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*Ovidius Pictus: Afterlives
of the Metamorphoses
in Europe, from Books
to the Arts*

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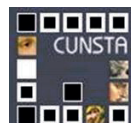
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*Ovidius Pictus: Afterlives of the *Metamorphoses* in Europe, from Books to the Arts*

edited by
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The Representation of Bacchic Festivities in the Middle Ages: The Illuminated Manuscripts of the *Ovide moralisé* and the *Ovidius moralizatus*

Patricia Meilán Jácome*

Abstract

At the end of the third book and the beginning of the fourth book of the *Metamorphoses*, the particular Thebaid created by Ovid is narrated, with the entry of Bacchus into Thebes and the celebration of the Bacchic festivities. This paper aims to study the images in relation to this theme that are represented in fourteenth century illuminated manuscripts of *Ovide moralisé* and *Ovidius moralizatus*. In this analysis we will take several aspects into account: the different texts that illustrate the miniatures, the *Ovide moralisé* and the *Ovidius moralizatus*, for which the different texts will be compared; the lack of previous iconographic models of this myth, and the absence of key points in the narrative.

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As a consequence, each miniaturist, when converting the myth into an image, opts for a presentation of the god and his rites, with the consequent creation of different versions for this topic.

1. Introduction

This contribution focuses on a specific moment narrated in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: the entrance of Bacchus and the representation of the Bacchic festivities¹. My aim is to present how this iconography is constructed through the miniatures included in two different *corpora* of manuscripts, that of the *Ovide moralisé* and the *Ovidius moralizatus*, limiting the temporal space to the manuscripts produced during the 14th century.

The iconography of Bacchus in the Middle Ages has not really been studied to date. Apart from the publication by Andreas Emmerling-Skala, *Bacchus in der Renaissance*², which, although focused on the Renaissance world, makes an extensive study of medieval sources and also gathers information on some miniatures, nothing else has been published so far. The modest explanations of the figure of Bacchus in mythological dictionaries always omit the part related to the Middle Ages, passing directly from the Greco-Roman world to the Renaissance, without even making a brief mention of the iconographic existence of the god during this period.

Increasing the prism of research on the subject, the first studies on classical iconography during the Middle Ages are those carried out by Erwin Panofsky, Fritz Saxl and Jean Seznec³. The figure of the god Bacchus is mentioned at different times in these studies, although the study of other ancient gods is always encouraged⁴. We can also find references or brief studies within the analysis of specific manuscripts, such as the thesis published by Gerard Jasbar

¹ This contribution is part of my research into the figure of Bacchus in the Middle Ages that is discussed in my PhD dissertation under the supervision of Fátima Díez Platas. Under the title *Study of the iconography of the god Bacchus in the Middle Ages*, the main issue consists on examining and studying the iconography of Bacchus during the Middle Ages, which has led me towards deeper research into the *Ovide moralisé* and *Ovidius moralizatus* manuscripts.

² Emmerling-Skala 1994.

³ Panofsky 1970; Panofsky, Saxl 1933; Seznec 1940.

⁴ In Panofsky's *Renaissance and Resuscitations in Western Art* (1970) the figure of Bacchus is mentioned in connection with the Osnabrück chalice (p. 150), and in the famous footnote on the different versions of the *Ovide moralisé* (p. 129, note 82), the *Ovidius moralizatus* and the illuminated manuscripts of the same. Panofsky and Saxl 1933 cite him as a god represented in the two manuscripts of the Rabano Mauro's *De Rerum Naturis*, the one in the Archivio dell'Abbazia di Montecassino (Casin. 132) and the one in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (Pal. Lat. 291).

(1980)⁵ on the manuscript of *De civitate Dei* by Saint Augustine preserved in the Landesschule Pforta Library of Schulpforte, where he analyses the figure of Bacchus and connects it with the other two chronologically closest miniatures⁶, or comparisons in groups of manuscripts, such as the article on the representation of Bacchus in the *Epistres Othea* manuscripts by Eliana Carrara⁷.

2. Presentation and analysis of the Ovidian texts

The story of the myth of Bacchus is told at the end of the third book and the beginning of the fourth book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in the special Thebaid narrated by the author. The poet describes the entry of Bacchus into Thebes and the events that subsequently took place in that city, the death of Pentheus and the transformation of the Minyades into bats. With this episode of Bacchus entering Thebes, Ovid presents us with one of the lesser-known characteristics of the god, that of the itinerant god and through it the celebration of the Bacchic festivities.

The myth begins by narrating Tiresias' prophecy to Pentheus, in which Tiresias warns Pentheus of Bacchus' arrival and that his refusal to perform the god's rituals would lead to his death. After that, Bacchus' arrival in Thebes is described between verses 528 and 530, with this brief description: «The god is now come and the fields resound with the wild cries of revellers. The people rush out of the city in throngs, men and women, old and young, nobles and commons, all mixed together, and hasten to celebrate the new rites»⁸. From verse 531 onwards, the speech of Pentheus begins, in which Ovid describes the ritual elements of the *festiva* that follows the arrival of Bacchus: the women as the gods' followers, the wine that drives them mad, the musical instruments used, cymbals, tambourines and horns or flutes, all of which speak of music, the thyrsus they carry in their hands, the branches, i.e. the vine and ivy, with which his followers adorn their heads, and the new sacrifices dedicated to the

⁵ St. Augustine, *De civitate dei*, ms. 10, dated between 1168-1180, Jasbar 1980.

⁶ This is the representation of Bacchus in two specific manuscripts, *De Rerum Naturis* by Rabano Mauro preserved in the Archive of Montecassino Abbey, Casin. 132 (p. 388B) and the *Farsalia* by Lucan in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich (Clm 13091, f. 117).

⁷ Carrara 1995. In the various manuscripts of the *Chroniques de Hainaut*, which include the representation of Bacchus, similar articles to Carrara 1995 can be found for the study of the figures of the ancient gods. See Leclercq-Marx 2009; Tesnière 2006.

⁸ Ovid, *Metamorphosis*, III, 528-530: «Liber adest, festisque fremunt ululatibus agri: / turba ruit, mixtaeque viris matresque nurusque / vulgusque proceresque ignota ad sacra feruntur». All English translations are by F.J. Miller and the original texts of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* are from the bilingual edition of A. Ruíz de Elvira.

god. In this fragment the Bacchic elements are presented through Pentheus speech, and therefore take on a negative character:

“What madness, ye sons of the serpent’s teeth, ye seed of Mars, has dulled your reason?” Pentheus cries. Can clashing cymbals, can the pipe of crooked horn, can shallow tricks of magic, women’s shrill cries, wineheated madness, vulgar throngs and empty drums; can all these vanquish men, for whom real war, with its drawn swords, the blare of trumpets, and lines of glittering spears, had no terrors? You, ye elders, should I give you praise, who sailed the long reaches of the sea and planted here your Tyre, here your wandering Penates, and who now permit them to be taken without a struggle? Or you, ye young men of fresher age and nearer to my own, for whom once ‘twas seemly to bear arms and not the thyrsus, to be sheltered by helmets and not garlands?⁹

We can see that the identifying elements of the myth are presented briefly, and the god does not actually appear physically until the myth of the Tyrrhenian pirates is narrated (vv. 582-691). Again, Ovid includes another description of the Bacchic festivities at the beginning of book fourth (1-30)¹⁰, where he describes, in this case in relation to the Theban women, how they abandon their chores to celebrate the sacrifices, in contrast to the Minyades who continue to work. The dress and attributes of the women are described as follows: their breasts are covered by skins, their hair is worn loose and intertwined with garlands, and they carry a thyrsus in their hands; he also describes the musical aspects: the women’s chanting, the tympani and the cymbals playing. In the middle of the story, Ovid mentions the different names by which the god

⁹ Ovid, *Metamorphosis*, III, 531-542: «“Quis furor, anguigenae, proles Mavortia, vestras / attonuit mentes?” Pentheus ait; aerane tantum / aere repulsa valent et adunco tibia cornu / et magicae fraudes, ut, quos non bellicus ensis, / non tuba terruerit, non strictis agmina telis, / femineae voces et mota insania vino / obscenique greges et inania tympana vincant? / vosne, senes, mirer, qui longa per aequora vecti / hac Tyron, hac profugos posuistis sede Penates, / nunc sinitis sine Marte capi? vosne, acrior aetas, / o iuvenes, propiorque meae, quos arma tenere, / non thyrsos, galeaque tegi, non fronde decebat?».

¹⁰ «At non Alcithoe Minyeias orgia censet / accipienda dei, sed adhuc temeraria Bacchum / progeniem negat esse Iovis sociasque sorores / impietatis habet. festum celebrare sacerdos / immunesque operum famulas dominasque suorum / pectora pelle tegi, crinales solvere vittas, /serta coma, manibus frondentis sumere thyrsos / iusserat et saevam laesi fore numinis iram / vaticinatus erat: parent matresque nurusque / telasque calathosque infectaque pensa reponunt / turaque dant Bacchumque vocant Bromiumque Lyaeumque / ignigenamque satumque iterum solumque bimatrem; / additur his Nyseus indetonsusque Thyoneus / et cum Lenaeo genialis consitor uvae / Nycteliusque Eleleusque parens et Iacchus et Euhan, / et quae praeterea per Graias plurima gentes / nomina, Liber, habes. tibi enim inconsumpta iuventa est, / tu puer aeternus, tu formosissimus alto / conspiceris caelo; tibi, cum sine cornibus adstas, / virgineum caput est; Oriens tibi victus, adusque / decolor extremo qua tinguitur India Gange. / Penthea tu, venerande, bipenniferumque Lycurgum / sacrilegos mactas, Tyrrhenaque mittis in aequor / corpora, tu biiugum pictis insignia frenis / colla premis lyncum. bacchae satyrique sequuntur, / quique senex ferula titubantis ebrius artus / sustinet et pando non fortiter haeret asello. / quacumque ingrederis, clamor iuvenalis et una / femineae voces inpulsaque tympana palmis / concavaque aera sonant longoque foramine buxus»: Ovid, *Metamorphosis*, IV, 1-30.

is known and various iconographic aspects, describing Bacchus as a youth or a child, and including a brief description of the followers of the Bacchic thiasus, the Bacchantes, the satyrs and Silenus.

These two moments of Ovid's narrative show different attributes, costumes and activities during the Bacchic festivities, but not an exact account of the events, as other myths may have, or specific elements for the development of the action itself, such as the metamorphosis of some of the characters, as in the myth of Jupiter and Io, where several specific points of the myth are narrated: Jupiter's meeting with Io, Io's transformation into a cow, Juno's commissioning of Argus and his death at the hands of Mercury. We will see how, as a result of this lack of focal points in the story, each miniaturist chooses the visual vocabulary of the myth that he considers appropriate, creating a series of different iconographies.

On the other hand, to perform the iconographical analysis of the representation of these bacchic episodes we must take into account that the miniatures do not illustrate the original Ovidian text, but two specific medieval texts: the *Ovide moralisé*, dated between 1309-1328¹¹ and the *Ovidius moralizatus* dated between 1340-1350/62¹². The *Ovide moralisé*¹³, composed by an anonymous author from Burgundy or central-west France¹⁴, within 72000 octosyllabic verses is a rewriting, with a re-interpretation of the myths for the benefit of Christian morality. The description of Bacchus' entry into Thebes in the *Ovide moralisé* extends from verses 2030 to 2063 of the third book, a considerably expanded description considering that Ovid devoted only three verses to it¹⁵. The anonymous author of the poem explains the Bacchic festivities at length, although repeating the same Ovidian elements: they celebrate the god of wine, all Thebans, rich and poor, men, women, young and old, join

¹¹ Baker *et al.* 2018, pp. 182-192, expose all the data provided by De Boer 1915-1938, Engels 1945, Lord 1975 and Jung 1994, 2009 and carry out a revision of the chronology.

¹² For a complete revision on the dating of Bersuire's work see Piqueras Yagüe 2020, pp. 41-57.

¹³ The *Ovide moralisé* edition was completely published only by Cornelis de Boer between 1915 and 1938 (Boer 1915-1938) and was reprinted between 1966 and 1967. In this edition De Boer reproduces the text from a single manuscript, the oldest, Rouen (Bibliothèque municipale, ms. O.4), including variations from a complete copy, Lyon (Bibliothèque municipale ms 742), and from another representative of a group of Y manuscripts (Bibliothèque nationale de France fr. 872). Currently the Oef group led by Marylène Possamaï and Richard Trachsler is working on the full text edition, including an exhaustive study of the manuscripts, although so far only volume I with the edition of the text of the first book has been published (Baker *et al.* 2018). For more information on the old editions see Baker *et al.* 2018, pp. 122-131.

¹⁴ Croizy-Naquet 2002.

¹⁵ Our case is not exceptional, since in the *Ovide moralisé* the text of Ovid is greatly increased. From the almost 12000 (11995) verses of the *Metamorphoses*, the *Ovide moralisé* has a total of 72000, including allegories, moralisations and additions. Cf. Jung 1994, pp. 152-153; Demats 1973.

in and make sacrifices to him; they carry thyrsus and vine-leaf hats, and drink well, so that some people go mad, and others stagger around. Music played on instruments such as horns and drums enlivens the festivities:

Mes par temps doit estre averie
 La prophecie dou devin,
 Quar Baccus vient, li dieus de vin,
 Libers, li deus de grant vaillance.
 Tuit li firent grant reverance,
 Et gran joie ont de sa venue
 Li riche home et la gent menue.
 De lui festoier sont en grant
 Viel et joenne, petit et grant,
 Damoisiaus, dames et meschines.
 Trompes, tabours, cors et buisines
 Oïsez par Thebes sonner,
 Et la contree resonner.
 Nulz ne se faint de joie faire.
 Cierges ardans et luminaire
 Veïssiez par tous ces moustiers.
 L'ences fume par ces autiers.
 Grant feste font et gran office.
 Au nouviau dieu font sacrefice.
 Leurs poitrines couvrent de piaus.
 Tisons portent, si font chapiaus
 En lor chiez de feuilles de vigne.
 N'est viel ne joenne qui ne vigne
 Au sacrefice cultiver.
 La les veïssiez estriver
 De faire joie et de bien boivre.
 N'avoient pas apris le boivre,
 Qui les affole et escervele.
 Li uns cloce, l'autre chancele,
 Li pluseur chieent et trebuschent;
 Parmi ces champs crient et huschent
 A maniere de forsenez.
 Cil damoisel de Thebes nez,
 Jentilz et de moult grant renon,
 Cil qui Pentheüs avoit non,
 Des plus puissans de la cité,
 Despisoit, par sa niceté,
 Baccus et tous ses sacrifices¹⁶.

After these verses, Pentheus' speech continues, closely following the original text. As occurs in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, at the beginning of the fourth book the poem resumes the description of the festivities, with certain par-

¹⁶ *Ovide moralisé*, III, 2030-2063. All *Ovide moralisé* texts are taken from De Boer edition.

ticularities in relation to Ovid's text¹⁷. Where Ovid says *serta coma* (v. 4.7), that is loose hair, the *Ovide moralisé* specifies *chapiaux de feuilles de vigne* (vv. 4.43-44), that is vine leaf hats, and where Ovid specifies that mothers and daughters-in-law abandon their cloths (v. 4.9), the *Ovide moralisé* omits that specification in the type of followers. Finally, it is interesting to note how Ovid, in describing the followers who make up the Bacchic committee, speaks of Silenus without mentioning his name (vv. 4.26-27), whereas the *Ovide moralisé* clearly identifies him by saying *Sillenus sor son asnou* (v. 4.77), Silenus on his donkey.

Otherwise, the text of the *Ovidius moralizatus*¹⁸ is the opposite of the expansion of the verses that we saw in the *Ovide moralisé*. Pierre Bersuire, as part of his *Reductorium morale*¹⁹, makes this Ovidian exegesis, in which he summarises Ovid's *Metamorphoses* at the same time that he adds a whole series of allegorical and moral explanations, in the style of the medieval *exempla*. Bersuire devotes his fable tenth²⁰ of book III to the story of Pentheus,

¹⁷ «Tous li pueples, qui ce savoit, / Fu esmeüs pour cest afaire / Aus nouveaux sacrefices faire. / Toutes les Ysmenedienes / Et les dames thebanienses / Par sacrefices honoroient / Baccus, et pour dieu l'aoroient, / Si fesoient par ces moustiers / Fumer l'encens sus ces autiers, / Si chantoient oé, oé! [...] / Li prestre o grant devotion / La feste Baccu celebrioint, / Et au pueple la comandoient / A celebrer sollempnelment, / Et que toutes comunelment, / Soient dames, soient puceles, / Soient baiasses ou anceles, / Se tenissent de laborer, / Si venissent au temple orer / A cele feste sollempnee, / Et fust chascune eschevelée / Et portast sor son chief chapiaux / De feuilles de vigne, et de piaux / Ait chascune son pis couvert, / Si port en ses mains tison vert / Et foillu, et qui nel fera / Le nouveiu dieu corroucera, [...] / Et disoient par grant entente: / Dieux de pardurable jouvente, / tous jours enfes et jouvencielz, / Li plus biaux que l'en truisse es cielz, / Et tout jours chies de verge avroies, / Se tu cornus ne devenoies. / Plains ez de force et de fierté. / Tout Orient as sormonté. [...] / Apres toi corent, a grans presses, / Li satiriaul et les prestresses / Et Sillenus sor son asnou, / Qui ne pense s'a boivre non / Et a farsir dou vin sa pance / Si s'apuei sor sa potance. / Tu fais tenir ces beles tables / Et doner ces mes delitables»: *Ovide moralisé*, IV, 4-82.

¹⁸ The first edition of the *Ovidius moralizatus* was published in Paris in 1509 by the editor Jodocus Badius, with significant modifications (cfr. Piqueras Yagüe 2020). Subsequently at the beginning of the 20th century two scholars published respective editions of the text. On the one hand Fausto Ghisalberti in 1933 (Ghisalberti 1933) making an edition compiling from the manuscript of the Biblioteca Ambrosiana of Milan (D. 66 inf), including only the additions with respect to Badius' text of 1509. In 1962, Joseph Engels (Engels 1962) transcribed Badius' 1509 edition. Maria van der Bijl's edition of book one, based on 52 manuscripts, was produced in 1971 (Bijl 1971). In the same year, William Reynolds produced an English translation in his thesis (Reynolds 1971). More recently several editions have been appeared. The first, Pablo Piqueras' doctoral thesis, includes an edition, but again based on the 1509 edition, and a translation into Spanish (Piqueras Yagüe 2020). The massive work led by Dieter Blume and Christel Meier starts from the Gotha manuscript, to produce an edition of the first Avignon version, including in the 8 more manuscripts to the revision, at the same time as the German translation (Blume, Meier 2021). Finally, the English translation by Frank Coulson and Justin Haynes just came out (Coulson, Haynes 2023).

¹⁹ The *Ovidius moralizatus* would correspond to book thirteen of Pierre Bersuire's *Reductorium morale*, they can be found bounded together or independently.

²⁰ This would be fable XIII according to Piqueras' edition, which is based on the edition

telling us in just thirty lines of the prophecy of Tiresias to Pentheus, the arrival of Bacchus, the death of Pentheus killed by his mother and aunts, and the transformation of the Minyades into bats with the consequent allegorical explanation of the myths. In this case, the description of the arrival is absent, and only the Bacchic festivities, his followers the Bacchantes and the relationship between Bacchus and wine are briefly mentioned on the text.

Pentheus, rex Crete, improperavit Tiresie, quod cecus esset. Cui repondens Tiresias ait: *quam fieres felix, orbis si luminis esses*. Festa Bacchi contempnes et exinde contemptus occideris. Accidit ergo, quod cum Bacchus cum suis sacris ad festa celebranda venisset, Pentheus noluit suscipere festa. Immo audiens, quod ille festa in monte Citherone celebrabat, ivit illuc ad impediendum. Cum ergo ibi esset mater sua et sorores matris sue dicta festa celebrantes, virtute Bacchi factum est, quod ipse et parentes sui insanirent, ita quod videntes Pentheum ipsum esse aprum crediderunt et contra eum cucurrerunt et ipsum lapidibus obruerunt et baculis occiderunt [...] quod fatuum est bacchantes, id est, Bacchum seu vinum colentes²¹.

As we have seen, the differences between the two works, *Ovide moralisé* and *Ovidius moralizatus*, are obvious, as are the representations in the two groups of manuscripts, as we shall see.

3. *The images of Bacchic festivities in the manuscripts*

Two groups of manuscripts, the *Ovide moralisé* and the *Ovidius moralizatus*, have been chosen for the study of this article. These manuscripts, dating from the 14th century, are the first in the Middle Ages to depict the entry of Bacchus into Thebes and the Bacchic festivities. In the case of the *Ovide moralisé*²², there are twenty-three surviving manuscripts, sixteen of which have

printed by Badius in Paris in 1509. In fact, however, the manuscripts do not contain this numbering, and we must bear in mind that both the Engels and the Piqueras editions do not present the text as it appears in the manuscripts, but as it appears in the Badius edition, in which a number of fables have been changed both in their location and in their length. This is the specific case of the fable of the Minyades, since Bersuire includes it in the fable dedicated to Bacchus in Thebes, Pentheus and the Minyades, following this specific order, which is reflected not only in the text of the Gotha and Bergamo manuscripts, but also in their miniatures. For more information on Bersuire's modification to Ovid's original order and Badius' edition changes, see Piqueras Yagüe 2020, pp. 89-118, and Blume and Meier 2021.

²¹ Pierre Bersuire, *Ovidius moralizatus*, III, 13. Text taken from Blume and Meier 2021.

²² Sixteen of the twenty-three manuscripts of the *Ovide moralisé* in verse are illuminated (Jung 1996b; Baker *et al.* 2018). Only five of the surviving manuscripts have a significant number of miniatures: Rouen, Bibliothèque municipale, ms 0.4, produced between 1309-1325, with 453 miniatures; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms Arsenal 5069, dated c. 1325-1340, with 304 miniatures; Lyon, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. 742, dated c. 1385-1390, with 57 min-

been illuminated, covering a chronology from the beginning of the 14th century to the end of the 15th century. For our study, which focuses on the 14th century manuscripts, only two of them have this type of iconography, the one preserved in Rouen, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. O.4, and the one in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Arsenal 5069.

In the case of the *Ovidius moralizatus*, the corpus of manuscripts preserved is much larger, ninety-one manuscripts, but only five are illuminated²³. Two of them include this subject illuminated, specifically those preserved in Gotha, Forschungsbibliothek with the signature Membr I98, and in Bergamo, Biblioteca Civica Angelo Mai, ms. Cassaf. 3.4, both dating from the 14th century.

We begin with the oldest manuscript of the group, preserved in Rouen, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. O.4 (henceforth Rouen), made in Paris around 1325 by the Master of Fauvel. The miniature on folio 84r represents the beginning of the story of Bacchus and Pentheus: two men, one young and bearded, the other older, bearded and wearing a hat, stand before a statue of an idol on a column. The statue is dressed in golden robes, wears a crown and gestures with its right hand²⁴ (fig. 1). In this case, the identification of the figures as Pentheus and Tiresias standing before the statue of Bacchus is fairly obvious.

atures; Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek, Thott 399, dated c. 1480, with 49 miniatures. The other group of the manuscripts belong to the same stemma of manuscripts and are illuminated with fifteen miniatures each one: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 373, dated c. 1380; Genève, Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire, fr. 176, produced c. 1390; Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. Lat. 1480, dated c. 1390. For the illustration of the manuscripts of the *Ovide moralisé* see: Jung (1996a and 1996b), Lord (2011: 261-270), who, however, only considers five illuminated manuscripts, Clier-Colombani (2017) and Baker *et al.* (2018). On the illumination of selected manuscripts see Lord (1975), Blumenfeld-Kosinski (2002) and Drobinsky (2009). See also the contributions of M. Cavagna, S. Cerrito, F. Clier-Colombani, I. Fabry-Tehranchi, W. Gobbels at *Les Archives de littérature du Moyen Âge* (ARLIMA, <<http://www.arlima.net/index.html>>, 20.06.2023).

²³ Only five of the ninety-one manuscripts of the *Ovidius moralizatus* are illuminated. These five manuscripts are produced between the fourteenth to the end of the fifteenth century; only two of the surviving manuscripts feature a significant number of miniatures: Gotha, Forschungsbibliothek, ms. Membr. I 98 produced between 1350-1360, with about 102 miniatures although not all of them are finished, and with blank spaces for many more; Bergamo, Biblioteca Civica Angelo Mai, ms Cassaforte 3.4, dated c. 1390-1410, with 210 miniatures but it has suffered severe losses at the beginning and end. Of the other three surviving manuscripts, two have illuminated only *De formis figurisque deorum*: Treviso, Biblioteca Comunale, ms. 344, produced between 1390-1410, with twenty-one miniatures; and Ghent, Ghent Cathedral, ms. 12, dated c. 1490, with eighteen miniatures. The last manuscript, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. Latin 5703, was not designed to contain illuminations but it has twenty pen-and-ink drawings in the margins of the Ovidian text. On the illustration of the manuscripts of the *Ovidius Moralizatus* see Lord 1995 and 2011; Trapp 1995; Blume 2014; McLaughlin 2017; Blume, Meier 2021; Zanichelli 2022.

²⁴ Carla Lord (1975) identifies this miniature as the worship of Bacchus, although as it is also an example of worship, we must interpret it as a visual description of the fable of Tiresias and Pentheus.

This manuscript also contains a miniature of the representation of the Bacchic festivities at the beginning of the fourth book, folio 89v. (fig. 2). In this case, three men and two women form the group of worshippers, with two of the men standing and waving a censer towards the god, while the other three kneel with their hands folded in prayer. The god, again a male figure dressed in golden robes with a crown, stands on an altar.

The next manuscript, preserved in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. Arsenal 5069 (henceforth Paris)²⁵, dates from around 1330-1335²⁶, was produced in Paris, and is associated with the same miniaturist workshop as that in Rouen, the Master of Fauvel and his collaborators. Two miniatures depict the entry of Bacchus into Thebes and his festivities. Folio 34v (fig. 3) shows a group of worshippers making an offering to a sculpture of Bacchus. In this case, the group consists of four men, two bearded and two beardless, dressed in clerical robes. One of them kneels before the altar on which the idol/Bacchus is placed and offers him a ram. In this manuscript, the idol is depicted as a golden, naked, squatting, cross-legged figure with slightly sketched features. As in the Rouen manuscript, at the beginning of the fourth book, on folio 38v (fig. 4), there is another miniature illustrating the celebration of the Bacchic festivals. This miniature represents on the left a group of three men in long robes, two of them bearded and one beardless. The three men clasp their hands together as a symbol of prayer and raise them towards a statue of an idol/Bacchus placed on an altar. The figure of the idol is similar to that in the previous miniature: a golden, naked, squatting, cross-legged figure with slightly sketched features.

With the next two manuscripts of the *Ovidius moralizatus* we move forward in time to the middle and end of the 14th century. The first codex is preserved in Gotha, Forschungsbibliothek, ms. Membr 198 (henceforth Gotha)²⁷.

²⁵ This manuscript is very close to the Rouen manuscript, not only because of the date of its creation but also because it was made in Parisian workshops, and more specifically in the workshop of the same miniaturist, the master of the *Roman de Fauvel*, according to François Avril. It contains 305 miniatures. The miniature on folio 186v has been mutilated and is partially preserved. In addition, the miniatures on folios 8v, 139r, 143r, 168v, 172r, 185r and 186r have been torn off. Compositionally, compared to the Rouen manuscript, many of the main figures have been enlarged, while secondary figures have been eliminated. Architectures and landscapes have been reduced. In this manuscript the miniaturist is more creative in the depiction of metamorphoses, one of the greatest challenges for artists; he seems to feel free to rethink, invent and modify the form of the hybrids. Manuscript digitised at <<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b525031179/f1>>, 20.06.2023. See Jung 1994, 1996a, 1996b, 2009; Lord 1975, 1985 and 2011; Blumenfeld-Kosinski 2002; Clier-Colombani 2017; Baker *et al.* 2018.

²⁶ On the different proposals for dating the manuscript, see the bibliography in the previous note.

²⁷ The manuscript preserved in Gotha was commissioned by Bruzio Visconti (d. 1356), and its illuminations are attributed to the Bolognese miniaturist known as the Master of 1346. It may have been a luxurious manuscript, for it is estimated that the design originally included 289

It is the oldest illuminated manuscript of the *Ovidius moralizatus*, dated circa middle of the 14th century and produced in Bologna. The miniature on folio 19v (fig. 5) is dedicated to the entry of Bacchus into Thebes and the events that take place there. To this end, the miniaturist composes a scene in which, through a synoptic narrative, he shows the various myths narrated in this fable, from the prophecy of Tiresias to Pentheus, the feasts of Bacchus, the death of Pentheus and the metamorphosis of the Minyades. In the upper part, in the background, there is a sketch of the city of Thebes with a small temple in the foreground, which we can deduce would be a temple dedicated to Bacchus. The next level shows, on the left, two male figures, with Tiresias wearing a toga like a sage or a university professor and Pentheus, clearly identified by the crown on his head; this group would represent the prophecy of Tiresias to Pentheus. On the other side, on the right, a group of female figures adorn their heads with garlands of flowers, while they drink wine gathered around a table; this would be identified as the representation of the Bacchic festivities. On the third level, the miniaturist has created the group representing Pentheus' death by his mother and aunts; three figures are waving their hands towards another half-man, half-wild boar; Pentheus' face itself, as it was pictured in the prophecy of Tiresias to Pentheus, is drawn on this metamorphosed figure, which thus visually represents the hallucinatory vision suffered by Agave and her sisters when they saw Pentheus appear. Finally, in the foreground, in the lower part of the miniature, on a loom covered with vine leaves and bunches of grapes, the metamorphosis of the Minyades into bats is depicted, representing their evolution in three stages using the three daughters of Minyas to display each step of the transformation²⁸.

The last manuscript chosen for the analysis is kept in the Bergamo, Biblioteca Civica Angelo Mai ms. Cassaforte 3.4 (henceforth Bergamo)²⁹. It is dated

miniatures, of which 77 fully illuminations were made up to and including book 5 of the poem, 25 were partially colored and three were simply drawn (f. 31). See Degenhart, Schmitt 1980; Lord 1995; Suckale-Redlefsen 2011; Blume 2014; McLaughlin 2017; Venturini 2018; Blume, Meier 2021; Zanichelli 2022.

²⁸ It is interesting to note, although it is outside the subject of this study, that in this manuscript the three daughters of Minyas are represented, each one showing a different moment of metamorphosis, although in the Gotha manuscript the text does not say at any time that the daughters of Minyas were three.

²⁹ This manuscript has 210 miniatures. The prologue of the *Formis figurisque deorum* is mutilated, the first deities Saturn, Juno, Mars and Apollo are missing, and the manuscript begins with the description of Venus. At the end, the manuscript is also mutilated and lacks the last part ending with the myth of Ardea, which corresponds to Book 14. It presents some miniatures of a less professional skills, presumably made by an amateur and not in a miniaturist workshop. About its authorship, between monastic and notarial, see McLaughlin 2017 and Zanichelli 2022, and also for a new view on their area of origin see Blume, Meier 2021. This manuscript is digitised at <<https://www.bdl.servizirl.it/vufind/Record/BDL-OGGETTO-3823>>, 20.06.2023. See also Degenhart, Schmitt 1980; Lord 1995; Gatti et al 1995; Venturini 2018; and Zanichelli 2022.

between 1355 and 1370³⁰ in the area of the northern Italy. The miniature on folio 37r depicts (fig. 6), again in a single scene, the entry of Bacchus into Thebes, the myth of Pentheus and the transformation of the Minyades. On the left, a bearded male figure holds a small shrine in his hand and wears what appears to be a crown of branches or bunches of grapes on his head. Beside him, kneeling before the altar, are two female figures, one of whom is holding a ram, presumably, as part of the ritual. Next, in the centre of the scene are two figures, a man wearing a crown and holding a woman by the hands. To the right of the scene, a woman sits at a loom with a bat beside her.

4. *The euhemerist and Christian tradition: Bacchic festivities as a scene of idolatry*

After introducing the miniatures studied in this article, we will focus on the analysis of the relationship between the text and image, but above all on the creation of the myth, the transformation of the myth into image and its result, and the configuration of different versions to represent the god in Thebes.

It is important to remember that, in these manuscripts, many of the myths of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* were depicted for the first time in the Middle Ages. In the French manuscripts of the *Ovide moralisé*, the representation of Bacchus' entry into Thebes and the Bacchic festivities are similarly embodied. In these first two manuscripts, Rouen and Paris, we will first analyse the representation of Bacchus as a pagan idol, and the conformation of the scene of the Bacchic festivities as a scene of idolatry. The first miniature in the Rouen refers to the revelation that Tiresias explains to Pentheus concerning his future by refusing to celebrate the coming of the god (fig. 1). The statue of Bacchus, towards which Pentheus and Tiresias turn, is represented, as we have already seen, as a golden figure wearing a long robe and a crown on his head, just like the idol/Bacchus on folio 89v (fig. 2). We are at the beginning of the iconographic creation of the myths narrated in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and therefore the gods are represented as kings in this first manuscript. The early Christian Fathers began to interpret the Greek and Roman gods and goddesses as ancient kings, in an attempt to demystify them to their readers and transform the gods into human beings. Saint Isidore of Seville, for example, tells us in his work *Etymologies*: «Quos pagani deos asserunt, homines olim fuisse produntur, et pro uniuscuiusque vita vel meritis coli apud suos post mortem coeperunt»³¹.

³⁰ Researchers do not agree on the chronology of this manuscript. Degenhart, Schmitt 1980 consider the second half of 14th century, Venturini 2018 opts for the final decade of the 14th century, while Blume, Meier 2021 chose a date of between 1355-1370.

³¹ Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, VIII, 11.

This option of using euhemerism to explain the existence of the pagan gods is one of the three options put forward by Jean Seznec³², to represent mythological themes in the Middle Ages, in which myths are identified as historical facts of the past, more or less disfigured, and gods and goddesses as kings and queens. They were thus stripped of their supernatural power and transformed into ordinary mortal beings who could be used or explained in the light of medieval Christianity³³. As a result, in the Rouen manuscript all the representations of the gods wear crowns, whereas the ancient kings do not. This attribute therefore acts as a visual identification resource. This same visual asset can be found in the Paris manuscript, but without the precision and accuracy of the Rouen manuscript; most of the gods are depicted with crowns, but in the case of Bacchus, the crown is only shown in one miniature³⁴.

In the two miniatures of the Paris manuscript (fig. 3 and 4), the type of Bacchus/idol depicted has changed radically: it is now a naked figure, with distorted features and without a crown.

4.1. *The figure of Bacchus as an idol*

The representation of ancient gods as idols is very common and follows standard images. According to Camille³⁵ (1989 p. 120) the most common type of idol is the one that inherits the features of the god Mars and is depicted naked, with shield and spear. An analysis of the Rouen manuscript shows that eighteen miniatures represent scenes of worship before an idol³⁶. Through these miniatures, we can see three different types of representing an idol: one as the god Mars, another dressed in a long robe and crowned, and a third as a torso. Within these idols we can find four scenes in which the figure/idol is

³² For Seznec 1940 the gods in the Middle Ages have survived through their association with three different types of identification: euhemerist, cosmological and allegorical.

³³ It should also be noted that both the *Ovide moralisé* and the *Ovidius moralizatus* are two works of an allegorical nature, in which classical myths are interpreted through the Christian vision of the time. In the *Ovide moralisé*, the narration of a myth or series of myths of the metamorphoses is always followed by an allegorical explanation of it, which is clearly introduced in the text of the poem with formulas of the type *vous dirai que senefie cele fable*. See Blume 2014, Baker *et al.* 2018.

³⁴ The miniatures that include Bacchus' figure in the Paris manuscript are: f. 30v Bacchus planting a vine, f. 111 Bacchus discovers Ariadne, f. 146 Bacchus grants a gift to Midas, but the only one that represents Bacchus crowned is in f. 146.

³⁵ This type of representation of the ancient gods as idols has been extensively studied by Michael Camille in his book *The Gothic Idol*, in which he studies the different representations of idols and their implications and meanings during the Middle Ages (Camille 1989).

³⁶ The miniatures in Rouen that include presentations of idol worship are as follows: f. 31, f. 84, f. 89v, f. 91, f. 161, f. 212, f. 215v, f. 233v, f. 244v, f. 252v, f. 256v, f. 291, f. 300, f. 322v, f. 360v, f. 366 and f. 399.

wearing long robes and a crown³⁷, all of which coincide with scenes from the fables in which a particular divinity is worshipped or invoked for help. In folios 84, 161 and 233v, the idol is represented according to the Mars typology of the naked figure with or without the spear and shield; all of them coincide with scenes representing the allegorical parts of the *Ovide moralisé* poem. The last possibility is the representation of an idol with only the upper part of the torso figured. This happened in folios 215v, 291, 300, 321, 322v and 360v, coinciding with scenes in which an action takes place in a temple, such as the images of the death of Achilles (f. 322v) or the abduction of Helen (f. 300). When the god/idol is depicted in long robes, the features of the faces and the details of the hands are much more defined than when depicted as a Mars or torso type, where the features of the figure are simplified and schematised. In all these eighteen miniatures, the idol can be placed on a column or on an altar, although more often on a column³⁸ (fig. 7).

In the Paris manuscript, the number of idols represented has been significantly reduced to nine miniatures. The scene of Ninus worshipping the statue of King Belus (f. 2v) is depicted in exactly the same way as in the Rouen codex. The idol is a figure dressed in golden robes and is crowned. However, in the other miniatures with idols of this manuscript³⁹, the idol is always a naked figure, with demonic features, and crossed legs⁴⁰, just as in the two scenes of the Bacchic feast in the manuscript (fig. 3 and 4). The Bacchus/idol type has been modified, a nude figure with deformed features and crossed legs is represented,⁴¹ a characteristic that soon appears in the figures of the Gothic idols, associating them with a negative character of the pagan gods, and which visually are more closely related to images of demoniac representations.

4.2. *Bacchic festivities as a scene of idolatry*

The scenes of Bacchic festivities in the Rouen manuscript (f. 89v, fig. 2) and in the Paris (f. 35 and 38v, figs. 3 and 4) are structured in the same way: the image of Bacchus/idol on the right and a group of worshippers on the left. In Rouen, the groups are made up of men and women of different classes, in-

³⁷ These are Ninus and his people worshipping the statue of their king Belus who had died (f. 31); Teletusa and Isis (f. 244v); Macarius and the handmaid of Circe showing her the statue of Pico (f. 366), and the Roman embassy at Delphi (f. 399).

³⁸ Idol on a column in folios 31, 84, 91, 215v, 233v, 252v, 291, 300, 322v, 360v and 366. Idol over an altar in folios 89v, 161, 212, 244v, 256v, 321 and 399.

³⁹ Folios 35, 38v, 73, 79a, 79b, 81, 178v and 187v.

⁴⁰ Miniatures in folios 73, 79a, 79b, 81, 255 and 262.

⁴¹ On the subject of idols and their representation with crossed legs, which in medieval art generally symbolises proud tyrants, see Camille 1989, p. 71 with bibliography in note 55.

cluding within the composition two bearded men, alluding to older men, and a beardless man associated with youth. The two female figures wear different headdresses, representing the wide range of the Theban women who celebrated the cult. We can deduce that the miniaturist is trying to be more faithful to the text that through these details, in order to visually capture the idea of Ovid's verse III, 529, «men and women, old and young, nobles and commons, all mixed together» and verses III, 2037-2039 of the *Ovide moralisé* «De lui festoier sont en grant / Viel et joenne, petit et grant, / Damoisiaus, dames et meschines» and managed to show in the miniature the diversity of the Thebans who must have followed the Bacchic rites.

However, such details and visual allusions to the text lose their force in the Paris manuscript. In this manuscript, the group of Bacchic followers has lost the plurality to which the text refers, and which the Rouen manuscript managed to capture. In the Paris manuscript, the Thebans are all men, bearded or beardless, but without any differentiation in their clothing. In this case, the miniaturists opted for standard scenes which, as we shall see, do not differ from similar scenes in other manuscripts.

As mentioned above, Fauvel's Master and his collaborators were responsible for the production of both the Rouen and Paris manuscripts. This workshop of miniaturists of Fauvel's Master and collaborators worked in Paris for a long period of time between 1315 and 1340, resulting in a rich production of illuminated manuscripts. Such images of idolatry of this kind are repeated in other manuscripts from this workshop, such as the *Petite Bible Historial* (Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 8, f. 346), where the prophet Zephaniah is seen preaching to a group of pagans who are worshipping an idol; or in the *Miroir Historial*, French translation by Jean de Vignay of the *Speculum Historial* by Vincent de Beauvais⁴² (Bibliothèque national de France, fr. 316, f. 64), also by Master of Fauvel. There are many other examples of miniatures like this one from different workshops of miniaturists, such as the *Miroir Historiale* (Bibliothèque National de France, ms. Arsenal 5080, f. 333v), illuminated in Paris, which shows another scene of idol worship with similar characteristics (fig. 8).

In fact, this iconography of idolatry has its Christian parallel, as shown in the Rouen and the Paris manuscripts. In both codices, there are several images of Christian worship⁴³ in which a person or a group of people worship the image of the crucified Christ, the Cross or a chalice; the conception of the scene

⁴² The *Speculum historiale* is the fourth part of the work *Speculum maius* by Vincent de Beauvais, which is a scholastic encyclopaedia dedicated to Louis IX and retouched in 1253, it was a widely read text. The *Speculum historiale* relates the history of the world in 3793 chapters, from the creation to the Crusades. Jean de Vignay translated this fourth part into French in 1333 at the request of Queen Jeanne of Burgundy as the *Miroir Historial*.

⁴³ In Rouen folios 91, 167 and 234; in Paris folios 31, 71v, 159 and 159v.

is the same as the one we can see in the miniatures of idol adoration: women and men of various appearances are shown kneeling before the figure of the crucified Christ on an altar.

5. *The proposal of the manuscripts of the Ovidius moralizatus*

As far as the manuscripts of *Ovidius moralizatus* are concerned, the miniaturist did not have much information in the text about the celebration of the Bacchic festivities and the arrival of Bacchus at Thebes. In Bersuire's text, as we have seen, the information about the rituals and the arrival of Bacchus is rather scarce; all we know is that rituals were celebrated and that the worshippers were mainly women.

The Gotha manuscript contains only one miniature on this subject. The picture (fig. 5) shows a pavilion in the background as part of the rituals mentioned by Bersuire, and it also represents his followers, the Bacchantes, who are shown celebrating, sitting around a table and toasting with wine. It is interesting to note that Bacchus is not depicted in this miniature, because in the *Metamorphoses* and in *Ovidius moralizatus* Pentheus never sees Bacchus, and when he sends his soldiers to look for the god they cannot find him, so it makes more sense that the god is not physically represented in this scene. What is original about this manuscript – something that is later found more frequently in Ovidian and non-Ovidian manuscripts when Bacchus is depicted⁴⁴ –, is his direct association with wine and by extension with his wor-

⁴⁴ In the oldest manuscripts in which the figure of Bacchus appears as a god, dating from the 11th and 12th centuries, his association with wine is always present; the god is depicted with a cup of wine or even drinking. This is the case of the miniatures in the manuscripts of Saint Augustine's *De civitate Dei* in the Landesschule Pforte Bibliothek ms. 10 (f. 3r), the Lucan's *De Pharsalia* in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 13091 (f. 117) and the manuscript of Rabanus Maurus' *De rerum naturis* in the Archivio dell'Abbazia di Montecassino, Casin. 123 (p. 388B). In the 14th century the first manuscripts to include the representation of Bacchus are those of the *Ovide moralisé*, Rouen and Paris, which make a small visual reference to the relationship between the god and wine by depicting the scene of Bacchus and the Tyrrhenian pirates, including a few barrels of wine in the boat (Rouen f. 88 and Paris f. 37v). During the 14th and 15th centuries we will see how this relationship between Bacchus and wine continues in numerous manuscripts. For example in Christine de Pizan's *Epistre Othea* (see note 45), in the *Ovide moralisé in prose* in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 137 (38 v.), or that of Martin Le Franc' *Le champion des dames* in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 12476 (f. 11v), where the drinkers appear directly. In other manuscripts, the relationship between Bacchus and wine is developed by identifying the god as a producer of wine or a benefactor of the vines, as in the case of several manuscripts of Virgil's *Georgics* (Edinburgh, University Library ms. 195 (f. 19), Hoklham Hall library, ms. 307 (f. 67v), Leiden, Bibliotheek der Universiteit, ms. BPL 6B (f. 25r), and Lyon, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. P. A. 27), or the manuscript of Saint Augustine's *De civitate Dei* in The Hague, Museum Meermano-Westreenianum, ms. 11 (f. 209).

shippers, drinkers or drunkards. In this particular manuscript, they are not exactly representation of drunkards, but his Bacchantes are enjoying the wine and celebrating the arrival of the god. However, we will see how in other miniatures the context becomes negative, and the worshippers become drunkards. This can be seen in the illuminated manuscripts of Christine de Pizan's *Epistre Othea* where the miniature associated with the description of Bacchus deals mainly with this theme, so that the god is represented with his followers the drunkards. In the various manuscripts of the *Epistre Othea* Bacchus can be seen drinking or offering wine to his followers, who are usually gathered around a table toasting. The drunkards are shown in various states of intoxication; they may be drinking, spilling the wine or even sleeping on the floor⁴⁵. Another example can be found in a fifteenth manuscript of the second prose version of the *Ovide moralisé*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 137⁴⁶(f. 38v, fig. 9), where Bacchus appears to his followers, the drunkards. Here, the miniaturist has chosen to personalise the representation of the god Bacchus, emphasising his association with drunkards and wine. The table and floor are stained with wine, and the glasses are spilt on both the table and the floor.

The miniatures of the last manuscript to be considered in this small corpus of study, the Bergamo manuscript, in their staging of the Bacchus' festivities seem to contradict the information given in the text of the *Ovidius Moralizatus* and moreover, the proposition of the Gotha manuscript. Instead the Bergamo manuscript show the god himself appearing during the festivities (fig. 6). In the miniature the figure on the left, with what appears to be a crown of branches or bunches of grapes on his head, is identified as Bacchus, as we have seen in the manuscripts of the *Ovide moralisé*, Rouen and Paris. The difference between the manuscripts of the *Ovide moralisé*, Paris and Rouen, and this one of the *Ovidius moralizatus*, Bergamo, is that, in this particular theme of Bacchus' entry into Thebas and his festivities, Bacchus appears for the first time as a divinity and not as an idol or statuette. He wears a crown of

⁴⁵ The manuscripts from Christine de Pizan's *Epistre Othea* that include these images are: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France fr. 606 (f. 12), London, British Library Harley 4431 (f. 106), Waddesdon Manor, ms. 8 (f. 14v), Lille, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. 391 (f. 24), Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek, ms. 9392 (f. 24v), The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, KW 74 G 27 (f. 24) and Oxford, Bodleian Library, 421 (f. 22).

⁴⁶ Manuscript made between 1470 and 1480 in the Bruges area. It was commissioned by Louis de Gruuthuse (c. 1427-1492), Burgundian courtier, appointed knight of the golden fleece, and decorated by the Master of Marguerite of York and his collaborators. It is illuminated with 119 miniatures arranged as follows: 15 large illuminations in the form of a frontispiece-image, introducing the 15 books of the *Metamorphoses*, and occupying almost three-quarters of the text box and 31 small column-wide miniatures, alternating with 73 historiated letters in grisaille. This manuscript is digitised in <<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b105385281>>, 20.06.2023. See Jung 1997; Cerrito 2008 and 2013; Harf-Lancner, Pérez-Simon 2015; Clier-Colombani 2017; Jung 1997; Baker *et al.* 2018.

vine shoots and holds a small altar in his left hand, towards which two female figures approach to make an offering. Once again, the female devotees and the sacrifices are present, although in this case the god is the one wearing the crown of branches, an attribute that the miniaturist maintains throughout the manuscript in various images in which the divinity appears⁴⁷. The figures in the center could be identified as Pentheus and possibly his mother, although it is difficult to determine exactly what they are doing, while the scene on the right corresponds to the myth of the Minyades⁴⁸. In this case, in order to depict the entrance of Bacchus and his festivities, the miniaturist has chosen to represent the god and an act of worship, more in line with what we have seen in the first manuscripts of the *Ovide moralisé*, but also taking into account that the text that it illuminates does not offer many more options for its realisation.

It should also be noted that in later 15th century manuscripts the depiction of the worship of Bacchus is transformed, although the two options seen here are mixed: worship and the association with wine. In the case of the manuscript in the Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek ms. Thott 399⁴⁹ (f.lxxii v., fig. 10), Bacchus appears on a small pedestal in an interior, as if he were a statue; in front of him four people, two of them drinking and the other two kneeling in a pleading attitude. The difference with the images of worship and sacrifice that we have seen in Rouen and Paris manuscripts, apart from the inclusion of the drinkers as his followers, is that the god is not represented as a generic idol, instead here he is represented with various attributes: on the one hand the crown of vines on his head, and on the other the animal he rides, a tiger⁵⁰.

⁴⁷ Bacchus is depicted in different scenes in this manuscript, in all of them he is wearing a crown with vine leaves and bunches of grapes. On folio 7v in the section of *De formis figurisque deorum*, in the description of this god; in the third book in the scenes of Bacchus and the expedition through Libya (f. 35v) and Bacchus and the Tyrrhenian pirates (f. 36); in the seventh book in the story of the son of Bacchus who steals a bull (f. 77) and in the myth of Midas (f. 117v).

⁴⁸ This scene has also been difficult to identify. According Bravi 1989, p. 288, and McLaughlin 2017 the scene corresponds to the following: on the left Bacchus, in the centre Pentheus; on the right Arachne at the loom, at the end, a spider. Venturini 2018 identifies the miniature with the depiction of one of the Minyades and suggests that the figures in the centre are Pentheus and his mother Agave.

⁴⁹ This manuscript contains the first chapter of Pierre Bersuire's *Ovidius moralizatus*, the *De formis figurisque deorum* translated into French, and the *Ovide moralisé*. It was produced in Flandes ca. 1480. It is a luxurious manuscript illuminated with forty-nine miniatures that belongs to Otto Thott (1703-1785). This manuscript is digitised at <<http://www5.kb.dk/manus/vmanus/2011/dec/ha/object116197/en/>>, 20.06.2023. See Legaré 1990; Jung 1996; Baker *et al.* 2018.

⁵⁰ This representation of Bacchus riding a tiger comes directly from Bersuire's text *De formis figurisque deorum*, at the beginning of *Ovidius moralizatus*. In that first part Bersuire describes the figure and some attributes of several gods, and for Bacchus says: «Erat itaque imago Bacchi puer cum facie muliebri, cum pectore nudo, cum capite cornuto, qui super tigrides equitabat»: Pierre Bersuire, *Ovidius moralizatus, De formis figurisque Deorum*, 13 (Blume, Meier 2021).

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the first images depicting the arrival of Bacchus in Thebes and the festivities that took place there focus on the sacrificial and worship aspects of the god rather than other aspects of the myth.

In all these manuscripts we can see the intention of the miniaturists or the person responsible for the construction of the iconographic cycle to create a new visual vocabulary for a mythological iconography that had no antecedents. If we analyse them, we can see that the French and Italian worlds opted for different solutions when dealing with the same scenes. The French manuscripts of the *Ovidius moralisé*, Rouen and Paris, follow the iconographic models of the Christian world, using a standard iconography, that of idolatry, while the Italian manuscripts of the *Ovidius moralizatus*, Gotha and Bergamo, try to create a new visual image of mythological nature, taking into account all the Greco-Roman cultural baggage that still survives in the Italian world.⁵¹ In particular, the Gotha manuscript introduces into the scene the direct association of Bacchus with wine and, by extension, with his faithful followers, the drinkers or drunkards, a theme that we will find more often later, not only in representations of Bacchus' entry into Thebes, but also in other non-Ovidian manuscripts when Bacchus is represented. One of the interesting changes in this version is the replacement of the drunken followers of Bacchus by the Bacchantes, who are the ones celebrating and enjoying the wine. Here the miniaturist is certainly following Bersuire's text more closely, perhaps seeking a more mythological approach.

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⁵¹ It is not without reason that in the medieval world there are several testimonies of travelers going to Rome describing the ancient Roman sculptures that could be seen at that moment in Rome, such as the text of Magister Gregorius' *De Mirabilibus Urbis Romae*. On this subject, see also Camille 1989, pp. 95 ff.

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Appendix



Fig. 1. Rouen, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. O.4, f. 84r: Pentheus, Tiresias and Bacchus. Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France



Fig. 2. Rouen, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. O.4, f. 89v: Adoration of Bacchus. Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France



Fig. 3. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. Arsenal 5069, f. 34v: Adoration of Bacchus. Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France



Fig. 4. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. Arsenal 5069, f. 38v: Adoration of Bacchus. Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France



Fig. 5. Gotha, Forschungsbibliothek, ms. Membr 198, f. 19v. @Forschungsbibliothek Gotha



Fig. 6. Bergamo, Biblioteca Civica Angelo Mai, ms. Cassaf. 3.4, f. 37v. Courtesy of Biblioteca Civica, Bergamo



Fig. 7. Rouen, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. O.4, folios 161, 215v, 256v and 91. Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France



Fig. 8. *Miroir Historiale*. Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. Arsenal 5080, f. 333v.
Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

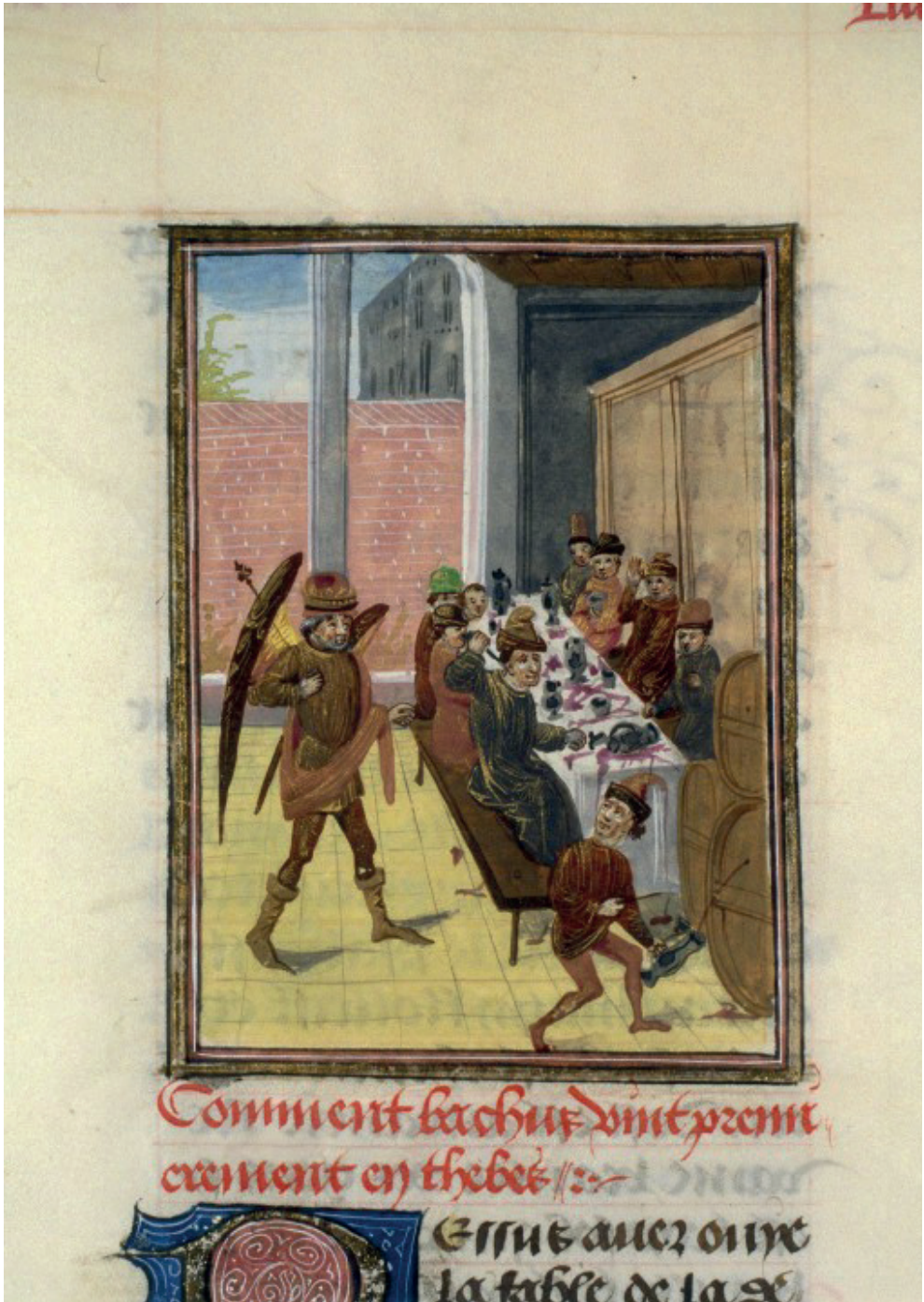


Fig. 9. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 137, f. 38v: Bacchus and his followers, the drinkers. Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France



Fig. 10. Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek ms. Thott 399, f. lxxii v: Bacchus and his followers, the drinkers. Source Kongelige Bibliotek, Digital collections

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