the poet too literally;⁴ and after all it was Callimachus himself who had remarked that it is the poet's *métier* to deceive.

There was nothing new in the idea that the universe was in a state of continual flux. This was the teaching of Heraclitus, and Ovid's admired Lucretius, following in the steps of his master Epicurus, had proclaimed that change was inseparable from mortality:

nam quodcumque suis mutatum finibus exit,
continuo hoc mors est illius quod fuit ante.

'For if anything is so transformed as to overstep its own limits, this means the immediate death of what it was before.'⁵

Where Ovid parted company from Lucretius was in the application of this doctrine to the human soul. This, it may be suggested, is the point of a passage of the *Metamorphoses* that has puzzled some critics and bored others, but which delighted Dryden and C. J. Fox, who 'always considered it as the finest part of the whole poem', the great speech of Pythagoras (xv. 75-478). What is formally a long digression is accommodated to the argument of the poem with great skill, prophetically bridging the long interval

³ For this sense of *perpetuus* compare Horace, *Odes* i. 7. 6 and the parallel passages quoted by Nisbet and Hubbard in their commentary (Oxford, 1970).

⁴ Or rather not according to the obvious literal sense of his words; what he is really getting at may emerge, as here, by taking him very literally indeed. The same is true of Lucretius, as Ovid cannot fail to have noticed.

⁵ Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura* i. 670-1; the lines recur at i. 792-3, ii. 753-4, iii. 519-20. Compare iii. 756 *quod mutatur enim dissoluitur, interit ergo*, 'whatever changes is disintegrated and therefore destroyed'.

between Numa and Augustus and achieving a climax (ll. 448-9) on a theme that informs and dominates the whole book: apotheosis, divinization, the supreme change to which human beings can aspire. The speech turns on the premiss that in all the constantly changing universe one thing remains unchanged, *anima*, the soul:

our souls

Are still the same for ever, but adopt
 In their migrations ever-varying forms . . .
 We too ourselves, who of this world are part,
 Not only flesh and blood, but pilgrim souls . . .
 (xv. 171-2, 456-7)

All else must eventually yield to the assaults of time:

Time, the devourer, and the jealous years
 With long corruption ruin all the world
 And waste all things in slow mortality.
 (xv. 234-6)

At the very end of the poem, using words clearly meant to recall these lines,⁶ Ovid exempts his own work from this general law:

Now stands my task accomplished, such a work
 As not the wrath of Jove, nor fire nor sword
 Nor the devouring ages can destroy.
 (xv. 871-2)

Horace (*Odes* iii. 30. 6-9) and Virgil (*Aeneid* ix. 446-9) expected to be read as long as the power of Rome endured. By making Pythagoras lead up to Rome as the last of a series of great powers that have in their turn declined and fallen (xv. 420 ff.), Ovid allows the reader to infer that in the end Rome too must bow to the inexorable law of change. Only his poetry, identified with his soul, the 'better part' of himself, will live on to eternity, *per omnia saecula*:

Let, when it will, that day, that has no claim
 But to my mortal body, end the span
 Of my uncertain years. Yet I'll be borne,
 The finer part of me, above the stars,
 Immortal, and my name shall never die.

⁶ xv. 234 *tempus edax rerum tuque inuidiosa uetustas*; cf. 872 *nec poterit ferrum nec edax abolere uetustas*.

Wherever through the lands beneath her sway
 The might of Rome extends, my words shall be
 Upon the lips of men. If truth at all
 Is stablished by poetic prophecy,
 My fame shall live to all eternity.

(xv. 873-9)

The lines are richly ambiguous. In the words 'I'll be borne . . . above the stars, / Immortal' we may discern a hint of the Pythagorean doctrine that a soul 'might ultimately shake off the body altogether . . . and attain the final bliss of losing itself in the universal, eternal and divine soul to which by its own nature it belonged'.⁷ The last word of the poem, however, is *uiuam*, 'I shall live', suggesting a more personal mode of survival through poetry. It is idle to ask what Ovid 'believed'. He was neither a devotee nor a philosopher, but a poet who, when it suited him to do so, used the language and the ideas of religion or philosophy to lend authority to his fixed convictions. These flowed from his instinctive understanding of his own nature and his own gifts. He was a poet because that was what he was called to be. In his famous 'autobiography' he records how his father had tried to cure him of his obsession with poetry and what came of it:

motus eram dictis totoque Helicone relicto
 scribere temptabam uerba soluta modis.
 sponte sua carmen numeros ueniebat ad aptos,
 et quod temptabam scribere uersus erat.

'Obediently I threw Helicon over and tried to write prose. Each time a poem would come willy-nilly in correct metre, and all my attempts at prose were verse.'
 (Tristia iv. 10. 23-6)

Poetry was his life, till death—and after.

III

The *Metamorphoses* conforms to the conventional pattern of classical epic in so far as it is a long poem in hexameters of high literary pretensions. That is as far as conformity extends. Aristotle did not so much lay it down as take it for granted that epic, like

⁷ W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, i (Cambridge 1962), 202-3.

tragedy, should be serious; the *Metamorphoses*, if it is anything, is high comedy. Unity too he took as read; the *Metamorphoses* is *ex hypothesi* and of set purpose episodic. More fundamentally still, it is of its nature anti-generic. At i. 452 the theme of love makes the first of its many appearances, and in introducing it Ovid makes a pointed reference to his own poetic début as a love-elegist: Apollo's rebuke to Cupid for not minding his own business echoes the poet's own reproach on the same grounds in the opening elegy of the *Amores*.⁸ This is an implicit assertion of the poet's freedom (in defiance, if need be, of the normal demarcations set forth in the *Remedia Amoris* 371 ff.) to handle each theme in the style which it seemed to him to demand: elegiac, pastoral, tragic—or indeed, as in the battles of Books V and XII, epic itself. The *perpetuum carmen* turns out to be, among other things, an anthology of genres.

In time and space the scope of the *Metamorphoses* is comprehensive, being nothing less than universal history from the Creation to the present. That at least is its ostensible scope; its real subject is the microcosm of human psychology. People, and how they react under stress, were what interested Ovid. That had been the theme of his earlier poetry, especially of the lost tragedy *Medea* and the *Heroides* (Letters of Heroines). The *Metamorphoses* does not, like the *Aeneid* or the *Pharsalia* or the *Thebaid* (in their different ways), state a case; rather it asks questions, exploring and analysing for the most part without comment or commitment. Ovid depicts a universe in which human beings, and more often than not the gods who are supposed to be in charge, are at the mercy of blind or arbitrary or cruel, and always irresistible, forces. E. M. Forster might have had the *Metamorphoses* in mind when he wrote to Siegfried Sassoon that 'the devil who rules this planet has contrived that those who are powerless shall suffer'. In this dangerous and uncertain world the happy ending is the exception (iv. 575 n.). Repeatedly the emphasis is on deception and violence; the reader soon comes to realize that the description of an idyllic landscape is a prelude to rape or bloodshed (iii. 407 n., etc.). Nothing is ever quite what it seems; nobody's identity is ever wholly secure.

⁸ i. 456; cf. *Amores* i. 1. 5. I am obliged to Dr S. E. Hinds for pointing out to me the implications of this and other parallels between the two passages. For Ovid's penchant for 'self-reference' in the *Metamorphoses* see below, pp. xxvii-xxviii.

IV

512 303
223

The true Midas is the poet, the true golden touch his transforming art. Ovid's achievement in the *Metamorphoses* is to transmute what ought to be a profoundly depressing vision of existence into a cosmic comedy of manners. To read him is to be perpetually reminded of Horace Walpole's favourite saying, that life is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those that feel. One attitude is as philosophical as the other, and neither calls for apology. This Ovidian parody or burlesque of the actual world indeed exploits the incredible and the absurd to a degree that some have found inordinate. Ovid himself had no doubt about poet's licence:

exit in immensum fecunda licentia uatum,
obligat historica nec sua uerba fide.

'The poet's fruitful freedom knows no bounds and takes no oath to tell it as it happened.'

(*Amores* iii. 12. 41-2)

Yet under the wild fantasy and the vast exaggerations, the black humour and the occasional cruelty, Ovid's is a serious way of looking at the world, or at least a way that can be taken seriously. The delicate interplay of humour and pathos in stories such as those of Io or Callisto or Ceyx and Alcyone; the ambivalent treatment of Hercules; the even-handedness with which the balance of sympathy is held between Ajax and Ulysses: these and many other ambiguities reflect the detachment of a mind fascinated by the vicissitudes, paradoxes, and contrarities of existence. These are visible and comprehensible phenomena, explicable on the hypothesis of an endless and inexorable flux (having much in common, though the point emerges only by implication, with Epicurean atomism) in created things. The quest for a deeper underlying meaning, if it exists, Ovid left to others. It was enough for him to illustrate and explore the reflection on the psychological plane of that universal physical turbulence. This may help to account for the length and elaboration of Pythagoras' speech. The immense and unpredictable variety of human (and divine) behaviour so entertainingly reviewed in the first fourteen books of the poem is finally accounted for and justified only after the evidence has been produced. Pythagoras' exposition, that is to say, may be seen as a kind of theodicy.

V

These behavioural characteristics have their counterpart in the poet's management of language and literary structure. Apart from the tragedy *Medea* all Ovid's earlier work (and the poetry written in exile) was in elegiac couplets: a discontinuous medium, in which each couplet is a semi-autonomous unit. The epic hexameter called for a fundamentally different technique, in which the relationship between the syntactical units (clauses and sentences) and the metrical units (the individual verses) was more flexible, more subtle, and more expressive. Rather as Macaulay invented the English paragraph, so Virgil invented the Latin verse period, by establishing a balance of length and emphasis between the units of epic discourse that satisfied the mind and the ear. To Ovid this balance clearly approved itself, for he did not in essentials alter it. The average length of his periods in the *Metamorphoses* is almost identical with Virgil's in the *Aeneid*, between three and four verses. What differs is the distribution of emphasis, resulting in a more even tempo and a higher overall speed.

This is the index of a fundamental preoccupation, to keep the poem moving. Virgil could afford to pause, to build up atmosphere, and to contrive expectations or uncertainties which would only be resolved some hundreds or thousands of lines later. In the *Aeneid*, plot and structure are completely integrated. The individual books of the poem are members of a complex interlocking composition in which the parts are rigorously subordinated to the whole. Only when Book XII has been read can Book I, and all that has intervened, be seen to make sense, and for the whole to be properly appreciated every part of the poem must be read in the light of the rest. The organization of the *Metamorphoses* is quite different. It is true that Pythagoras' speech, as argued above, can be read as the theoretical premiss of the main argument of the poem; and it is also true that in it is picked up and amplified the account of the Creation in Book I. However, this 'ring-composition' is of purely formal significance. The essential difference from the *Aeneid* is that the structure of the *Metamorphoses* is serial, cutting right across the divisions between the books. These are indeed ingeniously exploited by the poet—for Ovid never misses a technical trick—but in a purely 'local' way,

to provide immediate surprise or drama and to whet the reader's expectations. The overriding aim of the poet is to carry the reader effortlessly from episode to episode, his appetite constantly titillated by variety of subject-matter, tone, tempo, linguistic wit, and literary treatment.

In this plan the transitions from one character or episode or cycle of stories to the next take on their true functional importance. Quintilian criticized Ovid for excess of ingenuity in this area, while acknowledging that there were practical reasons on his side:

It is a tasteless and childish affectation of rhetoricians to make even their transitions the vehicle of an epigram and to court applause for such tricks. Ovid plays the fool in this way in the *Metamorphoses*, though he can plead necessity, having to impart a semblance of unity to such heterogeneous subject-matter.⁹

This as far as it goes is a fair comment, and in this as in other things Ovid sometimes indulged himself (see, e.g., ix. 666-7 n.); but the transitions are integral in another way, as being themselves demonstrations of metamorphosis in action, verbalizations of the continuous flux of events, which in the real world do indeed flow into one another in ways which are now easy and natural, now unexpected or indeed incredible. One of the reasons why the *Metamorphoses* is, as reviewers used to say, 'hard to put down' is precisely that the poet has built into it a continuity that makes it hard. It turns out to be a *perpetuum carmen* in a quite different sense from that first understood. Until the invocation of the Muses when the end is almost in sight (xv. 622 n.) Ovid does not allow the reader to draw breath.

VI

Ovid was a learned poet and the *Metamorphoses* is a learned poem. The terms require further definition. The Latin noun which, in this technical context of poetics, complements the adjective *doctus* (learned) is not *doctrina* (erudition) but *ars*: professional skill, craftsmanship (Greek *techne*). It goes without saying that the learned poet was expected and assumed to be

⁹ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* iv. 1. 77.

erudite. How many achieved real and solid erudition—were, that is, widely and deeply read, not only in the recognized classics but in the obscurer byways of the literary, scholarly, and indeed the scientific tradition—admits of some doubt. Few could measure up to the standard set by Callimachus. What tended to count in practice was the ability to use what you did know, to set out your wares to the best advantage. The poet's art lay in combining, varying, and embellishing the available materials and in the manner of his doing so—wittily, obliquely, allusively, piquantly, and above all unexpectedly. This was the mode taken over by Catullus and later Roman poets from the scholar-poets of Alexandria, *imprimis* Callimachus; and in this mode Ovid excelled. Genius is, among other things, the ability to transform common artistic property into something original and individual. Ovid's use of his sources in the *Metamorphoses* exemplifies with unusual brilliance the power of the creative intelligence to work this recurrent miracle.

Ovid had read his Roman epic predecessors, especially Lucretius and Virgil, and had learned much from them; but models for a poem such as the *Metamorphoses* had to be sought elsewhere. At the source of this tradition of mythological epos stood not Homer, but Hesiod. His *Theogony*, on the genealogy of the gods, and its continuation, the Catalogue of Women or *Eoëae* (ascribed to him in antiquity, whether or not his), were particularly influential examples of the 'collective' or catalogue poem: assemblages of legendary material rather than unified narratives such as the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*. The form of discrete episodes strung on a thread of poetical editorializing had been adopted by Callimachus for his *chef d'œuvre*, the *Aetia* (Causes). This was an elegiac poem in four books, totalling some 7,000 verses, expounding the legendary origins of various historical Greek rites and customs. Callimachus seems to have been the first to make systematic poetical capital out of a general interest in local history and aetiology, and his poem, with his views on poetics expressed vigorously in its famous Proem, was extremely influential. Many of the stories in the *Metamorphoses* end with or embody some such explanation or *aition*. Callimachus too offered hints for the management of transitions. In view of the role played in the *Metamorphoses* by the dinner-table as a setting for story-telling, it is interesting to find Callimachus introducing his account of the

worship of Peleus in the island of Icos by recalling how he found himself by chance next to a native of the island at dinner.¹⁰

Ovid's ostensible subject-matter, metamorphosis, was of course a common theme of Greek, as of all, myth, exploited by more than one Hellenistic poet. The *Ornithogonia* of Boios or Boio (date and sex uncertain) dealt with one of the recurrent themes of the *Metamorphoses*, transformations into birds. The *Heteroeumena* (Transformations) of Nicander of Colophon (second century BC) is known from the prose paraphrases of the mythographer Antoninus Liberalis (second century AD)¹¹ and provides the opportunity for enlightening comparisons. Ovid, as might have been expected, tended to treat his material with some freedom. Thus in Nicander's version Dryope (*Metamorphoses* ix. 326 ff.) was abducted (out of kindness) by the hamadryads, who substituted for her a poplar tree and a spring, while she became a nymph with good grace; and the tale ended with an *aition*, the foundation by her son Amphisus of a sanctuary and a foot-race. This is a far cry from Ovid's tragic treatment, but Nicander is the only other known authority for the story and it seems most probable that he was Ovid's source.¹² Variation sometimes takes the form of refinement, as in the stories of Procris (vii. 687-8 n.) or Iphis (ix. 687 ff. n.) or, mostly notably, Pygmalion (x. 243-97 n.). In all this he keeps well within the poet's traditional licence to innovate on his material; it is perhaps more surprising to find him making free with Homer, as he does in the debate over the arms of Achilles (xiii. 216-17 n., 230 n., 279 n.).

The most characteristic and successful technique applied by Ovid to his sources is that of combination. In Nicander's version of the story of the Pierides the verdict on the songs of the competitors was pronounced by nature: when the girls sang the skies loured, for the Muses rivers stood still and Helicon swelled heavenwards for joy until Pegasus at Poseidon's orders stopped it

¹⁰ Frag. 178 Pfeiffer; compare *Metamorphoses* iv. 765 ff., viii. 571 ff., xii. 155 ff.

¹¹ Wherever Nicander is mentioned in the Explanatory Notes it can be assumed (unless otherwise indicated) that the source of the information is Antoninus. Those wishing to pursue the matter may be referred to the excellent edition with French translation and copious notes of Antoninus by M. Papathomopoulos (Paris, 1968).

¹² For other examples of Ovid's use of Nicander see ii. 706 n., iv. 415 n., v. 294-678 n., 461 n., vi. 317-81 n., vii. 353 n., 371 n., viii. 543-4 n., ix. 280-323 n., 454-668 n., 669-797 n., xi. 347 n., xiii. 692 n., 715 n., xiv. 525 n.