

Archaeologizing Intertextuality in Virgil and Ovid

This paper considers the interpretative consequences for Ovid's exile poetry of accepting that ancient readers recognized and processed intertextuality in ways that are roughly comparable to the best – not all! – modern critical approaches to the subject. It begins with a brief look at two passages that show readers in antiquity grappling with intertextuality in Virgil and Ovid. In the discipline of classical studies, which has long fetishized the verbal parallel, there has been no shortage of practitioners who have adopted the term “intertextuality” merely because, to paraphrase A. E. Housman, it is a longer and nobler name than “allusion”, even though they use it in pretty much the same way. Recognizing the ways in which ancient readers were indeed alive to the interpretative possibilities offered by what today we call intertextuality can perhaps help to nudge the door open to some broader conclusions about the way Ovid's approach to poetry changed in *Tomi*, a development that he acknowledges by foregrounding the diminished role of intertextuality in his verse.