

# Roman elegy : problems of self-definition, and redirection

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ROMAN ELEGY:  
PROBLEMS OF SELF-DEFINITION,  
AND REDIRECTION

There may well be no other genre of Roman poetry whose literary history has been so completely determined by its own practitioners as elegy. As a result aspects of the genre other than the critical values and intentions of individual elegists remain unresolved: the question of its models or origins in Hellenistic elegy, has barely advanced after a century of discussion since Jacoby<sup>1</sup>, and should perhaps be discarded as a false problem. Again although 'objective' narrative elegy was practised by Propertius (1.20; 3.15; 4.4,6,9 and 10) and Ovid (as a recurring element in his *Fasti*) without any explicit comments by the elegists themselves, it was left to Richard Heinze at the beginning of the twentieth century to investigate the distinctive nature of elegiac narrative in *Ovids elegische Erzählung*, work since modified by the studies of Hermann Tränkle, Peter Knox and Stephen Hinds<sup>2</sup>. It is not, of course, surprising that the

<sup>1</sup> F. JACOBY, "Zur Entstehung der römischen Elegie", in *RhM* 60 (1905), 38-105.

<sup>2</sup> See R. HEINZE, *Ovids elegische Erzählung*, Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Phil.-Hist. Kl., 71,7 (1919) = *Vom Geist des Römertums*, ed. E. BURCK (Stuttgart 1960), 308-403; H. TRÄNKLE, "Elegisches in Ovids Metamorphosen", in *Hermes* 91 (1963), 459-75; P.E. KNOX, *Ovid's Metamorphoses and the Traditions of Augustan Poetry* (Cambridge 1986), and S. HINDS, *The Metamorphoses of Persephone* (Cambridge 1987).

elegists themselves have left no comment on a matter of technique such as the divergence of elegiac narration from the formality of epic narrative, but they are also silent on other aspects of their tradition. I would suggest that the elegists' affirmation of elegy as intrinsically 'subjective' love poetry persistently skewed the wider reality of their own individual record and of the genre's achievements at Rome.

For the elegists, defining their genre and its poetics largely took place through two procedures; firstly the enumeration of an apostolic succession, to which each elegist attached himself: consider Propertius 2.34, Ovid's listings in *am.* 1.15 and 3.9.61f. (of which more below) and the 'autobiography', *trist.* 4.10, or his extended list of love poets in the apologia of *trist.* 2. Secondly the elegists defined their work in formal terms: content as determined by metre: *materia conveniente modis* as Ovid puts it, or to follow Wimmel's more nuanced comment, *Stoff und Stil*<sup>3</sup>. Wimmel in fact through his study of the programmatic invocation of Callimachus by Augustan poets determined most subsequent critical analyses of elegiac self-positioning, as scholars either followed his assessment of Callimachean *recusatio* poems and proems, or reacted directly against it.

Without discounting Wimmel's careful and detailed analysis of texts both within the elegiac tradition, and beyond it in Virgil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics* and Horace's *Epistles*, I would like to use his discussions to reopen the question of the poets' overt and concealed purposes in their programmatic poems. Wimmel rightly distinguishes between the poems of *recusatio* which simply profess inadequacy to tackle the more ambitious or heroic themes offered by the Augustan achievement, and the rarer poems that seem to attempt this 'grander' material, but then acknowledge their own failure. Some scholars like Gordon Williams have stressed that within the shorter elegiac compass these poems are in fact meeting the imagined demand, conferring honour upon

<sup>3</sup> W. WIMMEL, *Kallimachos in Rom. Die Nachfolge seines apologetischen Dichtens in der Augusteerzeit*, Hermes Einzelschriften 16 (Wiesbaden 1960).

Augustan military or political and moral achievement<sup>4</sup>. Others have seen the depicted failure as evidence that Propertius or Ovid wanted to discredit the panegyric genre they seemed to attempt<sup>5</sup>. What is never considered by modern critics is the possibility that Augustan elegiac (or lyric) poets actually wanted to expand their themes beyond the erotic material expected by their public. To this question, and to Wimmel, we shall need to return.

Over the last twenty years, however, three new critical approaches have developed towards Roman elegy, at least in France and the English-speaking world: one is to search elegiac texts, sometimes against the grain, for political messages rejecting or deriding the Augustan ethos<sup>6</sup>: another, more productive, approach has applied to Roman elegy its concern with problems of poetic identity and reflexivity. This is at its best and most stimulating in the clear presentation of its theoretical basis of our colleague Alain Deremetz's *Le Miroir des Muses. Poétiques de la réflexivité à Rome*<sup>7</sup>. As he has shown, poetic

<sup>4</sup> On *recusatio* see G. WILLIAMS, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* (Oxford 1968), 46, 50, 56, and 102-3, arguing that supposed pressure on the poets from Maecenas to write on Augustus' *res gestae* is "an invention. It provided a framework in which they could both praise the regime and express their own views on the themes appropriate to their own poetic ideals and the sources of their inspiration". See also 300-303 and 557-8.

<sup>5</sup> I support G. WILLIAMS' protest (*Change and Decline. Roman Literature in the Early Empire* [Berkeley 1978], 79-86) against the assumption that Ovid would deliberately deflate his own passages of formal panegyric. The most nuanced position on the issue of anti-Augustanism in Ovid is St. HINDS' recognition ("Generalizing about Ovid", in *The Imperial Muse: Ramus Essays on Roman Literature of the Empire*, ed. A.J. BOYLE [Berwick, Victoria 1988], 1-34) that a text could provide different readings for different readers. In Hinds' judgment Ovid's techniques of expression allowed both Augustus and the wide republic to find in his panegyric language what they were seeking to understand.

<sup>6</sup> Attitude is the most difficult element of any text to calibrate. See Duncan F. KENNEDY, "'Augustan' and 'Anti-Augustan': Reflections of Terms of Reference", in *Roman Poetry and Propaganda in the Age of Augustus*, ed. A. POWELL (Bristol 1992), 26-58; and *The Arts of Love. Five Studies in the Discourse of Roman Love Elegy* (Cambridge 1993). For a nuanced assessment of various Ovidian texts see A. BARCHIESI, *Il Poeta e il Principe. Ovidio e il discorso augusteo* (Bari 1994; now translated as *Poet and Princeps* [Berkeley 1997]).

<sup>7</sup> Villeneuve sur Ascq 1995; see especially 1-71 and on elegy 351-409.



reflexivity includes both articulated aesthetics and allusive intertextuality. The third approach, which I have taken, supplements these critical techniques by re-reading the 'biographical' content of the 'subjective' elegies as encoding statements about the author's poetic career and designs. Thus the poet's experience in suffering or making love becomes a kind of allegory for his experience in writing about it and his erotic disillusionment serves to motivate and justify a change of direction.

Note that this last statement presupposes that Latin elegy was inherently, and not coincidentally, love elegy. One of my main concerns is to trace how Roman elegists, having embraced the temptation of writing elegy predominantly about the ordeals of love, withdrew from its compromising limitations in order to release their art, and encompass new themes<sup>8</sup>. For in the sum of their work Tibullus, Propertius, and especially Ovid show themselves aspiring to virtually the whole amazing spectrum of speech acts, social functions, and themes that (as Cameron has shown in his study of Callimachus<sup>9</sup>) were explored not only by archaic Greek elegy but by its Hellenistic counterpart.

### *Elegy before Ovid*

I would like to start from the motif of succession outlined above, and in particular from the first Augustan instance of this theme, not *in* elegy but, it has been persuasively argued, *about* elegy. The work of Cornelius Gallus, the earliest Roman elegiac poet, did not survive beyond the first century of our era<sup>10</sup>,

<sup>8</sup> On the range of themes inherited from Hellenistic elegists, see the introduction, pp.4-16, of my commentary, *Ovid: Fasti. Book IV*, Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics (Cambridge 1998).

<sup>9</sup> *Callimachus and his Critics* (Princeton 1995), esp.149-53; 289-91; 312-5 and 388, and more briefly in "Genre and Style in Callimachus", in *TAPA* 122 (1992), 305-312.

<sup>10</sup> The last critic who implies familiarity with Gallus's elegies, is Quintilian, in his stylistic survey at *inst.* 10.1.93, *Ovidius utroque lascivior, sicut durior Gallus*.

leaving critical estimates to depend on the 'immanent' assessment of his peers. Admired by Virgil and treated as a model by Propertius and Ovid, Gallus has suffered a severe loss of reputation from the disappointing quality of the two elegiac quatrains and detached line of the Qasr Ibrim papyrus generally attributed to him<sup>11</sup>: David O. Ross in particular, a distinguished critic of Latin poetry, seems to have been silenced by this unwelcome sample of the poet he reconstructed with such enthusiasm in *Backgrounds to Augustan Poetry: Gallus, Elegy and Rome*<sup>12</sup>. However, the first 'Augustan' poetic succession is invoked in Virgil's tribute to Gallus at *ecl.* 6.64-67, 69-72:

*tum canit, errantem Permessi ad flumina Gallum  
Aonas in montes ut duxerit una sororum,  
utque viro Phoebi chorus adsurrexerit omnis;  
ut Linus haec illi divino carmine pastor...  
dixerit: 'hos tibi dant calamos (en accipe) Musae,  
Ascraeo quos ante seni, quibus ille solebat  
cantando rigidos deducere montibus ornos.  
his tibi Grynei nemoris dicatur origo,  
...*

From this sequence conveying the shepherd's pipes from the Muses first to Hesiod, then Gallus<sup>13</sup>, Ross argued that the poet's aition of Apollo's Grynean grove (*Grynei nemoris... origo*) was composed in elegiac distichs, like his more famous love elegies: Indeed he suggests that Gallus composed *only* in this

<sup>11</sup> Taken as they stand the two quatrains from Qasr Ibrim are neither elegy nor epigram: the best explanation, if they are indeed the work of Gallus, is that they are either extended incipits (but they seem more like closure of a poem than its opening) or excerpts chosen by the writer of the papyrus for a commonplace book. See J.A. FAIRWEATHER, "The Gallus Papyrus; a new interpretation", in *CQ* 34 (1984), 167-174.

<sup>12</sup> Ross's book inevitably went beyond the evidence, and the merits of its later chapters are damaged by his hypotheses about Gallus; see the review of E.A. SCHMIDT, in *Gnomon* 51 (1979), 433-6.

<sup>13</sup> Linus does not seem to be part of this chain, but a figure from Bucolic itself (*pastor*). See D.O. ROSS, *op.cit.*, 21-3, 28, 34-6 and 118-20 and the discussion below of *OV. am.* 3.9.23-4.

metre, writing learned aitiological poetry before or even as part of his four books of *Elegies*. At first the allusion to Hesiod seems to militate against this; did not Hesiod write exclusively in hexameters? But if Callimachus can cite the Muses' appearance to the shepherd Hesiod as model of his own elegiac inspiration at the beginning of the *Aitia*, the statement of generic precedence can be related to *Stoff und Stil*, without concern for metre. In fact it is highly likely, as Ross suggests<sup>14</sup>, that the genealogy itself is doubly 'immanent' literary history, quoted by Virgil's Silenus from Gallus' own claims, made in awareness of Callimachus' precedent. The scholiastic tradition can hardly be relied on, either for Euphorion or for Gallus, as it probably depends on inference from Vergil<sup>15</sup>. But while Ross admits that there is no material evidence that Euphorion, the poet of the aitiological Grynean grove, ever wrote elegy: he claims that Gallus himself

"wrote only elegy. Furthermore... Gallan elegy was rich in myth, capable of such highly sophisticated aetiology as that on the Grynean Grove, could become on occasion pastoral, and defined self-consciously a new role for the poet as the representative of a long tradition of inspired singers". (p.48)

Professor Schmidt has brought out the fallacies in Ross's account of Gallus' poetry, and has convinced me that we cannot

<sup>14</sup> *Op.cit.*, 34-6, citing R. REITZENSTEIN, "Properz-Studien", in *Hermes* 31 (1896), 194-5 and Fr. SKUTSCH, *Aus Vergils Frühzeit* (Leipzig 1901) as well as W. WIMMEL's more tentative endorsement (*op.cit.*, 235 n.3).

<sup>15</sup> From the scholiasts and grammarians Ross cites Filagrius on *ecl.* 10.50 *Chalcidico idest Chalcis civitas in Euboea, in qua fuit Euphorion, qui Euphorion distichico versu (sidus illi a conversu LM, sidiis iliaco usu P) usus est*. That Gallus himself wrote even his Grynean grove in elegiacs is suggested by Diomedes in *GL* I 484 Keil: *quod genus carminis praecipue scripserunt apud Romanos Propertius et Tibullus et Gallus, imitati Graecos Callimachum et Euphoriona*: Servius and Servius auctus on *ecl.* 10.1 are neutral: *Gallus... fuit poeta eximius; nam {et} Euphorionem, ut supra diximus, transtulit in Latinum sermonem et amorum suorum de Cytheride scripsit libros quattuor*. But even Parthenius' suggestion in his preface that he was offering Gallus material εἰς ἔπη καὶ ἐλεγεῖας, does not guarantee that Gallus' version of Euphorion was composed in ἔπη, or necessarily stood outside the corpus of his elegiac poetry.



know when or in what metre Gallus adapted his material from Euphorion. It would seem most likely that he used the same metre as his model, but there is no subsequent record of Gallus, save as an elegist and master or model of elegists: despite the implications of *ecl.* 10.50-51 *Chalcidico quae sunt mihi condita versu / carmina*, there his profession of changing to a pastoral mode (*pastoris Siculi modulabor avena*) may cover a different reality, that the Grynean aition was abandoned and remained unsung. Virgil's allusions were written for those who knew, and never intended to provide us with literary history.

So we are reduced to Gallus's erotic role in the unambiguous elegiac successions, starting with Propertius's canon at 2.34.85-94:

*haec quoque perfecto ludebat Iasone Varro,  
 Varro Leucadiae maxima flamma suae;  
 Haec quoque lascivi cantarunt scripta Catulli  
 Lesbia quis ipsa notior est Helena;  
 Haec etiam docti confessa est pagina Calvi,  
 Cum caneret miserae funera Quintiliae.  
 et modo formosus quam multa Lycoride Gallus  
 mortuus inferna vulnera lavit aqua.  
 Cynthia quin etiam versu laudata Properti,  
 Hos inter si me ponere fama volet.*

But what, commentators have asked, are *haec*?<sup>16</sup> Propertius has just interpreted Virgil's *Eclogues* as love-poems, *Werbende Dichtung*, and rapidly assimilated the less adapted Hesiodic *Georgics* to them: such were the poems of Varro of Atax, Catullus and Calvus (note the elegiac epithets *lascivus*, *doctus* and *miser* and the autobiographical hint of *confessa*). It is Gallus who links

<sup>16</sup> Cf. e.g. H.E. BUTLER and E.A. BARBER (Eds.) (Oxford 1933), *ad* 81, p.261: "Haec cannot refer to the *Georgics* or to Virgil's work as a whole, since it is clearly picked up by *haec quoque* (87) which refers to the poetry of love. We have therefore a reference to erotic poetry in general... The allusion of *hic* (83) will be the same, with special reference to the *Eclogues*. The digression to the *Georgics* (77-80) forms a clumsy interruption. There is, however, no remedy, save the transference of 77-80 to follow 66..."

Propertius to the earlier poets, bearing even in death the wounds inflicted by Lycoris<sup>17</sup>. Although the bond between all these predecessors need not be love *elegy*, it is certainly poetry about love. But most readers have interpreted Propertius's verses as a miniature history of Roman elegy, equated with love elegy. As Ross has suggested, Propertius himself contributed through the love poems of his *Monobiblos* to creating this narrower generic image<sup>18</sup>. Certainly Propertius provided Ovid with the sequence which he acknowledges in *am.* 3.9.60-66, and in its purest form at *trist.* 4.10.51-54:

*Vergilium vidi tantum: nec avara Tibullo  
tempus amicitiae fata dedere meae.  
successor fuit hic tibi, Galle, Propertius illi;  
quartus ab his serie temporis ipse fui.*

But these generic canons can be deceptive in more ways than one, not only in what or whom they exclude. It is natural for each new poet to drop the earliest of his predecessors for the sake of a neat succession; but he can also deceive by inclusion. Ovid knew that the history of elegy was not the same as that of love poetry, and shows it in his *Apologia* of *trist.* 2. There he presents a virtual history of Greek and Roman poetry in a maximal list of all who wrote about love. The Roman listing moves from slanted accounts of Ennius and Lucretius' themes to the *furta* of Catullus and Calvus (2.427-32), through the lesser neoterics to the *furta* of Varro of Atax (440). He then adds erotic works by three serious senatorial figures (Hortensius, Servius and Sisenna), before he culminates in the canonical succession of *trist.* 4.10, that is, Gallus (2.445-6), Tibullus (2.447-464), and Propertius (2.465-6).

I have already briefly anticipated my main argument — that Roman elegy slipped into identification with love elegy because

<sup>17</sup> This despite the known fact that Gallus killed himself for political reasons, because Augustus had repudiated him as a friend.

<sup>18</sup> See e.g. D.O. ROSS, *op.cit.*, 51-2.



of the success of Gallus' quasi-autobiographical love elegies<sup>19</sup> and their imitation in Propertius' *Monobiblos* 'Cynthia'. I hope to extend this argument by illustrating how Ovid too had to work to extricate himself from this autobiographical trap fostered by popular taste. It was not enough that he himself provided in *am.* 1.1-3 a clinical observation of his entrapment by Cupid, first into love poetry, then into a love-affair as the necessary raw material. Ovid would need all of the third book of *Amores* to demonstrate the exhaustion of personal love poetry and justify its abandonment. This is not to dispute Conte's shrewd analysis of Ovid's detached and ironic rewriting of love elegy, first in the subjective *Amores* then in the objective didactic *Ars*: however, my concern is not with "Amore senza elegia", but with elegy before and after it became identified with subjective love poetry — 'Elegia senza amore'<sup>20</sup>.

Before holding Propertius responsible for this narrowing of focus, we must return to the field harvested by Wimmel, that of Propertius's professed reluctance to epicize, and its implications for what he *was* willing to write.

Let us start with the extravagant 2.10, partly to recall some of Wimmel's criteria of interpretation, but also because it can be heard echoing behind a particularly complex shift of direction by Ovid in the third book of *Amores*. Wimmel has argued, after examining Propertius' Callimachean symbology in light of the *Aitia* prologue, that the poet associates the symbol of the untouched meadow with an emphasis on his subject matter, but uses the symbolism of the untrodden path when emphasis

<sup>19</sup> B.M. GAULY, *Liebeserfahrungen: zur Rolle des elegischen Ich in Ovids Amores*, Studien zur klass.Philol. 48 (Frankfurt/M. 1990), 33-40, has successfully challenged the tradition from Franz Skutsch to D.O. Ross that Gallus gave the title *Amores* to his four books *amorum suorum*. On the instability of book titles at Rome see N. HORSFALL, "Some Problems of Titulature in Roman Literary History", in *BICS* 28 (1981), 103-14.

<sup>20</sup> This is a deliberate inversion of G.B. CONTE's "L'amore senza elegia: i Rimedi contro l'amore e la logica di un genere", in *Generi e lettori. Lucrezio, l'elegia d'amore, l'enciclopedia di Plinio* (Milano 1991), 53-94.

is on stylistic or methodological innovation<sup>21</sup>. Thus in Callimachus' thought a new path must precede or accompany new material; logically to be sure, a new path is necessary in order to reach any new destination. With this in mind we are ready for Propertius 2.10:

*Sed tempus lustrare aliis Heliconae choreis  
et campum Haemonio iam dare tempus equo.  
iam libet et fortis memorare ad proelia turmas  
et Romana mei dicere castra ducis.  
quod si deficient vires, audacia certe 5  
laus erit: in magnis et voluisse sat est.  
aetas prima canat Veneres, extrema tumultus  
bella canam quando scripta puella mea est.  
nunc volo subducto gravior procedere vultu.  
nunc aliam citharam me mea Musa docet. 10  
surge, anime, ex humili! iam, carmina, sumite vires!  
Pierides, magni nunc erit oris opus<sup>22</sup>.*

The extant verse of Callimachus does not imply that he ever felt under pressure to encompass a military theme, and Cameron has rightly suggested that the poet was rejecting the material and scale, not of epic, but of undisciplined catalogue elegy<sup>23</sup>. For Propertius, in contrast, both the preeminence of the epic tradition and the strength of Roman interest lay in warfare: his readers would assume that in proposing a different kind of dance, he was contemplating a change of metre as well as tone. But any judgments on the genre are distanced by the parade of symbols. Besides genres the poem must bridge cultures and epochs, from heroic Greek to contemporary Roman: so he passes from the Homeric associations of Thessalian, that

<sup>21</sup> W. WIMMEL, *op.cit.* (above n.3), 110.

<sup>22</sup> The text is that of *Sexti Properti Elegiarum libri IV*, ed. P. FEDELI (Stuttgart 1984). For earlier discussions see G. WILLIAMS, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* (above n.4), 50 and 558; W.R. NETHERCUT, "Propertius, *Elegy II.10*", in *SO* 47 (1972), 79-94, and J. WARDEN, "Bella satis cecini", in *CJ* 73 (1977), 19-21.

<sup>23</sup> Cf A. CAMERON, *Callimachus and his Critics* (Princeton 1995), 305-12: "Genre and Style".

is Achillean, war-horses to a couplet composed of the most basic terms in Roman war-narrative, which sets Rome's present leader on a Homeric level. Only the opening line and final couplet (25-26: *nondum etiam Ascræos norunt mea carmina fontis, / sed modo Permessi flumine lavit Amor*) present the poet in a generically determined Greek landscape. The poet is ready for battle, with boldness to compensate for lack of strength. But at 7 this resolve gives way to deferral, justifying postponement of battle poetry (*tumultus, bella*) until his youth and love poetry are ended<sup>24</sup>. In lines 9 to 12 Propertius raises his voice, illustrating, with gently self-parodic intent, the new tone and *magnum os*. He puts on a sterner countenance (*subducto... vultu*) and is schooled by the muse in the new theme (*aliam citharam*) as he urges his heart to rise from humble diction (*surge, anime, ex humili*)<sup>25</sup>, and his verse to gather strength. But even the Muses' teaching cannot sustain the poem, which falls away, just as Calliope explicitly deflects his ambitions in 3.3.39-40 *contentus niveis semper vectabere cynis / nec te fortis equi ducet ad arma sonus*.

Modern scholars have often belittled 2.10, but it impressed Ovid, who took it as basis for his self-positioning in *am.* 3. For Ovid's echoes of Propertius are not simply homage to a predecessor, but imply that he is himself embarking on a similar poetic change of direction.<sup>26</sup> Since 3.1 plays not on the standard contrast of elegy and epic, but that of elegy and tragedy, Ovid substitutes the Bacchic thyrsus<sup>27</sup> for Apollo's dances as symbol of the new spirit desired:

<sup>24</sup> Propertius expands on this relationship between age and poetic theme in 3.5.15-48, as does Ovid in the opening elegy of *am.* 3.

<sup>25</sup> *Ex humili* probably marks stylistic plainness, the opposite of *magnum os*: cf. HOR. *carm.* 3.25.17, and *epist.* 2.1.250-1 *sermone... repentes per humum*.

<sup>26</sup> On the relationship between PROP. 2.10 and OV. *am.* 3.1, see M. LABATE, *L'arte di farsi amare. Modelli culturali e progetto didascalico nell'elegia ovidiana* (Pisa 1984), 32, "un precedente significativo della poetica elegiaca ovidiana, uno spunto per quella che diverrà, in Ovidio, la precarietà della poesia d'amore".

<sup>27</sup> Also found incidentally at PROP. 3.3.35.



*"tempus erat thyrso pulsum graviore moveri  
cessatum satis est: incipe maius opus.  
materia premis ingenium; cane facta virorum:  
"haec animo" dices, "area digna meo est."  
quod tenerae cantent lusit tua Musa puellae,  
primaque per numeros acta iuventa suos.  
nunc habeam per te Romana Tragoedia nomen:  
implebit leges spiritus iste meas". (am. 3.1.23-30)<sup>28</sup>*

Tragedy claims the virtue of epic by designating her content (*materia*) as *facta virorum*: she relegates Love elegy to youth (*per numeros acta iuventa suos*<sup>29</sup>) and demands a change of metre as well as genre: the proposed genre will be a *maius opus* worthy of the poet's spirit (*animo... digna*) as it rises to match tragedy's generic requirements. And how does Ovid end book 3? With the same images of thyrsus and threshing floor, but with an extra ingredient — the heroic horses inherited from Propertius:

*corniger increpuit thyrso graviore Lyaeus:  
pulsanda est magnis area maior equis.  
imbelles elegi, genialis Musa, valet,  
post mea mansurum fata superstes opus. (am. 3.15.17-20)*

Propertius too sees his elegies as *imbelles*. In 2.1 he had claimed that the fates would not give him the power to lead heroic forces into battle (*ut possem heroas ducere in arma manus*, 18) a phrase that could as well evoke the exhortatory elegies of Tyrtaeus and Mimnermus as narrative military epic<sup>30</sup>.

When the theme of war (in epic or elegy) returns in book 3, it is again deferred in favour of his positive programme, which

<sup>28</sup> This and subsequent quotations from *Amores* are taken from E.J. KENNEY's second edition, Oxford Classical Texts (Oxford 1994).

<sup>29</sup> J.C. McKEOWN *ad. loc.* notes the echo of PROP. 3.5.19-20 *me iuvat in prima coluisse Heliconia iuventa / Musarumque choris implicuisse manus*, and 2.10.7 *aetas prima canat Veneres*.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. from D.E. GERBER's *Greek Elegiac Poetry* (Cambridge, MA 1999) Tyrtaeus 11, addressed to young warriors (νέοι) and papyrus 19, also Mimnermus 13 and 14.

now aspires for the first time to the refined verse of Callimachus and Philotas: *exactus tenui pumice versus eat* (3.1.8, cf. *tenuastis* 5). In rejecting the *dura corona* (20) of national annalistic themes in favour of the Muses' *molliā sēta* (19) Propertius combines the imagery of the *Aitia* prologue, (refusing to drive his chariot to the Muses by the broad public track)<sup>31</sup> with a more Roman choice. It is less often noted that in 3.1 Propertius has masked his turning away from love elegy by the positive shift to new addressees: if, as he himself believed, he had won his fame as a poet of his own experiences in love, he could not afford to lose his public by repudiating love elegy. Instead he can appeal to them in new terms: no longer explicitly as a sympotic audience or as individual readers (cf. 2.24, 25, 26b, 30) but as Romans or Rome herself (3.1.15 and 35; 3.11.49; 3.13.34)<sup>32</sup>.

All three programmatic elegies in book 3 play variations on the poetological symbols of 2.10, but when Propertius addresses the connoisseur Maecenas in 3.9, he blends Callimachean imagery with a new set of parallels from the visual arts. First a brief analysis of its four sections, alternating focus on Maecenas and the poet:

- A) 1-20 1-4 Maecenas' modesty (*intra fortunam...tuam*); his request
- 5-8 Gnostic arguments for modesty
- 9-16 Analogies from the modesty of visual artists
- 17-20 Gnostic support arguments for modesty.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. with *lata via* (14) CALL. *Aitia* fr.1.27 δῖφρον ἐλ]ᾶν μὴδ' οἴμον ἀνὰ πλατύν; and compare discussion in A. DEREMETZ, 55f., and for Greek lyric M. ASPER, *Onomata allotria. Zur Genese, Struktur und Funktion poetologischer Metaphern bei Kallimachos* (Stuttgart 1997) and R. NÜNLIST, *Poetologische Bildersprache in der frühgriechischen Dichtung* (Stuttgart 1998).

<sup>32</sup> There is good comment on Propertius' shift to open address to Rome and Romans in book 3 in the Princeton dissertation of Alison ORLEBEKE, *Aspects of Innovation in Propertius' third book* (1999), 39-45. *Viri*, in 3.4.3 is more specific, addressing the fighting men, or *pubes Romana*; cf. Tyrtaeus' address, ὦ νέοι. The concern for his youthful public will continue through 3.1-3, returning in 3.2 (a promise of more love poetry, to reassure his readers), 3.3.47-50, and even 3.9.43-46. But now he presents the new book simply as poetry to enjoy at peace: *quod pace legas* (3.1.17).



- B) 21-34 Maecenas' *vitae praecepta* and *exempla*; his fame (32) and the monuments of his *fides*.
- C) 35-46 Propertius' modest aims and themes; "holding back" (36).
- D) 47-60 Under Maecenas' leadership (*te duce*) Propertius will sing national themes: Maecenas' favour (*fautor*) and guidance (*signa*) will give the poet honour (*hoc... laudis*) as his follower (*in partis... fuisse tuas*).

Does he mean it? Has deferral (*mora*) become a promissory note? James Butrica<sup>33</sup> has recently offered strong arguments for seeing 3.9 as the constructed midpoint, the Contean "proemio nel mezzo"<sup>34</sup> of the three books 2-4, which he believes Propertius designed to mirror his artistic progress in choosing between continuing elegies inspired by Cynthia or tackling either Roman epic themes, or learned Hellenistic elegy. While it is difficult to swallow the strongest version of Butrica's thesis, that Propertius intended 2-4 *from the beginning* for collective publication, his linear interpretation of the three books and the positive aspirations of successive 'programme' elegies is in line with other recent readings of 3.9, from Bennett<sup>35</sup>, to Ross<sup>36</sup>, to Cameron<sup>37</sup>. It is easier to accept Butrica's milder hypothesis<sup>38</sup>, that the books were first published successively, and the effect of development was then imposed upon the collective "Tribiblos" by the calculated composition and arrangement of programmatic elegies.

As Bennett went some way to establish, the most remarkable aspects of 3.9 are not its internal incoherences but its intertextual echoes of Lucretius and Virgil, especially the addresses to

<sup>33</sup> "The *Amores* of Propertius: Unity and Structure in books 2-4", in *ICS* 21 (1996), 87-158.

<sup>34</sup> See G.B. CONTE, "Proems in the Middle", in *YCS* 29 (1992), 147-59.

<sup>35</sup> A.W. BENNETT, "The Patron and Poetical Inspiration: Propertius 3.9", in *Hermes* 96 (1968), 318-40.

<sup>36</sup> D.O. ROSS, *Backgrounds to Augustan Poetry*, 123-5.

<sup>37</sup> Alan CAMERON, *Callimachus and his Critics*, 472-5. But Cameron is chiefly concerned to exonerate Callimachus from charges of rejecting epic poetry.

<sup>38</sup> *Art.cit.* (above n.33), 157-8.

Maecenas in the *Georgics*. Maecenas is to be the poet's *dux* like Calliope in Lucr. 6.92-95, showing him the way to victory in the race: *te duce ut insigni capiam cum laude coronam*<sup>39</sup>. In *georg.* 2.39-45 Virgil invokes Maecenas as source of his fame (cf. 3.9.59), and asks his company in sailing his poem on the open sea, then calls on his patron to support him while he still hugs the shoreline:

*tuque ades, inceptumque una decurre laborem,  
O decus, o famae merito pars maxima nostrae  
Maecenas, pelagoque volans da vela patenti:  
non ego cuncta meis amplecti versibus opto.  
[...]*

*ades et primi lege litoris oram  
in manibus terrae. [...]*

Here surely is the source of both the shore-hugging in Prop. 3.3.23 *alter remus aquas alter tibi radat harenas*, and the fear of sailing in 3.9.4 *non sunt apta meae grandia vela rati* and 35 *non ego velifera tumidum mare findo carina*. But the elegy owes even more to the proem of *Georgics* 3. Both exploit the symbolic glory of racing chariots (*georg.* 3.17-18 = Prop. 3.9.17); both combine backward-shooting Parthians (3.9.54 *Parthorum astutae tela remissa fugae*) with triumphs from east and west (3.9.53 *currus utroque ab litore ovantes*, echoing *georg.* 3.31-33 *fidentemque fuga Parthum versisque sagittis / et duo rapta manu diverso ex hoste tropaea / bisque triumphatas utroque ex litore gentes*). Propertius concentrates his Virgilian allusions in the poem's last section: thus *te duce* (47) and *sub tua iussa* (52) reverse in positive form the negatives of Virgil's address to Maecenas: *georg.* 3.40-43 *interea... silvas saltusque sequamur / intactos, tua, Maecenas, haud mollia iussa. / te sine nil altum mens incohat. en age segnis / rumpe moras*. Like Virgil Propertius

<sup>39</sup> This may be a footrace, or perhaps another chariot contest: compare the incomplete sentence at 6.47 *quandoquidem semel insignem conscendere currum*. We have the same metaphor in Prop. 2.10.23, if we follow Goold, in adopting Markland's emendation *inopes laudis conscendere currum* for Mss *culmen*.

acknowledges, but unlike him prolongs, delay, cf. 3.9.36 *tota sub exiguo flumine nostra mora est* with *georg.* 2.45-6 *non hic te... /... per ambages et longa exorsa tenebo*; and 3.42-3 *en age segnis / rumpe moras*.

Like book 3 as a whole, the poem reflects diverging aims and attitudes<sup>40</sup>. There are still elements of delay, implicit in Propertius's self-portrayal as a young half-trained horse needing gentle guidance — "take up the indulgent reins of my unformed youth", (*mollia tu coeptae fautor cape lora iuventae*) (3.9.57) — Propertius is returning to the age-related excuses of 3.5<sup>41</sup>. But in 3.9 the poet claims to be a "follower" of Maecenas' preaching and practice who will succeed by his help. And his plans include the first sketch of the aitiological and loyalist program fulfilled in book 4, with the Palatine legend of Romulus and Remus as well as the victory of the future Augustus Caesar over Cleopatra: and this Propertius celebrates almost immediately, in 3.11.

The address to Maecenas has put more aesthetic symbology on parade than the poet has ever arrayed before. And from now on the variety of poetic material expands: as Butrica demonstrates, Propertius is both reaching out in new directions with varied generic colouring, and indicating his frustration in love<sup>42</sup>. Although 3.10 and 3.16 are addressed to and about Cynthia, both 3.12 and 3.20, still concerned with love, presuppose other relationships; 3.13 and 3.14 deal with aspects of contemporary Rome that deter the pursuit of love: women's

<sup>40</sup> Compare G. WILLIAMS' comment (*Tradition and Originality*, 558) on the tension in 3.1, 3.3 and 3.9 between themes of peace and private life and the great events of Roman history: he earlier notes (p.56) "movements of sentiment" [in these *recusatio* poems] "so that the serious tone can be taken up and dropped, and made to alternate with more light-hearted comment by the author, for instance, on his own weakness".

<sup>41</sup> *Coeptae*, literally "just begun" is taken as active by most editors; e.g. "patron of the youthful work I have begun", G.P. GOOLD. The request to serve as charioteer is remodelled in *OV. fast.* 1.25-6 to Germanicus *vates rege vatis habenas, / auspice te felix totus ut annus eat*.

<sup>42</sup> J. BUTRICA, *art.cit.* (above n.33), 139-40.



greed and inaccessibility, to which 3.15 adds "her" jealousy and 3.19 lustfulness: 3.17 promises a thanksgiving hymn to Bacchus, a grand dithyramb thundering with Pindaric spirit — aspiring like 2.10 beyond the *humile*, and setting aside his deprecation of 'thundering' in 2.1<sup>43</sup>. The invective elements in these elegies foreshadow the formal renunciation of his love for Cynthia, more directly heralded by 21 and 23. If we had only Propertius' third and fourth books we would never have been content to equate Roman elegy with the limited variations of personal love poetry. Elegies like 3.18 and 3.19 are as full of *doctrina*, both ethnological and mythological, as Callimachus himself.

### *Ovid and the Amores*

It was the public who preferred *Amores*, and expected the ordeals of love from elegy. This is the reason for Ovid's pretence, when he begins *am.* 1.1 with a teasing show of resistance to love and its poetry, diverting responsibility onto Cupid and his inflammatory contagion. Why ever were the five books of his first edition reduced to three, unless he was in some way dissatisfied with what he had produced?<sup>44</sup> It is unlikely they were technically weak; far more likely that he felt their material to be repetitious. Ovid even repeats the claim of being forced by love to abandon 'higher' poetry as he enters book 2. But as he moves into the final book of *Amores* we cannot expect the poet to alienate his public by open rejection of continued 'autobiographical' love elegy, or by declaring his intent to move on. This is surely the point of Tragedy's rebuke and Ovid's weak demurral in 3.1: he introduces his own procrastination of

<sup>43</sup> Cf. 3.17.39-40 *haec ego non humili referam memoranda coturno, / qualis Pindarico spiritus ore tonat* with 2.10.11 *surge, anime ex humili*, and 2.1.39-40 *sed neque Phlegraeos... tumultus / intonet angusto pectore Callimachus*, adapting *Aitia* fr.1.20 βροντᾶν οὐκ ἐμὸν ἀλλὰ Διός.

<sup>44</sup> It will be seen that I take Ovid's prefatory epigram literally, despite N. Holzberg's arguments.

alleged "marching orders"<sup>45</sup> in order to reconcile his audience to the coming change.

So how does Ovid reposition himself in this final book of *Amores* to escape the confines of love elegy? It is time to return to *Amores* 3 for a linear analysis. My concern is not, of course, with any kind of autobiographical inference about Ovid's experience, or with the absolute chronology of these elegies, but with the effect he has sought by the arrangement of elegies put before us. However the opening and closing poems need a brief chronological comment. Although McKeown agrees with Hollis that 3.1 and 3.15 alike were probably composed after the rest of their book for the first edition, it is difficult to see why they could not have been composed for the later, three-book, version<sup>46</sup>. Like the late poem 2.18 they speak of Ovid's engagement with tragedy in terms which suggest that he has a tragedy well under way. But the only firm datings in book 3 are too early to be useful<sup>47</sup>.

In 3.1, Ovid's 'choice at the crossroads', Elegy is personified both by her physical appearance as a finely clad beauty with a loving gaze, perfumed hair and a charmingly lopsided gait<sup>48</sup> and by her speech. This promotes Elegy's generic self-image as a light or fickle creature like Cupid, well matched to her subject matter. Once again it is the other genre, in this case the tragic buskin, that is *durus*. And Elegy comically materializes

<sup>45</sup> Cf. 3.15.16 *aurea de campo vellite signa meo*.

<sup>46</sup> Compare J.C. McKEOWN (Ed.), *Ovid: Amores*. Vol I: *Text and Prolegomena* (Liverpool 1987), 74-5, and the Chronological Appendix in A.J. HOLLIS (Ed.), *Ovid. Ars Amatoria*. Book I (Oxford 1977), 150-51.

<sup>47</sup> These are the defeat of the Sygambri in 16 B.C., and Tibullus' death (in 19 if we accept Domitius Marsus' implied date to the year of Virgil's death; but see V. BUCHHEIT, in *Philologus* 109 (1965), 104-120 on the probable dating of TIB. 2.5 to 18/17 B.C.

<sup>48</sup> See the fascinating analysis of this encounter in terms of three dramatic genres by A. DEREMETZ, 67-71, and J.C. McKEOWN (Vol. I, Prolegomena, s.v. "doctrina") noting the double allusion to Callimachus' vision of the Graces in *Aitia* fr.7.10f., and Prodicus' fable of Hercules' choice between Virtue (Tragedy, since *virtus* is implied by her material of *facta virorum*) and Pleasure (Elegy). Only the limping pentameter is peculiar to Elegy.



herself as the love-note or tablets pinned to a door and exposed to passersby or stuffed in a maid's bosom. So this Elegy is still love elegy, still boasting of her utility as *werbende Dichtung*. But successive poems in book 3 will gainsay her claims; the poetic *persona's* love affair is going awry in more ways than one, and Ovid uses the failure or backstaging of love itself to convey the exhaustion of specifically love elegy<sup>49</sup>.

Thus 3.2, the most provocative and optimistic poem of the book, depends for its outcome on an imaginary rerun of the chariot race to gratify the girl's vows by letting her favourite win; but it postpones the hopes and vows of the seducing poet beyond the frame of this elegy: *alio cetera redde loco* (3.2.84). The next poem shows the lover-poet betrayed, deploring the fact that his girl has perjured herself without divine retribution, while the gods are angry only with "us men". The next elegy (3.4) again presupposes her infidelity, but takes an opposite rhetorical stance: it denounces the futility of surrounding a modern girl with guards, contrasting the self-imposed chastity of heroines like Penelope; addressing the "Vir" Ovid treats the infidelity of his girl as proof of her desirability, and a social asset to the man who will enjoy the gifts and convivial hospitality of her many friends. But *rusticus est nimium, quem laedit adultera coniunx* (3.4.37) may be a good line for a *Praeceptor amoris*: it is no motto for personal love elegy; with such inversion of the romantic code the genre itself must perish.

Omitting the spurious 3.5<sup>50</sup> we come to 3.6, a magnificent poem, which takes as its pretext that the poet is cut off from reaching his beloved by a stream in spate; he considers poetic

<sup>49</sup> With all respect for the arguments of J.C. McKEOWN in his section "Arrangement" (*op.cit.*, 95-6) I do not believe that 3.13 is the only poem that clearly "foreshadows the end of the collection". The symmetrical relations with poems in book 1 that McKeown observes are in no way incompatible with the heightened sense of frustration and despair which is their cumulative effect. In this it will be seen that I am closer to the analysis of Niklas HOLZBERG in *Die römische Liebeselegie. Eine Einführung* (Darmstadt 1990), 109-118.

<sup>50</sup> On which see E.J. KENNEY, in *CQ* 12 (1962), 1-31 and *Agon* vol.I.

solutions like supernatural vehicles and rejects them outright as the *prodigiosa... mendacia vatum* (17), something that will never happen: and thus reaches his intended theme. The loves of rivers (celebrated in a lost work of Callimachus) fill 60 lines of the elegy, of which the last 34 retell the myth of Ilia's pregnancy and her rescue through marriage to the Joseph-like river Anio. Twice within this splendid poem, however, we are reminded of the failures and banalities of our world, in the poet's denial of supernatural travel *nec tulit haec umquam nec feret ulla dies* (18) and his abuse of the stream as no noble river with a proud name (89, 91) but a random run-off of rain, snow and mud unfit for the traveller to drink.

In 3.6, then, the poet lover was frustrated from reaching his girl; in 3.7 he has access, but his own virility fails him. Here at the heart of the book the poet is driven to denouncing his own member; having overcome all the usual obstacles — *optabam certe recipi; sum nempe receptus / oscula ferre, tuli; proximus esse. fui* (47-8) — he has failed as a man (59-60; *nec vir ut ante, fui*). McKeown carefully notes the difficulty of calculating the central elegy of this book, given the possibility that 3.5. is inauthentic and 3.11, which he prints as a single poem, can be construed as either single or double. As he argues, out of the four combinations only two would give a clear central poem, and it would be the lament for Tibullus, certainly a symbol of the death of love elegy. But whether we include 3.5 or omit it, the numerical centre of the verses in this book will occur in 3.7.<sup>51</sup> And after this failure as a lover he will show in the next elegy that he has failed as a poet: *et quisquam ingenuas etiamnunc suspicit artes / aut tenerum dotes carmen habere putat?* His poems have been able to reach the girl but he has not; she praised (or thanked? *cum bene laudavit*) him, then shut the door in his face. Values are inverted and the impoverished poet is perceived

<sup>51</sup> Without 3.5 there are 844 verses; the midpoint between 422/3 occurs before 3.7.65 *nostra tamen iacuerunt velut praemortua membra*. Including 3.5 there are 890 verses, and the midpoint comes at 3.7.46/7.

as a barbarian, while the blood-spattered soldier is preferred. As in 3.4, he invokes the gods, blaming Jupiter's bad example of corrupting Danae in the form of gold, as he blames men for the harmful effects of civilization, but these arguments annul in advance the desperate final appeal for divine intervention: if only some god would take pity on a neglected lover and turn this ill-gotten wealth to dust! The fiction of the successful lover poet is falling apart, as neither the lover nor the poet succeeds in enjoying his love.

In 3.9 Elegy herself, now seen not as provocative but as woe-ful, is asked to weep and tear her hair for the dead Tibullus; poetry is unavailing just as father Apollo wailed lament for Linus contrary to the bent of his lyre (*invita... lyra*, 24)<sup>52</sup>. Again the gods have failed, or proved powerless to defend pious men and sacred poets (cf. 17, 35-44). But in a final note of hope Ovid echoes Tibullus' own expectation of going to Elysium, where the youthful Catullus and Calvus<sup>53</sup> will greet him, and Gallus *si falsum est temerati crimen amici* (63): Tibullus will be their companion, adding himself, not explicitly either to elegists or to love poets, but to the band of devout men (65-66).

Next 3.10 makes the summer *anniversarium Cereris* and its enforced *secubitus* for women a pretext for mythological and aitiological elegy, as Ovid presents a first cause for this ritual celibacy in the passion of Ceres for Iasius and the famine brought on by her emotional conflict of love and shame, opposing it to the more obvious and conventional origin of the festival in celebrating the recovery of Persephone. This preoccupation with *sacra*, along with the unmediated narrative of the festival of Faliscan Juno in 3.13, reflect Ovid's developing

<sup>52</sup> In this allusion (3.9.23-4) et *Linon in silvis idem pater 'aelinon' altis / dicitur*, as in 3-4, Ovid is surely evoking the supposed origin of the elegy in lament, for which see D.E. GERBER (Ed.), *A Companion to the Greek Lyric Poets* (Leiden 1997), 93-132.

<sup>53</sup> Catullus and Calvus both seem to have died young, but perhaps *hedera iuvenalia cinctus / tempora* (61-2) is worded to suggest the youthful nature of their love poetry.



poetic interest in the sacred Calendar that will emerge as *Fasti*. The poem or pair of poems 3.11/11b echo Catullus' famous "lover's conflict" of resistance and surrender (poem 8, ending *at tu Catulle destinatus obdura*)<sup>54</sup> as well as alluding to the safe-coming of Propertius' ship into harbour in the *renuntiatio amoris* that closes book 3<sup>55</sup>. But his farewell to love is instantly reversed as he succumbs, despite his girl's offence against the gods and her partner's rights (*socialia iura*), to the prevailing winds of desire (51).

3.12, like 3.8, marks the failure of love and condemns the futility and mendacity of poetry: Ovid's praise of Corinna has made his beloved into common property and stirred up the gods against him. His own *ingenium* (8) is to blame, since he wilfully sang of Corinna instead of epic sagas. Now poetic success has brought about emotional ruin, and love poetry, instead of functioning advantageously as *werbende Dichtung*, has actually damaged his (imaginary) love. If only he had sung less well (*aversis... Musis*, 17) she would not have been prostituted. But the second half of the poem shifts to demolish even the fiction of Corinna. As in 3.6, he protests that poets should not be trusted, since their licence is unbounded; *exit in immensum fecunda licentia vatum* (3.12.41). Thus contradictory arguments condemn love elegy both for inventing a mistress, and for her imagined betrayal.

After the ritual details and aition of Halaesus in 3.13 only 3.14 remains before Ovid abandons the field. It carries to the logical conclusion the increasingly dominant theme of deception and betrayal. Just as *am.* 1.4 luxuriated in deceiving his mistress's partner in public as well as in private,<sup>56</sup> and 3.4 derided that partner for complaining at deception, just as 3.8

<sup>54</sup> On interpretation of this poem since 1920 see D.F.S. THOMSON (Ed.), *Catullus* (Toronto 1997), 226f.

<sup>55</sup> *Iam mea votiva puppis redimita corona / lenta tumescentes aequoris audit aquas* (3.11.29-30) = *ecce coronatae portum tetigere carinae* (PROP. 3.24.15).

<sup>56</sup> The deceiver is now himself deceived; compare the inversion in 3.11.23-4 of the secret signals once addressed to Ovid as interloper in 1.4.17-20.

culminates in lamenting that the same partner welcomes the wealthy soldier as his mistress's lover but excludes the poet, so finally Ovid addresses the woman, urging her at least to pretend she is not betraying him. In 1.4 he had asked her to lie to him about her sexual activities with her protector: now he acts as if he were her legitimate protector, and she were flaunting her sexual activities with others. Promiscuity (*prostare*) has taken over in both 3.12.8 and 3.14.11, forcing the poet to ask the impossible, that he should knowingly let himself be deceived. Once love is dismissed, it is time to dismiss love poetry in the final poem, *am.* 3.15.

### *Ovid after the Amores*

Ovid was still to write the four didactic books which retain love as their ostensible theme: but these distance and neutralize it, cancelling its elegiac pathos by treating it as an unreal art or game: it is the didactic, not the sentimental or erotic element that defines their genre and tone. But Ovid had still three major bodies of non-erotic elegy before him. In the proem to the aitiological *Fasti* he would pass over love as theme, remodelling the elegists' old 'excuse' from epic. Instead of singing of Caesar's warfare (*arma*) he had chosen to sing of his *sacra*. Like Propertius in 3.9, he appeals to his patron to give him the necessary lead and ensure the success of his poem, but there is no falling away. The poem moves forwards and even when honouring Augustus' highest title, *Pater Patriae*, in *fast.* 2.119-144, his too weak *ingenium* and his *elegi* rise to the supreme challenge:

*quid volui demens elegis imponere tantum  
ponderis? heroi res erat ista pedis.* (2.125-6)

His protest is only a rhetorical *praemunitio*, a ritualized gesture to generic traditions; Ovid launches fearlessly into the revered title *sancte Pater Patriae*, and the people's universal love. Only when he approaches April, the month of Venus, in *fast.* 4 will



Ovid conjure up the ghost of love elegy past and recant his recantation of *am.* 3.15.

The situation is again changed in the exile poetry, for now Ovid's *ingenium* and his poetic success as *praeceptor amoris* are his offence; hence the first poem of *Tristia*, addressed to his volume, insists on its *titulus* as proof of its innocence (*trist.* 1.1.67-68), but takes that title as already given. These new poems conform to the generic *querimonia* of *Ars poetica* 75<sup>57</sup>, or the *flebiles modi* mocked by Horace in the elegiac Valgius (*carm.* 2.9.9): We recall *flebilis*... *Elegia* from *am.* 3.9.3. Other words besides *tristis* and *flebilis* signal the mode; *miser*, and *infelix* with its double force of both suffering and causing misfortune<sup>58</sup>, and *mei casus* (*trist.* 1.5.45; 1.8.19), restoring to its true reference the language melodramatically lavished on mere sexual frustration at *am.* 1.12.1 *flete meos casus: tristes rediere tabellae. / infelix hodie littera posse negat.*

Two elegies, 1.6 and 1.7, reverse the direction of his eroto-didactic elegy: 1.6 as *praeconia* (35) of his wife's loyalty; and 1.7 (on the unpublished *Metamorphoses*) which rejects the ivy crown, as proper to *laeti poetae*, not for his brows or circumstances (*temporibus meis* 1.7.4). Yet while 1.6 implicitly repudiates his poetry of *furta*, he grounds it in the tradition of love elegy by recalling Antimachus' *Lyde* and Philitas' *Bittis*<sup>59</sup>. Thus cumulatively, but without an explicit program, Ovid has set the stage for the last new sub-genre of elegy — the poetry of exile<sup>60</sup>. This renewed form of elegiac lament and its generic

<sup>57</sup> Cf. the *querimonia* Horace rejects at his apotheosis in *carm.* 2.20.22, and *querelae* evoked by Cornelia in *PROP.* 4.11.57, *HOR. carm.* 3.11.52; at 3.24.33 *querimonia* are simply complaints.

<sup>58</sup> *Miser*: *trist.* 1.1.31-2; 1.2.13, 19 and 42; 1.3.40; 1.4.5 etc.; *infelix*: *trist.* 1.1.4 (of the book itself if m.sing., if not of its clothing); 1.7.14; 2.1.

<sup>59</sup> As McKeown notes, the presence of Ovid's wife in *am.* 3.13 carried him outside the norms of love elegy.

<sup>60</sup> Other allusions to the book's title as *Tristia* occur at 2.493 *his ego deceptus non tristia carmina feci*; 4.1.15, Achilles' self-consolation; 4.10.112 *tristia quo possum carmine fata levo*; 5.1.47 (echoing 3.1.9) *interea nostri quid agant nisi triste libelli?*, and beyond the *Tristia* cf. *Pont.* 1.1.16, and 3.9.35 *cano tristia tristis*.

propriety is articulated at the opening of *trist.* 3 (1.9-10 *inspice quid portem; nihil hic nisi triste videbis, / carmine temporibus conveniente suis*<sup>61</sup>). The same tone is proclaimed as appropriate (*convenire*) in the first poem of *trist.* 5 (5.1.5-6 *flebilis ut noster status est, ita flebile carmen, / materiae scripto conveniente suae* and 47-8 *interea nostri quid agant nisi triste libelli? / tibia funeribus convenit ista meis*). Once again, as in *Amores*, Ovid presents his elegies as autobiography, claiming personal experience and emotion as the proper theme of elegy. For the third or even fourth time Ovid has renewed the potential of his genre.

### Epilogue

Why, then, given Ovid's demonstration of the vast range of themes, tones and generic functions available to elegy, from narrative to dialogue, from lament to exhortation, is there no significant Roman elegy — love elegy or elegy on any other theme — after Ovid? For Horace, writing his critical *Epistle to Florus*, the obvious rival preening in the public gaze is the elegist — usually construed as Propertius; *carmina compono, hic elegos: mirabile visu / caelatumque novem musis opus* (*epist.* 2.2.91-2).

Ovid's poetic successors, the unnamed *minores* of *trist.* 4.10.55 were probably elegists like his named predecessors. Of the poets listed in *Pont.* 4.16 five (Montanus, 11-12; Sabinus and Tuscus, 20; Proculus, 32; Capella, 36) were certainly elegists; in the next generation Seneca's personal poetry from exile, or what is credited to him, is elegiac. But move on another generation to the Flavian age and we have a very odd situation: the elegists are not real poets and the poets are not elegists.

We have three independent witnesses. Let us start with Martial, the oldest. He at times names his verses as *scazons* or

<sup>61</sup> The next couplet (3.1.11-12) explicitly blames the limping rhythm of his distich on the length of his journey.

hendecasyllables, but with the elegiac distichs they are all *Epigrammata*<sup>62</sup>. It is other people who write elegy, such as Nerva, "the Tibullus of our age" (8.70) or the imaginary Malisianus who dares to recite verse in Tibullus' meter at the home of Stella, the consular love elegist, or the brothers Unici who write verse worthy of Lesbia or Corinna (12.44). A number of Martial's longer pieces in elegiac distichs, such as the sentimental portrait of his Spanish villa (12.31), or the birthday poem (12.62) in their tone, diction, length and topic could be elegies, but he does not call them so; the only place where he acknowledges writing elegies is one of those exceptions that prove the rule: he also claims to have begun writing epic, tragedy, lyric, and satire (not a distinct meter) before he mentions elegy and finally epigram, but only as a set-up for the competitive versifier Tucca:

*audemus saturas: Lucilius esse laboras  
ludo levis elegos: tu quoque ludis idem.  
quid minus esse potest? epigrammata fingere coepi.* (12.94.7-9)

So elegy (neatly packed into the pentameter) is seen as trivial compared with the effort of Lucilian Satire, and weightier only than epigrams themselves.

We turn to Statius, who only began to publish his occasional poetry when he had already virtually finished his epic. The topics of his *Silvae* are laments or descriptions of luxurious settings or wedding celebrations, all generically suited to elegy; but he writes hexameters, with the occasional escape into lyric or hendecasyllables. Only when he is celebrating Stella's wedding is Elegy prominent as a third party:

*quas inter vultu petulans Elegea propinquat  
celsior adsueto, divasque hortatur et ambit  
alternum suffulta pedem, decimamque videri  
se cupit et mediis fallit permixta sorores.* (*silv.* 1.2.7-10)

<sup>62</sup> Compare the discussion of the name *epigrammata* for the poetic genre, and its development at Rome by M. PUELMA, "Epigramma. Aspekte einer Wortgeschichte", in *MH* 53 (1996), 123-39.



His Venus addresses the bride Violentilla, reminding her in Propertian language of Stella's learned poems (*docta... carmina*) known to all the youths and girls of Rome (172-3): in his own person and in elegiac style Statius evokes these lost masterpieces — the prayers and tears and nightlong laments (*questus*) of the lover at the threshold, and the name of his beloved Asteris<sup>63</sup> sung through the city morning, noon and night, so that she began to bend her harsh heart and to seem cruel in her own eyes (196-200). Statius' diction is pointedly emotive, designed to conjure up Stella's verse, but the meter is steady hexameters. This will not prevent Statius from calling on all the poets who steal the last foot from the noble epic *qui nobile gressu / extremo fraudatis epos*, (*silv.* 1.2.250-1), Philitas, Callimachus, Propertius in his Umbrian grotto, *nec tristis in ipsis / Naso Tomis divesque foco lucente Tibullus* (254-5)<sup>64</sup>.

Statius knows the elegists so well, but the most recent name is Ovid in melancholy exile; perhaps J.P. Sullivan was right that it was Ovid's exile, seen as punishment for the *Ars amatoria*, that deterred succeeding generations from writing elegy<sup>65</sup>. If only it had! Let us turn away from canonical poets and what do we find? *Scribunt indocti doctique poemata passim* (pace Hor. *epist.* 2.1.117).

Consider Pliny's *Letters*. Those *versiculi* of which he is so proud in *epist.* 5.3 are not necessarily elegiac, but his respectable predecessors whose verse we know about, like Seneca and Nerva, used the meter — we cannot tell what works of Virgil, Accius and Ennius he had in mind. Young Calpurnius Piso's first recital (*epist.* 5.17) was of *Katasterismoi*.

<sup>63</sup> Asteris as the poetic name of Stella's beloved is attested only here: Martial refers to her as Ianthis (6.21) a pun not on her lover's name but her own. Not surprisingly neither pseudonym corresponds metrically to her actual pentasyllabic name.

<sup>64</sup> It is interesting that Ovid has been invoked in terms of his *Tristia* rather than the love-poems so much closer to Stella's erotic verse. The allusion to Tibullus draws on 1.1.6 *dum meus adsiduo luceat igne focus*.

<sup>65</sup> *Martial: the Unexpected Classic* (Cambridge 1991), 106.



"A learned but rewarding theme", says Pliny, "composed in flowing, delicate, smooth and even lofty *elegi*, ringing the changes of rise and fall, plainness and fullness, sweetness and austerity", all pronounced with blushing youthful vigour. In another letter (*epist.* 6.15) he reports that the knight Passennus Paulus, a proud descendant of Propertius *scribit elegos*. Elegy, along with hendecasyllables, is at home in the amateur recital hall; Sentius Augurinus turns his compliments to Pliny in hendecasyllables (*epist.* 4.27) but when Pliny describes his own development as a poet (*epist.* 7.4) he starts with a now forgotten tragedy (probably in Greek) at the age of fourteen, then the Latin elegiacs he composed against the sea and island where he was becalmed on a voyage; later he tried the hexameter and only then started to write hendecasyllables. In a recent bout of insomnia he turned an anecdote into a dozen hexameters (a sample is offered) then turned to elegiacs (*transii ad elegos*), and read them to his friends when he got back to the city. Clearly versifying is simply a gentlemanly time-killer.

But if it was the ultimate amateur diversion to produce elegiacs, amateurs like Pliny also used the eleven syllable lines favoured by Martial and occasionally Statius (*silv.* 1.6; 2.7; 4.9). We would expect hendecasyllabic poems to be shortwinded, but Statius' examples are extended (102, 135 and 55 lines).

So perhaps it is not enough to argue, as I am tempted to, that Statius disdained the meter because all the amateurs indulged in it. Is there something intrinsically unsatisfactory about the elegiac distich? I think there was. The poet with something to say, who wants to enjoy the flavour of saying it, the poet who enjoys rich diction, epic epithets and lofty turns of phrase, needs more room to think in; against the scanty eleven feet of the elegiac distich can be set the regular hexameter period of 3 and a half lines, 21 or 22 feet, double the space for complex sentences to flow forwards unimpeded<sup>66</sup>. And this,

<sup>66</sup> I would add to this the crippling restriction to the bisyllabic pentameter ending which developed with Tibullus and Ovid. In Catullus 68a alone

I believe, did as much to make poets shun elegy as the social factor that amateurs had made it *déclassé*. The form originated for short inscriptions and served that purpose magnificently: Ovid showed that it was ideal for poems to mark an occasion, for conversational exchanges and casual narrative: but it was ill-suited to carry the weight of extended formal poetry, and our Flavians knew it.

pentameters end in rich nouns and verbs like *epistolium*, *restituam*, *perpetitur*, *pervigilat*, *Veneris* and *officium*; the first bisyllable is *petas* (14), then from *mihi* (20) they become more common. This allows more variety of sentence structure and diction since the poet admits even polysyllables like *amaritiem*. No doubt the clash of ictus and accent generated by these polysyllables was a strong musical argument against them, but the rule reduced the pentameter endings to the banal and predictable possessives (*mea*, *tuo* etc.) and verb (*agat*, *erit*, *erat*, *fuit*) and noun (*amor*, *aqua*, *equus*, *onus*, *opus*) forms, preponderantly with an initial vowel.

## DISCUSSION

*St. Hinds:* Your epilogue is extremely thought provoking in the questions which it raises about post-Ovidian elegy — both about how it *was*, and about how it was narrativized in literary-historical terms.

It occurs to me that one can hypothetically reconstruct here an instance of how traditional literary history (in A. Deremetz's terms "l'histoire littéraire lectoriale") may part company from immanent literary history ("l'histoire littéraire auctoriale").

I am convinced that one or more of these post-Ovidian elegists — however amateur and derivative he may have been as an artist — will have included in his verse an immanent literary-historical narrative, explaining that he himself is the inevitable successor of Gallus, Tibullus, Propertius and Ovid, indeed the inevitable *telos* of Roman elegy. However, unlike the succession narrative offered by Ovid himself, this hypothetical narrative will have failed to impress or convince enough readers to gain currency outside the poet's own work: unlike Ovid's narrativization of the history of elegy, this successor's narrative will have failed to find canonization as "l'histoire littéraire lectoriale".

*E. Fantham:* I am not sure whether I am more charmed or disturbed by your suggestion: in fact, as you know, mediocre elegy has usually survived because it was included in a corpus, or dedicated to imperial personages (*consolatio ad Liviam*), a context that excludes such self-aggrandizement.

*A. Barchiesi:* Dato che il Suo lavoro è solitamente molto attento anche a una storia letteraria su basi sociali e culturali, posso sottoporLe una narrazione standard della storia dell'elegia

su basi socioculturali e poi chiederLe come si rapporterebbe al suo discorso?

La versione standard di una sociopoetica dell'elegia romana sarebbe che l'elegia acquista prestigio e centralità come zona di contatto fra pubblico e privato, in un'epoca di grandi mutamenti e transizioni (di composizione sociale, struttura politica, rapporti Italia-Roma, costume, ecc.) un'epoca cioè in cui il rapporto di mutua ridefinizione tra pubblico e privato è nevralgico e 'caldo' — e perde prestigio e centralità quando, nel I secolo d.C., il quadro si stabilizza e i rapporti fra pubblico e privato si sono ormai riassetati. La mia non è una professione di fede in questi argomenti ma solo un invito a tenere presente il rapporto fra storia letteraria dalla parte dei produttori e sociologia delle forme letterarie.

*E. Fantham:* It seems to me that this 'standard' version is too much influenced by the particularities of the Augustan social and political revolution: it treats elegy as inherently resistance-literature, rather than as sentimental personal utterance or learned and allusive mythical narrative. Noone treats Horace's love lyrics or his *Odes* stressing private life and personal withdrawal as resistance-literature. There were other ages when poetry flowered, such as the time of Nero, certainly a period of *otium*, and one which should have fostered an abundant production of personal poetry (provided the Emperor did not feel himself outshone!). Yet elegy did not return.

*M. Citroni:* La svalutazione di un genere per 'inflazione' può certo essere una ragione importante per la fine di un genere, in quanto può scoraggiare i grandi poeti a impegnarsi. Il suggerimento di E. Fantham è molto interessante. Ma Orazio (*serm.* 1,10,46 s.) ci dice di essersi messo a scrivere satire dopo che avevano tentato *frustra* Varrone Atacino *atque quibusdam aliis*. Dunque quando era già in corso una 'inflazione' del genere. Sia da Hor. *epist.* 2,1,117 *scribimus indocti doctique poemata passim* (l'iperbole è certo scherzosa), sia dall'impressionante elenco di



poeti in Ovidio *Pont.* 4,16 (che ci sarebbero quasi tutti sconosciuti se questa elegia fosse andata perduta) si ricava l'idea di un diffuso diletterismo poetico nei più diversi generi, da cui si stacca ogni tanto qualche figura che viene canonizzata. Ma le ragioni per cui a certe opere viene attribuito valore canonico risiedono nei criteri di giudizio del pubblico e della critica contemporanea; criteri che ci sfuggono largamente. Anche la lirica per noi finisce (o quasi) dopo Orazio. Cesio Basso era stato canonizzato come lirico (Quint. *inst.* 10,1,96) e non era certo un diletterante; ma le sue liriche saranno state davvero molto superiori alle elegie di Stella o di Passieno Crispo, non canonizzate? La satira, genere che mette anch'esso in gioco la relazione tra individuo e società (mi riferisco a ciò che ha opportunamente osservato Barchiesi a proposito dell'elegia) continua a fiorire in età imperiale. Ma è vera fioritura o è sporadica casualità la presenza di due satirici 'canonizzati' nel corso di un secolo e mezzo dopo la pubblicazione delle *Satire* di Orazio? Quanto alla presenza di 'quasi-elegie' in distici in Marziale e di 'quasi-elegie' in esametri o in faleci in Stazio, direi che è in questo periodo che comincia una vera *Kreuzung der Gattungen* nella poesia latina. Finora i poeti latini si attenevano con una certa fedeltà alle regole fondamentali dei generi greci. Da Marziale in poi, fino ad Ausonio e Claudiano, si vanno perdendo i confini tra i generi, specialmente tra i generi 'minori'.

Ho molto apprezzato la lettura di *Amores* 3 come un 'piano di disimpegno' dall'elegia come presunta autobiografia erotica. Ho sempre avuto l'impressione che 3,13 in cui *coniunx*, in evidenza nel primo verso, spezza bruscamente la finzione elegiaca, fosse collocato verso la fine del libro come preannuncio al lettore della prossima fine dell'opera elegiaca. Ora capisco che il progetto di 'disimpegno' ha un disegno più ampio. La posizione di 3,13 avrebbe una funzione di annuncio al lettore corrispondente e inversa alla funzione che credo di aver riconosciuto alla posizione verso la fine del libro di *am.* 2,18 come spiegazione del rapporto tra la prima e la seconda edizione degli *Amores* (M. Citroni, *Poesia e lettori in Roma antica* [Roma-Bari 1995], 447).

*E. Fantham:* That is most helpful. Like you I am not sure whether the survival of Persius (*quis leget haec?*) warrants speaking of satire as flourishing between Horace and Juvenal. And as far as lyric is concerned, even if we discount Horace's own remarks (*epist.* 1.19.35-49) about the disappointing reception of his lyric corpus (*carm.* 1-3), lyric was, I think, both too difficult technically for Roman amateurs and required a lightness of spirit that was alien to imperial Rome. And I would hardly describe Quintilian as canonizing Bassus (*si quem adicere velis, is erit Caesius Bassus, quem nuper vidimus; sed eum longe praecedunt ingenia viventium*). Thank you for your reminder about the encroachment of other genres springing from an increasing hybridization (*Kreuzung der Gattungen*). If I have understood you right, you are suggesting that elegy was, as it were, crushed and displaced between the expanded ranges of informal epigram and formal ekphrastic hexameters.

*A. Deremetz:* Votre exposé m'a semblé confirmer l'importance considérable que la 'confidence' d'Ovide sur la succession canonique des quatre grands élégiaques a jouée dans la vision que l'histoire littéraire nous a donnée de la création élégiaque à Rome. Êtes-vous d'accord avec ce jugement? Et considérez-vous que l'histoire littéraire a survalorisé le propos ovidien? Pourriez-vous aussi me dire quelques mots sur l'absence de Tibulle dans votre catalogue? Faut-il penser qu'à la différence des autres élégiaques il n'a rien dit sur sa pratique, ou peut-on considérer comme possible la présence discrète et masquée de telles considérations dans son œuvre?

*E. Fantham:* Yes, not only in his reiteration of the canon but by sheer force of personality, as I see it, Ovid as last and most prolific of the elegists has imposed his vision upon subsequent Roman poets, even before Statius, who follows the Ovidian sequence in *silv.* 1.2. But we may be able to prevent Ovid from deceiving us as well. We can see that Ovid's canon, repeated even after he had written *Fasti* and several books of personal

poetry in exile, encourages a narrow reading as a list of love elegists. I believe Statius is the first to associate Ovid with the poetry of the *Tristia*, and does so to make the paradox that even in exile Ovid must have rejoiced at the success of Stella's elegies consummated in his marriage with Violentilla.

Tibullus is an interesting case. I would say that he did not need to emerge from a period of love elegy and disavow himself, but produced both learned Alexandrian elegy (1.7) and bucolic poems of nostalgia for ancestral simplicity even in his first book, indeed in the first poem of that book. And I confess to passing him over because I know of no statements of his that invite a special reading of elegiac tradition or his position within it.

*St. Hinds:* And I note that Statius's specification of Callimachus and Philitas as Greek exponents of elegy in *silv.* 1.2.250-1 shows the successful conversion of Propertius' rather idiosyncratic choice of these two particular Greek predecessors into a standard narrative of 'lectorial' literary history.

*E. Fantham:* Yes indeed. Philitas does not even make an appearance in the erudite syllabus of Hellenistic poets taught by Statius's father, according to *silv.* 5.3.156-8.

*E.A. Schmidt:* Ist Tibull ein Liebeselegiker, oder hat erst Ovid ihn dazu gemacht? Was bedeutet es, dass wahrscheinlich erst und nur Ovid seine Elegien *Amores* genannt hat? (Zum Zweifel am Titel *Amores* für die Elegien des Gallus vgl. B.M. Gauly, *Liebeserfahrungen* [cf. E. Fantham, n.19 S. 191]). Was bedeutet es in Zusammenhang des Tenors Ihres Vortrags, dass keiner der Elegiker für den Dichtungsamen der Geliebten Venus- oder Liebesanspielungen gewählt hat, trotz Catulls Lesbia (und der Leucadia des Varro Atacinus, die doch wohl eher Sappho- als Apollon-Assoziationen hervorrufen sollte), sondern dass sie, von Gallus bis Tibull, die Geliebte durch ihren Namen mit Apollo (Lykoreios, Kynthios, Delios) verbinden?



*E. Fantham:* Certainly Tibullus does not introduce either of his poetry books with an elegy that programmatically heralds love poetry. While Propertius's incipit for the *Monobiblos* is *Cynthia prima*, Delia only enters Tibullus 1.1 after Messala and well after Tibullus' programmatic outline of his own simple *Lebensideal*. I would even suggest that his love elegies are less successful than those on rural, religious or ceremonial themes; they show a poverty of invention and inability to develop content in their restless shifting of topics and introduction of new subordinate figures. But without entitling poems *Amores* the other elegists by the prominence they give to their poetically named (and poetically significant) mistress mark their work as love elegy. Only Ovid gives so little particularity to Corinna that he needs to label his collection with the plural "Love affairs" (or poems or episodes of love).

*J.P. Schwindt:* Die fast vollständige Abwesenheit ausdrücklicher poetologischer Reflexion in Tibulls elegischem *oeuvre* ist in der Tat auffallend. Meines Wissens beschränkt sich der Autor darauf, in 2,5,109-12 die Geliebte als Inspirationsquelle seiner Dichtung herauszustellen (*usque cano Nemesim, sine qua versus mihi nullus / verba potest iustos aut reperire pedes*) und, umgekehrt, in 1,4,61-66 die Poesie zum Medium der Verewigung der Besungenen zu erklären (*quem referent Musae, vivet, dum robora tellus, / dum caelum stellas, dum vehet amnis aquas*). Die Nützlichkeit elegischen Dichtens (als erfolgreich werbendem) wird bald — in Ansehung des strengen Regiments der *puella* — bezweifelt (2,4,13f.), bald mit strenger Gebärde als ausschliesslicher Sinn solchen Dichtens gefordert (2,4,15-20 und 2,6,9-12).

Für die literargeschichtliche Selbstpositionierung des Autors geben dergleichen Bemerkungen nicht viel her, und es ist erstaunlich, dass sich Tibull in der Überlieferung behauptet hat, ohne wie Properz und vor allem Ovid evidente 'Duftmarken' in einem System der literaturhistorischen Selbstbehauptungs- und Legitimierungsversuche zu hinterlassen.



*E. Fantham:* That is most helpful: your thorough survey does indeed show how little self-conscious trace of his literary principles and purpose Tibullus has left us.

*E.A. Schmidt:* Kann man Gründe dafür angeben, dass sich das elegische Distichon im Lateinischen so stark zugleich als syntaktische Einheit abschliesst? Denn nur, wenn und weil das der Fall ist, gilt Ihre Überlegung, dass es so wenig Raum für das Denken bot und, wie ich hineinfügen möchte, immer gleich viel Raum. Die Befreiung der deutschen Lyrik in der Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts bestand in der Aufgabe der immer gleich langen syntaktischen Einheit des Alexandriners und im freien Fliessen der Sätze über die Verse und Strophen horazischer Systeme hinweg. Im alexandrinischen Distichon gab es Enjambement vom Hexameter zum Pentameter und auch vom Pentameter zum Hexameter: ein extremes Beispiel ist Kallimachos, *Epigr.* 20 Pf. Aus den *Aitien* nenne ich an längeren Sätzen nur fr.1,1-6, 25-28, 31-36, sowie fr.110 (*Coma Berenices*) mitsamt Catulls Übersetzung, die einmal einen Satz enthält, der sich über vier Distichen erstreckt (66,7-14).

*E. Fantham:* I suppose the self-contained distich of Latin elegy might be compared in its constriction to the predominantly endstopped hexameters of Catullus or Lucretius, which Virgil put behind him. But, as you say, the distich itself seems less confining in Catullus and early Propertius than it becomes in Ovid. Perhaps the fixed closure of Ovid's distichs is less noticeable because of the brevity and flexibility of his phrases and sentences within the distich. In any case, his example was, I think, an impediment to the variety of later less nimble elegiac versifiers.

*E.A. Schmidt:* Wie beurteilen Sie die Elegienzyklen im *Corpus Tibullianum*, so weit sie, auch nach Ihrer Meinung, nach-ovidisch sind?

*E. Fantham:* I admit to finding Lygdamus and the so-called 'Friend of Sulpicia' so imitative and impoverished in vocabulary and imagination, that they might seem prime evidence for the deterrent effect of Ovid. Clearly Sulpicia is rather limited in vocabulary and expression, but her small scale makes the perhaps deliberate effect of girlish *Schwärmerei* seem fresh and vivid. She is represented by only forty lines, but these are relatively free of metrical containment; they include several enjambements within the distich ([Tib.] 4.7.9-10; 4.10.1-2 and 3-4; 4.11.3-4 and 5-6). In 4.7.7-8, the sentence runs on into a new distich, and 4.12 consists of one six-line sentence, constructed like the complex sentences of four and five distichs that open Catullus 65 and 68a.

*M. Citroni:* Marziale, di fronte a una estesa produzione di poesia occasionale banale (ben attestata da Plinio il Giovane) reagisce cercando di conquistarsi, proprio in questo genere amatoriale alla moda, una posizione di poeta canonico. Il genere, come vediamo da Plinio *epist.* 4,14,9, non aveva neanche un nome fisso. Marziale, appunto per accreditarsi una posizione canonica, impone alla varietà dei suoi carmi un nome fisso (*Epigrammata*), stabilisce una precisa *Diadoche* dei rappresentanti canonici del genere (Catullo, Domizio Marso, Albino-vano Pedone, Getulico). Usa quasi solo i tre metri prevalenti nei carmi minori di Catullo (distico, scazonte, falecio).

*E. Fantham:* I am grateful to you for bringing out how Martial has not only enriched the scope of epigram (in his collective sense) but provided the genre with a history. I suspect, however, that the increased variety of his content is not the chief reason for the shrinkage of elegy at any level of distinction in this period. Rather we have a shift of sensibility which promotes personal sentiment inside the family instead of elegiac eroticism.

*M. Citroni:* Da Marziale si potrebbe ricavare un elemento a conferma della tesi di E. Fantham e di ciò che ha detto poco fa

A. Barchiesi. Di tutta la grande varietà di temi tradizionali dell'epigramma, il solo tema che Marziale *non* sviluppa è quello erotico-sentimentale affine all'elegia erotica augustea.

A. Kerkhecker: Aus unserer Diskussion hat sich für mich eine Spannung ergeben: zwischen einem eher geistes- oder sozialgeschichtlichen Modell, wie es A. Barchiesi charakterisiert hat, und einem Modell auktorialer Selbstbestimmung. Vielleicht sollte man gar nicht versuchen, diese Spannung aufzulösen. Sie wäre dann Teil einer Phänomenologie der 'immanenten Literaturgeschichte'. Scheint Ihnen das sinnvoll?

E. Fantham: Yes, it is not just good sense, but necessary to continue balancing the immanent literary history of our self-centered poets against the familiar and less provocative assessments of critics. You are surely right that we should cherish this tension.

E.A. Schmidt: Liebeselegie, oder allgemein, das Motiv elegischer Lebenswahl, scheint poetisch produktiv gewesen zu sein, so lange in Rom Privatheit faktisch oder ideologisch (im Sinn der überkommenen Verhaltensmuster) umstritten war, von Catull also bis Properz. Für den Liebhaber in Ovids *Amores* ist das Leben der Musse nicht mehr Wahl, sondern selbstverständliche Gegebenheit, weshalb die Liebe dann der schönste Zeitvertreib wird. Das Andauern der *pax Romana* und der unpolitischen Privatheit der Bürger führt schliesslich in neronischer Zeit zum Unbehagen am Frieden, zum Melancholie der Musse (vgl. *Carm. Einsidl.* 2).

E. Fantham: You raise a fascinating new theme. Is it a coincidence that your persuasive reading of the eclipse of elegy leads us back to a more bucolic form of melancholy? Perhaps the *otium* of the pastoral world offered a better mirror of the loneliness generated by the loss of real public life.