

MNEMOSYNE

BIBLIOTHECA CLASSICA BATAVA

COLLEGERUNT

H. PINKSTER · H.S. VERSNEL

DM. SCHENKEVELD · P.H. SCHRUIJVERS

S.R. SLINGS

BIBLIOTHECAE FASCICULOS EDENDOS CURAVIT

H. PINKSTER, KLASIEK SEMINARIUM, OUDE TURFMARKT 129, AMSTERDAM

SUPPLEMENTUM DUCENTESIMUM TRICESIMUM SECUNDUM

ROY K. GIBSON AND CHRISTINA SHUTTLEWORTH KRAUS

THE CLASSICAL COMMENTARY



THE CLASSICAL COMMENTARY

HISTORIES, PRACTICES, THEORY

EDITED BY

ROY K. GIBSON

AND

CHRISTINA SHUTTLEWORTH KRAUS



BRILL
LEIDEN · BOSTON · KÖLN
2002

CONTENTS

11. Between Scylla and Charybdis? Historiographical Commentaries on Latin Historians	269
RHIANNON ASH	
12. Handling a Philosophical Text	295
CHRISTOPHER ROWE	
13. Text and Commentary: The Example of Cicero's <i>Philosophica</i>	319
ANDREW R. DYCK	
14. 'Cf. e.g.': A Typology of 'Parallels' and the Role of Commentaries on Latin Poetry	331
ROY K. GIBSON	
15. A Network with a Thousand Entrances: Commentary in an Electronic Age?	359
WILLARD McCARTY	
16. Commenting on Commentaries: A Pragmatic Postscript	403
ELAINE FANTHAM	
Index	423

Editors' Preface	ix
List of Contributors	xv
Further Reading	xix
1. Introduction: Reading Commentaries/Commentaries as Reading	1
CHRISTINA SHUTTLEWORTH KRAUS	
2. Starting from the <i>Telemachy</i>	29
STEPHANIE WEST	
3. A Narratological Commentary on the <i>Odyssey</i> : Principles and Problems	49
IRENE J. F. DE JONG	
4. Commenting on Fragments	67
SUSAN STEPHENS	
5. The Sense of an Author: Theocritus and [Theocritus] ..	89
RICHARD HUNTER	
6. "A Woman Does Not Become Ambidextrous": Galen and the Culture of Scientific Commentary	109
HEINRICH VON STADEN	
7. Classical Commentary in Byzantium: John Tzetzes on Ancient Greek Literature	141
FELIX BUDELMANN	
8. Juan Luis de La Cerdá and the Predicament of Commentary	171
ANDREW LAIRD	
9. The Way We Were: R. G. Austin, <i>In Caelianam</i>	205
JOHN HENDERSON	
10. The Xenophon Factory	235
ALBERT RIJKSBARON	

14. 'CF. E.G.': A TYPOLOGY OF 'PARALLELS' AND
THE FUNCTION OF COMMENTARIES ON
LATIN POETRY

Roy Gibson

The attraction of these great collections [Mayor, Headlam, Pease] is of course that the reader might be able to use the collected material for a different end, might be able to tell new stories on the basis of old data; *and to this end it is better to have too much than too little*. K. J. Dover's commentary on Aristophanes' *Clouds* is rigorously selective, and everywhere shows evidence of its author thinking clearly about what should and should not be included: which it is why it is a much less interesting and useful commentary than the ragbag of craziness which is W. J. M. Starkie's edition.¹

The citation of 'parallel' texts is a key feature of modern commentaries on classical texts. Parallels are used, among other things, to support a reading in a text, to help construe the text, establish register, identify allusions/intertexts, and build a context for interpretation. In effect, parallel texts frequently constitute the bulk of the system within which the commented text is to be read.² Commentators, furthermore, derive great satisfaction from finding parallels, and are everywhere to be found stacking them high and deep on the shelves of their commentaries. As one critic has remarked of the commentary, "there is an aesthetics of opulence and even of exuberance inherent to the genre."³ But what is this opulence for? Is a wealth of parallels designed to aid the reader's interpretation of the text or merely to display the erudition of the commentator?⁴ More fundamentally, what is the nature of the relationship between a text and the system of 'parallels' within which we are invited to read it? What critical processes are elided in the abbreviation—cf. e.g.—which routinely introduces parallels in commentaries?

¹ Fowler (1999) 436 (italics my emphasis); cf. *idem* (1997) 14.
² See Fowler (1997) 14–15.

³ Gumbrecht (1999) 446. The corollary is a characteristic attribution of 'brevity' to the commented text; see Sluiter (1999) 186.

⁴ Similar questions may be asked of footnotes and the quantities of primary and

The epigraph to this chapter perhaps might discourage the asking of these questions. The collections of parallels in the commentaries of Mayor and Pease clearly do aid and stimulate readers, and it must seem superfluous to ask whether what works in practice will function equally well in theory. Furthermore, as Fowler implies, commentaries stout with a wealth of 'parallel' material paradoxically often have longer and more productive lives than their leaner and more selective cousins. However, this enthusiasm for 'excess' is not shared by all, at least to judge by the hostile reviews often handed out to those deemed insufficiently economic.⁵ Nor has the critical innocence of the collection of 'parallel' texts gone unquestioned.⁶ In order to look further at the theoretical and other problems raised by the use of parallels in commentaries, I use my own commentary on Ovid's *Ars amatoria* 3 as the *locus* of investigation. Produced below are some notes close to—or replicas of—those to be published in a commentary forthcoming in the Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries series. More frequently, however, I use earlier versions of my notes, which second thoughts caused me to alter or discard. The intention is not to provide a commentator's 'Bildungsroman.' Instead, I use my own commentary as a way of showing that the problems discussed are not abstract issues (or a path to criticizing others), but rather are of close concern to commentators and are ones with which I as commentator have wrestled—and expect to go on doing so.⁷ (Nevertheless, to avoid wearying the reader with constant personal references, I normally use the third person ['he'] to refer to myself as commentator.)

First, the term 'parallel' itself must be unpacked. Parallel lines, of course, never meet. But there is more to the term than this geometrical image allows. Whether used as noun or verb, 'parallel' is popularly employed to refer to analogy, equality, similarity, or comparability. That is to say, the type of resemblance covered is highly variable. As for the relations of resemblance covered by 'parallel,'

secondary material characteristically they contain; see Nimis (1984), Grafton (1997) 107ff. See also Stephens (above) 84–5 on commentaries on fragmentary texts.

⁵ See, for example, the notices given van Dam's commentary on Statius, *Silvae* 2 by Mayer (1986) and Ahl (1986); more generally, Griffin (1995) 13.

⁶ See Goldhill (1999) 393–97.

⁷ I cannot fail to add that the best I can hope to do is set these problems out in a clear and helpful fashion: my forthcoming commentary—exposed to the response: 'Physician, heal thyself'—has hardly solved them.

these are, in classical commentaries at least, thoroughly heterogeneous. As we shall see below, the relation of resemblance between a particular feature of the commented text, and a set of *comparanda* drawn from the full range of classical literature, may be semantic, syntactic, connotative, conceptual, contextual—or simply one of similarity of content. As von Staden notes, 'parallel' is little more than a collective label of convenience.⁸ He might have added that popular usage within the discipline pushes the term to include everything from precise similarity and partial analogy to the sort of correspondence which a sense of charity might term 'muted.' The construction of a typology of parallels below will reveal in some detail the heterogeneous nature of the relations of resemblance, and also introduce us to some of the methodological and other problems raised by the uses to which parallels are put.

1. *Parallels: A Typology*

The construction of a typology, as might be expected, is fraught with difficulties. There is more than one way to analyse parallels and their uses, and to establish one set of types is necessarily to exclude from the critical frame other typologies which different critical agendas may produce. Furthermore, even within its own terms, the set of types produced below is not exhaustive and may contain overlaps. Nevertheless, it is to be hoped that the typology will provide a useful basis for discussion.⁹

1.1 *Establishing the Text*

Medieval commentaries on the *Ars amatoria* display a rather limited interest in the establishment of the text,¹⁰ but the latter became one of the main interests of early-modern commentaries, such as the famous seventeenth-century edition of Ovid by Heinsius,¹¹ and here parallels are constantly cited to justify the editor's choice of textual

⁸ Above, 111. For an expression of dissatisfaction with the piecemeal explanation of texts associated with the use of heterogeneous parallels, see Most (1985) 37.

⁹ For an earlier attempt to suggest a typology of parallels and to define their use, see Lync (1978) 3–5.

¹⁰ See Hexter (1986) 39–40, 68–9.

¹¹ On Heinsius, see Kenney (1974) 57–63.

variant.¹² In fact, the enormous critical success of (e.g.) instances of 'parallel' syntax in justifying a particular reading undoubtedly played a role in the adoption of other kinds of parallel as a wider interpretative tool in commentaries. At any rate, a modern example of the use of parallels to establish the text may be given from *Ars* 3.733f., where Ovid is telling his female pupils in the art of love a cautionary story involving the mythical hunter Cephalus:

ille feram uidisse ratus, iuuenaliter artus | corripit "He, thinking he had seen a wild beast, impulsively snatches up his limbs." *artus* is the conjecture of Merkel for the *arcus* or *arcum* of the MSS. *arcus* may initially appear the more likely reading, as *corripere* is commonly used of snatching up arms (see *TLL* 4, 1040, 55ff.), but is not attested in combination with *artus*. Nevertheless, *artus* is to be preferred, as Cephalus was traditionally associated with a spear (as in the present context) and not a bow. Furthermore, although *artus corripere* is not attested, close parallels may be used to defend the phrase; cf. e.g. Verg. *Aen.* 3.176 (after the visit of the *Penates*) *corripio e stratis corpus*, 4.572 (after the visit of Mercury) *corripit e somno corpus*, *TLL* 4, 1041, 36ff.

The transmitted *arcus* is declared to be unsatisfactory for the broad contextual reason given, but it is problematic that the conjectured alternative *artus* is not attested with *corripere*, and that the latter verb is often found with a class of noun, namely weapons, of which the text transmitted by the manuscripts is a member. Nevertheless, phrases similar to *artus corripit* can be produced from the *Aeneid*. A close resemblance of syntactical structure—and signified physical action—between the two Vergilian examples and the commented text is argued to make them 'parallel.' This parallelism is argued to underwrite the claims for the plausibility of the conjectured reading.

1.2 Comprehending the Text

Parallels are also used to help the reader construe and otherwise make sense of the text. At *Ars* 3.576, for example, the precise meaning of the sentence, although presumably obvious to experienced native speakers, will not be sufficiently clear to modern readers without some detailed linguistic archaeology:

¹² Cf. Dyck (above) 320-1 on the development of modern commentaries from early-modern *variorum* editions.

quae fugiunt, celeri carpente poma manu "With speedy hand pluck the fruit which 'flees,'" *fugere* and cognates are used of food and drink which is 'going off' or passing into over-ripeness; cf. e.g. Cic. *Off.* 3.91 (sc. *quanti*) *qui unum fugiens uendat sciens, debeant dicere*, Pliny *Nat.* 15.40 (of the prices fetched for the common peach) *quod miremur, quia non aliud fugacius*. Fruit is at its sweetest then; cf. Sen. *Epist.* 12.4 (of old age) *conlectamur illam at amemus; plena est uoluptatis, si illa scias uli grauisima sunt poma cum fugiunt*. The image here then sums up the greater attractiveness of the mature lover, and warns the *puellae* not to delay in taking him.

Here *fugiunt* does not signify 'flee, recede' (in the literal sense)—which might invoke, irrelevantly for the context, the image of Tantalus in the underworld. Rather, in a context summing up the attractions of mature male lovers (not unlike Ovid himself), the verb is likely to have the special sense 'pass into over-ripeness.' 'Parallels' from Cicero and Pliny are cited to establish the existence of this special sense for food and drink. But whereas in the previous textual-critical example the 'parallel' consisted of similarity of syntactical structure, here it resides in semantic 'equality.' One final semantic and 'contextual' parallel is then cited from Seneca to illustrate the special metaphorical resonance of the verb in the shared context of advancing age. This, added to the purely semantic parallels, is understood to make a strong argument for the sense 'pass into over-ripeness' in the *Ars amatoria*.

1.3 Establishing Register within the Text

In seeking to give a sense of the style of a passage, the commentator will often seek to locate the text within a particular kind of linguistic discourse. For example, in the course of telling women how to elude their male chaperones and rendezvous with lovers, Ovid asks what chaperones can do when the Bona Dea expels *all* men from her temple—*praeterquam si quos illa uenire iubet* (*Ars* 3.638 'except any that she bids come'). What the translation cannot convey is that *praeterquam si quos* seems to mimic legal phraseology (rather ironic in a context where Ovid appears to be encouraging his pupils to transgress law or custom). In establishing that mimicry, however, none of the available *comparanda* offers precise equality. Rather, broadly comparable examples establish loose semantic and syntactic relations with legal discourse, e.g., Livy 38.38.9 (the text of a treaty) *ne nauigalo citra Calycadum . . . extra quam si qua naus pecuniam . . . portabit*, Ulpian *Digest* 21.1.12.3 *sciendum est scaeuum non esse morbosum uel uitiosum*,

praeterquam si inbecillitate dextrae ualidius sinistra utitur. Similar imprecision is to be found when a commentator tries to fix a word or phrase within a stylistic register by quantifying the spread of parallel instances across texts and genres. Here commentaries, particularly those on Latin poetry, have tended to concentrate on placing words and phrases between the poles of 'high' and 'low,' 'poetic' and 'prosaic.' Indeed the hope has been expressed that electronic commentaries may offer 'register' as one of their pathways to users: "Only if one clicks on 'register' is one offered a comment on whether a word is poetic or prosaic; and only if one clicks again is one given the data on which the commentator bases her statement."¹³ However, as has been pointed out recently with some force, much Latin currently described as 'prosaic' could more accurately be described as 'neutral'; in any case 'prosaic' is based on too broad a category of text to be critically useful.¹⁴ Nevertheless commentaries might benefit from occasionally offering the kind of open-ended philological note in which Charles Brink (apparently) specialized. His fascinating comments on Horace *Epistles* 2.1.107 *damnosa libido*, on first reading, may leave the reader unclear on the stylistic level of *damnosa*. But the evidence is fully and patiently surveyed, invites repeat visits by the reader and tacitly demonstrates that the evidence provided by 'parallel' instances may be complex.

So far we have been concerned with the linguistic *minutiae* of commentaries, and seen that the use of the term 'parallel' in each of these areas encompasses a wide range of type of resemblance, of relation of resemblance, and of quality of resemblance. This is a pattern which is also repeated at broader levels of understanding and interpretation.

1.4 Contextualizing the Text

Genre has traditionally been regarded as an important critical guide for contextualizing a work. According to this interpretative strategy, in the case of the *Ars*, 'parallels' with elegy and didactic poetry in terms of content are of particular importance for understanding the

text. For example, at *Ars* 3.169–92 Ovid gives advice to his female pupils on the subject of clothing. Dress is something that obsesses previous elegists, particularly Propertius, but also appeals to didactic poets, and this is of interest to the commentator on a didactic poem:

Dress is a subject traditional to didactic; cf. the advice given on the dress appropriate to the jobs of hunting and farming at (e.g.) Hesiod *Erg.* 536ff., Grattius *Cyn.* 337ff., Oppian *Cyn.* 1.97ff. Here Ovid gives advice on the dress appropriate to the job of being caught by men. But in this case the clothes must be suitable not only to the task and terrain, but also to the wearer. For, as in the previous passage (135–68), emphasis falls not on the possible range of material, but on the principle of 'decorum.' Each *puella* must choose the color which suits her personally (187–92).

A comparable generic context, viz., didactic poetry, and loosely similar subject matter can be said to make the passages from Hesiod, Grattius and Oppian 'parallel' to Ovid's advice to women on what they should wear to attract men. As with the semantic and syntactic examples above, parallelism is assumed to make the cited texts somehow relevant to the understanding of the commented text. But note that certainly one (Oppian) and arguably a second (Grattius) of the cited texts post-date the publication of the *Ars*. The commentator may cite later semantic parallels without undue worry, as the slow pace of change in elite literary language often guarantees that texts, sometimes centuries older, will not be irrelevant to comprehending the commented text. But on what ground does the commentator cite the content of later texts to establish or make a point about a tradition which, since the commented text partakes of it, logically must precede the *Ars*? One answer is that the parallels bear the hallmark of 'interpretability.' That is to say, here they highlight nuances in the commented text, provoking useful reflection on similarities and differences between text and parallels. Where other didactic poets give advice on clothing appropriate to the task and the terrain, Ovid adds the further twist that the clothing must also be appropriate to the wearer (his pupils must choose the shade of clothing which becomes the color of their complexion). The parallels, by giving context and significance to Ovid's treatment of his subject matter, suggest the *Ars* text is part of a partially-sunken 'ridge' of generic tradition—a ridge which is now visible only in the isolated islands provided by surviving texts. Or perhaps the Ovidian text,

¹³ Fowler (1999) 427.

¹⁴ Adams and Mayer (1999) 3–10.

occurring at a relatively early stage, itself helped to create the tradition, and this fact is implicitly realized by the engagement of later texts (here Grattius) with the basic subject matter of the tradition.¹⁵

However, 'interpretable' may now appear to have the virtually tautologous sense 'from which the commentator produces meaning.' To put it another way, what is there to prevent the description of parallels as simply a rhetorical device for convincing readers of the validity of the commentator's decision to put particular emphasis on one element in the text—here Ovid's instruction to wear something suited to individual complexions? One answer is that the commentator, after all, has not invented the parallels—that is, at least he has not forged them. More importantly, it is possible to think of 'parallels' which fail to produce context and meaning of comparable richness. For example, how illuminating for the *Ars* 3 passage would be Athena's clothing of Odysseus in the rags of the beggar on his return to Ithaca in *Odyssey* 13? Of course, some sort of meaning for the Ovidian text could be extracted from this 'parallel': in both cases an authoritative figure makes decisions on clothing, and the clothing is suitable to the new situations in which the wearers are about to find themselves. One may be able to go on to say something about clothes being always implicated with the projection of an identity. But the differences in context and content between Homer and Ovid are rather greater than their similarities. In particular, the action of the divine figure in the *Odyssey* is an instruction to Odysseus only in an implicit sense. The *Ars* is bound rather more closely to Hesiod, Grattius, and Oppian by sharing the pivotal feature of explicit instruction from accredited expert to pupil(s)—on a subject established in the repertoire.

By searching for similar subject matter in texts of the same genre, the commentator may then hope to provide new insights into a text. But there is a further problem here: what exactly is genre? Is it a category with quasi-ontological status, or, like the term parallel itself, a label of convenience? If the latter, whose convenience is being served? Ancient classifications of genre do not always overlap with our own. It is well known, for example, that no ancient critic defines didactic poetry separately from epic, no doubt because the 'instruc-

¹⁵ Others may make the more cynical point that, given four didactic texts covering the same subject-matter, readers are bound to try to construct a meaningful narrative from them.

tional' strain was felt to be a fundamental part of epic.¹⁶ Yet we work provisionally with definitions of a separate genre known as 'didactic.' Admittedly, the construction of this category has caused critics fewer misgivings than the attempt to find a single genre for the collection of ancient texts we know as the ancient novel—a group which likewise appears never to have been conceptualized separately in antiquity.¹⁷ Nevertheless, even within the accepted modern category of didactic, problems remain, as the first two exemplars of the didactic 'clothing' tradition above—Hesiod and Ovid—will demonstrate. What, for example, is the proper status of Hesiod's *Works and Days*: instructional poem or wisdom literature? As for the *Ars amatoria*, that poem explicitly advertises its own problematical relationship to its 'genre' by eschewing the standard meter of epic and didactic in favor of the elegiac meter adopted by Roman love poets.¹⁸ As if to confirm this sense of discomfort, modern studies on didactic poetry sometimes exclude the poem from (serious) consideration.¹⁹ It is nevertheless undeniable that viewing the *Ars* within the context of 'didactic'—and elegy—has been richly productive of ways for understanding the poem. Perhaps it would be useful to adopt the view that, as some have argued, genre exists only in its individual realization within a single text. This more flexible approach allows each text to construct its own sense of literary ancestry, and to operate according to its own (intelligible) version of 'generic' rules.²⁰

¹⁶ See Toohey (1996) 5–7, Sluiter (1999) 174ff. (on Homer and the conviction of his ancient commentators about the instructional intent of the text).

¹⁷ On the history and ideological implications of the attempt, see Selden (1994). Ash, Dyck, Rowe, and von Staden (all above) are similarly concerned with the implications of genre in commentary writing.

¹⁸ The choice of elegiacs represents an experiment not repeated, to my knowledge, in a 'didactic' work until the short *De Insitione* by the fifth-century agricultural author Palladius. However, fragments of an early imperial elegiac poem on the science of astrology by the Greek author Anoubion of Diosopolis have recently been published as P.Oxy. 4504–4507. On the rarity of elegiacs as a didactic medium, see further Obbink (1999) 64.

¹⁹ See however Volk (2002). The *Ars* often proves equally disconcerting to critics of elegiac love poetry, who often exclude the poem from studies of the genre, except where it parallels features or confirms interpretations of 'personal' love elegy; indexes to books on elegy frequently reveal a paucity of reference to the poem.

²⁰ For a convenient summary, see Lee-Stecum (1998) 16–18. For genre as a necessary component of the generation of meaning, see Conte (1989) 442.

1.5 Identifying Intertexts/Allusions

'Parallels' have also traditionally played a central role in establishing references by the commented text to external sources. The relation of resemblance implied by 'parallel' in these instances is more difficult to define than in the previous example. Nevertheless, parallels which point to the existence of allusions are often less dependent on comparability of (purely) generic context and similarity of subject matter than those parallels from Hesiod, Grattius, and Oppian above which were argued to contextualize the commented text. An example may be given from a passage in *Ars* 3 where Ovid, in competition with other lovers such as rich men, is trying to promote himself as the ideal client-*amicus* to his pupils who are imagined in the role of patrons (541):

nec nos ambitio nec amor nos tangit habendi "neither ambition nor love of gain influences us." *amor habendi*, an arresting phrase, is attested a further five times in extant Latin. The first instance occurs in the context of the exemplary society of the bees, at Verg. *Georg.* 4.177 *Cecropias innatus opes amor urget habendi*. A further three are found in the equally exemplary context of the Golden Age, but this time the scenario is one of decline therefrom; cf. Verg. *Aen.* 8.327 *et belli rabies et amor successit habendi*, Ov. *Met.* 1.131, *Fast.* 1.195. A (pointed) reference here to the *Aeneid* passage would open the possibility of claims by Ovid to a firmly 'prelapsarian' character for poets. Yet it is arguable that Ovid is referring particularly to Horace's Volteius Mena, a *cliens* ruined by the patronage of one Philippus. In the surrounding context Ovid is presenting himself as a client-*amicus* to the *puellae*, and an allusion to Hor. *Epist.* 1.7.85 *amore senescit habendi* would make the ironic point that poets are not likely to be ruined by their patronage in the way that the Horatian *cliens* was destroyed.

Here close verbal similarity and looser correspondence of theme, it is understood, relate the phrase *amor habendi* in the *Ars* to various *comparanda* in a manner which is productive of meaning for the former. But there are a number of issues which require discussion. First, note the unobtrusive phrase 'extant Latin.' For all we know, Gallus may have used *amor habendi* in a context which provided the richest reading of all for this passage in the *Ars*.²¹ Secondly, while the com-

²¹ Nevertheless, it is fair to say that classicists have been acutely conscious of 'ghosts' (cf. Stephens [above] 68 on the obsession of the profession with fragments). It is possible to criticize those who display more interest in what has gone than in what has survived, but one may also see this as the legitimate expression of anxiety

mentator tentatively raises the possibility of a reference to the 'parallel' *Aeneid* passage, the overall tendency of the note is—to some extent—to close down (or focus) meaning by privileging one intertext, namely Horace, over the others. This narrowing of options (or focusing of critical attention) has not taken place gratuitously, as the commentator has given special status to the intertext which, according to his own reading of the passage, appears to possess most significance for the Ovidian passage. That is, the commentator implies that the 'golden age' overtones of *amor habendi* derived from Vergil find less contextual resonance and carry less point in the *Ars* than the 'patronage' connotations derived from Horace; the Horatian themes of the patron-client relationship fit in more closely with the Ovidian context and carry a stronger message. This act of privileging involves focusing on one particular similarity, namely that of comparability of theme. However, if one were to fix on literal verbal similarity as the strongest indicator of closeness of relations between texts—as many critics routinely do—special privilege would be given to the 'golden age' *Aeneid* passage (*amor successit habendi*) over the Horatian example (*amore senescit habendi*), and the primary significance of the passage would change. On what formal ground, then, has the commentator decided to privilege comparability of theme over verbal similarity?²²

The above discussion presents a microcosm of a vigorous debate currently taking place within the discipline. On the one hand, some critics have emphasized the need for careful discrimination between intentional allusions by an author and accidental confluences of language in a medium where convention and meter narrowed the stock of available phrases and images. Others detect in such discrimination a conservative desire to circumscribe the kind of 'intertextual' event worth commenting on.²³ The *amor habendi* example does not

city about the disappearance of most of the context for surviving ancient texts. This is an anxiety in fact shared (and sometimes taken advantage of) by commentators. When they say 'e.g.,' what they often mean is: 'there are no other parallels known to me, but the spread of the evidence leads to me believe that more must have existed.' See also Kraus (above) 20–2.

²² On *amor habendi*, see also the Introduction to my forthcoming commentary ('The Date of *Ars* 3').

²³ Note the opposition set up by Hinds (1998) 26 between (a) the philological criteria of Morgan (1977) 3 ("similarity in choice of words, position of the words in the line, metrical anomalies, structural development of a particular passage, and other concrete evidence which can be linked to the work of an earlier author");

raise urgent questions of 'intentional allusion' versus 'accidental confluence,' although the commentator's tentativeness about the possibility of a direct allusion to the *Aeneid* passage, and his decision not to attempt to generate meaning from the parallel with the first *Georgics* passage, raise such questions implicitly. Nevertheless, the apparent creation of a hierarchy of reference—with Horace at the top—may be criticized by some.²⁴ The hierarchy may be defended on the ground that a clearer lead is thereby given to readers of the commentary. One should add that the scrupulous commentator will also aim to provide enough material to allow unsatisfied readers to generate alternative readings. Yet are there benefits to be had from abandoning traditional hierarchies of reference in favor of constructing more horizontal chains of resemblance? Such an argument is well made in the second chapter of Hinds (1998)—although the proportion of critical work done here by adjectives such as 'conservative' and 'fundamentalist' may give pause for thought. Nevertheless, taking as his starting point the lover's lament *me miserum* (Ovid, *Amores* 1.1.25), Hinds follows a chain of 'parallels' for this phrase past the point of indirect or even unconscious Ovidian allusion (i.e., beyond the possible reference in the *Amores* to the programmatic *miserum me* of Propertius 1.1.1). The chain leads out to Cicero's *Pro Milone* and a discussion in Quintilian of the funereal effectiveness of Cicero's *me miserum* in this context. As Hinds points out, this is "part of the cultural matrix from which Ovid's poetic voice emerges," and an awareness of it sensitizes the reader to the nature of the self-pitying and rhetorical cry from a poet writing in a genre aware of its funereal origins.²⁵

It was noted earlier that some commentaries already occasionally offer open-ended philological notes. Could commentaries also include more open-ended discussion of chains of resemblance? Certainly commentaries in the past have been able to accommodate something like this. As Goldhill points out, in their different ways the Midrash, early modern *variorum* editions and ancient scholia either string together citations with the intention of multiplying meaning (or multiplying

and (b) his own axiom about the potentially infinite possibilities for the mobilization of allusion. For a sophisticated restatement of the earlier position, see the useful attempt by Boyd (1997) 19–48 to distinguish between 'parallels,' 'formulae,' and active references in Ovid's *Amores*.

²⁴ For criticism of this tendency, see, e.g., Fowler (1997) 16.

²⁵ Hinds (1998) 30–4.

authority?), or list alternative readings without necessarily privileging one over the other.²⁶ Yet a modern commentary privileging this kind of research would demand publishers prepared to take risks ('how can it be produced economically?'), highly skilled readers with a sense of adventure ('but standards amongst students are declining'), and sympathetic promotion committees ('but what powers of discrimination are on display here?'). A partial analogy from textual criticism may also provide pause for thought. No editor of a text is ever thanked for reporting every variant in a manuscript tradition, or for giving an even hand to a series of modern conjectures. Rather, readers expect discrimination from the editor, while simultaneously maintaining skepticism about her/his constitution of a 'final' text. Is it to electronic commentaries that we must look for more open-ended discussions of chains of resemblance?²⁷

1.6 *Identifying Topoi*

Whereas 'Contextualizing the Text' above dealt with subject matter whose repetition elsewhere within a single genre lent it significance, here we are dealing with themes, images, situations, and phrases repeated across a—usually wide—range of genres. The understanding is that the familiar repetition of these items rendered them standard, and that together these standardized items formed a coded system within which writers might understand human experience, social relations, and even nature.²⁸ Hence establishing the standards or conventions, usually through the compilation of 'parallels' for images and phrases, has been thought a necessary prerequisite for understanding classical texts. Commentaries are, in fact, by tradition the very place where readers expect to find these compilations. The relation of resemblance between a particular instance in a given text and the commentator's *comparanda* is, at root, one of similarity of

²⁶ Goldhill (1999) 408. But for a more negative characterization of the practices of ancient scholia here, see Most (1985) 38–9.

²⁷ Certainly electronic resources are already offering readers more choice of textual variant than is possible or desirable in a printed text; see Robinson (1997) 153–65 on the benefits afforded the reader by the simultaneous availability of multiple electronic versions of the text of the *Cambridge Tales*.

²⁸ On the historical context for this kind of formalism and its (ultimate) critical limitations, particularly in relation to medieval studies and the work of E. R. Curtius, see Cantor (1991) 161–204, esp. 189ff. On *topoi*, see also Hinds (1998) 34–47.

theme and content, but, in metaphorical terms at least, a syntactical relation of resemblance is in operation. The *comparanda*, in theory, provide the (flexible) grammatical structure within which a particular instance may be assumed to function. A classic example of a convention in this sense is the *locus amoenus*. The collection of 'parallel' instances of descriptions of water, grass and trees from other ancient texts will alert the reader to repeated elements in such descriptions, and a focus on similarities to, and differences from such standard elements may help to generate meaning for the commented text.

As with the other types of 'parallel' above, there are issues of methodology and practice which require airing. Two particular problems—the commentator's focus on parallels rather than on the commented text, and the conventionalization of the text through parallels—are discussed in detail at a later stage. Here it is convenient to move on to an important, but little discussed, feature of commentaries, namely collections of parallel material which are in effect 'under-conceptualized' forms of the compilations of conventions discussed above.

1.7 'Supplementing' the Text

Commentaries are not only guides to comprehension and interpretation, but act also as works of reference. That is to say, large-scale commentaries traditionally cater both for readers who desire a sustained interpretation of a passage or work, and for more casual browsers, such as those who want substantial amounts of 'hard' information on (e.g.) a cultural or social phenomenon which they remember occurs in a poem, or who want further references for a literary theme. The classic justification for this was offered by Fraenkel in the preface to his *Agamemnon* commentary: "It is my experience, and probably that of others as well, that it is far easier to remember 'X' or 'Y' has discussed such and such a phenomenon in connection with that vexed passage in that play' than to have present in one's mind the precise number of the volume of one of the far too many periodicals in which X or Y may have dealt with the matter."²⁹ One might add that it also makes commentaries stimulating to read, and

²⁹ Fraenkel (1950) Lix-x. On reading commentaries without the text see also Kraus (above) 1-2, 15.

it is not unknown for classicists to read a commentary primarily for itself and not for the text in question.

However, not everyone agrees that this reference-book function is a legitimate one, and many would prefer to see commentaries take on the stricter function of guides to the interpretation of the work in hand.³⁰ But there is an historical pressure acting on commentators of which account must be taken. Gumbrecht notes a difference between the spatial metaphors which structure our sense of what commentators do and those which are commonly applied to other interpreters allowed more discursive space by their chosen format. The latter are commonly thought of as penetrating a text, looking for meaning below or behind the surface. By contrast, "I think we expect commentators to be 'lateral' in relation to their texts of reference and, consequently, we expect commentators to position themselves in a relation of contiguity."³¹ This difference is to be related, Gumbrecht suggests, to the original place of commentaries in the medieval European tradition on the physical margins of a text.³² Of course one may find counter-examples, from classical antiquity onwards. Galen's commentaries—separate works in themselves—on the Hippocratic corpus suppose deficiencies in the commented text which the commentary itself must make good.³³ Nevertheless, the metaphor of contiguity is sympathetic to the original role of many commentaries as teaching tools.³⁴ When an opportunity for pedagogy presented itself in the text, the commentator often supplemented and amplified the text in order to instruct pupils in a matter not necessarily central to the work in question.³⁵ The role of 'teacher' may have disappeared from the modern commentator's self-perception, but the tendency to amplify and supplement remains—as in the case of the following note on one of the eight sexual positions listed by Ovid at the end of *Ars* 3 (at 777):

³⁰ See the reviews of van Dam's *Status* mentioned above, n.5.

³¹ Gumbrecht (1999) 445—whose discussion is, however, hampered by a false distinction between 'commentator' and 'interpreter'.

³² On this phenomenon, see also Budelmann (above) 143-8.

³³ See Vallance (1999) 244, also von Staden (above) 113-5.

³⁴ For the pedagogical interests of (e.g.) ancient and medieval Homeric commentaries and medieval commentaries on Ovid, see Sluiter (1999) 178-9, Budelmann (above) 162-3, and Hexter (1986) 23. On modern school commentaries, see Rijksbaron (above).

³⁵ For an illustration, see Sluiter (1999) 188, also Budelmann (above) 157-61.

parua uehatur equo 'the small woman should ride on the horse.' For the *mulier equitans*, cf. e.g. Arist. *Vesp.* 500ff., Men. *Peric.* 484, Machon 168-73, 358-75, Hor. *Sat.* 2.7.50 (of a prostitute) *agilauit equum lascua supinum*, Petron. 140.7, Apul. *Met.* 2.17, Adams, *Latin Sexual Vocabulary* 165f.; Henderson, *Maculate Muse* 164-6. The *figura* may have been associated particularly with the notorious 'pornographer' Philaenis; cf. Asclep./Posidipp. *AP* 5.202.3 (the speaker makes a dedication) *νικησασα κἔλῃτι Φιλαινίδα τὴν πολύχαρον*, Cameron *GRBS* 31 (1990) 299. The scene is popular particularly with Roman artists; see Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking*, plates 7-9; 165-7, 172, 202-4, 216-8, 257f.; also Johns, *Sex or Symbol?* 136f.

This note is clearly 'over-adequate' in the amount of material it provides for the interpretation of the lemma. 'Parallels' for the position in literary and artistic sources are listed, regardless of whether these parallels are directly relevant for understanding the text. In reality the compilation of this sort of material is an under-conceptualized form of the documentation of conventions discussed above. Again the relation of resemblance is one of similarity of content or theme, but the set of *comparanda* usually lacks the 'grammatical' ambitions of the convention-compilation mentioned above. That is to say, the commentator makes no strong claim for the 'parallels' offering a coded system within which the lemma may be interpreted. (Later critics may, in fact, be able to discover 'grammatical' ambitions latent within such collections, as Fowler in the epigraph to this chapter hints generations of scholars have done with the collections of material in the works of Mayor, Headlam, and Pease.) In their worst manifestation, such compilations are an inert mass of material which bury the text under a mound of miscellaneous information. But, if properly handled, the kind of information collected in the 'sexual positions' example above, together with the information collected on the other positions in the surrounding couplets, may form a valuable reference resource for the subject. The information is convenient, easily located (after all, *Ars* 3 is famous for its passage on sexual positions) and is massed together in a way that is not usually found even in specialist monographs. Nevertheless, commentators and their readers would do well to keep in mind Hunter's warning that, given the scantiness of surviving material from the ancient world, such collections of material should never be mistaken for 'complete' pictures of part of that world.³⁶

³⁶ Hunter (above) 105.

2. Parallels: Further Issues

So far we have been examining the heterogeneous relations of resemblance covered by the term 'parallel' in the classical commentary, and incidentally seen some of the issues and problems surrounding the various uses of 'parallels.' In the second half of this chapter I focus in more detail on further problems and issues raised by the use of parallels (although some are obviously related to those previously raised). The first three are united by what may be termed 'parallelomania'.³⁷ Given the critical usefulness of parallels documented above, it is not surprising that commentators should cite them so extensively and so readily. But are there limits to the usefulness of parallels?

2.1 Parallelomania I: 'Useless' Intertexts?

Earlier we looked at arguments against the circumscription of the kind of 'intertextual events' worth commenting on. Cases labelled 'chance confluence' by some might provide for others an important link in an intertextual chain of parallels. Here we look at a marginal case designed to test the critical endurance of traditional commentators and more radical intertextual critics alike. At *Ars* 3.386, Ovid points out to his female pupils that they are excluded from male sports on the Campus Martius, including swimming in the Tiber: *nec [sc. uos] Tuscus placida deuehit amnis aqua* ('nor does the Tuscan river carry [you] along with its smooth stream'). A version of the line-ending is found already in the *Corpus tibullianum*, where an unnamed speaker is praying for the recovery of a *puella* who has fallen ill (3.10.8): [*sc. quidquid triste timemus*] *in pelagus rapidis euehat amnis aquis* ('[whatever trouble we fear] let the river carry it to the sea with its rushing waters'). Commentators, alert to the critical possibilities offered by parallels, will note the close similarity, but will then face the problem of what to do with it. And indeed, what can

³⁷ The term is taken from Sandmel (1962), who has much of interest to say precisely because he is working with a corpus of texts, unlike Latin poetry, notable for its lack of sense of familial links. He tries to distinguish between 'true' and 'alleged,' 'routine' and 'significant' parallels in the Christian Gospels, the letters of Paul, Philo, Rabbinic literature, and the Qumran texts. As Hinds (1997) 115 notes, most classical intertextualists are of the 'soft' variety—and might feel distinctly less comfortable working with such a heterogeneous corpus.

one do with it?—given that the contexts, content and treatment are all rather different.

In his discussion of the limits of 'allusion,' Hinds covers two sorts of representative case. The first is a case where a parallel between two texts provides the opportunity for interpretation, but it is disputed whether allusion from one to the other is intended by the author.³⁸ E.g., to return to an example cited above, the *me miserum* of the twenty-fifth line of Ovid's first love elegy may be interpreted as a programmatic dramatization of the *miserum me* of the first line of the first elegy of Propertius. But the inexactness of the 'parallel' and commonness of the phrase *me miserum* may cause doubts about the deliberateness of the allusion. The second is a case where scholars are in fact overwhelmed by the apparently self-multiplying possibilities on offer. E.g., the 'many mouths' motif used by Vergil at *Aen.* 6.625–7 has extant parallels in Homer, Ennius, Hostius, Lucretius, and the *Georgics*, all of which allow the possibility of meaningful reference by Vergil to them. But here, given the complexity of the allusive possibilities, many would deny that deliberate 'reference' is at issue and make recourse to the idea of a 'convention' or '*topos*' at work.

The Ovidian *amnis aqua* example presents a set of interestingly different issues. No one disputes that meaning *could* be produced from the *me miserum* or 'many mouths' parallels. But can any meaning at all be produced from the parallel between Ovid and the *Corpus tibullianum*? There appears to be no interpretability at source—unless we resort to the rather minimal conclusion that we see here the participation of the *Ars* in poetic memory.³⁹ Old commentaries were perhaps able to dodge this problem via a simple 'cf. [Tib.] 3.10.8,' whose subtext was "there's a resemblance here, but I have no idea what to do with it." But modern commentators are under rather more pressure to be more open about what they mean by 'cf.' Does the commentator then exclude or include? To include is to allow later generations the chance of making sense of a 'parallel' from which the commentator has failed to produce meaning—precisely the ground on which Fowler, in the epigraph to this chapter, declared 'it is better to have too much than too little' in a commentary. But

³⁸ Hinds (1998) 25–47.

³⁹ Given that this *Corpus tibullianum* text is usually assumed to precede Ovid, the alternative conclusion that the earlier text is claiming generic identity through quotation is hardly open to us.

to exclude is to unclutter the commentary and—no less importantly—to adhere to an economics pleasing in the sight of one's publisher. Does Hinds' axiom—"There is no discursive element in a Roman poem, no matter how unremarkable in itself . . . that cannot in some imaginable circumstance mobilize a specific allusion"—here reach its practical limits?⁴⁰

2.2 *Parallelomania II: The Search for Topoi*

Parallels, as we saw earlier, may be used to establish the conventions and commonplaces relevant to understanding a given passage in a text. Sometimes, as with the 'many mouths' motif mentioned immediately above, an embarrassment of riches is available. At other times, evidence for the existence of a convention behind a particular passage may be scanty. Yet the commentator, conscious of the high value of *topoi* as a critical tool, may expend much labor on trying to document the existence of a conventional element in the commented text. Occasionally this effort may have a peculiar impact on the form of the commentator's note, as in the following example of a note on Ovid's recommendation that pupils take advantage of the privacy allowed for washing in order to communicate secretly with lovers (*Ars* 3.619f.):

**scilicet obstabit custos ne scribere possis, | sumendae detur
cum tibi tempus aquae** "will a keeper hinder you from being able to write, when an opportunity is given you for taking water in your hands?" . . . I can find no close parallel for the comical ruse of writing letters while pretending to wash in private. Note however Arist. *Thesm.* 482ff. (a wife gets out to meet her lover on the excuse of going to the latrine; perhaps cf. Aristaeus 2.4); also Ov. *Epist.* 21.12ff. (the nurse pretends that Cydippe is asleep in her bedroom, so that Cydippe can write to Acontius) . . .

The commentator has searched from Aristophanes to Aristaeus via Ovid himself, and has found some parallels, albeit not ones which establish a viable *topos* within which the passage can be interpreted. This is interesting in itself, because surprising: few authors are more 'conventional' than Ovid. But the search for conventions, rather than the comprehension or interpretation of the text, has become the

⁴⁰ On some possible implications of the decision to call a halt to chains of resemblance at a particular point, see Fowler (1997) 24–5.

focus of critical energy. For the commentator who sees the text's primary function as that of mounting a challenge to parallel all of its details, it is ironically rather reasonable to cast the note in the form of a reflection on his own failure to construct a proper *topos*. But what of the reader? Practiced readers of commentaries may indeed still be able to wrest something useful from the note, but this rather involves reading against the grain of the commentator's own text.

At other times the commentator's search for parallels may be more successful and turn up some material which, at first sight, appears surprisingly closely-related, but, on reflection, turns out rather less useful for interpretative purposes than expected. A modern example illustrates the problem well. Umberto Eco, writing about his novel *The Name of the Rose*, discusses an essay written on the work by its Russian translator:⁴¹

she remarks that there exists a book by Emile Henroit (*La rose de Bratislava*, 1946) in which can be found the hunting of a mysterious manuscript and a final fire in a library. The story takes place in Prague, and at the beginning of my novel I mention Prague. Moreover, one of my librarians is named Berengar, and one of the librarians of Henroit was named Berngard Marre.... She said that in Henroit's novel the coveted manuscript was the original copy of the *Memoirs* of Casanova. It happens that in my novel there is a minor character called Hugh of Newcastle.... The conclusion of [the translator] is that "only by passing from one name to another is it possible to conceive of the name of the rose."

Eco admits that he delighted in concealing sources of which he was aware within the narrative, and was delighted that critics discovered them; admits too that critics drew his attention to sources of which he was unaware when writing, but certainly must have influenced him unconsciously. But of Henroit's novel he flatly denies any previous knowledge. Some of the coincidences—manuscript, fire, Prague and Berengar—are humorously embarrassing to the author (although Prague, in fact, plays no crucial role in the story), and it is conceded that they may lead astray the reader lacking access to Eco's mind. Yet the author insists that ultimately the 'parallels' are without value, because they fail to lead to an 'interesting' interpretative

⁴¹ Eco (1992) 75–8. The whole of Eco's chapter (67–88) is of relevance to many of the issues discussed here.

path. Aside from the fact that Newcastle and Casanova are not semantically equivalent, Eco points out that, among other things, Hugh of Newcastle plays "a very marginal role and h[as] nothing to do with the library. If the text wanted to suggest a pertinent relationship between Hugh and the library (as well as between him and the manuscript) it should have said something more."⁴² This ought to provide a cautionary tale for classicists, commentators above all. So little has survived from ancient literature that, after the joy of finding a parallel, we may consider our job done, and fail to communicate to the reader what we consider the interpretative value of the parallel to be.

2.3 *Parallelomania III: Burying the Text in Conventions*

Even where the interpretative value of 'parallels' is agreed by all, further dangers lie in wait for the commentator who collects them. For parallels, by themselves, may paradoxically reduce a text—otherwise thoroughly 'formulaic' in itself—to the merely conventional, as in the following note on a *locus amoenus*. This is the spot in which Cephalus takes his rest after hunting, and in which Procris will later meet her death from the spear of Cephalus (*Ars* 3.687–98):⁴³

687–98 The *locus amoenus* is a standard setting for violence and rape; cf. e.g. *Hymn. Dem.* 6ff. (Persephone), Callim. *Lau. Pall.* 71ff. (Teiresias), Moschus *Eur.* 63ff. (Europa), Prop. 1.20.33ff. (Hylas). In the *Metamorphoses* a pool, set in wooded and shady surroundings, is used recurrently as a scene for violence, death, and rape; cf. e.g. *Met.* 2.417ff. (Callisto and Jupiter), 2.454ff. (Diana and Callisto), 3.155ff. (Actaeon), 3.407ff. (Narcissus), 4.296ff. (Hermaphrodite), 5.385ff. (Persephone), 5.585ff. (Arethusa), 10.126ff. (Cyparissus); also *Fast.* 3.13ff. (Silvia and Mars), Parry *TAPA* 95 (1964) 275–80, Segal, *Landscape in Ovid's Metamorphoses* 4–19.

⁴² But for discussion of a 'chance' parallel—between the respective Casaubons of Foucault's *Pendulum* and *Middlemarch*—which the author concedes does possess some interpretative value, see Eco (1992) 81–3.

⁴³ *Ars* 3.687ff. *est prope purpureos colles florentis Hymetti | fons sacer et uiridi caespite mol- lis humus; | silua nemus non alta facit; legit arbutus herbari; | ros maris et lauri nigraque myrtus olent; | nec densum foliis buxum ...* "There is near the empurpled hills of blooming Hymettus a sacred spring, and the ground is soft with the verdant turf. The wood, of no great height, there forms a grove; the strawberry tree overshadows the grass; rosemary and laurels and swarthy myrtles give their perfume. Nor [is] the box-tree with its thick foliage [wanting]. ..."

These parallels do have an important role to play, in as much as they establish a convention. They tell us that a pool set in wooded and shady surroundings is a very common scene, and is one in which violent action conventionally takes place. This is useful information, and some progress might be made by setting the text within the traditions to which it so obviously belongs. But unless care is taken, the mapping of the scene onto the conventions which can be abstracted from the parallel passages will consume all the commentator's (and reader's) critical energy. The commentator may be reduced to concentrating on parallel details of low significance (*Ars* 3.689):

tegit arbutus herbam For the strawberry tree as a feature of idyllic landscapes, cf. e.g. Theoc. 5.129, Verg. *Ecl.* 7.46, Hor. *Carm.* 1.1.21f. *nunc uiridi membra sub arbulo | stratus, nunc ad aquae lene caput sacrae.*

The mapping of the text onto the conventions of the *locus amoenus* is a necessary preliminary, but is hardly adequate as a response to the passage as a whole. Perhaps the commentator ought also to be asking "Why is the *locus amoenus* so frequently the setting for violent acts? What does it mean for the reader to watch a violent act taking place here?" For if such violence is implied to be (merely) conventional, then both commentator and reader are effectively absolved from interrogating the violence. A conventional scene does indeed demand the citation of the controlling convention, but a conventional text does not require the reproduction of only the conventional in its interpretation.⁴⁴

2.4 *Parallels as Substitute for Interpretation?*

The note on the *locus amoenus* illustrates other features frequently characteristic of the commentator's citation of parallels. The commentator has collected passages apparently relevant to understanding the commented text, but, aside from indicating similarity of theme and content, leaves the reader to generate meaning for the text from the *comparanda*.⁴⁵ To understand why this has happened, we will look

⁴⁴ Cf. Kennedy (1994) 92. The matter is phrased more subjectively by Cantor (1991) 200: "The paradoxical judgement that may be made about Curtius' view of medieval literature is that he gets most of it right, but the boring, not the interesting, part."

⁴⁵ Essentially the same criticism was made in 1902—rather ironically—by Walter Headlam; see Goldhill (1999) 394.

in more detail at a note on a passage where Ovid is telling his pupils how to behave at a dinner party (*Ars* 3.755f.):

carpe cibos digitis (est quiddam gestus edendi), | ora nec immunda tota perungue manu "Take up food with your fingers (the way you eat counts for something), and do not besmear all your face with dirty hand." The Romans did not use forks; cf. e.g. *Ars* 1.577, Marquardt-Mau, *Privatleben der Römer* 316–8. For criticism of bad table manners, cf. e.g. Eubul. frg.41 K.-A., Ter. *Eun.* 935ff., Lucian *Dial. Meretr.* 6.3, *Merc. Cond.* 14–18. *quidam* is the transmitted reading here...

Here the commentator has used the time-honored formula 'for phenomenon ABC, cf. e.g. XYZ.' This has effect of throwing attention out from the commented text towards the *comparanda*. That is to say, Ovid's text is apparently used to illuminate a stereotype, to introduce an interesting set of 'parallels.' Despite the fact that commentary is supposed to valorize concentration on the primary text,⁴⁶ here critical energy is in fact channeled away from the text. It is arguable that this habit of listing parallels without comment may stem ultimately from confusion over the basic reason for collecting them in the first place. As we saw earlier, commentaries act in part as works of reference as well as guides to interpretation. But these impulses may become confused, and a set of references which might have a genuine explanatory role may be set out by a commentator in a format, as above, more appropriate to listing a set of 'supplementary' or 'reference' parallels. The reference resource function of the commentary has usurped its interpretative function, and as a result the reader may receive the impression that the listing of parallels is interpretation. In fact, the passages cited from Eubulus and Terence etc. could be used to provide an illuminating context for the interpretation of the passage. Together these 'parallels' suggest the existence of a convention which stereotyped the low-born as having bad table-manners. One could use these parallels to ask what is implied about Ovid's own pupils by his assumption that they need to be taught good manners.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ See Ma (1994) 76 and further Kraus (above) 20–1.

⁴⁷ In other cases a commentator clearly may have thought hard about the relationship between the parallels and commented text, but has allowed the conventions of commentary annotation to elide the process of interpretation. For an extreme example, see Goldhill (1999) 394–7.

2.5 *Parallels: Centrifugal and Atomizing Effects*

The above note on table manners also illustrates one final problem raised by the citation of parallels, namely the 'atomization' of the text.⁴⁰ If parallels remain the commentator's primary focus or basic unit of thought, there may result a tendency to concentrate on finding *comparanda* for the individual elements which make up the commented text. This done, the commentator may consider the job finished, without reflecting on the need to rise to an interpretative synthesis. A fuller note on the 'dinner-party' passage discussed above will illustrate this:

carpe cibos digitis (est quiddam gestus edendi), | ora nec immunda tota perungue manu The Romans did not use forks; cf. e.g. *Ars* 1.577, Marquardt-Mau, *Privatleben der Römer* 316-8. For criticism of bad table manners, cf. e.g. Eubul. frg. 41 K.-A., Ter. *Eun.* 935ff., Lucian *Dial. Meretr.* 6.3, *Merc. Cond.* 14-18. *quiddam* is the transmitt reading here, and provides the sense "pluck the food with your fingers (there is a certain way to eat with your hand)." However, better sense is provided by Heinsius' *quiddam*: "... (the way you eat [with your hand] counts for something)." For this idiom, cf. e.g. Cic. *Att.* 6.3.4 *est enim quiddam aduenientem non esse peregrinum atque hospitem*, Ov. *Fast.* 6.27 (with Bömer's note), *perunguo* is emphatic ('smear all over'), and is normally used of thick greasy liquids; cf. e.g. Cic. *Tusc.* 1.113 *iuuenes u... ueste posita, corpora oleo perunxerunt*, OLD s.v. *immundus* is prosaic and avoided in elevated poetry; for statistics see Brown on Lucr. 4.1160.

In this note, isolated elements in the text generate isolated *comparanda*. The note could be rewritten in such a way as to combat the effects of atomization, and to synthesize the apparently miscellaneous information into a coherent picture of the text. Much of the information given in the note could be centered around the stereotype which assumes that the 'low-born' cannot eat daintily with their finger tips, but know only how to stuff their faces using the whole of their hands (particularly evident in the passage from Lucian's *Dialogi meretricii*). With this at the center of the note, it could now be more clearly seen why Heinsius' *quiddam* is preferable: 'the way you eat counts for something,' i.e., the way you eat with your hand

⁴⁰ For various pessimistic discussions of this phenomenon, see Most (1985) 35-8, Ma (1994) 76, Goldhill (1999) 411-20; also (for biblical commentaries) Houlden (1990) 131-2. For more positive assessments, see in this volume Budelmann 153-7, Hunter 101-2, Kraus 10-16 (all above), and McCarty (below) 364-5, 380.

has a social value. Similarly the use of the emphatic *perunguo* ('smear all over') can now be attributed to the fact that the *praeceptor* has a strong social point to make about the avoidance of the appearance of vulgarity. And *immundus* is appropriately used in the context, as the subject matter requires 'low' vocabulary in order for its vulgarity to be made clear to the reader. (In addition, the couplet could also be integrated into the wider interpretation of the passage, which is filled with types of vulgar behavior stereotypically associated with low-born women.) Thus a mass of apparently miscellaneous information can often be integrated in such a manner as to provide a satisfactory attempt at overall interpretation.

However, as the note stands the reader is left to construct a link between 'parallels' which cover a full range of (heterogeneous) relations of resemblance:

- 1) texts which, on comparison, confirm the absence of Roman forks;
- 2) texts, comparable in theme and subject matter, which suggest a conventional association between 'poor' table manners and the low-born;
- 3) texts which provide semantic equivalencies for a Latin idiom.

The material in the note is presented in an essentially 'centrifugal' rather than 'centripetal' manner, and so, as in the previous example, ultimately directs the gaze of the reader away from the text. It could be argued, however, that there are positive aspects to this kind of note. Readers are forced to participate in the construction of sense, since the commentator is not handing it to them on a platter, and are made to realize that they are constructing a sense. Ultimately, however, the responsibility for conceptualization is perhaps left rather too much in the lap of the reader.⁴¹

Conclusion

Parallels are clearly a useful critical tool, but a lack of clarity about their precise role, allied to an ignorance of their limitations as a critical tool, may result in many of the problems reviewed above. Some of these problems allow interesting critical views onto the whole problem of reading and interpretation. Nevertheless, a commentator's failure to reflect on the issues they raise may result in a text atomized

⁴¹ Cf. Ma (1994) 76.

by, or buried under, a mass of miscellaneous information, where the reader is given little indication of how to apply the material provided to the job of interpretation, and the text is reduced to a series of harmless commonplaces.³⁰

Works Cited

- Adams, J. N., and R. G. Mayer, eds. 1999. *Aspects of the Language of Latin Poetry*. Oxford (Proceedings of the British Academy 93).
- Ahl, F. 1986. Review of van Dam (1984). *Phoenix* 40: 360–2.
- Boyd, B. W. 1997. *Ovid's Literary Loves: Influence and Innovation in the Amores*. Ann Arbor.
- Brink, C. O. 1982. *Horace on Poetry 3. Epistles Book 2: The Letters to Augustus and Florus*. Cambridge.
- Cantor, N. F. (1991). *Inventing the Middle Ages*. Cambridge.
- Conte, G. B. 1989. 'Love Without Elegy: The *Remedia amoris* and the Logic of a Genre,' *Poetics Today* 10: 441–69 (reprinted 1994 in *Genres and Readers: Lucretius, Love Elegy and Pliny's Encyclopaedia*, Baltimore = 'L'Amore senza elegia: i 'Remedia amoris' e la logica di un genere,' 1986 in G. Lazzarini, *Ovidio: Rimedi contro l'Amore*, 9–53. Venice).
- van Dam, H.-J. 1984. *P. Papinius Statius: Silvae Book II*. Leiden.
- Dover, K. J. 1968. *Aristophanes: The Clouds*. Oxford.
- Eco, U. 1992. 'Between Author and Text,' in S. Collini, ed., *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, 67–88. Cambridge.
- Fowler, D. 1997. 'On the Shoulders of Giants: Intertextuality and Classical Studies,' *MD* 39: 13–34.
- . 1999. 'Criticism as Commentary and Commentary as Criticism in the Age of Electronic Media,' in Most, ed., 426–42.
- Fraenkel, E. 1950. *Aeschylus, Agamemnon*. 3 vols. Oxford.
- Goldhill, S. 1999. 'Wipe Your Glosses,' in Most, ed., 380–425.
- Grafton, A. 1997. *The Footnote: A Curious History*. London.
- Griffin, J. 1995. 'The Guidance that We Need,' *Times Literary Supplement* 14.4.95: 13–14.
- Gumbrecht, H. U. 1999. 'Fill Up Your Margins! About Commentary and copia,' in Most, ed., 443–53.
- Headlam, W., and A. D. Knox. 1922. *Heraclitus: The Mimes and Fragments*. Cambridge.
- Hexter, R. J. 1986. *Ovid and Medieval Schooling. Studies in Medieval School Commentaries on Ovid's Ars amatoria, Epistulae ex Ponto and Epistulae heroidum*. Munich (Münchener Beiträge 38).
- Hinds, S. 1997. '“Proemio al mezzo”: Allusion and the Limits of Interpretability,' *MD* 39: 113–22.
- . 1998. *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry*. Cambridge.
- Houlden, J. L. 1990. 'Commentary (New Testament),' in R. J. Coggins and J. L. Houlden, eds., *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, 129–32. London and Philadelphia.
- Kennedy, D. F. 1994. Review of C. Gruzeller, *Claudian, De Raptu Proserpinae* (1993), *G&R* 41: 92.
- Kenney, E. J. 1974. *The Classical Text*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London. (Sather Classical Lectures 44).
- Lee-Stecum, P. 1998. *Powerplay in Tibullus*. Cambridge.
- Lyne, R. O. A. M. 1978. *Ciris: A Poem Attributed to Vergil*. Cambridge.
- Ma, J. 1994. 'Black Hunter Variations,' *PCPS* 40: 49–80.
- Mayer, R. 1986. Review of van Dam (1984), *CR* 36: 50–1.
- Mayor, J. E. B. 1886–9. *Thirteen Satires of Juvenal*. 4th edition. London.
- Morgan, K. 1977. *Ovid's Art of Imitation: Propertius in the Amores*. Leiden.
- Most, G. W. 1985. *The Measures of Praise*. Göttingen.
- , ed. 1999. *Commentaries—Kommentare*. Göttingen (Aporemata 4).
- Nimis, S. 1984. 'Fussnoten: Das Fundament der Wissenschaft,' *Arethusa* 17: 105–34.
- Obbink, D. 1999. 'Anoubion. Elegiacs' in N. Goniis et al., eds., *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* Vol. lxvi: 57–109.
- Pease, A. S. 1935. *Publi Vergili Maronis Aeneidos liber quartus*. Cambridge, MA.
- Robinson, P. M. 1997. 'New Directions in Critical Editing,' in K. Sutherland, ed., *Electronic Text: Investigations in Method and Theory*, 145–71. Oxford.
- Sandmel, S. 1962. 'Paralleomania,' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 31: 1–13.
- Selden, D. L. 1994. 'Genre of Genre,' in J. Tatum, ed., *The Search for the Ancient Novel*, 39–64. Baltimore and London.
- Sluiter, I. 1999. 'Commentaries and the Didactic Tradition,' in Most, ed., 173–205.
- Starkie, W. J. M. 1911. *The Clouds of Aristophanes*. London.
- 'Toohey, P. 1996. *Epic Lessons: An Introduction to Ancient Didactic Poetry*. London and New York.
- Vallance, J. T. 1999. 'Galen, Proclus and the Non-Submissive Commentary,' in Most, ed., 223–44.
- Volk, K. (2002). *The Poetics of Latin Didactic: Lucretius, Vergil, Ovid, Manilius*. Oxford.

³⁰ I wish to thank the following for very stimulating advice and criticism: F. Budelmann, J. Henderson, C. Kraus, G. Most, S. Rigby, I. Wallis, and audiences in Nottingham, Heidelberg, Chicago, and Manchester.