

# Philosophy in Ovid, Ovid as Philosopher

*Edited by*

KATHARINA VOLK AND GARETH D. WILLIAMS

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## Preface

This volume grew out of the editors' longstanding interest in two apparently unrelated topics: Ovidian poetry and Roman philosophy. While many classical Latin poets were increasingly studied for their philosophical allusions and affiliations, Ovid was until relatively recently still often considered an irreverent virtuoso averse to serious thought. But could an Augustan *poeta doctus* really be so out of touch with one of the most significant intellectual developments of his time? Was there no philosophy in Ovid—and no way of seeing Ovid as a philosopher?

With these questions in mind, we contacted an international group of scholars—both seasoned Ovidians and younger colleagues—and asked whether they might be interested in participating in a conference on *Ovidius Philosophus*. The response was overwhelmingly enthusiastic; one person even told us that he had been waiting his “whole life for this conference to come along”! The event took place at Columbia University on March 29–30, 2019, and the chapters in this volume are (sometimes significantly) revised versions of the papers delivered then. We are most grateful to the authors for making the conference a success and contributing their work to the volume.

In organizing the conference and seeing the publication to completion, we have relied on the support of many individuals and institutions, which it is a pleasure to acknowledge in these pages. The Stanwood Cockey Lodge Foundation generously subsidized both the original event and the volume's preparation for publication. Additional funding for the conference came from the Columbia Department of Classics, the Columbia University Seminars, Columbia's Center for the Ancient Mediterranean, and Columbia's Society of Fellows and Heyman Center for the Humanities. We are most grateful for their support and also wish to convey our heartfelt thanks to Lien van Geel for her skill and good cheer in taking care of the conference logistics.

We are delighted that our exploration into Ovidian philosophy has found a home with Oxford University Press and thank Stefan Vranka for his belief in the project and for his help and support throughout. We are grateful to Ponneeelan Moorthy for steering the book through production and to



Volk  
Williams

Philosophy in Ovid, Ovid as Philosopher

Advance Praise for *PHILOSOPHY IN OVID, OVID AS PHILOSOPHER*

"This volume will do a lot to advance the idea that there is much more to Ovid than his *lascivia*. More broadly, it will help to reframe in very positive ways how we understand the relationship between philosophy and Latin poetry."

—JOSEPH FARRELL, University of Pennsylvania

"This excellent book mightily exceeds the expectations of a collaborative volume. The multi-author collection not only takes stock of philosophical themes and intertexts in Ovid's oeuvre but also opens up fresh perspectives grounded in the proposition (really developed here for the first time) that Ovid is seriously engaged with Greco-Roman philosophy. A groundbreaking volume that charts totally new paths toward more fully understanding an underappreciated dimension of Ovid's poetry."

—JOHN F. MILLER, University of Virginia

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