Lectures on Ovid's Metamorphoses: The Class Notes of a Sixteenth-Century Paris Schoolboy

Citation

Permanent link
http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:41510675

Terms of Use
This article was downloaded from Harvard University’s DASH repository, WARNING: This file should NOT have been available for downloading from Harvard University’s DASH repository.

Share Your Story
The Harvard community has made this article openly available. Please share how this access benefits you. Submit a story.

Accessibility
The history of education, of its changing goals and methods, materials and social contexts, offers a fascinating study at the cross-section of intellectual, social and institutional history. In setting the context for and then analyzing a unique source recently acquired by the Rare Books Division of the Princeton University Library, I hope to recapture some aspects of the experience of a Paris schoolboy in 1570-1, as he took notes in class on his teacher’s discussion of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, book I.¹

Some aspects of Renaissance education, in sixteenth-century Paris in particular, are already well known.² The humanist project, however elusive of precise definition, characteristically involved educational reforms at the preparatory level emphasizing grammar and rhetoric in the

¹ Ovid, *Metamorphoseon liber primus cui doctissima Lactantii accesserunt argumenta, cum annotationibus Longolij longe utilissimis* (Paris: Denys du Pré, 1570). Ex PN173.R56. All references to this work will be made by folio number only with "r" for recto and "v" for verso.
ancient languages at the expense of the once predominant logic. At the University of Paris, the collèges which had served since the Middle Ages to provide elementary education in grammar or financial support when necessary to students in the arts faculty, proved an ideal breeding ground for the new propaedeutic curricula. From the late fifteenth century the collèges began to offer their own teaching, notably in the humanistic fields.\textsuperscript{3} This development was officially sanctioned by the university in 1534 when grammar teachers were finally granted the full privileges of university membership.\textsuperscript{4}

The humanist educational theory first developed in the private schools of Italy, such as that of Guarino of Verona, was transmitted to Northern Europe primarily by the writings of the internationally renowned Dutch humanist Erasmus.\textsuperscript{5} In France more specifically Guillaume Budé helped the spread of humanist ideals not only through his writings but also through his position as counsellor to king Francis I. Despite personal tensions between Budé and Erasmus, both worked to undermine the old scholastic university program by changing the curriculum at the source of

\textsuperscript{3} Some of the best known collèges were also allowed to teach philosophy and the courses pertaining to the curriculum of the faculty of arts, and fewer still offered instruction in the higher faculties. See Codina Mir, 55-6.

\textsuperscript{4} Codina Mir, p. 77.

\textsuperscript{5} On humanist education see especially Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, \textit{From Humanism to the Humanities} (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).
university recruitment, the schools.\textsuperscript{6} The collège thus became the crucial locus of humanist reform and as such gained a prominence of its own, providing what we would call a secondary education between the small and little-known elementary schools and the arts faculty of the university on which it increasingly encroached.

As Greek instruction was only gradually introduced to the Paris collèges after about 1550, the primary goal of the humanist curriculum at the collège was to impart the linguistic and cultural knowledge required for a mastery of Latin eloquence. In returning to the ancient manuals of grammar and rhetoric by Cicero and Quintilian and assigning only purely classical texts, the object was to "steep" the child "in a cultural discipline derived from the ancient world" which he would then share with an international community of well-educated men and women.\textsuperscript{7} In the Erasmian program typical of Northern humanism this education in "humane letters" was intended to be an education in virtue as well, and the child's behavior could indeed be carefully monitored given the development of boarding facilities at the collèges from the late fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{8} According to Erasmus this acquisition of classical culture was a necessary part of the education of a

\textsuperscript{7} McConica, p. 41.
\textsuperscript{8} Codina Mir, pp. 56-9.
good Christian.⁹

The major source which historians have so far exploited for writing the history of education in the collèges is archival. Many collèges, especially in the provinces, left records of their regulations and assigned curricula.¹⁰ From these sources we learn for example that the early sixteenth century saw the first introduction of successive and clearly delineated classes (ordines), varying in number from collège to collège, but regularly covering certain material with pupils of a certain level and age.¹¹ Most collèges had at least six classes devoted to grammar until the final or "first" class, which studied rhetoric. Pupils were not generally accepted under age ten and probably progressed normally through the ranks in five to seven years.¹² Although essential for institutional history, these sources are limited in what they can tell us about what actually happened in the classroom. Regulations are often repeated precisely because what they condemn is common practice; on the other hand, they can also be kept on the books long after the conditions they describe have lost their significance. Official curricula may not in fact be adopted by individual teachers, and

---

⁹  McConica, p. 47.
¹⁰  Codina Mir, p. 89. On the diversity of sources that he used see p. xv.
¹¹  On the novelty of this concept, see Codina Mir, 99-109.
¹²  On difficulties in preventing pupils, especially of noble or royal families from entering before age ten, see Gustave Dupont-Ferrier, Du Collège de Clermont au Lycée Louis-le-Grand (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1921), vol. 1, p. 68.
when they are, teachers, then as now, struggle and often fail to finish them in the time allotted to them.

There is a different kind of source, however, which takes us more directly into the classroom and has recently begun to be explored: the collection (sammelband) of printed school texts with student annotations. Such sources are rarely extant, given the constant use to which they were subjected, and conversely many of those which survive are not consistently annotated. The Princeton Library is thus especially fortunate to own two excellent examples of this genre. In particular the volume which it has most recently acquired far surpasses most in the diligence and clarity with which its student owner maintained it. Bound together in one volume are fourteen separate works published in Paris between 1551 and 1570, predominantly by Denys du Pré and Thomas Brumen, who specialized in school editions:

---

13 The other one, carefully annotated by a student in the classes of the Ramist lecturer Claude Mignault (Ex PA260.xC6.1550) has been studied by Anthony T. Grafton, "Recent acquisitions" (including the reproduction of one page) Princeton University Library Chronicle 41(1979): 76-8 and "Teacher, Text and Pupil in the Renaissance Class-Room: A Case Study from a Parisian College" History of Universities 1(1981): 37-70. The Library also owns a third sammelband from the same place and period, but its annotations are sparser and have not yet been studied: Ex 2837.302.052.

14 For a brief description see Scott Carlisle, "Renaissance Education" Princeton University Library Chronicle 49(1988): 296-7, and the Kraus sales catalogue, Books and Documents of the Sixteenth Century, catalogue #146 (New York: H.P. Kraus, 1987), pp. 54-5 which includes the reproduction of one page. The book was purchased from Kraus in spring 1987 through the efforts of Stephen Ferguson, Curator of Rare Books.

15 On Brumen see P. Renouard, Imprimeurs et libraires
Ringelberg, *Rhetorica*; a compendium of Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*, books II, III and V; Cicero, *De optimo genere oratorum*, *Pro M. Marcello oratio*, *In M. Antonium Philippica nona*, *Pro lege Manilia*, *Pro Q. Ligario* and *Post reditum in Senatu oratio*; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* I, and selected *Elegies*; *Virgil Aeneid* II; *L. Florus, De gestis Romanorum* IV; Pliny the Younger, *De viris illustribus*;¹⁶ and a compendium of Jean Despautère's *De syllaborum quantitate*. All but Cicero's *Pro Marcello* are annotated by the same student owner, in the margins and on additional interleaved folios.

This volume is a model of its genre: interleaved irregularly throughout the volume are blank pages especially designed to carry student notes, of a heavier weight than the paper used by the printer; each page, whether blank or printed, has been painstakingly ruled in red to mark off the space reserved for annotations; the annotations themselves, usually in an Italic hand, are regular and legible, without an ink blotch and with hardly any words crossed out; at the bottom of many pages the notes taper elegantly in a V or end with a pen

¹⁶ This work is attributed to Caius Plinius Caecilius Secundus, nephew and adoptive son of Pliny the Elder in this collection, although today "almost everything about this set of brief lives is disputed--author, title, contents, date, sources" according to Leighton D. Reynolds, *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of Latin Classics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 149.
flourish. One can still detect a certain familiar student weariness in places: as the task wore on, the regularity of the hand and of the ink pressure sometimes deteriorated; or, facing a deadline, teacher and student failed to finish a text—the notes thus stop abruptly, even in mid-sentence, before the end of the text. In some places our student paused to add a subscription, a favorite saying or amusing proverb, often in French. In these moments of relaxed attention, especially when writing in the vernacular, his hand often shifted to a different style, a more characteristically French cursive, less elegant and less legible to us. This is also the hand in which he wrote his interlinear paraphrase in the poetic texts, which must have been taken down in great haste.\textsuperscript{17} This French cursive thus seems to be the style of comfort for this particular boy, which he used when necessary under time pressure or when taking a break from careful work. On the other hand he used the Italic cursive for his flourishes and frontispiece, as well as for most marginal notes, which were probably copied over from the notes he had taken directly in class, possibly in the French cursive.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{17} For more on the interlinear paraphrase, see below.
\textsuperscript{18} I deduce that the student copied over his notes at leisure after class from the fairly frequent instances of tapered paragraphs, which require knowing in advance the precise number of words to arrange. There are some marginal annotations in what I have called the French cursive, in texts where there are very few annotations altogether (Cicero's \textit{De optimo genere oratorum}, Ovid's \textit{Elegies} and Despautère's \textit{De quantitate}) and at the beginning of two heavily annotated works, Cicero's \textit{Post reditum in Senatu} and the \textit{Aeneid}. In the latter two cases the hand turns
Our student was one Pierre Guyon: his name appears on the binding, on the handmade "frontispiece" to the collection and more or less fancifully throughout the volume. Pierre Guyon tells us nothing about himself, although we can assume that he came from a well-to-do family. The volume is bound in French calf while other school notebooks were often merely bound in cured skin, and is personalized with a gilt engraving of his name and his two favorite mottoes, which are repeated amid the notes as well: "in labore quies" or "en labeur mon repos" (in work is my rest) and "virescit vulnere virtus" (courage grows with the wound). Both are expressions of worthy sentiments known to have been adopted as personal devices by noble families and high clergy in France and Britain. Although all the collèges to Italic after a few pages. These French cursive notes still seem to have been copied over after class, since they also display occasional tapering.  

---

19 See for example the other collections of annotated school texts in the Princeton Library mentioned in note 13.  
20 These mottoes are reported in Henri Tausin, *Dictionnaire des devises ecclésiastiques* (Paris: Emile Lechevalier, 1907), pp. 91 and 222 and in Laurence Urdang et al., *Mottoes* (Detroit, MI: Gale Research Co, 1986), pp. 135, 430 and 812. "In labore quies" was the motto of Robert, cardinal de Lenoncourt and bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne, Metz, Embrun and archbishop of Arles, who died in 1561 (Tausin, p. 91). "Virescit vulnere virtus" was used by Antoine Duprat, chancellor of France under Francis I, archbishop of Sens and bishop of Albi and Meaux, who died in 1535 (Tausin p. 222). The alliterative phrase was quoted by Nonius Marcellus from the *Annals* of the Roman poet Furias Antias and was also the motto of a number of British noble families, for example of David Count of Mansfield (1573-1628) (Urdang et al. pp. 135, 182). On the theory of devices in this period and their use, especially by the nobility, for expressing "permanent or temporary personae" see Daniel S. Russell, *The Emblem and Device in France* (Lexington, KY: French Forum, 1985),
admitted a few poor scholarship students, most pupils paid their way. The best-studied of the Paris collèges, the Collège de Clermont, for example, catered primarily to children of the nobility and the bourgeoisie, more than half of whom came from the Paris area.\footnote{Dupont-Ferrier, pp. 63-5.} As the young Guyon did not become notable enough to be included in any biographical dictionaries, who he was, where he came from and what he subsequently did with his education can unfortunately only be matter for speculation at this point.

Dates at least are fairly certain, since the annotations themselves provide them at regular intervals. Guyon began this class in 1570, according to the opening subscription. One other text, Cicero's \textit{Post reditum in senatu oratio} was annotated in 1570, while Cicero's \textit{Philippica nona} seems to have been read over the year break,\footnote{The new year was usually located as it is today at the end of December, although practice in the sixteenth century could vary and place the year break in March.} as its opening subscription is dated 1570 and its closing annotation was made in 1571. All of the other dated texts were read in 1571; in particular Guyon finished, "praise be to the Lord,"\footnote{"Finito libro sit laux (sic) et gloria Christo."} Ringelberg's \textit{Rhetorica} on May 8, Cicero's \textit{Pro lege Manilia} on May 14 and the \textit{Aeneid} Book II on June 1, 1571. Without knowing whether some texts were read

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{footnotes}
\item[21] Dupont-Ferrier, pp. 63-5.
\item[22] The new year was usually located as it is today at the end of December, although practice in the sixteenth century could vary and place the year break in March.
\item[23] "Finito libro sit laux (sic) et gloria Christo."
\end{footnotes}
\end{footnotesize}
concurrently with others, and if so which ones, any conclusions about the actual progress of the course are tenuous. Indeed although the school year in Paris generally began on October 8, the day of Saint Rémy, the pupils did not always spend what we would consider a full academic year in the same class.

Finally Guyon specifies in two places that he was in the third class at the Collège of Lisieux in Paris under the regent Louis Godebert of Picardy. We know that at Clermont the sixth and lowest class was devoted to the study of Latin declensions, the fifth to tenses and the fourth to syntax so that the task of the third class was to "perfect" this knowledge of grammar and to begin the study of "quantity" or scansion. The second class was then devoted to poetry and the first and final class to rhetoric. Although none of the specific Latin texts assigned at Clermont to implement the grammatical lessons of the third class are identical with Guyon's list, the presence of Despautère's

---

26 "Achevé douir le 8 de May 1571 à Paris a la 3e classe de Lisieux estans regens Me <Maître> Lois Godebert Picard." The Kraus catalogue had speculated on the basis of "IHS" signs occasionally added in the margins that the student was at a Jesuit institution, the only one in Paris being the Collège de Clermont. In the 1540s there were some Jesuit students at Lisieux according to Codina Mir p. 61, although it would seem surprising that there should be any there after 1564 when Clermont was founded. Although clearly a sign of piety, the "IHS" alone does not necessarily denote Jesuit affiliation; indeed Calvin's Geneva used a similar symbol on its seal.
28 Clermont assigned selections from the Metamorphoses and
standard manual on quantity suggests that the basic curriculum for the third class may have been similar at Lisieux. It focused on works of prose to be studied "grammatically," but also introduced the material of the second class in exposing the pupils to what was probably their first taste of Latin poetry with Ovid and Virgil, and further announced the curriculum of the final class by presenting Ringelberg's textbook on rhetoric.

We know nothing about Louis Godebert except that Guyon's notes were taken in his class, presumably under some form of dictation. According to what is known about common practice at the collèges, Godebert probably held class for two hours each morning and afternoon. Most of the session would have been devoted to his praelectio, or commentary on the assigned text from the Aeneid Books V, VII and IX for example.

29 Ovid was often the first poet to be taught in school, see Ann Moss, Ovid in Renaissance France: A Survey of Latin Editions of Ovid and Commentaries Printed in France Before 1600 (London: The Warburg Institute, 1982), p. 1. Indeed the fact that lucus (grove) is explained in this commentary on Ovid (interleaved folio facing f. 6r) suggests that the pupils did not have much experience with poetry, since the term is so common in poetry, yet peculiar to it.

30 Discouraged by Erasmus, dictation was forbidden in some collèges, but widely practiced in others, according to Codina Mir, pp. 123-4. Since it is likely (see note 18) that most of the notes we find in the margins were written in only after class, it is virtually impossible to determine whether they were taken under direct dictation or whether Guyon recomposed each paragraph of commentary himself on the basis of more fragmentary class notes. Nevertheless the fact that Guyon's few mistakes often seem to be aural misunderstandings, as for example when he claimed to be commenting on ignis (fire) while the text in fact reads in his (in these; see f. 9v) or in his misspelling of hyperbole (see note 60 below) leads me to suspect that these notes represent Godebert's lectures delivered at near dictation speed without serious reworking by Guyon.
and its author, on which the students took notes like Guyon's. The students would be responsible for reciting this material when quizzed by their peers or masters either during _quaestiones_ at the end of class, or in the _reparationes_ common at mealtime, or at the beginning of the next class in the exercise of _redditio_. Although the curriculum also included exercises in oral and written composition, it was the _praelectiones_ which transmitted the elements of classical Latinity and ancient culture considered necessary to achieve eloquence. Beyond the knowledge itself considered essential to an understanding of a given text, the master's commentary also transmitted tacit assumptions and conclusions about the nature of an ancient text and the kind of approach considered appropriate in this period. Thanks to the Princeton collection we can see in the case of Ovid's _Metamorphoses_ Book I, among others, precisely what kind of commentary was copied and studied with such diligence, although many questions about the practical, physical and social setting of these lessons still cannot be answered.

In addition to the prominent status in Latin literature which Ovid's works retain today, "no Latin poet was more familiar to the reading public of Renaissance France, or better loved, than Ovid." Indeed in the sixteenth century editions of

---

31 Codina Mir, pp. 111-8 and Dupont-Ferrier, pp. 208-12.
32 Moss, p. 1.
Ovid numbered more than three hundred, while his closest competitors, Horace and Virgil, were the object of approximately ninety and one hundred editions respectively.\textsuperscript{33} The \textit{Metamorphoses} were the best known and most admired of Ovid's works. They did not incur moral strictures as Ovid's love poetry did and offered, in addition to the classical lore common also to the \textit{Fasti} for example, some discussion of deeper topics such as the origin and nature of the world, particularly in books I and XV. In fact these first and last, more philosophical, books of the \textit{Metamorphoses} are, along with the speeches of Ajax and Ulysses excerpted from Book XIII, the only ones to be printed separately, specifically for use in schools, during the French Renaissance.\textsuperscript{34} This preference for passages presenting the classical account of the creation of the world in book I or the speech of Pythagoras in book XV attests to the fact that Ovid was studied not only for his poetic abilities, but was especially valued as a source for ancient philosophy, a basic knowledge of which was required as part of the classical culture that was to be mastered in the humanist school curriculum.

As the first part of a work on changes in the natural world, book I of the \textit{Metamorphoses} begins with the changes


\textsuperscript{34} See Moss, pp. 66-79. The speeches of Ajax and Ulysses are among the texts in the Princeton \textit{sammelband} Ex2837.302.052 for example.
involved in the creation of the world from chaos, the appearance of the four elements and of man. After describing how Jupiter in anger turned the impious Lycaon into a wolf and caused the destruction of all men save two by a flood, the book then tells of the repopulation of the earth by the stones that Deucalion and Pyrrha, the two survivors, threw over their shoulders. In these passages Ovid addresses issues central to ancient philosophers from the Pre-Socratics on. The book then ends with the stories of Daphne, Io and Argus which are more characteristic of the rest of the work.  

Already in Antiquity the Metamorphoses were read for their descriptions of nature and appreciated for their causal accounts of change. Heavy use of passages from Ovid is evident in most Medieval encyclopedias from Isidore of Seville to Vincent of Beauvais, while more specialized works on topics in natural history and natural philosophy in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, for example by Albertus Magnus and John Sacrobosco, have also been shown to quote from Ovid. The most common presentation of the Metamorphoses in the Middle Ages, however,

35 Daphne was turned into a tree when she asked to be saved from the hot pursuit of Apollo; Io was turned into a heifer after Jupiter had taken her as his lover and was finally restored to her original nymph form once Argus, her many-eyed guardian, had been turned into a harmless peacock.  
36 Including Hrabanus Maurus, Alexander Neckham, Hugh of Saint Victor, Thomas de Cantimpré and Brunetto Latini for example.  
37 Simone Viarre, La survie d'Ovide dans la littérature scientifique des XIIe et XIIIe siècles (Poitiers: Centre d'Etudes Supérieures de Civilisation Médiévale, 1966).
stressed its moral, not its natural lessons. The genre of Bersuire's *Ovide moralisé*, popular in the vernacular as well as in Latin, provided for each fable, summarized rather than quoted from Ovid's text, a number of different allegorical interpretations, each with a clear moral message.\(^{38}\)

Some early sixteenth-century commentators, like the Lyonnais Dominican Peter Lavinius, continued in Bersuire's vein to use an allegorical basis for drawing morals from the *Metamorphoses*, in particular by establishing parallels with the Old Testament. For example in Lavinius' analysis Deucalion represents Noah who also founded a new race as sole survivor from the old race. Lavinius approached the pagan text as a Christian commentator, applying to the *Metamorphoses* the same rules of exegesis as he did to the Bible.\(^{39}\) Other commentators, influenced rather by the humanist movement, like Raphael Regius in the late fifteenth century, abandoned the allegorical and typological approaches in favor of a study which focused more on the text itself and strove to encapsulate all ancient knowledge, as well as some moral conclusions of relevance to contemporaries.\(^{40}\)

Until the 1530s most editions of the *Metamorphoses* included a printed commentary which often dwarfed the text itself to a

\(^{38}\) See Moss, pp. 23-7.


\(^{40}\) Moss, pp. 29-30.
small section at the center of the page. Amid this profusion, reeditions of Bersuire's *Ovide moralisé* coexisted alongside editions which sported commentaries by both Regius and Lavinius, or those of Regius supplemented by annotations of lesser-known humanist commentators such as Micyllus. Although there are clear differences between the approaches of Lavinius and Regius, the "schools" they represented were not so sharply opposed that a single reader could not find both approaches interesting at the same time. On the contrary it seems that publishers welcomed the accumulation of different commentaries in one edition; the more commentators they could boast on the title page, the better.

By the 1530s, however, publishers had discovered the new and delightfully stable market of collège students whose teachers preferred to use plain editions of the text to which they would add their oral commentary in class. Although some of Ovid's less known works were still the object of printed commentary, no editions of the *Metamorphoses* with full commentary were published in France after 1528.\(^{41}\) By the late sixteenth century the editions of the *Metamorphoses*, almost exclusively designed for school children, had evolved again, to include specially expurgated editions of Ovid favored by Jesuit teachers, and "rhetorical" editions which emphasized variant readings and figures of speech.\(^{42}\)

\(^{41}\) Moss, p. 71
\(^{42}\) Moss, pp. 40-1.
The edition provided to Guyon, possibly on the basis of an order placed with the publisher by Godebert, is characteristic of the middle phase of the sixteenth century. The text is complete; in fact, it includes two additional lines which are not attested in modern editions. It is also quite plain; although the title page proclaims that the text includes the "most learned arguments of Lactantius" and annotations by Longolius which are "by far the most useful," these actually amount to very little. Every few pages the poem is interrupted by a paragraph of prose attributed, probably spuriously, to the late Antique Christian writer Lactantius, which summarizes the coming section. These are consistently ignored, as Godebert provides his own summaries of the poem at the beginning of new sections, often repetitive of the printed ones.

Longolius, an influential French humanist of the early sixteenth century, provides terse printed comments in the margin which are similarly both ignored and reproduced. Frequently offering in a single word the topic of a particular passage, these notes are useful first of all for finding one's place in a text which otherwise is rarely demarcated. They also address, although much more briefly, many of the same concerns as

44 Between lines 547 and 548: "Quae fecit ut laedar, mutando perde figuram" and between the middle of line 700 and the middle of line 701: "...tibi nubere nympha volentis/ Votis cede dei..."
Godebert's notes: the type of argument used, for example "a consequentibus" (f. 4v); Greek terms and quotations of relevance as parallels to or sources for the Latin text; comparisons with other Latin authors. Longolius calls attention to metre as well, noting a "spondaicus" for example (4v). Guyon does not seem to have paid any attention to these notes and often duplicates their content in the margin in a fuller form with no reference to them.

What Pierre Guyon and his classmates would learn from their reading of Ovid, indeed what they would learn to imitate as the proper method of commentary on an ancient text, was thus entirely dependent on how master Godebert had them fill their margins.

As was common practice, Godebert probably began his lessons on Ovid and other poets by providing a word-by-word paraphrase of each verse. Guyon has written above each word of the printed text a Latin alternative, simple synonym or more complex paraphrase, in a minuscule hand. French was generally forbidden in all aspects of collège life, including meals, and use of the vernacular entailed well-determined punishment. Latin was taught

47 For the first line "In nova corpora /fert /animus /mutatas /dicere /formas" the paraphrase runs: "in novas effigies et species /desiderat /mens mea /conversas /explicare, desiderare /figuras et imagines, cum rerum tum personarum," f. 1r.
48 Codina Mir, p. 132.
primarily in Latin, at least, we can be sure, by this advanced a
level. The paraphrase was thus no doubt in part designed to
insure that the pupils understood the text word by word,
although unusual terms such as "lucus" or "muscus" would also be
explained in more detail in the margin. But the exercise, which
provided synonyms for simple as well as difficult words, indeed
often offering more unusual words to "explain" obvious ones, can
also be understood as training for the students' writing skills,
teaching them to vary their vocabulary and to serve as their own
thesauri. 49

While Erasmus was hostile to any use of vernacular, Vives
for example felt that a teacher should master the students' native language in order to best communicate with them. The implication is that minimal explanations in the vernacular would help understanding. Codina Mir, pp. 81-2.

Cf. "muscus" f. 8v (for the complete passage, see note 55), and "lucus" on the interleaved folio facing f. 6r: "'Lucus' properly denotes a forest or grove to which, because very little sun shines through, the name 'lucus' was given by antithesis." "Luco: lucus proprie significat sylvam...in qua quoniam sol minime lucaret, per antifrasim lucus nominatus."

From the ink patterns on a few pages annotated in red rather than the usual brown ink, it seems that the class did not annotate the text line by line or sentence by sentence immediately after paraphrasing it. Rather the paraphrase would run ahead over about 18 lines before the class returned to comment in detail on the lines they had just covered. In other words when Guyon picked up his red ink, the first passage he paraphrased was 18 lines ahead of the first word he commented on in the margin, and similarly when he returned to brown ink a few pages later, the paraphrase "turned brown" 18 lines before the commentary did (ff. 5-7). In the last few pages of the text, the paraphrase continues over one hundred lines past the last commentary, and itself stops short of the end of the book. Where the paraphrase alone remains, it is unclear whether Guyon simply failed to copy over the commentary from each class or whether the teacher in his haste to finish the text did not give any. In any case it appears that the class did not even read through the
The commentary was clearly the focus of the lesson. The higher faculties at the university had long since developed a tradition of textual commentary which usually involved an overall discussion of the author, his work and its literary genre, an analysis of specific words and expressions of interest for their origin, meaning or rhetorical nature, comparison with other passages in the canon of ancient literature and finally "moral and philosophical conclusions." This format was easily adapted to the curriculum of the collèges and indeed by mid-century had become the hallmark of the *modus parisiensis*. Within this broad outline, Godebert could turn for ideas on the content of his comments to the printed commentaries available since the beginning of the century and reprinted in later editions, although not in France. The most important of these were the commentaries by Lavinius and Regius mentioned above.

Godebert's commentary follows the text closely. Guyon has usually lightly crossed out each word or phrase to be discussed in the margin. Unlike Lavinius whose commentary begins with a broad and abstract discussion of different creation accounts, Godebert's notes focus on specifics. Although Godebert rarely

---

52 Codina Mir, p. 113.
53 See above, pp. 15-6.
54 This practice is particularly helpful when reading the notes over after they have been written down, especially since Guyon's marginal notes do not always run in parallel with the text. For example the notes on f. 9r apply to the text on f. 10r.
copies him exactly, Regius seems his most likely model. As
Regius does, Godebert comments on individual words, figures of
speech, strategies of argument or contextual and philosophical
details relevant to a particular expression or passage. Each
comment constitutes a self-contained bit of information which
Godebert does not attempt to relate to a broader discussion of
the text of any particular area of knowledge. The text thus
serves less as an object of study for its own sake than as the
occasion for the transmission of whatever facts about the
ancient world can be associated with it to enhance the students' mastery of classical culture. The comments range from the
traditional trivium of grammar, rhetoric and dialectic to facts of geography, classical literature or mythology, and natural science.

Godebert's first task is to explain unusual terms and expressions. For "cornua Phoebe" (the horns of the moon) Guyon has written: "Diana or the moon is called Phoebe after the name of her brother Phoebus, that is the sun, as it waxes and wanes each month in its circle its extremities are called horns because of their appearance and resemblance <to horns> and for this reason the Egyptians are accustomed to offer a cow in sacrifice to the moon, which they worship by the name of Isis."55

55 "Cornua Phoebe: Diana sive luna de nomine fratris sui Phoebi, id est solis Phoebe dicta est, haerere unoquoque mense in circulum crescere atque decrescere consueuit eius vero extremitates ob speciem et similitudinem cornua sunt appellata
In geography, in a gloss of the "Nabathean kingdom," Guyon learns that Ovid "defines the oriental region by the places that surround it, as both the Persian and the Nabathean kingdoms neighbor it, and from that part of the sky in which the sun begins to appear. Indeed Nabat was the son of Ishmael who moved to this region with his eleven brothers and in habited it, whence it is called Nabathea as Josephus writes in the Antiquities of the Jews."56 The lessons in natural history include a description of "muscus," or moss, as "a humble herb with small leaves which usually grows in humid and watery places and has a heavy odor."57

Godebert occasionally ventures an etymology. "Caelum" or sky, is "that region of the world which is above the four elements and is called "coelum" either because it is covered ("celata") with planets and stars as if with gems, or because it is concave, indeed the Greeks say "koilor" for concave, or

et idcirco Aegyptii vaccam in sacrificiis ei auferre solent Isidis nomine collentes." f. 2v. Regius also tells of this Egyptian custom.


57 "Squalebant musco: muscus est herba humilis exiguorum foliorum quae in locis humidis et aquosis nasci solet, cuius gravis est odor." interleaved folio facing f. 8v.
because it hides ("celet") and contains all things here below."\textsuperscript{58}

This interest in widening the students' classical vocabulary is probably what should be considered "grammatical" about the curriculum. Godebert never discusses concrete issues of grammatical agreement or syntax, nor does scansion make an appearance even in the form of marks over the verses. The "perfection of grammar" to which the third class was in principle devoted was clearly more sophisticated than the term might initially suggest to us.

Although rhetoric was the specific assignment only of the most advanced class of the collège, Godebert and his colleagues teaching the lower classes were clearly attentive to training their students from early on to recognize figures of speech. Godebert regularly calls attention to synecdoches, metonymies, periphrases and cases of prosopopoeia without further ado, as if the students were already familiar with these terms. On the other hand, Godebert defines "hypallage" as he points to the semantic inversion of the first verse,\textsuperscript{59} as well as "hyperbole,"\textsuperscript{60} which must have been new to the pupils. More elaborately, Godebert explains why Ovid's description of the silver age as

\textsuperscript{58} "Coelum: Ea mundi regio quae quatuor elementis super eminet coelum vocatur, vel quia syderibus et stellis tanquam gemmis celata sit, vel quia sit concava, graeci enim koilor concavum vocant vel quia haec omnia inferiora celet et contineat." f. 2r.

\textsuperscript{59} "Nova corpora: Hipallage id est Oratio inverso rerum ordine complexa, naturalis enim ordo postulabat ut ita diceret corpora in novas formas mutata sint." f. 2r.

\textsuperscript{60} Guyon writes "hiperbore" the first time (f. 5v) although he later spells it "hiperbole" (f. 8v).
"worse than" the golden age is an improper use of terms: "This is a catachresis. For the comparison is made with the golden age which was quite devoid of wickedness; thus when he says 'worse' he means 'less excellent.'"  

Godebert also points to a "short anakephaleosis, that is a summary of all those things that he <Ovid> has presented generally until now on the distinction of chaos into the four elements." Although most of the figures of speech that Godebert mentions appear in Regius' commentary, these last two do not.  

Godebert ventures further into the art of persuasion, discussing the strategies of Ovid's arguments and occasionally borrowing a term from dialectic, as if to foreshadow the students' future classes. Thus Ovid's conclusion that the

---

61 "Deterior: Catachresis fit enim comparatio cum aura aetate quae tamen omnis nequitiae expers fuit, itaque cum deteriorem dicit minus praestantem significat." interleaved folio facing f. 5r.

62 "Sic ubi dispositam: Brevis est anakephaleosis, id est complexio eorum omnium quae hactenus generaliter de distinctione chaos, in quatuor elementa protulit." first interleaved folio facing f. 3r.

63 The relationship of rhetoric and dialectic in this period is well known to be laden with tensions and ambiguities. Although different humanists sought to emphasize the importance of one or the other field, dialectic in principle dealt with modes of reasoning, in particular syllogisms, while rhetoric described and sought to emulate ancient tactics in persuasion. Godebert is concerned here with the latter project, although his remark about Ovid's "argument from effects" is evidence for the introduction of once strictly dialectical terms into rhetorical analysis. For more on dialectic in this period see Wilhelm Risse, Die Logik der Neuzeit (Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann, 1964), vol.I. On the place and content of rhetoric see Kees Meerhoff, Rhétorique et poétique au XVIe siècle en France (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986) and articles in Peter Sharratt ed.
invention of shipping was the greatest evil of the iron age rests on an "argument from effects," Guyon writes. Godebert also comments that "Ovid exaggerates the unhappy and miserable condition of the iron age and that war raged at this time among men, to which the love of gold above all inflamed them." Likewise by describing dolphins swimming amid the forests, Godebert notes that Ovid "exaggerates the calamity of the flood with respect to the transformation of nature; indeed dolphins usually live in the water, not in forests."

Finally, Godebert remarks that Ovid's details in the description of his metamorphoses serve to make them more believable. Thus Ovid "describes the true metamorphosis and transformation of Daphne into a laurel tree by adding the distribution of the different parts of her body which changed into the parts of the tree." Similary "in order to make the

64 "Vela dabat ventis: Argumento ab effectis ducto maxima ferrae aetatis fuisse hominem declarat ex eo praesertim quod ad quae rerendas ex peregrinis regionibus opes navium usum excogitaverint atque earum auxiliora maria navigarerint, cum tamen ventorum naturam non satis adhuc perspectam haberent." f. 5r. An "argument from effects" is in principle a term borrowed from dialectic, but in practice was already often used in rhetorical contexts.
65 "Crepitantia: exagerat infelicem et miseram ferrae aetatis conditionem et quod bellum tam temporis inter homines, exarserit ad quod eos potissimum auri utilitas inflammavit." f. 5v.
66 "Delphines: exagerat calamitatem diluvij a mutatione naturae rerum, Delphines enim in aquis degere solent non in sylvis." interleaved folio facing f. 7v.
67 "Mollia cinguntur: explicat veram metamorphosim et tranformationem Daphnes in laurum adhibita distributione
transformation into men of the stones thrown by Deucalion and Pyrrha more probable, <Ovid> explains by name the way in which all the parts of the stones were changed into other similar parts, thus the humid and earthy parts into flesh, the harder and more solid parts into bones."68 Godebert presents these detailed descriptions by Ovid as a tactic in persuasion.

These different types of commentary reveal how Godebert's teaching was embedded in a curriculum focused on grammar, rhetoric and, in later classes, dialectic—a system in which Godebert himself had presumably been trained.69 The "grammatical" and rhetorical comments in particular were virtually de rigueur for any pedagogical presentation in this period and indeed remain so today. But the Metamorphoses were not simply studied for what they added to a student's range of vocabulary and of figures of speech. Ovid's text offered if not direct cultural information about the ancient world, then at least a wealth of opportunities for Godebert to improve his pupils' knowledge of ancient culture with his own digressions and additions. The tone

---

68 "Et terrena fuit: ut magis probabilem faciat lapidum a Deucalion et Pyrrha post terga factorum in homines tranformationem nominatim declarat quo pacto quaeque lapidum partes in alias similes converse fuerint humidae enim et terreneae in carmem, Duriros vero et magis solide in ossa conversa sunt." interleaved folio facing f. 9r.

69 I have found nothing on Godebert so far. It might be possible to trace his own student days through the Picard nation at the University of Paris. I owe this suggestion to Marie-Madeleine Compère.
of these philosophical and contextual comments varies. Sometimes Godebert sounds thoroughly detached, even alienated, from the ancient beliefs he describes, as in the case of religious beliefs in particular; at other times Godebert presents the tenets of classical natural philosophy without clearly distinguishing whether they are to be understood merely as glosses on Ovid's cultural background or as true statements about the world, or as both.

Godebert's contextual notes attempt to place Ovid in ancient thought or literature by comparing him with other authors. In his introductory paragraph about the author and his work, Godebert reveals not only what he believes to be the source of Ovid's work, but also one of the sources of his own commentary. Copying almost directly from a printed commentary by Micyllus, a minor figure who added annotations to those of Regius in a 1565 edition of the Metamorphoses from Venice, Godebert had his pupils write: "As Virgil followed Homer, Hesiod and Theocritus, and Horace followed Pindar, thus here also Ovid

70 "Quo quidem opere exemplum Parthenii Chii poetae imitatus dicitur, qui idem argumentum iam antea Graeco poemate tractasse fertur. Sic et Virgilius, Homerum, Hesiodum et Theocritum: Horatius Pindarum: Valerius Apollonium itemque alii alios imitati sunt." Ovid, Metamorphoseon libri XV... Regii explanatio...cum novis Iacobi Micylli...additionibus (Venice: Gryphius, 1565), in "Jacobi Micylli annotatio" facing p. 1. Although Micyllus' commentary was never printed in France, the similarity is so striking as to suggest a direct borrowing. The collèges indeed maintained libraries not only for their students, but also for their teachers and researchers which, at their largest perhaps, at Clermont, could reach 18000 volumes by the late sixteenth century. See Dupont-Ferrier, p. 123.
followed the famous Greek Partheus Scius <Parthenius of Chios> who had earlier written a work with this same argument. 71

After finding Ovid a respectable Greek antecedent, Godebert notes ancient thinkers who corroborate many of the specifics of his account and generally rounds off his students' classical culture by mentioning any other relevant ancient source. He comments for example that Ovid "attributes the creation of the whole world to God as first author, which he calls excellent nature here and which Plato called 'spirit,' an opinion Vergil followed in Eneid VI" from which Godebert then quotes. 72 Likewise Ovid's portrayal of the evils of the iron age is confirmed by Horace who also sees in the construction of ships the cause of great evil. 73 Godebert turns for confirmation of Ovid's

71 "Ut Virgilius Homerum, Hesiodum, Teocritum (sic) et Horatius Pyndarum, ita hic quoque Ovidius Partheum Scium Graecum poetam clarissimum qui eiusdem argumenti opus antea contexuerat immitatus (sic) est his quindecim libris." folio facing f. 2r. The poet in question is no doubt Parthenius, born in Nicaea in the first century B.C. and author of a work entitled Metamorphoseis which like his other works is extant only in fragments. He is thought to have influenced Cornelius Gallus and Virgil, with no mention of Ovid in this context, however (Der Kleine Pauly). Godebert makes no further reference to him in his commentary.


73 "Montibus in liquidos: Inter alia aureae aetatis felicitatis argumenta hoc enumerat quod tum non essent naves
description of the unevenness of the weather in the iron age to Hippocrates: the poet "calls the autumns unequal because of the inconstant nature now of summer, now of winter, between which autumn is placed, and in addition because it is clear that sometimes the fall is contracted in cold and other times it is dissipated in heat, which Hippocrates writes in *Aphorisms III* determines the outcome of many illnesses."\(^{74}\)

On the origin of agriculture and domesticity, Godebert points to some controversy. Thus Virgil said that Ceres first taught men agriculture, while Tibullus claimed that Osiris had.\(^{75}\)
Similarly Godebert notes a dispute concerning the origin of houses: "Because of the excessive inclemency of the weather during the silver age men were forced to build houses so that they could be safe from its attacks; in any case there is a controversy over the period in which this first started, indeed many historians, among whom Eutropius, write that when Saturn came to Italy from Greece, he taught those uncivilized populations to build houses and cultivate the land, while before then they had lived in caves and huts thatched with leaves and branches." I have found none of these exact discussions in earlier commentators, although both Lavinius and Regius frequently refer to other ancient writers. These are the contributions most likely to be Godebert's own.

The tone of these comments is entirely matter-of-fact, as Godebert himself does not take positions on Ovid's statements, but merely informs his pupils of what "the poet says" and of what others have said on the same subject. Godebert offers much of his summary of Ovid's text in a similar spirit, with the sole

---

Tibullus is from *Elegies* I.7 lines 29-30, as in Albius Tibbulus, *Carmina libri tres*, ed Chr. G. Heynius (Hildesheim: Olms, 1975), p. 89.

76 "Et glacies astricta tum primum: Tempore aetatis argentae propter nimiam aeris inclementiam coacti fuerunt homines domos aedificare ut a talibus iniurijs securi esse possent: caeterum quo in tempore primum incepit est controversia, multi enim historiographi, inter quos est Eutropius scribunt Saturnum cum in Italiam e Graecia venisset, rudis illi populos rationem Domorum aedificanda cum terraeque collende docuisset cum antea ipsi in speluncis et casulis ex frondibus velgultisque (sic for vigultisque) contextis habitaret." interleaved folio facing f. 5r.
concern of clarifying the meaning of the text and no interest in its intrinsic truth-value. It is thus with detachment that Godebert explains, for example, under the rubric of Peneus the river-god, that "the Ancients believed that some divinity lived in the rivers and for this reason worshipped them religiously."77 Similarly Godebert notes that "it was established by custom among the Ancients that before sacrificing to the gods they would wash themselves with water and would thus believe themselves to be cleansed of all vices and guilt."78 This is no doubt useful information for understanding the text, but it is presented with a clear awareness of the distance separating an alien ancient world from the world he shared with his pupils.

When Godebert glosses Ovid's statements about the natural world, the object again is to impart information helpful for understanding this and other ancient texts, but in these discussions Godebert leaves more ambiguity as to whether what is true about ancient philosophy also applies to his own time. In his introductory comments Godebert called "Ovid, especially in this first book, not only a poet, but also a philosopher who treats accurately what the ancient philosophers reported in their writings about the first origin of the world, the

77 "Numen habetis: Antiqui existimabant aliquod numen inesse fluminibus et idcirco ea religioso collebant." interleaved folio facing f. 12r.
78 "Inde ubi libatos: In more posithum erat, apud Antiquos, ut priusquam dijs sacrificarent aquis sese abluerent quibus omnia sua vitia et crimina detegi et obliterari credebant." interleaved folio facing f. 8v.
distinction of the elements, the division of the ages and the arrangement of the world by its creator."\textsuperscript{79} Ovid was clearly valued in collège curriculum as a source about the ancient view of the natural world. Godebert thus follows through Ovid's account of the creation of order from chaos and of the four elements with their different and conflicting qualities as descriptive of the beliefs of the Ancients which must become part of the cultural background of his pupils.

At times however Godebert adds commentary which goes beyond a mere gloss and seems to involve his own beliefs about the natural world. After Ovid's description of the elements and their different qualities Godebert notes for example: "The earth is the heaviest body. For this reason it occupies the center of the whole world, which is the lowest place of all since it is the furthest removed from the sky in all directions, and because of this the earth is never moved from this position, otherwise it would climb up, which its nature forbids since it would move closer to the sky."\textsuperscript{80}

Godebert often presents Ovid's account of the creation as

\textsuperscript{79} "In hoc autem potissimum primo libro Ovidius non modo Poetam sed Philosophum quoque agit, accurate enim tractat ea quae ab antiquis Philosophis de primo mundi origine elementorum distinctione, aetatum divisione actoris denique orbis Ornatu literis prodita fuerunt." folio facing f. 2r.

\textsuperscript{80} "Nec circonfuso: Terra quoniam corpus est gravissimum. Idcirco totius orbis centrum occupat, qui locus est omnium Infimus quoniam undique a caelo remotissimus est, a quo terra ob eam Causam nunquam movetur alioqui enim ascenderet quod natura sua plane repugnat cum propius accederet ad caelum." f. 2v.
if it were thoroughly reconcilable with his own Christian perspective and therefore true as an objective description of the world. By the late Middle Ages Ovid had already become such a familiar figure for Christian commentators that many no longer struggled with the strangeness of his paganism. Indeed Godebert easily attributes much of Ovid's account to divine providence, a concept which does not appear in the *Metamorphoses* themselves. Thus for Godebert, Ovid's description of the formation of beings out of chaos is an illustration of the work of divine providence. Or, when Ovid remarks that it is a wonder that the winds which are so powerful do not tear the world apart, Godebert interprets Ovid's rather fearful statements as a praise of God: "the poet praises divine providence thanks to whose arrangement the winds are constituted in different and opposite parts of the air, so that they will not by chance come together and with most powerful gusts blow over the whole world."

---

81 See Allen, p. 87.
82 "Vix ita limitibus discreverat: Secundam metamorphosim id est transformationem explicat ad creationem animalium spectantem cum enim Dei providentia omnia elementa inter se distinxisset et unicumque quod naturae erat accommodatum attribuisset postea certis animalium formis ac Imaginibus eadem exornavit." f. 3r.
84 "His quoque: Divinam providentiam Poeta commendat cuius consilio venti diversi atque oppositis partibus aeris sunt constituiri, ne si forte una consent (sic for coissent) vehementissimis flatibus totam mundi machinam vertisset." second interleaved folio facing f. 2v.
cases Godebert finds what Ovid says about nature to be true and to correspond unproblematically with his own beliefs.

In those cases where Ovid threatens to contradict other well-established ancient beliefs or Godebert's own Christian views, the pupils are told how the situation should be resolved. In one instance for example, Ovid seems to say that water is the heaviest element, whereas earlier he had said that earth was. Following Regius' commentary here, Godebert explains at some length, and Guyon has specially noted the passage, 85 that "at first view Ovid could seem here to assign the third place among the elements to earth, which however occupies the last place because of its being the heaviest element, but if the matter is examined closely, it will easily appear from Ovid's own words that the third place is given to water, which, he says, the earth touches on all points of its surface." 86 On the one hand Godebert saved the poet from what might have seemed an embarrassing contradiction; on the other hand he also chose to reconcile Ovid with Aristotelian physics and probably also his own beliefs, according to which earth is the heaviest element.

In another instance Godebert took a sharper stand against Ovid's contradictions both of himself and of what Godebert

85 With a pointing finger in the margin.
86 "Ultima possedit: Videri posset his primo obtuitu sive aspectu tertium locum inter elementa terrae assignare, quae tamen prae summa gravitate ultimum occupat sed si exacte res inspiciatur facile apparebit ex verbis Ovidij tertium locum aquae tribui quam dicit terrae extremam superficiem omni ex parte contingere." first interleaved folio facing f. 3r.
believed to be the truth. When Ovid offers two accounts for the origin of man, one promethean and the other divine, Godebert does not try to reconcile them but rather determines that one is true, the other false. Ovid's story that Prometheus created man from earth and water and gave him a soul from the fire in the sky is "a fable and full of error," Godebert concludes, while Ovid's other account which attributes the creation of man to "God, the author of all things, is certainly in accord with the truth which the Holy Scriptures confirm and prove." On certain important issues a mere gloss of the ancient author's thought cannot suffice without a final judgment of its veracity, even by the grammar master.

While basic religious tenets such as the origin of man constituted precisely the kind of issue on which Godebert felt he had to point out Ovid's errors, Ovid's statements about the natural world did not receive such careful attention. It is not surprising that Godebert should note that the earth must reside in the center of the world, without so much as mentioning the Copernican theory, given the impenetrable technicality of Copernicus' work to a grammar master like Godebert, and the

---

87 "Deerat adhuc et quod dominari: Quoniam statim post discreta atque separata quatuor elementa, homo orbis cultor et habitator factus est, hic duplicem eius tradit originem, unam quae a Deo summo rerum omnium authore promanavit quae prorsus cum veritate est consentanea quam etiam sacrae scripturae probant atque confirmant, alteram quae a Prometeo profluxit qui ex terra atque aqua fluviali aspersa hominem ad Dei imaginem prius effinxisse et deinde surrecto igne e caelo illi animam indidisse fertur quae fabulosa est et erroris plane." f. 3v.
absence of general discussion of a work published less than thirty years earlier. What is more startling, however, is the simplicity with which Godebert repeats after Ovid and Ptolemy that "the body of the earth is divided into five parts according to the latitude and longitude, which cosmographers call regions or zones, of all of which the middle one cannot be inhabited by men because of the excessive heat of the sun and therefore is called torrid." While Godebert quite reasonably also repeats that the arctic zones are deserted because they are too cold, his comment about the torrid zone betrays a remarkable ignorance of, or in any case a failure to appreciate the significance of, the much better publicized discovery of the New World and its inhabitants nearly eighty years earlier. On this point knowledge of the ancient commonplace about the natural world was all that Godebert sought to convey, without any reference to additional information on the question.

88 See Frederic J. Baumgartner, "Scepticism and French Interest in Copernicanism to 1630" Journal of the History of Astronomy 17(1986): 77-88 who finds that Copernicanism was first discussed in France in the decade after 1550, especially in circles sympathetic to skepticism. Copernicus was probably introduced in the universities by Peter Ramus, only after Godebert's own training.
89 "Utque duae dextra: Corpus ipsius terrae secundum suam latitudinem et longitudinem in quinque partes dissecat quas sive regiones sive plagas cosmographi nominant earum omnium quae media est propter nimium solis ardorem ab hominibus habitari non potest quae idcirco torrida vocatur." second interleaved folio facing f. 2v.
90 In fact the inhabitability of the torrid zone had already been discussed in the Middle Ages and maintained by a number of Islamic authors.
The kind of commentary that Godebert taught his pupils to consider appropriate was a mix of new and old. Some of Godebert's comments displayed the detached analytical gaze of the humanist whose purpose was to understand the ancient world in full, with its river-gods and sacrifices, as a great but alien world. Others drew on the tradition of Medieval commentary which by the sixteenth century could unproblematically fit Ovid's account into a Christian setting by introducing divine providence into Ovid's explanations. Above all Godebert's commentary was designed for a curriculum which stressed a mastery of classical Latin and a broad knowledge of ancient culture. Whenever vaguely relevant Godebert added references to other ancient texts and expanded on the philosophical beliefs of the Ancients, at times adding opinions of his own which seem to hold beyond the level of textual explanation.

Godebert derived the content of his commentary largely from the printed commentaries of Regius and others like Micyllus who shared his approach. Godebert follows the text closely as they did and reproduces some of their specific remarks, such as Micyllus' account of Ovid's Greek antecedents or Regius' discussion of the relative heaviness of water and earth. Godebert probably drew on other sources as well, in particular for his references to Greek terms. Indeed while it is plausible
that Godebert's quotations from Latin writers are based on his own reading, the fact that Guyon's notes on the poem of Isocrates added at the end of the collection as the only Greek text in the volume are abandoned after only three lines of Latin paraphrase, and that Guyon's rendering of the Greek alphabet is sometimes mistaken suggests that Godebert was not very comfortable with Greek himself and relied on other, as yet unidentified commentators for these passages.

Piecing together commentary from different printed sources as well as from his own reading, Godebert in turn offered his students a patchwork of information. The collège curriculum devoted to the acquisition of Latin eloquence imparted not only a working knowledge of Latin grammar, figures of speech and basic methods of argumentation, but also included an amazing collection of bits of information, ranging from geography to natural science. Although designed as a mere gloss on the classical text, these comments would constitute for many students the only formal education they would receive in fields outside grammar and rhetoric which alone were formally studied at the collège. The rich annotations left by Pierre Guyon in the margins of Ovid's Metamorphoses provide us with an excellent view of the nature of this transmission of knowledge. Centered exclusively around a series of classical texts like Ovid's

---

91 Guyon reversed the lambda in "koilor," as quoted in note 58 above.
Guyon's collège education consisted of an accumulation of his teachers' commentaries. The hope was that in studying the classical texts under the master's guidance the student would acquire his own skills in Latin composition and the art of persuasion and that in memorizing the wide-ranging commentary of his teachers he would store up for himself a plentiful supply of copia or subject material to display when appropriate in the exercise of his diligently acquired eloquence.\textsuperscript{92}

\textsuperscript{92} I would like to thank Anthony Grafton for suggesting and seeing me through this project. I am grateful to Lisa Jardine, Carol Quillen and Nancy Siraisi for helpful advice and to Stephen Fergusson of the Princeton Library for making it possible in the first place.


Ovid. Metamorphoseos libri moralizati...cum tropologica enarratione per Petrum Lavinium.... <Lyon, 1510>. (Ex)2893.357.010.
---. *Metamorphosis cum luculentissimis Raphaelis Regii enarrationibus*.... Venice, 1521. (Ex)2893.357.021q.

---. *Metamorphoseon libri XV. Raphaelis Regii Volaterrani luculentissima explanatio...cum novis Iacobi Micylli, viri eruditissimi additionibus*.... Venice: Gryphius, 1565. (Ex)2893.357.065q.


Renouard, P. *Imprimeurs et Libraires Parisiens du XVIe siècle. Fascicule "Brumen"*.


