OVID AND RHETORIC

It has long been a common allegation that Ovid's work is mainly rhetorical in character. One critic has even gone so far as to apply that epithet to the whole of it [1]. But objectors have not been wanting. Brooks Otis in 1938 ridiculed 'the naive assumption' that in the *Heroides* rhetorical influence 'is absolute and completely causative' [2]. More recently H. Fränkel [3], who mentions among the objectors R. Heinze, H. Magnus, F. Lenz and others, has also helped to clarify the issue by examining some implications of the term 'rhetorical'. It is a matter of some regret [4] that L. P. Wilkinson in his most engaging book *Ovid Recalled* (1955) does not begin by making a similar examination and that his approach to the subject of rhetorical elements in Ovid is not as methodical as, for example, that of S. F. Bonner [5]. Moreover few critics have stopped to distinguish school-exercises in rhetoric from declamation as a fashionable pursuit for adults; or rhetoric of these two kinds from the public or private recitation of poetry. My present aim is to reconsider the ancient evidence for Ovid's connections with rhetoric in its various kinds and to re-assess in a general way its effect upon his work.

The kind of rhetoric which made the earliest impact on Ovid was simply the study and practice under professional teachers of the art of effective speech. If this art was taught with especial reference to public *speaking* in all its forms, it none the less drew its illustrations from literature at large and from poetry as well as prose, and was therefore also of relevance to effective *writing*. The training consisted of preliminary exercises (*progymnasmata*) [6]

1. A. A. Day, *The Origins of Latin Love-Elegy*, Oxford 1938, p. 71, n. 2: 'the whole of Ovid is rhetorical'.

2. *Trans. Am. Phil. Assoc.*, 1938, p. 216, n. 94.

3. *Ovid, A Poet between Two Worlds*, Univ. of California Press 1945, pp. 167-69.

4. Cf. *Class. Rev.*, Vol. LXXI, March 1957, pp. 40-44.

5. *Roman Declamation*, Univ. Press of Liverpool, 1949, pp. 149ff.

6. See below, pp. 39, 47.

culminating in school-declamations of *controversiae* and *suasoriae*. It will be convenient to refer to the teachers as 'rhetors' and to the training as 'school-rhetoric'. No bad sense, such as 'artificial' or 'ostentatious', attaches to the word rhetoric when used in this way; nor does 'declamation', as a technical term of ancient rhetoric, mean anything more than 'an oratorical exercise on an invented theme' [1].

The rhetors themselves practised declamation, sparingly at first and for instructional purposes only; but in Augustan times their professional displays became more frequent and their audiences less restricted — indeed, Augustus himself, together with Maecenas and Agrippa, attended a performance by Porcius Latro [2]. We hear also of amateurs, sometimes men of high official standing, who either matched themselves with the rhetors or declaimed alone before a more or less exclusive audience [3]; so that declamations could be of three sorts — school-exercises, professional displays (whether in or out of school), and displays by amateurs [4].

Our best sources of evidence for Ovid's connection with rhetoric are Seneca the Elder and a few references made by Ovid himself. Consider first *Contr.* ii. 2. 8-12, where the general sense is easier to follow if Seneca's illustrative matter is omitted from the transcript (Bornecque's text):

> 8. hanc controversiam memini a puero Ovidio Nasone declamari apud rhetorem Arellium Fuscum, cuius auditor fuit; nam Latronis admirator erat cum diversum sequeretur dicendi

1. Cf. J. Wight Duff s.v. *Declamatio* in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 1949: '*Declamatio*' (perh. originally a translation of κατήχησις, 'dinning into the ears'. F. H. Colson, *Classical Review*, 1922, 116-17) long retained a nuance of excessively loud and over-vehement oratory (Cic. *Planc.* 19. 47; Tac. *Dial.* 35. 4f.), though late in Cicero's lifetime it had come to mean an oratorical exercise on an invented theme'.

2. W. A. Edwards, *The Suasoriae of Seneca...*, Cambridge 1928, p. 115 (on *Suas.*, II. 21) gives other refs. for attendances by notables. *Contr.* II. 4. 12 mentions the visit of Augustus to Latro. See also S. F. Bonner, *op. cit.* p. 40.

3. Cf. Sen. *Contr.* IV. *Praef.* 2: Pollio Asinius numquam admissa multitudine declamavit; *ibid.* X. *Praef.* 4: (T. Labienus) non admittebat populum, et quia nondum haec consuetudo erat inducta, et quia putabat turpe et frivolae iactationis. H. Bornecque *ad loc.* concludes that the *consuetudo* began c. 10 A. D.

4. Cf. Reure, *Les gens de lettres et leurs protecteurs à Rome*, Paris 1891, p. 350.

genus. habebat ille comptum et decens et amabile ingenium. oratio eius iam tum nihil aliud poterat videri quam solutum carmen. adeo autem studiose Latronem audiit, ut multas illius sententias in versus suos transtulerit ... (here *Met.* xiii. 121 and *Am.* i. 2. 11-12 are quoted). 9. tunc autem, cum studeret, habebatur bonus declamator: hanc certe controversiam ante Arellium Fuscum declamavit, ut mihi videbatur, longe ingeniosius, excepto eo, quod sine certo ordine per locos discurrebat ... (extracts from Ovid's declamation follow). 12. declamabat autem Naso raro controversias et non nisi ethicas; libentius dicebat suasorias: molesta illi erat omnis argumentatio. verbis minime licenter usus est nisi in carminibus, in quibus non ignoravit vitia sua, sed amavit... (here follows an illustrative anecdote). ex quo apparet summi ingenii viro non iudicium defuisse ad compescendam licentiam carminum suorum, sed animum. aiebat interim decentiorem faciem esse in qua aliquis naevus esset.

There are several points of interest and importance in this passage, some of which appear to have been missed. Five comments will bring these to light and lead up to an explanation of Seneca's train of thought.

(i) Seneca, who was at least ten years older than Ovid but survived him by at least twenty, quotes from no declamation by him other than this one school-exercise of his boyhood. As Seneca's memory was prodigious, it is reasonable to suppose that there were no later Ovidian declamations to record and that Ovid's preferences for *suasoriae*, etc. mentioned in § 12 also refer to his school-days alone. (This point does not seem to have obtained recognition).

(ii) Ovid declaimed, Seneca says, 'before Arellius Fuscus, whose pupil (*auditor*) he was: for he gave Latro his homage (*admirator erat*) when aiming at a different style of speaking'. Here, despite what follows and despite any implications of Pliny *N.H.* xx. 160, the change from the word *auditor* to *admirator* should not be overstressed. It may well be due to a difference of fact; for the pupils of Fuscus and of Latro were not on the same footing. Seneca himself explains this in *Contr.* ix. 2. 23, where the term *auditor*, as applied to a pupil of Latro's, is carefully qualified: 'audivi Florum quemdam, auditorem Latronis, dicentem non apud Latronem. neque enim illi mos erat quemquam audire declamantem; declamabat ipse tantum et aiebat se non esse magistrum sed exemplum'. Seneca goes on to say that Latro was the only Roman rhetor whose *discipuli* were content to listen instead of themselves being heard; and so 'initio contumeliae causa a deridentibus ... auditores vocabantur; deinde in usu verbum esse coepit et promiscue poni pro discipulo auditor'.

(iii) The qualities of Arellius Fuscus, 'who had the faults and merits of the Asiatic school' [1], are summarised by Seneca (*Contr.* ii. *Praef.* 1). In descriptive passages he admitted words of any kind, provided only they were brilliant or striking (*dummodo niterent*); his style was gorgeous, exuberant rather than rich (*splendida oratio et magis lasciva quam laeta*); and it was also extremely uneven, being sometimes jejune and sometimes *nimia licentia vaga et effusa*. Similarly in *Suas.* ii. 10, after giving a longish sample of the style, Seneca asks his sons to decide whether Fuscus had spoken *nitide* or with excessive liberty (*licenter*) of diction. Certainly *poeticus color* can be found in this sample, as also in another, viz. *Suas.* vi. 5-6 [2]. Elsewhere (*Suas.* iv. 5) Seneca says that Fuscus was especially partial to *suasoriae* (which he preferred to declaim in Greek). These gave more scope for poetry than did *controversiae*. They allowed the treatment of 'locorum habitus fluminumque decursus et urbium situs moresque populorum' (*Contr.* ii. *Praef.* 3.)

(iv) Ovid's affinities with Fuscus are clear. In school-rhetoric he shared his preference for *suasoriae*; in his poetry, as in Fuscus' declamation, the chief fault was *licentia* — cf. Seneca § 12 above and Quintilian's famous criticism: 'Ovidi *Medea* videtur mihi ostendere quantum ille vir praestare potuerit, si ingenio suo imperare quam indulgere maluisset' (*Inst. Or.* x. 1. 98); in poetry, too, he was guilty of exuberance (*lascivia*), a failing which Quintilian noticed both in his elegiac poems (*ibid.* 93) and in the *Metamorphoses* (*ibid.* 88; cf. iv. 1. 77). Perhaps because of these affinities and because, on occasion, he could far outdo Fuscus at his own game (*longe ingeniosius*, § 9, above), he tried a change of tutor [3].

1. Cf. W. Edward, *op. cit.* pp. xli and 108.

2. Cf. also *Suas.* iii. 5: solebat ... Fuscus ex Vergilio multa trahere ut Maecenati imputaret.

3. So too another pupil of Arellius Fuscus, the philosopher Papirius Fabia-

(v) Porcius Latro of Cordova, unlike the Greek or Greco-Asian Arellius Fuscus and unlike Ovid himself, was capable of great self-restraint. His old friend Seneca the Elder in a long description of him [1] says: 'nemo plus ingenio suo imperavit, nemo plus indulsit'. He accuses those critics who denied Latro's ingenuity (*subtilitas*) of failing to recognise a quality that was all the more effective because concealed: and also tells us that Latro's somewhat severe taste (*iudicium strictius*) allowed him no stylistic effects and no irrelevance without good excuse. Latro seems to have kept more closely than his rivals to what was natural and probable [2]; and was more methodical than some in announcing the intended sequence of his topics before he began to declaim. But perhaps his free use of *sententiae* was the quality that won him the greatest admiration.

Though Seneca's train of thought in the passage transcribed above remains much obscured by his desultory, parenthetic style, the foregoing comments suggest the following explanation [3] of it:

Ovid was taught in his boyhood by Arellius Fuscus (it was only later, when studying a different style, that he gave his homage to Latro). The marks of his talent were neatness, grace and charm. Poetry underlay even his boyish declamations, which might have been taken [4] for poetry in prose. (His eager hearing of Latro is attested by many poetic renderings of Latro's prose *sententiae*)... Despite its kinship with poetry, his school-boy declamation was considered good; and in one *controversia* he far outdid Arellius Fuscus, except for some disorderly arrangement. (Actually he seldom spoke in *controversiae* at all, and then only if

nus, after imitating the style of his master 'plus deinde laboris impendit ut similitudinem eius effugeret, quam impenderat ut exprimeret' (*Contr.* II. *Praef.* 1).

1. *Contr.* I. *Praef.* 13-24, from which all descriptive points are taken unless otherwise stated.

2. Cf. H. Bornecque, *Sénèque le Rhéteur, Contr. et Suas.*, Paris 1902, Vol. I, p. xxix.

3. See also H. Fränkel, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-7, 170 ff., who comes by different ways to much the same conclusion.

4. i. e. 'Might have been taken for prose-poetry, (but was not) because 'verbis minime licenter usus est'. Cf. H. Fränkel, *op. cit.* p. 170. For a similar *potest videri* see *Contr.* IX. 5. 17 (p. 40 below).

they turned on questions of character; any *argumentatio* [1] he found tiresome, and so preferred *suasoriae*). His school-declamation was good because the liberties he took with diction were extremely few. In his poetry, however, he was wayward, and wilfully so, as the following anecdote shows... etc.

Further references to Ovid by Seneca the Elder are mainly concerned with *sententiae*, a term to which no single English word corresponds. They are terse observations, either of a general character or relating to particular circumstances, and sometimes charged with dry humour or wit or innuendo. Both types are illustrated by the *sententiae* of Latro which Ovid versified (above). The first, which is akin to proverbial wisdom or the Greek γνώμη, appears in Latro's 'non vides ut immota fax torpeat, ut exagitata reddat ignes? mollit viros otium, ferrum situ carpitur, desidia dedocet', cf. *Am.* I. 2. 11:

> *vidi ego iactatas mota face crescere flammas*
> *et rursus nullo concutiente mori;*

the second in his 'mittamus arma in hostes et petamus' a challenge thrown out by Ajax in the ὅπλων κρίσις, cf. *Met.* XIII. 121f.:

> *arma viri fortis medios mittantur in hostes;*
> *inde iubete peti.*

Ovid in *Am.* I. 8. 43 'casta est quam nemo rogavit' provides a more pungent example of the first type; and of the second in *Her.* V. 105, where Oenone sizes up Helen to Paris: 'ardet amore tui? sic et Menelaon amavit'. Rough parallels of equal pungency can be found in the Elder Seneca and are quoted by S. F. Bonner, *op. cit.* pp. 151-52, cf. 54-55.

There is nothing in Seneca and nothing elsewhere to suggest that Ovid declaimed after leaving school, or even that he regularly attended declamations [2] as well as recitals of poetry; but

1. '*Argumentatio* is the trickly syllogistic by means of which the orator tries to convince the audience that the facts of the case are such as he alleges them to be', H. Fränkel, *op. cit.* p. 170, who points out that as the themes for school *controversiae* were ill-supplied with facts *argumentatio* was bound to be tiresome and that Seneca seems to have shared Ovid's distaste for it.

2. Nothing can be safely inferred from his friendship with L. Iunius Gallio (*Suas.* III. 7), one of Seneca's 'tetrad' of declaimers, younger by c. 13 years.

this is currently believed and has helped to foster another belief — that the influence of *declamatio* accounts for his numerous *sententiae*. It is therefore worth noting that Seneca's evidence (the loans from Latro apart) favours an opposite view, namely that the flow of *sententiae* was rather from Ovid to the rhetors, so that Latro, like Fuscus before him, may have met his match in the poet. Thus in *Contr.* iii. 7. 2. L. Cestius Pius, a popular rhetor, is quoted as saying that Ovid had stocked the age with brevities as well as with breviaries on love — 'hoc saeculum amatoriis non artibus tantum, sed sententiis implevit'; and *ibid.* x. 4. 25 we find P. Vinicius, cos. suff. of 2 A. D., a 'summus amator Ovidi', quoting *Met.* xii. 602 with approval and advising declaimers 'to get Ovid by heart and so carry models of *sententiae* in their heads'.

Essentially there is nothing rhetorical about *sententiae* of whatever type. Seneca in *Contr.* vii. 3. 8 mentions a *declamator* who applied to particular circumstances a form of expression borrowed from the mime-writer Publilius Syrus. He describes it as a *genus sententiarum* which had turned the heads of all the young men — 'quo infecta iam erant adulescentulorum omnium ingenia' — and then goes on to mention the regrets of Cassius Severus, a 'summus Publili amator', that the mime-writer's less good points were being chosen for imitation in preference to those outstanding generalisations 'better expressed by Publilius than by any comic or tragic writer, Roman or Greek', e. g.

tam deest avaro quod habet quam quod non habet.

Similar tributes to Publilius are paid by Seneca the Younger (*Epp.* viii. 8-10) and by Aulus Gellius (xvii. 14). Rhetoric did not create the *sententia*: it merely created a vogue. Nor did it create that *Italum acetum* which infuses the native drama and satire of the Romans and gives to certain *sententiae* their pungency.

Another passage in the *Controversiae* (vii. 1. 27), though connected rather with description than with *sententiae*, is of interest because it shows us Ovid's mind at work, intent here too upon brevity. Seneca has occasion to quote two lines from Varro Atacinus:

Desierant latrare canes urbesque silebant;
omnia noctis erant placida composta quiete.

He then adds, not without demur [1], a comment 'which Ovid used to make', that 'there could have been a great improvement by cutting out the last three words and stopping at « omnia noctis erant »' — « night held all ».

Nature's operations on the grandest scale are more than once depicted by Ovid with equal conciseness. Here is the flood in epitome (*Met.* 1. 292):

omnia pontus erat, deerant quoque litora ponto [2]

'everywhere was sea — a shoreless sea'. Or here the shrinking of the seas during Phaëthon's exploit (*Met.* ii, 263 f.):

quod modo pontus erat, quosque altum texerat aequor,
exsistunt montes et sparsas Cycladas augent [3].

A couplet in his Pontic landscape is equally condensed and effective (*P.* 3. 1. 19 f.):

rara, neque haec felix, in apertis eminet arvis
arbor, et in terra est altera forma maris.

Even these little masterpieces, with others as good, are sometimes called rhetorical on the ground that *descriptio* (ἔκφρασις) was a subject taught among the school-exercises in composition. Thus Carl Brück [4], after adducing the *Progymnasmata* of Theon to show that the subjects of ἔκφρασις were persons, events (such as war and peace, storm and famine), places and seasons, goes on to quote or cite, with an occasional despairing '*et cetera*', some ninety descriptions in Ovid, neatly arranged under Theon's headings but including for good measure animals and monsters described and the more outrée of the metamorphoses — these last as presenting a peculiar challenge to rhetorical skill. Nor is this all. If we turn to Brück's chapter (pp. 47-59) on *Paraphrasis*, — i.e. recasting one's own or another's thought in different ways — and then consult the sub-section on ἐξεργασία — i.e. dilating

1. The suggested change, he says, would express Ovid's thought, not Varro's, which was different.

2-3 Approved by the younger Seneca, *Q. Nat.* III. 23. 13-15, who, however, quotes them as if from the same passage and regrets that the rest of it is not up to their level. Cf. H. FRÄNKEL, *op. cit.* p. 173 and refl.

4. *De Ovidio Scholasticarum Declamationum Imitatore*, Giessen 1909, p. 26.

and improving upon a theme briefly treated by another — we shall find that Ovid in his picture of the flood was concerned to improve upon Horace, *C.* i. 2. 7-12, and so was rhetorical twice over, practising the school-exercise of *ἐξεργασία* as well as that of *ἔκφρασις* or *descriptio*. In fact *paraphrasis* or *ἐξεργασία* are made to account for every item in the *Amores*, the *Heroides*, and the *Metamorphoses* for which any 'source', Greek or Roman, can plausibly be traced.

Such studies are not valueless — at any rate to the history of education. Unfortunately scholars bemused by them sometimes forget that the eye for significant detail and the flair for a brief descriptive phrase are a gift of nature to poets. Schooling by the rhetors could sharpen observation and sharpen phrases, but at the most was a secondary matter. Nor should it be forgotten that poets throughout the ages have been inspired by poetry[1] and that the Roman poets in particular enjoyed variations, playful or otherwise, upon the work of predecessors.

The only other passage in Seneca that calls for mention is *Contr.* ix. 5. 17. It concerns Votienus Montanus, an orator from Narbonne, who spoilt his own *sententiae* by reiterating them. 'Not content', Seneca says, 'with saying a thing once and saying it well, he ends by having said it badly; and because of this and of other points in which an orator can seem (*potest videri*) to resemble a poet, Scaurus used to call Montanus « an Ovid among orators ». For Ovid too does not know how to leave a good saying well alone'. He goes on: 'Of the many « Montaniana », as Scaurus called them, to be found in Ovid, I'll be content with this one example: — When Polyxena has been led off to be sacrificed at Achilles' burial mound, Hecuba says (*Met.* xiii. 503 f.):

cinis ipse sepulti
in genus hoc pugnat.

Ovid might have been content with that. He added:

tumulo quoque sensimus hostem.

Nor did that content him. He added:

Aeacidae fecunda fui.

1. Cf. *Tr.* III. 11. 37: 'non hic librorum per quos inviter alarque / copia.'

What Scaurus used to say is true: « to know how to speak is not so good a point as knowing when to stop! ».'

Reiteration of this particular kind is not connected by Seneca with rhetorical training or practice: he regards it rather as an idiosyncrasy common to both Montanus and Ovid. It is true that efforts 'to surpass oneself' in successive variations on a single theme were an exercise in *paraphrasis* recognised at any rate by Quintilian[1] and possibly already prescribed in Ovid's boyhood. If so, it may well be that 'a natural tendency' in Ovid 'was exaggerated'[2] by such schooling. But Seneca does not say so; nor does he imply, though cited by L. P. Wilkinson (*op. cit.*, p. 10) to this effect, that 'rhetoricians counted' Ovid 'among the poets' and that 'the poets' counted him 'among the rhetoricians'. Neither in Seneca nor elsewhere is there any support for the second half of this antithesis. Ovid the rhetorician is an invention of modern critics.

Brück, without citing this passage of Seneca, has his own method of suggesting that Ovid's 'variations on a theme' were rhetorical. He quotes (*op. cit.* p. 47) lines 123 and 128 of *A.A.* ii as if they formed a single couplet:

non formosus erat, sed erat facundus Ulixes,
ille referre aliter saepe solebat idem,

— and then invites us to suppose that *facundia* in Ovid's opinion consisted in reiteration. But in its proper couplet the meaning of 128 is simply that Ulixes, asked by Calypso again and again for the story of Troy's fall, told it from a number of different angles. Quite apart from this, Ovid surely knew, no less than Scaurus and Seneca, that true *facundia* would resist idle variations, not display them. If he failed to apply the principle to his poetry, it was because 'non ignoravit vitia sua, sed amavit'.

The references made by Ovid himself to his connection with rhetoric are mostly indirect, except in his autobiography (*Tr.* iv.

1. Cf. 'contendere nobiscum possumus' *Inst. Or.* x. 5. 7 and context. When Lysias made play with variations, Plato regarded it as youthful swagger *ἐφαίνετο δή μοι νεανιεύεσθαι* (*Phaedr.* 235a, quoted by Brück, *op. cit.* p. 47).
2. S. F. Bonner, *op. cit.* p. 155, n. 3.

10). There he draws a contrast between himself and his brother, older by a year, in their days at school. Both attended famous teachers of rhetoric (*insignes urbis ab arte viros*) and continued their studies after assuming the broad-striped *toga virilis* that marked them out for a senatorial career. But his brother's talent was for oratory from the first (17-18):

frater ad eloquium viridi tendebat ab aevo
fortia verbosi natus ad arma fori;

his own, for the high vocation, the *caelestia sacra* of poetry — a phrase which recalls lines 17-18 in his lament for Tibullus (*Am.* iii. 9):

at sacri vates et divum cura vocamur;
sunt etiam qui nos numen habere putent.

He tells of the secret compulsion of the Muse; of a brief reversion to prose, in deference to his father's materialism; and of prose turning automatically to verse. None of this suggests a particularly serious student of rhetoric; and however we reconstruct the chronology of his early life[1], he cannot for long have pursued the public career which was the prime objective of rhetorical training. Moreover he speaks of that career, after its abandonment, with distaste or even contempt (*Am.* 1. 15. 5f.):

nec me verbosas leges ediscere nec me
ingrato vocem prostituisse foro.

His autobiography makes no mention of declaimers or declaiming, but dwells upon his youthful cultivation, amounting to worship, of contemporary poets and upon his grateful devotion to the Muse,

1. His first public recital of poetry (*Tr.* iv. 10. 57ff.) may have been given in 25 B.C. at the age of 18. Next year his brother died, leaving him prospective heir to his father. About the same time his study at Athens (*Tr.* i. 2. 7) would normally have begun; and then or later — perhaps 21-20 B.C. — came a tour with the poet Macer in Asia Minor and Sicily (*P.* ii. 10.31ff.). In 19 B.C. he first circulated *Am.* iii.9. on the death of Tibullus; and before his 25th birthday in 18 B.C. (the first year in which a quaestorship could fall due), he must have decided to abandon a public career — a decision that may well have been made before the tour with Macer. See H. Frankel, *op. cit.* pp. 8, 174 f., 193, and reff.; H. Bardon, *La Littérature Latine Inconnue*, Tome II, Paris 1956, pp. 64-66 and reff.

first and last. There is nothing here to conflict with the inference drawn above from Seneca the Elder, that Ovid declaimed only in his school-days; but we must think of that period as including the assumption of the *toga virilis*. This might take place between the ages of 14 and 16, sometimes earlier or later by a couple of years[1]. Ovid's brother had assumed it before his death at 19. Ovid, a year younger, may have done so at 18 at latest or before.

Funeral orations gave play to rhetorical talent even under the Principate and were perhaps more satisfying than declamation for its own sake. Yet Ovid, when given the chance of public lament for his patron Messalla, preferred the medium of verse (*P.* i. 7. 29f.). Recitals of poetry were certainly to his taste (see below); but no record remains that he either declaimed or attended declamations once his school-days were over. It is reasonable, however, to suppose that social duty sometimes claimed his attendance; and a qualified interest in the oratory of his friends may be argued from two of the *Pontic Epistles*. Thus in *P.* iii. 5. 7ff. he acknowledges with gratitude the copy of a speech made by M. Aurelius Cotta Maximus before the *centumviri*. This warmed his heart by bringing Rome and his friend Maximus to Tomi; and it may have held his attention for other reasons as well. He himself had once served in the Centumviral Court (*Tr.* ii. 93f.); moreover the business of that Court sometimes turned on assessments of character and merit[2] similar to those of the ἁπλοῦν κρίσις in *Mel.* xiii, or, indeed, to those of the *controversia ethica* — the only kind of *controversia* that Ovid could stomach. Ovid read the speech again and again, and asked for more; but characteristically asked also for proof by samples that Maximus was still writing poetry and for assurances that he himself was remembered at recitals given by Maximus and his friends.

The other epistle (*P.* ii. 5) is addressed to Salanus — not a close friend, but a sympathiser and clearly of importance as being the

1. Cf. Marquardt, *Privatleben*, p. 126 ff.

2. Cf. Quint., *Inst. Or.* iii.10.3: '...ut cum apud centumviros post alia quaeritur et hoc, uter dignior hereditate sit'; *ibid.* iv. 2. 5: '... de re constat, de iure quaeritur, ut apud centumviros: « filius an frater debeat esse intestatae heres »'. Cf. Brück, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

tutor in oratory of Germanicus. In lines 59-72 Ovid compares and contrasts poet and orator. They are kindred spirits; there is a bond between them; but each observes the conventions of his own pursuit ('et servat studii foedera quisque sui', 60). After comparing other kindred spirits, such as peasant and farmer, he continues:

tu quoque Pieridum studio, studiose, teneris,
ingenioque faves, ingeniose, meo.
distat opus nostrum, sed fontibus exit ab isdem:
artis et ingenuae cultor uterque sumus. (63-66).

Here follows a corrupt line, and then:

sed tamen ambobus debet inesse calor:
utque meis numeris tua dat facundia nervos,
sic venit a nobis in tua verba nitor.
iure igitur studio confinia carmina vestro
et commilitii sacra tuenda putas. (68-72).

These lines are sometimes quoted to support the contention that Ovid's poetry is largely rhetorical. It has even been suggested that school-rhetoric is the 'common source' referred to in the words 'fontibus exit ab isdem'[1], though surely the Pierian spring is meant, as indicated by line 63. Ovid must naturally have wished to make the most of his connection with Salanus. But he preserves what was most precious to him, his artistic integrity, by not exaggerating the similarity of their respective pursuits — 'distat opus nostrum'. Horace had written (*A.P.* 86f.):

descriptas servare vices operumque colores
cur ego si nequeo ignoroque, poeta salutor?

Ovid, long familiar with every kind of poetry, was keenly aware of the recognised conventions separating one kind from another and not less aware of the 'studii foedera' separating orator from poet. He acknowledges that both need ardour or fire (*calor*); but orator must look to poet for polished brilliance of expression (*nitor*) and poet to orator for sinews, *nervi*, a word which seems in this context to mean substance or structure[2].

1. Cf. Brück, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
2. Cf. Quint., *Inst. Or.* viii, *Praef.* 18: resistam iis, qui omissa rerum, qui

This is the same Ovid whose school-rhetoric 'could seem' — but was not — prose-poetry and whose liberties of diction were few; the Ovid whose first tutor Arellius Fuscus sought overeagerly after *nitor* and confused the bounds of poetry and declamation. Other passages show, not without humour, that the uses and abuses of rhetorical training and ability had not escaped him. Thus in *A.A.* i. 459ff. he teaches that eloquence can take effect in love as in public life, but only if well concealed — 'quis, nisi mentis inops, tenerae declamat amicae?' Love-letters, too, if overwrought in style, could give offence; their language should be colloquial — but a lover's — and suggest that the writer was present and talking. Later (*ibid.* 609f.) he adds that after a first declaration of love words will come of themselves, without need of his teaching; and poets as well as orators are given a caution in *A.A.* ii. 507f., — not because of any rhetorical taint, but because their *levis insania* (as Horace calls it) has faults of its own:

sed neque declament medio sermone diserti,
nec sua non sanus scripta poeta legat.

Women too receive their warning (*ibid.* iii. 479f.). For them the pitfall is not declamation nor a poet's craziness, but 'barbara lingua' — bad style, the speech of the underbred.

This review of evidence from Seneca the Elder and from Ovid himself may at least have suggested that the closeness of the poet's connection with rhetorical training and practice of all kinds has been exaggerated. But what of his connection with *recitatio*, a social activity, first encouraged by Gaius Asinius Pollio (76 *B.C.* — *A.D.* 5), which grew up side by side with *declamatio* and had some of the same effects? Both activities could be either private or public. Just as Horace says in *Sat.* i. 4. 73: 'nec recito cuiquam nisi amicis idque coactus', so it is said of C. Cassius Severus (c. 50 *B.C.* — c. *A.D.* 37): 'raro declamabat et non nisi ab amicis coactus' (Sen. *Contr.* iii, *Praef.* 7). Ovid may have had the privilege of listening to Horace — if that is the meaning of *Tr.* iv. 10. 49.

nervi sunt in causis, diligentia quodam inani circa voces studio senescunt, idque faciunt gratia decoris ... In Cic., *de Or.* iii. 106 the meaning is more like 'structure'. Elsewhere 'vigour' is meant, e. g. Cic., *ibid.* 80; *Orator* 91: Hor., *A. P.* 26; Quint., *ibid.* x. 1. 60.

In his youth, when he saw a god in every poet, he attended recitations of one kind or the other by Macer, Propertius, Ponticus and Bassus and made his own début at a public performance 'when his beard had been cut but once or twice' (*ibid.* 57f.). It is clear from *P.* ii. 4. 13-18 (to Atticus) that Ovid regarded private recitals as a means of obtaining sound criticism before risking a public performance. The value set by him upon such criticism is shown also by *Tr.* iii. 14. 39f., iv. 1. 89-92; *P.* iii. 5. 39-44 (to Cotta Maximus), iv. 12. 25f. (to Tuticanus). Both private and public recital helped to make a work known; and public applause [1] was a great stimulus to poets, no less than to actors, on their road to renown, cf. *A.A.* iii. 403; *P.* i. 5. 57f., 77-82; iv. 2. 33-38.

When L. P. Wilkinson writes (*op. cit.*, p. 11): 'We should never forget that Roman poetry was written primarily to be declaimed, not read', by 'declaimed' he simply means 'recited in public'. But when the adjective 'declamatory' is used of any Ovidian work, there is always a suggestion that its modes of thought and figures of speech are better suited to an orator's audience than to a reader and also, very often, that they are out of place in the work concerned. The suggestion may imply either a resemblance to the declamations preserved by Seneca the Elder, or, in a wider sense of the word 'declamatory', dependence upon the lore of *inventio* and *elocutio* as taught in school-rhetoric.

S. F. Bonner (*op. cit.*, p. 149-156) has kept this distinction in view and sought out only those features in Ovid 'which seem to have a sharply-defined relationship with the Senecan declamations'. He follows the trail of *suasoriae* in *Am.* ii. 11, *Met.* xiii (ὅπλων κρίσις), and *Tr.* ii; rounds up some *sententiae* so brief and pungent that they 'might equally well be transplanted to the pages of Seneca'; and points here and there to Ovid's declamatory figures of thought and speech. There is much in this that commands assent; but assent is qualified partly for the reason indicated on p. 38 above and partly for two others. It is assumed

1. The public were not necessarily bad critics; for poets abounded, competition was severe, comparison easy. Nor was their applause at this time necessarily venal or influenced by a *claque*. Horace *A. P.* 419-25, 451-52 indicates that false praise could be given to rich amateurs at a private recital but might lead to a very different public reception.

throughout that Ovid's connection with *declamatio* was long and close. For this there is no good warrant (pp. 37, 13 above). Nor is attention given to the 'ingrained' rhetoric of the Romans, due largely to climatic effects on social habits. This, as L. P. Wilkinson says, made them 'speak, even in moments of passion, in a way more likely to sound artificial to an Englishman than to an Italian or to a Frenchman nurtured on Corneille and Racine' (*op. cit.*, p. 227) [1].

Attempts to trace in Ovid the elements dependent upon school-rhetoric have been made by Brück and others. This is no place to review them in detail. Enough to say that the school-exercises of his time are first reconstructed (with obvious hazards) from later works, including always the *Progymnasmata* of Hermogenes and Theon (cf. p. 39 above) and that every element which then appears to match a text-book item is claimed as 'declamatory' or 'rhetorical' — often with the connotation 'fictitious' or 'insincere'. We are told [1], for example, that the writing of love-letters was practised by the orator Lysias as a sub-division of ἐγκώμια and ψόγοι; and that if the *Heroides* cannot be classed under this sub-division, or even as *suasoriae*, they are surely *prosopopoeiae* or *ethopoeiae*, corresponding to the type of exercise which Hermogenes and his like introduce with the words τίνας ἂν εἴχοι λόγους e.g. what would Andromache say over Hector's dead body? Ovid is left by this procedure with precious little of his own, and Vergil [2] and Propertius with little more [3]. The result is not surprising; for poets as well as prose-writers had long been drawn upon to provide the rhetors with their classified lists of every theme and its development, every turn of thought and expression, known to man. As well play hide and seek with oneself as search in this way for traces of rhetoric in poetry.

It is true, however, that formalism in the Roman teaching of style was much more pronounced than it is in our own and that this appears in the structural and other elements common to many

1. Cf. A. A. Day, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-67, 74; S. F. Bonner, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

2. Cf. M. L. Clarke, '*Rhetorical Influences in the Aeneid*', in *Greece and Rome*, Vol. XVIII, Jan. 1949, pp. 14-27.

3. Cf. A. A. Day, *op. cit.*, p. 71, referring to Meusel, *Curae Propertianae*, Leipzig, 1902.

of the Augustan and later poets. Habits inculcated at school became a second nature; and many of these habits were good, by any standards. Vergil himself would have written less well without them; even to-day they are of service, as anyone may learn from Sir H. J. C. Grierson's *Rhetoric and English Composition* (Edinburgh and London, 1914).

Had Ovid not lived at a time when the art of effective speech was intensively cultivated, more for its own sake than for civic use, his best would have been less good. But he gave to rhetoric as much or more than he got, putting into it something of his own poetic and gaily individual temperament. Macaulay [1] found him 'rather a rhetorician than a poet'. But that was not the feeling of antiquity. It was of Lucan, not Ovid, that Quintilian (*Inst. Or.*, x, 1, 90) wrote 'magis oratoribus quam poetis imitandus'.

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1. The *Life and Letters*, by Sir George TREVELYAN, World's Classics Edition, Oxford, Vol. II, p. 446.

OVIDS VERHÄLTNIS ZUR BILDENDEN KUNST

AM BEISPIEL DER SONNENBURG ILLUSTRIERT

Seit den Tagen des von Lessing so energisch verurteilten Joseph Spence ist das Verhältnis antiker Dichter zur bildenden Kunst ihrer Zeit nicht selten behandelt worden; Ovid allein sind nach manchen allgemeineren Urteilen oder Einzelbeobachtungen meines Wissens nicht weniger als fünf Monographien samt einem Aufsatz gewidmet worden. Als erster beschränkte sich P. Schönfeld [1] noch auf das ergiebigste Werk, die Metamorphosen, erkannte aber ausser den eigentlichen Ekphraseis von Bildwerken nur zwei zuverlässige Fälle von Beeinflussung des Dichters durch die Kunst an; seine kritische Haltung trug ihm A. Rieses Vorwurf ein, dass er nichts Neues und nichts Sicheres gebracht habe [2]. Viel systematischer behandelte W. Wunderer [3] die gesamte Hinterlassenschaft des Paeligners und kam zu deutlicheren Ergebnissen, indem er mutig Gewisses von Zweifelhaftem unterschied. Hingegen konzentrierte sich Costantino Buccino [4] wieder auf ausgewählte Stücke der Metamorphosen, und so erschien ihm die *perfetta corrispondenza* zwischen Dichtung und Bildnerei fast nirgends getrübt, ja, er meinte geradezu, dass Ovid seinen Farbenreichtum zum grössten Teil seiner lebendigen Kunstbetrachtung zu verdanken habe. Auch N. Laslo [5] wollte die Materie wohl nicht erschöpfen; nachdem er in langen theoretischen Erörterungen das Problem reichlich kompliziert hatte, gelangte er in der Praxis der Einzelbehandlung jeweils

1. *Ovids Metamorphosen in ihrem Verhältnis zur antiken Kunst*, Diss. Leipzig, 1877.

2. *Burs. Jahresber.* V2 1877, 23 f.

3. *Ovids Werke in ihrem Verhältnis zur antiken Kunst*, Diss. Erl. 1889 (Acta Sem. Philol. Erl. V 1891, 158 ff.). Skeptisch dazu R. EHWALD, *Burs. Jahresb.* XXII 2, 1894, 46 ff.

4. *Le opere d'arte nelle Metamorfosi di Ovidio*, Napoli 1913 (55 S.). U. Albini hat mir freundlicherweise Einsicht in die Schrift verschafft.

5. *Riflessi d'arte figurata nelle Metamorfosi di Ovidio*, in *Ephem. Dacorom.* VI 1935, 368 ff.

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