

WILLIAM CAXTON

The Booke of Ovyde Named Methamorphose

The first English translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* was the work of William Caxton, not just England's first printer but also a successful merchant, diplomat, and one of the most prolific translators of the fifteenth century. Extremely popular in the late Middle Ages, the stories in the *Metamorphoses* featured in works by Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate. Caxton's translation, which survives only in a single manuscript now in Magdalene College, Cambridge, was made not from the original Latin but from a prose version of the French *Ovide moralisé*, a chivalric adaptation which includes allegorical and historical interpretations of the fables as well as additional classical tales. In the fifteenth century, Burgundian chivalric taste influenced the proliferation of the prose romance, and this genre was, in turn, sought as the height of English literary fashion. The *Booke of Ovyde* is thus a perfect example of how Caxton both reflected and influenced literary tastes of his day.

This critical edition, the first of the entire work, seeks to encourage the study of Caxton's *Ovyde*, both as an example of the late-medieval *mise en prose* and as a significant part of Caxton's considerable *oeuvre*. It also serves as an entry point into the complex textual tradition of medieval Ovidian commentaries. An extensive introduction examines Caxton's method as a translator, his language, and the history of both the *Ovide moralisé* and Caxton's Magdalene College manuscript.

BRITISH WRITERS OF THE MIDDLE AGES
AND THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD 4

Edited by

James P. Carley
York University
Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies

Anne Hudson
University of Oxford

Richard Sharpe
University of Oxford

James Willoughby
University of Oxford

STUDIES AND TEXTS 182

WILLIAM CAXTON

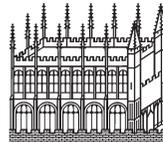
*The Booke of Ovyde
Named Methamorphose*

Edited by
RICHARD J. MOLL



PIMS

PONTIFICAL INSTITUTE
OF MEDIAEVAL STUDIES



Bodleian Library
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Acknowledgement

This book has been published with the help of a grant from the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, through the Awards to Scholarly Publications Program, using funds provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Ovid, 43 B.C.–17 or 18 A.D.

[*Metamorphoses*. English (Middle English)]

The booke of Ovyde named Methamorphose / William Caxton ; edited by Richard J. Moll.

(British writers of the Middle Ages and the early modern period ; 4)

(Studies and texts ; 182)

Translation of: *Ovide moralisé en prose*.

Translated from the Middle French.

Edition based on manuscripts held in the Pepys Library, Magdalene College,

Cambridge: Cambridge, Magdalene College, Old Library F.4.34 and Cambridge, Magdalene College, Pepys Library, 2124.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Text in Middle English; introduction and notes in English.

Co-published by: Bodleian Library.

ISBN 978-0-88844-182-9 (PIMS). – ISBN 978-1-85124-253-5 (Bodleian Library)

1. Ovid, 43 B.C.–17 or 18 A.D. – Translations into Middle English. 2. *Ovide moralisé* (Prose). 3. Ovid, 43 B.C.–17 or 18 A.D. – Translations into English – History and criticism. 4. Ovid, 43 B.C.–17 or 18 A.D. – Influence. 5. Caxton, William, ca. 1422–1491 or 2. 6. *Metamorphosis* – Mythology – Poetry. 7. Mythology, Classical – Poetry. 8. Fables, Latin – Translations into Middle English. I. Moll, Richard J. (Richard James), 1966– II. Caxton, William, ca. 1422–1491 or 2 III. Bodleian Library IV. Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies V. Magdalene College (University of Cambridge). Manuscript. F.4.34 VI. Magdalene College (University of Cambridge). Manuscript. Pepys 2124 VII. Title. VIII. Title: *Ovyde named Methamorphose*. IX. *Ovide moralisé* (Prose). X. Title: *Metamorphoses*. English (Middle English). XI. Series: Studies and texts (Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies) ; 182 XII. Series: British writers of the Middle Ages and the early modern period ; 4

PA6522.M2C39 2013

871.01

C2012-908556-1

Published in North America by the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 59 Queen's Park Crescent East, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 2C4 (www.pims.ca).

Published in Europe, including the United Kingdom, by The Bodleian Library, Broad Street, Oxford OX1 3GB (www.bodleianbookshop.co.uk).

© 2013

Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies

59 Queen's Park Crescent East

Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 2C4

www.pims.ca

MANUFACTURED IN CANADA

Contents

Acknowledgements	vii
Introduction	I
William Caxton	3
The <i>Ovide moralisé</i>	7
The <i>Ovide moralisé en prose</i>	19
Caxton and the <i>Ovide moralisé</i>	25
Caxton as Translator	27
Caxton's Language	36
The Manuscript	41
Previous Editions	46
Editorial Procedures	48
WILLIAM CAXTON	53
<i>The Booke of Ovyde Named Methamorphose</i>	
The Table of this booke	55
Proem	69
Book One	75
Book Two	98
Book Three	128
Book Four	153
Book Five	188
Book Six	208
Book Seven	231
Book Eight	256
Book Nine	284
Book Ten	313
Book Eleven	340
Book Twelve	372
Book Thirteen	417
Book Fourteen	446
Book Fifteen	476
Explanatory Notes	499

Appendix A: Orpheus et Erudice	565
Appendix B: Readings from the <i>OMP</i>	569
Bibliography	571
Glossary	577
Index of Proper Names	610

Acknowledgements

It is a standard trope to state that the editor's debts are many, but, despite being conventional, such statements are usually true. I would, therefore, like to thank the Pepys Library, Magdalene College, Cambridge for access to the manuscript of Caxton's text, and also the British Library, the Bibliothèque nationale de France and the National Library of Russia for supplying me with microfilm copies of manuscripts in their collections.

Research for this project was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada through a Standard Research Grant and I am very grateful for their assistance. The edition was begun at Villanova University and the majority of the work completed at the University of Western Ontario and both institutions were very encouraging and patient with such a large project.

A variety of research assistants worked on Caxton over the years, including Michael Kightley and Sean Henry. Special thanks are due to Erica Leighton whose work at various stages has been extraordinarily helpful. Their input has been invaluable and their good humour as I worked through textual conundrums has been very welcome. Charles Ruud bridged a language barrier that threatened to delay work and I am very grateful for his help. Jane Toswell offered a great deal of valuable advice not only on editing but on the deceptively complex process of finishing such a project and her encouragement has always been much appreciated. I have been saved from innumerable embarrassments by Mario Longtin who volunteered a great deal of his time and expertise to correcting my understanding of Caxton's source texts. Unfortunately, an acknowledgement and a few lunches are no real recompense for his contributions.

The editorial board at the Pontifical Institute has been generous with their time and input. Specifically, I would like to thank the anonymous readers for their careful and detailed assessments of the project, Fred Unwalla for his valuable advice and Megan Jones for both her care and her patience. The finished text is greatly improved for their collective efforts.

Finally, as always, my greatest debt is to Margaret McGlynn. With a minimum of complaining she has read various versions of the introduction, deciphered several marginal glosses, and discussed general and specific issues of editing almost since my work on Caxton began. The project, quite simply, would not have been completed without her.

Caxton warns that his text may be unsuitable for all readers and cries ‘Ye maydens & doughtirs, withdrawe you þat ye here it not! And yf ye here it, beleue it not.’ My own daughters, Niamh and Ardith, are too young now to read the text profitably, but I trust that if and when they do read it they will heed Caxton’s advice and pass over the racier bits. And so it is with some trepidation (and with the knowledge that they certainly have not helped speed the project along) that I dedicate the volume to them.