

Writing Ritual: The Triumph of Ovid¹

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1 A triumphal story

The ceremony of triumph was one of the defining institutions of Roman culture. Its origins were, for the Romans, lost in the self-serving traditions of their myth-history—as old, or older than, the city itself.² Modern authors may be more sceptical about the history of the ceremony.³ Nonetheless as far back as we can reliably see into the Roman past the triumph (or, if you prefer, a ceremony retrospectively re-defined as a triumph) was an honour voted to those Roman generals who had achieved sufficiently significant victories—or massacres—in the cause of Roman conquest. The triumphing general processed through the city in a chariot, followed by his victorious troops (often said to sing ribald songs at the general's expense: 'Romans keep an eye on your wives, the bald adulterer's back in town,' as Julius Caesar's soldiers chorused⁴). In front, went his booty and his captives. The unlucky ones were put to death when the procession reached the foot of the Capitoline hill, before it made its way up to the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus for the general to sacrifice to the gods—and to host a lavish dinner.⁵

The ancient literary imagination was enthralled by, and exploited, the mimetic games that were played in the triumphal procession.⁶ For apart from the living,

1 This paper comes with thanks to those who participated in discussions at Stanford. The form (and idiom) of this written version remains substantially as delivered, though I hope that participants will spot that significant details have changed. JOHN HENDERSON was a fund of advice in preparing the original version. I shall be returning to some of the issues raised here in a longer study of the Roman triumph which I am currently preparing.

2 In the monumental version of Roman history erected in the forum in the reign of Augustus, the 'Fasti Capitolini' as we now call them (A. DEGRASSI, *Inscriptiones Italiae XIII.1*, Rome 1947), Romulus heads both the consular and triumphal lists, as first supreme office holder of the city and the first to triumph (see below, p. 117). But other versions of triumphal origins were eagerly canvassed. Servius (*Aen.* 4.37) refers to the claims of Pliny and Pompeius Trogus that the *pompa triumphi* originated in Africa, *quam sibi Romani postea vindicaverunt*. In the *Natural History* (34.33) Pliny himself refers to a statue of *Hercules triumphalis* dedicated by Evander.

3 I am not here concerned to debate the thorny (and, in my view, probably fruitless) questions about the 'real' origins of the triumph. VERSNEL 1970 reviews the various theories up to the 1960s; RÜPKE forthcoming, takes a sharper twenty-first century look.

4 Suet. *Iul.* 51

5 Any attempt to offer a normalising/normative description of this—or any other—ceremony inevitably smoothes over the unpredictable changes, the on-the-day improvisations, the shifts of practice and organisation. Institutional history is inevitably homogenizing. All the same, for longer treatments of 'the triumphal procession', see BEARD 2003a and KÜNZL 1988, 9–44, 65–84

6 This is the main theme of BEARD 2003a.

breathing captives who walked along in chains in front of the general, there was a whole range of other signs and *simulacra*: models of notable captives who were unable to be present (Cleopatra, for example, famously graced Octavian's triumph as a waxwork, complete with asp or two);⁷ paintings or three-dimensional images of battles won or territories conquered; placards and billboards carrying their do-it-yourself ecphrasis, the names of towns destroyed or boastful slogans (the famous phrase, *veni, vidi, vici*, was carried in Caesar's Pontic triumph, blazoning his rhetorical, no less than his military, skills).⁸ Predictably enough, ancient writers found in all this a wonderful prompt for reflections on the idea of *mimesis* itself, on representation versus reality, on plausibility, fraud and disbelief. Tacitus, for example, injects a subversive political spin, linking the corruption and hypocrisy of imperial power to the very 'sham-ness' of triumphal imagery. So, in the triumphal procession of Germanicus in 17 CE, the *simulacra* of mountains, rivers and battles prod us into seeing the victory itself as merely mimic.⁹ Ovid too smartly exposes many of the ambivalences of triumphal representation. One particularly clever twist comes in a poem from exile, *Ex Ponto* 2.1, written—so it is regularly assumed—to mark the triumph of Tiberius *ex Illyrico*, celebrated in 12 CE (though voted some years earlier).¹⁰ In his list of the highlights of mimetic ingenuity featured in the procession, Ovid mentions the parade of 'barbarian towns, mimicking their sacked walls in silver, with their painted men':

*protinus argento versos imitantia muros
barbara cum pictis oppida lata viris.*¹¹

The question this raises for the reader goes right to the heart of the representational flux of the (representation of the) triumph. Are these men *painted on the images* of the towns that were being paraded (like the silver walls)? Or are they *images of painted men*—smeared with woad or tattooed, after the habit of northern barbarians?¹² And how could we readers tell the difference?

Of course, at the very centre of the show came what modern scholars at least have found the most extravagant and tantalizing mimetic element of the whole ceremony: the triumphant general himself, with his specially reddened face, eagle-topped

sceptre, and purple toga. Exactly what he was dressed as—or dressed up as, or imitating (and the precise formula we choose must make a significant difference to how our interpretation proceeds)—has been the matter of enormous scholarly dispute. But whether we see him as representing a god or a monarch or a statue, or some combination of those elements, it is clear that he sets the tone for (or follows the pattern of) the representational games of the ceremony as a whole.¹³

The history and development of the triumph has one major *caesura* that is absolutely crucial to the concerns that underlie this volume. The Roman historical narrative counted something in the order of 300 triumphal celebrations at Rome, from its origins up to the reign of Augustus. That tradition came to an end in 19 B. C. E. when L. Cornelius Balbus celebrated a triumph for a series of successes in Africa.¹⁴ After that, 'proper' triumphs were restricted to the ruling emperor and his immediate family; and even these were comparatively few and far between. This shift is glaringly written into the history, poetry and much other literature of the early principate, and particularly of, or about, the reign of Augustus. It is not the celebration of the triumph that now holds centre stage, but the refusal of them, the paraded decline of the offer of a triumph by the likes of Agrippa and the emperor himself, the speculation about triumphs that are never to be held and the substitution of a variety of para-triumphal honours (notable the grant of the so-called 'triumphal ornaments').¹⁵ The triumph is now largely celebrated by *not being celebrated*. However we are to interpret the rare (if sometimes very lavish) imperial triumphs that do still take place,¹⁶ the traditional triumph is now history, its descriptions—including those set pieces which dominate our 'evidence' for the ceremony—are inevitably retrospective reconstructions and re-inventions. This closure is marked, and naturalized, by the inscribed list of triumphs put on display (somewhere in the Roman forum) during the Augustan principate.¹⁷ The names from Romulus to Balbus were so carefully arranged that Balbus' triumph fits perfectly into the very last line of the fourth and final slab. That last triumph stands for the 'natural' end of the sequence—there was, after all, no more space for any more names.¹⁸

7 Dio Cassius (51.21) makes the point that the model meant that Cleopatra was 'sort of' there. I have called it, for convenience and by guesswork, a 'waxwork'. In fact, we do not know the material or form of the image; in the Renaissance, it was believed that the marble statue now generally known as 'Sleeping Ariadne' was the very image concerned (see L. BARKAN, *Unearthing the Past: archaeology and aesthetics in the making of Renaissance culture*, New Haven, London 1999, 246–47).

8 Suet. *Jul.* 37.

9 *Ann.* 2.41. Not to mention the outrageous parade of fake captives (Gauls dressed up as Germans) planned by Caligula (Suet. *Cal.* 47).

10 HARDIE 2002, 309; MILLAR 1993, 12. The exact date of the triumph—23 October—is provided by the Fasti Praenestini (DEGRASSI, *Inscriptiones Italiae XIII. 2*, Rome 1963, 135). The celebration was delayed because of the Varian disaster (Suet. *Tib.* 17.20).

11 *Ov. Pont.* 2.1.37f. (with L. GALASSO [ed.], *P. Ovidii Nasonis, Epistularum ex Ponto Liber II*, Florence 1995, ad loc., who is reassuringly unconvinced of the emendation by Heinsius of *pictis* to *fictis*). The phrase *pictis ... viris* strikingly echoes the *pictas ... vestes* of the triumphant general (l. 31); I shall discuss below (p. 124) the slippage between the figure of the general and his captives.

12 For tattoos, see Verg. *georg.* 2.115; Mela 2.10.

13 A wide range of interpretations and methods of argument on this question (plus a surfeit of further references) can be found in BEARD 2003a, RÜPKE forthcoming, VERSNEL 1970.

14 See J. DESANGES, 'Le triomphe de Cornelius Balbus', *Revue Africaine* 101 (1957), 5–43. It is worth emphasising, nonetheless, that the ancient literary tradition is just as keen to make Balbus a *first* as a *last*: that is, the first 'foreigner' to triumph at Rome, as a native of Gades (for example, Plin. *nat.* 5.36).

15 On this series of interlocking developments, see BOYCE, 1942; HICKSON, 1991. Among a welter of triumphal refusals, see for example, *Mon. Ancyr.* 4.1; Dio Cassius 54.11 f.; 54.24; 55.6.

16 The role of the triumph within imperial dynasties is an important story for another time. I broach it in BEARD 2003b.

17 The Fasti Capitolini (see above, n. 2). The exact original location and the form of the building or arch on which they were displayed remains uncertain, despite vociferous claims to the contrary. For recent contributions to the controversy, see L. CHIOFFI, *Gli elogia augustei del Foro Romano: Aspetti epigrafici e topografici*, Rome 1996, 22–26; 50–53; F. COARELLI, *Il Foro romano 2: Periodo repubblicano e augusteo*, Rome 1985, 269–308; C. J. SIMPSON, 'The original site of the Fasti Capitolini', *Historia* 42 (1993), 61–81.

18 For the clear end represented by Balbus' triumph in the inscribed text, see DEGRASSI (n. 2).

This volume is concerned with the relationship of literary discourse to ritual action and to religion as a social and cultural institution. It is asking us to reflect on where we feel comfortable in placing our disciplinary boundaries between 'literary criticism' and 'the history of ritual'. What aspects, if any, of ritual or religious history can be set apart from the history of discourse? In these terms, the triumph is an acute, and usefully exemplary, limit case—for the simple reason that from the middle of the Augustan period on, it is ritual whose principal form is in ink alone, whether as a speculative fantasy or an historical reconstruction. It is a ritual that exists on paper frequently without a direct referent in ritual action (or, at least, only in historical ritual action). It is a ritual that must be better *to think with* than *to do*.

2 Ovid: *Tristia* 4.2

This essay will think through some of these questions, and take a fresh look at some major issues of method and approach in the study of Roman religion, by focussing on a single poem by Ovid: *Tristia* 4.2. It is a poem written, so it is generally agreed, around 10 CE from exile in Tomi. It appears to evoke a ceremony of triumph that had not yet taken place, and in the strictest sense never would—a triumph predicted by the poet for, most likely, Tiberius' campaigns in Germany.

*Iam fera Caesaribus Germania, totus ut orbis
victa potest flexo succubuisse genu,
atque velentur fortasse Palatia sertis,
turaque in igne sonent inficantque diem,
candidaque adducta collum percussa securi
victima purpureo sanguine pulset humum,
donaque amicorum templis promissa deorum
reddere victores Caesar uterque parent,
et qui Caesareo iuvenes sub nomine crescunt,
perpetuo terras ut domus illa regat,
cumque bonis nuribus pro sospite Livia nato
munera dei meritis, saepe datura, deis,
et pariter matres et quae sine crimine castos
perpetua servant virginitate focos;
plebs pia cumque pia laetetur plebe senatus,
parvaeque cuius eram pars ego nuper eques:
nos procul expulsos communia gaudia fallunt,
famaque tam longe non nisi parva venit.
ergo omnis populus poterit spectare triumphos,
cumque ducum titulis oppida capta legei,
vinclaque captiva reges cervice gerentes
ante coronatos ire videbit equos,
et cernit vultus aliis pro tempore versos,
terribiles aliis inmemoresque sui.
quorum pars causas et res et nomina quaeret,
pars referet, quamvis noverit illa parum.*

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*hic, qui Sidonio fulget sublimis in ostro,
dux fuerat belli, proximus ille duci.
hic, qui nunc in humo lumen miserabile fixit,
non isto vultu, cum tulit arma, fuit.
ille ferox et adhuc oculis hostilibus ardens
hortator pugnae consiliumque fuit.
perfidus hic nostros inclusit fraude locorum,
squalida promissis qui tegit ora comis.
illo, qui sequitur, dicunt mactata ministro
saepe recusanti corpora capta deo.
hic lacus, hi montes, haec tot castella, tot amnes
plena ferae caedis, plena cruoris erant.
Drusus in his meruit quondam cognomina ierris,
quae bona progenies, digna parente, fuit.
cornibus his fractis viridi male tectus ab ulva
decolor ipse suo sanguine Rhenus erat.
crinibus en etiam fertur Germania passis,
et ducis invicti sub pede maesta sedet,
collaque Romanae praebens animosa securi
vincula fert illa, qua tulit arma, manu.
hos super in curru, Caesar, victore veheris
purpureus populi rite per ora tui,
quaque ibis, manibus circumplaudere tuorum,
undique iactato flore tegente vias.
tempora Phoebea lauro cingetur: io! que
miles io! magna voce triumphus canet.
ipse sono plausuque simul fremituque canente
quadriungos cernes saepe resistere equos.
inde petes arcem et delubra faventia votis,
et dabitur merito laurea vota Iovi.
haec ego summotus qua possum mente videbo:
erepti nobis ius habet illa loci.
illa per immensas spatiat libera terras,
in caelum celeri pervenit illa fuga;
illa meos oculos mediam deducit in urbem,
immunes tanti nec sinit esse boni;
invenietque animus, qua currus spectet eburnos;
sic certe in patria per breve tempus ero.
vera tamen capiet populus spectacula felix,
laetaque erit praesens cum duce turba suo.
at mihi fingendo tantum longeque remotis
auribus hic fructus percipiendus erit,
atque procul Latio diversum missus in orbem
qui narret cupido, vix erit, ista mihi.
is quoque iam serum referet veteremque triumphum:
quo tamen audiero tempore, laetus ero.
illa dies veniet, mea qua lugubria ponam,
causaque privata publica maior erit.¹⁹*

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Already wild Germany, like the whole world, may have yielded on bended knee to the Caesars; mayhap the lofty Palatium is decked with garlands and incense is crackling in the fire, colouring the light of the day, while from the white victim's throat smitten by the axe's stroke the red blood is pattering upon the ground, the gifts promised to the temples of the friendly gods are being made ready for offering by both Caesars and by the youths who are growing under Caesar's name (10) to give that house eternal sway over the world; with her good daughters

19 I have used for convenience the Oxford Classical Text of S. G. OWEN (the more recent and much less conservative Teubner edition of J. B. HALL contains no emendations that affect my argument). For reference, the translation of A. L. WHEELER in the Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., London) is given (adapted to the Latin of the Oxford Text).

86, with plate 51. As usual with the history of the triumph, there are competing versions of this narrative of closure; it seems very likely that the other set of triumphal fasti which survive in a much more fragmentary state, the so-called Fasti Triumphali Barberiniani (possibly from an original location on the Capitoline hill) petered to a finish with the triumph of L. Sempronius Atratinus in 21 B. C. (DEGRASSI [n. 2] 341–45).

Livia for the safety of her son is perchance offering gifts, as she will often do, to the deserving gods, and in her company the matrons also and those who without stain in eternal virginity keep watch over the hearth of purity; the loyal plebs is rejoicing, and with the loyal plebs the senate and the knights among whom but recently I had a humble part: but I driven so far away miss the common rejoicing and nothing but a slight rumour penetrates so far.

So then all the people will be able to view the triumph, (20) reading the names of captured towns and the titles of leaders, beholding the kings with chains upon their captive throats marching before the garlanded horses, seeing some countenances turned to earth as becomes captives, others grim and forgetful of their lot. Some of the people will inquire the causes, the objects, the names, and others will answer though they know all too little. (This one who gleams aloft in Sidonian purple, was the leader in, that other his next in command. This who now has fixed his sad gaze upon the ground, (30) had not such countenance when he bore arms. That fierce fellow with hostile eyes still ablaze was at once the instigator and planner of the fight. This traitor here trapped our men in a treacherous place—the one who now conceals his unkempt face with his long hair. That one following him they say was the priest who sacrificed captives to a god who often refused them. This lake, these mountains, these many forts, all the rivers were filled with wild slaughter, filled with gore. Drusus once earned in this land a surname—(40) Drusus, who was a noble scion, worthy of his father. This thing with broken horns and sorry covering of green sedge was the Rhine himself, discoloured with his own blood. See! even Germany is borne along with streaming locks, seated in grief at the feet of the unconquered leader. Offering her proud neck to the Roman axe she wears chains on that hand in which she carried arms.) High above them in the car of victory, thou wilt ride, O Caesar, clad in purple before the faces of thy people as old rite bids. Throughout thy course thou wilt be applauded by the hands of thy subjects, (50) from all sides flowers will fall and cover thy path. With their temples all garlanded in the laurel of Phoebus the soldiers will shout *io, io triumphe* in loud voices. At the sound of their singing, the applause, the din, thou wilt thyself see the four steeds often rear. Then thou wilt seek the citadel and shrines that favour prayers and thou wilt give the votive laurel to deserving Jupiter.

All this I, an exile, shall see in my mind's eye—my only way; for my mind at least has a right to travel to that place which has been torn from me. It travels free through measureless lands, (60) it reaches the heaven in its swift flight, it leads my eyes to the city's midst, not allowing them to be deprived of so great a blessing; and my mind will find a place to view the ivory car,—thus at least for a brief space I shall be in my native land. Yet the real sight will belong to the happy people, the throng will rejoice in the presence of their own leader.

But as for me—in imagination only and with ears far away I shall have perforce to realize the joy, and there will scarce be one sent far from Latium to the opposite side of the world (70) to tell it all to eager me. Even he will tell the tale of that triumph late, when it is already of longstanding; yet whenever I hear of it, I shall be glad. Then will come a day on which I may lay aside my gloom; greater than a private cause will be that of the state.

This is a poem often taken as a very *straight* version of a triumph—in particular, as a recantation from exile of Ovid's earlier, and incriminating, version of the ceremony in the *Ars Amatoria*, where he cast the triumphal procession as a key locus of erotic pursuit, amatory conquest, and worse. Here by contrast we have a *paean* of the Caesars' exploits in Germany, a *palinode* with no *ulterior* purposes.²⁰ The *paean* opens with the speculation that Germany might already have crumbled and that all the preparations for a triumph might already be underway. Ovid cannot be sure (lines 17f.), because he is in exile and only *parva fama* reaches Tomi. All the same, he goes on to imagine the whole *populus* at the ceremony, the procession, the placards bearing the names of captured towns, the prisoners, the garlanded horses; and, just as he did in the *Ars*, he ventriloquizes the response of someone explaining to their neighbour in the audience what everything is, as it

20 *Ov. ars* 1.217–28; the comparison is made, for example, by GALINSKY 1969 (from whom the quotations are drawn) and E. J. KENNEY, in his notes to A. D. MELVILLE, *Ovid: sorrows of an exile* (Tristia), Oxford 1992, 150. On the triumph in the *Ars*, see below, pp. 122f.

passes by in procession (lines 27ff.). He starts by picking out the enemy war leader (*hic ... dux fuerat belli*), and goes through a variety of figures until we reach (line 43) the image of Germany herself (perhaps we are to imagine a three dimensional model), paraded right in front of the general. The general is, though he is not directly named, Tiberius Caesar in his triumphal chariot, making his way to the Capitol (lines 55–56) to sacrifice to Jupiter. But it is only in the mind (lines 57ff.) that our exiled poet can see all this—for his mind is the only part of him that is free to visit Rome.

A few recent readers (notably PHILIP HARDIE and S. J. HEYWORTH) have seen rather more at stake in this poem than a simple apology for an earlier subversive treatment of the triumph. For HARDIE, there are major issues of mimesis, representation and plausibility raised here by Ovid. So, for example, the poet laments his absence from the celebrations—in contrast to the people of Rome, who can see the *real* spectacle (line 65). The joke is (or *one* of the jokes ...) that those watching the *real* procession in Rome would be watching representational games no less fictive than Ovid's own *second-order* fictive imitations:

[The distance between Ovid and Rome is not as great as it seems. What exactly is the 'real spectacle' on show? Largely a parade of feignings, images of events and places far off, pictures, tableaux, personifications, imitations which supply the matter for the second-order fictive imitations of the poet.]²¹

I want to develop this line of approach and suggest that we are dealing here with a poem which explores the very idea of the triumph-as-poetry within the context and complexities of the Augustan autocracy. I am emphatically *not* wanting to revisit old debates, by suggesting that—far from being a *paean*—this poem is somehow *anti-Augustan*. I am not trying to claim that it is sending up the triumph, or satirically undermining the official line on military *gloria*. I am suggesting rather that Ovid's written version of a *triumph that never was* exposes the fault lines in the imaginative economy of triumphal celebration; that far from being off the agenda of historians of ritual—because it focuses on an event that never took place, because it is a poem and because, let's face it, it is by Ovid—it should be the centre of our (or their) attention. More ritual, after all, takes place in the head than on the street. Ovid here is pointing us to ways of *thinking the triumph*, and asking us to reflect on what happens to the (literary) institution of the triumph when we read it as part of the *Tristia*. How do the characteristic themes of this particular collection of poems—*anonymity*, *naming*, *mourning* and *tears*—frame the triumph (and vice versa)? He is also, as I shall highlight below, prompting us to face the very nature of the triumph *as literature*.

3 Tristia's triumph-in-ink

The first two lines are enough to remind us that this poem is going to demand hard

21 HARDIE 2002, 308–11 (quotation, p. 309). HEYWORTH 1995, 145–49 argues that far from being a recantation of the *Ars*, this poem serves to keep the *Ars* on the literary agenda.

reading. Immediately, the other side of triumphal victory is signalled: namely the potential, or memory, of defeat. Germany may be the site of splendid imperial performances on the field of battle; but it is also (as the word order underlines) *fera Caesaribus*, 'wild and cruel to the Caesars'. The Varian disaster and the devastation which that wreaked on Augustus' imperialist ambitions is one thing. But Germany and the ruling house are locked together even more closely, for better or worse. It is a point taken up later (line 39), in relation to Drusus—the only Caesar, unless we count Livia, actually named in the poem. Drusus, Ovid underlines, owed his *cognomen* 'Germanicus' to his successes in the province: *Drusus in his meruit quondam cognomina terris*.²² But we are not going to forget that it was in Germany too that Drusus went to his death. As the Pseudo-Ovidian *Consolatio ad Liviam* succinctly put it, he came home from the Germans to a funeral instead of a triumph: *Funera pro sacris tibi sunt ducenda triumphis/ Et tumulus Drusum pro Iovis arce manet*.²³ But the next line (*victa potest flexo succubuisse genu*) offers a different spin on the Caesarian history of Germany. True, the province may have gone down in bended knee to the imperial house. But Ovid's formulation is also directing us back to a passage in his own, earlier, *Fasti*: *succubuit famae victa puella metu* ('Overcome by fear of ill-repute, the girl gave in' or with a sharper twist, no less faithful to the Latin, 'Overcome by fear, the girl succumbed to fame').²⁴ The single word *victa* will, in Ovid, have alerted us already to a potentially erotic conquest. In fact, the line in the *Fasti* is part of Ovid's highly eroticized account of that founding moment of conflict between proto-Republican liberty and monarchical mis-rule: the Rape of Lucretia. Lucretia is the *puella*; she is giving in to (the fame of being raped by) Tarquin.²⁵ How strongly, we must ask, is Ovid prompting us to map the submission of Germania to the Caesars onto his own cynically erotic version of Lucretia's submission to autocratic power?

I wish to concentrate, however, on the projected triumph of *Tristia* 4.2; and particularly on the description put into the mouth of an imaginary observer of the procession as it goes by (lines 27ff.). It is this passage of the poem that has been regularly read against, and in direct contrast to, that other description of a triumph-that-would-never-happen, of Gaius Caesar in *Ars Amatoria* 1.217–228:

*Spectabunt laeti iuvenes mixtaeque puellae,
Diffundetque animos omnibus ista dies.
Atque aliqua ex illis cum regum nomina quaeret,
Quae loca, qui montes, quaeve ferantur aquae,
Omnia responde, nec tantum si qua rogabit;
Et quae nescieris, ut bene nota refer.*

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22 The plural *cognomina* offers a reminder of yet deeper historical connections. For the name Drusus is also itself a *cognomen*, won (according to Suet. *Tib.* 3) by one of our Drusus' ancestors in the fourth century B. C. E., after single combat with a Gaul named Drausus. The Claudian branch of the Caesars had been locked into Gallo-German history since time immemorial.

23 Ps. Ov. *cons.* 27f.: You have to hold a funeral instead of a sacred triumph / It is pyre that is waiting for Drusus in front of Jupiter's citadel.

24 *Fast.* 2.810.

25 A. J. BOYLE's translation of the *Fasti* (London, 2000) nicely picks up the idea of Lucretia being written into history through the rape: 'Fear conquered: the girl surrendered to fame.'

*Hic est Euphrates, praecinctus arundine frontem;
Cui coma dependet caerula, Tigris erit.
Hos facito Armenios; haec est Danaëa Persis;
Urbs in Achaemeniis vallibus ista fuit.
Ille vel ille, duces; et erunt quae nomina dicas,
Si poteris, vere, si minus, apta tamen.*

Watching will be fun for boys and girls together; and it's a day that will let everyone's heart off the leash. When one of the girls asks what the names of the kings are, what places, mountains or rivers are being carried past, have an answer for everything—and don't just wait to be asked. And anything you don't know, reply as if you did. Here is Euphrates, with the reeds around his forehead. The one with the blue locks hanging down will be Tigris. Have these as the Armenians; she is Persia, sprung from Danaë; this one was a city in the Achaemenian valleys. That one there or there, they're chieftains. And you'll have names to give them, correct if you can manage it; if not, then at least sounding right.

Here the triumphal procession is presented, predictably enough, as a good place for a learner-lover to make his own conquest and to impress the girl in his sights with his spurious erudition, as he identifies all the images that pass in front of them. The joke is on the girl, who cannot make sense of what she sees—but also on the boy and the narrator and the conventions of the whole charade. After all how plausible *are* the confidently spurious identifications that the boy and the narrator between them concoct? Whoever could distinguish the Tigris from the Euphrates anyway?²⁶

What happens, then, when the triumphal procession and the questions and responses of the more or less ignorant (*quamvis noverit illa parum*) spectators are relaunched in *Tristia* 4.2? It is much more complicated than a simple and elegant recantation. For a start, there is a strong logic behind the order of spectacles recounted in the later poem. Here the consequences of Roman conquest, as paraded before the spectator-reader, become progressively nastier as the procession moves on. Starting from the noble leader dressed in his purple (lines 27f.), the imagined commentator moves quickly through the downcast, the perfidious, the human sacrificer, to the bottom line of any victory and defeat: blood and death. Just after we have been reminded of Drusus' fate, we meet (images of) the Rhine and Germany herself. The Rhine is, frankly, a right mess and he is stained with his own blood. And what of his horns? Here we are, surely, being jolted back to Vergil's famous Actian triumph in Book 8 of the *Aeneid*. Part of the climax in that procession of *gentes* was the *Rhenus bicornis*.²⁷ In Ovid's triumph his horns have been smashed. Finally Germany brings up the rear (lines 43–46), sitting in mourning at the general's feet. As for all the most dangerous or significant prisoners, this triumph is shortly to be her funeral.²⁸

But this ventriloquised description of the procession parades the characteristic indeterminacy of triumphal representation quite differently from the procession in the *Ars*. Throughout the *Tristia* there is a stress on naming (or rather on not-naming) that loads our search to identify the people and objects on display in a significantly different way.²⁹ In fact, despite the request for names (line 25), with its direct

26 BEARD 2003a, 35–37 offers a more detailed reading of this passage.

27 Verg. *Aen.* 8.727: 'the two-horned Rhine'.

28 We might note that the next poem in the book (4.3) launches another imaginary funeral—this time for Ovid.

29 For issues of naming in the *Tristia*, see E. OLIENSIS, 'Return to Sender: the rhetoric of nomina

allusion straight back to the *Ars* (*nomina quaeret*),³⁰ names are precisely what we are not given here—apart from the reference to the dead Drusus and the two pieces of geography (*Rhenus* and *Germania*). The pressure must be on the reader to wonder what names to apply, what might (in the terms suggested by the *Ars*) be 'plausible'. But the indeterminacy goes further than that. As so often in the cultural economy of spectacle, we find ourselves drawn into reflecting on where the boundaries are to be placed between spectator and show, victor and victim, writer and what he describes. The first character (lines 27–28) is indeed a plausible noble enemy, dressed in his Sidonian purple. Yet it is hard to resist the temptation of seeing a Caesar here (as he rides *sublimis* in his chariot), particularly as throughout the poem Ovid parades the interchangeability of leadership across the divide between victory and defeat. Both Roman and their enemies have *duces* (lines 28, 44), on both sides the *duces* ride high (lines 27, 47), on both sides they are dressed in purple, of a sort (lines 27, 48).³¹ Besides, as Hardie points out, 'triumphant Caesar is placed on the same level of reality or unreality as the conquered personification of Germania, 43–4, 47–8.'³² Triumphal spectacle, Ovid is insinuating, always risks elevating the proudly defeated monarch a well the triumphant victor.³³

So where is Ovid himself? Do we find him coming in second place in the procession (lines 29–30), the one with his eyes fixed gloomily to the ground, the one who used to fight in the army (of Love)? Maybe; or maybe not. But the poet is certainly asking us to cast him not only as the literary impresario of this spectacle, but also as its triumphant general and victim. This is precisely the point of line 61: *illa meos oculos mediam deducit in urbem*. Ovid's 'mind' or 'imagination' (*illa*) is 'leading' (*deducit*) his eyes into the midst of the city. *Deducit*, however, conveys more than simple 'leading'; for *deducere* is the closest thing in Latin to a technical term for 'taking someone in triumph to' (most famously used by Horace in the context of the non-parade of Cleopatra in Augustus' Actian celebration).³⁴ In other words, we are being asked to see in (different parts of) the poet himself, both triumphator and captive.

Finally I wish to turn to the lines that lead up to Ovid's assertion in line 57 that he, being an exile, can only see all 'this' (*haec*) in his mind's eye. What exactly is the 'this' which his imagination conjures? At first sight, the answer seems to be a range of standard triumphal rituals. Our imagined observer appears to finish his account of the procession in line 46.³⁵ Then the poet narrator takes over to evoke

in Ovid's *Tristia*, *Ramus* 26 (1997), 172–93. MILLAR 1993, 12 relates the lack of individuation among members of the imperial family to the growing importance of the collective category of the *Domus Augusta*.

30 *Trist.* 4.2.25 = *ars* 1.219 (emphasised by GALINSKY 1969, 102).

31 I say 'of a sort' because one might reasonably contest the exact equivalence between the colour (and associations) of *ostrum* and *purpureus*.

32 HARDIE 2002, 310.

33 A similar theme raised in Plutarch's account of the triumph of Aemilius Paullus (*Aem.* 33.4), where he claims that the children of the defeated Perses stole the show.

34 *Hor. carm.* 1.37.31 (with R. G. M. NISBET, M. HUBBARD [edd.], *A Commentary on Horace's Odes Book I*, Oxford 1970, ad loc.).

35 I say appears because, as DENIS FEENEY rightly pointed out to me, the Latin has no formal indication of where the direct speech ends.

Caesar in his chariot, the troops shouting the ritual 'io triumphe', the horses bridling at the sound of applause, and so on (lines 47–56). There is nothing unusual about this—except that it is not only a description of a triumph, but also a mini-anthology of quotations and clichés from earlier triumphal poetry.³⁶ There are strong echoes of the (poetically) triumphal opening of *Georgics* 3 in the figure of the triumphator (*victorque virum volitare per ora*, line 10).³⁷ Line 52 (*miles 'io' magna voce 'triumphe' canet*) is an almost direct quotation from Ovid's poem on the triumph of Love in *Amores* 1.2 (*vulgus 'io' magna voce 'triumphe' canet*, line 34), and an even closer echo of Tibullus in his (unfulfilled) projection of a triumph for Messalinus in 2.5 (*miles 'io' magna voce 'triumphe' canet*, line 118)—however you fathom the exact relationship between Tibullus and the *Amores*. The end of line 54 (*saepe resistere equos*) exactly quotes part of Propertius' triumph in 3.4 (*ad vulgi plausus saepe resistere equos*, line 14). In short, as the garlanding of the soldiers with Apollo's laurel (the symbol of poetry as much as triumphant victory) must hint, we have found ourselves as reader right in the middle of the most famous phrases of the triumph-in-ink. Exile or not, the only way Ovid could have enjoyed this particular celebration was in his head. And he has rubbed our noses in the idea of the triumph not *in* but *as* poetry.

4 Ritual in the head

Conventional modern scholarly wisdom suggests that it is harder to *theorize* than to *do*. So far as the issues of this volume are concerned, I am far from certain that any such suggestion is true. Most of the contributors and readers would have relatively trouble in formulating a theoretical model of ritual practice and literary discourse, their overlaps and boundaries. Much more difficult is to show what difference any such model would make to the practical way we go about our intellectual business. To put it another way, *how* does exploring rituals-in-ink affect our historical understanding of the ritual practice and institutions? Do we miss out if, as religious historians conventionally do, we approach the triumph through Plutarch's 'historical account' of the triumph of Aemilius Paullus rather than through Ovid's literary 'fictions'?³⁸

Surely we do miss out. This volume shows clearly that ritual is not solely performative. It exists as much in literary representation, in recollection, re-telling and imaginative fantasy as it does on the ground or at the altar. Those representations signify, and can constructively re-signify, the ritual for its participants and observers; and they both reflect and prompt the ways of thinking that are inscribed even in the most aggressively 'historical' accounts of ritual action. In the case of the triumph, Ovid in *Tristia* 4.2 teases out many of the ambivalences

36 As HEYWORTH 1995, 146 notes, but does not fully develop.

37 Note also the echo of *quadriugos* (3.18). HEYWORTH 1995, 152, n. 46 'catches sight' of the 'sinister figure cursed in that other poem of Ovid's exile', the Ibis in line 49.

38 To cast the blame on no-one else, M. BEARD, J. NORTH and S. PRICE, *Religions of Rome*, Cambridge 1998, pay much less attention to poetry than they probably should.

that are crucial parts of its imaginative economy: its awkward inextricability from death and defeat, the perilous slippage between victor and victim, the violent cruelty that victory for some (and defeat for others) necessarily entails. And it is a fair bet that when Plutarch or Appian came to write their now classic versions of triumphal narrative on which we all depend, they did so having learned to 'think the triumph' in dialogue with Ovid or other forms of its literary fiction. If the primary locus of religion is, as it must be, in people's heads, then literary representations (or 'second-order fictive imitations') must be central to it. It is only by a wilfully blind confidence in the conventional generic boundaries that we have usually chosen to exploit Plutarch's second-order imitations rather than Ovid's.

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