STATUS	TYPE	OCLC #	
Submitted	Copy	5215204	
SOURCE	REQUEST DATE	NEED BEFORE	
ILLiad	06/12/2014	07/12/2014	
BORROWER	RECEIVE DATE		DUE DATE
VZS	JUN 13 2014		
LENDERS			
VA@, *ZAP, CLU, CUY, NDD			

BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

LOCAL ID			
AUTHOR		ARTICLE AUTHOR	Holzberg, Niklas
TITLE	Lampas.	ARTICLE TITLE	Playing with His Life: Ovid's 'Autobiographical' References
IMPRINT	[Muiderberg, Netherlands : Dick Coutinho	FORMAT	Serial
		EDITION	
ISSN	0165-8204	VOLUME	30
		NUMBER	?
		DATE	1997
		PAGES	4–19

INTERLIBRARY LOAN INFORMATION

ALERT		AFFILIATION	SUNY/OCLC, Oberlin Grp., LVIS
VERIFIED	<TN:130210><ODYSSEY:141.222.4.99/ILL> OCLC	COPYRIGHT	US:CCL
MAX COST	OCLC IFM - 25.00 USD		
LEND CHARGES		SHIPPED DATE	
LEND RESTRICTIONS		FAX NUMBER	(518)580-5540
		EMAIL	ILLDESK@skidmore.edu

BORROWER NOTES SUNY/OCLC Deposit Account# w/ UMI:D#800108
Oberlin Grp. Mem/CANNOT PAY INVOICE WITHOUT COPY OF REQUEST
We do charge those that charge us. (maxCost: 25.00)

ODYSSEY	141.222.4.99/ILL
ARIEL FTP	
ARIEL EMAIL	

BILL TO INTERLIBRARY LOAN
SKIDMORE COLLEGE LIBRARY
815 NORTH BROADWAY
SARATOGA SPRINGS, NY, US 12866

SHIPPING INFORMATION

SHIP VIA Fastest at no cost
SHIP TO INTERLIBRARY LOAN
SKIDMORE COLLEGE LIBRARY
815 NORTH BROADWAY
SARATOGA SPRINGS, NY, US 12866
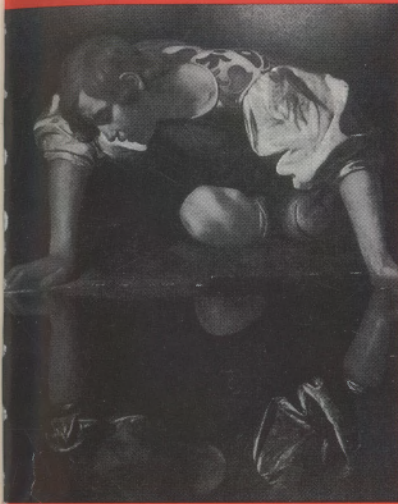
RETURN VIA
RETURN TO

B 5 355 853

DTD/ Ariel
NRLF Access Services
Date 6/16/14
Initials NN
PS C
Pages 9

VZS

themanummer: ovidius

LAMPAS

Ovid's 'Autobiographical' References[1]

N. Holzberg

We are told again and again that, of all Roman poets, Ovid is the one whose biography is by far the best known to us[2]. What we think we know is, in point of fact, drawn almost exclusively from references made by the first-person speaker in Ovid's works. Two other sources offer only the following information. Firstly, the manuscripts include in the titles the author's full name, Publius Ovidius Naso (whereas in the texts themselves only the one that is metrically convenient appears - Naso). Secondly, Seneca the Elder, who met Ovid personally when the latter was a student of rhetoric, reminisces more than half a century later in his *Controversiae* about the young man's particular leanings within the discipline that was to be so important for his writings[3]. These 'memoirs' are, however, of dubious historical value. In the years since the two men's encounter, Seneca has become acquainted with Ovid's now famous works and is clearly pro-, or rather retrojecting the opinion he has of them into his account of the poet's early rhetorical exercises; he even offers an example of these (*Contr.* 1.2.8). This is the deductive method typical of ancient biography: 'Just as the Twig is bent, the Tree's inclin'd'. It is, of course, the tree that Seneca is looking at here.

Now, are the details which Ovid himself, speaking in the first person, gives us any more reliable? Most of them are indeed presented in a text which is commonly labelled 'autobiography', in the poem *Tristia* 4.10. However, recent analyses of Ovid's works have made it increasingly clear that we would be well advised to differentiate between the person talking in the poems and the person of the poet himself. We must, 1 think, now acknowledge that Ovid actually takes on a different rôle in each of his works (and in his erotic elegies there is even 'method' in it[4]). In the *Amores* he is the *poeta/amator*, in the *Epistulae Heroidum* he embodies each of the mythical female (and male) letter-writers, in the *Ars Amatoria* and the *Remedia Amoris* he is the experienced *praeceptor amoris*, in the *Metamorphoses* a *mythologus*[5], in the *Fasti* an *antiquarius*[6], and in the exile poems the *relegatus*[7]. Yes, the banished poet is a *persona* too, as is, therefore, even the speaker in the 'autobiography'.

Before we turn to this particular text, let us take a look at one of those 'autobiographical' references that are scattered over Ovid's entire oeuvre (with the exception, of course, of the *Epistulae Heroidum*). It will provide us with a first demonstration of how even in such seemingly personal moments the literary game of playing rôles is continued. The example in question is *Ex Ponto* 2.10, an elegy in the form of an epistle from the *relegatus* to the epic poet Macer, who had already been the addressee of an erotic elegy, *Amores* 2.18. In both cases Ovid uses the *personae* of the epic poet and the first-person elegiac poet to confront the 'grand' with the 'little' genre, a variation then on the theme of *recusatio*. In *Ex Ponto* 2.10 this comprises recollections of a journey the two friends had undertaken together at some point in the past. First they had toured the *magnificas Asiae urbes*, with Macer acting as guide here. Then, again with Macer as guide, they had travelled to Sicily and, once there, to Etna and the flame-belching giant buried beneath. Crossing the island, they had seen Henna, the pools of Palicus and the rivers linked with the mythical names Anapus, Cyane, Alpheus and Arethusa. Two modes of transport are mentioned (33f.):

1.   Originally a paper given at the 1996 Euroclassica Teachers' Conference in Nijmegen, later also at the Universities of Innsbruck, Göttingen, Mannheim, Florence, Verona, Udine, Swansea, Birmingham and Keele, now supplemented with footnotes. The English text is largely a revised version of two sections from the second chapter of my book *Ovid: Dichter und Werk*, published in 1997 by the Verlag C.H. Beck in Munich.

2.   A.L. Wheeler, 'Topics from the Life of Ovid', *AJPh* 46 (1925), 1-28, 1; H. Fränkel, *Ovid: A Poet Between Two Worlds* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, 1945), 4; Ovid, *The Erotic Poems*. Transl. with an Introd. & Notes by P. Green (Harmondsworth, 1982), 15. E. Lefèvre, *RhM* 123 (1980), 158 is even able to 'peek into the Black Sea workshop of the resigned poet'.

3.   Cf. esp. Fränkel 6-8; J.T. Davis, *Fictus Adulter: Poet as Actor in the Amores* (Amsterdam, 1989), 15-28; S. Döpp, *Werke Ovids: Eine Einführung* (Munich, 1992), 24-8.

4.   The poet transforms himself from the *poeta/amator* in the *Amores* fifteen times into a *puella* in the *Heroides* (and in 15 even into a *poetria/puella*), and in *Ars amatoria* and *Remedia amoris* into the experienced teacher of both *amator* and *puella*. On the *persona* of the *Amores* cf. esp. B.M. Gauly, *Liebeserfahrungen: Zur Rolle des elegischen Ich in Ovids Amores*, Studien zur klassischen Philologie, 48 (Frankfurt, 1990), 24-8 (who differentiates perhaps unnecessarily between several *ego*'s), on that of the *Ars* G. Wellmann-Bretzigheimer, 'Ovids 'ars amatoria'', in: H.G. Rötzer/H. Walz (edd.), *Europäische Lehrdichtung: Festschrift für W. Naumann* (Darmstadt, 1981), 1-32, 4-7.

5.   On the *persona* of the narrator of the *Metamorphoses* cf. esp. F. Graf, 'Ovide, les Métamorphoses et la véracité du mythe', in: C. Calame (ed.), *Métamorphoses du mythe en Grèce antique* (Geneva, 1988), 57-70, 62-7.

6.   C.E. Newlands, 'Ovid's Narrator in the *Fasti*', *Arethusa* 25 (1992), 33-54; id., *Playing with Time: Ovid and the Fasti*, Cornell Studies in Classical Philology, 55 (Ithaca/London, 1995), 51 ff.

7.   G. Bretzigheimer, 'Exul ludens: Zur Rolle von *relegans* und *relegatus* in Ovids Tristien', *Gymnasium* 98 (1991), 39-76, 40.

seu rate caeruleas picta sulcauimus undas,

  esseda nos agili siue tulere rota.

(Either we ploughed in a painted boat through the blue waves, or a carriage took us with swift wheel.)

A journey leaving no sight unseen, but one that could, considered more closely, also prove to be a literary journey, or perhaps even solely that, as Gareth Williams has shown in his 'Banished Voices'[8]. With Macer acting as cicerone in the cities of Asia Minor - presumably in Troy too, then - and on the way to Sicily, where fiery Etna is the first port of call, it is therefore the world of the *Iliad*, of the *Aeneid* (in which the hero also lands in Sicily and goes to Etna) and of a Gigantomachy that falls to the epic poet's lot. The other stops on the island, which, like Macer's part, take up four verses (21-24/25-28) belong to Ovid's poetical territory: they are mentioned in the same order in Book 5 of the *Metamorphoses*, in the story of the abduction of Persephone. Likewise the transport. Not only is travelling by ship and chaise a metaphor which Augustan poets liked to use for the joint trip of author and reader through a poem[9], but the vehicles named here - in a distich with one line for each - also stand specifically for 'grand' and 'little' poetry. The 'painted' vessel of the hexameter, ploughing through the waves, has sister ships in Virgil's *Aeneid* (e.g. in 5.158 or 663), and an *esseda* is the same type of carriage that takes Cynthia to Tibur in Propertius (2.32.5) and would take the *puella* to Sulmo in Ovid's *Amores* (2.16.49).

Who could say now whether the literary journey was also one actually undertaken by the poets, and if it was, then when? Naturally, it is all quite feasible. However, for the poet the intertextuality of his verses is clearly more important than their 'autobiographical' content, which he could easily have presented in a more simple and precise form. Whatever the case may be, it is definitely carrying things too far when attempts are made to pinpoint the date of the trip - it must have been in Ovid's younger days, of course[10] - in order then to describe its significance for the poet's life in, for example, the following terms: 'He returned home with a treasure-trove of impressions locked in his

faithful memory, with which he was to sustain the wonderful graphic power of his poetry'[11].

This instance demonstrates the need for extreme caution in the evaluation of any autobiographical references made by a poet whose game of literary and other contexts also includes playing even 'with his life'. In any case, Ovid and other ancient authors often signal that the world of the poetic 'I' is not necessarily that of the poet himself[12]. The oldest such suggestion known to us is actually found as early as Catullus, who tells the two addressees of his *Carmen* 16 that they should not conclude from the obscenity of his poems that he himself is not quite *castus*. Even in antiquity, then, readers of poetry could not automatically assume that the *ego* speaking in a poem was identical with the poet himself[13]. And when reading *Tristia* 4.10 we too must naturally consider very carefully which of the particulars about Ovid's *vita* offered there can be rated as historical facts and which look suspiciously like stylized literary usage[14].

Let us for the moment just recapitulate those biographical details gleaned from *Tristia* 4.10 and elsewhere in Ovid's writings that stand unshaken even in the face of the gravest doubts as to their historicity[15]! The poet was born on March 20th, 43 B.C. in the Paelignian town of Sulmo. His family, landed gentry, was very old and in Rome they had equestrian rank. Ovid and his brother, who was exactly one year older and who died young, studied together in Rome under several outstanding rhetoricians. After completing his legal training Ovid seems to have had the option of embarking upon a senatorial *cursus*, which indicates that he was wealthy. His financial means were certainly ample enough to allow him to reject any thought of a political or military career. At the age of about twenty, after holding various minor administrative positions in Rome (exactly which can no longer be ascertained) and just before reaching the quaestorship stage, Ovid dropped out, and could from then on devote himself entirely to his poetry. He led a carefree life in the capital, in constant discourse with his fellow-writers and his audience, until one autumn, probably that of the year 8 A.D. - his parents were already dead, he himself was living with his third wife and his only child, a daughter, had two children from two husbands - he was banished for life by Augustus to Tomi in the Dobridja on the Black Sea. He was, however, permitted to keep his citizenship and his

8.　　G.D. Williams, *Banished Voices: Readings in Ovid's Exile Poetry* (Cambridge, 1994), 42-8.

9.　　G. Lieberg, 'Seefahrt und Werk: Untersuchungen zu einer Metapher, besonders der lateinischen Literatur', *GIF* 21 (1969), 209-40; T. Heydenreich, *Tadel und Lob der Seefahrt: Das Nachleben eines antiken Themas in der romanischen Literatur*, Studien zum Fortwirken der Antike, 5 (Heidelberg, 1970), 59-61.

10.　　After a 'period of studying' in Athens (set forth in florid detail by, for example, W. Kraus, 'Ovidius Naso', in M. v. Albrecht/E. Zinn [edd.], *Ovid*, Wege der Forschung, 92 [Darmstadt, 1968], 67-166, 69), a deduction based on *Trist.* 1.2.77. It ought to be considered that this is a priamel with a clear allusion to Prop. 1.6.13ff. (cf. 3.2.1).

11.　　Kraus 69.

12.　　Cat. 16.5f.; Ov. *Trist.* 1.9.59f.; 2.353-56; 4.10.68; *Pont.* 2.7.47-50; Mart. 1.4.8; 11.15.13; Plin. *Epist.* 4.14.4f.; Apul. *Apol.* 11.

13.　　Cf. esp. B. Feichtinger, 'Poetische Fiktion bei Properz', *GB* 16 (1989), 143-82, 143-54.

14.　　Cf. esp. B.R. Fredericks, '*Tristia* 4.10: Poet's Autobiography and Poetic Autobiography', *TAPA* 106 (1976), 139-54; J. Fairweather, 'Ovid's Autobiographical Poem', *CQ* 37 (1987), 181-96.

15.　　All relevant passages conveniently collected in Wheeler and Kraus.

N. Holzberg

Playing with His Life. Ovid's 'Autobiographical' References

property, banishment in his case taking the mild form of *relegatio*. He published several poetic works there - this too he was apparently still allowed to do - but in spite of his repeated appeals to the emperor for forgiveness, neither Augustus nor his successor Tiberius pardoned Ovid. He probably died in exile, perhaps soon after completing the fourth book of his *Ex Ponto*, which can be dated some time after 16/17 A.D. This then the *curriculum vitae*; we shall come to the dating of his works later.

This is meagre indeed. So meagre that, if anyone actually wanted to interpret Ovid's works biographically, it could no more provide the basis for such an approach than could the known facts about other Roman poets. But what about the remaining 'autobiographical' references in *Tristia* 4.10? My decidedly cautious evaluation of such material in the elegy means that I would class, for example, the passage in which we are told that Ovid's father often declared his son's first poetic ventures void of prospects (21f.), as freehand improvisation to add colour to the 'autobiography'. And similarly the first public recitation of *Amores* poems by the poet, then a mere eighteen years old or thereabouts (57f.). Is this a fair assessment? And what about the picture of life in Tomi painted by the *relegatus* in this and other exile poems? Is it too of only very limited historical value?

The credibility of Ovid's 'autobiographical' sketches of his experiences as an exile on the Black Sea is not something I need delve into in great depth here, since it has recently been the subject of several studies[16]. Suffice it to say that the impression created by the speaker in the *Tristia* and the *Ex Ponto*, who endures ills such as almost perpetual icy winters, a life in the society of the most primitive barbarians and the constant threat of the Scythian hordes attacking Tomi with their poisoned arrows, is in complete contradiction to the very convincing findings of modern studies on Black Sea history in ancient times. Ovid's descriptions of the region and people are not based on his own experiences there, but drawn from literary sources such as the Scythian passage in Virgil's *Georgica* (3.349ff.). And as for the personal lot of the exile - its depiction gives us a new, playful variation of the 'elegiac system' developed by Gallus, Propertius and Tibullus. Here too we have, for example, a paraclausithyron situation: the *relegatus*, like the elegiac lover lying before the door, is denied entry to a better existence, in this case life in a more pleasant place of exile[17].

But back to the so-called 'autobiography' *Tristia* 4.10! This carefully composed elegy is, in terms of form and content, calculated to bring out certain antitheses in bold relief. The most important of these are the contrasting pairs 'carefree youth in Rome/wretched old age in exile' and 'political career/poetic *far niente*'. In the outer structure Ovid expresses this by using for his 'autobiography' the compositional pattern found in Greek encomia from the 4th century B.C. and then later again in encomia-influenced Latin biographies. The traditional tripartite arrangement, for us first perceptible in Nepos' vita of Atticus[18], next in Tacitus' *Agricola*[19] and then regularly in Suetonius' *Caesars*, looks in the latter of these authors something like this: a relatively short Part One describes more or less chronologically the life of the later emperor up to the point where he assumes office; Part Two, which forms a broad centrepiece, deals under various rubrics with the individual virtues (and/or vices) and deeds of the emperor; Part Three, again shorter and again for the most part chronological, gives an account of the emperor's final days[20].

In Ovid, Part One takes up 40 verses and ends with the exile telling us, after a chronological account of the first twenty years of his life, that, instead of striving to become a senator, he let the Muses talk him into a life of *otia*. Thus he names here his way of 'assuming office', and it corresponds exactly to the alternative life chosen by the elegiac *poeta/amator* in Propertius and Tibullus. In the slightly longer centrepiece (41-90) there then follow two sections of almost equal length in which the remaining details of the exile's life are presented under various rubrics. In verses 41-64 he lists the Roman poets famous in his youth, some of whom he knew personally, and appoints himself Benjamin of their number at the end. In verses 65-90 he talks first about his three wives - what a rubric this! - about his daughter and two grandchildren, and then about the death of his parents. Part Three finally (91-132), which has roughly the same length as Part One, deals with his 'final days' in so far as the now - in his own words - grey-haired exile, after a chronological account of his sufferings to date in banishment, declares proudly that his Muse, his constant comforter, has

16. Cf. esp. J.-M. Claassen, 'Ovid's Poetic Pontus', *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar* 6 (1990), 65-94; Williams 6ff.; B. Chwalek, *Die Verwandlung des Exils in die elegische Welt: Studien zu den Tristia und Epistulae ex Ponto Ovids*, Studien zur klassischen Philologie, 96 (Frankfurt, 1996), 32-64.

17. On the transformations of elegiac motifs in *Tristia* and *Ex Ponto* cf. esp. B. Nagle, *The Poetics of Exile: Program and Polemic in the Tristia and Epistulae ex Ponto of Ovid*, Collection Latomus, 170 (Brussels, 1980); Williams; Holzberg, *Ovid*, 181ff.

18. Cf. N. Holzberg, 'Enkomionstruktur und Reflexe spätrepublikanischer Realität in der Atticus-Vita des Cornelius Nepos', in: P. Neukam (ed.), *Anschauung und Anschaulichkeit*, Dialog Schule - Wissenschaft, Klassische Sprachen und Literaturen, 29 (Munich, 1995), 29-43.

19. Here significantly the place of the set of rubrics in the middle section is taken by an account of Agricola's exploits in Britain in the style of a historical monograph.

20. Comparable also is, besides the structure of Pliny the Younger's *Panegyricus* on Trajan (where, of course, Part Three is missing), that of Augustus' *Res Gestae*. Perhaps Ovid knew an earlier version of this latter? That would also explain why in *Trist.* 4.10 he evidently includes some details for the sake of the analogy to Augustus (the year 43, equestrian rank, three wives, one daughter; cf. Fairweather 193ff.).

N. Holzberg

Playing with His Life. Ovid's 'Autobiographical' References

already granted him the kind of fame normally only attained after death (121f.)[21].

The *relegatus*, then, paints a picture of himself as, on the one hand, a man tormented day and night since his enforced departure from Rome - and we have just seen briefly above that the author, given his real-life situation in Tomi, is laying it on thick here. On the other hand, he would also have himself seen as an 'elder poet', already immortal in his own day. It seems quite evident to me that when thus carving his own niche in the hall of fame, which is clearly what Ovid intended to do in *Tristia* 4.10, the author also needed to sculpt the portrayal of himself as a young poet accordingly. There, in complete contrast to the old man in exile, he presents himself as a typical elegiac poet with all the freshness of youth. As such he first distances himself expressly from the world of *negotium*, represented by his father and brother. In verses 17-20 the brother's early liking for the *fortia arma fori* are compared with his own poetic inclinations, then follows the passage about his father. Who is not automatically reminded here of the famous opening situation in *Amores* 1.1, where the *poeta* about to write of *arma* and *violenta bella* is prevented from doing so by Amor and is thus reprogrammed to become first an elegiac poet and then an *amator*?

The poetic 'I' of *Tristia* 4.10 is, so he tells us, persuaded by the Muses to write elegies. And when he then gives a public reading of his first poems, he naturally cannot be young enough to contrast with the sorely tried grey-headed poet. Only if we fail to recognize the deliberate antithesis here can we read that his beard had, as the exiled poet recalls, at the time of this recital been trimmed only twice at the most, and take this so literally as to calculate on the basis of ancient shaving practices - as described in a handbook - that this all took place in the year 25 B.C. and that therefore Ovid's work on the *Amores* dates from thence. The author's game with the elegiac system is such a strong element in this text too that the poem cannot simply be regarded as a data bank for historical reconstructions of a biography.

Let us just have a look at the *Amores* and see whether the work itself can give us any idea when and under what circumstances it was written. In the introductory epigram the three elegy books even talk to us personally, declaring:

> *Qui modo Nasonis fueramus quinque libelli,*
>   *tres sumus; hoc illi praetulit auctor opus.*
> *ut iam nulla tibi nos sit legisse uoluptas,*
>   *at leuior demptis poena duobus erit.*
> (We who only recently were still five books of Naso are now three; the author has chosen this opus rather than that other. Since reading us is no fun for you anyway, with two of us removed the punishment will at least be lighter.)

Scholars are unanimous in their interpretation of these words: Ovid, they say, indicates here that the text following is the 'second edition' of the *Amores*, which, having originally been published in five books, is now reduced to three[22]. As to the approximate date of publication for this lost 'first edition', here the conclusions differ. Attempts to reconstruct it - and up until quite recently there have been almost as many of these as there have been interpretations of the existing texts - have not come up with a reliable answer on this point. The poem *Amores* 1.14 with its allusions to the Romans' capture of Sygambri (45-50) would seem to fit nicely into the time around 15 B.C. If it can be assigned to the 'first edition', then that would be an approximate publication date. If not, an earlier date would have to be assumed, but for those who read the passage in *Tristia* 4.10 discussed above as historical information, then not before 25 B.C.

The 'second edition', the *Amores* in its extant form, is generally dated to some time around the birth of Christ. A reference in the *Ars Amatoria* permits the assumption that this work was published not long after the first half of the year 1 B.C.[23], and the majority of scholars believe that the *Ars* itself is mentioned in *Amores* 2.18[24]. This elegy begins with the speaker giving the epic poet Macer his reason for continuing to write, unlike his friend, short poems, the reason being that his (repeated) attempt to leave his *puella* has failed. A failure too has been the outcome of his effort to change to 'grand' poetry. The *poeta/amator* describes this venture as follows:

> *sceptra tamen sumpsi curaque tragoedia nostra*
>   *creuit, et huic operi quamlibet aptus eram.*
> *risit Amor pallamque meam pictosque cothurnos*
>   *sceptraque priuata tam cito sumpta manu;*
> *hinc quoque me dominae numen deduxit iniquae,*
>   *deque cothurnato uate triumphat Amor.*
> *quod licet, aut artes teneri profitemur Amoris*

---

21. *Musa* in 20 and 117 underlines the contrast and the correspondence between Parts One and Three.

22. *Sic et* Holzberg, *Die römische Liebeselegie: Eine Einführung* (Darmstadt, 1990), 88. Of all the countless studies on the chronology of the early works I should like to pick out only A. Cameron, 'The First Edition of Ovid's *Amores*', *CQ* 18 (1968), 320-33; H. Jacobson, *Ovid's Heroides* (Princeton, N.J., 1974), 300-18; R. Syme, *History in Ovid* (Oxford, 1978), 1-20; A. Primmer, 'Datierungs- und Entwicklungsfragen bei Vergil und Ovid', *WSt* 16 (1982), 245-59; J.C. McKeown, *Ovid: Amores. I: Text and Prolegomena* (Leeds, 1987), 74-89. A trace at least of doubt as to the second edition theory can to my knowledge so far only be found in G.P. Goold, *ICS* 8 (1983), 97f. But see the forthcoming *AJAH* article by A. Barchiesi, 'Ovid the Censor', which the author kindly sent to me after I had completed my book on Ovid.

23. Kraus 99. Syme 13-5 presents here too his case for a second edition. His arguments are as hard to swallow as many parts of his book, which completely ignores the literary character of Ovid's work.

24. 2.18.19f. is taken to refer to the *Amores* by, for example, Fränkel 175 n. 4 and Cameron 331f.

(ei mihi, praeceptis urgeor ipse meis!),

aut quod Penelopes uerbis reddatur Vlixi

  scribimus et lacrimas, Phylli relicta, tuas, (...)

(Still, I took up the sceptre and through my effort a tragedy grew and I was not even that unsuited to the task. Amor laughed at my cloak, brightly coloured buskin and the sceptre which I had so lightly taken into my layman's hand; from here too the divine power of my unfair mistress brought me down and Amor triumphed over the sublime tragedian. What I may do is either tell of the arts of tender Amor (woe is me, I am getting tangled in my own teachings) or write of what Odysseus is told in Penelope's words, or of your tears, abandoned Phyllis.)

The last distich here is an allusion to the *Epistulae Heroidum* 1 and 2. There follow further allusions to the *Epistulae* 5, 11, 6, 10, 4, 7 and 15, then a brief account of the answers penned by one Sabinus to six of these letters; finally, the speaker suggests that Macer too likes to join the 'camp' of the elegiac world.

So the speaker was not able to change to the 'grand' genre tragedy either and now just continues to do what is sanctioned: either he teaches the *artes Amoris*, but sees himself then ensnared in his own teachings, or he writes letters from mythical women, of which he has, apparently, already produced nine. Now, the words *artes Amoris* and *praecepta* are interpreted by most scholars as an allusion to the *Ars Amatoria*, which must, in that case, already have existed. In my view, however, this distich refers both within the elegy 2.18 and in the poem's wider context to the *Amores*. As current analyses of this collection are making ever clearer, the elegies are meant to be read, in the order we know, as an 'erotic novel'[25]. And within the plot of this 'novel' the wail let out by the *poeta/amator*, which is not a word in the ear of literary historians, but as so often, a genuine outburst on the part of the fictional 'I', is entirely appropriate to the given situation.

I can hardly present here a complete structural analysis of the *Amores*, but I can outline briefly what I mean. The 'erotic novel' begins in the first elegies of Book 1 with the *poeta/amator* vowing fidelity to his *puella*, but indicating at the same time that he is by nature polygamous (1.3[26]). He encourages the *puella* to be unfaithful too, teaching her ways to deceive her *vir* (1.4). But once she has slept with him (1.5), he on the one hand worries and is constantly on his guard lest she deceive him - he talks about this in several elegies in Book 1 (especially 6, 7, 8, 10; 14 must also be included here). On the other hand, he himself soon begins to show an interest in other women; the first mention of

this is in 2.2. But then he finds out that the *puella* has used what he taught her in 1.4 against him, and from then on he has a number of unpleasant experiences with her. She has an abortion, for example, and the *poeta/amator* does not even know who would have been the father (2.13/14). There apparently follows a period of separation (2.15 and 16), and this results in the *poeta/amator* remembering now the power of his poetic talents. He reminds the *puella* that his elegies can make her immortal (2.17), and he even tries to change to the 'grand' genre, tragedy. And when this fails, he realizes for the first time the full extent of the unfortunate situation he has brought upon himself with his earlier *praecepta* for the *puella* (2.18). He does try to snap out of it with a little infidelity of his own (2.19). At the same time, however, he cynically encourages the *vir* of the new *puella* and the new *puella* herself not to make his erotic successes too easy for him. It is the same old mistake again - meting out *praecepta* that can cut two ways. Realizing this, he lets out an aside (2.19.34):

ei mihi, ne monitis torquear ipse meis!

(Oh my, I only hope I won't suffer torture myself on account of my own teachings!)

Scholars taking the biographical approach to the *Amores* have always been bothered by the fact that elegy 2.18, a poetological-programmatical one, is followed by this primarily erotic poem, while Books 1 and 3 end each with a programmatical elegy. It should be obvious now, however, that there is method in this. For Ovid the story line of his 'erotic novel' is more important at this point than a Propertian structural principle, even if he does apply this in the traditional position in Books 1 and 3. The above-quoted verse provides furthermore a transition to the novel's 'continuation' in Book 3, where the *poeta/amator* will actually suffer 'torture', but this is not something we need pursue here. What we have seen so far ought to have made it clear why I believe that the much-debated *artes* distich 2.18.19f. refers to the *Amores* themselves.

If my interpretation is correct, then the extant text of the *Amores* must have been written before the *Ars*. This would fit in perfectly with the reference in Book 3 of the latter to both the *Amores* and the *Epistulae Heroidum* together (343-46)[27]. And I can now also throw doubt on the assertion that our *Amores* text is the 'second edition' of a work that had already seen a 'first edition'. What is this 'unabridged' version of the extant collection of elegies with its carefully designed narrative structure supposed to have looked like? Was it too an 'erotic novel', but with more episodes? For whom would the 'epitome' we

---

25.   See now esp. B. Zimmermann, 'Ille ego qui fuerim, tenerorum lusor amorum: Zur Poetik der Liebesdichtungen Ovids', in M. Picone/B. Zimmermann (edd.), *Ovidius redivivus: Von Ovid zu Dante* (Stuttgart, 1994), 1-21; M. Buchan, 'Ovidius Imperamator: Beginnings and Endings of Love Poems and Empire in the *Amores*', *Arethusa* 28 (1995), 53-85, and, in great detail, Holzberg, *Ovid*, 55ff.

26.   On the double entendres in 1.3 cf. E. Woytek, 'Die unlauteren Absichten eines Ehrenmannes (Zur Doppelbödigkeit von Ovid, Amores 1,3)', *WSt* 108 (1995), 417-38.

27.   The old theory according to which *Ars* 3 was published later than *Ars* 1/2 can be considered invalidated in the light of arguments to the contrary put forward by Wellmann-Bretzigheimer (n. 4), 3 n. 7, 7 and 14 and A.R. Sharrock, *Seduction and Repetition in Ovid's Ars Amatoria 2* (Oxford, 1994), 18-20.

N. Holzberg

Playing with His Life. Ovid's 'Autobiographical' References

now possess have been written - for impatient readers? But then the second distich of the epigram would have to be taken literally and not understood as it is quite clearly meant to be - ironically, that is.

I would interpret the two verses in which the reader is informed that his 'punishment' has been reduced from five to three books as a witty allusion to the famous words of Callimachus: 'great book, great evil'[28]. The new *poeta doctus*, publishing his first work in written form, wants to make it clear right from the start that he is, as it were, writing himself into the Alexandrian tradition with this book. And this he does by sifting through the vast quantity of compositions he has kept as groundwork on a number of papyrus rolls - we shall be asking directly why he names the number five - and compiling from these an opus that conforms to the standard set by the critic Callimachus. It is not hard to believe that in the years before publication of the *Amores*, when Ovid was giving the customary private and public readings from his manuscripts[29], he did indeed earn himself a reputation for being a *nimium amator ingenii sui* ('all too fond of his own talent'), as Quintilian was later to characterize him (*Inst. or.* 10.1.88). Well, now he could put critical readers' minds at rest, and herein lies the epigram's irony.

Why originally 'five' books? Perhaps we should bear in mind that about the same time as Ovid was publishing his *Amores*, around 15 B.C. then, or a little later, two of his great predecessors on the Roman poetry scene - Horace and Propertius - each published the fourth book of a collection of poems, and this in both cases after a conspicuous gap of several years between the appearance of the new book and the first three earlier ones[30]. Thus perhaps Ovid is alluding here to his two fellow-authors. If so, the epigram would once again have to be read ironically, with the talking books of the *Amores* declaring saucily: 'If our *auctor* had wanted, we would even have been one book longer than Horace's collected odes and Propertius' collected elegies now, and we would all have been published at one fell swoop to boot!'

It would seem, then, that the decades of debating about the chronology of Ovid's early works were much scholarly ado about nothing. The order of their composition, at any rate, now appears to be a very uncomplicated matter. Around 15 B.C. Ovid published the *Amores*; prior to this, over a period of time - exactly how long we cannot say - he read his erotic elegies to a variety of audiences, but then decided that not all of these poems were worthy of inclusion in the book which he now proposed to circulate, an 'erotic·novel'

passing muster as strictly Alexandrian. Before the first publication of his poetry 'in print', as it were, Ovid had already begun to write letters from mythical women and had presented some of them at readings[31]. This new variation of the genre 'elegy' apparently caused such a sensation that Sabinus immediately wrote the answering epistles mentioned in *Amores* 2.18[32]. The 'printed' version of the various letters from heroines appeared between 15 and 1 B.C. It now comprised a total of 15 elegies, probably divided into three books with five in each[33]. Some time after the first half of the year 1 B.C. there then followed the *Ars Amatoria* and the *Remedia Amoris*.

But what about the tragedy mentioned in *Amores* 2.18? Well, this attempt on the part of the poetic 'I' to write a work of 'grand' poetry was not the first. As he tells us in *Amores* 1.1, he had already tried his hand at an epic in the style of Virgil's *Aeneid*, but Amor had laughed at that, just as he would later laugh at the idea of a tragedy, and had put a stop to it. In 2.1 he talks about having started a Gigantomachy, but its completion had been prevented by the *puella*, who denied him her favours. Both of these passages are generally interpreted not as Ovid's own autobiographical references, but as variations on the *recusatio* theme, and it would seem logical to suppose that the same applies to the tragedy story. Here the ground is being prepared for the end of the *Amores*, where the elegiac poet eventually will actually be turning into a tragedian. And this is the very metamorphosis that the *poeta/amator* promises in 3.1 to the personified Tragedy, after she has been arguing with the personified Elegy over him.

The verses in 2.18 could, then, be interpreted as a further variation on the *recusatio* theme. Ovid's choice of tragedy as the 'grand' genre to which the *poeta/amator* turns at the end could simply have been his only option for this very effective scene with the two female personifications of the 'grand' and the 'little' genre: he could hardly have used epic, at least not without disregarding gender. All the same, we are told by Quintilian (*Inst. Or.* 8.5.6; 10.1.98) and Tacitus (*Dial.* 12) directly and indirectly by Seneca the Elder (*Suas.* 3.5) that Ovid wrote a *Medea* tragedy, and the two rhetoricians each even quote one verse from the work[34]. Was this drama really written by Ovid? This is a

---

28. Frg. 465 Pf.

29. On this 'probatory phase' see R. Starr, 'The Circulation of Literary Texts in the Roman World', *CQ* 37 (1987), 213-23.

30. *Odes* 4 is generally thought to have been published around 13 B.C., Propertius' fourth book not long after 16 B.C. Barchiesi (n. 22), on the other hand, points to Gallus, *Amores*, 1-4, 'the founding text of Roman elegy'.

31. This would be the simplest interpretation of *Am.* 2.18.21-6. All *Epistulae* not named here are now, almost as a general rule, regarded as spurious amongst Anglo-American scholars (cf. most recently P. Knox, *Ovid: Heroides: Select Epistles* [Cambridge, 1995], 5ff.), but this is to my mind a very dubious consequence of the biographical approach.

32. On the wittiness of Sabinus' literary design brilliantly K. Heldmann, 'Ovids Sabinus-Gedicht (Am. 2,18) und die 'Epistulae Heroidum'', *Hermes* 122 (1994), 188-219.

33. M. Pulbrook, 'The Original Published Form of Ovid's *Heroides*', *Hermathena* 122 (1987), 29-45; W. Stroh, 'Heroides Ovidianae cur epistulas scribant', in G. Papponetti (ed.), *Ovidio poeta della memoria: Atti del Convegno Internazionale di studi, Sulmona, 19-21 ottobre 1989* (Rome, 1991), 201-44.

34. On these verses in detail Döpp (n. 3), 71-4.

question that must certainly be asked, if only because the *relegatus* in the *Tristia* says (5.7.27f.):

> *nil equidem feci - tu scis hoc ipse - theatris,*
> *Musa nec in plausus ambitiosa mea est.*
> (I have certainly written nothing for the theatre - you yourself know this - nor is my Muse desirous of applause.)[35]

In *Tristia* 2, the letter to Augustus, however, the *relegatus* does try to prove what a serious poet he can be with the following (549-56):

> *sex ego Fastorum scripsi totidemque libellos,*
> *cumque suo finem mense libellus habet,*
> *idque tuo nuper scriptum sub nomine, Caesar,*
> *et tibi sacratum sors mea rupit opus;*
> *et dedimus tragicis scriptum regale cothurnis,*
> *quaeque grauis debet verba cothurnus habet;*
> *dictaque sunt nobis, quamuis manus ultima coeptis*
> *defuit, in facies corpora uersa nouas.*
> (Six books of *Fasti* I have written and as many again, and every roll ends with its own particular month; and this work too, just recently superscribed with your name, Caesar, and dedicated to you, has my fate interrupted; and I have given the buskins of tragedy a regal piece of writing, and the solemn buskin has the language owing to it; and sung by me were - although the finishing touches are lacking in this undertaking - the bodies turned into new forms.)

So, a drama after all. But is it not odd that the actual title *Medea* is not mentioned here either, and that the distich 553-4 is not particularly good poetry, the ugly repetition being but one reason for this[36]? Furthermore, it separates the *Fasti* from the *Metamorphoses*, the text alluded to in verses 555-6, and both are referred to as unfinished. Could it be possible that someone understood the *Amores* speaker's description of his transformation into a tragedian as an autobiographical account of Ovid's own development, and deemed it appropriate to insert this distich here? And could it even be possible that this someone (or another someone) felt that a tragedy was needed to go with the tragedian and so published a Medea drama under the name of Ovid? A tragedy, then, which Seneca the Elder, Quintilian and Tacitus presumed genuine, just as Pliny the Elder did not recognize the *Halieutica*, a text now generally considered spurious[37], as a Pseudo-Ovidianum? This latter didactic poem, the *Consolatio*

ad Liviam[38] and *Nux*[39] all show that in early imperial times there were already poets who could produce very exact imitations of Ovid[40]. And if *Medea* was a forgery, it was a clever one in the selection of its subject, as this very theme is treated frequently by Ovid, twice even at great length (*Epistulae Heroidum* 12[41]; *Metamorphoses* 7.1-403)[42].

Naturally we can only speculate here. However, in the middle of the generic transformation which Ovid so carefully planned and executed - from the *Amores* over the *Epistulae* to the *Ars* and *Remedia* - a work of 'grand' poetry does seem downright out of place. Earlier interpreters of Ovid were quite happy with this development of his from elegiac poet to tragedian, as documented for them in *Amores* 2.18, 3.1 and 15, and they credited the author with having undergone a very laudable process of artistic maturing. Walther Kraus, for example, observed: 'Ovid is the typical precocious heir to an already fully developed art, writing verse before really living himself. Deeper quality needs time to emerge'[43]. In 1982 E.J. Kenney remarked on *Amores* 3.15.17f., where the *poeta/amator* announces his final changeover to the 'grand' genre: 'in retrospect it will be seen chiefly as having been a stepping-stone to higher things'[44]. In 1974 Howard Jacobsen had even declared: 'The loss of his tragedy *Medea* is likely one of the most significant gaps in our treasure of works from antiquity and is but scarcely repaired by the relatively extensive treatments of Medea in the *Heroides* and *Metamorphoses* and the numerous allusions to her in virtually every work Ovid wrote'[45]. Assessments such as these, of which many more could be cited, quite unmistakably arise from the wishful thinking inherent in the biographical approach and attributable to the influence of Romantic poetics. Such projections entirely obscure the very clear purpose with which the

---

35. How irritating these lines are for Ovid scholars becomes evident when the conclusion is drawn from them that *Medea* was meant to be read, not staged (e.g. Kraus 87).

36. Emendations have of course been proffered (cf. now Hall's edition, *app. crit.* on these lines). The wording is, however, the same in all manuscripts.

37. Most recently J. Richmond, 'Doubtful Works Ascribed to Ovid', *ANRW* II 31.4 (1981), 2744-83, 2746ff.

38. Most recently H. Schoonhoven (ed.), *The Pseudo-Ovidiana ad Liviam de morte Drusi (Consolatio ad Liviam, Epicedium Drusi)*. A Critical Text with Introd. and Comm. (Groningen, 1992).

39. M. Pulbrook (*Nux Elegia* [Maynooth, 1985]) now believes that this is genuine. To Richmond it seems 'very improbable, but not quite impossible' that Ovid wrote it (2767).

40. On these *poetae Ovidiani* see A.G. Lee, 'The Authorship of the *Nux*', in N.I. Herescu (ed.), *Recherches sur Ovide, publiées à l'occasion du bimillénaire du poète* (Paris, 1958), 457-71, 469.

41. For P.E. Knox, 'Ovid's *Medea* and the Authenticity of *Heroides* 12', *HSPh* 90 (1986), 207-23, one argument for classing this elegy as spurious is that it is based on the Medea drama. Cf. in contrast S. Hinds, 'Medea in Ovid: Scenes from the Life of an Intertextual Heroine', *MD* 30 (1993), 9-47.

42. It is also worth remembering that in *Trist.* 3.9 Tomi is named as the scene of Medea's fratricide.

43. *AAHG* 11 (1958), 141.

44. *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature. II: Latin Literature* (Cambridge, 1982), 421.

45. *Ovid's Heroides* (Princeton, N.J., 1974), 109.

N. Holzberg

Playing with His Life. Ovid's 'Autobiographical' References

poeta doctus Ovid organized his life's work on the basis of the elegiac system - so clear a purpose in fact, that one might in retrospect almost believe that Ovid welcomed banishment because it even afforded him the opportunity to create a new variation for his genre: the 'exile elegy'[46].

The cliché of Ovid as a poet 'fulfilling his potential' can actually be traced back to Quintilian, who felt the need to note: lOvid's *Medea* seems to me to demonstrate how much the man could have achieved had he chosen to bridle his talent rather than indulge it' (*Inst. Or.* 10.1.98). And precisely because the tragedy was, according to Quintilian, so very different from Ovid's other works, I find it hard to believe that he really was its author. Then again, he might have been! But gone is gone. Perhaps I may at least be permitted to find it rather peculiar that some books on Ovid's *Gesamt*output devote a whole chapter to *Medea* and thus, proportionally speaking, give more space to two measly verses[47] from a lost opus than they do to other works that survive in their entirety[48].

As we come to the end of these deliberations, let us cast a glance at a surviving Ovid text once again. At the beginning of the elegy *Amores* 3.15, the *poeta/amator* says (1f.):

> *Quaere nouum uatem, tenerorum mater Amorum:*
> *raditur haec elegis ultima meta meis.*
> (Look for a new poet, Mother of tender loves: this turning-post will be scratched for the last time by my elegies.)

A farewell to elegies? Yes. Does it actually also apply to the author himself? Well, let's not go into that again. But does it even apply at all to the elegiac 'I'? Anyone who has read the *Amores* from the beginning to this point in one sitting will remember that only four elegies previously, in 3.11, the *poeta/amator* takes leave of his *puella* too, because he cannot bear the *servitium amoris* any longer. Amongst other things he says there in v. 28:

> *quaere alium pro me qui uelit ista pati.*
> (Look for another to take my place, one who will put up with this!)

These parting words are unmistakably echoed in the later farewell to elegy. But here, in 3.11, there follow four verses later (some editors make this the start of a new elegy[49]) the clear retraction and renewed submission to the yoke of elegiac love so much hated only a moment before[50]. Given this sudden about-turn, what are we really to think of the tear-jerking good-bye to elegy in 3.15? Is Ovid not just trying to play a game with us once again? With all of us, that is - those of us who interpret his verses as autobiography and those of us who don't. I think that he is. And this is why I have presented here some examples of how the poet plays with the facts of his life and the facts of the background of his poetry. And if we play the game with him, then we must be more cautious than at any poker table.

Institut für Klassische Philologie der Universität München
Geschwister-Scholl-Platz 1, 80539 München

---

46.   On this generic metamorphosis see F. Spoth, *Ovids Heroides als Elegien*, Zetemata, 89 (Munich, 1992), 142-56 and 223-5 and Holzberg, *Ovid*, 24ff.

47.   The similarity between the verse quoted in Quint. 8.5.6 and *Epist.* 12.73-6, one attributed to the elegy's derivation from the tragedy (Döpp [n. 3], 72f.), could naturally be reversed too.

48.   For example Fränkel 46f.

49.   On this problem essential reading M. Keul, *Liebe im Widerstreit: Interpretationen zu Ovids Amores und ihrem literarischen Hintergrund*, Europäische Hochschulschriften, XV 43 (Frankfurt, 1989).

50.   I am grateful to Herbert Neumaier for drawing my attention to this verbal echo.