

OVID'S *SCRIPTA PUELLA*: PERILLA AS POETIC AND POLITICAL FICTION IN *TRISTIA* 3.7¹

Ovid's depiction of Perilla, the female poet to whom he addresses one of his letters from exile, has gained her a place in scholarly discussions both of the verse from the later years of Augustus' principate and of women writing poetry in Latin.² Both of these categories of verse suffer from a general lack of surviving poetry: we have only an exiled Ovid here, and (at least among women poets of the Augustan period) a Sulpicia there. Given such limited evidence, Perilla looks like a lucky survivor from the wreck of ancient literature,³ despite the fact that she is known to us only from *Tristia* 3.7. It is hard not to connect the sense that the survival of Perilla is a happy accident with her treatment in modern scholarship; for the way in which scholars have assigned a real existence to Perilla constitutes a striking exception to the widespread acceptance of the thesis of Maria Wyke that the women of Roman elegy are fictional constructs, *scriptae puellae* written to meet the needs of the male elegists.⁴ Studies of the last two decades have concerned themselves with issues such as Perilla's identity,⁵ her similarities with the contemporary poetess Sulpicia,⁶ and status as a *docta puella*.⁷ Such biographical approaches to Perilla are,

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² Witness e.g. the Appendix of 'Named poets of whom no verbatim quotation survives', in A.S. Hollis (ed.), *Fragments of Roman Poetry c. 60 BC – AD 20* (Oxford, 2007), s.v. 'PERILLA' (at 426): 'Ovid addresses a woman poet by this name in *Tristia* 3.7. Courtney (p. 229) guesses that she was a Greek freedwoman of Ovid who wrote poetry in Latin (whence line 12 "doctaque non patrio carmina more canis?"). I prefer the traditional view that she is Ovid's stepdaughter (cf. line 3 "dulci cum matre sedentem"); line 12 could well mean that she composed not in the manner of her stepfather (i.e. she avoided giving instruction in love, cf. 29–30).' See too J. Stevenson, *Women Latin Poets* (Oxford, 2005), 35–6: 'The essential fictionality of the Propertian *puella* has been carefully argued by Maria Wyke ... But the fictionality of Cynthia does not necessarily imply that women who are referred to as part of the web of society (e.g. as fiancées, wives, or sisters), or who are referred to by their own names, are also fictions ... [Ovid's] poems from exile ... include one which tells us that his circle included at least one woman poet, Perilla. Sadly, nothing of her work has survived ... Whatever the precise relationship of Ovid and Perilla, the poem speaks of the fostering of a young protégée's talent by an established poet. It would be perverse to see this relationship as imaginary; Ovid speaks to and of actual people in the poems written from Pontus.'

³ Ovid is our only extant poetic witness to the later years of Augustus' reign; *Pont.* 4.16 names (lost or fictitious) contemporary practitioners of poetry in Rome.

⁴ See particularly M. Wyke, 'Written women: Propertius' *scripta puella*', *JRS* 77 (1987), 47–61, and 'Reading female flesh: *Amores* 3.1' in A. Cameron (ed.), *History as Text* (London, 1989), 113–43, revised versions of which are found in M. Wyke, *The Roman Mistress* (Oxford, 2002), at 46–77 and 115–54 respectively.

⁵ See for example Hollis (n. 2) and E. Courtney (ed.), *The Fragmentary Latin Poets* (Oxford, 1993), the work to which Hollis refers in n. 2.

⁶ See J.P. Hallett, 'Contextualising the text: the journey to Ovid', *Helios* 17 (1990), 187–95.

⁷ See T.N. Habinek, *The Politics of Latin Literature* (Princeton, 1998), 122–36.

however, fundamentally misguided; they fail to engage with the wider context of both Latin love elegy and Ovid's exilic elegies. The figure of Perilla provides us with a portrait of a female poet who recalls other elegiac women, whose poetry appears strongly connected with Ovid's own work, and whose fears about writing verse in the aftermath of Ovid's punishment for erotic poetry echo the concerns of his own exile poetry. To read Ovid as straightforwardly representing reality in his depiction of Perilla is therefore to ignore Ovidian participation in the broader strategies of the discourse of Roman elegy, and to do a disservice to the complexity, self-referentiality and invention of his poetry.

Accordingly, this paper adopts a new approach by suggesting that, no less than the mistresses of Latin love elegy, Perilla is a *scripta puella* – with, however, the crucial difference from her elegiac forbears that Perilla is written to meet the modified poetic programme of Ovid's elegies from exile. After his banishment by the emperor Augustus on the grounds that he had taught Roman citizens how to conduct adulterous affairs (thus going against the spirit of Augustus' anti-adultery and pro-marriage legislation of 18 B.C.) in his elegiac *Ars amatoria*,⁸ Ovid ostentatiously rejects the erotic topics more usually associated with the elegiac metre, 'returning' the genre to its roots as the poetry of mourning.⁹ The discontinuity between Ovid's pre- and post-exilic elegies is not, however, as radical as Ovid claims; scholars have uncovered a variety of ways in which the exiled Ovid reworks Latin love elegy, writing, for example, to the emperor as if to a harsh elegiac *domina*, or treating the Muses who caused his downfall yet still command his devotion as captivating but harmful mistresses.¹⁰ As we shall see, then, the *scripta puella* of the exile elegies has necessarily undergone a transformation in response to the advertised changes in Ovid's poetic agenda.

The first section of this tripartite paper establishes the status of Perilla as a *scripta puella*, exploring Ovid's hints that she is a poetic construct, and the ways in which his portrayal of Perilla recalls and responds to other elegiac depictions of women. Section two goes on to probe the purposes to which Ovid puts this poetic construct, primarily by examining the link that Ovid makes between the poetry of Perilla and that of Sappho. The final section treats Ovid's portrayal of a named contemporary poet in the light of the broader issue of names within the *Tristia* and Ovid's comments on the changed circumstances of poetic production in Rome after the disaster of his exile. An important aim throughout the paper is to

⁸ The charge is most clearly laid out at *Tristia* 2.211–12: *altera pars superest, qua, turpi carmine facto | arguor obsceni doctor adulterii*, where *facto* is the conjecture of Hollis. The text of *Tristia* followed in all other instances in this paper is that of the most recent Teubner (J.B. Hall [ed.], *Ovidius: Tristia* [Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1995]).

⁹ Cf. e.g. *Tr.* 3.1.7–10 (*id quoque, quod uiridi quondam male lusit in aevo, | heu nimium sero damnat et odit opus | inspice quid portem: nihil hic nisi triste uidebis, | carmine temporibus conueniente suis*), 5.1.3–8 and 23–4 (3–8: *hic quoque talis erit, qualis fortuna poetae: | inuenies toto carmine dulce nihil | flebilis ut noster status est, ita flebile carmen, | materiae scripto conueniente suae. | integer et laetus laeta et iuuenalia lusi: | illa tamen nunc me composuisse piget. | [...]* | 23–4: *quod superest, numeros pudibunda ad carmina flexi, | et memores iussi nominis esse sui*). For the supposed origins of elegy in funeral lament, see e.g. *Am.* 1.1.21, 3.9.1–4, *Her.* 1.8, S. Hinds, *The Metamorphosis of Persephone* (Cambridge, 1987), 103–4, R.G.M. Nisbet and M. Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace: Odes Book 1* (Oxford, 1970) on Horace, *Carm.* 1.33.2, and C.O. Brink, *Horace on Poetry: Ars Poetica* (Cambridge, 1971) on Hor. *Ars P.* 75–8.

¹⁰ See respectively B.R. Nagle, *The Poetics of Exile: Program and Polemic in the Tristia and Epistulae ex Ponto of Ovid* (Brussels, 1980 = *Collection Latomus* 170), 22–32 and G. Williams, *Banished Voices* (Cambridge, 1994), 151–3.

analyse Perilla within the wider context of Latin elegy, while taking the programme of Ovid's exilic elegies into account.

1. 'SPEAKING' NAMES AND THE *SCRIPTA PUELLA*

Women in Latin elegy tend to appear under invented names which have appropriate and often witty connotations,¹¹ from Propertius' *Cynthia*, alluding to Cynthian Apollo and thereby Callimachean poetics,¹² to Ovid's *Dipsas*, the dipsomaniac bawd of *Amores* 1.8, or *Corinna*, the girlfriend of the *Amores* whose pseudonym evokes both the Boeotian poet of that name and Corinna's status as an elegiac everywoman, a Jane Doe figure revealed to be such via a bilingual pun on the Greek word for 'girl', *κόρη*.¹³ The likelihood therefore that 'Perilla' is also a 'speaking' name is supported not just by generic precedent, but also by Ovid's practice of not assigning names to the addressees of his epistolary *Tristia*;¹⁴ eschewing a pseudonym to name an actual living woman as the recipient of *Tristia* 3.7 would constitute an unlikely exception to this rule.¹⁵

While the scholarly consensus is that the name Perilla is a pseudonym,¹⁶ this sobriquet has caused scholarly consternation, because of the coincidence between her name and the pseudonym used to celebrate a notorious woman as a mistress in the verse of at least one of Ovid's poetic predecessors. Compare Ovid, *Tristia* 2.433–4, 437–8¹⁷ and Apuleius, *Apologia* 10.4:

quid referam Ticide, quid Memmi carmen, apud quos	433
rebus abest omnis nominibusque pudor;	
et quorum libris, modo dissimulata Perillae	(437)
nomine, ¹⁸ nunc legitur dicta Metella suo?	(Ov. <i>Tr.</i> 2.433–4, 437–8)

¹¹ For some exceptions to naming women only via pseudonyms, see M. Wyke, 'The elegiac woman at Rome', *PCPhS* 213 NS 33 (1987), 153–78, at 153–7 (on Propertius 4), a revised version of which is now found in Wyke (n. 4 [2002]), 78–114.

¹² See J.G. Randall, 'Mistresses' pseudonyms in Latin elegy', *LCM* 4 (1979), 27–35, at 32 for Cynthia.

¹³ See e.g. Randall (n. 12), 34, and J.C. McKeown, *Ovid: Amores, vol. I: Text and Prolegomena* (Liverpool, 1987), 21.

¹⁴ The rhetoric of Stevenson (n. 2), 36 misses (or at any rate obscures) this point: it is only in the *Epistulae ex Ponto* (and not in the collection of letters which precedes them from the Black Sea, the *Tristia*) that addressees are named, with one exception (for which, see the next n.).

¹⁵ The one exception to the rule of anonymous addressees in the *Tristia* is Augustus, the named addressee of *Tristia* 2 (he is addressed as *Caesar* at 27, 209, 323, 551 and 560, and as *Auguste* at 509), whose unusual status as the author of Ovid's banishment and Rome's sole ruler explains Ovid's deviation from his normal practice in the *Tristia*; for the political implications of naming and withholding names in the *Tristia*, see section 3.

¹⁶ See e.g. Hollis (n. 2), G. Luck, *P. Ovidius Naso: Tristia. Band II Kommentar* (Heidelberg, 1977), 199; contrast Courtney (n. 5), 229: 'I would guess that she was a freedwoman of Ovid, too unimportant socially to make concealment of her name necessary.'

¹⁷ I follow Riese's transposition of this couplet, which correctly unites Ovid's mention of Tidea (433–4; for more on this poet of the Republican and civil war period, see Hollis [n. 2], 158–63 and Courtney [n. 5], 228–9), who was known to have celebrated Metella as 'Perilla', with remarks on this pseudonym (427–8).

¹⁸ Given the Apuleius parallel on the next page, the senseless *per illos/per ipsos* of the MSS must conceal *Perilla* (a correction which apparently dates from early Italian editions).

eadem igitur opera accusent C. Catul[l]um, quod Lesbia pro Clodia nominarit, et Tigidam similiter, quod quae Metella erat Perillam scripserit, et Propertium, qui Cynthia dicat, Hostiam dissimulet, et Tibullum, quod ei sit Plania in animo, Delia in uersu.
(Apul. *Apol.* 10.4)

As Hollis (n. 2) observes, troubled by the disparity between Ovid's concentration on the pure morals of the 'Perilla' of *Tristia* 3.7 and the promiscuity of the woman who was concealed by that name in earlier love poetry: 'In the circumstances it might have been more prudent to avoid a pseudonym which had been borne by the notorious Metella, celebrated by Ticide ... and at least one other poet ...' (426). Hollis (n. 2), 161–2 brilliantly elucidates the complex and textually difficult passage from *Tristia* 2 given above, but he seems to miss the point to Ovid's subsequent choice of the name 'Perilla' for the addressee of *Tristia* 3.7. For the reader who encounters the *Tristia* collection in chronological order, 'Perilla' in *Tristia* 3.7 is obviously revealed as a fictional name, since Ovid has already spelled out its fictional status by referring to the concealing function of this pseudonym in earlier poetry. Ovid's choice of this name for the poet addressed in 3.7 is therefore revealed to be a joke: the point is that this is *not* the name of a real woman.¹⁹

Ovid reinforces his hint that Perilla is a 'speaking' name which reveals only its own fictionality in the first three lines of *Tristia* 3.7:

Vade salutatum, subito perarata, Perillam,
littera, sermonis fida ministra mei.
aut illam inuenies dulci cum matre sedentem ...

By claiming that the letter will find *illam* (3), Ovid virtually spells out that the word *Perilla* is formed from a combination of the Latin words *per* and *illa*; that the form *Perillam* appears in the first line, anticipating *illam* at 3, reinforces the word play. Ovid's partial deconstruction of the name makes the point that Perilla is a poetic construct.²⁰

That Perilla is a poetically constructed *scripta puella* can be further illustrated by comparing Ovid's depiction of her with the description which introduces Corinna,

¹⁹ A case of Jane Doh, rather than Jane Doe (if you will). That the name 'Perilla' is already a joke in Ticide is recognized by K. Milnor, 'Sulpicia's (corpo)reality: elegy, authorship, and the body in Tibullus 3.13', *CA* 21 (2002), 259–82, at 262 n. 7, where she discusses the name's evocation of Perillus/Perilaus, the inventor of Phalaris' brazen bull who was consumed by his own art (cf. e.g. Prop. 2.25.11–12, 3.24.13, Ov. *Ars am.* 1.653–6; see further M.B. Skinner, 'Perillus at Tomis', in H.D. Jocelyn (ed.), *Tria Lustra: Essays and Notes Presented to John Pinsent*, Liverpool Classical Papers No. 3 [Liverpool, 1993]), 301–10, with probable allusion to the erotic burning Metella inflicted on her lovers (see R.G.M. Nisbet, *Collected Papers on Latin Literature* [Oxford, 1995], 397 n. 27). That Perilla was an invented name may have been clearer to Ovid's contemporaries than to modern readers: G.O. Hutchinson, 'The Catullan corpus, Greek epigram, and the poetry of objects', *CQ* 53 (2003), 206–221, at 211 n. 21, notes that he has encountered no instances of the name Perillus in Latin inscriptions or of the feminine form of the name anywhere other than Ovid.

²⁰ Perhaps there is also a joke here at the expense of Catullus, who had failed to spell out by any such word play that the 'Ipsitilla' of 32 is a pseudonym derived from the word *ipsa* and meaning something like 'my little mistress'; the name (which is given variously in the MSS) and its connotations are, however, controversial: see e.g. C.M. Neudling, *A Prosopography to Catullus* (Oxford, 1955), 87 and M. Gwyn Morgan, 'Ipsithilla or Ipsicilla? Catullus, c. 32 again', *Glotta* 52 (1974), 233–6.

Ovid's mistress in the *Amores*.²¹ Ovid had already flirted with the expectations of his readers by withholding the name of his beloved until the fifth poem of the first book,²² and the entirety of *Amores* 1.5 reads as an extended tease in which Ovid simultaneously offers and conceals information about his mistress.²³ This technique can be seen at *Amores* 1.5.9–12:

ecce, Corinna uenit, tunica uelata recincta
candida diuidua colla tegente coma –
qualiter in thalamos famosa Semiramis isse
dicitur, et multis Lais amata uiris [...]

At the very moment at which Ovid first individualizes the figure of the mistress required by the demands of the elegiac genre, earlier referred to as simply *longas compta puella comas* (*Am.* 1.1.20), by giving her a name,²⁴ he retreats from the particular to the more general by comparing Corinna with not one but two famous women. To describe Corinna at this moment via similes likening her to other women,²⁵ rather than by concentrating on any attributes special and unique to Corinna, is to avoid directly revealing much information about Corinna herself.²⁶ The reader's sense that Corinna is a composite woman, a blend of the qualities of those who came before her in elegy, myth and history, is further reinforced by the generalized terms in which Ovid lists her physical attributes at lines 17–24:

ut stetit ante oculos posito uelamine nostros,
in toto nusquam corpore menda fuit.
quos umeros, quales uidi tetigique lacertos!
forma papillarum quam fuit apta premi! 20
quam castigato planus sub pectore uenter!
quantum et quale latus! quam iuuenale femur!
singula quid referam? nil non laudabile uidi
et nudam pressi corpus ad usque meum.

²¹ There are many excellent discussions of Corinna's poetic debut in *Am.* 1.5: see e.g. J.C. McKeown, *Ovid: Amores, vol. II: Commentary on Book One* (Liverpool, 1989), ad loc. on the many details of the poem and, recently, D. Kennedy, 'Elegy and the erotics of narratology', 19–33 and P. Salzman-Mitchell, 'Snapshots of a love affair: *Amores* 1.5 and the program of elegiac narrative', 34–47, in G. Liveley and P. Salzman-Mitchell (edd.), *Latin Elegy and Narratology* (Columbus, OH, 2008). The following discussion, therefore, merely sketches some ground which is very familiar for readers of elegy.

²² Cf. Propertius 1.1.1, where *Cynthia* is the first word, and Tibullus 1.1, where Delia is named at line 57.

²³ Ovid's presentation of Corinna is encapsulated at lines 3–8 (*pars adaperita fuit, pars altera clausa fenestrae; | quale fere siluae lumen habere solent, | qualia sublucent fugiente crepuscula Phoebus, | aut ubi nox abiit, nec tamen orta dies. | illa uerecundis lux est praebenda puellis, | qua timidus latebras speret habere pudor*), where the half-light Ovid describes in the venue for his encounter with Corinna mirrors his partial portrait of her (and may provide one explanation for her description in very general terms: he could not see her very clearly!), and *latebras* (8) hints that Ovid will not so much reveal as conceal, sparing Corinna's *pudor*.

²⁴ Ovid simultaneously refers to her hair (10), the one attribute of a mistress he had previously singled out, thereby revealing that Corinna fits the bill of *Am.* 1.1.20.

²⁵ The behaviour and attributes that Ovid's choice of similes evokes here are discussed by McKeown (n. 21), 111–13.

²⁶ For the distancing effects of similes, which can stress difference as well as similarity, see e.g. D.C. Feeney, 'Shall I compare thee ...? Catullus 68b and the limits of analogy', in A.J. Woodman and J. Powell (edd.), *Author and Audience in Latin Literature* (Cambridge, 1992), 33–44.

It would be impossible to pick Corinna out from an identity parade on the information provided here: the adjectives which are attached to her various body parts are mostly general and non-specific: in keeping with the generic *quos, quales* (19) and *quantum et quale* (22) are the unrevealing *toto* (18),²⁷ *apta* (20) and *iuvenale* (22).²⁸ Ovid even suggests that the individual details he gives his readers do not matter all that much with *singula quid referam?* (23); in context, the question suggests that Corinna is wholly beautiful, but it is also open to the interpretation that the actual characteristics of Corinna are not worth the reader's attention because they are so far from individualizing her. The cumulative effect of this description of Corinna is to render her an identikit woman, a body and anybody;²⁹ the typical elegiac *scripta puella*, in short, who can be anatomized and enjoyed on the page by readers whatever their preferences for particular physical types.³⁰

If Ovid presents Corinna as the everywoman of standard elegiac discourse, Perilla is equally typical of Ovid's new brand of exilic elegies. After Ovid's downfall for his erotic poetry, women who are presented using realistic devices no longer appear as sexy and sexually available (for hints that such elements persist in the *scriptae puellae* of his exilic elegies, however, see below); instead, they are chaste, loyal and defined in terms of close familial, rather than overtly erotic, relationships.³¹ The new woman of the exilic letters is typified by Ovid's own wife,

²⁷ 18 alludes to Cat. 86, where Catullus disputes the general view that Quintia is beautiful by conceding three attractive attributes (*mihi candida, longa, | recta est*, 1–2) with *haec ego sic singula confiteor* (2; influencing *singula quid referam* at *Am.* 1.5.23?), but then says *totum illud formosa nego; nam nulla uenustas, | nulla in tam magno est corpore mica salis* (3–4); we then learn that Quintia is merely a foil for Catullus' mistress: *Lesbia formosa est, quae cum pulcherrima tota est* (5). By revisiting the Catullan reference to beauty as a totality in combination with listing individual physical attributes and denying any fault in Corinna (which is rather more lukewarm than Catullus' praise of Lesbia), Ovid thus aligns her with Catullus' mistress.

²⁸ For love as suited to the young, see e.g. M. Labate, *L'arte di farsi amare* (Pisa, 1984), 34–5 and S.J. Heyworth, 'Propertius: division, transmission, and the editor's task', *PLLS* 8 (1997), 165–85.

²⁹ Cf. *Am.* 3.7.39 (*at qualem uidi tantum tetigique puellam!*), reprising 1.5.19 to describe a woman with whom Ovid has experienced impotence (she cannot be identified with Corinna, given the reference, at lines 25–6, to Corinna as another woman with whom Ovid has been able to have a recent successful sexual encounter).

³⁰ Cf. *Am.* 2.4, where Ovid confesses that all kinds of women appeal to him (*non est certa meos quae forma inuitet amores*, 9) and then lists many different feminine attributes to which he is susceptible; the poem reads as a compendium of the qualities found in attractive women in love poetry (for such charms tabulated, see A. Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus* [New York and Oxford, 1992], 45 and esp. 234 n. 21).

³¹ E. O'Gorman, 'Love and the family: Augustus and the Ovidian legacy', *Arethusa* 30 (1997), 103–23 already notes how the elegiac woman of the exile poetry moves 'into the discourse of piety' (116); S. Harrison, 'Ovid and genre: evolutions of an elegist', in P. Hardie (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid* (Cambridge, 2002), 79–94, talks of the exile poetry's 'replacement of the disreputable mistress [*sc.* of earlier love elegy] with a respectable wife' (91). The chaste *scripta puella* of the exilic elegies has an ancestress in another chronologically late instalment of Latin elegy which also stands generically outside the mainstream of Latin love elegy: Prop. 4.11, which gives a voice to the *matrona* Cornelia (for whom, see e.g. Wyke [n. 11], 170–3). Cf. also Arethusa, who sends a letter to her husband, away on military service, in Prop. 4.3 (on Arethusa, and this poem's utilization of the portrayal of a loyal wife to express a continued preference for the erotic over the military, see Wyke, *op. cit.*, 157–61); Ovid's exile poetry reworks Prop. 4.3 by presenting us with a woman left in Rome while her husband is absent – although restoring the man to his place at centre stage in elegy, he gives us only the correspondence of the male partner.

who appears as a paragon devoted to her husband.³² Leaving aside Perilla's poetic abilities for the moment, the details which Ovid reveals about Perilla fit neatly into this new elegiac template: line 3 reveals her devotion to her family, in a stereotypical picture of a girl sitting with her mother (*dulci cum matre sedentem*),³³ line 13 her chaste morals (*tibi cum facie mores natura pudicos*), and line 17 refers to her virginity (*primus id* [i.e. Perilla's poetic talent] *aspexi teneris in uirginis annis*).³⁴ The only mentions of Perilla's physical attributes come in the reference to *facie* at 13, reprised in line 37, but these hints at her good looks are overshadowed by the picture of the future loss of her looks in verses 33–8:

ista decens facies longis uitabitur annis,
 rugaque in antiqua fronte senilis erit,
 inicietque manum formae damnosa senectus,
 quae strepitum passu non faciente uenit;
 cumque aliquis dicet 'fuit haec formosa', dolebis,
 et speculum mendax esse querere tuum.

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This vision of the fate that awaits every beautiful woman is not only a highly conventional poetic topic in general terms,³⁵ but it also fits the new template of the *scripta puella* of the exile poetry in that it anticipates Ovid's exilic comments on his wife's ageing;³⁶ women are not allowed to remain young and beautiful even in the imagination of the exiled poet. On such limited information as Ovid gives here, Perilla can no more be identified with an actual living Roman woman than Corinna before her.³⁷ Ovid even hints at such a link between Corinna and

³² For the exilic portrayal of Ovid's wife, see e.g. *Tr.* 1.2.37–44 (note particularly *pia ... coniunx*, 37, stressing Ovid's wife's family loyalty), 1.3 (particularly 82, where Ovid's wife wishes to be *coniunx exulis exul*), 1.6 (particularly the praise of her *probitas* at 19; on this poem and its alignment of Ovid's wife with mythological wives whose praiseworthy behaviour was celebrated in verse, making her doubly a *scripta puella*, see S. Hinds, 'First among women: Ovid, *Tristia* 1.6 and the traditions of "exemplary" catalogue', in S.M. Braund and R. Mayer [edd.], *Amor: Roma. Love and Latin Literature* = *PCPhS* suppl. 23 [Cambridge, 1999], 123–42; at 124, Hinds usefully identifies this poem's introduction of 'the new sub-genre of spousal love poetry'), 3.3 (particularly 25–8 and 47–58; at 55 Ovid's wife is *optima coniunx*), 3.4b.59–62, 5.5.19 (where his wife is mentioned in connection with her daughter), 5.14 (a eulogy of Ovid's wife), and *Pont.* 3.1.44 (where Ovid tells his wife that in his poetry *coniugis exemplum diceris esse bonae*). M. Öhrman, *Varying Virtue: Mythological Paragons of Wifely Virtues in Roman Elegy* (Lund, 2008), 151–89, usefully discusses the depiction of Ovid's wife from exile.

³³ Luck (n. 16), ad loc. cites Hes. *Op.* 519–20.

³⁴ Ovid does not of course necessarily suggest that Perilla is *still* a virgin; indeed, these lines clearly refer to the past, at least with reference to the first recognition of Perilla's potential.

³⁵ For the loss of female looks as a poetic theme (particularly in erotic poetry), see e.g. R.K. Gibson, *Ovid, Ars Amatoria Book 3* (Cambridge, 2003), 110.

³⁶ *Tr.* 5.5 is on the theme of his wife's birthday, perhaps prompting *Pont.* 1.4, where Ovid presents himself as physically an old man (cf. *iamque meos uultus ruga senilis arat*, 2, with *Tr.* 3.7.34), and then imagines that his wife too has aged (47–52). Ovid's presentation of Perilla as an old woman recalls Ovid's tendentious self-presentation as aged in the exile poetry (cf. e.g. *Tr.* 4.8.1–4, 4.10.93–4): such self-presentation suggests that the now elderly Ovid has changed from the man who had erred with the 'youthful' *Ars amatoria* (see e.g. *Tr.* 2.543–4 *ergo quae iuuenis mihi non nocitura putauit | scripta parum prudens, nunc nocuere seni*, 3.1.7–8, 5.1.7–8), evokes sympathy for his plight in exile, and matches Ovid's depiction of Augustus as an old man (for which, see e.g. *Tr.* 2.166). For more on Ovid's exilic focus on his old age, see H.B. Evans, *Publica Carmina: Ovid's Books from Exile* (Lincoln and London, 1993), 74–91, esp. 82–4, 89.

³⁷ Another example of Perilla's portrayal as a *scripta puella* comes in the statement that Perilla has moderate wealth (*sunt tibi opes modicae, cum sis dignissima magnis*, 39), which

Perilla as he closes the portion of *Tristia* 3.7 which directly relates to Perilla's personal attributes with *singula ne referam* (43), alluding to *singula quid referam?* at *Amores* 1.5.23.

What does, however, differentiate Perilla from other women is her poetic abilities, described in a hendiadys as *raras dotes ingeniumque* (14). Yet this attribute too can be seen to be conventional. Although Ovid paints a picture of a woman whose *ingenium* sets her aside from other women, Perilla, whom he addresses as *doctissima* (31), follows in a long tradition of *doctae puellae* who are able to appreciate poetry and sometimes even compose their own verse.³⁸ Even her poetic talent, the feature of Perilla which might at first seem most likely to mark her out as departing from a generic template, ultimately reinforces the fact that she remains within the restricted mould of the elegiac woman: not so much a *puella* who is able to act as a *scriptor* as the *scripta puella* of convention.

2. HER MASTER'S V(O)ICE

To what purpose or purposes, we might therefore ask, does Ovid put this poetic construct? One of the ends which the *scripta puella* of earlier elegiac discourse serves, as identified by Wyke, is political: analysing, at 49–53, the opposition set up between Propertius' *scripta puella* and the treatment of Augustus as a poetic theme in Propertius 2.10, Wyke comments: '2.10 reveals that as long as Cynthia is being written, a poem on Augustus is being eternally deferred. [...] Here elegy's heroine is political fiction, perennially opposed to the topics of patriotic poetry.'³⁹ In light of the politicized treatment of the *scripta puella* in earlier elegy, and the inevitably heightened political concerns of the *Tristia* (given Ovid's exile by the foremost man in Rome), it would be foolish not to look for similar elements in the women of the exilic elegies.

Such elements are not hard to find. The programmatic connection which Ovid makes at *Amores* 3.1 between different types of poetry and different women strongly suggests that the *scriptae puellae* of the exile poetry should be read in the light of

Luck (n. 16), ad loc. notes is recalled in Ovid's description of his wife at 5.5.47 (*fortunaque moribus impar*); not only is Perilla like Ovid's wife in being worthy of more, but she is also created in the image of the male love elegists in having only a modest fortune: cf. e.g. Ovid's comment on his own *domus* at *Tr.* 2.113–14 (*et neque diuitiis nec paupertate notanda, | unde sit in neutrum conspiciendus eques*) and *Tib.* 1.1.78 (*dites despiciam despiciamque famem*).

³⁸ For *docta* applied approvingly to mistresses' appreciation of verse, see e.g. *Cat.* 35.16–17 (where Caecilius' mistress is *Sapphica puella | Musa doctior*), *Prop.* 1.7.11, 2.13.11; for mistresses composing verse, see e.g. *Prop.* 1.2.27–8, 2.3.19–22 (*et quantum Aeolio cum temptat carmina plectro | par Aganippaeae ludere docta lyrae, | et sua cum antiquae committit scripta Corinnae | carminaque Erinnae non putat aequa suis*), and *Ov. Ars am.* 3.319–20. Furthermore, the connection of Perilla's poetic talents with a male ancestor (*doctaque non patrio carmina more canis?*, 3.7.12) parallels *Prop.* 3.20.7–8, where a woman's *castae Palladis artes* (7) in the hexameter may evoke her poetic abilities (or, alternatively, her skill at wool working), only for the pentameter to hint that such skills are inherited from a learned male ancestor: *splendidaque a docto fama refulget auo* (8).

³⁹ Wyke (n. 4 [1987]), 52–3. Wyke (n. 4 [1989]), 124–9 also reads the conflict between Elegy and Tragedy in *Amores* 3.1 as political, embodying the opposition between *meretrix* and *matrona* so central to Augustan poetry and politics.

Ovid's claim to have changed the course of his elegies,⁴⁰ and these elegiac women do appear at first glance to reflect Ovid's rejection of the erotic strand in elegy, which had so offended Augustus, and to embody instead the behaviour which Augustus required of Roman women.⁴¹ However, we have already seen that the exile poetry's break with erotic elegy is not as decisive as our author claims; similarly, a closer look reveals that the transformation of the women of the exilic elegies is only cosmetic, with traces of the typical elegiac *scripta puella* remaining:⁴² see, for example, *Tristia* 3.3.23–4 (*nuntiet huc aliquis dominam uenisse, resurgam, | spesque tui nobis causa uigoris erit*) where Ovid seems to get an erection at the thought of his wife coming,⁴³ and she is crucially called a *domina*, evoking the typical elegiac mistress.⁴⁴ Again, at 5.14.7–8, when Ovid tells his wife *cumque uiri casu possis miseranda uideri, | inuenies aliquas, quae, quod es, esse uelint*, he recalls his earlier comment on the desirability of being known as 'his' at *Amores* 2.17.29–30 (*noui aliquam, quae se circumferat esse Corinnam. | ut fiat, quid non illa dedisse uelit?*), casting his wife as equivalent to Corinna.⁴⁵ Despite Ovid's statement of Perilla's pure morals (*Tr.* 3.7.13), Perilla is also cast in an erotic mould, most overtly by the comparison of her poetry with the verse of Sappho at lines 19–20:⁴⁶

ergo si remanent ignes tibi pectoris idem,
sola tuum uates Lesbia uincet opus.

Treating these lines in his commentary, Georg Luck (n. 16, 201) restricts the phrase *ignes ... pectoris* (19) to the notion of inspiration, and interprets the pentameter's reference to Sappho in a very limited sense:

⁴⁰ On the embodiment of two different writing practices in the female forms Elegia and Tragoedia in *Amores* 3.1, see Wyke (n. 4 [1989]).

⁴¹ For Augustus' traditional and patriarchal views of how women should behave, see e.g. Suet. *Aug.* 64 and J. Hallett, 'The role of women in Roman elegy: counter-cultural feminism', *Arethusa* 6 (1973), 103–5.

⁴² E. Oliensis, 'The power of image-makers: representation and revenge in Ovid *Metamorphoses* 6 and *Tristia* 4', *CA* 23 (2004), 285–321, at 303 does not detect any hints that Perilla is anything less than a new, moral woman for the exile poetry when Ovid talks of Perilla's 'restraint, her chastity, her devotion to *bonae artes*', but nevertheless recognizes that Ovid's focus on these attributes evokes 'her opposite number, never named but exerting a certain pressure throughout, being the elegiac *puella* addressed in the *Ars Amatoria*, a creature of pleasingly loose morals characterized by her devotion to *artes* now retrospectively characterized as *malae*'.

⁴³ For *surgere* with sexual meaning, see J.N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (Baltimore, MD, 1982), 57; might the prefix *re-* suggest that the elegiac poet would thereby get back to his usual state?

⁴⁴ For the elegiac *domina*, see e.g. Prop. 1.1.21, Tib. 1.1.46 (the first mention of a beloved in his poetry), Ov. *Am.* 1.4.47; cf. R. Pichon, *Index Verborum Amatoriorum* (Paris, 1902 = Hildesheim, 1966), 134.

⁴⁵ Öhrman (n. 32), 165–7 treats another example of Ovid's continued exilic eroticizing of women in the depiction of his wife, persuasively reading *Tr.* 4.3.25–8 as presenting us with an Ovid who fantasizes about his wife fantasizing about him. J. Henderson, 'Bringing it all back home: togetherness in Statius' *Siluae* 3.5', *Arethusa* 40 (2007), 245–77, analyses well the threat inherent in Ovid's praises of his wife as a model of conjugal fidelity; such praises suggest that his wife might slip from the revised template that Ovid is in the process of drawing up.

⁴⁶ Another erotic hint in the portrayal of Perilla may be detected in the picture of Ovid as her teacher (cf. *saepe magister eram*, 24; for Ovid's eroticization of the teacher-pupil relationship, readers need not look any further than his *Ars*; I return below to *magister*) or in *causa ruboris eram* (26); for the blushing of girls in love, see e.g. Cat. 65.24 and Verg. *Aen.* 12.66 (with R.O.A.M. Lyne, 'Lavinia's blush: Vergil, *Aeneid* 12.64–70', *G&R* 30 [1983], 55–64).

Zu *pectus* als Sitz des *ingenium*, aber auch der Inspiration und Vision [...] – *uates Lesbia*: schrieb Perilla lyrische Dichtungen (auf Griechisch? [...]) oder ist das Kompliment ganz allgemein, wie Prop. 2,3,21 f.

To read in this way constitutes an almost perverse determination to overlook possible erotic connotations,⁴⁷ given that in elegy and other erotic poetry, fire can often refer to the fires of love,⁴⁸ and *ignes ... pectoris* can therefore denote erotic passion as well as inspiration; even more obviously, given the stereotypical depiction of Sappho as the poet of passion in Roman poetry,⁴⁹ the comparison of Perilla's verse with Sappho's strongly hints that we are to read Perilla as sharing Sappho's erotic themes. This hypothesis explains Ovid's repeated emphasis on Perilla's fears and hesitation about writing verse:⁵⁰ witness *sed uereor ne te mea nunc fortuna retardet*, | *postque meos casus sit tibi pectus iners* (21–2), *metuis* (28), and *pone ... metum* (29). Ovid's warning that Perilla can place aside her fear and continue to write so long as neither man nor woman learns how to love from her writing (*pone, Perilla, metum; tantummodo femina nulla | neue uir a scriptis discat amare tuis*, 29–30) in fact *only* makes sense on the supposition that Perilla might conceiv-

⁴⁷ The refusal of scholars to interpret the portrayal of Perilla's putative poetry as erotic can be attributed to a number of factors: (i) the subversive implications of such an interpretation; I discuss these further below; (ii) the description of her *mores ... pudicos* (13), which may make the reader think that her work is also chaste, in light of the ancient idea that the poet's work reflects their character (cf. e.g. Arist. *Poet.* 1449a, which claims that when tragedy and comedy came to light, poets chose their genre *κατὰ τὴν οἰκείαν φύσιν*, Ar. fr. 694 K–A [on Euripides] *οἷα μὲν ποεῖ λέγειν τοῖος ἐστίν*, and A.J. Podlecki, 'The Peripatetics as literary critics', *Phoenix* 23 [1969], 114–37), an idea which Ovid alludes to and rejects – at least with reference to his own case – at *Tr.* 2.353–4 (*crede mihi, distant mores a carmine nostri*; | *uita uerecunda est, Musa iocosa mea*); and (iii) the curious query at 12 as to whether Perilla is singing *doctaque non patrio carmina more*, which has often been interpreted in light of the view that Perilla is Ovid's stepdaughter by his third marriage (a character who features only at *Pont.* 4.8.11: *nam tibi quae coniunx, eadem mihi filia paene est*); on this interpretation, Ovid (as Perilla's *pater*; a role which he acknowledges he almost fulfilled in the simile of 18: *utque pater natae, duxque comesque fui* [qua poetic leader]) would recognize that Perilla works in a different genre or on different themes from his own; scholars read Ovid as stressing that Perilla does not write erotic verse (see e.g. Habinek [n. 7], 135). I would interpret *non patrio ... more* somewhat differently: given that (as I argue) Perilla is an Ovidian poetic construct, Ovid would *metaphorically* be her 'father' (cf. the characterization of Ovid's poems as his children at e.g. *Tr.* 1.1.107, 113–16, 1.7.20; on this conceit, see S. Hinds, 'Booking the return trip: Ovid and *Tristia* 1', *PCPhS* 31 [1985], 13–32). Alternatively, if a flesh-and-blood woman does indeed lie behind Perilla, the interpretation that she is Ovid's stepdaughter seems the most natural way of reading of *Tr.* 3.7, and this would explain the similarity noted above between Ovid's depiction of her and his own wife, and would furthermore suggest continuity in the Ovidian family.

⁴⁸ See *ignes* with precisely this sense at e.g. *Tr.* 2.407, 4.10.45, Verg. *Ecl.* 5.10 and cf. Pichon (n. 44), 150 for erotic *flamma*.

⁴⁹ Cf. e.g. Hor. *Carm.* 2.13.24–5, 4.9.10–12 (*spirat adhuc amor | uiuuntque commissi calores | Aeoliae fidibus puellae*), and Ov. *Tr.* 2.365 (*Lesbia quid docuit Sappho nisi amare puellas?*). This stereotype predominates to the extent that other aspects of her poetic production, which suggest that she shares the broader concerns of her male archaic lyric contemporaries, are overlooked: cf. H.N. Parker, 'Sappho schoolmistress', *TAPhA* 123 (1993), 309–51.

⁵⁰ Alternatively, if Perilla is *not* to be read as an erotic poet, Ovid suggests an atmosphere of fear and oppression surrounding the production of *all* poetry in Late Augustan Rome; compare perhaps the similar comment on the contemporary poetic climate detected in Prop. 4.10 by J. Ingleheart, 'Propertius 4.10 and the end of the *Aeneid*: Augustus, the *spolia opima* and the right to remain silent', *G&R* 54 (2007), 61–81. See further below.

ably follow Ovid in writing a work like the *Ars amatoria*.⁵¹ Only if Perilla repeats Ovid's offence in composing erotic verse need she fear falling victim to the same punishment as her former *magister* (24) in the art of writing poetry.⁵² *magister* is a loaded word for the exilic re-reader of Ovid's *Ars amatoria*: for Ovid's pose as the teacher of love in that work is what led Augustus to banish him, in the belief that he had taught adultery to Roman men and women.⁵³ In the wider context of Ovid's life and poetic career, Ovid's claim that he acted as the teacher of a woman poet who can be compared with Sappho must be interpreted as subversive.

Accordingly, when Ovid encourages Perilla, a poet in the Ovidian mould, to get on with writing love poetry, he suggests the falseness of the impression he elsewhere strives to create in his exile poetry that the metaphorical 'death' of his own exile has caused the demise of the Ovidian strain of Latin love elegy. Despite Ovid's pose of having reinvented love elegy as the poetry of exilic mourning, *Tristia* 3.7 implies that Perilla carries on his work as a typical Latin love elegist. At this point, it is worth returning to the name which Ovid gives to this creation: a combination, as we saw earlier, of *per* and *illa*. The name may suggest that *per illam* (literally 'through her'), that is, an invented poetic mouthpiece,⁵⁴ Ovid envisages the survival of erotic poetry.⁵⁵ The opening couplet may even come close to

⁵¹ *femina* and *uir* allude to the *Ars*: compare *Tr.* 2.5–6 [*sc.* Musae] *carmina fecerunt ut me cognoscere uellet | omine non fausto femina uirque mihi*, which must allude to the *Ars*, given the context, the poem's specified audience of men (*Ars am.* 1–2) and women (*Ars am.* 3), and its aim of bringing these groups together. Ovid teasingly hints at Perilla's potential authorship of her own *Ars amatoria* at 31–2 (*ergo desidia remoue, doctissima, causas, | inque bonas artes et tua sacra redi*; for the plural *Artes* to denote Ovid's *Ars amatoria*, see *Tr.* 2.253, 345, 3.14.5–6, *Pont.* 1.1.12, 2.2.104), but (almost) neutralizes the suggestion by attaching the adjective *bonas* to *artes*.

⁵² Furthermore, the theory that Ovid presents Perilla as a poet of love can also help to explain why lines 31–8 combine the notion of Perilla getting on with writing poetry (31–2) with the frequently erotic motif of old age inflicting its damage on female looks (33–8; cf. n. 35): the implied point is that Perilla needs to get on with writing specifically *erotic* poetry, which will earn her erotic attention which she can make use of while still young (for the motif of making the most of love whilst young, cf. e.g. *Ars am.* 3.59–82 with Gibson [n. 35] ad loc.).

⁵³ Cf. n. 8, *Tr.* 2.347 *sed neque me nuptae didicerunt furta magistro* (denying the charge against the *Ars*), and, for Ovid's pose as *magister* within the *Ars amatoria* and *Remedia amoris*, see e.g. *Rem. am.* 55 *uixisset Phyllis, si me foret usa magistro*, *Ars am.* 2.173 *uestri peccata magistri*, 744 (successful male lovers are to inscribe *spoliis NASO MAGISTER ERAT*; cf. 3.812) and 3.341.

⁵⁴ That Ovid lies behind Perilla may be hinted at not just by her name and Ovid's claim that he is her *magister* and has acted almost as her father (cf. n. 47 on the literary connotations of this statement), but also through Perilla's imagined complaint that she has a *speculum mendax* (38). We might read this as a hint that Perilla is in fact Ovid's reflection (cf. *mendacem ... formam* at *Met.* 3.439 of the image of himself that Narcissus sees in the reflective pool): the mirror lies in so far as it does not accurately reflect a woman, but rather a male author. Cf. *me mea prodidit umbra* (*Am.* 1.8.109), where the shadow betrays Ovid not just by giving his presence away to the bawd Dipsas as he eavesdrops on her erotic advice, but also by betraying the way in which her advice mirrors Ovid's own amatory philosophy, as is persuasively argued by M.L. Stapleton, *Harmful Eloquence: Ovid's Amores from Antiquity to Shakespeare* (Ann Arbor, 1996), 19–20.

⁵⁵ The survival of poetry is an explicit concern at the end of *Tristia* 3.7: see 51–4 (*dumque suis uictrix omnem de montibus orbem | prospiciet domitum Martia Roma, legar. | tu quoque, quam studii maneat felicius usus, | effuge uenturos, qua potes usque, rogos*), which appropriately evoke the potentially Sapphic origins of this topos: cf. the injunction *effuge ... rogos* with the words of Sappho in the fictitious epitaph composed for her by Tullius Laurea, *Anth. Pal.* 7.17.7 (*Αἰδέω σκότον ἔκφυγον*), and for Sappho's concern for the survival of poetry after death, see e.g. Sappho fr. 55.

spelling out that Perilla acts as a mouthpiece for Ovid: the feminine gender of both *Perilla* and *littera* means that the phrase *sermonis fida ministra mei*, grammatically to be taken in apposition to *littera*, might also be understood as referring to Perilla, the faithful *ministra* of Ovidian discourse in so far as she repeats the words of her former poetic *magister*.⁵⁶ That Ovid envisages the continuation through Perilla of his previous erotic elegies, in defiance of the heavy penalty exacted for such work by Augustus, is supported by the statement of lines 47–8 (*ingenio tamen ipse meo comitorque fruorque: | Caesar in hoc potuit iuris habere nihil*), which make an explicit issue of Augustus' lack of power over Ovid's poetic *ingenium*.⁵⁷

3. SPEAKING NAMES:

'... A GENTLE WIND *EX* | *PONTO* BLOWS'⁵⁸

Augustus and his relationship to contemporary Roman poetry is the issue with which I wish to conclude my analysis of Ovid's poetic construct and the purposes to which he puts it. Ovid's suggestion that through the figure of Perilla his erotic elegy continues in Rome in the aftermath of his exile needs to be placed in the broader context of the importance of names in the *Tristia*, letters in which the addressees are not named. An excellent recent paper by Ellen Oliensis connects Ovid's withholding of the identities of his addressees – which she labels 'not only a feature but a theatrically pointed theme of the *Tristia*' – with the spectre of Augustus as a potential reader of the letters from exile who might be interested in 'hunting the pages of the *Tristia* for compromising information'.⁵⁹ The *Tristia*, after all, are written by a poet condemned by Augustus for his love elegies, and Oliensis comments that 'Ovid has ostentatiously written these poems as if they were liable to be read by informers, if not by the origin and end of informers, Augustus himself'.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ *ministra* as applied to Perilla has interesting connotations: it is picked up by Ovid's definition of himself as Perilla's *magister* (24), and 'servant' implies a reversal of the situation of Latin love elegy, where the male elegists appear as the slaves of women (for which topos, see e.g. R.O.A.M. Lyne, 'Servitium amoris', *CQ* 29 [1979], 117–30).

⁵⁷ For similar statements of Augustus' powerlessness over Ovid's mind and *ingenium* in the exile poetry, see S.J. Heyworth, 'Notes on Ovid's *Tristia*', *PCPhS* 41 (1995), 138–52. If, as I have suggested, Perilla is a *scripta puella*, and one of the purposes this fiction serves is to let Augustus know that Ovid's brand of erotic poetry still has influence and exponents in Rome, the question remains why Ovid invents a *female* poet to make this point. The answer, I suggest, may be twofold: firstly, Ovid continues the typical elegiac practice of constructing fictitious women who serve the male poet's own ends; secondly, as far as we can tell from Ovid's main defence of his erotic elegy, *Tristia* 2, the element of Ovid's teaching in the *Ars amatoria* which caused the greatest offence to Augustus was that it taught *women* how to love (see e.g. *Tr.* 2.243–58). Ovid's teaching of Perilla to follow in his poetic footsteps is therefore highly subversive.

⁵⁸ My quotation is taken from the Ovidian lines of verse with which Vladimir Nabokov closes his remarks on his concealment of proper names in his autobiography: 'To avoid hurting the living or distressing the dead, certain proper names have been changed. These are set off by quotation marks in the index ... Its presence will annoy the vulgar but may please the discerning, if only because "Through the window of that index | Climbs a rose | And sometimes a gentle wind *ex* | *Ponto* blows"' (V. Nabokov, 'Foreword', *Speak, Memory* [London, 1969], 12).

⁵⁹ E. Oliensis, 'Return to sender: the rhetoric of *nomina* in Ovid's *Tristia*', *Ramus* 26 (1997), 172–93, both at 177.

⁶⁰ Oliensis (n. 59), 177.

Nowhere does the issue of the *Tristia*'s capacity for revealing compromising information seem more important than in the case of the names and identities of contemporary authors of erotic poetry. Throughout *Tristia* 3.7, Ovid stresses the harm done to him by his verse: witness lines 7, 8, 9, 21–2, 27–8 and 53.⁶¹ The fate of Ovid's erotic poetry is inextricably linked with the atmosphere of fear surrounding the writing of verse that pervades the poem, as lines 21–30 repeatedly evoke the fears of Perilla that she might suffer the same fate as Ovid:

sed uereor ne te mea nunc fortuna retardet,
 postque meos casus sit tibi pectus iners.
 dum licuit, tua saepe mihi, tibi nostra legebam;
 saepe tuis iudex, saepe magister eram:
 aut ego praebebam factis modo uersibus aures, 25
 aut, ubi cessares, causa ruboris eram.
 forsitan exemplo quo me laesere libelli,
 tu metuis poenae fata secunda meae.
 pone, Perilla, metum; tantummodo femina nulla
 neue uir a scriptis discat amare tuis. 30

In the light of Ovid's terrible downfall, poets must avoid writing the sort of poetry that might bring them to the attention of Augustus.⁶² The invented figure of Perilla therefore allows Ovid to comment upon the fear felt by writers and readers in Rome after the punishment of his *Ars amatoria*.⁶³

The connection of the writing of erotic poetry with an atmosphere of fear and Augustan disgrace is not a feature peculiar to *Tristia* 3.7; it looks back to *Tristia* 2, where, at the end of a long catalogue of authors who had provided Ovid with precedents for his own erotic poetry,⁶⁴ Ovid pointedly withholds the names of any distinguished living exponents of the literature of passion, thereby managing to avoid implicating others who might be punished for the same 'crime':

his ego successi – quoniam praestantia candor
 nomina uiuorum dissimulare iubet.⁶⁵ (Tr. 2.467–8)

⁶¹ See *uiuere me dices, sed sic, ut uiuere nolim* (7) and *mala ... nostra* (8) of Ovid's current exilic plight, which he stresses has been caused by his poetry (*Musas ... nocuere*, 9); Ovid returns to the disaster of his banishment with *mea ... fortuna* (21) and *meos casus* (22), spelling out that his verse was to blame at 27–8 (*me laesere libelli ... | poenae ... meae*); finally, the penultimate line of the poem repeats Ovid's point that his poetic pursuits have not turned out well (*quam studii maneat felicius usus*, 53).

⁶² I do not mean to suggest that Ovid's portrait of Rome as beset by censorship and fear is necessarily accurate, although there is some support for the accuracy of this picture in Prop. 4.10 (for which, see n. 50), Dio Cass. 53.19.3–4 (on the change that took place in public affairs in Rome in 27 B.C., and the consequent silence and concealment), and (perhaps) the fact that no love poetry survives from the late Augustan period (despite Ovid's claim at *Pont.* 4.16 that there are several writers working on erotic themes).

⁶³ Cf. e.g. Ovid's imagined scenes of the disgraced books of the *Ars amatoria* hiding themselves (Tr. 1.1.109–12), and of a reader who will read *Tristia* 1 and keep his wishes for Augustus' leniency quiet (Tr. 1.1.29–30 *et tacitus secum, ne quis malus audiat, optet, | sit mea lenito Caesare poena levis*).

⁶⁴ The catalogue of Tr. 2.363–468 is introduced with *denique composui teneros non solus amores: | composito poenas solus amore dedi* (361–2).

⁶⁵ Although the exclusion of living authors from literary 'canons' is conventional (see e.g. Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.54 and Vell. Pat. 2.36.3 *nam uiuorum ut magna admiratio, ita censura difficilis est*), Ovid's *candor* (467), or 'loyalty', towards his fellow poets lies in suppressing their names,

This concealment of the identities of living erotic authors can be contrasted with the way in which Ovid virtually ‘informs’ on those who are safely dead, accusing them of having anticipated him in writing the sort of poetry that constitutes an offence against Augustus’ social legislation:⁶⁶

credere iuranti durum putat esse Tibullus,
 sic etiam de se quod neget illa uiro.
 fallere custodes idem docuisse fatetur,
 seque sua miserum nunc ait arte premi. (*Tristia* 2.447–50)

Ovid may tendentiously spell out the way in which Tibullus had anticipated his own *Ars amatoria*’s alleged offence here (note particularly the didactic *docuisse*, the legalistic *fatetur* – which suggests that Tibullus had committed a crime that he had to confess – and, above all, *arte*, which most obviously evokes the title of Ovid’s offensive book), but a few poems before *Tristia* 3.7, Ovid states categorically that he will not act in his verse as an *index*, an informer who will bring unwelcome attention to his friends by revealing their true identities.⁶⁷ Witness 3.4.63–72:

uos quoque pectoribus nostris haeretis, amici,
 dicere quos cupio nomine quemque suo.
 sed timor officium cautus compescit, et ipsos
 in nostro poni carmine nolle puto.
 ante uolebatis, gratique erat instar honoris,
 uersibus in nostris nomina uestra legi.
 quod quoniam est anceps, intra mea pectora quemque
 adloquar, et nulli causa timoris ero. 70
 nec meus indicio latitantes uersus amicos
 protrahit. occulte, siquis amabit, amet.

This final sentence is open to the sort of double meaning familiar to readers of Ovid’s exile poetry. On the most obvious level, Ovid refers to the concealment of his friends’ affection for him. Yet, set in the broader context of Ovid’s corpus, *siquis amabit, amet* recalls the opening couplet of Ovid’s offensive *Ars amatoria*: *Siquis in hoc artem populo non nouit amandi | hoc legat, et lecto carmine doctus amet* (*Ars* 1.1–2). Recall of these loaded words suggests that erotic poetry along the lines of the *Ars* is what is at issue here, and that Ovid therefore alludes to

and so protecting them from both the envy that attends successful living writers (for which, see e.g. Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.86–9; since this notion had featured in an earlier letter to Augustus, there is no need to explicitly state this common idea in *Tristia* 2, but the fact that it is unstated authorizes readers to ponder other reasons why concealing their names is loyal), and also punishment of their erotic work.

⁶⁶ For Ovid acting as an informer on Tibullus here, see A. Barchiesi, ‘Insegnare ad Augusto: Orazio, Epistole 2.1 e Ovidio, *Tristia* II’, *MD* 31 (1993), 149–84, at 171–3 (reprinted as ‘Teaching Augustus through allusion’, in A. Barchiesi, *Speaking Volumes* [London, 2001], 79–103, at 95–6).

⁶⁷ The *index* was a very Augustan figure, given that Augustus’ *lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis* encouraged informers: husbands were obliged by law to take action against their adulterous wives (failure to do so made them accessories, guilty of *lenocinium*), and parties outside the marriage could also prosecute adulterous wives: see J.F. Gardner, *Women in Roman Law and Society* (London and Sydney, 1986), 127–32, S. Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian* (Oxford, 1991), 262–99. J. Booth, ‘Aspects of Ovid’s language’, *ANRW* 2.31.4 (1981), 2686–700, at 2695 notes that Ovid invented the elegiac role of the *index* who reports the lover’s infidelities to the beloved.

concealing the identities of friends who are his fellow poets and who must love – that is, write love poetry (cf. e.g. *Amores* 1.1 for the connection of these two activities) – in secret after Ovid's downfall.

It is hard not to connect Ovid's insistence here on his refusal to act as an informer with his creation in *Perilla* of a *scripta puella*, a fictional poet who appears under an invented name, who represents the covert survival of Ovid's erotic programme in defiance of Augustus and who, crucially, cannot easily be identified with any living individual. 'Perilla' thus serves to comment – without the potential danger inherent in an address to an actual, named living exponent of erotic verse in Rome – on the restrictions on poetic free speech in the Late Augustan principate which Ovid appears to proclaim at the end of the *Metamorphoses*.⁶⁸ In his creation of *Perilla*, therefore, Ovid has taken the political implications of the *scripta puella* of Latin love elegy a characteristic step further.

Durham University

JENNIFER INGLEHEART
jennifer.ingleheart@durham.ac.uk

⁶⁸ See *Met.* 15.871–2 (*iamque opus exegi, quod nec Iouis ira nec ignes | nec poterit ferrum nec edax abolere uetustas*) with D. Kovacs, 'Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.2', *CQ* 37 (1987), 458–65, at 463 for *nec Iouis ira nec ignes* as an allusion to Augustus' wrath as he banished Ovid for his *carmen et error* and for the coda to the *Met.* (871–9) as a post-exilic addition.

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