

**A POETICS OF EXILE:
THE RECEPTION OF OVID'S *TRISTIA* IN
TUDOR ENGLAND**

SOPHIE JANE BUCKINGHAM

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University of East Anglia
School of Literature, Drama and Creative Writing

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ABSTRACT

Using a combination of manuscript and printed sources, this thesis examines the ways in which Ovid's *Tristia* was read and received in sixteenth-century England. This study challenges the presupposition that readers have perpetuated since the early twentieth century – that Ovid was a lascivious or scandalous poet, spreading works full of lust – and forwards the case for Ovid the family man, loving husband, defender of poetry and immortal fame. Its opening chapter gives the reader a thorough grounding in the reception history of the *Tristia* – how it was read and used in the medieval and early-modern period in both France and England, in its manuscript and printed forms. It proves that this text was much-appropriated for its moral standpoint well into the seventeenth century. Chapter two provides vignettes of three writers key to England's continued engagement with the *Tristia* - John Skelton, Geoffrey Whitney and Ben Jonson - illustrating the work's wide appeal to poets, emblem-book compilers and playwrights in the sixteenth century. The ways in which envoy and the 'Go Little Book' conceit emerge in English Renaissance literature begins to be traced here. Chapter 3 on Thomas Wyatt subreads the Petrarchan angle from which the *Tristia* was approached, forwarding the case for a repurposing of the exilic work in his amatory verses. Thomas Churchyard's influence on the canon presents itself in chapter 4, as, significantly, the first translator of a three-book *Tristia* in 1572. Here the copy used is reidentified and Churchyard's own imitative practice of translation examined. Finally, the work culminates with a chapter on Edmund Spenser's *Amoretti*, *Epithalamion*, *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* and the *Shepherd's Calendar*, the ways in which they re-use the *Tristian* envoy, and how they approach monumentalising the poet through myth-making in a conscious attempt to confer immortal fame.

NOTE ON EDITIONS USED

All references to Ovid's *Tristia* come from the Loeb edition, *Tristia and Ex Ponto*, trans. Arthur Leslie Wheeler (London: Heinemann, 1924) which has a facing-page Latin to English translation. For all of Thomas Wyatt's poems I have used the *Collected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt*, ed. Muir and Thomson (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1969), as this edition retains the original spellings. Excerpts from Thomas Churchyard's *De Tristibus* come from the 1580 edition, *The Thre First Bookes of Ovid's De Tristibus* (London: Thomas Marshe, 1580) which appears in a more complete textual witness on Early English Books Online than the 1572 edition does. References to Joachim Du Bellay are from the online translation of *Les Regrets*, trans. A. S. Kline <www.poetryintranslation.com> unless stated otherwise. In some instances there have been multiple translations consulted for clarity, and these are then noted in the accompanying footnotes. Finally, Edmund Spenser's *Shepherdes Calender, Amoretti, Epithalamion* and *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* are all sourced from *The Shorter Poems*, ed. Richard McCabe (London: Penguin Classics, 1999).

TEXTUAL NOTE

CCCHA has been used as an abbreviation for *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* for ease of reference. All Latin contractions cited throughout this thesis contained within MS and early-printed texts have been expanded and placed in square brackets to aid clarity.

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for my father,
Alfred Buckingham
1948-2008