Living with Ovid: The Founding of Arnulf of Orléans’ Thebes
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In the late twelfth century Arnulf of Orléans (c. 1175), schoolmaster at the cathedral school of St Euverte, produced a composite commentary to Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, which influenced the reception, grammatical and allegorical interpretation, and commentary tradition of the work through the fifteenth century.¹ In particular, Arnulf’s unique combination of meticulous philological rigor and assertive allegorical exposition (at times even self-referential) allows a view into a classroom in which an authoritative master recontextualizes the *Metamorphoses* for his students and reconciles its meaning within the milieu of the late twelfth century. This essay will contextualize the nature and influence of Arnulf’s *Metamorphoses* commentary, analyze the formats of the extant manuscript evidence, then illustrate the significant blend of grammatical and allegorical approaches through a close reading of Arnulf’s commentary to Ovid’s founding of Thebes, a well known episode which serves as an illustrative epitome of the commentator’s innovative exposition of the *Metamorphoses*.

Arnulf of Orléans and the *Orléanais*
Arnulf, also known as Rufus Arnulfus, was one of the known authoritative masters of the *Orléanais* active in the late

¹ A complete critical edition is in progress currently from my unpublished dissertation, Gura, ‘A Critical Edition and Study of Arnulf of Orléans’ Philological Commentary’; the seminal article discovering Arnulf and his works is Ghisalberti, ‘Arnolfo d’Orléans’, which edits some of the material and remains the only edition of the *Allegoriae*. Though commendable, Ghisalberti’s text is prone to many errors in transcription and does not represent the textual tradition accurately since many important manuscripts and their relationships were unknown to him; Coulson, ‘Reading the Classics in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance’, 29-30 addresses the problems of Ghisalberti’s text; see also Coulson and Nawotka, ‘The
Re-Discovery of Arnulf of Orléans’ Glosses to Ovid’s Creation Myth’, 267-99; and Coulson’s many publications in this bibliography.


4. Contemporary attestations include Alexander Neckham (*De laudibus divinae sapientiae*, 5.607-10) and Geoffrey of Vinsauf (*Poetria Nova*, 1013-17); generally, see Engelbrecht’s articles in n. 3; Ziolkowski, ‘Mastering Authors and Authorizing Masters’, 112-3 for Orléans specifically; Coulson, ‘Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* in the School Tradition of France, 1180-1400’, 48-50; Coulson, ‘Ovid’s Transformations in Medieval France’, 33-5.

This access to texts, source materials, schools, and Magister Hilary’s tradition of exposition no doubt fostered the robust output of the *Orléanais* commentators. Arnulf authored commentaries on the Ovidian corpus including the *Fasti*, *Amores*, *Ars amatoria*, and *Remedia amoris*; commentaries on the *Heroides*, *Tristia*, and *Epistulae ex Ponto* are also attributed to him. In addition to the works of Ovid, Arnulf also wrote a substantial commentary on Lucan’s *Bellum civile* (i.e. *Pharsalia*). Lastly, commentaries on the works of Horace, the pseudo-Plautine *Querolus* and elegiac comedies are likely spurious attributions. The manuscript evidence for the circulation and dissemination of his commentaries spans the late twelfth through the fifteenth century and attests to the schoolmaster’s influence.

Authorship of many commentaries can be attributed reliably to Arnulf due to the commentator’s fondness of embedding a self-referential colophon as the final gloss. For example,
Arnulf’s final gloss on the *Metamorphoses* in which he inserts himself into the poem usurping the first person by appending a prepositional phrase to the final line (lemmata in italics):

*indefflebile* anime siquidem bonorum non deflentur, immo malorum unde et anima Rufi Arnulfus, qui has glosulas fecit Aurelianis, defleri non debet si eas bene fecit immo *si quid habent ueri uatum presagia uiuam cum Ouidio.*

*unlamentable*, indeed the souls of the good are not lamented, rather those of wicked; and for this reason the soul of Rufus Arnulfus, who made these glosses in Orléans, should not be lamented if he made them well – no, wait – if the vagaries of poets have any truth I shall live with Ovid.

Other examples are found in his commentaries on *Remedia amoris*, *Fasti*, and *Bellum ciuile*.

1.5 The comments always serve as markers of the commentator’s auctoritas, and are aggressive, even polemical, displays of self-aggrandizement. Consider his self-referential colophon to the *Remedia amoris* in which he engages deliberately his rival, Fulco who authored his own commentary to the *Remedia*:

*Postmodo*, postquam legeritis et sanati fueritis, soluetis quod uouistis, quia eger sanitatem recepit per hoc opus ‘De remediis’ quod Arnulfus glosauit ad sanandos illos qui a Fulcone fuerant decepti.

*Afterwards* after you read and are cured, you’ll get what you prayed for, because the sick man reclaimed his
health through this work, ‘De remediiis’, which Arnulf glossed to cure those who had been deceived by Fulco.

Arnulf’s use of the self-referential colophon shows more than an indication of ‘the growth of auctoritas around select major names’.18 The embedded colophons provide examples of the personal connection he feels toward his work, but also show an awareness of competing texts in the area.

However, Arnulf’s commentary to the Metamorphoses distinguishes itself from the other commentaries circulating in the Loire during the period. In addition to an accessus19 and glosses (Glosulae), the commentary also contains a list of transformations (Mutationes), and allegorizations (Allegoriae) for each of the poem’s fifteen books. The Glosulae are primarily grammatical and philological in nature, emphasizing a clear understanding of the literal sense of the text. Arnulf is not concerned with an abstract interpretation or secondary exposition,20 which are both found in his Allegoriae. The glosses address numerous areas21 often problematic to his audience of elementary readers of Latin: morphology, grammar, syntax, patronymics and matronymics, geographical locales, mythological and astrological references, and the general ability to understand the expression of ideas conveyed by the Latin. However, not all of the Glosulae are overtly pedantic; the commentator also addresses the overall structure of the poem, textual cruces and variant readings.

Much of the commentary is original, but Arnulf makes use of many sources through direct and indirect routes of transmission. He also draws on an unknown source circulating in the area, of which Uggucione of Pisa also knew and used in his Deriuationes.22 Following the Glosulae for each book of the poem are Arnulf’s Mutationes, and then the Allegoriae,
which are combinations of allegorical, historical, and moral expositions for each fabula. These three sections form the complete commentary and alternate in this fashion for each of the fifteen books of the Metamorphoses. The commentary was highly influential in the centuries to follow, informing numerous commentators, teachers, and scholars, of which many notable medieval and renaissance examples survive. The anonymous ‘Vulgate’ commentator of the mid-thirteenth century incorporates much of Arnulf into his commentary verbatim.\(^{23}\) Italian humanists, Zomino da Pistoia and Damiano da Pola both used Arnulf’s commentaries to lecture:\(^{24}\) Zomino possessed medieval copies of at least two of Arnulf’s works and also wrote a modified version of the Glosulae in his own autograph,\(^ {25}\) and Damiano annotated his own manuscript of the Metamorphoses with Arnulf’s glosses.\(^ {26}\) In the north, German humanist, Amplonius Rating de Berka, owned a mutilated thirteenth-century copy of the complete commentary inserted into a manuscript among other glossed Ovidian works.\(^ {27}\) The Allegoriae, which likely begin the Metamorphoses’ allegorical tradition,\(^ {28}\) influenced John of Garland’s allegorical versification of the Metamorphoses, the Integumenta Ouidii,\(^ {29}\) and were drawn on explicitly by Giovanni del Virgilio,\(^ {30}\) and Pierre Bersuire for his Ouidius moralizatus.\(^ {31}\) Such broad dissemination, use, and influence has left behind a robust manuscript tradition.

### Manuscripts and Textual Transmission

Geographically, the manuscript tradition of the commentary is strong in France, but a definitive Italian tradition appears as early as the first quarter of the thirteenth century and continues through the fifteenth.\(^ {32}\) However, as the commentary cycles between two different manuscript formats, catena\(^ {33}\) suffers the same drawbacks discussed in n.1.

24. Gura, ‘From the Orléanais to Pistoia’, 185-7 for the humanists.
25. Found in Pistoia, Biblioteca Forteguerriana Communale, A 46.
26. BAV, Vat. lat. 5222.
27. See Gura, ‘A Critical Edition and Study’, 107-116 for a description; also Gura,
‘From the Orléanais to Pistoia’, 186.


32. See Gura, ‘A Critical Edition and Study’, 46, and notes 112 and 113. The principle Italian MSS are: Bodleian, Canon., class. lat. 1, 1200-1250 (O); Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 36.18, 1300-1400 (F); BAV, Vat. lat. 5222, c. 1415 (D); Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, B 18 inf., 1420-1500 (A); Pistoia, Biblioteca Forteguerriana Communale, A 46, 1400-1458 (Z).

33. The term is used and defined by Ward, ‘From Marginal Gloss to Catena Commentary’,

and scholion, it undergoes a metamorphosis of its own assuming various hybridized versions and modified forms. The earliest extant manuscripts are transmitted in the catena format, and date between the end of the twelfth through the early thirteenth century, close to Arnulf’s floruit. These are (with sigla):

BSB, Clm. 7205, 1175-1200 (M)

Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, lat. XIV.222 (4007), 1175-1200 (V)

Weimar, Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek, Q 91, 1200-1225 (T)

BnF, lat. 8001, 1200-1225 [text of Arnulf inserted within a twelfth-century copy of Met.] (P)

The manuscripts were copied clearly in an educational environment: they do not maintain a uniformity of script within themselves (Plates 19 and 20), and have great variability in formality and level of execution. The scripts of each manuscript may be identified readily as bookhands which display the transitional features of the period, though the need for rapid forms surpasses the scribes’ deliberate attempts at a more formalized ‘Gothic’ treatment. Examples include: descenders curving sharply to the left; final limb of uncial m curves to the left below the line and extends beneath the second minim when found in initial position, within a word, and at word-end within a line; the presence of litterae elongatae (Plate 19); breaking of g (Fig. 6); atrophy of the two-compartment a leading to Semitextualis (Plate 21). The palaeographical evidence depicts an environment of production where speed is the most important factor, which, in turn, must be linked to demand. The choice of format,
catena, for M, V, T, and P also indicates a need for rapid dissemination of the text.

In brief, catena format is an example of a utilitarian tradition used in oral lectures of authoritative masters. The format enjoyed popularity in the late eleventh, twelfth, and early thirteenth century.\textsuperscript{36} When in catena format, a commentary becomes a primary text and is virtually separated from its object (i.e. the text upon which it comments). The only remnants of the object are truncated lemmata, which are usually underlined. The syntax of the lemmata often govern the grammatical features of their glosses including morphology, noun-adjective agreement, subject-verb agreement, sequence of tense, and antecedents of pronouns. In addition to syntax, lemmata may also influence stylistic features, most notably word order and thus emphasis. These relationships are features which allow the lemmata to act as links between text and commentary (hence Ward’s term ‘catena’), and enable a continuous reading of both text and commentary. If the reader is unaware of this relationship between lemma, gloss, and the context of the object, reading can be difficult. A gloss on the murder of Androgeus from Book 7 illustrates this relationship [lemmata are in \textit{italics}]:

Androgeique necem iustis ulciscitur armis. (Ovid, \textit{Met.} 7.458)\textsuperscript{37}
[and he avenged the murder of Androgeus justly with arms].

Androgei filii sui quem Athenienses necauerunt. (Arnulf, Glos.7.458)
[of Androgeus, his own son, whom the Athenians murdered].

Minos, the subject of ulcisictur, is expressed at Met. 7.456 (bella parat Minos), but appears in the gloss as sui. The antecedent of the reflexive adjective may only be inferred by the reader if he is aware of the poem’s grammar. Arnulf uses apposition as the predicative construction employing the genitive forms filii sui.

The manuscripts of Arnulf’s commentary in catena format contain the accessus followed by the Glosulae, Mutationes, and Allegoriae in the same alternating arrangement per book, though M is the only complete witness (V, T, and P are in various fragmentary states). P especially shows signs of a divergent tradition: the Mutationes and Allegoriae for Books 3-15 follow continuously the accessus and Glosulae to Books 1, 2, and the first five of Book 3 (six lines of text in P). The first gloss of the respective Glosulae precedes the Allegoriae for some books only. It is clear that P was copied from a manuscript containing the entire commentary, but the demand for allegory surpassed that for philology. The Arnulfian material was inserted subsequently into a twelfth-century copy of the Metamorphoses. The textual divergence seen in P is realized fully as the commentary’s format changes from catena to scholion (marginal and interlinear glossing) throughout the thirteenth century. The different sections of the commentary circulate independently, in hybrid forms, and become paired
with or incorporated into other texts. A notable example is the circulation of the *Allegoriae* with John of Garland’s *Integumenta Ouidii*.

The *catena* format serves as the primary vehicle for the commentary’s dissemination to later periods. It allows the text to move quickly and succinctly on the page. Since the commentary circulates independently of the object’s full text, *catena* commentaries furnish portable exemplars for subsequent oral lectures, copying into *scholion* format, or insertion into other manuscripts (as is the case with T). As the popularity of *scholion* grows in the thirteenth century, that of the *catena* begins to wane. Two thirteenth-century manuscripts of the *Metamorphoses*, both originating from the region, are two *scholion* witnesses of the commentary which derive definitively from *catena* exemplars:

- **BL**, Burney 224, 1200-1250 (B)
- **Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 13.10, Aug. 4°, 1250-1300 (W).**

Though the complete text is contained, the systematic functionality of Arnulf’s twelfth-century *catena* commentary is transformed. For the first time in the extant tradition, Arnulf’s text must compete for space on the page with that of others, including Ovid. The *Glosulae* are copied in *scholion* format in the margins and interlinearly in both manuscripts; the *accessus*, however, precedes the *Metamorphoses* in B (fol. 2r), but follows it in W (fol. 141v). The *Mutationes* and *Allegoriae* also undergo changes. In W, the *Allegoriae* are written in the margins wherever the scribe could find space and scattered throughout each book, sometimes appearing near their corresponding *fabulae*, others near the beginning of each

39. The *Allegoriae* are also written as continuous prose, but introduced by the *accessus* in St Omer, BM, 678, fols. 104r-111r (S); see Gura, ‘From the Orléanais to Pistoia’, 180-1.

40. MSS O, A, Z, and D of the Italian tradition omit the colophon, though it is transmitted in F.

41. Ovid’s Theban cycle is often read in contrast with the *Aeneid*; see Hardie, ‘Ovid’s Theban History: The First ‘Anti-Aeneid’?’, 224-35; cf. Janan, *Reflections in a Serpent’s Eye*, ch. 7 for a psychoanalytical approach and discussion of ‘overly Vergil-centric view of later epic writers’ (via Robinson, review of *Reflections in a Serpent’s Eye*, 385-6).

Glossing Cadmus the Hero

Arnulf’s pedagogical rigor is best seen through a close textual reading of his commentary on a particular episode in the *Metamorphoses*. This method organically encompasses the commentator’s multifaceted approaches to his glosses in the order which they occur within the narrative of Ovid’s text. The personal and authoritative connection he feels with Ovid’s poem is elicited through a similar reading of his *Allegoriae*, in which his transformation of classical *mythos* into medieval *fabula* results in self-referential allegorical exposition. The arrival of Cadmus and his founding of Thebes is a powerful example of these features as well as a testament to the enduring popularity of Arnulf.

Ovid initiates his version of the Theban Cycle as he transitions from the story of Jupiter and Europa, which concludes Book 2, to that of Cadmus and the founding of Thebes in Book 3. The ‘House of Cadmus’ will occupy the narrative through the majority of Book 4, which contains Cadmus’ own serpentine transformation. Book 3 begins...
with *iamque* (as he does Books 7 and 14) raising the reader’s expectation of an unbroken continuation of the previous story. Arnulf is quick to gloss Ovid’s veiled mention of Europa’s rape which occupies only the first two lines of the book (‘*Iamque deus posita se confessus deuirginando eam – the god had already placed aside his disguise and revealed himself by taking her virginity*’); the gloss then resolves the geographical movement to Crete, anchored by the adjective *Dictea* in 3.2 (*Dictea Cretensia a Dictis qudam ciuitate Crete – *Dictean means Cretan, taken from Dicte, a particular city in Crete*). Arnulf employs an etymological approach for proper adjective *Boeotia* at 3.13 where Apollo’s oracle gives Cadmus the prophecy (‘*Boetia a boue inuenta uel Boetia auxiliaria; Boe- tius enim adiutor – Boeotian is taken from “bos” (cow) or Boeotian means “helping”, for this reason “Boethius” means “helper”*’). The gloss conveys effectively the Greek to Latin connotations of cow (*βοῦς/bos*), but presents an alternative (and spurious) etymology from ‘help’ or ‘aid’ (*βοηθέω*); the commentator then digresses briefly on a tangent for his students, by explaining the etymology again with reference to Boethius, an author well known in the medieval classroom. The etymological approach is abandoned for a mythographic one to gloss the final geographical movement from Delphi to the outer borders of Boeotia. Delphi is referenced at 3.15 through the ‘Castalian cave’ (*Castalio…antro*) though the adjective properly refers to the spring, which Arnulf interprets as an aetiological myth for a region and the spring itself: ‘*Castalio Castalis nimpha fuit; ibi sepulta et ab ea regio et fons dictus est – Castalian Castalis was a nymph; she was buried there and the region and spring take their name from her*’. The treatment of *Panopes* at 3.19 is similar (*Panopes regio quedam a regina, uel a nimpha sic dicta – Panope is
a certain region named after a queen or nymph’), though Arnulf’s alternative explanation identifies Panope with the sea-nymph mentioned in Aeneid 5.240 rather than the city on the Cephissus River.

After the narrative is situated firmly in Boeotia, the companions of Cadmus soon encounter the serpent of Mars in the cave as they search for fresh water. Ovid’s introduction of the serpent at 3.32 intrigues the commentator, and prompts him to address the use of vocabulary and accompanying stylistic features:

\[
\text{Marcius bellicosus uel Marti sacratus; anguis proprio est aquarum, serpens terre, draco uolans aeris, et draco templorum; cristis et auro id est aureis cristis lucidis ad modum auri et est endiadis.}
\]

\[
\text{Martian is warlike, or sacred to Mars; anguis is properly a water-snake, ‘serpens’ is one on land, ‘draco uolans’ a serpent of the air, and ‘draco’ is one found in temples; with crests and gold means with golden crests that are shiny like gold, and it is an hendiadys.}
\]

As Anderson notes, the association of the serpent with Mars is unclear;\(^{43}\) Arnulf presents both a figurative and more literal interpretation.\(^{44}\) The commentator also takes issue with the use of \textit{anguis} for a serpent on land rather than one in the water, and proceeds to explain the correct vocabulary for the varieties of snakes found in the water, land, air, and those who guard temples. He then identifies Ovid’s use of \textit{cristis et auro} as a hendiadys (\(\varepsilon \nu \delta \zeta \upsilon \delta \nu \omega \nu \upsilon: \text{one through two}\)), the rhetorical feature in which two substantives are used in lieu of one substantive and an adjective (or genitive), and presents
the anticipated adjective-noun unit *aureis cristis* to describe the serpent’s crest. The description of the serpent culminates at 3.44-5 as it rears up and its sheer size is experienced by the companions of Cadmus. Grammatically, line 44 is considered problematic by Arnulf:

> despicit deorsum aspicit supereminens. *quanto qui* antagon determinans Arthos protenditur in austrum ubi deprimitur terra, sic quod totus uidiri non potest.

*it looks down* means it looks at the grove downwards as it looms above it. *as large as the one* means the serpent that bounds the Arctos [*the Twin Bears*] is stretched forth southward where it is sunk down by the land, because in this way the serpent cannot be seen entirely.

A literal interpretation of *despicere* is preferred to the verb’s usual figurative usage and is glossed with an adverb-verb-participle construction. The enormous size of the serpent is expressed via a correlation between the physical serpent and the constellation which divides the Greater and Lesser Bears. Arnulf chooses his lemma to guide the student through the parenthesis beginning line 45 and then explains the correlation (though does not address that, according to Ovid, the serpent is about twice as large as the constellation). The snake looms over the men, who are now described as ‘Phoenicians’ (3.46), which prompts both a mythographic summary and an interesting etymological variant:

> Phenicas tres fuerunt fratres: Phenix a quo dicta est Phenicia regio, Cilix a quo dicta Cilicia, et Cadmus qui condidit Thebas; isti tres missi sunt pro sorore querenda
The first explanation, a mythographic summary of the sons of Agenor and their foundations draws heavily on either the First or Second Vatican Mythographer (or both),\textsuperscript{45} as it contextualizes the reference. The appended etymology, however, reflects a strong grammatical focus. Likely informed by Priscian,\textsuperscript{46} Arnulf explains the bizarre linguistic transformation from the assimilated form \textit{phoeniceus}, \textit{-a}, \textit{-um} to \textit{punicceus}, \textit{-a}, \textit{-um} to describe a reddish hue. In order to contextualize why the men are ‘reddish’, Arnulf, also known as Rufus for his red hair, interprets the adjective to mean the Phoenicians could have reddish hair as well.\textsuperscript{47}

Leading up to his battle with the serpent, Cadmus searches for his missing companions and discovers their corpses. The time of day, high noon, is expressed at 3.50 as \textit{fecerat exiguas iam sol altissimus umbras}, which Arnulf explains simply (‘\textit{sol altissimus} in meridie – the sun is at its highest at mid-day’). The interpretation of vocabulary, especially when
The verb also occurs in Culex, 325.

verbs use literal rather than figurative meanings (e.g. despicit in 3.44), is a favorite of the commentator. When Cadmus tracks his men, Ovid uses the verb uestigare which Arnulf glosses with a literal interpretation (‘uestigat id est uestigia eorum sequitur – he tracks that is to say he follows their footprints’). Unusual vocabulary receives consistent attention such as the use of letata at 3.55 when Cadmus discovers the corpses of his companions. Likely an Ovidian coinage, forms of the verb occur only in this passage and Ibis 505,48 prompting the commentator to gloss the form in terms of meaning and etymology (‘letata mortificata a leto – deathed means the bodies were destroyed; the word is from “death” [letum]’). By this point in the twelfth century, medieval orthography also creates false homonyms due to the loss of diphthongs, of which letata is a prime example which could be misinterpreted by Arnulf’s audience of elementary readers (cf. class. laetata). Arnulf treats the substantive use of the adjective molaris, -e, common in poetry, used at 3.59 in a similar fashion: ‘molarem lapidem magnum ad modum mole – millstone [molaris] is a large stone like a millstone [mola]’. The commentator then uses the newly glossed vocabulary word in his comment to explain the success of Cadmus’ iaculum where the millstone failed: ‘duricia eadem qua uicerat molarem – the same hardness with which the serpent had overcome the mill-stone’. The subject of accessit in 3.72 is enjammed and thus delayed until the beginning of the next line (causa recens), which also makes the reflexive nature of the participle solitas ambiguous. Arnulf explains the phrase outside the language of grammar as ‘solitas sibi domesticas dum accessit: de uulnere dicit – while it added to the usual [anger], [which is] proper to itself: he is talking about the wound’.

Ovid graphically describes the serpent’s death at the
hands of Cadmus, complete with swelling, convulsing, and foaming. Unusual forms are glossed with synonyms (3.74: ‘albida idem est quod alba – white [albida] is the same thing as white [alba]’) and perfect passive participles are glossed and etymologized (3.75: ‘rasa squamis exasperata a rado, -is – scraped by the scales means stirred up by them; it is from rado, radere [to scrape]’). Despite the use of spira in the earlier description of the serpent, Arnulf glosses the contextual meaning in geometric terms, explaining how a spira can make an orbis: ‘spiris spira est circulus imperfectus non ad idem punctum rediens – by the coils a “spira” is an imperfect circle and it does not return to the same point’. When the serpent rushes upon Cadmus and is compared to a flood at 3.79, the assault is rendered as impete uasto; the usage of impete is explained via an alternative form: ‘inpete pro inpetu nec plus inuenitur sicut nec de sponte rite ritu – with an attack [impete] is used for “impetus”, and it is not found more just as “rite” is not freely used for “ritu”’. As the snake attempts to draw itself back, the accusative-infinitive unit plagam sedere is glossed in more literal terms: ‘plagam sedere id est in profundo locum tenere – the wound settling that is to say, taking a place deeply’. Before the beast expires, it becomes stuck to a tree by the spear and the commentator’s final gloss on the episode explains in simple terms the ‘virtual zeugma’ noted by Anderson⁴⁹ in 3.92 (‘cum robore arboris; ceruix serpentis – with the hardness of the tree; the neck of the snake’).

The following episode in which Cadmus sows the serpent’s teeth and the autochthonous Spartoi fight receives only two glosses from Master Arnulf. The first explains the phrase mortalia semina in apposition to the iussos dentes in 3.105, providing an alternative grammatical construction followed by a different rendering of the sense of mortalia: ‘mortalia

⁴⁹ Anderson, Ovid’s Metamorphoses: Books 1-5, 346.
*semina* mortalium uel humana quia homines sunt procreati—*mortal seeds* means seeds of mortals, or they are human seeds because human beings were brought forth from them’. The alternative interpretation, *humana*, emphasizes the humanity of the armed men, whom Arnulf specifies are human beings (*homines*) rather than some monstrous race. The use of *mortalia*, however, suggests only that what springs from the ground can die. At the end of the founding myth, Ovid mentions only Echion by name out of the five surviving Spartoi, and in his compendiose fashion, Arnulf appends the other names:50

*quorum fuit unus Echion et alius Ideus, tercius Cromis [sic], quartus Iperon,*
quintus Pelorus; uel unus eorum fuit Bromius ut quidam dicunt.

*One of whom was Echion* and another was Udaeus, the third was Chromius, the fourth was [sc.] Hyperenor, the fifth was Pelorus; or Bromius was one of them as certain people say.

When Arnulf seeks to distance himself from the comments of others, he uses phrases like *ut quidam dicunt* or *secundum alios*. The commentator appears rightly skeptical of identifying Bromius with one of the Spartoi; at 4.II he identifies correctly the form as a name for Bacchus (complete with etymology). After the grammatical exposition for the entirety of Book 3 concludes, the schoolmaster moves to allegory.

**Magister Cadmus and Allegorical Serpent’s Teeth**

Arnulf uses the *Mutationes* to recapitulate the transformations of Book 3 as a segue into his allegorical interpretation.
It is in the *Allegoriae* that the commentator’s recontextualization of the founding myth assumes a more personal tone of a familiar discourse between master and student.

The founding myth (*Met.* 3.1-130) contains three different transformations according to Arnulf’s list of *Mutationes*: Cadmus from a king to an exile, the serpent’s teeth into seeds, and the seeds into armed men. In his *accessus*, Arnulf addresses the concept of transformation from two perspectives when discussing the *materia* (subject matter) of the work. The first is the way in which a particular metamorphosis occurs: natural (*naturalis*), magical (*magica*), or spiritual (*spiritualis*). Natural metamorphoses are corporeal, elemental transformations (*per contexionem elementorum uel reexionem*), magical ones are those brought about through sorcery (*per prestigia magorum*), which may change the *corpus* but not the *animus*, and spiritual changes are those that deal explicitly with the *spiritus* (*circa spiritum*) and alter abstract or mental qualities. The second division is formed from the Aristotelian categories of matter: animate to animate, inanimate to inanimate, inanimate to animate, and animate to inanimate. When applied to the founding myth, the commentator’s distinctions reveal a spiritual metamorphosis of animate to animate matter (*Cadmus de rege in exulem*), a natural transformation of inanimate to inanimate matter (*dentes serpentis in semen*), and another ‘natural’ change, but from inanimate to animate matter (*semen in milites armatos*).

In his *Allegoriae*, Arnulf compartmentalizes the transformations and his expositions are either historical, allegorical, or moral. Combinations of the categories are found in some expositions. For example in the transformations of Tereus, Procne, and Philomela in Book 6, Arnulf acknowledges the events relayed in the myth as historical, but their
respective metamorphoses as purely allegorical (‘Quod de Tereo et Progne et Philomena dicitur totum est historicum, de mutatione uero allegoricum – what is said about Tereus and Procne and Philomena is completely historical, but, concerning their transformation, it is allegorical’). The commentator does not always specify the type for each transformation, as in the case of the Allegoriae for Book 3: ‘Modo quasdam historice quasdam allegorice quasdam moraliter exponamus – Now, let us explain certain transformations historically, some allegorically, others morally’. The Allegoriae for Cadmus and the founding of Thebes are historical and allegorical interpretations set against a mythographic and rhetorical background – moral exposition is barely present for these sections. Arnulf creates his own allegorical epyllion and recasts the entire myth in familiar terms to the medieval classroom.

The mythographic explanation of the three brothers, the same Phoenices of 3.46, is recontextualized to situate Cadmus’ migration from Phoenicia as a historical event before turning quickly to allegory. Apollo and his oracle at Delphi have no historical position in this exposition, but rather the prophecy is glossed simply as Cadmus turning to his own innate wisdom (consilio Appolinis, id est sapientie sue). Throughout the exposition, Arnulf portrays Cadmus as the sagacious bringer of writing and oratory (thus education) to the Greeks. Alleg. 3.3 lays the foundation for this portrayal strongly in historical and allegorical terms:

Cadmus reuera sapientissimus fuit qui in Greciam deuenit, ubi iam inuente erant litere in lingua Hebraica, uoluit Grecis litterarum doctrinam manifestare; ubi bos iacebat, id est ubi homines uentri dediti pascendo gule erant intenti non studio.
Cadmus really was the wisest man who arrived in Greece [from Phoenicia], where letters had already been discovered in the Hebrew language and he wanted to make the teaching of letters known to the Greeks; ‘where the cow was laying’ means where men were addicted to their bellies through grazing like cattle – they were intent upon gluttony not study.

The Phoenician origin of the Greek alphabet specifically through Cadmus and his companions was known in antiquity, for example through Herodotus\(^5\ C2\) and Lucan.\(^5\ C3\) Arnulf draws primarily on Isidore of Seville\(^5\ C4\) for the Hebrew parentage of Greek and Latin letter forms as he depicts Cadmus as the magister dispensing his *doctrina* to the Greeks. The oracle’s prophecy is explained first in allegorical, then in mor- nalistic terms. The location of Cadmus’ city, which begins to seem more and more like a school, is a place where men do not exercise their intellect, but are addicted to their physical appetites. The description and choice of language are similar to Sallust’s\(^5\ C5\) description of those who pass idly through life. For Sallust, these men are not only slothful (\*dediti uentri atque somno\*) but also uneducated and uncultured (\*indocti incultique\*). Arnulf advances a more literal interpretation of *uentri* strengthened by *pascendo* resulting that the Greeks there have succumbed to a vice, gluttony (\*gula\*), and were neglectful of *studium*. The exposition continues the Sallustian discourse of bodily gratification in lieu of mental development.\(^5\ C6\) Cadmus’ companions (\*socii\*) sent to fetch fresh water for the ritual libation are then transformed by Arnulf into students (\*discipuli\*) seeking out other pupils of vigorous talent (\*uiuidi ingenii\*) with whom to vie. It is here that classical declamation and oratory are transformed into medieval
disputation. The vocabulary used to allegorize the remaining sections of the founding myth creates an agonistic discourse of rhetorical style. The fons for the sacrificial water becomes a location where the plain style (subtilis) abounds and the act of drawing the pure water is thus attracting students through eloquence (facundia). Arnulf explains the death of Cadmus’ companions as their rhetorical defeat (confutare), not by the serpent of Mars with its triple-toothed bite, but rather by more eloquent speakers (facundiores) who wield a biting and witty style (mordendo).

In Ovid’s account, Cadmus is styled in the manner of Hercules with a lion’s skin, wielding both spear and javelin. Arnulf remakes Cadmus the hero into Cadmus the orator:

Cadmus uero pelle leonis indutus, id est ferox, et duo hastilia ferens, facundia et sapientia munitus, socios disputando confutatos uindicare desiderans disputando…

Cadmus was dressed in a lion’s skin, that is to say he was wild, and he carried two spears means he was protected by his eloquence and wisdom, as he desired to deliver, with his own disputation, his companions who had been put to silence through disputation…

The orator is wild and courageous (ferox), and his epic weaponry is his eloquence (facundia) and wisdom (sapientia) emphasized previously. The above passage contains other, more subtle transformations of the character of Cadmus. Ovid’s Cadmus is motivated by vengeance: he will either avenge his dead companions or die trying (3.58-9). Arnulf rearticulates the hero’s apostrophe: the ultor is recast as uindicare desiderans. The departure from ulcisci to uindicare is a shift from the
explicit motives of vengeance and punishment to those of liberation, defense, and deliverance. The specific use of language allows Arnulf’s Cadmus, the wise orator, to be driven by a desire to liberate and defend his students by engaging in his own disputation.

The battle between Cadmus and the serpent, now a disputation, is couched in rhetorical terms. Arnulf is concerned only with Cadmus’ assault, of which three points receive exposition: Cadmus’ first attempt to wound the snake, his failure to do so, and his third, successful attempt. The molaris glossed literally in the Glosulae, becomes, in allegory, useless argumentations of which the particulars are known, but unspecified (quasdam argumentationes nullius utilitatis). The impervious nature of the snake becomes a stylistic defense. The locals, whom Arnulf calls indigenae, are presumably the Greeks described earlier. Their lack of a writing-system does not prevent them from thwarting Cadmus’ first attempt in the disputation. Their speech, however, is not the plain style (subtilis) sought by Cadmus’ students, but rather is one wrought with cleverness (calliditas). Arnulf creates a stylistic battle within his own narrative, allowing the calliditas of the Greeks to overcome, albeit briefly, the sapientia which so informs Cadmus and his oratory. In the disputation, Cadmus triumphs by using intelligent precision and subtlety along with the plain style in his maxims: his sententiae are acutiores and subtiliores compared to those of the Greeks. The use of comparatives emphasizes Cadmus’ stylistic mastery and effective use of genre, while his choice of the plain style reveals his true intention: instruction and proof. Cadmus wins the disputation and thus the serpent dies.

Arnulf passes over the bridge passage and the prophetic whispers of Cadmus’ future snake-form and proceeds imme-
diately to the sowing of the serpent’s teeth, the next mutatio. He returns to Cadmus’ desire to bring his doctrina litterarum to the Greeks, and the sowing of serpent’s teeth becomes the discovery of the Greek alphabet. It is interesting that by this point in the Allegoriae Cadmus is no longer a Phoenician profugus, but has been hellenicized with the impending foundation of his city. The commentator must recontextualize the historical and allegorical context of his exposition to explain why the letters are represented by teeth:

Postea dentes serpentis seminauit, id est literas Grecas inuenit; unde dicitur Grecorum primus uestigat grama- ta Cadmus; litere Grece dentes serpentis dicuntur potius quam alie quia astutiores et subtiliores sunt Greci quam alii, uel quia astutiores sunt homines poetice professionis quam laici uel propter satiricos qui mordaces sunt.

After he sowed the serpent’s teeth, that is discovered Greek letters; whence Cadmus is said to be the first of the Greeks who traced out the alphabet. Greek letters are called ‘serpent’s teeth’ rather than other letters because the Greeks are more precise and plainer speakers than other peoples, either because men of poetic expression are more precise than laymen, or on account of the satirists who are biting.

Arnulf turns once again to the vocabulary of rhetorical style and genre. The Greeks now possess the very same mastery of oratory that Cadmus did when he confuted them in the previous disputation. As in the Glosulae, alternative information is appended with uel when there is variation in the source, or the commentator feels there may be more than one interpretation.
The bite of the allegorical serpent’s teeth may either be the precision of poets, or, more specifically, the biting wit of satirists.

The final mutatio is the birth of the fully armed Spartoi from the teeth planted in the furrows. The teeth have already been rearticulated as letters, and from those letters now spring forth rhetors who vie with their opponents as if they were armed with weapons (rethores qui contra adversarios suos acsi armati sint confligunt). Cadmus has created a formidable group of rhetoricians with his invention of writing. At this point, Arnulf consciously departs from Ovid’s narrative to continue his own. He does not allegorize Ovid’s account of the passive Cadmus, who watches the Spartoi destroy one another after their admonition of the dangers of civil war. Rather, the commentator discusses the usual version of the myth, in which Cadmus throws a stone into the crowd of earth-born causing them to fight amongst themselves:

…et misso lapide inter eos a Cadmo, id est questione aliqua, mutuo se occidunt, id est mutuo sibi opponentes et respondentes se confutant et confundunt.

…and after Cadmus threw a stone among them, meaning some quaestio, they strike each other down, that is they put themselves to silence and confuse themselves while they debate and respond among themselves.

Cadmus assumes the role of a magister presenting a quaestio and allows the new rhetors to confute themselves. He is able to control the discourse with barely any participation. The five surviving Spartoi whom Arnulf listed methodically by name in the Glosulae are further transformed. No longer rhetors, Echion and his brothers are abstracted into the vowels (quin-
que uocales superstites fuerunt), which Arnulf says are necessary for all speech (dictio) and are the foundation of all teaching (quorum auxilio fundatur omnis doctrina). Arnulf leaves his students with an exposition emphasizing the authority of the magister and the triumph of his artes over the local competitors. It is one in which the schoolmaster is the absolute authority whose very arrival brings education and culture.

Arnulf’s approaches exemplify his authoritative and innovative method infused with the commentator’s characteristic tones of self-reference. It is easy to see a bit of Arnulf and his St Euverte in the allegorical exposition of Magister Cadmus and Thebes, to which the Glosulae add the grammatical auctoritas necessary for the twelfth-century magister – so much so that, for Magister Arnulf, it is perfectly acceptable to correct Ovid’s use of vocabulary (Glos. 3. 32) and even rewrite the narrative for his own purposes (Alleg. 3. 7-8)! The manuscript tradition testifies to the commentary’s popularity and demand, and ability to stay relevant in the rich grammatical and allegorical commentary traditions of the Metamorphoses. Such longevity has indeed enabled Rufus Arnulfus to obtain his wish to ‘live with Ovid’.


Manuscripts with sigla: 60

M BSB, Clm. 7205, 1150-1200
V Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, lat. XIV.222 (4007), 1150-1200
T Weimar, Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek, Q 91, 1200-1250
P BnF, lat. 8001, 1200-1250
B BL, Burney 224, 1250-1300
<GLOSULAE LIBRI III>

1. *Iamque deus posita* se confessus deuirginando eam.
2. *Dictea* Cretensia; a ‘Dictis’ quadam ciuitate Crete.
13. *Boetia* a ‘boue’ inuenta; uel Boetia auxiliaria; Boetius enim adiutor.
15. *Castalio* Castalis nimpha fuit; ibi sepulta et ab ea regio et fons dictus est.
19. *Panopes* regio quedam a regina; uel a nimpha sic dicta.
32. *Marcius* bellicosus; uel Marti sacratus; *anguis* propri est aquarum, serpens terre, draco uolans aeris, et draco templorum. *cristis et auro* id est aureis cristis lucidis ad modum auri, et est endiadis.
44. *despicit* deorsum aspicit supereminens. *quanto qui* anguis determinans arthos protenditur in austrum ubi deprimitur terra, sic quod totus uideri non potest.
46. *Phenicas* tres fuerunt fratres: Phenix a quo dicta est Phenicia regio, et Cilix a quo dicta Cilicia, et Cadmus qui
condidit Thebas; isti tres missi fuerunt pro sorore querenda quam tamen non inuenerunt; uel Phenices dicti sunt a rubris capillis, ‘pheniceos’ enim Grece ‘rubrum’ Latine, postea mutata est ‘e’ in ‘u’ et ablata ‘h’, dicti sunt ‘Punices’, deinde breuitatis causa dicti sunt ‘Puni’.

50. sol altissimus in meridie.
52. uestigat id est uestigia eorum sequitur.
55. letata mortificata a leto.
59. molarem lapidem magnum ad modum mole.
64. duricia eadem qua uicerat molarem.
70. idque ubi scilicet hastile.
72. solitas sibi domesticas dum accessit: de uulnere dicit.
74. albida idem est quod alba.
75. rasa squamis exasperata a ‘rado, -dis’.
77. spiris spira est circulus imperfectus non ad idem punctum rediens.
79. inpete pro inpetu, nec plus inuenitur sicut nec de sponte rite ritu.
88. plagam sedere id est in profundo locum tenere.
92. cum robore arboris. ceruix serpentis.
105. mortalia semina mortalium; uel humana quia homines sunt procreati.
126. quorum fuit unus Echion et alius Ideus, tercius Cromis, quartus Iperon, quintus Pelorus; uel unus eorum fuit Bromius ut quidam dicunt.

<MVTATIONES LIBRI III>

[1] Hee sunt mutationes huius libri: Cadmus de rege in exulem, dentes serpentis in semen, semen in milites armatos, Acteon in ceruum, Iuno in anum, Tyresias de uiro in feminam, de femina iterum in uirum, postea de uidente in ce-
cum, Echo in saxum, Narcissus in florem, Bachus in Acetem, naute in pisces marinos.

<ALLEGORIE LIBRI III>

De dentibus ergo id est de litteris nati sunt milites armati id est rethores qui contra aduersarios suos acsi armati sint confligunt et misso lapide inter eos a Cadmo, id est questione aliqua, mutuo se occidunt id est mutuo sibi opponentes et respondentes se confutant et confundunt. [8] Quinque tamen remanserunt quorum auxilio Cadmus urbem fundavit id est quinque uocales superstites fuerunt sine quibus nulla est dictio quorum auxilio fundatur omnis doctrina.

Apparatus Criticus Glosularum

1-46 M PBWODA  50-126 M BWODA

1. eam] puellam W

2. cretensia] om. A  a...crete] om. W  dictis] dicte A


15. castalis M A: castalo O: castalia (W) D: casta P  et... dictus est om. O  dictus est] denominatus D: dictus A

19. uel a nimpha om. PA

32. bellicosus M BO P: bellicosus W\textsuperscript{1}  D A: uel bellicosus W uel marti sacratus M PBO: a marti consecratus W\textsuperscript{2}: marti consecratus D: uel marti consacrat\textsuperscript{2} A anguis...templorum] om. A aquarium] aque O  draco] a raco sic M aeris] in aere (B)O  et draco templorum M: tracho templi sic W: om. PBOD  id est cristis aureis W\textsuperscript{3} lucidis] lucidam A  et est endiadis M BW: om. OA: aureis et est ibi endiadis ante id est cristis D
44. quanto…potest] om. ODA  arthos W: ortos MB  pro-
tenditur BW: pertenditur M

46. om. OD  phenicas M P: phenicos B: pheni. W: phenices
A querenda] querendam M: perdita P  thebas] ath-
enas W: athenis Wac  isti M: iste B: ili W: illi A: qui P
quam…inuenerunt] om. P  dicti sunt] aque sunt sic W
postea mutata] posita mutatum sic A  causa breuitatis
MA: breuitatis causa BW

50. om. WO: hic desinit P

52. eorum] annorum sic O  eorum sequitur uestigia M

55. om. W a leto] om. DA

64. qua] que D  uicerat DA: uincat M: superauit B(W):
uincerat sic O

72. om. WOA  id est sibi domesticas (B') de uulnere dicit
super causa recens (lin. 73) B'D'

74. om. OA  idem quod alba M: alba W: est idem quod alba
D

75 om. WO  a rado (d)is] om. A

77. ad idem M DA: ad eundem BWO

79. nec plus] om. BW: et non plus O: nec tamen plus D: nec
plus tamen A  rite ritu M: om. BWODA
88. in profundo locum tenere M: in profunde ire sic B: profundam esse WD

92. om. WO

105. om. WO uel…procreati om. DA sunt procreati M: intercreati sunt B

126. glossam super uirorum (lin. 110) ponit B cromis] heronius D uel…dicunt MBW: om. ODA

Apparatus Criticus Mutationum et Allegioriarum
MV BPW

1. huius] tertii V armatos milites M


3. cadmus om. PB in reuera W deuenit MV: de fenicia ueniens PBW homines uentri pascendo tantum erant PW pascendo] parendo B


5. ferens MV B: gerens PW facundia et sapientia MV B: -iam et -iam PW munitus MV B: comitatus (P)W inpellens MV B: ex- (P)W utilitatis MV: subilitatis uel utilitatis dei P:
subtilitatis B: utilitatis uel subtilitatis W  indigenarum]
om. B  nocuit MV: nocere potuit PBW

6. theodorus post unde add. W  grece] igitur B  dicuntur]
dicte sunt BW  potiusquam V P: magis quam W: potius M: potius grecie quam alie B  sunt MV: fuerunt B  sunt greci et subtiliores P: fuerunt g. e. s. W  la(i/y)ci] alii scilicet laici B


8. quinque] sex M  urbe] suam ciuitatem V  fundauit]
conposuit conposuit dupliciter sic V  uocalis V  nulla dicto est M  cadmus fundatur sic V

Apparatus Fontium Glosularum


Apparatus Fontium Allegoriarum

1. cf. Isid. Etym.1.3.4-6; cf. Ps.-Lact. Narr.3.fab.1; 3. cf. Isid. Etym. 3.3-6, Sent. 2.46.2; cf. Sal.Cat.2.7-9; 5. cf. Isid. Sent.3.14.6; 6 cf. Theod. Ecl.133
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tione collegistri studium additis etiam
his quaque principium suta egregia
structurum ut tranquillitatis dispositione
mucius diuina letat-prinse se illustrum ut suorum facta iadimnistrado
impio securitatem quam cognoscis ret
lestone. Incipit liber et Paulus
Paulus. Eutropii de gestis Romanis.
VINUS IULITA UT QUUBIS C"IACERAT
regnavit innotens deinde la
turnur. Iouem si
limum egrecia su
iens incultate
que creus nomine Saturna dicta
est cuius rume haecenus cernunt
insulis tuscis haud peul aburbe.
Hic Saturnus qua mitalia latu
abest latebra latum appellata e
ipse e rennum adhuc rudes poplos
nonus edificare terras incolere
plantare uenas docuit aet
humanis moribus uerere. Quantae semi
feris glandium tantum modo alimentis ut sunt sustentarent s'aut


tectio annu
decem annis
cece s. ant
cece un. an
annus. cec

gnea uene
uenit. ann
cu turno di
meant eun
fauam leg
ambitio acc
num oppr
appellavit

annis tribu
regnum sub
eris dem
exe creusa co
italia uer
canus derel
regno alban
um postum
na filium

Deinde aliqu
ut a quo se
Parului idoneus er
