

*Italian Readers of Ovid from the Origins to Petrarch: Responding to a Versatile Muse.* Julie Van Peteghem.

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This book aims to historically and culturally contextualize Ovid's reception in medieval and early Renaissance Italian poetry. The objective is largely achieved, and *Italian Readers of Ovid from the Origins to Petrarch* constitutes an excellent study of the reception of Ovid in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Italy.

The book is divided into two parts of uneven length. The first, shorter part ("Writers as Readers") deals with the material and cultural contexts in which it was possible to read Ovid in Italy during the period considered, and comprises an introduction and chapter 1, "Ovidius—Ovidi—Ovide—Ovidio: A History of Reading Ovid in the Due- and Trecento." This title refers to the fact that in this period we see the coexistence and interaction of Latin, Occitan, French, and Italian readings of Ovid. From Van Peteghem's analysis it emerges that there was a large enough readership for Ovid and Ovid-inspired poetry and prose both in Latin and in at least one vernacular language. Contemporary readers could meet Ovid in a variety of formats (commentaries, translations, anthologies, mentions in treatises, other works of literature) and contexts (schools, universities, courts, monasteries). Van Peteghem delineates the characteristics of a quite lively Italian community of readers of Ovid.

Readers turned writers constitute the subject of the second part of the book ("Readers as Writers"). Chapter 2, "Examples (Not) to Follow: The First Italian Ovidian Poems and Their Occitan Models," studies the reception of Ovid in the first three movements of Italian literature: the Sicilian poets, the Siculo-Tuscan poets, and the *dolce stilnovo* poets. Van Peteghem's thesis is that Ovid's influence expressed itself mainly through Occitan intermediation, revealed by their use of Ovidian materials inherited from the troubadours, such as the preference for the Ovidian simile and for certain Ovidian characters (Narcissus, Pyramus, and Thisbe), and by the often programmatic value of the explicit mentions of the name of Ovid. Chapter 3, "Something Old, Something New: Dante, Cino da Pistoia and Ovid," examines the influence of Ovid on the works of Dante (especially *Vita Nuova* and *Rime petrose*) and of Cino da Pistoia. The chapter begins with an analysis of Dante's first mention and quotation of Ovid in the prose of the *Vita Nuova*, but the similarities between the beginning of the *Vita Nuova* and the opening couplet of Ovid's *Remedia amoris* are surely overstated.

In chapter 4, "Ovid in Dante's *Commedia*," Van Peteghem demonstrates mastery over the enormous bibliography on this subject (she would not have been aware of C. Cattermole and M. Ciccutto's *Miti, figure, metamorfosi: L'Ovidio di Dante* [2019]). First, she provides an overview of the studies devoted to the fruitless search for Dante's actual copy or copies of Ovid; then, she argues that Dante had two main sources from

which he could derive Ovidian materials: all the Latin works of the poet, and the vernacular Italian lyric of the time. Both sources are exploited in the *Commedia*. Van Peteghem refers here to her digital humanities project Intertextual Dante, part of the Digital Dante website. She focuses her intertextual analysis on the Cacciaguida episode in *Paradiso* as a means of illustrating the depth of Dante's engagement with his Ovidian sources.

While it is true that the Cacciaguida episode contains two clearly Ovidian passages (*Par.* 17.1–3, “Qual venne a Climenè”; 46–48, “Qual si partio Ipolito di Atene”), I am not convinced of the relevance of some of the Ovidian passages Van Peteghem cites as parallels to Dante's words. For example, it might be that, as commentators have suggested, there is a connection between *Par.* 15.13–18 and *Met.* 2.319–22 (from the Phaeton episode). Saying, however, that at *Met.* 2.323 Phaeton is described as “procul a patria” and that this means, by (supposedly) reworking the preceding passage, that “Dante introduces the theme of exile: a theme he will treat most explicitly in *Par.* 17” (184), sounds very much like an overinterpretation. Chapter 5, “Petrarch's Scattered Ovidian Verses,” aims at locating Petrarch's reception of Ovid in the literary and cultural contexts of contemporary Italy.

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*Dante's Christian Ethics: Purgatory and Its Moral Contexts.* George Corbett.  
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George Corbett's *Dante's Christian Ethics* is a bold reappraisal of the intertextual foundations of the classifications and hermeneutics of vices and virtues in the second canticle of the *Commedia*. Continuing the scholarship of Carlo Delcorno and Siegfried Wenzel, which highlights the affinity of Dante's moral organization of purgatory with the *Summa de vitiis et virtutibus* by William Peraldus (ca. 1200–71), Corbett enumerates how Dante's poem more closely echoes that “older, more conservative tradition” of conceptualizing vices than Thomas Aquinas's apparently more innovative *Summa Theologicae* (101). The volume is arranged in nine parts: a brief introduction, seven main chapters grouped into three sections, and a conclusion. Corbett's tone is straightforward and economical, presenting his topics, arguments, and primary and supporting texts with invigorating efficiency throughout. While the primary focus of the volume is specifically *Purgatorio*, the author provides an overview of the moral structure of the entire poem, starting with a summary of the organization of vices in *Inferno*, the correlation of these with their complementary virtues in *Purgatorio*, and then, finally, a review of the virtues represented in *Paradiso*.

Corbett's stated objective is to help orient the reader of the *Commedia* by providing a bird's-eye view of the moral structure of Dante's itinerary in its entirety before focusing