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Ovid's Self-Reception in His Exile Poetry

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The study of Ovid's reception begins with Ovid and importantly is shaped by his statements about his poetry and career in his exile poems. Ovid in exile is the "first extant reader to interpret and reprocess" his earlier works (Hinds 1999a: 48). In the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto* Ovid does more than reflect on his earlier poetry; he attempts to control its reception and to construct an image of "Ovidianism," which is meant to convince the emperor to recall the poet. But, of course, there are more "re-s" involved in the exile poetry than reception: Ovid reflects on his career, recalls, rewrites, and revises his earlier works, refutes the misinterpretation and condemnation of the *Ars Amatoria*, and rebukes the emperor for his excessively harsh punishment of the poet and his flawed understanding of his poetry. Ovid is concerned with the reception both of his earlier poetry, especially the *Ars*, and that of his current project, the exile poetry. He seeks in exile to shape an image of his poetic career that will guarantee his lasting fame. This chapter will look at some of the general strategies and themes of the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto* that reflect "Ovid's self-consciousness about how his texts will survive and how they will be reread in the light of new circumstances" (Burrow 2002: 302).

I want to look specifically at three aspects of Ovid's self-reception in his exile poetry. First, I am interested in the way in which Ovid in exile encourages a rereading of his earlier poems, in an attempt to shape their reception and interpretation in ways that will reflect his current situation and plead his case with the emperor. This involves defending his past (erotic) poetry by crafting an ideal reader and by conditioning his audience's reception of his texts. Second, and closely related to the first strategy, through allusions to his earlier poetry, Ovid encourages the reader to read his personal history into his poetic corpus, to reconsider his earlier work in the light of his current exilic state. This reuse of past erotic, mythical, and metamorphic motifs to shape his current experiences creates interesting and piquant

conflicts between poetic fictions and the poet's new reality. The poet offers himself as the subject of poetry: *Tr.* 1.5b.57–58 *pro duce Neritio, docti, mala nostra, poetae, / scribite*, "instead of the Neritian hero, learned poets, write of my sufferings". Finally, in exile Ovid reflects on his poetic career, defends his literary choices, and compares his downfall with other career models, as he advocates for the future transmission and survival of his poetic texts.

Rereading and Revising

The emperor Augustus relegated Ovid to Tomis on the Black Sea (modern Constanta in Romania) in 8 CE, when the poet was 51 years old (*Tr.* 4.10.95–96), for two crimes: the *Ars Amatoria* and an unknowable "mistake" (*Tr.* 2.207 *duo crimina, carmen et error*). Ovid's exilic *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto* represent a radically new departure in the Roman elegiac tradition, but Ovid is less interested in proclaiming their originality than stressing their inevitability. His exilic condition poses a generic opposition to the possibility of writing in any genre other than elegiac lament.[1] These are poems born from his sad new circumstances (e.g. *Pont.* 3.9.35 *cano tristia tristis*, "being sad, I sing sad songs"), and must function to rescue the poet by representing him at Rome, pleading his case with the emperor, and defending his career. While Ovid continually stresses the discontinuity and decline of his exilic poetic production in comparison to his pre-exilic poetry (e.g. *Tr.* 3.14.33 *ingenium fregere meum mala*, "my misfortunes have crushed my talent"), modern critics highlight instead the close relation of his exilic and pre-exilic phases, pointing out his undiminished poetic abilities, his unchanged style, wit, and irreverence. Decline instead may be seen as a trope, a strategic pose designed to evoke sympathy and reproach the emperor (Nagle 1980: 171), or it may function as an ironic, self-mocking pose (Williams 1994: 50–99).

Ovid emphasizes his former position as Rome's foremost poet by reminding his readers of his past literary achievements. One of the ways he does this is through pervasive allusions to his earlier writings. Although Ovid frequently defines the exile poetry in terms of a rupture with his literary past, especially with his didactic love poem, the *Ars Amatoria* (*Tr.* 1.1.67 *non sum praeceptor Amoris*, "I am not the teacher of Love"; cf. *AA* 1.17 *ego sum praeceptor Amoris*), it is well known that there is a strong line of continuity between the elegy of exile and Ovid's earlier amatory elegy (Kenney 1965; Evans 1983). Although he expresses regret for the composition of the *Ars Amatoria* (e.g. *Tr.* 5.1.8), Ovid continually positions his new poetry in relation to his previous love poetry, constantly evoking the repudiated model and reminding the reader of it (Labate 1987). Ovid persistently identifies himself as a love poet throughout the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto* (*Tr.* 4.10.1–2; *Pont.* 2.11.2). In *Tr.* 5.1.17–20 Ovid's wish that he did not follow the love poets Gallus, Propertius, and Tibullus still functions to reinscribe him in this genealogy. In his imagined epitaph, Ovid remains *tenerorum lusor amorum,* "he who played with

tender love" (*Tr.* 3.3.73). Widely demonstrated is Ovid's redeployment in Tomis of the techniques, vocabulary, and themes of the amatory mode when framing his suit to Augustus and expressing his longing for inaccessible Rome (for the similarity of Ovid as "exclusus exul" and *exclusus amator*, see for example Nagle 1980, Helzle 2003, Rosati 2003 on *Pont.* 2.2.40). His wife is offered the fame and immortality earlier offered to Corinna in the *Amores* (*Tr.* 4.3.81–82, 5.14.1–6). In *Pont.* 3.3 a now bedraggled Cupid himself returns (replaying his numerous earlier programmatic scenes in Ovid's poetry); his changed appearance announces the sadly altered condition of the exile elegies, yet marks a defiant continuity with the poet's earlier amatory works.

It is, of course, Augustus' reception of the *Ars Amatoria*, the *causa exilii* (*Pont.* 3.3.23), that concerns Ovid above all. Ovid's repeated defenses of the offending poem serve as persistent rebukes to the emperor, who by including the poem in his condemnation of the poet provided Ovid with his best weapon for his self-defense. It suited Ovid to claim that his poetry was the major cause of his exile (*Tr.* 5.12.45–46), as his offense was apparently unmentionable (e.g. *Pont.* 3.3.73–74 *quicquid id est (neque enim debet dolor ipse referri, / nec potes a culpa dicere abesse tua)*, "whatever it is (for the pain itself ought not be recalled nor can you say that you are free from guilt)"). *Tristia* 2 constitutes Ovid's most prominent attempt to rewrite the reception of the *Ars Amatoria*, to defend it as morally neutral and harmless. In this poem Ovid does not so much apologize for the *Ars Amatoria* as instruct Augustus (and his readers) how to read poetry, while expressing his views on readership and reception (Barchiesi 2001). Among his many claims, Ovid suggests that Augustus has not had the time to read the *Ars Amatoria*, busy as he is with affairs of state (213–40) and that he has been "critically naive" about the nature of poetic reception (Williams 1994: 193). Ovid argues that "the burden of interpretation falls on the reader of the poetry" (Gibson 1999: 23). The morals and mind of the reader determine whether a text is harmful (301 *omnia perversas possunt corrumpere mentes*, "all things can corrupt perverse minds"); there is no *crimen* in his *Ars* (240), if it is read *recta mente* (275). A sound and balanced judgment is required (80). Ovid suggests that "every work of art is open to deviant interpretations" (Barchiesi 1997: 33). The *Ars* has been unjustly singled out against the author's intention and Ovid's tendentious review of Greek and Latin literature (361–538) is meant to show that all texts are potentially immoral if misread, even Virgil's *Aeneid* (533–36), and yet all of Ovid's erotic predecessors eluded punishment (469–70). The teleological thrust of this catalogue of authors firmly asserts Ovid's position in the literary tradition (Ingleheart 2010: 22–24). Later, Ovid will turn to Germanicus in the hopes of finding in a fellow poet a proper understanding of the nature of poetry (*Pont.* 4.8.67–68).

Ovid also attempts to shape Augustus' understanding of his *maius opus*, the *Metamorphoses*, encouraging especially a recognition of its panegyrical intent.[2] At *Tristia* 2.63–66 Ovid proposes that Augustus will find in the epic praise of himself. This "retrospective authorization of an 'Augustan' reading of the poem" (Hinds 1999a: 50) may, however, be undermined by its advertised fictionality (64 *in non credendos*

corpora versa modos, "bodies changed in unbelievable ways"), which casts doubt on the credibility of Augustus' own projected deification at *Metamorphoses* 15.861–70. Later in *Tr.* 2 Augustus is again enjoined to find time to read the epic (557–62):

> atque utinam revoces animum paulisper ab ira,
>   et vacuo iubeas hinc tibi pauca legi,
> pauca, quibus prima surgens ab origine mundi
>   in tua deduxi tempora, Caesar, opus!

Would that you might recall your mind from anger awhile and order a few lines from this be read to you in leisure, those few lines in which, beginning from the first origin of the world, I led the work down to *your* times, Caesar!

Ovid here rewrites *Met.* 1.3–4 (*primaque ab origine mundi / <u>ad mea</u> perpetuum deducite <u>tempora</u> carmen*, "lead down a continuous song from the first origin of the world to my times"), modifying its temporal teleology in Augustus' favor. Bruce Gibson (1999: 19–20) has drawn attention to the potentially deflating force of the repeated *pauca*, which seems to draw attention to the fact that Augustus is mentioned only at the beginning and end of the epic. This revision also deflects attention from the epic's epilogue, which celebrated Ovid's own poetic immortality (*Met.* 15.871–79; cf. 871–72 *iamque opus exegi, quod nec Iouis ira nec ignis / nec poterit ferrum nec edax abolere vetustas*, "now I have completed a work which neither the anger of Jove nor fire nor iron nor devouring old age can destroy"). In *Tr.* 1.1, however, Ovid had already suggested an emendation of this epilogue, urging the *Tristia* book to tell the books of the *Metamorphoses* to include his *fortuna* in their metamorphic catalog: *his mando dicas, inter mutata referri / fortunae vultum corpora posse meae*, "I would like you to tell them that the aspect of my own fortune can be reckoned among those changed bodies" (119–20). Like his poetry, Ovid himself has been transformed and damaged by exile (*Tr.* 3.11.25 *non sum ego quod fueram*, "I am not as I once was").[3] Throughout the exile poetry Ovid repeatedly casts doubt on, but never wholly surrenders (e.g. *Tr.* 3.7.45–52; *Pont.* 3.2.29–32), his exultant assertions of immortality in the epilogue, frequently "conceding to the firepower of *Iovis ignis* and *ira* the very supremacy against which his epilogue had taken its final stand" (Hinds 1999a: 50).

When Ovid in *Tr.* 1.7.11 suggests that the *Metamorphoses* provides a *maior imago* of himself, a better representation of the poet in his absence, it is a modified *Metamorphoses*, as he goes on to suggest the addition of six lines to the preface, which offer a "newly pessimistic way into the *Metamorphoses*" (Hinds 1985: 26) by pointedly referring to the writer's exile (35–40):

> orba parente suo quicumque volumina tangis,
>   his saltem vestra detur in urbe locus.
> quoque magis faveas, non haec sunt edita ab ipso,
>   sed quasi de domini funere rapta sui.
> quicquid in his igitur vitii rude carmen habebit,
>   emendaturus, si licuisset, erat.

> Whoever you are who touch these volumes bereft of their author, to these at
> the very least let a space in your city be granted. And that you may favor them
> more, these were not published by their author, but were as if snatched from his
> funeral. Whatever flaw this unformed poem may have, he would have emended
> it, if it had been permitted.

Ovid encourages a newly autobiographical reading of the epic, in which his mytho-
logical figures serve as analogues for his own (much worse) sufferings. He "retro-
spectively reads the reality of his own exile into the fictions of the earlier poems"
(Hardie 2002b: 285).

It is through allusion especially that Ovid in his exile poetry redeploys and
rewrites his earlier poetry to reflect the circumstances of his exiled state. As Gareth
Williams suggests, in Ovid's earlier *Heroides* and *Metamorphoses* the psychology of
estrangement, alienation, and exile was fully engaged before the blow of relegation
fell and thus "in his artistic arrangement of exile Ovid is banished by Augustus to
strangely familiar psychological territory" (2002: 245). Ovid frequently frames his
new situation as the experience "in actuality" of many of the myths and metaphors
of his earlier poetry, finding in them prophetic allusions to his future fate. Most
famously, Ovid elevates his sufferings by comparing them with those of numerous
mythological figures, all human victims of the gods, many of which appear in his
earlier poems.[4]

Ovid, as we have seen, describes his exilic condition as a metamorphosis
(*Tr.* 1.1.117–20) and identifies with a number of mythological victims in the
Metamorphoses, such as Phaethon (e.g. *Tr.* 1.1.79–82, 3.4.29–30; *Pont.* 1.2.31–32),
Icarus (*Tr.* 1.1.89–90, 3.4a.21–24), and Semele (*Tr.* 4.4.67–68). Within this scheme
of "mythic victimology" (Hinds 2007: 198), Ovid famously identifies himself with
Actaeon (*Tr.* 2.103–8), who inadvertently (*Tr.* 2.105 *inscius*, cf. *Met.* 3.142 *non scelus
invenies*) incurred the vengeful wrath of Diana, and, having been transformed
into a stag, was dismembered by his own hunting dogs (*Met.* 3.173–255). By this
analogy Ovid underlines his own innocence and elevates his personal tragedy.[5]
The image of mutilation and dismemberment is frequently applied to Ovid's exilic
condition in his mythic comparisons (see *Tr.* 1.3.73–74). In *Pont.* 1.2.27–28 Niobe
provides a parallel for Ovid's own eternal grief, a motif Ovid associates with his
choice of genre in the exilic elegies. He contrasts his "real" fate with that of the
fictional Niobe and laments his inability to undergo transformation and be relieved
of his suffering, as Niobe was allowed. Elsewhere, Ovid's language suggests that
through excessive mourning his body is, in fact, experiencing liquefaction in a
manner similar to mythical figures such as Byblis or Egeria, who are transformed
into water through grief in the *Metamorphoses* (*Pont.* 1.1.67–68, 1.2.55). Exile is,
finally, similar to metamorphosis as "a form of exilic limbo, poised between life
and death" (Putnam 2010: 38; *Pont.* 3.4.75–76). Ovid's sufferings will elevate him
to the ranks of mythical heroes (*Pont.* 3.1.56 *nos quoque conspicuos nostra ruina facit*,
"My downfall will also make me famous").

Ovid also uses the vocabulary of transformation to depict the extremes of the landscape in Tomis (Frings 2005: 252–262). Located, as he claims, at the ends of the earth, natural marvels abound. Boundaries are not observed, especially those between the elements of land and water in its frozen form. The barrenness of Pontus is described in terms similar to the opening cosmogony of *Met.* 1 (*Pont.* 3.1.20 *in terra est altera forma maris*, "the land is but another form of the sea" ∼ *Met.* 1.291 *iamque mare et tellus nullum discrimen habebant*, "now there was no distinction between sea and land"). The frozen fish (*Pont.* 3.1.15–16 *in aequore piscis / inclusus tecta saepe natavit aqua*, "in the sea the fish often swim covered by a roof") and dolphins trapped by ice (*Tr.* 3.10.43–44) are the sorts of marvels typical of the ends of the earth, and also are reminiscent of the reversals of the flood in *Met.* 1 (296 *hic summa piscem deprendit in ulmo*, "one catches a fish caught on the top of an elm," 302 *silvasque tenent delphines*, "dolphins occupy the forest"). These scenes suggest that Ovid's exilic world represents a reversion to Chaos and the kind of breakdown of elemental boundaries so typical of the transformations of the *Metamorphoses*. At *Tr.* 1.8.5 Ovid laments that a friend's deceit has turned the world upside down: *omnia naturae praepostera legibus ibunt*, "all things shall proceed in reverse of the laws of nature."

Ovid's exile poetry shares the most in content, tone, and form with his *Heroides*, wherein he had already explored the subject position of "isolated and often paranoid uncertainty" (Williams 1997: 115; see Rahn 1958; Rosenmeyer 1997; Frings 2005: 240–52). The abandoned heroines similarly express in elegiac epistles their desperation and laments to absent lovers. Ovid aligns his new poetry with the *Heroides* at the beginning of the collection at *Tr.* 1.1.13–14, where the mention of *liturae* "blots" caused by his *lacrimae* "tears" constitutes an echo of *Her.* 3.3 *quaecumque aspicies, lacrimae fecere lituras*, "whatever you will see, tears have made the blots" (itself an allusion to Propertius 4.3.3–4) and establishes "the *litura* as a sort of trade-mark of the elegiac epistle" (Hinds 1985: 15, cf. *Tr.* 3.1.15–16). Tears and complaints are leitmotifs of both the *Heroides* and the *Tristia* and *ex Ponto*, which make a generic statement by drawing attention to the ancient etymological association of elegy with lament (see Knox 1995 on *Her.* 15.7 *flebile carmen*; *Tr.* 5.1.5 *flebilis ut noster status est, ita flebilis carmen*, "as my state is lamentable, no less is my poetry doleful"). At *Tr.* 1.3.82–84 (*te sequar … accedam profugae sarcina parva rati*, "I will follow you … I would be a small burden to your ship of exile") Ovid's wife is made to speak words of entreaty similar to those of Briseis to Achilles in *Heroides* 3.68–69 *non ego sum classi sarcina magna tuae … sequar*, "I am not a heavy pack for your fleet … I shall follow" (another allusion to Propertius 4.3.46). In a move similar to his suggested revisions to the opening of the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid suggests at *Tr.* 1.6.33 that his wife could now be placed at the head of the collection of the single *Heroides*: *prima locum sanctas heroidas inter haberes*, "you ought to have first place amongst the revered heroines" (Hinds 1999b). As letters, the poems in both collections express worries about communication, imagine their reception (*Tr.* 5.2.1–2; *Her.* 18.16–18, 20.1–8), complain about the

circumstances of writing and their letters' linguistic deficiencies (*Tr.* 3.1.17–18, 3.14.49–55; *Her.* 3.1–2), and ask to be read (*Pont.* 2.2.7 *perlege*, *Her.* 4.3, 5.1). The ultimate failure of Ovid's exilic letters to achieve their purpose in recalling him from exile makes the experience of reading them even closer to that of the ineffectual letters of his mythological heroines, whose endings were always already determined.

While Ovid clearly mythologizes and fictionalizes his exilic experiences and surroundings and thereby encourages his reader to read the poet's personal circumstances back into his earlier poetry of metamorphosis and erotic suffering, he is simultaneously eager to contrast his real suffering with fictional sufferings and thus gain sympathy for his very real miserable condition (*Tr.* 3.11.61 *crede mihi, felix, nobis collatus, Ulixes*, "believe me, compared with me, Ulysses was lucky"). Ovid cannot be transformed into a tree or stone to escape his sorrows like the characters in the *Metamorphoses* (*Pont.* 1.2.33–34), nor can he fly away from his place of exile (*Tr.* 3.8.1–12). Ovid's autobiographic persona is invested in convincing the reader that his self-representation in his exile poetry is true (*Tr.*1.5.80 *in nostris fabula nulla malis*, "there is no fiction in my sufferings"; cf. *Tr.* 4.1.66), yet his whole poetic corpus famously flaunts "his power to command or suspend our credence in his fictions" (Feeney 1991: 225). As Philip Hardie observes, "reality, in Ovid's and his reader's shared experience of his poetry, long ago fused too intimately with the text to emerge now in its pristine and pretextual innocence" (2002b: 285). Fritz Graf (2002: 114), however, suggests that while in the exile poetry "reality exceeds by far the limits of what the mythic template can perform, … the mythic tradition still functions as a gauge; by its very breaking down, it signals the new and unheard-of suffering of the exile." Ovid's stress in his exile poetry on personal autobiographical detail served to create the portrait of the artist in exile which proved so potent a vision of Ovidianism for later artists (see Lyne 2002).

Poetic Careers

Ovid's poems are characterized by a marked tendency to locate themselves self-consciously within the poetic tradition and within the poet's own poetic career (Barchiesi and Hardie 2010: 59). In his exile poetry Ovid reviews and seeks to shape the reception of his poetic career, past, present, and future, and to compare it with those of other poets. His exilic poems show an "obsessive concern with his current status and posthumous reputation" (Farrell 2004: 50; e.g. *Pont.* 1.5.71–86). Ovid is, understandably, worried about the continued circulation and survival of his texts. The immortality and autonomy of poetry become major preoccupations as Ovid seeks to recall his earlier success, to secure the continued renown of his name at Rome, and to pledge further literary success, if recalled. The exile poetry creates a portrait of the artist *not* at Rome, which becomes as much a portrait of the artist (as he used to be) in Rome. Only Ovid's poems can travel to Rome

(*Tr.* 3.14.8) and only they keep alive his name there (*Pont.* 3.5.33–34). Through these recollections Ovid reminds the reader of his earlier role in Rome as its most famous poet (e.g. *Tr.* 5.3). His expressions of a continuing desire for fame announce his future ambitions (*Tr.* 5.12.37). One of the major themes of Ovid's exile poetry is the commemorative power of his poetry (e.g. *Tr.* 5.14), which offers to his addressees the promise of future poetic composition. His advertisement of the utility and importance of poetry for the creation of imperial authority and even divinity (*Pont.* 4.8.55, 63–64) holds out both promise and implied threat (cf. *Tr.* 4.9.24).

In his self-fashioning of his poetic career Ovid has in mind especially the progress of Virgil's career (see Farrell 2004).[6] At *Rem.* 395–96 Ovid famously matches his poetic achievements in elegy with Virgil's in hexameter. In *Tr.* 2 the generic ascent and evolution of Virgil's career is meant to provide a parallel for Ovid's self-defense of his career trajectory (537–40):

> Phyllidis hic idem tenerosque Amaryllidis ignes
>   bucolicis iuvenis luserat ante modis.
> nos quoque iam pridem scripto peccavimus isto:
>   supplicium patitur non nova culpa novum;

This same man as a youth had written earlier in bucolic meter playful poetry about the tender passions of Phyllis and Amaryllis. Long ago I too erred in that kind of writing: thus a fault not new is suffering a new punishment.

Ovid draws attention to his "greater works" in his defense at *Tr.* 2.548. Famously, Ovid's claims at *Tr.* 1.7.15–20 to have burnt upon departing in exile the unrevised manuscript of the *Metamorphoses* recall Virgil's dying wish to burn the manuscript of the *Aeneid*. The professed incompleteness of the epic (14, 22, 28–30) aligns Ovid with the potent myth of Virgil's death and his poetic perfectionism.[7] As he asserts the parity of his epic with Virgil's, Ovid also reproaches Augustus for not approving of his poetry as he had Virgil's (cf. *Tr.* 2.533 *tuae … Aeneidos*). Ovid here and elsewhere creates an image of a famous poet interrupted at the height of his career, leaving his two greatest works unfinished, the *Metamorphoses* (cf. *Tr.* 3.14.19–23) and the *Fasti* (*Tr.* 2.549–552).

Although Ovid claims at *Tr.* 2.549 to have already written all 12 books of the *Fasti*, the second half seems never to have been published. In the event, the failure of the unfinished *Fasti* to reach its goal becomes "a mute reproach to the constraints set upon the poet's speech" (Feeney 1992: 19), but also suggests the possibility of completion should he return to Rome in happier circumstances. The surprising absence within the exilic corpus of any mention of Ovid's contemporary revisions of the *Fasti* after the death of Augustus may be part of his poetic strategy to underline the poetic limits imposed by his exilic condition. In Tomis Ovid is cut off from Rome and its religious festivals, disconnected from Roman time (*Tr.* 3.12.17–26;

Hinds 2005: 217). Although he complains about his inability to write timely enco-
miastic poetry (e.g. *Tr.* 4.2.57–58), he does, however, begin to compose poems
on imperial themes, such as the military triumphs of Tiberius (*Tr.* 4.2; *Pont.* 2.1, 3.4
[12 CE]) and accessions to the consulship (*Pont.* 4.4 [14 CE] and 4.9 [16 CE]). In mid-15
to late 16 Ovid began revisions to the *Fasti* from exile. He composed a new proem
for *Fasti* 1, containing a dedication to Germanicus, which replaced an exordium
to Augustus (*Tr.* 2.551), and made additions or changes elsewhere as well, mostly
in Book 1, which reflect on his exiled condition and new political circumstances
(see Syme 1978: 46; Fantham 1985; Herbert-Brown 1994: 173–212; Barchiesi 1997:
177–80; Green 2004: 15–24). The "dynamic interplay" between the "pre-exilic and
exilic strata" of the *Fasti* "serves only to enrich and to deepen the exilic nature of
Fasti's discourse" (Boyle 2007: 7), as the reader is invited to reread the whole poem
(and its incompleteness) in the new light of exile.

At *Tristia* 5.1.42 Ovid promises *carmina laetitiae … plena* ("poems full of joy")
if he is recalled from exile, poetry very different from his earlier love poetry, of
which Caesar himself will approve (43–45). Mario Labate (1987) has suggested that
the post-exilic career Ovid is mapping out might have looked similar to Statius'
occasional poetry in the *Silvae* (e.g. *Pont.* 1.2.131 *epithalamium*, 1.7.29–30 *epicedion*,
3.4.3 *triumphus*, 4.11 *consolatio*). Ovid is increasingly promising praise poetry, on
such themes as Augustus' deification (*Pont.* 4.6.17–18) and the military triumphs
of Tiberius and Germanicus (*Pont.* 2.1). In *Pont.* 3.4, a poem celebrating Tiberius'
Pannonian triumph of 12 CE, Ovid complains that his distance from Rome makes it
impossible for him to offer a timely and eyewitness account of the event (essential
to occasional poetry); he must instead rely on hearsay alone (*Pont.* 3.4.20 *oculi fama
fuere mei*, "rumor has been my eyes"). Ovid's promises depend on his presence in
Rome and constitute an important new argument for his recall.

Pont. 4.8 contains a petition to Germanicus that promises future commemora-
tion in Ovid's poetry if he is removed from Tomis. This promise was to be ful-
filled initially in his revisions from exile to *Fasti* 1, but in supporting his claim of
poetry's power to bestow immortality, Ovid cites the Trojan and Theban epic cycles
(51–54), and the *Metamorphoses*, evoked once again through verbal echoing of its
opening cosmogony (57–60):

> sic <u>Chaos</u> ex illa <u>naturae</u> <u>mole</u> prioris
>   <u>digestum</u> partes scimus habere suas; (cf. *Met.* 1.6–7)
> sic <u>adfectantes</u> <u>caelestia</u> <u>regna</u> <u>Gigantas</u> (cf. *Met.* 1.152)
>   ad Styga nimbifero vindicis igne datos

Thus [from poetry] we know that Chaos, separated from that mass of prior
nature, has its proper divisions, by this that the Giants aiming at heavenly rule
were hurled to the Styx by the cloud-bearing fire of the avenger.

The evocation of the cosmogonic temporal sequence of the *Metamorphoses* contin-
ues in the mention of the apotheoses of Liber, Hercules, and Caesar in the following
lines (61–64), recalling the series of apotheoses in the *Metamorphoses* leading up to

that of Caesar at the end of the epic (15.746–85). Ovid hereby reminds Germanicus that he has indeed created gods before (*Pont.* 4.8.55 *di quoque carminibus, si fas est dicere, fiunt*, "even the gods, if it is permissible to say this, are created by poetry").

At *Pont.* 4.8.49–51 Ovid echoes Horace's famous claims that the immortality of poetry outlasts material structures (*C.* 3.30.1–5, *C.* 4.8). These allusions serve to recall Horace's importance for the poetics of Ovid's exile poetry and also his career as a "paradigmatically successful and imperially favored poet" (Oliensis 2004: 307).[8] After writing his *Epistles*, Horace turned to imperial themes in the fourth book of *Odes*. Earlier in *Tr.* 4.8 Ovid had used Horatian imagery and language to contrast his miserable old age in exile with the ideals of poetic retirement expressed in Horace's *Epistles* 1 (*Tr.* 4.8.19–28; 24 ∼ *Epist.* 1.1.2). Ovid thereby suggests both that he deserves an honorable retirement, no less than Horace, and that, as Horace did, he too could turn to the composition of encomiastic poetry.

Finally, the tragic poetical and political career of the love poet and prefect Cornelius Gallus, who fell from Augustus' favor and was forced to commit suicide, provided Ovid with a significant personal and poetical negative career paradigm.[9] In a number of poems Ovid encourages an analogy between the disruption of his poetic career and Gallus' tragic end. Barchiesi and Hardie suggest that "*Tristia* 2 is implicitly structured as a supplement to Gallus' career, an opportunity for a victimized elegiac poet to talk back" (2010: 69). In *Tr.* 4.9, which contains a threat of poetic attack against an enemy (16 *Pierides vires et sua tela dabunt*, "the Muses will provide strength and their own weapons"), Ovid forcefully asserts the universal fame and immortality of his poetry in terms recognizably Gallan (20–22; Cairns 2006: 98):

> quodque querar notum, qua patet <u>orbis,</u> erit.
> ibit ad <u>occasum</u> quicquid dicemus ab <u>ortu,</u>
>   testis et <u>Hesperiae</u> vocis <u>Eous</u> erit.

> My complaint shall be known wherever the world extends. Whatever I say shall proceed from the rising sun to its setting, and the East shall be a witness to the voice of the West.

This allusive reminder of the survival of Gallus' works supports Ovid's perhaps increasingly desperate claims for the ultimate autonomy of poetry: *Tr.* 3.7.47–48 *ingenio tamen ipse meo comitorque fruorque:/ Caesar in hoc potuit iuris habere nihil*, "my genius is my companion and my resource: Caesar has not been able to have any jurisdiction over that." While Ovid's exilic self-construction of his poetic career includes its successful resumption upon his recall, unfortunately, the emperors did not prove to be good readers of his poetry.

Notes

1   Although he did, in fact, also compose the elegiac invectives of the *Ibis*, make revisions to the *Fasti*, and perhaps wrote *Heroides* 16–21.

2   Ovid claims that Augustus is praised in all of his poetry at *Pont.* 1.1.27−28; cf. *Tr.* 1.2.101−4.

3   On the analogy of the declining quality of Ovid's poetic corpus and his own physical state, see for example *Tr.* 4.6.39−44, 5.13.3 *aeger enim traxi contagia corpore mentis*; Newlands (1997).

4   On the mythologizing of Ovid's exile, see Broege (1972), Claassen (1988; 2001: 44−57), Viarre (1988), Videau-Delibes (1991: 19−178), Davisson (1993), McGowan (2009: *passim*).

5   On the possibility of post-exilic revision of this section (and other passages) of the *Met.*, see Kenney (1982: 444, n. 1).

6   On the numerous allusions to Virgil throughout the exilic works, see Hinds (1985) on *Tr.* 1.1, Williams (1994: *passim*), and Putnam (2010).

7   Hardie and Moore (2010), Tissol (2005). Cf. *Tr.* 2.38, 3.14.20.

8   Horatian influence is pervasive in the exile poetry. See for example Hardie (2002a: 297−99), Ingleheart (2009).

9   *Tr.* 2.445−46 *non fuit opprobrio celebrasse Lycorida Gallo, / sed linguam nimio non tenuisse mero*, "Gallus was not reproached for celebrating Lycoris, but for not holding his tongue after too much wine." Ovid explicitly distances himself from Gallus' crime at *Tr.* 3.3.47−48 *non aliquid dixi*, "I didn't say anything."

Further Reading

Casali (1997) argues that Ovid urges the reader to interpret in his exile poetry a climate of fear under the tyranny of Augustus. Gaertner (2007b) discusses Ovid's style in the exile poetry and his indebtedness to ancient epistolographic conventions. Habinek (1998) has a chapter that reads Ovid's exile poetry as a colonizing narrative, which valorizes legitimacy of Roman imperialism from its margins. Holzberg (2002) in one chapter traces thematic patterns in the exile poems and suggests that Ovid, inspired by the Greek epistolary novel, constructs an exilic "plot." Luck (1977) is the only commentary on all of the *Tristia*.

Oliensis (1997) suggests that Ovid's highly advertised suppression of the names of the addressees of the *Tristia* is meant to reflect the aura of paranoia and suspicion prevalent in Augustan Rome.

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