

In July, thanks to the Society's support, I had the opportunity to visit the British Library to examine two medieval manuscripts that contain glosses on several of Ovid's works. My area of specialization is the medieval reception of Ovid, and medieval school commentaries on classical texts afford valuable insight into the ways such texts were conceptualized and taught in the Middle Ages. Unfortunately, very few of these commentaries have been edited, or even catalogued with any degree of specificity. Because manuscript catalogues are rarely explicit about the level of glossing contained in a text, it is usually hard to establish how interesting a particular manuscript's glosses will be without seeing them in person. The first manuscript I examined, Add. MS 21169, is a thirteenth-century manuscript containing the *Heroides* (incomplete), the *Amores*, the *Ars Amatoria*, the *Remedia Amoris*, the *Fasti*, and the *Tristia* (also incomplete). The British Library catalogue says that the manuscript contains glosses, but does not elaborate on the content or nature of the glosses. I was primarily interested in the glosses on the *Amores*, *Ars*, and *Remedia*, but unfortunately, upon examining the manuscript I found that the glosses were very sparse for those texts. The *Tristia* and the *Fasti* were much more extensively glossed. The glosses that were present for the love poetry tended mainly to rephrase or slightly elaborate upon Ovid's text (I noticed few basic lexical or grammatical glosses). The glosses are typical of glosses I have seen elsewhere.

The second, Add. MS 49368, was more interesting for my purposes. The manuscript, dating from the thirteenth/fourteenth century according to the British Library catalogue, was only available for viewing on microfiche. While I was able, for the most part, to decipher the text, there were some gaps in my transcriptions due both to my own time constraints and to the occasional difficulties presented by the microfiche. Add. MS 49638 comprises a wide variety of texts, including several Ovidian and pseudo-Ovidian works. The manuscript contains marginal glosses, not unlike the glosses in Add. MS 21169; but it also contains two different *accessus* to Ovid's works (one to the *Tristia* and one to the *Amores*). The catalogue entry says that the first *accessus*, to the *Tristia* (f. 143 v.), "closely resembles the *Accessus* to the *Metamorphoses* in the *Versus Bursarii Ouidii*, an extract from which was printed by E. H. Alton, *Hermathena*, xcv, 1961, p. 74." This turned out to be an accurate representation of this *accessus*, of which I produced a rough transcription. The British Library catalogue says that the second *accessus* (f. 167 r.), which directly follows the *Amores* in the manuscript, "differs from the two *Accessus* to

the *Amores* printed by G. Przychocki, *Accessus Ovidiani* (Symbolae ad veterum auctorum historiam atque ad medii aevi studia philologica), Krakow, 1911, pp. 28-9.” I have not yet had the chance to verify this for myself, however. I produced a transcription of the second *accessus* as well, with some gaps that a bit more time with the manuscript would probably allow me to fill in.

Typically, the authors of Ovidian *accessus* are concerned with a few key issues. They tend to produce a biography of the author and a list of his works, as one might expect. For the work in question, as with any other work, they usually address “quid materia, quid intentio, que utilitas, cui parti physice subponatur.” Commentators can have very different opinions about these. Finally, speculation as to the cause of Ovid’s exile is usually a main point of interest. Various reasons are given for the exile, but authors often cite Ovid’s own explanation of “carmen et error,” citing the *Ars* as the *carmen*. Usually the *error* is either that Ovid was caught sleeping with Livia, or else that he caught Augustus in some act of adultery (often both explanations are given in the same *accessus*). In the first *accessus* in Add. MS 49368, the author is almost exclusively concerned with Ovid’s biography, and discusses his early career, his older brother, and some of his other works. The *accessus* also makes an (erroneous) attempt to contextualize Ovid’s birth, saying that he was born “in tempore illo in quo pugna fuit Mario et Sulle.”

The second *accessus* starts off by listing the *materia, utilitas, intentio*, etc. of the *Amores*. Then it addresses the question of the work’s title (the *Amores* were usually called “*Sine titulo*” in the Middle Ages). The usual explanation for this is that Ovid had already gotten in trouble for the *Ars* and therefore tried to camouflage the subject matter of the *Amores* by leaving it without a title, and this *accessus* does not deviate from that explanation. Significantly, it mentions Ovid’s exile, giving only one explanation: that he wrote the *Ars*, in which he discussed Augustus’ wife, with whom he was sleeping, and was therefore exiled (I should note that there were one or two words that I could not make out in the midst of this explanation). The *accessus* ends by summarizing Ovid’s explanation at the beginning of the *Amores* of how his subject matter changed from wars to love, and how his five books became three.

The second *accessus* in Add. MS 49368 contains elements that I have seen in other *accessus*, but unlike the manuscript’s *accessus* to the *Tristia*, it does not clearly resemble any one other *accessus* I have encountered. In any case, it is useful to have seen both, because they help fill in the blanks of the tradition of Ovidian commentary in the thirteenth century.