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Converting Ovid: Translation, Religion, and Allegory in Arthur Golding's *Metamorphoses*

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ABSTRACT

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Scholars have not adequately explained the disparity between Arthur Golding's career as a fervent Protestant translator of continental reformers like John Calvin and Theodore Beza with his most famous translation, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. His motivations for completing the translation included a nationalistic desire to enrich the English language and the rewards of the courtly system of patronage. Considering the Protestant opposition to pagan and wanton literature, it is apparent that Golding was forced to carefully contain the dangerous material of his translation. Golding avoids Protestant criticism of traditional allegorical readings of pagan poetry by adjusting his translation to show that Ovid was inspired by the Bible and meant his poem to be morally and theologically instructive in the Christian tradition. Examples of Golding's technic include his translation of the creation and the great deluge from Book One, and the story of Myrrha from Book Ten.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

"No man is an island, entire of itself," writes Donne as he considers his own mortality, and I think along the same lines as I look back on this thesis project. As I try to add a clod of earth to the continent of scholarship on the English Renaissance, I realize that my thinking is similarly composed of the help, support, and thinking of friends, mentors, and family. I would like to thank Bruce Young for his mentorship since my first semester as an English major, John Talbot for opening my eyes to the power of the classical tradition in English literature, Kim Johnson for energetically challenging my thinking as a graduate student, and Rick Duerden for his expert perspective.

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Laus & honor Soli Deo.

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Converting Ovid: Translation, Religion, and Allegory in Arthur Golding's *Metamorphoses*

The entirety of Ovid's epic, *Metamorphoses*, never had been translated into English when the young Arthur Golding brought his Oxford education and his religious upbringing to bear on the task around 1563. At the same time he was working on the *Metamorphoses*, Golding was also translating *Institutes of the Christian Religion* by John Calvin, and would later go on to translate over 30 other works by continental reformers including Calvin, Philippe de Mornay, and Theodore Beza. Considering the projects that occupied most of Golding's career, his choice to undertake the translation of Ovid's epic seems like an unusual choice. The fact that the *Metamorphoses* is a racy collection of violent and erotic stories was not lost on early modern audiences; certain episodes, like Myrrah's incest or Tereus's rape of Philomela, were contemporary bywords for poetical evil and warnings against the dangers of the imagination.

Scholars have long puzzled over how Golding's Ovid fits into his literary career and cultural moment. Tom Lockwood has recently observed in *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English: 1550-1660* that "the text for which Golding is now most famous, and which was immediately influential—his translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* into fourteener couplets—is an anomaly in his prolific career as a translator" (443-44). Golding's 1937 biography—titled *An Elizabethan Puritan*—notes that "It has been a surprise to many that so stern a puritan as Golding later showed himself to be, should have translated the *Metamorphoses*" (33). More recently, in the introduction to his 1965 scholarly edition of the poem, J. F. Nims writes of the "odd collaboration…between the sophisticated darling of a dissolute society…and the respectable country gentleman and convinced Puritan who spent much of his life translating the sermons of John Calvin" (xiv). In his 1978 treatment, Gordon Braden argues that the fact that "after Ovid, Golding never published another translation of

pagan imaginative literature**"** shows that the project was "one of several interrelated failures of intention" (12). Raphael Lyne, writing in 2001, sees "a degree of tension" between Golding and his subject matter (30), and Gary G. Gibbs and Florinda Fuiz summarize the scholarly reaction to Golding through 2008 as one of "paradox" (557). No one, however, seems to have arrived at a satisfactory answer to the question: if his biography, theology, and *oeuvre* place Golding at odds with Ovid, why did he feel compelled to translate the fifteen books of the *Metamorphoses*?

Certain critics have offered unsatisfactory explanations to this question by pointing out that Golding moralized the tales in his translation to fit with his Christian viewpoint. Madeline Forey writes in the introduction to her 2002 scholarly edition that "Golding's reading of history, whether classical, biblical or contemporary, was very much in line with his reading of mythology" because all of these interpretive acts were part of his "quest for moral *exempla*" or examples that proved a moral point (xxii). In other words, Forey believes that Golding sought out opportunities for moral instruction in the texts and events that he wrote about. However, as we shall see, Golding did not intend his translation to be read simply as a disjointed collection of morals, but as a "whole body" of narrative with historical and theological implications extending far beyond moralization. In this respect, his translation of the *Metamorphoses* is more rigorous than his other works in the way that he worked to unify and purify disparate elements. In 2008, Gary Gibbs and Florinda Fuiz claimed dismissed the incongruities in Golding's corpus, claiming that "Throughout his corpus, written over several decades, Golding expressed various opinions. Yet the end result was remarkably focused" (575), explaining that one common factor in all of his writings was his "traditional allegorical approach" (563). However, given the cultural discourse surrounding allegorical interpretation in Protestant England, the explanation that Golding's Ovid unproblematically taps into a "traditional…approach" is incomplete. Moreover,

claims of consistency across Golding's works are overblown; Golding's *Metamorphoses* is his only translation of classical poetry, his only published translation of non-theological or historical content, and his only text to print a warning on the title page: "With skill heed and judgment this work must be read, / For else to the reader it stands in small stead" (1). Some scholars have expanded on the idea of Golding's warning and related it the overall meaning of his work. Gibbs and Fuiz claim that the function of Golding's *Metamorphoses* is to serve as "an 'Anti-Bible'– a history of people without God's covenant" to show "the powerlessness of people in a culture without clear and certain meaning" and "the downfall of several heroic men…in a world turned upside down" (575). The evidence that I have discovered, however, shows that Golding did not present his translation as an Anti-Bible, but as a parallel Bible—a text that confirms the Word of God because it is in part a reworking of Biblical narratives. The texts that I explore show that Arthur Golding did not simply try to find moral lessons in the *Metamorphoses* using a traditional allegorical approach, but that he intended his project to be one of uncovering, beneath the poetic ornamentation, what he thought were the literal theological, moral, and historical meanings latent in Ovid's text for a discerning audience.

The magnitude of Golding's project of converting Ovid lead to significant anxiety on his part, as is clear from his cautionary couplet; an admonition for careful reading of dangerous content is uncharacteristic in books of the area. One early modern book with a similar note was Francesco Giorgi's *De Harmonia Mundi*, which included a censor's note on its title page advising cautious reading, "*caute legendum,*" because of the Platonistic and Cabalistic material it contained (Yeats 62). It is remarkable that Golding would put a warning similar to a censor's on his title page, especially when we compare it with title pages of Golding's other translations, where he praises his productions in the conventional manner. For example, he writes on the title

page to Justinus' *History* that it is "a worke conteynyng...great plentie of moste delectable

hystories, and notable examples, worthie not onelie to be read but also to be embraced and

followed of all menne" (1). Another of his translations is advertised as "a worke very pleasant

and profitable" (Bruni 1), and another calls itself, "a woorke very needefull and profitable"

(Calvin 1). That Golding puts a warning on the title page of this book alone out of all his works

shows his concern over its reception; from what we can reconstruct of the cultural attitudes of his

historical moment, his fears were not without justification.

Coinciding with the proliferation of classical translations around the time that Golding

started working on *Metamorphoses*, there was an anxiety about the value of profane literature in

early modern England. Influential humanist Thomas Elyot, through his character Candidus,

argued in 1540 that

> I could never rede that…Poets were called to any honorable place…for as moche
>
> as the more parte of their invencions consisted in leasynges, or in sterynge up of
>
> wanton appetytes, or in pourynge oute, in raylynge, theyr poison and malice. For
>
> with theyr owne goodes and goddesses wer they so malaparte, that with theyr
>
> aduoutries [sic] they fylled great volumes" (qtd. in Herman 44).

This critique is especially applicable to a work like *Metamorphoses* which highlights its

own penchant for stories about lascivious gods in Book Six, where Arachne weaves a tapestry

repeating all sixteen instances of divine adultery that had occurred in the poem up to that point.

Indeed, Elyot expressed concerns about Ovid's morality in particular in his influential 1531

educational treatise *The Book Named the Governor*: "Also Ovid who seemed to be most of all

poets lascivious in his most wanton books hath right commendable and noble sentences" (29).

Following this general condemnation, Elyot lists a few instances of worthy sentiment in Ovid's

works that he clearly believes are the exception, and not the rule. While some extreme elements within the Protestant movement were opposed to imaginative literature in all forms, Elyot was in the mainstream in worrying about the effects of texts that portrayed licentious behavior or pagan doctrines (Herman 13). The most famous expression of this sentiment was Stephen Gossen's 1579 *The School of Abuse*, an attack on plays and poetry that was considered serious enough to provoke Phillip Sidney's *Defense of Poesy*. Specifically, the specter of paganism was frightening to many Protestants who were increasingly exposed to classical texts. This anxiety was so acute that in his translation of Guydo de Columpnis, published in 1565, John Lydgate says that he will simply skip describing the pagan rites of the Trojans: "Wherfore as nowe I let overslyde, / Their paynim rites supersticious" (123). While Lydgate writes that he will merely "overslyde" the dangerous material in his translation, Thomas Drant, in his preface to a 1566 translation of Horace's *Satires* compares the changes he makes to the original to the violence enacted against the pagan captives at the hands of the Israelites in Deuteronomy 21: "I have done as the people of god wer commanded to do with their captive women that were hansome and beautiful: I have shaved of his heare, and pared of this nayles (that is) I have wiped awaye all his vanitie and superluitie of matter" (4). To avoid the dangerous enticement of pagan beauty in the text, Drant writes that he has "changed and much altered his wordes" (4). A year earlier, in 1565, Thomas Stapleton voiced a similar concern when he wrote that false books could lead a man to "become a very painim: which god forbid that ever any man should persuade the unlearned" (Staphylus 49). This fear that the uneducated class (or to early modern term "the simple sort") was vulnerable to pagan doctrines is especially relevant to a translator, who by definition takes a text previously available only to the few who could read a foreign language and presents it to the masses. The idea that the common people could not be trusted with pagan texts is parallel to

Catholic prohibitions of scriptural translation, and from a modern perspective, it is ironic for the Protestant champions of the vernacular Bible to voice it. These concerns about uneducated readers are particularly relevant to Golding's translation because of Ovid's encyclopedic compendium of pagan stories. Golding was nervous enough about this problem to include a separate introduction for "the simple sort [who may] offended…bee, / When in this booke the heathen names of feyned Godds they see" ("To the Reader," lines. 1-2).

Unexpectedly, Golding lent his own voice to the chorus condemning pagan literature by translating the attack on ancient poets that Theodore Beza appended to his closet drama *Abraham Sacrifiant*. One of Calvin's disciples at Geneva and a major figure in the continental reform movement, Beza published his play in French in 1550 while renouncing his former career as a poet and imitator of classical works. This work was popular in England along with Beza's other writings, and Arthur Golding's proficiency with languages meant that he had access to the originial by 1560s when he was working on his *Metamorphoses*. While the exact timing of his acquaintance with Beza is difficult to prove, he eventually thought the play was important enough to translate it in 1575. In Golding's version Beza writes, "For I confesse, that even of nature I have delighted in poetrie, & I can not yet repent me of it: neverthelesse it greveth me right sore, that the litle grace which God gave me in that behalfe, was imployed by me in such things, as the very remembrance of them irketh me now at the hart" (2-3). While Beza does not renounce all poetry, his conscience is grieved by the licentious works of pagan writers. "Of a truth it would become them [contemporary authors] better to sing a song of God then to…counterfet the furies of the auncient Poets, to blase abroad the glory of this world…or to buzie them selves rather in overturning then in turning of thinges" (3). The terms that Beza uses here in Golding's translation are surprisingly close to common caricatures of Ovid as a wanton

poet. Golding's work of translating Ovid fits Beza's description of a modern poet who portrays the works of ancient poets interested in poetical glory and the "overturning" of things because Ovid writes "Of shapes transformed to bodies strange" (1.1) and claims that "all the world shall never / Be able for to quench my name" (15.990-91). It is possible that Golding translated Beza as a kind of repentance for his earlier work, but judging by Golding's engagement with fervent Protestant groups since his college days, we can infer that he was in contact with Protestants who expressed these sentiments long before he translated Beza in 1575, so Golding must have had a way of reconciling his work with these Protestant opinions.

Notwithstanding the backlash he faced from his Protestant allies, Golding did translate all 15 books of the *Metamorphoses*. The factors that went into Golding's motivation included more than religious concerns, he also had patriotic and financial reasons for undertaking his transition. Inspired by the political nationalism under the Tudor monarchs, there was an emerging sense of linguistic nationalism that coincided with Golding's formative years. Elyot voiced this opinion in 1531 in *The Book Named the Governor*: "like as the Romaynes translated the wisedome of Grecia into theyr citie, we maye, if we lyste, bringe the lernynges and wysedomes of theym bothe into this realme of Englande, by the translation of theyr works" (88). For Elyot, "translate" could mean both the rendering of a text in a new language and the conveyance of something from one place to another. With these definitions in mind, we can see how Elyot suggested that the way that England can enrich itself in knowledge and understanding is to transport these virtues onto their island through translating ancient texts, just as the Romans did. Translating Ovid is an especially fitting response to Elyot's call because Ovid was one of the Romans Elyot mentions who was himself a translator, in the sense that he reworked Greek material into the Latin language and culture. Closer to the time Golding made his translation, Roger Ascham

praised Hoby's version of Castiglione's *The Courtier* as "so well translated into English" that with the "book, advisedly read, and diligently followed, but one year at home in England would do a young gentleman more good, I wish, than three years travel abroad spent in Italy" (20). The knowledge of Italy could be had in England through translation without any need for physical travel because the meaning of the book had already been carried across. In 1561, Jasper Heywood, a young student from Cambridge where Golding had studied briefly before leaving the college in the wake of the Marian Catholic reforms, wrote about the patriotic nature of translation. He writes that he will "endeuour to shew my selfe so louing to my countreye, as to helpe for the small talent that god hath geuen me, to conduct by som meanes to further vnderstanding the vnripened schollers of this realm" (3). A similar love of country was the theme of Thomas Nuce's writings, another younger contemporary of Golding's who studied at Cambridge. "The translating of Latine, or other Bookes of other languages, into our mother tong, doth…profite the common wealth…and especially to the profit of our native country" (3). The patriotic rhetoric employed by these translators involved giving profit to their nation, but translation involved personal profits as well.

There was a connection between the nationalistic project of enriching the English language through translation and the economic patronage system that made many of these translations possible. Supporting the arts was one of the main methods of political propaganda in the English Renaissance. In the Elizabethan court, patronage was one of the many ways that nobles could distinguish themselves. The Queen herself was famous for her ability with languages, and produced translations starting at age eight. Happy to receive countless fawning dedications, Elizabeth rarely had to support financially writers and translators to secure their praise. Other nobles vying for attention actually sought out translators for the prestige a

groundbreaking translation would bring to their name. Brenda M. Hosington, in *The Oxford History of Literary Translation* outlines this pattern and lists some of the major benefactors of translations in the Elizabethan era. The most prolific patron in her list is Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester, who attracted dedications from Thomas North, James Sanforde, Robert Peterson, William Blandie, Timothy Kendall, and Arthur Golding (54-55). Leicester actively supported Golding during the translation process, taking him into his close circle as evidenced by Golding's preface to the 1565 edition of the first four books of Ovid's epic which he places "at Cecil house," the residence of William Cecil, one of Leicester's political allies. In that preface Golding flatters Leicester's patriotism as well as his honor. He writes that Leicester was "wont to encourage them [translators] to proceed in their painful exercises attempted of a zeal and desire to enrich their native language with things not heretofore published in the same" ("1565 Epistle" 2). The appeal of enriching the English literary canon was great enough for Leicester to encourage and support Golding financially. Golding writes that "if it may please you [Leicester] to take" the translation as a gift, "I account my former travail herein sufficiently recompensed and think myself greatly enforced to persevere in the full accomplishment of all the whole work" ("1565 Epistle" 2). Golding implies that Leicester's approval is all he needs to finish the project, but the language of remuneration in the dedication suggests that the relationship involved material as well as intellectual support. Besides the patriotic cachet he garnered by supporting the translation, or to use an alternate contemporary term, Englishing of a great work of classical literature, it is possible that Leicester had personal reasons for being Golding's benefactor. Leicester had been one of Ascham's pupils, and had apparently wasted his natural gifts for languages. Ascham, famous for advocating double-translation as the best method for learning Latin, had written to Leicester in 1571 that "When I [Ascham] see the ability of inditing that is in

you naturally, I lament…that by your own fault you do not exercise and exceed yourself by labour wherein you exceed almost all other by nature" (104). If this charge rang true for Leicester, it is not hard to imagine him sponsoring Golding's massive translation as compensation for his personal lack of exercise in translating and language learning despite his natural talents. At the very least, Leicester would have a native predisposition to the kinds of projects that Golding could offer.

Whatever Leicester's reasons for commissioning him, Golding's translation had the nationalistic appeal of bringing a major work into English and offered Golding the rewards of Leicester's patronage. But even with the nationalistic and financial forces that helped to shape his decision to translate, Golding still needed to shield himself from the potential criticism of his Protestant contemporaries. One obvious method that was available to him was to read the *Metamorphoses* allegorically, finding hidden meanings that supported moral living and Christian doctrine. Practiced by Pierre Brusier in *Ovidius Moralizatus* in 1340 and the author of *Ovide Moralisé* in French around the same time, this was the medieval method of reading Ovid which involved the traditional four-fold exegesis of explaining the literal, moral, allegorical, and anagogical senses of a text. Significantly, the first version of *Metamorphoses* in English was Caxton's 1477 translation of one of these French versions, in which Caxton preserved the medieval commentary but gave Ovid's narrative only in paraphrase. While Golding probably did not have access to Caxton's version, which appears to have survived only in a single manuscript, he was familiar with allegorized interpretations including the notes in the Latin text from which he translated (Forey xix). However, even though it was a way to avoid the straightforward presentation of immoral content, there was a danger in allegorical interpretation, as the rejection

of an allegorical reading of scripture was one of the first defining characteristics of Protestantism.

Along with their focus on direct access to the authoritative Word (*sola scriptura*), Protestants insisted on its strict literal interpretation (*solus sensus litteralis*). In a 1575 translation of Luther's commentary on Galatians, Luther condemns "the idle and unlearned Monks and the Schooledoctors…which taught that the Scripture hath foure senses: the literall sense, the figuratiue sense, the allegoricall sense, and the morall sense, and according to these senses they have foolishly interpreted almost all the wordes of the Scriptures" (210). Luther associates the complex method of fourfold exegesis with Catholicism ("monks") and scholasticism ("Schooledoctors"). Luther even specifically condemned this interpretational technique when it was applied to Ovid's epic, writing that "At first allegories originated from stupid and idle monks. Finally they spread so widely that some men turned Ovid's Metamorphoses into allegories. They made a laurel tree Mary, and Apollo they made Christ" (qtd. in Stapleton 272). Such condemnations from the great reformer would have been troubling for a Protestant and humanist like Golding. And Luther was not alone in his denunciation of allegorical exegesis. William Tyndale, the biblical translator, wrote in *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, "that the scripture hath but one sense, which is the literal sense. And that literal sense is the root and ground of all, and the anchor that never faileth, whereunto if thou cleave, thou canst never err or go out of the way" (164). Here Tyndale equates straying from the literal sense into an allegorical reading with straying from the sanctioned "way" and into forbidden paths of sin. Earlier in his treatise, Tyndale specifically mentions Ovid as an example of the improper practice of allegorical exegesis. He mocks those who "prove a point of the Faith as well out of a fable of Ovid or any other poet, as out of St John's Gospel or Paul's Epistles" (160) and tells his readers

that in establishing doctrines, such false tales are "of no greater value than a tale of Robin Hood" (159). These statements from Tyndale would seem to indicate that there was no room for an allegorical reading of the *Metamorphoses* in English Protestant culture, but Tyndale's insistence on the literal sense is not as rigid as it appears. As Thomas Luxon has pointed out, Tyndale "sounds like the most absurd sort of literalist…but he is not." Luxon explains that Tyndale believed that certain passages in scripture like proverbs "require diligent searching and interpretation to arrive at its intended literal sense" (81). Although Luxon's overarching claims that Protestants considered all of history to be allegorical have been questioned by Deborah Shuger, my reading of Tyndale justifies Luxon's opinion in this point. Tyndale writes that "allegory is as much to say as strange speaking, or borrowed speech: as when we say of a wanton child, 'This sheep hath magots in his tail, he must be anointed with birchen salve;' which speech I borrow of the shepherds… Thus borrow we, and feign new speech in every tongue. All fables, prophecies, and riddles, are allegories; as Aesop's fables, and Merlin's prophecies; and the interpretation of them are the literal sense" (163). Ignoring his glib reference to the corporal punishment of children, we can see from this passage that Tyndale believes that an allegorical interpretation of texts designed to be read allegorically—like Aesop's fables—is actually the literal sense of that text. Barbara Lewalski gives a representative example of this kind of exegetical strategy in the words of James Durham who wrote, "There is a great difference betwixt an Allegorick Exposition of Scripture, and an Exposition of Allegorick Scripture: the first is that, which many Fathers and School-men fail in, that is, when they Allegorize plain Scriptures and Histories" (122). This distinction between attaching a false interpretation onto a straightforward text and finding the literal meaning behind an allegorical text is important to our understanding of Golding's interpretive apparatus. In his cultural context, he needed to show that

he was not imposing a false meaning onto his translation, but finding the morals that Ovid had intentionally placed there. Thus, it is inappropriate to simply label Golding's method a "traditional allegorical approach;" in the new Protestant tradition, Golding's approach to allegory was very different from the method that had been employed for hundreds of years previously.

In refashioning Ovid into an author that that had intended the *Metamorphoses* as religious and moral instruction, Golding followed contemporary mythological scholarship by asserting that the Roman poet was influenced, directly, or indirectly, by a Christian reading of the Hebrew Bible. Golding also claimed that the greatest of the ancient writers had spiritual insight into Christian truths that allowed them to write such powerful poetry. Golding articulates these two theories in his prefatory materials to explain the remarkable agreement that he saw between *Metamorphoses* and the Calvinist interpretation of the Bible. The first is that Christian truths, which had originally been common before becoming lost or corrupted by the fall of mankind, were still partially remembered by the poets. "For nature beeing once corrupt...By Adams fall, those little seedes and sparkes of heavenly lyght / That did as yit remayne in man...To superstition did decline" ("To the Reader" 5-9). Because of this corruption of the divine seeds, or patterns, the Greek and Roman religious stories were only distorted pictures of genuine sacred history. However, Golding posits that even in this state of superstitious decline, the spark of heavenly light within man could occasionally incline the mind to true doctrine. Golding speculates on the possibility that Ovid's "mynd did beare / Him witnesse that there are no Gods but one" ("Epistle" 393-94) and seems to equate poetic inspiration with prophetic power. In this sense, Golding gives credence to the Latin practice of calling poets *vates* or prophetic bards.

Golding's second method of Christianizing Ovid is to claim that this Roman poet had read the Hebrew Bible and based many of his incidents and messages on that text. Ovid "seems

according to the sense of scripture to proceed" ("Epistle" 416), Golding writes, and generalizes

that all of the ancient "Poets tooke the ground of all their cheefest fables out / Of scripture"

("Epistle" 530). If the ancient poets had access to scripture, what prevented them from telling

stories that were similar to those found in the Bible? The answer that Golding gives refashions

Ovid after his own image: as a Christian interpreter and an allegorist. Ovid's purpose in writing

his tales of transformations was "To vertue and godlynesse but furtherers of the same," just as

Golding's book is written "To all mens profit and delyght" ("Epistle" 614). Furthermore, if Ovid

had access to the Bible, it was presumably in the Hebrew or the Greek versions, so his task of

writing what Golding calls "the sense of scripture" is one of translation, or of conveying the

sense of one text into another. But instead of simply translating the Hebrew or Greek version of

the Bible he supposedly had into Latin, Golding claims that Ovid and other Roman poets

"shadowing with their gloses went about / To turne the truth to toyes and lyes" ("Epistle" 530-

31), or in other words, to make the truths of scripture into allegories that only "lerned persons"

could properly decipher ("Epistle" 185). By aligning Ovid with himself, Golding essentially

presents a converted and reformed Ovid, someone whom even fervent Protestants could "safely

use without desert of blame" ("Epistle" 337).

  In order to see how Golding went about reforming Ovid in the body of his translation, we

will look at a series of examples where Golding has departed from a strict literal rendering of the

Latin text to prove that Ovid's poem was a hidden retelling of the Bible. Golding spends over a

third of his prefatory material drawing parallels between the creation, the four stages of man, and

the universal flood with similar stories in Genesis, effectively setting the reader up to see Ovid's

text through a biblical lens. After claiming that "partly in the outward phrase, but more in very

deed, / [Ovid] seems according to the sense of scripture to proceed" ("Epistle" 415-16) in his

introduction, Golding modifies the "outward phrase" as well as the order of Ovid's account of the creation. Where the Latin reads *cesserunt nitidis habitandae piscibus undae, / terra feras cepit, volucres agitabilis aer* (I.74-5), [They let the fish live under the shining wave, the wild beast occupied the land, the agile birds the air] with Ovid's text ascending up a ladder of hierarchy from fish below to beasts on land to birds in the air, Golding's version reads "The waters next both fresh and salt he let the fishes have. / The suttle ayre to flickring fowles and birdes he hath assignde. / The earth to beasts both wilde and tame of sundrie sort and kinde." (I.84-6). The inversion of the order of beasts and birds is significant because Golding is invested in having Ovid follow the biblical account where the fish and the fowls come on the fifth day of creation and the land animals follow on the sixth. The departure from the Latin text here is slight, only involving a change in order without any significant expansion or contraction of the substance of the story, but it makes the text into an allusion to the Bible which furthers Golding's project of portraying Ovid as actively encoding the Genesis account into his poem.

In addition to changing the order of elements in Ovid's text, Golding often expanded on phrases in the Latin to read Ovid in a biblical context. Golding promises in his Epistle to show how "when he [Ovid] comes to speake of man, he dooth not vainly say / (as some have written) that he was before all time for ay, / Ne mentioneth mo Gods than one in making him. But thus / He both in sentence and in sense his meaning dooth discusse" ("Epistle" 417-20). Golding is building Ovid's Christian credibility again by contrasting him with ancients like Plato who expressed the opinion that humankind had always existed in his *Phaedrus*. In the next few lines of the Epistle, Golding quotes his own translation to further prove that Ovid's portrayal of human creation was an allusion to the Judeo-Christian account.

> Howbeit yet of all this while, the creature wanting was,

> Farre more devine, of nobler minde, which should the residue passe
>
> In depth of knowledge, reason, wit, and high capacitie,
>
> And which of all the residue should the Lord and ruler bee. (I.87-94)

The Latin text for this section with my literal translation follows :

> *Sanctius his animal mentisque capacius altae*
>
> *deerat adhuc et quod dominari in cetera posset*. (I.76-7)
>
> [A more sanctified creature with a larger, lofty mind was still missing who could
>
> dominate the rest]

Here Golding expands on his source text considerably, focusing on the dignity of man with words like "divine," "nobler," "knowledge," "reason," and "wit" expanding considerably on the Latin terms "*sanctius*" and "*capacious*." While "*capacious*" could connote a more capable mind, the ideas of "knowledge" and "reason" are Golding's additions, and "divine" transforms the ideas of setting apart and consecration associated with "*sanctius*" into an idea reminiscent of man created "after the image of God" (*Geneva Bible*, Gen. 1:27) Here Golding is changing his translation into the theological idiom of his culture that stressed the affinity between God and prelapsarian man. Indeed, he goes beyond the text of the Bible (which does not mention the "reason," "wit," or "nobility" of Adam and Eve) and reads the Calvinist interpretation of the story back onto Ovid's poem. He continues this technique a few lines later, writing:

> And where all other beasts behold the ground with groveling eie,
>
> He gave to Man a stately looke replete with majestie.
>
> And willde him to behold the Heaven wyth countnance cast on hie,
>
> To marke and understand what things were in the starrie skie. (I.96-100)

Again, the Latin text and my translation:

> *Pronaque cum spectent animalia cetera terram,*
>
> *os homini sublime dedit, caelumque videre*
>
> *iussit et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus*. (I.84-87)
>
> [Bent over, the rest of the animals look at the ground, but he made humans have
>
> an upturned face and told them to look up to the stars]

Golding's key expansions here are the phrase "stately looke replete with majestie" and the term "understand" by which implies what his introduction overtly states—that we are "to lift our eyes…of mind / To heaven…to learn to know / And knowledge him that dwelleth there" ("Epistle" 463-65). Again, the changes to the text here stress the dignity of mankind before the Fall and the importance of understanding the will of heaven. Instead of simple moralization where an author draws a practical lesson for life from a story, the interpretation here is more focused on promoting a particular brand of Christianity than on giving advice for upright living. Golding certainly was capable of the kind of standard moralizing that he employed in his unpublished translation of Aesopic fables titled *Moral Fabletalk*, and he uses it at times in his *Metamorphoses*, but his emphasis is on the more serious theological implications of his interpretation.

Later in Book 1, Golding changes not just the order or connotations of the original, but adds specifically Christian terms to the narrative is his treatment of the flood passage. Golding makes the episode sound and feel like the story of Noah from Genesis 6 through a more radical departure from the text than we have seen in previous examples. In Ovid's Latin, Jove explains that he must destroy the all of the families of the earth because "*qua terra patet, fera regnat Erinys. / In facinus iurasse putes. Dent ocius omnes / quas meruere pati (sic stat sententia) poenas*" (I.241-43) [to the ends of the earth a wild Fury reigns. They have sworn falsely. Let

them quickly pay all who deserve to suffer punishment. Thus stands my will]. The offense for

which mankind will be destroyed here involves corrupt oaths, but the Judeo-Christian notions of

sin or disobedience to God's will are absent. Golding renders this passage thus,

> in all the Earth is none, / But that such vice doth reigne therein, as that ye would
>
> beleve, / That all had sworne and solde themselves to mischief us to grieve. / And
>
> therefore as they all offend: so am I fully bent, / That all forthwith (as they
>
> deserve) shall have due punishment" (I.281-85).

His translation gives a much more Judeo-Christian explanation for God's decision to flood the

earth, rendering "*Erinys*" as "vice," and expanding the idea of falsely swearing into the charged

Christian idiom "sold themselves to mischief" with its implication of the need for redemption, or

a buying back. In this passage, Golding almost certainly has in mind the phrasing of Genesis 6:5-

13:

> When the Lord sawe that the wickednesse of man was great in the earth, and all
>
> the imaginations of the thoughtes of his heart were onely euill
>
> continually…Therefore ye Lord said, I will destroy from the earth the man, whom
>
> I haue created…for the earth is filled with crueltie through them" (*Geneva Bible*).

Golding's Epistle explains his interpretation of the episode in terms of Ovid's intentional

allegorization. He claims that "All these things [the main ideas of the flood] the Poet here dooth

show / In colour, altring both the names of persons, tyme and place" ("Epistle" 490-91).

The phrase "in colour" here refers to the rhetorical figures that distinguish a "playne and naked

tale or storie simply told" with a more engaging presentation "that shadowed is with colours in

his kynde…the thing…well declared, with pleasant termes and art" ("To the Reader" 122-26). In

other words, Ovid's stories are a layer of ornament covering the plain truths of the Bible.

Golding, by rendering their true meaning is not like the Catholic "Schooledoctors" that Luther

had railed against for elaborating simple passages with superfluous four-fold exegesis, but he is

instead following in the Protestant tradition of reducing allegorical ornamentation to get at the

simple truth.

Within the text of his translation, Golding dramatizes his quest for finding the biblical

truths lying behind the words of ancient poetry. In the ending of the flood episode, where Pyrrha

and Deucalion pray for the ability to start the human race anew, Golding sympathetically

imagines himself in the action of this narrative about interpretation, giving himself a precedent

for his interpretational technique within Ovid's text. In the story, Deucalion and Pyrrha receive a

cryptic message instructing them how to repopulate the world. They are forced to figure out the

meaning of the message just as Golding worked to decipher Ovid's epic. The goddess they pray

to tells them "Depart you hence: Go hille your heads, and let your garmentes slake, / And both of

you your Graundames bones behind your shoulders cast" (452-53), leaving them to make sense

of the command. Deucalion and Pyrrha puzzle over this message, "The doubtfull wordes wherof

they scan and canvas to and fro" (460), after which they make their interpretations. At first,

Pyrrha takes the message literally, and is "afraide hir Graundames ghost to hurt / By taking up

hir buried bones to throw them in the durt" (457-58). However, Deucalion allays her fears

because he shows that in this case the apparently literal meaning is not the same as the intended

meaning. Just as Protestants allowed for an allegorical reading of an allegoric scripture,

Deucalion is able to see past the apparent meaning of the commandment and into its intended

meaning, which is much more simple. To solve the riddle, Deucalion reasons, "by counsell wise

and sage," that

"Well, eyther in these doubtfull words is hid some misterie,

> Whereof the Gods permit us not the meaning to espie,
>
> Or questionlesse and if the sence of inward sentence deeme
>
> Like as the tenour of the words apparantly doe seeme,
>
> It is no breach of godlynesse to doe as God doth bid.
>
> I take our Graundame for the earth, the stones within hir hid
>
> I take for bones, these are the bones the which are meaned here.

In this example, Deucalion's thought process mirrors Golding's when the latter searches Ovid's words with a conviction that there is "hid some misterie" in these "doubtfull words." One prominent scholar has recently pointed out this sympathy from a translator who is "especially sensitized to characters who are in a similar position" to his (Reynolds 297). Reynolds focuses on the relationship between Deucalion's parsing of the text of the oracle and Golding's process of translation, focusing on the "verbal trick" whereby "'Stones' mean 'bones' because the two words rhyme" (297). However, I believe that the connection between Golding and Deucalion has less to do with linguistic translation than the explanation of concealed meaning. The words themselves are easy to translate, but their significance is harder to interpret. It is important to note that the passages about hidden meanings, including the phrases "sence of inward sentence" and "tenour of the words apparantly doe seeme" are Golding's interpolations where the Latin only reads "*aut fallax...est sollertia nobis*" [unless my wit is false] (1.391). Golding's additions here refashion Deucalion, and by extension, Ovid into interpreters of intentional allegory, and justify the Christianizing that Golding does in the rest of this story. Keeping Genesis in mind, Golding writes that Deucalion and his wife are "both just and both devout" (1.383), and that they petition God with "humble heart and minde" (1.445) which recalls the description of Noah as "a just and upright man" (Gen. 6:9). Furthermore, just as Noah "found grace in the eyes of the

Lord" (Gen. 6:8), Deucalion and Pyrrha earnestly "seeke / To God by prayer for his grace" (1.432-33) and "such grace and favor find" (1.446) that the gods answer their petition. In keeping with his Christian theme, Golding translates "*pia*," the Roman ideal of duty and loyalty, as "godlyness" (1.477), and gives "church" (1.441) and "chapell" (1.443) for "*templi*" [temple] and "*delubra*" [shrine]. Golding is not worried about these Christianizations because he believes that Ovid actually meant "church" when he wrote "*templi*" because, as he writes in his preface, a plain story "Makes not the hearer so attent to print it in his hart / As when the thing is well declarede, with pleasant terms and art" ("To the Reader" 125-26).

The examples we have looked at so far—the creation, the flood, and the repopulation of the world—all have clear biblical analogues and involve material that Golding easily reworked in a Christian mould. The moral and theological lessons that he draws from these episodes do not seem too far-fetched when compared with the original Latin text. The wisdom and order of God's creation, the punishment for sin with the flood, and the rewards for piety with the blessings to Deucalion may not be obvious in the original, but Golding's subtle changes in order, connotation, and expansion makes these episodes into a parallel Bible that proves the universality of truth. However, some would argue that there are many more episodes containing violence, eroticism, or both that fit Gibbs and Fuiz's description of "an 'Anti-Bible'—the record of a people without God's covenant" from which readers can only learn by way of warning. But scholars like Gibbs and Fuiz forget that Judeo-Christian scripture is also full of negative examples that function as warnings that would have seemed resonant with Ovid's stories for a reader like Golding. For every story like the rape of Philomela in Ovid, we can find the rape of Dinah in Genesis 34 or the rape and dismemberment of the Levite's concubine in Judges 18. To parallel the story of Myrrha, we have the story of Lot's daughters in Genesis 19. When Golding

arrives at the stories that Orpheus narrates in Book Ten, the incestuous relationship between

Myrrha and her father, his reaction to the episode is in line with Protestant reactions to similar

incidents in the Bible. He denounces the sinful act as a deviation from an established order, not

as proof of a society that exists without order. Golding contains the infamous narrative in a

textual barrier of condemnation to prevent his readers from misunderstanding the moral of the

story. Before beginning, Golding expands upon Ovid's warning from Book Ten which reads:

> *dira canam; procul hinc natae, procul este parente*
>
> *aut, mea si vestras mulcebunt carmina mentes,*
>
> *desit in hac mihi parte fides, nec credite factum,*
>
> *vel, si credetis, facti quoque credite poenam.* (10.300-03)
>
> [Dire is my song; far off from here, daughters, and fathers be far off or, if your
>
> minds are charmed by my song, miss giving me credit in this part, believe this
>
> never happened, or, if you believe, also believe the punishment]

The emphasis here in the Latin is balanced between the roles of the narrator and the audience:

just as the narrator repeatedly tells the audience to flee or disbelieve the story, he highlights the

pleasing power of his song which is so potent that the audience will stay after all of his warnings.

Golding has an interest in maintaining an image of Ovid as a wise teacher of Biblical truths;

therefore, even though this passage is narrated by Orpheus, Golding shifts the emphasis away

from the poet's charming power.

> Of wicked and most cursed things to speake I now commence.
>
> Yee daughters and yee parents all go get yee farre from hence.
>
> Or if yee mynded bee to heere my tale, beleeve mee nought
>
> In this beehalfe: ne think that such a thing was ever wrought.

> Or if yee will beeleeve the deede, beleeve the vengeance too
>
> Which lyghted on the partye that the wicked act did doo. (10.327-32)

Even though Golding has ample space in his long lines, he has completely eliminated Ovid's portrayal of the intoxicating power of prurient poetry. As we have now come to expect, Golding has interpolated several condemnatory adjectives that do not exist in the Latin. "Wicked and most cursed," and "wicked acts" are added to clarify further that the story is depraved. Golding's use of "vengeance" for "poenam" heightens the biblical feel of the passage by aligning it with such scriptural commonplaces as "vengeance is mine, I will repay" (Rom. 12:19) instead of using the legal term "penalty."

Because Golding deemphasizes Ovid's complaisance in purveying a narrative of over 250 lines describing incest between a father and his daughter, he is able to maintain his portrayal of Ovid as a biblical teacher. In fact, by playing up the language of condemnation that is less pronounced in the original, Golding creates a vision of Ovid that aligns him with Protestant commentators on the Bible. Instead of presenting a history of a people without a moral code, Golding shows Ovid comparing his characters' actions with a Christian moral standard. The way that Golding contains and moralizes the episode closely parallels the way that his fellow Protestants contained similar stories that they came across in the Bible. For example, Protestant commentary on the story of Lot's daughters in the Geneva Bible (the most popular Protestant version in England in the 1560s) shows a similar pattern to Golding's moralization. Without this commentary, the text in Genesis relates the incident without any obvious moralization, explaining that Lot's daughters were motivated by a desire to maintain the family line, not by forbidden lust like Myrrha. "the elder [daughter] saide unto the yonger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth, to come in unto us after the maner of all ye earth. Come, wee will

make our father drinke wine, and lie with him, that we may preserve the seede of our father"

(Gen. 19:31-32). This conspiracy between two female characters is reminiscent of Myrrha's

incestuous scheme, but instead of agreeing to sleep with an unseen maiden like Myrrha's father,

Lot is oblivious to his role in making his daughters pregnant. After completing their plan "they

made their father drinke wine that night, and the elder went and lay with her father: but he

perceiued not, neither when she lay downe, neither when she rose up" (verse 33). This pattern

repeats the next day, and soon both daughters become pregnant, eventually giving birth to sons.

We are told that their sons, Moab and Ben-ammi are the progenitors of the Canaanite tribes of

the Moabites and Ammonites "unto this day" (verse 38). This etiological twist is reminiscent of

many of Ovid's explanations that rhetorically signal the end of each episode, and often take the

place of a moral to the story. Similarly the Bible passage does not overtly condemn Lot's

daughters, though the association of Lot's daughters with the wicked peoples of Canaan that the

Israelites will later drive out does imply that their actions were sinful. Still, for Protestant readers

like Golding, the lack of local and specific judgment calls for clarification, and in the Geneva

Bible, several marginal glosses provide the interpretational containment of the story. We read

that "unless [Lot] had been drunk, he would never have done that abominable act" but the

commentary does not completely absolve Lot from his sin: "Thus God permitted him to fall most

horribly in the solitary mountains, whom the wickedness of Sodom could not overcome" (24).

Even the Biblical narrator's etiological note about the Ammonites is moralized in the

commentary, and Geneva Bible notes that Ben-ammi means "son of my people: signifying that

they rejoiced in their sin, rather than repenting of it" (24). With this example from the Bible that

Golding and his fellow Protestants read from in mind, it is clear that Myrrha's incest would not

be understood as a history of sin only conceivable among a people "without God's covenant."

Lot was Abraham's nephew, and his daughters were born into the Abrahamic covenant, yet they still committed incest with their father. From the text in Genesis, it is not entirely obvious that their actions are sinful, but commentaries like the notes in the Geneva Bible supply the necessary moralization. Golding makes Ovid parallel to Calvin in that he has Ovid comment on the story to clarify otherwise ambiguous moral implications.

By showing that the literal sense of Ovid's work, or the meaning that Ovid intended his readers to take from his poem, was Christian and moral, Golding was able to circumvent the criticism that may have come from liberal Protestants. He is able to present objectionable material embedded in an interpretational framework that drew Christianity out of paganism and moral lessons out of ribald stories, all while avoiding the charges Protestants leveled against allegorical interpretation. Golding goes to great lengths to prove that Ovid intended for his poem to appear to be "outwardly most pleasant tales and delectable histories," but "fraught inwardly with most pithy instructions and wholesome examples, and containing both ways most exquisite cunning and deep knowledge" ("1565 Epistle" lines 5-9). Without considering the cultural meanings associated with translation, immoral literature, and allegorical interpretation, it is easy to be stumped by the "paradox" of Golding's work, or come to the conclusion that it was meant purely as a collection of negative examples as Gibbs and Fuiz did. However, with a proper contextual framework in place, we can begin to understand why Golding chose to translate the *Metamorphoses*, why he packaged it in the way he did with his paratextual material, and why he departed in the ways he did from a literal reading of the Latin text. He was not so much a moralizer of the *Metamorphoses* as he was the converter of Ovid himself.

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