RECONSTRUCTING HOME IN EXILE: OVID'S *TRISTIA*

By

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Abstract

This thesis explores the physical landscapes and social interactions that form Ovid's home in Rome, as well as his vision of a transcendent home made possible through poetry. My case-studies will be poems from Ovid's *Tristia* in which he either directly reconstructs home or provides a photographic negative image of home by highlighting the opposite: the barbaric. I will spend the first chapter examining Ovid's construction of home's physical landscape. In *Tristia* 3.10 and 3.12, Ovid recreates Rome as a sort of negative image of Tomis. Rome is what Tomis is not. In Chapter Two, I will look at Ovid's reconstruction of social interaction; alienated in Tomis, he maintains his connections in Rome through his absent presence, as exemplified in *Tristia* 3.5. But home for Ovid is more than Rome. In Chapter Three, I will examine Ovid's position as a sacred *vates* who can, through his poetry, have a transcendent home on Mount Helicon. Tiberius's future triumph in Germany (*Tristia* 4.2) gives Ovid the opportunity to join himself to Caesar's triumph; his poem becomes the symbolic declaration of his own victory over the world. His letter to his daughter Perilla (*Tristia* 3.4), who is also a poet, reveals that poetry gives Ovid a companionship with her even while he is absent; poetry allows him friendships that spans any distance. I will also examine *Tristia* 4.10, Ovid's autobiography, as a further example of Ovid's transcendent home on Mount Helicon. He spent his boyhood on Mount Helicon, and in his early years he becomes known and read in the city; in exile he finally becomes known and read in the whole world.

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I would like to thank Tara Welch for her suggestions, her steady feedback, her support and her friendship during the process of writing this thesis. I would also like to thank Anthony Corbeill for introducing me to Jon Hall's work as well as for being one of my readers. Emma Scioli also deserves thanks for reading my work. Stephanie Swenson allowed me to use her translation of Joachim Du Bellay, for which I am grateful. Finally, I would like to thank my wonderful fiancé, Luke Oswald, for his support, love, and encouragement during this past year.

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Introduction

Dorothy aptly realized that there is no place like home, a realization that gains poignancy for those who are absent from home. Certain smells, foods, and cultural quirks begin to stand out when contrasted with what is foreign, and they begin to be missed. What is home for the exiled Ovid? He reconstructs home for his readers in the *Tristia*. Home is first of all a physical landscape, and language acts as Ovid's chisel to sculpt home's environment. But home is also made up of people; social relationships, while not as easily mapped as city streets, are as much a part of home as the physical structures. Ovid is able to create an absent presence through his poetry, and continue to engage his readers back in Rome. But Ovid, while reconstructing his life at Rome, is able to find a transcendent home. His poetry is the vehicle by which he builds Rome and puts himself back into that city, but at the same time his poetry is gives him a home. From high on Mount Helicon he can look down over the whole world, enjoy the companionship of fellow poets, and establish a name for himself that will last as long as Caesar's.

Survey of Scholarship

Recent scholarship on Ovid's poetry has been fascinated with Ovid as a master of illusion.[1] My discussion will fit into that trend because I will be looking at how Ovid's use of language to recreate home brings home near to him, and how at the same time he tries to establish an absent presence in the city and in the broader world. His position of exile gives him a unique ability to blend the home he remembers with his new surroundings. This plurality of vision is not unique to Ovid. In *The Art of Memory in Exile,* Hana Píchová examines the exile

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[1] See Hexter, Ralph. "Ovid the Illusionist," review of *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion*, by Philip Hardie. *The Classical Review* 54: 384.

literature of two authors, Vladimir Nabokov (exiled from Russia to Germany, America, and Switzerland) and Milan Kundera (exiled from Czechoslovakia to France). Píchová argues that the two writers' works are like a kaleidoscope, a beautiful pairing of both the old world and their new one. They avoid two dangers of exile, living too much in the past and forgetting the past. Píchová devotes the first half of the book to personal memory and the second to cultural memory. Chapter One is based on Nabokov's *Mary*, his first book written in exile. The book discusses another Russian exile, Ganin, who journeys back to his homeland through his memory. He "decides on a precise structure for his reverie, almost as if he were creating a literary piece. His organization is based on first resurrecting that perished world…"[2] Píchová also examines Nabokov's *The Gift*, written ten years later. She mentions that this work is concerned with literary talent; the writer is concerned with making exile "not only his physical home but his artistic home."[3] Chapter Two also deals with personal memory, especially the tragedy of forgetting and the importance of "sustaining personal memory through imaginative links to the past."[4] The heroines in two of Kundera's novels, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* and *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, cannot link their past to their present through imagination. In the former, the heroine Tamina finds that she no longer belongs in her homeland and cannot return to the land of exile; she is, at the end, alone. Sabina, the heroine of the second book, achieves some plurality of vision in exile, holding on to her ex-homeland and embracing her place of exile for a time. But, gradually, she forgets her homeland and she fades away. Chapter Three looks at the importance of cultural memory in Nabokov's *Mary* and *The Gift*: "culture does indeed overcome life's hardships…without culture one is groundless and possessionless."[5] Two exiled

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[2] Píchová, Hana. 2002. *The Art of Memory in Exile*. Southern Illinois University Press. 24.
[3] Ibid., 29.
[4] Ibid., 46.
[5] Ibid., 69.

writers are contrasted; one loses touch with his culture (Podtyagin, a Russian exile) and dies, and the other (Fyodor) keeps links with his cultural past and is able to have a productive life as an exile. The two authors, Nabokov and Kundera, both create worlds in which they find meaning in their exile. "By appropriating and experimenting with the rich structural, thematic, and stylistic play exhibited in the history of the novel, the exilic fictions of these writers create a bridge to this wider history of the novel, crossing 'kingdoms,' so to speak, creating vistas to imagined worlds where all again becomes possible."[6]

This book depicts in a more modern context what I will be looking for in Ovid: an exile's need to recreate home in his memory. Píchová's discussion of the exile's mental journey towards home—home reconstructed through memory—describes Ovid's reconstruction of home's physical landscape, which will be discussed in Chapter One. In Chapter Two, I discuss how Ovid participates in the social world at Rome; he engages in verbal exchanges that help keep the links to his cultural past, just as Fyodor does in *The Gift*. Píchová also examines the transcendent vision of those who are banished from their home, as I will do in Chapter Three. The exile needs to be able to remain connected with home through imagination, but also needs to blend those memories with the present and create something new. I suggest that Ovid's *Tristia* are a masterpiece of just such exilic writing. His plurality of vision gives him a new perspective.

Several scholars have shaped my view of Ovid as an exile. Matthew McGowan is concerned with setting up Ovid's exilic poetry in relation to Augustus as *princeps*. He focuses on subtext and interprets Ovid's poetry as an attempt to define his relationship to Augustus. McGowan also considers Ovid's poetic creation of physical space. McGowan explains how Ovid's physical absence from Rome allows him to occupy the poetic place, Tomis (135). He sees Tomis, Ovid's place of exile, as a photographic negative image of Rome, as I do, but he

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[6] Píchová, 114.

consistently relates that negative image to Augustus. Tomis is not Rome—Tomis is chaotic and

barbaric—because the *princeps* is not there to establish order. McGowan suggests that Ovid

highlights his distance from Rome as an attempt to create metaphorical distance between himself

and Augustan Rome.[7] He is able to establish some sort of autonomy because he is far from the

center of power. I suggest that Ovid's poetry is doing more than defining his relationship to the

princeps. I suggest that he is also defining himself as a *vates* who is known in all the world.

McGowan does briefly bring up the relationship between *urbs* and *orbs*, mentioning that

Ovid first makes the contrast in *Fasti* 2.[8] However, McGowan focuses on Augustus' cruelty for

sending Ovid to the edge of the Roman *orbs* and as far away from the *urbs* as he could be. I will

be concerned with the distinction between *urbs* and *orbs* as well, but I will look at Ovid's

recreation of *urbs*. He uses his poetry to put himself back in the city. At the same time, his poetry

places him in the broader context of the *orbs*.

Gareth Williams's *Banished Voices* also has shaped thought on Ovid's exile. Williams

encourages readers of the *Tristia* and *Ex Ponto* not to take Ovid's claims of poetic decline in

exile at face-value. First he examines Ovid's complaints about Tomis, highlighting the hazards

of using the poetry to create a historic account of the area. Williams argues that the poems can be

valuable even if read with historical ambiguity. He discusses how Virgil's poetry forms the

model for Ovid's description of winter in Tomis and that Ovid's environmental descriptions

cannot be trusted.[9] I will adopt a more literal view of Ovid's poetry, suggesting that his Virgilian

borrowings do not necessarily indicate that Ovid was fabricating or exaggerating winter in

Tomis. Williams notes Ovid's ability to maintain his poetic friendship with Macer in exile, an

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[7] McGowan, Matthew M. 2009. *Ovid in Exile: Power and Poetic Redress in the Tristia and Epistulae Ex Ponto*. Leiden: Brill. 121.
[8] Ibid., 208.
[9] Williams, Gareth. 1994. *Banished Voices*. Cambridge University Press. 41.

idea I will explore in my third chapter and apply to Ovid's relationship with his daughter Perilla.[10]

Stephen Hinds also has proved helpful in thinking about Ovid's exilic poetry, in particular his chapter in *Two Thousand Years of Solitude: Exile after Ovid*. Hinds links Ovid to the French poet Joachim Du Bellay, because both poets adopt the language of the land in which they dwell. Ovid begins to write in Getic, and Du Bellay, when in Rome, begins to write in Latin. Hinds examines Ovid's linguistic alienation in Tomis and his response to that alienation, and his ideas have influenced my second chapter on Ovid as a barbarian in Tomis.

Several authors have shaped my thought on Ovid's poetics in general. The first is Ellen Oliensis, who discusses Horace's relationship with his overreader, Maecenas, in *Horace and the Rhetoric of Authority*. Oliensis considers that Horace's poetry is addressed to specific named or unnamed individuals at times, but it is made to be "overheard" and is made ultimately for the public.[11] Ovid, I suggest, also writes his letters to be overheard. Just as Horace is aware of and addresses his eavesdroppers, Ovid writes letters to unnamed individuals and seems to intend a broad readership. The difference: Horace does this in Italy, and Ovid as an exile. I suggest that he is engaging his society, as Horace does, through poetry. He still has, or is trying to have, a voice in Rome.

Jon Hall's discussion of polite language in Cicero's letters has also shaped this thesis. Jon Hall, in "Politeness and Formality in Cicero's Letter to Matius (*Fam*. 11.27)," applies sociolinguistic theories to Cicero's letters, analyzing polite language in order to determine how politeness cultivated and preserved political friendships. Hall uses three of Cicero's letters—a letter to Matius, a letter to Trebonius, and a letter to Atticus—to argue that a "recapitulation-of-

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[10] Williams, 43.

[11] Oliensis, Ellen. 1998. *Horace and the Rhetoric of Authority*. Cambridge University Press. 7.

benefits" is a formal linguistic routine that Cicero employed to ease tension in friendships.[12] Cicero and other aristocrats (as Hall demonstrates by using some extant letters written by others *to* Cicero) used such routines as currency in the economy of *dignitas*; these polite exchanges insured that the Roman elite maintained face. To illustrate that the convention did not die with the Republic, I will suggest that Ovid too seems to be using polite linguistic conventions in his letters as a way to stay connected with Rome's social scene.

Road Map

The following chapters will explore Ovid's reconstruction of home in exile and will conclude with thoughts on what home is or can become for the exile. The first chapter will examine *Tristia* 3.10 and 3.12, Ovid's poems about winter and springtime in Tomis. Although Ovid is overtly describing his place of exile, I suggest that he is at the same time reconstructing the physical landscape that he knew back in Rome. In *Tristia* 3.10, Ovid traverses over the wintry landscape on (poetic) feet. Ovid's focus on the barbaric aspects of Tomis show (as in a negative photographic image) what winter in Italy would have been like. Further, Ovid uses poetry to construct this world and at times seems to imitate Virgil in his descriptions. Ovid reconstructs home using the language that would have been familiar at home. In *Tristia* 3.12, he does something similar. This springtime poem creates a vivid picture of what springtime would have been like in Rome, and does so using the language of Virgil, Propertius, Catullus, and Horace. These poetic references again allow Ovid to reconstruct home using the language of home.

Chapter Two will examine how Ovid goes beyond reconstructing the physical landscape of home; he reconstructs his social relationships as well. I will first look at how he presents

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[12] Hall, Jon. 2005. "Politeness and Formality in Cicero's Letters to Matius (*Fam*. 11.27)." *Museum Helveticum* 62: 193.

himself as a barbarian in Tomis. Ovid cannot communicate with the locals, and so faces

linguistic alienation. As discussed in Chapter One, Ovid uses language to reconstruct the

landscape of home. He also uses language in order to reconstruct his social world at Rome. He

participates in what Jon Hall calls the "economy of *dignitas*," the constant give-and-take among

the elite as they sought to maintain and even increase their dignity. Even among his own people,

however, Ovid faces social difficulties imposed by his physical distance and his status as a

relegated man. He constructs Augustus as his powerful overreader, the man who can give him

the ultimate benefit: an invitation back home. Ovid recreates the social relationships at home as a

way to stay relevant in Rome's economy and perhaps as a way to gain enough credit to be

recalled.

Chapter Three will be concerned with defining what home is for the exiled Ovid. I will

argue that Ovid's reconstructions of home become home for him. Ovid is able to speak and be

understood through his poetry and thus finds a transcendent home that surpasses legal

boundaries. In *Tristia* 4.2, he places himself in the middle of the city for Caesar's triumph over

Germany and creates a space for himself to speak as sacred *vates*; this space is where Ovid can

truly communicate and faces the least linguistic alienation. Neither Tomis nor the actual city of

Rome can offer such power of speech to him anymore. If home is a place where one is

understood, then the space created by his poetry seems to be Ovid's true home. In his letter to

Perilla (*Tr*. 3.7), Ovid again finds a place to speak and be understood. His relationship with his

daughter is that of one poet to another; even at home, their relationship was a literary one in

which reading and listening to each other's poetry was their primary activity. Because of poetry,

their relationship can transcend physical separation. Ovid's exilic poetry gives them space to

continue to engage with each other. Finally, in his autobiography (*Tr*. 4.10), Ovid reveals that he

has a transcendent home on Mount Helicon. He finds in poetry the permanence that makes bearable his exile from his physical home, Rome.

I will conclude by briefly looking at some similarities between Ovid, Augustine, and the Apostle John. All three of these men experienced either a metaphorical or actual exile. They all found comfort in visions of home—but not their physical home. All looked to a transcendent home: Ovid to Helicon, and Augustine and John to heaven. Ovid needed the power of language to recreate his home; Augustine and John needed faith. All attained to the plurality of vision that Píchová argues is critical for the exile. They "cross kingdoms" and create new vistas—vistas of their true country.[13]

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[13] Píchová, 114.

A Landscape of Language

In this chapter, I will examine how Ovid reconstructs Rome by first looking at how he constructs Tomis. He walks his readers on poetic feet through a winter wonderland in *Tristia* 3.10, and by looking at the negative image of this landscape—at times profoundly beautiful and at times starkly bleak—I will examine what home was for Ovid vis-à-vis his physical location. I will consider his springtime poem through the same lens, looking at his images of what spring is like in Tomis in order to determine what home was for Ovid. What emerges is both a physical description of home (again achieved partly through looking at what Tomis is *not*) and the language of home. Ovid often describes winter and spring in terms that his predecessors or peers also used. Physical reality and verbal description blend together; Ovid takes his readers on a journey through a real landscape, but that landscape is built in words—words that would most likely have been familiar.

In *Tristia* 3.10 Ovid describes winter in Tomis. He discusses the outdoor apparel of the locals, the ice on their barbarian beards, and the sea, frozen solid. These images are at times vivid and beautiful and at times bleak and harsh.[14] Ovid begins his reconstruction of Tomis by enchanting his readers with a sort of winter wonderland.[15] The barbarian peoples among whom Ovid lives don their winter gear, which Ovid must mention (although he claims that these people are not worthy of his talent, *non ingenio nomina digna meo* [3.10.6]). They ward off the cold

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[14] The extent to which Ovid exaggerates is debatable, and will be discussed later in this chapter.

[15] Gareth Williams suggests that "the idealized picture of a peaceful rustic existence…is a world apart from what Ovid portrays as the reality in Pontus" (28). He suggests that the landscape of Tomis is not conducive for poetry (27) and that "his imaginative recreation of this environment (a peaceful rural life) in Tomis…will be seen as the doomed enterprise it in fact proves to be" (28). Williams is looking at *Ex Ponto* 1.8, arguing that Rome and Italy are the perfect counterbalance to Tomis. They blend the peaceful, rustic countryside with martial prowess, providing the perfect place for poetic inspiration. I would hesitate to say that Ovid's attempts to recreate a peaceful rustic life in Tomis are doomed to failure, based on some of his descriptions of winter. We lose for a moment the wild image of Tomis and see instead the bundled-up barbarians, and we can marvel at the frozen sea, crossed by rumbling carts.

with skins and stitched breeches (*pellibus et sutis arcent mala frigora bracis/ oraque de toto corpore sola patent* [19-20]). Only their faces are exposed to the chill, and these too are described in more detail:

> *Saepe sonant moti glacie pendente capilli*
>   *et nitet inducto candida barba gelu.*
> Often the hair tinkles when moved, and frost clings. The beard gleams, white with the ice formed over it. (21-22)[16]

These beautifully vivid lines paint a clear picture in the reader's mind of the barbarians among whom Ovid claims to live. Ovid goes on to describe wine freezing and standing upright (23-24), and streams, rivers, and even seas frozen solid (25-50). Men and horses pass where ships used to go:

> *Quaque rates ierant, pedibus nunc itur, et undas*
>   *frigore concretas ungula pulsat equi;*
> *perque novos pontes, subter labentibus undis,*
>   *ducunt Sarmatici barbara plaustra boves.*
> And wherever boats had gone, now it was travelled by foot, and horse's hoof strikes the waves frozen in place by the cold; and Sarmatian oxen lead barbarian carts across new bridges, the water gliding below. (31-34)

Again, the image is a vivid one. Creaking carts, led by plodding oxen, rumble across the ice. Ovid recreates reality by means of poetry; his words traverse the scene, just as feet now traverse the frozen sea. I suggest a possible allusion to his own poetry by a pun on the meaning of *pes* in *pedibus nunc itur*. In *Ex Ponto* 3.3.29-30, *pes* is used in the poetic sense: *Tu mihi dictasti iuuenalia carmina primus,/ adposui senis te duce quinque pedes*, "You first dictated youthful songs to me, and under your leadership I placed five feet after six." In *Tristia* 1.1.15-16, Ovid puns on the double meaning: *uade, liber, uerbisque meis loca grata saluta:/ contingam certe quo licet illa pede*, "Go, book, and greet those pleasant places with my words; I'll at least touch them with that foot that's permitted." A similar pun occurs in *Amores* 1.1, as Ovid explains why he is

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[16] Text taken from The Loeb Classical Library second edition of Ovid's *Tristia* and *Ex Ponto*, edited by G. P. Goold (1988). All translations are my own.

writing elegy instead of epic: *risisse Cupido dicitur atque unum surripuisse pedem*, "Cupid is

said to have laughed and stole away one foot" (3-4). If in *Tristia* 3.10 Ovid is again punning on

the double meaning of foot, he may be highlighting his own poetic journey through the barbarian

landscape. He describes his hike across the ice, and includes another form of *pes*:

> *Vidimus ingentem glacie consistere pontum*
>   *lubricaque inmotas testa premebat aquas.*
> *nec vidisse sat est; durum calcavimus aequor,*
>   *undaque non udo sub pede summa fuit.*
> I have seen the vast sea frozen from ice and the slippery crust was pressing motionless
> waters. Nor is it enough to have seen; we trudged across solid water, and the crest of the
> wave was under a foot not wet. (37-40)

Ovid here seems to be the curious explorer or natural scientist, who not only sees the sea frozen,

but boldly walks on it himself with a dry foot (*non udo…pede*). I suggest that, as in the previous

example, *pes* may allude to Ovid's own poetry. Ovid did more than just look at the scene (*nec*

vidisse sat est); he writes a poem. He walks across the frozen sea on foot; his readers experience

that journey through (poetic) feet as well.[17]

The dangers of Tomis are momentarily forgotten in the presence of such natural wonders.

But Ovid breaks this spell shortly:

>   *Invehitur celeri barbarus hostis equo*
> *hostis equo pollens longeque volante sagitta*
>   *vicinam late depopulatur humum.*
> The barbarian enemy attacks with swift horse, the enemy strong in horse and far-flying
> arrow, and he ravages the neighboring land far and wide. (54-56)

Ovid reminds his readers that he is still in the dangerous and unpredictable frontier. The rest of

the poem is negative; Ovid describes the destruction and pillaging of enemies and the barrenness

of the land. No grapes are grown in the frozen wasteland: *non hic pampinea dulcis latet uva sub*

umbra, nec cumulant altos fervida musta lacus (Not here does the sweet grape lie under the viny

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[17] This pun is not unique to this poem See Hinds, Stephen. 1987. *The Metamorphoses of Persephone*. Cambridge
University Press. 16-18.

shade, nor does boiling must fill deep tubs [71-72]). There are not fruits. In another vivid image, introduced by the ecphrastic *aspiceres*,[18] Ovid describes the fields: *nudos sine fronde, sine arbore, campos* (naked fields without foliage, without a tree [75]).

Home is the counterbalance to the barbarian dress, beard, cold, and barren landscape. A debate has arisen concerning the reality of Ovid's exile. Some who doubt that the poet ever set foot in Tomis point to this poem's description of winter, claiming that Ovid's portrayal of the climate simply does not correspond to what that region was really like.[19] Because my discussion of Ovid's recreation of home assumes that he in fact in Tomis, I will present my case as to why Ovid's description of winter, though perhaps exaggerated, corresponds enough to the region that it does not disprove his exile. Current conditions suggest that the winter temperatures in Tomis could indeed be frigid. The northwest region of the Black Sea can see temperatures as low as 22˚ F during winter cold.[20] Some credit Ovid's account of house-flattening winds as being fantastic inventions, but strong winter winds are common in the Black Sea region.[21] Some areas even see hurricane force winds.[22] Ovid most likely did experience both extreme cold and strong winds, shocking to someone from the mild Mediterranean climate.[23] He may have exaggerated the severity, but there seems little reason to doubt that he was actually there.

John Gahan uses a different method to show that Ovid's account can at least be partially believed. He looks at three poems from the *Ex Ponto* that all emphasize the fact that the Black

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[18] Williams, 35.

[19] Ibid, 3. For a fuller history of the debate, see Fitton Brown, A.D. 1985. 'The Unreality of Ovid's Tomitan Exile." *Liverpool Classical Monthly* 10: 18-22 and Claasesen, J.-M. 1986. *Poeta, Exsul, Vates: A stylistic and Literary Analysis of Ovid's Tristia and Epistolae ex Ponto*. Diss. Stellenbosch. 24.

[20] "Black Sea Climate," Britannica Academic Edition, accessed March 20, 2012. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/68234/Black-Sea/33212/Climate.

[21] *Tristia* 3.10.17-18: *tantaque commoti vis est Aquilonis, ut altas/ aequet humo turres tectaque rapta ferat*, "And the force of the stirred up Aquilo is so great that it levels high towers to the ground and carries away snatched-up houses."

[22] "Black Sea Climate."

[23] Evans, H.B. 1975. "Winter and Warfare in Ovid's Tomis: ("Tristia" 3.10). *The Classical Journal* 70: 1.

Sea really does freeze in the winter, a claim that Italians greeted with suspicion even in Ovid's day. Gahan uses Ovid's insistence on certain points to confirm three aspects of *Tristia* 3 that he believes were accurate descriptions of winter. First, wine freezes when left standing (*Ex Pont.* 4.7.8 Cf. *Tr.* 3.10.23-24). Second, carts can be pulled across the frozen Danube (*Ex Pont.* 4.7.9-10. Cf. *Tr.* 3.10.33-34). Finally, the Black Sea also freezes (*Ex Pont.* 4.7.7; 4.9.81-86, esp. 85; 4.10.37-38. Cf. *Tr.* 3.10.37-38).[24] For now I hope to have shown that Ovid's exile should not be doubted because of the harshness of the winter he describes, a harshness that could in fact correspond to reality. Further, even when he does exaggerate, Ovid is still setting up a reliable image, perhaps not of what Tomis is, but of what home is *not*.

In Italy, men did not wear pelts and furs. They did not have the bushy, barbarian beard coated with frosty ice. Short, neatly-trimmed beards were fashionable in Rome at this time.[25] Williams suggests that Ovid presents this people as literary constructions, people who are matched to their rugged environment.[26] Ovid's description resembles the American pioneers of the 19th and early 20th century. Evelyn Cameron, a newly-married bride, journeyed from her elegant home in England to the Montana wilderness in 1889. In 1897, she writes to her sister-in-law back home about the ruggedness of her new neighbors: "One saloon is riddled with bullet holes & one cowpuncher held up the Justice of the 'Piece' (this is his spelling not mine). In fact, they painted the town red & not one was arrested!"[27] Like Ovid, Evelyn is fascinated by the differences between these cowboys and the more sophisticated men among whom she used to live. The ruggedness of the new frontier is reflected in their appearance and manners. In Tomis,

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[24] He does attribute some features of *Tristia* 3.10 to fancy, including the fur-clad, frosty bearded natives, snows that stayed on the ground two years, and the powerful winds. I will argue that these images, fabricated or not, are still useful in constructing a negative image of Italy.

[25] Williams, 16.

[26] Ibid. The Tomitans are *crudi* (Tr. 5.3.8), *feri* (P. 3.9.32), *saevi* (P. 4.8.84), *duri* (P. 3.2.102), *intonsi* (P. 4.2.2), and *hirsuti* (P. 1.5.74).

[27] Lucey, Donna M. "Evelyn Cameron: Pioneer Photographer and Diarist." *The Magazine of Western History* 41: 45.

the barbarian landscape produces barbarian residents. They are a product of their environment.[28] Ovid also discusses the dangers of the barbaric enemy. In Tomis, he lived under constant threat. Home, in contrast, was peaceful without the constant threat of enemy attack. McGowan reads this comparison as one with Augustus at the center. Tomis is not peaceful because the *princeps* is not there to establish order.[29] Even in the more peaceful scene of wagons crossing frozen ice, Ovid highlights the "otherness" of Tomis. He departs from Virgil and makes sure to call the carts not wide (*patulis…plaustris*) but barbaric (*barbara plaustra*). This is a foreign scene; not only is the crossing of ice strange, but even the very carts are barbaric.

Finally, home was a place of fertile abundance. If there were no grapes or must in Tomis, there certainly would have been in Rome. Even in the description of the must boiling in vats (*cumulant altos fervida musta lacus* [72]), Ovid seems to long for the warm comfort of the familiar. Through mentioning what is *not* in Tomis, Ovid gives us a glimpse of winters at home. In Rome, cooler weather was mitigated by familiar people, places, even by familiar drinks. Virgil also speaks of vats of must, full to the brim (*spumat plenis uindemia labris* [*Georg*. 2.6]):

> *huc, pater o Lenaee, ueni, nudataque musto*
> *tinge nouo mecum dereptis crura coturnis.*
> Come hither, oh Father of the Winepress, and after you've removed your buskins, dip
> your bare legs in new must with me. (*Georg*. 2.3-8)

Virgil is in Italy while he is writing, and he's calling the Father of the Winepress to come to him (*huc*); he asks him to remove his foreign gear (*coturnis*) and participate in a truly Italian activity: making wine. Ovid and Virgil seem to share a similar almost-nostalgic view of these brimming vats—a small but important part of the landscape of home in Italy.

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[28] Williams explores the literary background of this theory more fully (16).
[29] McGowan, 135.

Ovid's nods to Virgil throughout this poem construct the landscape of home in familiar

language. Ovid is using the language of home to reconstruct home. In *Georgics* 3, Virgil

describes winters in Scythia (a term Ovid uses to describe Tomis in *Tristia* 1.3.61):

> *Sed iacet aggeribus niveis informis et alto*
> *terra gelu late septemque adsurgit in ulnas.*
> *semper hiems, semper spirantes frigora Cauri…*
> *concrescunt subitae currenti in flumine crustae*
> *undaque iam tergo ferratos sustinet orbis,*
> *puppibus illa prius, patulis nunc hospita plaustris…*
> But the earth lies formless with snowy heaps, and rises up far and wide with piled-up ice
> seven cubits high. Always winter, always the North-west winds breathing frosty
> cold…sudden crusts harden on the flowing river, and now the water carries wheels made
> of iron on its back, and that water, which before was a host for ships, is now for broad
> carts. (354-356; 360-362)

The two accounts of winter correspond in several ways. Both Ovid and Virgil speak of large

amounts of snow, wintry winds, rivers freezing over, and carts crossing frozen waterways.[30] H.

B. Evans notes that Ovid "continually presents his own experience in terms of literary

experience…it should not be surprising therefore that Ovid turned to Virgil as a model for

presenting his own feelings and experiences in exile."[31] Ovid recalls Virgil's Scythia because

Virgil's text provides a point of contrast with Italy. Scythia is the extreme, while Italy is

balanced and moderate.   Propertius sets up a similar comparison. After describing some of the

notable things to see in the world, he returns to the superiority of Rome: *omnia Romanae cedent*

miracula terrae;/ natura hic posuit, quidquid ubique fuit (all the marvels of the world yield to

Rome; here nature placed whatever was best anywhere [3.22.17-18]). A literary tradition existed

even before Ovid's time in which authors described the "other" in order to highlight Rome's

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[30] Williams also links Ovid's account of winter to Herodotus (4.28) and Strabo (7.3.18). He sees in these literary borrowings evidence that Ovid was not describing the actual realities of Tomis. I would suggest that Ovid may be using the language of previous authors to describe actual reality, an idea that Williams finds unsatisfactory (Williams, 11).   As a modern reader of Robert Frost, I may describe a snowy wood with similar language, not because I had never seen one, but because his poetry has given me words to describe what I see.
[31] Evans, 5.

glories. The other half of the contrast, though not spelled out, is latent in Ovid's text because of the intertextual echoes.

Ovid describes the rugged landscape and equally rugged barbarians, and through the negatives of these images, home emerges as a place of peace, a temperate climate, and a cultivated appearance. But even as he describes Tomis, Ovid uses the language of poets who were home in Italy. I suggest that perhaps Ovid does this in order to keep his poetry from being tainted by too much barbarian influence. Not only were people and landscape intertwined, but Ovid saw a connection between physical place and poetic endeavor. This is perhaps best shown in the way Ovid claims poetic decline in exile because he is not able to compose poetry in his accustomed places: *quo magis his debes ignoscere, candide lector,/ si spe sint, ut sunt, inferior tua./ non haec in nostris, ut quondam, scripsimus hortis*, "All the more you ought to forgive these verses, kind reader, if they are less than you would have hoped. I don't write these words in my gardens, as I once did" (*Tristia* 1.11.35-37). Perhaps Ovid looks to Virgil for his themes, not because he is fabricating his landscape, but in order to stay connected to home. By describing Tomis as an outsider would, Ovid further reinforces the point that Tomis, and all he is describing, is *not* home.

Springtime in Tomis

The icy chills of winter do eventually give way to spring in *Tristia* 3.12. This poem explores spring in two regions, the countryside and the city. I will suggest that, as in his descriptions of winter, Ovid is again linking his work to Virgil's. Virgil, in *Georgics 2*, describes the agricultural wonders of the world, but finally insists that, east or west, Italy is best. Ovid, like Virgil, shows that springtime is best in Italy. Ovid begins on a happy note: boys and girls plucking violets, fields abloom, and swallows building their nests:

> *Iam violam puerique legunt hilaresque puellae,*
> *Rustica quae nullo nata serente venit;*
> *Prataque pubescunt variorum flore colorum,*
> *Indocilique loquax gutture vernat avis;*
> *Utque malae matris crimen deponat hirundo*
> *Sub trabibus cunas tectaque parva facit…*
>
> Now merry boys and girls pluck the violet, the flower of the field that springs up with no sowing. Meadows flush with the flower of many different colors, and the chatty bird sings a hymn to spring with an untaught throat. And as if to put off the charge of bad mother, the swallow builds her little house and a cradle under the rafters. (*Tr.* 3.12. 5-10)

Is Ovid describing Rome, or Tomis? The passage on first glance is ambiguous. Violets can grow in many different climates; popular among Romans and Greeks, violets can grow in northern climates as well. Violets could potentially have grown in Tomis. Swallows are common in art around the Mediterranean, but they actually live on every continent except Antarctica.[32] The children are described as cheerful, *hilares* (5). The scene is also rural; the violet is called *rustica* (6), and Ovid goes on to write about the grain hiding in the furrows of Ceres (*herbaque quae latuit Cerealibus obruta sulcis* [11]). Is Ovid looking out his window in Tomis as he writes, watching a swallow build her nest or a merry group of children gather flowers?

As Ovid continues to write about spring, however, he reveals that this world is not the Getic land. His readers are passing with him over the *Italian* countryside on yet another poetic journey, one that will end up in Rome. Vladimir Nabokov, exiled from Russia to Germany and later travelling to America and Switzerland, creates a similar journey in his novel *Mary*, published in 1926 and written just a few years after his own exile. Ganin, a character in the novel, is a Russian exile. In his new home in Berlin, a dingy building filled with other emigrants, he discovers a picture of a woman he used to love. This picture sends him on a journey back to

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[32] Swallows appear in a fresco in Akrotiri in Thera. Hollinshead, Mary B. 1989. "The Swallows and Artists of Room Delta 2 at Akrotiri, Thera." *American Journal of Archaeology* 93: 339. They also show up on Cleopatra's ship; Dio Cassius records that they were considered a bad omen (50.15.1-2). Plutarch also mentions the swallows (Ant. 60.7). McDonough, Christopher M. 2003. "The Swallows on Cleopatra's Ship." *The Classical World* 96: 251.

Russia and back to her, a journey that is entirely in his mind. He carefully plans out how he will make the journey, which roads his mind will travel. He "decides on a precise structure for his reverie, almost as if he were creating a literary piece. His organization is based on first resurrecting that perished world."[33] Ovid too is constructing his reverie, beginning with the beauty of spring in the countryside and gradually approaching the city.

Spring finds the city at leisure (*otia* [17]), and festivals follow one after another, replacing the word wars of the forum (*iunctisque ex ordine ludis/ cedunt verbosi garrula bella fori* [17]). People ride horses, spar with light arms, and play with balls and hoops (19-20). They attend the theater (24). Ovid ends his description of spring in the city with an exclamation: *o quater et quotiens non est numerare beatum/ non interdicta cui licet urbe frui!* (O four times blessed—and how many times cannot be numbered—the one who is permitted to enjoy the city that is not forbidden to them! [25-26])[34] Ovid highlights his own status as exile here, using the term *interdicta* to refer to the city. When a Roman was exiled, a decree was passed that barred him from fire and water (**interdictio** *aquae et ignis*).[35] In his reverie, he has arrived at the city, but the enjoyment of the real place is denied to him. Seemingly frustrated in his attempt to enter and enjoy the city via imagination, he suddenly turns to reality.

Ovid makes a clear switch from Rome to Tomis, beginning with *at mihi sentitur* (but I sense…[27]). The *at* here abruptly shatters the poetic place Ovid has just constructed. His tone changes; in Tomis too, spring has come, but he describes spring there as the mere absence of extreme winter:

> *At mihi sentitur nix verno sole soluta*

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[33] Píchová, 24.

[34] Cf. *Georgics* 2.458: *O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint/ agricolas!* (O too blessed, if they know their own goods, are the farmers!)

[35] Berger, Adolf. 1953. "Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law." *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 43: 508.

> *Quaeque lacu durae non fodiantur aquae:*
> *Nec mare concrescit glacie, nec, ut ante, per Histrum*
> *Stridula Sauromates plaustra bubulcus agit.*
> But I sense that the snow has melted under the spring-time sun, and the waters which are not dug hard from the pond: the sea does not grow solid with ice, nor does Sauromatian herdsman drive the creaking wagons across the Hister, as he did before. (27-30)

He uses many of the same words and images that he did in the poem about winter; again we are reminded of the snow, the frozen lakes, the ice, and the barbarians driving their wagons across the ice. But unlike the beginning of the poem, the reader does not feel, see, and hear spring as much as they feel, for a moment, the chills of winter. Tomis still is dreary.

Ovid, as in *Tristia* 3.10, can reconstruct the delights of springtime at home in part by using the language of those who were in Rome. I suggest that Ovid, in his springtime poem, makes references to Virgil, as well as to Catullus, Horace, and Propertius. Richard Thomas identifies the difficulty in determining when a reference is really a reference in poetry, and when the similarities are merely accidents of two authors who use similar words and the same language. I shall make use of his criteria in determining Ovid's own references: "In part the resolution of this problem lies in that most perilous quality of the mind, judgment, but at the same time two absolute criteria will be applied in what follows: the model must be one with whom the poet is demonstrably familiar, and there must be a reason of some sort for the reference—that is, it must be susceptible of interpretation, or meaningful."[36] Ovid would certainly have been familiar with the three authors. He explicitly names Propertius and Virgil as his poetic predecessors (*Tr.* 4.10).[37] Second, I will suggest there is meaning in his allusions. By

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[36] Thomas, Richard. 1986. "Virgil's *Georgics* and the Art of Reference." *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 90: 174.

[37] *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)*, "I only saw Virgil; nor did greedy fate grant time for my friendship to Tibullus (This man was your successor, Gallus, and Propertius followed him; I myself was fourth in this series)" (*Tr.* 4.10.51-54).

alluding to Catullus, he fits his poem within the context of descriptions of spring. His allusions to

Virgil and Propertius link his poem to their own works in which they praise Rome above all

other places on earth. And all of the allusions ultimately allow him to create poetry about home

with the language of home.

First, Ovid references Catullus. As Ovid describes the glories of spring, he begins a line

with the word *iam*: *iam violam puerique legunt hilaresque puellae,*(now merry boys and girls

pluck the violet [5]). This word seems to indicate that the actions he was about to describe would

be ones normally associated by his (Roman) readers with spring: "Now is the time of year

when…" Ovid is describing a scene familiar to him, a scene that embodies springtime. His use of

iam twice, in the first line of the poem and in the fifth, recalls Catullus 46:

> **Iam** *uer egelidos refert tepores,*
> **iam** *caeli furor aequinoctialis*
> *iucundis Zephyri silescit aureis.*
> Now spring brings back tepid warmth, now the fury of the sky grows silent with
> equinoctial, pleasant breezes of Zephyrus (Catullus 46.1-2).

Catullus will go on to use *iam* four times in this short poem. Catullus mentions the equinox; Ovid

speaks of the time of night being equal with day (*tempora necturnis aequa diurna facit*, "(The

Ram) makes the time of days equal to the times of night" [*Tristia* 3.12.4]). Ovid mentions the

breezes as well:

> *Frigora iam Zephyri minuunt, annoque peracto*
> * longior antiquis vim moderatur hiems*…
> Now the breezes of Zephyrus diminish the cold, and at the end of the year a
> winter longer than those of old gives up some of its force (*Tr*. 3.12.1-2).

Ovid describes spring in a similar way to Catullus. I suggest that he may do this in order to place

his poem in a familiar context; by using similar language to Catullus, he is signaling to his

readers the content of his poem—springtime—by referencing another springtime poem. He may

also be referencing Propertius in this opening line. Propertius, in Elegies 3.22, calls Tullus back

to Italy:

> *Frigida tam multos placuit tibi Cyzicus annos,*
> *Tulle, Propontiaca qua fluit isthmos aqua…*
> Cold Cyzicus has pleased you so many years, Tullus, where the isthmus flows
> with the waters of Propontis? (*El*. 3.22.1-2)

Propertius and Ovid open their poems with similar words (*frigora* and *frigida*), and have the

same message at heart: Rome is best. Propertius describes places that Tullus could see—the

Colchian River Phasis around the Black Sea, the Nile in Egypt, the island Delos, Pelion in

Thessaly (El. 3.22.1-16). But Tullus still ought to come home:

> *omnia Romanae cedent miracula terrae.*
> *natura hic posuit, quidquid ubique fuit.*
> All the marvels will yield to the Roman land. Here nature placed whatever was
> anywhere (*El*. 3.22.17-18).

Springtime, in any part of the world, is a welcome relief from winter, even springtime in Tomis.

Perhaps certain things in Tomis even triggered Ovid's memories of home and inspired his

poetry. But spring is best at home. Catullus too may make this connection. He closes his

springtime poem with friends who, having travelled far, are returning home:

> *o dulces comitum ualete coetus,*
> *longe quos simul a domo profectos*
> *diuersae uarie uiae reportant*
> O sweet band of companions, farewell, who having gone far from home, return in
> different ways on different roads (Catullus 46.9-11).

Catullus addresses his companions far from home, but he is writing from home. He is enjoying

the beauty of spring in Italy. The fact that his friends are returning may suggest that that beauty

is drawing them back, a beauty that can be found nowhere else.

So far I have suggested that Ovid references Catullus and Propertius. He may also be

referencing Virgil's second *Georgic*. Virgil praises Rome as the best among all places. He asks

his readers to look abroad to the different types of cultivation among the Arabs and the

Gelonians, the farming in India, Egypt, Ethiopia, China, Media, and Bactria (the area around

modern-day Afghanistan). But after singing their praises, he returns to Italy:

> *Sed neque Medorum siluae, ditissima terra,*
> *nec pulcher Ganges atque auro turbidus Hermus*
> *laudibus Italiae certent…*
> But neither the forests of the Medes, the most fertile land, nor the beautiful
> Ganges, nor Hermus chock-full of gold, can rival the praises of Italy (*Georg.*
> 2.136-138).

Virgil, when explaining why Italy is so great, connects part of its greatness to its seasons:

> *hinc bellator equus campo sese arduus infert,*
> *hinc albi, Clitumne, greges et maxima taurus*
> *uictima, saepe tuo perfusi flumine sacro,*
> *Romanos ad templa deum duxere triumphos.*
> *hic uer adsiduum atque alienis mensibus aestas:*
> *bis grauidae pecudes, bis pomis utilis arbos.*
> Here to the camp the lofty war horse comes, here the white herds, Clitumnus, and
> the bull, the greatest of victims, are often doused in your sacred stream, that lead
> the triumphant Romans to the temple of the gods. Here is perpetual spring and
> summer weather in other seasons: twice a year the herds bear young, twice a year
> the useful trees bear fruits (*Georg.* 2.145-150).

Virgil's poem associates Rome and springtime, like Catullus, Propertius, and Ovid. The

connection between spring and the winds of Zephyrus appears in Virgil as well. Virgil sings the

praises of spring in words that prefigure the opening of Ovid's poem:

> *uer adeo frondi nemorum, uer utile siluis,*
> *uere tument terrae et genitalia semina poscunt…*
> *auia tum resonant auibus uirgulta canoris…*
> *parturit almus ager Zephyrique tepentibus auris*
> *laxant arua sinus....*
> Spring is useful for the foliage of the woods and forests, in spring the earth swells
> and demands life-giving seeds…then the out-of-the-way thickets resound with
> birdsong… the nourishing field is pregnant and the fields loosen their bosoms by
> the warming breezes of Zephyrus (*Georg.* 2.323-324; 328; 330-332).

By evoking Virgil, Propertius, and Catullus, Ovid provides travelling companions as he leads his readers on the path back to Rome.

Ovid, by his poetic power, is creating the world as he travels through it. As a poet, he does have unique power to see what is not actually there and make it a reality for his readers, as McGowan notes: "becoming a *vates* in exile allows him to 'see' what he cannot actually have seen."[38] Ovid does at times break the spell, as he does when he reminds his readers that he is in the Getic land (*Tr*. 3.12.14, 16) and when he transitions to the first person (*at mihi sentitur*…[*Tr*.3.12.27]). Ovid may here be demonstrating his ability to see what he could not actually have seen. But his landscape uses the language of other poets to construct his reverie of home. I suggest that, as in the wintertime poem, Ovid uses the language of home because of the link between environment and his poetic ability. To avoid writing too much Tomis into his account of springtime in Italy, Ovid borrows from poets who were in Rome.

More than that, I suggest that Ovid is interacting with those poets he references. Ovid may be placing himself as the addressee of Catullus 46: he is one of those friends who is far from home and who hopes to be called but with the coming of spring. He may also be interacting with another springtime poem, Horace's *Epistle* 1.7. Horace was going to be away for the winter, but promises:

> *Te, dulcis amice, reviset*
> *cum Zephyris, si concedes, et hirundine prima.*
> He will come back to see you, sweet friend, if you permit it, with the spring winds
> and the first swallow" (*Ep*. 1.7.12-13).

Ovid also references both the Zephyrs and the swallows as marks of spring; it seems that Horace too was helping to provide Ovid with the language of home to reconstruct springtime at home.

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[38] McGowan, 159.

But this poem especially may have struck a deep chord in the exiled Ovid, who was hoping that he too might return to his friends with the coming of a new season.

Becoming the Barbarian

Heureux qui, comme Ulysse, a fait un beau voyage,
Ou comme celui-là qui conquit la toison,
Et puis est retourné, plein d'usage et raison,
Vivre entre ses parents le reste de son âge!
Quand reverrai-je, hélas, de mon petit village
Fumer la cheminée, et en quelle saison
Reverrai-je le clos de ma pauvre maison,
Qui m'est une province, et beaucoup davantage ?
Plus me plaît le séjour qu'ont bâti mes aïeux,
Que des palais Romains le front audacieux,
Plus que le marbre dur me plaît l'ardoise fine :
Plus mon Loir gaulois, que le Tibre latin,
Plus mon petit Liré, que le mont Palatin,
Et plus que l'air marin la doulceur angevine.

Happy is he who, like Ulysses, went on a fine voyage,
Or like the one who captured the fleece,
And then returned, well-traveled and understanding,
To live among his relations the rest of his days!
Alas, when will I see again,
The smoking chimneys in my small village, and in what season
Will I see again the wall surrounding my poor house,
Which to me is a province and much more besides?
More pleasing to me is the abode that my ancestors built
Than Roman palaces with audacious façades,
More pleasing to me than hard marble is delicate slate:
Rather my Gallic Loire than the Latin Tiber,
Rather my small Liré than the Palatine Hill,
And rather than the sea breeze, the sweet air of Anjou.[39]

-Joachim Du Bellay, Les Regrets, Sonnet 31

    Joachim Du Bellay, a member of the Pléïade, an elite group of sixteenth-century French poets, spent four years in Rome serving as a secretary to his uncle, a cardinal. While in Rome he composed *Les Regrets*, poems that Stephen Hinds convincingly argues are modeled on the *Tristia*. In *Sonnet 31*, Du Bellay calls the man happy who, after travelling, can return again and

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[39] I would like to thank Stephanie Swenson for translating this poem from the original French.

see his own smoking chimney (*fumer la cheminée)*, and live among his own people (*Vivre entre ses parents le reste de son âge)*. Ovid, as discussed in the previous chapter, also longs for the physical places of home as well as the relationships. In this chapter, I will look at the ways Ovid reconstructs the social relationships that were so much a part of home. I will first look at how he presents himself as a barbarian in Tomis. First I will suggest that Ovid is coming to a place that, although a Roman colony, has its own unique cultural identity. Ovid is marginalized in that culture because he cannot speak its language, and so he cannot engage in social exchange in Tomis. He has no reputation here. Consequently, Ovid uses language in order to reconstruct his social world at Rome. He establishes a present absence for himself, continuing to take part in what Jon Hall calls the "economy of *dignitas*," the give-and-take system in which the Roman elite sought to maintain or even increase their standing among their peers. Even among his own people, however, Ovid faces social difficulties imposed by his physical distance and his status as a relegated man. He needs Augustus as a powerful present-but-absent overreader to impress with his poetry, the man who had the power to elevate Ovid's own position in the economy of *dignitas* by recalling him from exile.

Part 1: Ovid as Barbarian in Tomis

Ovid was entering a territory recently brought under Rome's power; one might assume that, as a Roman, he would feel rather at home. But Tomis had not been long under Rome's control, and probably already had a cultural identity apart from Rome. As a point of comparison, we might look at the New Testament book of Acts, the physician Luke's letter to Theophilus written around 63-70 A.D.[40] In Acts XX: 14-22, the apostle Paul visits a Roman colony, Ephesus, in the province of Asia. Ephesus was, like Tomis, a town with a mixed population

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[40] 2005. *The Archeological Study Bible*. Zondervan Press. 1764.

including both Jews and Greeks, but still had a definite Greek cultural identity because of the worship of Artemis. Threatened by Paul's teachings, local silversmiths started a riot to rescue their business. The crowd chants, "Great is Artemis *of the Ephesians*!" (Μεγάλη ἡ Ἄρτεμις Ἐφεσίων, Acts 19:28). Luke highlights their solidarity, describing them as "one in spirit," (ὁμοθυμαδὸν, v. 29) and chanting as one (φωνὴ ἐγένετο μία ἐκ πάντων, v. 34). The city clerk quells the tumult by reminding them that they could be charged for rioting. Rome here appears to be more of a big-brother figure, watching over their shoulder, than a city with which the town identified. They were first and foremost Ephesians.

Tomis too had its own cultural identity, although the city seems to have been a diverse blend of Greeks and barbarians. Ovid talks about their common fashion sense: loose breeches and untrimmed hair. They also, and perhaps most importantly, shared a common language (*exercent illi sociae commercia linguae,* [Tr.5.10.35]).

Ovid does not want to assimilate to their way of dress, nor to their language. He does not want to mingle with the barbarians. He expresses surprise that the babarians live side-by-side with him: *et tamen intus/ mixta facit Graecis barbara turba metum./ quippe simul nobis habitat discrimine nullo/ barbarus et tecti plus quoque parte tenet,* "And nevertheless, the barbarian crowd within the city, mingling with the Greeks, causes fear. The barbarian lives just as we do, and there's no line dividing them from us, and more than half the homes belong to them" (*Tr.* 5.10.27-30). He also does not want to mix with them in their language and fears that his readers would read Sintic and Pontic words mixed with Latin (*ne Sintia mixta Latinis/…Pontica verba legas* [Tr. 3.14.49-50]). Because he does not assimilate, he becomes the barbarian.

Ovid cannot speak to his new neighbors, nor can he understand them; he is isolated because of the language barrier: *exercent illi sociae commercia linguae:/ per gestum res est*

significanda mihi, "Those ones engage in exchanges of their shared language: I must signify a thing by a gesture" (Tr. 5.10.35-36). Ovid uses *illi*, "those men," to refer to the people in his region, not *hi*, "these." He seems to distance the Tomitans from himself, and he becomes the barbarian: *barbarus hic ego sum, qui non intellegor ulli,/ et rident stolidi verba Latina Getae;/ meque palam de me tuto male saepe loquuntur,/ forsitan obiciunt exiliumque mihi*, "Here I am the barbarian, who is not understood by anyone, and the brutish Getae laugh at my Latin words. Often they speak evil about me right in front of me, and they can do that safely. Perhaps they even throw my exile in my face" (*Tr.* 5.10.37-40).

Ovid has no share in this society's "economy of *dignitas*;" in other words, he has no built-up reputation and he has no way of building one without communication. The insults Ovid faces in Tomis prove that he is excluded. Instead of polite language he finds mockery, at which the frustrated poet can only nod or shake his head. His barbarism is a linguistic one; Stephen Hinds points out that Ovid, as a Roman, probably was not in real danger of being thought a barbarian. But by presenting himself as such, he is able to "drive home the topos of linguistic alienation. The poet suddenly perceives that in this alien world *he himself*, paradoxically, the speaker of Latin, is the one who sounds like a barbarian."[41]

Part 2: Reconstructing Rome's Economy of *Dignitas*

Alienated from language-driven social life abroad, Ovid uses words and language to reconstruct his social world at Rome. He will, through his poetry, engage in the kind of *commercia* from which he was excluded in Tomis. This *commercia* involved participation in the economy of *dignitas*, the marketplace in which one could speak, be heard, and profit from those speech acts. Cicero's letters delineate the ways in which a member of the Roman elite could

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[41]Hinds, Stephen. 2011. "Black-Sea Latin, Du Bellay, and the Barbarian Turn: *Tristia*, *Regrets*, *Translations*," in *Two Thousand Years of Solitude: Exile after Ovid*. Ed. Jennifer Ingleheart. Oxford University Press. 77.

navigate this system, and as letters of Pliny and Fronto show, this system continued into the Imperial Age.

Cicero participates in a verbal exchange to "repay" by means of praise a debt he owed to someone; because his letters were often circulated and read publicly, the person whom he praised in a "private" letter would receive public recognition. Cicero's letters reveal how letter-writing worked into this system; Cicero and his correspondents often use polite compliments to conduct political business through letters.[42] Jon Hall gives a detailed description of the various formulas used, but I will focus on one: the recapitulation-of-benefits, a polite linguistic ritual Cicero uses to list his addressee's previous services to himself. A letter he writes to Matius illustrates this formula. The letter was written in response to the report that Matius was displeased with the orator's critical comments. Cicero handles this delicate situation by writing a letter outlining all Matius' previous services. Cicero opens with appreciation, and this response is not, as Hall notes, a mere *captatio benevolentiae* (a hope to gain favor before approaching a difficult issue) or one step in a rational argument.[43] Rather, Cicero was engaging in a polite routine to patch up his friendship. Or we might look at a letter Cicero wrote to Atticus (*Att*. 1.17) in 61 B.C. after Cicero's brother Quintus offended Atticus, who had refused to serve on his staff, with some disparaging remarks. Cicero, in his letters to Atticus, often employs an informal tone. However, in this letter he composes a recapitulation of Atticus' past benefits to him in the same formal manner as he writes to Matius. Hall uses these examples—written under vastly different circumstances—to show that the recapitulation-of-benefits was a "polite routine," a convention that Cicero could use to maintain his friendships and incur credit in the economy of *dignitas*.[44]

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[42]Hall, Jon. 2009. *Politeness and Politics in Cicero's Letters*. Oxford University Press. 49.
[43]Hall 2005, 196.
[44]Ibid., 198-199. For other examples of the recapitulation-of-benefits, see Cicero's letter to Trebonius (*Fam*. 15.21) and his letter to Appius Claudius Pulcher (*Fam*. 3.4).

Both letters illustrate the Roman economy of *dignitas* at work. Cicero's comments have injured Matius' *dignitas*; his praise can increase that *dignitas*. Romans tended to circulate letters and read them at dinner parties; thus, Cicero's comments would be widely known. In the case of the letter to Atticus, Quintus has injured Atticus' *dignitas* and Cicero employs formal language to show Atticus deference and, in a sense, restore his face. The linguistic convention plays the same purpose in all the letters: the formal tone indicates a respect for the recipient's social status. The expressions may or may not correspond to Cicero's feelings; as Hall notes, "what mattered was that he had performed these deferential courtesies with due care and commitment."[45]

The political competition in the Republic made *invidia* a threat, and increased the need to do business with polite discourse. The competition cooled under the Principate, the first period of the Roman Empire stretching from 27 B.C. to A.D. 284.[46] Ovid, however, does have recourse to these old-fashioned strategies. After the fall of the Republic, although evidence is scarcer, aristocrats continued to use polite discourse in letters. Pliny's letters reveal the continuation of polite discourse, with modifications, under imperial rule. Pliny uses formal linguistic structures when addressing the emperor Trajan. He begins the first letter (10.2): *Exprimere, domine, verbis non possum, quantum mihi gaudium attuleris, quod me dignum putasti iure trium liberorum,* "I am not able to express in words, Lord, how much joy you have brought to me, because you thought me worthy of the right granted to parents of three children." He begins another letter to Trajan almost identically (10.10): *Exprimere, domine, verbis non possum, quanto me gaudio*

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[45]Hall 2009, 65. On "hypocrisy" in the letter to Matius, see Shackleton Bailey. 1977. *Cicero: Epistulae ad Familiares*. Vol. II. Cambridge University Press. 486.

[46] Saller, Richard. 1982. "The Roman Imperial Aristocracy," in *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire*. Cambridge University Press. 121.

adfecerint epistulae tuae, "I am not able to express in words, Lord, what great joy your letters brought to me." Pliny uses the formula as a deferential way to express thanks.[47]

Ovid also uses his poetry to give and receive currency in the economy of *dignitas*. Ovid's *Tristia* contain elements of polite discourse. These poems reveal Ovid's continual attempt to remain active in the social scene at Rome, even as an exile; he uses polite compliments and terms of endearment with his addressees. I suggest that we find Ovid using a sort of recapitulation of benefits in *Tristia* 3.5:

> *Ut cecidi cunctique metu fugere ruinam,*
>   *Versaque amicitiae terga dedere meae,*
> *Ausus es igne Iovis percussum tangere corpus*
>   *Et deploratae limen adire domus:*
> *Idque recens praestas nec longo cognitus usu,*
>   *Quod veterum misero uix duo tresve mihi.*
> *Vidi ego confusos vultus visosque notavi,*
>   *Osque madens fletu pallidiusque meo:*
> *Et lacrimas cernens in singula verba cadentes*
>   *Ore meo lacrimas, auribus illa bibi;*
> *Brachiaque accepi presso pendentia collo,*
>   *Et singultatis oscula mixta sonis.*
> *Sum quoque, care, tuis defensus viribus absens*
>   *(scis carum veri nominis esse loco),*
> *Multaque praeterea manifestaque signa fauoris*
>   *Pectoribus teneo non abitura meis.*
> As I fell and all fled with fear from my ruin, and turned their backs to my
> friendship, you dared to touch the body struck by the fire of Jove and to
> enter the threshold of the grievous house: and being a recent friend and
> one not known for long, you did what scarcely two or three old friends did
> for me. I saw your confused face and I marked your expressions, and the

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[47] Other letters reveal a similar participation in exchanges of polite discourse. Pliny, in *Ep*. 4.15.9, writes to Minicius Fundanus. He recommends to Fundanus that, if elected consul the following year, he ought to treat the quaestor Asinius Bassus well, because of both the young man's character and the character of his father Rufus. Pliny asks that Fundanus treat Bassus like a son: *Debent autem sapientes viri, ut tu, tales quasi liberos a republica accipere, quales a natura solemus optare*, "Wise men like yourself ought to receive such men from the state as if they were the sort of children we ought to hope for from nature." Pliny uses some polite compliments throughout the letter, but for the most part he is fairly direct in telling Fundanus what he ought to do. He does use a form of *ignosco* to apologize, a feature noted by Hall in Cicero's letters, but Pliny apologizes only for being in a hurry, not for the imposition (*Ep*. 4.15.11): *pro inde indulge precibus meis, obsequere consilio, et ante omnia si festinare videor ignosce*, "Therefore indulge my prayers, heed my advice, and before all things forgive me if I seem to be in a hurry." This letter reveals that the linguistic rituals have changed slightly. Perhaps, under the changed political climate, the careful wording and polite structures between peers became less important.

face dripping with tears and paler than mine: and seeing your tears falling in choked words, I drank in your tears with my mouth, I drank in your words with my ears; and I felt your arms pressing on my neck, and kisses mixed with gulping sobs. I am also defended, dear one, by your powers while I'm away (you know that "dear" is in the place of your true name), and in addition I hold in my heart many clear signs of your affection, not about to leave. (5-19)

Ovid commemorates the services of this friend. One notable difference from Cicero's letter to Matius is that Ovid admits that the friend to whom he writes is a new one (*recens*), one whom he has not known long (*nec longo cognitus usu*). Cicero writes to Matius: *Quantum memoria repetere praeterita possum, nemo est mihi te amicus antiquior; sed vetustas habet aliquid commune cum multis, amor non habet*, "As far back as I am able to seek in my memory, no one has been a friend to me longer than you; but a *long* friendship has something shared with many, but one marked by love does not (*Fam*. 11.27.2)." But Ovid does seem to be engaging in some form of polite discourse. Like *Att*. 1.17, Ovid's poem contains forms of *carus* (*care* [17] and *carum* [18]), indicating that he was writing to a dear friend. The fact that the friend was a close one would not negate the need for a restatement of past services. Cicero, as mentioned previously, composes such a list for his friend Atticus. Atticus was a long-time friend; similarly, Ovid is writing to a friend who, although new, has outdone his old friends (*veterum* [6]) because of the love shown. This new friend has already performed such noble services that Ovid will never forget them (*pectoribus teneo non abitura meis*). This friend shared Ovid's grief, as Atticus shared Cicero's and is commended in the recapitulation-of-benefits in *Att*. 1.17 (*Vidi enim, vidi penitus que perspexi in meis variis temporibus et sollicitudines et laetitias tuas*). Cicero formally "repays" the debt he owes to Atticus' dignity; Ovid here may be "repaying" the loyalty of his friend.

Ovid still, however, is somewhat of a barbarian in Rome. What he hates and fears in Tomis—the slander (even that they slander his exile) and the inability to communicate—parallels his new relation to Rome. He cannot speak with his fellow citizens openly; he must communicate through letters. In fact, in *Tristia* 5.11, he mentions slander when he responds to his wife's complaint that someone called her "an exile's wife," *exulis uxorem* (*Tr*. 5.11.2). Besides facing insults at home, he also laments that he is forgetting how to speak Latin, as mentioned earlier. Whether or not this is the case, Ovid does at least construct himself as becoming barbarian—that is, alienated from the relationship forged and maintained by language. This alienation hinders how much he can actually do in the economy of *dignitas*, both because of physical distance and from his low status as an exile. Physical distance was certainly a barrier. Cicero faced this same difficulty when he served as governor in Cilicia. Cicero regretted the fact that, by being absent from Rome, he lost the ability to benefit his friends. He writes to one friend:

> *Maxime mihi fuit optatum Romae esse tecum multas ob causas, sed praecipue, ut et in petendo et in gerendo consulatu meum tibi debitum studium perspicere posses…sed moleste fero me consulem tuum studium adulescentis perspexisse, te meum, cum id aetatis sim, perspicere non posse.*
> I greatly hoped to be in Rome with you for many reasons, but mostly so that you could see my zeal towards yourself, a zeal owed to you, in seeking and managing the consulship…but I bear it with difficulty that I, as a consul, saw your youthful zeal, and you are not able to see mine, although I'm to this point of age. (*Fam*. 15.13)

Cicero is limited in how much he can benefit his friends, but he does establish an absent presence through his letters.[48] Ovid faces a greater obstacle even than the distance. Because of his status as exile, he cannot even name his addressees: *ne noceam grato vereor tibi carmine, neve/ intempestivus nominis obstet honor,* "I fear lest I should harm you with a favorable poem, and that the honor of the name would be untimely [*Tr*. 4.5.15-16]." Because the poems would

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[48] His letters of recommendation, for example, allowed him to use his influence even when away.

probably have been read in public, a friend's name in print could either add to his dignity or take away from it, depending on who was talking about them. Ovid does not want to harm his friends and settles for praising a nameless individual. But he is still not able to benefit them as much as he would like. This limitation on his speech is another type of linguistic alienation that divides him from Rome.

Ovid's reputation in Rome seems to depend upon his ability to communicate, primarily on his ability to communicate as a poet. His poems act as his currency in Rome's economy of *dignitas*. I suggest that *Tristia* 4.8 offers further evidence of Ovid's need to write poetry in order to build and maintain his reputation. *Tristia* 4.8 describes Ovid's wish to have retired from his labor and to enjoy a quiet old age. Poetic literary tropes link his labor to poetry; being a poet was, in a sense, his career. I will not here discuss whether Ovid needed to write poems to earn a living, but I will suggest that Ovid needed to write poems in order to have currency in the economy of *dignitas*.[49] It was this poetic labor, the labor done out of a need to build a reputation, that he wishes to come to an end. His past poetic achievements should have been enough to allow him to rise above the market's ebb and flow and to provide him a secure reputation so that he could spend his days pursuing his own interests.

He uses poetic tropes to link his achievements and his labor to poetry. Ovid begins this letter home by describing his advancing age; his hairs are swan-white (*iam mea cycneas imitantur tempora plumas* [1]) and he describes the approaching time of life as frail (*anni fragiles* [3]) and sluggish (*inertior aetas* [2]). He then reminisces about what he had expected to find at this point in his life:

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[49] I am aware of the controversy regarding just how dependent poets were on their patrons. Peter White argues that poets had no other place to go besides the houses of illustrious men. 1978. "Amicitia and the Profession of Poetry in Early Imperial Rome." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 68:74-92. I will not focus on whether Ovid or other poets needed poetry for their livelihood, but the need for poetry as currency in the economy of *dignitas*.

> *Nunc erat, ut posito deberem fine laborum*
> *vivere, me nullo sollicitante metu,*
> *quaeque meae semper placuerunt otia menti*
> *carpere et in studiis molliter esse meis,*
> *et parvam celebrare domum veteresque Penates*
> *et quae nunc domino rura paterna carent,*
> *inque sinu dominae carisque sodalibus inque*
> *securus patria consenuisse mea.*
> *haec mea sic quondam peragi speraverat aetas:*
> *hos ego sic annos ponere dignus eram.*
> Now it was high time that I should live with an end placed on my labor, and with no fear troubling me, and I should pluck up that leisure which always delighted my mind, and I should be lightly enjoying my pursuits. I should visit my modest home and the old Penates and the family property that now lacks a master. I ought to grow old, without a care in my wife's embrace and among dear friends and in my fatherland. At one time I, a young man, had thus hoped that these things would be accomplished. I deserved to spend these years in this way. (*Tr.* 4.8.5-14)

Ovid claims to have earned a peaceful retirement from his labors; he deserved (*dignus* [14]) to be without care (*securus* [12]). *Securus* and *dignus* both correspond to Ovid's place in the economy of *dignitas*. Ovid seems to think that he has done enough to have a fixed physical home and social place in Rome. That place was won by his labors. To what labors (*laborum* [5]) was Ovid referring? He was not a military man, nor a statesman. I suggest that he is here referring to his poetic endeavors. *Labor* is a word that Horace uses to describe his Callimachean-style poetry, poetry that was concise and carefully put together (corresponding to Callimachus' ἀγρυπνία).[50] Ovid further compares himself to a retired racehorse, who after a successful career (*multas palmas…adeptus* [19]), grazes lazily in a meadow so that he will not dishonor his previous victories. If we apply this metaphor to Ovid, the previous victories must be his poems. Ovid may also be alluding to his poetic project later in the poem, when he says that at his age he should not be drinking from a Getic stream (*tempus erat…nec siccam Getico fonte levare sitim* [25-26]). Perhaps the *fonte* here is another reference to Callimachean poetry. Callimachus valued

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[50]Crowther, N. B. 1978. "Horace, Catullus, and Alexandrianism."*Mnemosyne* 31: 40, 42.

the fine-spun poem (*Aetia*, *praef*. 24) and avoided the muddy rivers of epic.[51] Horace, alluding to poetry, contrasts the muddy river and light fountains in Satire 1: *dicas, 'magno de flumine mallem/ quam ex hoc fonticulo tantundem sumere'* (*Sat*. 1.1.55-56). He also refers to *fontibus integris* (*Odes* 1.26.6).The position of *fonte* next to the verb *levare*, "lighten," in Ovid's text enhances the effect. *Levis* is another word that describes good Callimachean poetry. In sum, Ovid seeks to withdraw from labors, to be content with his former victories, and to avoid the Getic font, all of which may be read as references to his former poetic endeavors. Ovid is seeking a retirement from poet labor.

The poetic tropes continue as Ovid desires to pursue his interests (*studiis* [8]) in a light or gentle way (*molliter*). Horace also uses *mollis* to describe what good poetry ought to be: *molle atque facetum/ Vergilio adnuerunt gaudentes rure Camenae*, "To Vergil the Muses, rejoicing in the countryside theme, granted the light and the elegant" (*Sat*.1.10.44-45). Stephen Hinds notes that *mollis* is a very Callimachean word, especially when juxtaposed with *arma*.[52]*Arma* appears in *Tristia* 4.8.20, when Ovid compares himself to the retired soldier who has retired his arms (*arma*) and placed them before the household gods. In sum, the poetic allusions in this passage are rich. Ovid is dreaming of a retirement from poetry to pursue poetry.

Finally, Ovid references Horace in a more direct poetic reference, each using a metaphor of receiving the wooden sword to describe withdrawing from his labor:

> *Miles ubi emeritis non est satis utilis annis,*
> *   ponit ad antiquos, quae tulit, arma Lares.*
> *sic igitur, tarda vires minuente senecta,*
> *   me quoque donari iam rude tempus erat.*

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[51]Ovid had previously embraced Callimachean ideas (*Am*. 1,1; 2,1; 1,15) but had openly rejected them in writing the Metamorphoses. Lyne, R. O. A. M. 1984. "Ovid's Metamorphoses, Callimachus, and l'art pour l'art." *Materiali e Discussioni per l'Analisi dei Testi Classici* 12: 16.

[52] Hinds, Stephen. 2006. "Generalizing About Ovid," in *Oxford Readings in Ovid*. Ed. Peter Knox. Oxford University Press. 40.

> When a soldier is no longer sufficiently useful, once he's served his time, he places his arms by the ancient Lares. In this way, therefore, since sluggish old age was lessening my strength, it was time for me also to be given the wooden sword. (*Tr.* 4.8.21-24)

Horace, in his *Epistle* 1, says something very similar:

> *Prima dicte mihi, summa dicende Camena,*
> *Spectatum **satis** et donatum iam **rude** quaeris,*
> *Maecenas, iterum antiquo me includere ludo?*
> *non eadem est aetas, non mens.*
> Oh you spoken of by my first Muse, and to be spoken by my final Muse, Maecenas, do you seek to include me, who was tested and found sufficient, and who was given the wooden sword, in the old gladiatorial school? I am not the same age, not the same mind. (*E.* 1.1.1-4)

Horace "owed" Maecenas poetry in exchange for being permitted to be a part of his social circle. One benefit merited another. Oliensis defines such benefits as "good turns that deserve but cannot compel other good turns" (154). Horace has dedicated many poems to Maecenas and seems to seem to think that he has done enough and is awarded a benefit in turn; he should be able to retire. He has paid back all debts and every obligation has been fulfilled.[53] Ovid too has earned the rest and has built up enough credit in the economy of *dignitas* to be able to retire. Like Ovid, however, Horace will not get what he claims to want. He will go on to write more poetry because his poetry is currency, and his words have real value in the give-and-take that was part of Roman elite life. For both Ovid and Horace, *satis* (*E.* 1.1.2, *Tr.* 4.8.21) is an empty word. Their debt really cannot be repaid in full; to stay relevant and maintain connections, they need currency. They need to write poetry.

Part 3: Reconstructing the Overreader

If Ovid was going to accurately reconstruct his social world, he would have to construct an overreader—a person with status whose pleasure in the poetry could give great rewards to the

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[53]Oliensis, 156.

poet. Ellen Oliensis explains the concept of an overreader by looking at Horace's poetry. Horace's overreader was Maecenas, a powerful man who could benefit Horace by giving him a place in his social circle. Horace in turn wrote poetry dedicated to Maecenas, and when not explicitly dedicated, he at least assumed that Maecenas would read what he wrote. In this sense, Maecenas was the one constantly reading over Horace's shoulder, and perhaps the one always in the back of Horace's mind as he wrote. Horace presents a complex relationship with Maecenas, one that is at times close and at times distant. In the passage mentioned earlier in this chapter, Horace mentions that Maecenas wants to include him in his gladiatorial school (*includere*, *E.* 1.1.3). This image perhaps draws attention to the close aspect of their relationship; they were in the same social circle.

But Horace also brings attention to the distance between the two men. He discusses his own stammering when he first met Maecenas; he was awed to be in the presence of a great man: *ut veni coram, singultim pauca locutus/ (infans namque pudor prohibebat plura profari…quod eram narro*), "As I came face-to-face with you, after I spoke a few gulped words (for tongue-tied modesty kept me from speaking more)…I am telling you what I was" (*Sat.* 6. 56-57,60). Horace himself was successful and had established himself in Rome; Vergil had recommended his fellow poet to the great Maecenas (*Sat.* 6.55). But Horace still gives deference to his overreader.[54] Such shows of respect could serve as currency in the economy of *dignitas*.

Ovid's situation is different; he is relegated from Rome and is in a weaker position than Horace. He constructs, however, none other than the emperor himself as the overreader for his poetry. Ovid has a rather large debt to pay; he has made an error and admits that he merited the punishment Caesar ordered: *et iubet et merui; nec, quae damnaverit ille,/ crimina defendi fasque*

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[54] Oliensis explores the complexities of Horace's relationship to Maecenas, including Horace's claims to want privacy instead of intimacy with his patron. 155.

piumque puto, "And he commands it, and I deserved it; nor do I think it right or pious to defend the charges which that great man condemned" (*Tr*. 1.2.95-96). Augustus is the one who condemned him, but he is often the subject of praise in Ovid's poetry. He is the one Ovid hopes will be reading over his shoulder. He writes to a friend: *ipse pater patriae—quid enim est civilius illo?—sustinet in nostro carmine saepe legi, nec prohibere potest, quia res est publica Caesar*, "The Father of the Fatherland himself—and really, who is more kindly than he?—he allows himself to be read in my poem, nor is he able to prevent it, since Caesar is the Republic" (*Tr*. 4.4.13-15). Caesar is the only one whom Ovid claims to mention often in the *Tristia*. He is the one at whom Ovid's communication is directed.

Ovid reconstructs Augustus not as a member of his intimate circle, but as a distant deity. He emphasizes the gap between the two of them. Ovid asks friends to speak to the emperor on his behalf: *spe trahor exigua, quam tu mihi demere noli,/ tristia leniri numina posse dei/ ...quaeque tibi linguae est facundia, confer in illud,/ ut doceas votum posse valere meum*, "I am drawn along by a slender hope, which you must not take from me, that the harsh will of the god is able to be softened…Whatever eloquence of tongue you have, bring it to bear on that task, namely that you teach me that my prayer can have strength" (*Tr*. 3.5.25-26, 29-30). Ovid's return will be won through eloquence (*facundia* [29]), his friends' as well as his own. His own poetry, as McGowan points out, is helping to "construct and define the newly deified status of Augustus and his family."[55] Millar notes that the works are concerned with giving Augustus and his future heirs proper honor:

> All of them [Ovid's works including *Tristia* and *Ex Ponto*] manifest an intense concern to incorporate appropriate reflections of the major monuments and successes of the regime…Ovid's works have to negotiate the insuperable task of incorporating appropriate allusions to Augustus,

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[55] McGowan, 164.

while also giving due recognition to his associates and successors, potential or actual.[56]

Polite discourse gave Ovid a way to engage with the emperor, honoring him while also trying to smooth their strained relationship both directly and through intermediaries with Augustus as the overreader. McGowan argues that Ovid continues to have a real presence in Rome's discourse.[57] I suggest that his poetry also gives him some currency by which he may hope to repay Augustus and perhaps gain enough credit to be recalled.

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[56] Millar, Fergus. 1993. "Ovid and the Domus Augusta: Rome Seen from Tomoi." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 83: 1.
[57] McGowan, 164.

Finding a Name in Exile

πρῶτον μὲν Ἑλλάδ᾽ ἀντὶ βαρβάρου χθονὸς
γαῖαν κατοικεῖς…
πάντες δέ σ᾽ ἤσθοντ᾽ οὖσαν Ἕλληνες σοφὴν
καὶ δόξαν ἔσχες: εἰ δὲ γῆς ἐπ᾽ ἐσχάτοις
ὅροισιν ᾤκεις, οὐκ ἂν ἦν λόγος σέθεν.
First, you dwell in Greece instead of a barbarian land…And all the Greeks know that you are
wise and you have a reputation: But if you lived on the farthest borders of the land, there'd be no
talk about you.
(Euripides *Medea* 536-7, 538-41).

In Euripides' *Medea*, Jason attempts to convince Medea that betraying and abandoning

her barbarian home was beneficial, because now she could enjoy all the privileges of the

civilized world. Ovid inverts Medea's experience, going from the civilized world to a barbarian

land. He links Tomis to the Medea myth in *Tristia* 3.9, where he explains the etymology of the

name: Tomis is related to the Greek word τέμνω, meaning "to cut."[58] It was here, Ovid says, that

Medea cut her brother's body to pieces in order to delay her father. She proceeds with Jason to

Corinth, where (he claims) she wins a great reputation for her betrayal. In contrast, Ovid built up

a reputation as a poet in Rome, but in his place of exile his talents were not (initially) recognized.

But he ensures that, although he's living on the farthest borders of the land, there is talk about

him. He creates his own place to speak. In this chapter, I will explore how Ovid is able to speak

and be understood through his poetry and thus finds a transcendent home that surpasses legal

boundaries. I will look at three poems that exemplify the transcendent power of speech in his

poems. In *Tristia* 4.2, he places himself in the middle of the city for Tiberius's triumph over

Germany and creates a space for himself to speak as sacred *vates*. In his letter to Perilla (*Tr.* 3.7),

Ovid again finds a place to speak and be understood. His relationship with his daughter is that of

a one poet to another; their relationship can transcend physical separation and poetry can

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[58] Wheeler, A. L. 1924. *Ovid Tristia and Ex Ponto*. Harvard University Press. n. on *Tr.* 3.9.33-34.

transcend life's worst losses. Finally, in his autobiography (*Tr.* 4.10), Ovid reconstructs a transcendent home. He has made a name for himself in Rome, but through poetic speech he makes a home for himself on Mount Helicon.

Triumph in Germany

In *Tristia* 4.2, Ovid vividly describes Tiberius entering Rome in triumph after conquering Germany. His triumph speaks to the crowd through visual symbols. Caesar conquered in Germany, and the people—unable to be present for the actual battles—look upon the symbols of his victory as they parade through the streets of Rome. Ovid uses verbs related to visual perception as he is describing the event:

> *ergo omnis populus poterit **spectare** triumphos,*
>   *cumque ducum titulis oppida capta **leget**,*
> *vinclaque captiva reges cervice gerentes*
>   *ante coronatos ire **videbit** equos,*
> *et **cernet** vultus aliis pro tempore versos,*
>   *terribiles aliis inmemoresque sui.*
> Therefore the entire populace will be able to watch the triumph, and they'll read the names of captured towns along with the titles of the leaders. They'll see kings, wearing chains on their captured necks, walking before garlanded horses, and they'll see the faces of others turned aside, as befits their situation; other faces are terrible and unmindful of their condition. (*Tr.* 4.2.19-24)

He proceeds to give a detailed catalogue of the conquered, including generals and traitors and priests (27-46). He describes them as if he were actually watching them march before his eyes: the traitor "covers his squalid face with streaming hairs" (*squalida promissis qui tegit ora comis* [34]). He describes the personified Germany, "borne along with streaming hair and sitting sadly under the feet of the unassailable leader" (*crinibus…fertur Germania passis,/ et ducis invicti sub pede maesta sedet* [43-44]). The titles of the leaders, the names of conquered towns, and even the chained kings all serve as symbols, as a visual representation of a conquered nation.

These same visual words and objects of the audience's gaze could refer to Ovid's poetry. He says that the populace will read (*leget*) the titles (*titulis*) of the leaders in the triumph. In *Tristia* 1.1, Ovid uses similar language to describe his poem's title, which will also be read: *nec titulus minio, nec cedro charta notetur*, "The title will not be marked with vermilion, nor the page with cedar" (7). The conquered leaders turn their faces aside, as befits their situation (*pro tempore* [*Tr.* 4.2.23]). In *Tristia* 1.1.4, his poem wears the proper attire of its time (*infelix habitum temporis huius habe*). I suggest that the faces turned aside (*vultus…versos* [*Tr.* 4.2.23]) could perhaps be meant to recall *versus*, verses. Ovid's poetry shows the proper shame because it has come from a barbarian land, just as some of the conquered leaders. Some of the leaders are not mindful of their situation, and I suggest that the word *inmemores* in line 24 also correlates to *Tristia* 1.1.10. Ovid says that his poem ought to be mindful (*memorem*) of his author's fortune. Finally, Ovid describes his poem as shaggy with streaming hairs, *hirsutus passis…comis (Tr.* 1.1.12); similar language was used to describe both the traitor (*promissis…comis* [*Tr.* 4.2.34]) and Germania (*crinibus…passis* [*Tr.* 4.2.43]). Ovid's first poem in the *Tristia* comes to Rome in the guise of a conquered foreigner. But the triumph and the poem serve a similar purpose: both are symbols that give Caesar and Ovid an avenue for speaking to the populace.

The two men both are in the public eye. Ovid, when praising Caesar in this triumph poem, uses language that he has used to describe himself:

> *hos super in curru, Caesar, victore veheris*
> *purpureus populi rite per ora tui,*
> *quaque ibis, manibus circumplaudere tuorum,*
> *undique iactato flore tegente vias.*
> You, Caesar, are carried above these (the conquered) in your victorious chariot, clad in purple and rightly paraded before the faces of your people. Wherever you go, you'll be applauded by the hands of your loyal supporters, and from all sides flowers are thrown and cover the road. (*Tr.* 4.2.47-52)

Ovid describes Caesar as being carried before the faces (*ora*) of the people (*populi*). Forms of *os* and *populus* occur in the same line a total of five times in the *Tristia*. In three of those instances, Ovid and his poetry are the center of popular attention. In *Tristia* 1.1.24, he describes what would happen if he tried to defend himself: *et peragar **populi** publicus **ore** reus* , "And I would be harried as a common criminal in the mouth of the people." In *Tristia* 4.1.6-8, he describes himself as "that one who was always in the mouth of the people," *illum qui **populi** semper in **ore** fuit*. In Tristia 3.14.23-24, it is his unpolished poetry that will come before the people: *nunc incorrectum **populi** peruenit in **ora***, "Now, uncorrected, it comes into the mouths of the people." Caesar was before the eyes of the people, but Ovid and his poetry were in their mouths.

The passivity of Tiberius is also highlighted in this passage. He is carried (*veheris* [47]) and applauded (*circumplaudere* [49]). Tiberius is literally carried before the people, and figuratively he is carried by the name he has inherited from Augustus. The name of Caesar has become institutionalized and no longer refers to one man. In a sense, the name has transcended the man who carries it. In a similar way, Ovid as poet is carried in the mouths of the people. The name has, in a sense, transcended the man.

This poem, ostensibly a praise of Caesar, also allows Ovid to show off his ability to reconstruct what he cannot see. McGowan remarks that in *Tristia* 4.2, "The power of the poet's mind is on display."[59] This triumph has not yet occurred; in fact, Tiberius was still in the field at the time this poem was composed. Ovid was predicting the triumph.[60] He admits that he has made up the entire scene, and in so doing, he draws attention to his poetic ability:

> *at mihi fingendo tantum longeque remotis*
> *auribus hic fructus percipiendus erit,*
> *atque procul Latio **diversum missus** in **orbem***
> *qui narret cupido, vix erit, ista mihi.*

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[59] McGowan, 160.
[60] Wheeler, A. L. n. on *Tristia* 3.9.1-2.

> But only by imagining and with ears far removed will I take hold of this enjoyment, and there will scarcely be one person who, after he's been sent far from Latium into the opposite side of the world, could narrate those things to eager me. (*Tr.* 4.2.67-70)

Ovid has fabricated this triumph by using his imagination (*fingendo*) and by whatever rumors reach his ears (*auribus*). He does not expect anyone to come who could narrate to him the things that he in fact has just narrated. *He* is the one who has been sent to the ends of the earth, as indicated by a similar line in *Tristia* 4.9. Ovid threatens his enemy that, although banished, he can still punish him: *sim licet **extremum**, sicut sum, **missus in orbem**, nostra suas isto porriget ira manus,* "Let me be sent into the farthest corner of the world, just as I actually am, my anger will stretch out its hands to you" (9).

He is in a far-away place indeed (*diversum…orbem*). The use of *diversum* to describe the world (*orbem*) may highlight this point. This word occurs only three times in all the *Tristia*. Forms of *verto* occur 9 times in the *Tristia*, and not at all in the *Ex Ponto*. (In contrast, in the first book of the *Metamorphoses* alone, *diversa* occurs 8 times and forms of *verto* occur 17 times.) Two forms of *verto* appear in *Tristia* 4.2, *versos* in line 23 and *diversum* in line 69. The idea of *change* is implicit in this word, as hinted at by its much more frequent use in the *Metamorphoses*, and *diversum* carries the idea of turning away. By calling the world *diversum*, Ovid's poem undermines its apparent pro-Caesar theme. In Rome, everyone's gaze is locked on Caesar's triumph; through the use of so many visual terms, Ovid highlights the importance of being able to see this event. But in Tomis no one really cares—that part of the world is turned away. His triumph fails to touch them. In fact, no one may ever come to tell them about it. Only Ovid's eyes were there: *illa meos oculos mediam deducit in urbem,* "That (mind) leads my eyes into the middle of the city" (*Tr.* 4.2.61). His mind leads him (*deducit*) into the city; *deducit* is also a poetic word, perhaps reminding his audience that Ovid reconstructs the city through his

poem. With his mind he can "see": *haec ego summotus, qua possum, mente videbo*, "I, though exiled, shall see these things in the only way I can: with my mind" (*Tr.* 4.2.57).[61] McGowan discusses Ovid's position as sacred *vates*: "becoming a *vates* in exile allows him to 'see' what he cannot actually have seen."[62] In this sacred role, Ovid can describe the triumph before it has even occurred; he is able to transcend his own exile and participate in the life of the city, resisting and even undermining his exile by his absent presence.[63]

The people of Rome, while watching the triumph, can read (*leget*) the names of the places and leaders that Caesar has conquered; the whole world can read those names in Ovid's poetry. Although in *Tristia* 1.1 he sends his little book in the guise of a conquered barbarian, Ovid shares in Caesar's victory when his poem is read. McGowan suggests that Ovid as sacred *vates* occupies a space between *ius* (human right) and *fas* (divine right), where he "constructs a poetic place for sacred speech."[64] McGowan points out that Augustus occupies a similar place between judge (*iudex*) and god (*deus*).[65] Both command a power of speaking. In *Tristia* 4.2, Tiberius "speaks" through his triumphal procession to a local, urban crowd; Ovid speaks to the whole world through putting the triumph into poetry. Ovid's reconstruction of Rome in this poem gives him a place for sacred speech, a sort of linguistic *commercia* that he did not have in

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[61] In Ovid's winter poem, he says, "Nor is it enough to have seen," *nec vidisse sat est* (*Tr.* 3.10.39). In this poem Ovid sees (*videbo*) with his mind, but he does more than see. As in the previous poem, he is taking a poetic journey, but this journey is through Rome. In the winter poem, he invites his readers into the landscape of his exile. Here, he invites readers into the landscape that is home for them, but a home constructed by Ovid's poetry. They must be content to see his poetic world; Ovid, on the other hand, is more than a spectator because he is a poet. He sees and describes, sees and creates. I would like to thank Emma Scioli of the University of Kansas for suggesting this connection.

[62] McGowan, 159.

[63] Philip Hardie describes how Ovid links metamorphoses and illusion, and how Ovid's language can cause change and transformation. Hardie, Philip. *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion*. Cambridge University Press. 229. I suggest that *diversum*, so prevalent in the Metamorphoses, may help create an absent presence for Ovid. He highlights his relegated status while at the same time giving the illusion to his readers that he is with them.

[64] McGowan, 121.

[65] Ibid.

Tomis nor really in Rome. If linguistic alienation characterizes the land of exile, then poetry—

the only place where he can speak freely—becomes home.

Letter to Perilla

Ovid's letter to Perilla also deals with the importance of reading and being read. I will

examine the forms of *lego* in this poem in order to show that shared poetry provided a link

between the two that transcends the distance between them. Ovid reconstructs their relationship

that they shared at home in Rome, but his poetry is at the same time a living example of that

relationship in action. Ovid also presents being read—and so gaining a reputation— as a way to

transcend life's worst losses.

Ovid begins this letter by imagining Perilla at home in Rome: *Aut illam inuenies dulci*

cum matre sedentem,/ aut inter libros Pieridasque suas, "Either you'll find her sitting with her

sweet mother or among her books and Muses" (*Tr.* 3.7.3-4).[66] He imagines his letter asking her,

"Do you also hold fast to those pursuits, and do you sing learned songs—not in your father's

way? For along with your fates and modest character, nature gave you a rare dowry and natural

talent" (*Tu quoque dic studiis communibus ecquid inhaeres, doctaque non patrio carmina more*

canis?/ Nam tibi cum fatis mores natura pudicos/ et raras dotes ingeniumque dedit [*Tr.* 3.7.11-

14]). Perilla, like Ovid, has innate talent (*ingenium*).[67] Ovid acknowledges his daughter's poetic

ability. He describes their poetic endeavors as shared (*communibus*). Even if she does not write

just like Ovid (*non patrio more*), she at least is engaged in a similar pursuit.

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[66] The father/daughter relationship established in this poem may be reflected in Ovid's use of the patronymic *Pieridas* in *Tristia* 3.7.4. Perhaps the "either/or" set up here reflects Perilla's split heritage: she is either with her natural mother, or she is with the Muses, who act as sort of poetic parents. Ovid, as her natural father and fellow poet, can relate to her on both levels. Again, I would like to thank Emma Scioli suggesting the possible nuance of *Pieridas*.

[67] Ovid speaks of his own talent in line 47 of the same poem: *ingenio tamen ipse meo comitorque fruorque*, "Nevertheless I am accompanied by and enjoy my own innate talent."

He further remembers their shared activity. When he was home, he would read his poetry

to her and read hers as well:

> *Dum licuit, tua saepe mihi, tibi nostra **legebam**;*
>   *saepe tui iudex, saepe magister eram:*
> *aut ego praebebam factis modo uersibus aures,*
>   *aut, ubi cessares, causa ruboris eram.*
> While it was permitted, I was often reading your poetry to myself, and I was
> reading mine to you. Often I was your judge, your teacher. Either I was offering
> my ears to recently-crafted verses, or, when you would stop writing, I caused you
> to blush. (*Tr.* 3.7.23-26)

Ovid's relationship with his daughter is more than a father/daughter relationship. In these lines,

Ovid is her judge (*iudex*) and teacher (*magister*). In another part of the same poem, Ovid presents

himself as his daughter's guide and companion (*utque pater natae duxque comesque fui*

[*Tr*.3.7.18]). He will use the same words (*dux et comes* [*Tr.* 4.10.119]) to describe how the Muse

relates to him. Both words originate from the military.[68] The bond between Ovid and his

daughter is a close camaraderie, the bond of two engaged in a common pursuit.[69] They engage in

this pursuit by writing poetry and by reading (*legebam*). When Ovid was at home, he and his

daughter were both poets and both members of the audience. Ovid readily critiqued her new

verses; he does not here condemn bad poetry, but he does make it a source of shame to stop

writing. Perhaps he was not merely encouraging discipline, but encouraging his daughter to walk

in her identity as poet. He himself does not stop writing poetry, even after his poetry got him

exiled.[70] There is something about the nature of a poet that must write poetry.

Ovid mentions that he and his daughter engaged in these poetic exchanges "while it was

permitted," *dum licuit*. But through his poem he is able to do what he used to do. He is providing

her with his own poetry to read. He perhaps causes her to blush when he exhorts her to be less

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[68] See *Tristia* 4.2.44 and *Met.* 1.560, in which *dux* is used in the context of a triumph.
[69] See Chapter 2, where Ovid relates his poetic endeavors to military pursuits by wishing for the wooden sword.
[70] He mentions, for example, in *Tristia* 3.7.9-10 that he is returning to the Muses even after they injured him.

concerned with her looks and more concerned in developing her mind (*Tr.* 3.7.31ff). Poetry is an

integral part of their relationship; because of this common passion, they have something to share

even in his exile. Gareth Williams discusses a similar relationship between Ovid and Macer,

looking at *Ex Ponto* 2.10. He describes Ovid's relationship to the poet Macer, saying, "If the

'real' poet is to be found in his work and not in his physical presence, the relationship between

Ovid and Macer is not interrupted by the former's exile."[71] Ovid, in *Tristia* 3.7, reconstructs his

relationship with his daughter, and provides at the same time an example of that relationship in

action.

Being read, however, is more than an intimate communication between father and

daughter and fellow poets. Ovid wants to be read by the world, and that sort of fame will

compensate for his losses in exile:

> *En ego, cum caream patria uobisque domoque,*
> *raptaque sint, adimi quae potuere mihi,*
> *ingenio tamen ipse meo comitorque fruorque:*
> *Caesar in hoc potuit iuris habere nihil.*
> *Quilibet hanc saeuo uitam mihi finiat ense,*
> *me tamen extincto fama superstes erit,*
> *dumque suis uictrix omnem de montibus orbem*
> *prospiciet domitum Martia Roma, **legar**.*
> Behold I, although I've lost fatherland, all of you and my home, and whatever
> could be taken from me has been taken, nevertheless I have my mind as my
> companion and the source of my joy: Caesar couldn't have any jurisdiction over
> this. Let whoever wants to end my life with a savage sword do it; but my fame
> will live on even when I am dead. And as long as Martian Rome, victorious, will
> look down from her hills over the whole conquered world, I shall be read. (*Tr.*
> 3.7.45-54)[72]

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[71] Williams, 43.

[72] Samuel Huskey writes a fascinating article on *Tristia* 3.1, in which one of Ovid's books gives a guided tour of
Rome. The book omits the monuments built by Augustus or Julius Caesar. He claims that *Tristia* 3.7 "states overtly
what Ovid says more subtly through his calculated omission of monuments and places in poem 3.1: the emperor's
authority, no matter how great, is ultimately temporary." 2006. "Ovid's (Mis)Guided Tour of Rome: Some
Purposeful Omissions in *Tr.* 3.1." *The Classical Journal* 102: 34.

Ovid's consolation and comfort for his losses is the fact that he will be read. Perilla too will face difficulties in life. For a young girl, perhaps the worst loss that can be imagined is the loss of beauty. Ovid reminds his daughter that her looks will not last forever:

> *Ista decens facies longis uitiabitur annis,*
> *rugaque in antiqua fronte senilis erit,*
> *inicietque manum formae damnosa senectus,*
> *quae strepitus passu non faciente uenit.*
> *Cumque aliquis dicet "fuit haec formosa" dolebis,*
> *et speculum mendax esse querere tuum.*
> That pretty face will be spoiled by long years, and the old age's furrow will crease your ancient forehead. Ruinous old age will lay its hand on your beauty; it comes with silent step. And when someone will say, "This woman *was* beautiful," you'll grieve, and you'll complain that your mirror is a liar. (*Tr.* 3.7.33-38)

Her looks will not last forever. He goes on to encourage her that some things will endure: *nil non mortale tenemus/ pectoris exceptis ingeniique bonis*, "we have nothing immortal except the possessions of our heart and mind" (Tr. 3.7.43-44). Perilla's poetry, one of those goods springing from her mind, has a permanence that will outlast her pretty face, and that permanence could be a comfort when she lost youthful beauty, just as Ovid lost his physical presence in Rome. Her mind could win her an enduring reputation (*fama*) like her father, whose exile actually gives him a wider audience than he might have had if he stayed in Rome.

Ovid's Autobiography

The final poem I shall consider is Ovid's autobiography, *Tristia* 4.10. In his letter to Perilla, Ovid presented poetry as something that could help assuage life's most difficult losses. His autobiography reveals that poetry, more than helping him cope, gave Ovid his identity. He was born a poet. Poetry also gave him a place in the city (*urbe*) as well as a place in the broader world (*orbe*).

Ovid did not choose his Muse; rather, from a very young age, the Muse chose him. At least, that is the way he tells his life story. Ovid's poem places his original home not in the city of Rome, but rather on Mount Helicon. As a child, prominent men of the city educated him (*insignes urbis…viros* [Tr.4.10.16]). But the Muse was drawing him, and interestingly, he says that the Muse was drawing him secretly: *at mihi iam puero caelestia sacra placebant,/ inque suum furtim Musa trahebat opus*, "But for me, by now a boy, the heavenly rites were pleasing, and the Muse was secretly drawing me into her own work" (*Tr.* 4.10.19-20). The word *furtim* indicates that he was not being taught poetry by the men of the city. Rather, he separates himself from the city; although the city's elite teachers were instructing him, he chose to follow the Muse instead.

His father was not pleased at the career path he chose: *saepe pater dixit studium quid inutile temptas?/ Maeonides nullas ipse reliquit opes*, "Often my father said to me, 'Why do you try this useless pursuit? Homer himself didn't leave any wealth behind him" (*Tr.* 4.10.21-22) Ovid tried to follow his advice. He leaves his home on Helicon and stops writing poetry: *totoque Helicone relicto/ scribere temptabam verba soluta modis*, "And when I had left all Helicon behind, I kept trying to write words loosened from meter" (*Tr.* 4.10.23-24). But Ovid was a born poet; his words somehow came out in measured feet anyway (*Tr.*4.10.25-26).

As he grew older, poetry did give him a place in the city: *moverat ingenium totam cantata per urbem/ nomine non vero dicta Corinna mihi*, "Corinna (I don't call her by her real name), sung throughout the whole city, had moved my mind" (*Tr.*4.10.59-60). Ovid is here referring to the heroine of his *Amores*, most likely an imaginary woman.[73] She, his poetic creation, had given him popularity throughout all Rome.

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[73] Wheeler, n. on *Tr.* 4.10.59. 201.

Ovid's exile, rather than checking his popularity, provided a chance to expand his readership. Stephen Hinds notes how, in his posthumously-published *Ex Ponto* 4, Ovid admits to slipping into a barbarian language in order to be understood:[74]

> *A! pudet et Getico scripsi sermone libellum*
> *structaque sunt nostris barbara uerba modis:*
> *et placui—gratare mihi!—coepique poetae*
> *inter inhumanos nomen habere Getas.*
> Ah, I'm ashamed! I even wrote a little book in the Getic language and fit barbaric words to our meters. And they liked it—congratulate me!—and I've begun to have the name of poet among the uncivilized Getae. (*Ex Ponto* 4.13.19-22)

Like he had in Rome, Ovid again wins the name of poet. He is moving beyond the bounds of the *urbe* and even beyond the bounds of the Latin language. In *Tristia* 4.10, Ovid rightly claims to be read in all the world:

> *nam tulerint magnos cum saecula nostra poetas,*
> *non fuit ingenio fama maligna meo,*
> *cumque ego praeponam multos mihi, non minor illis*
> *dicor et in **toto** plurimus **orbe legor**.*
> For although our times produced great poets, fame wasn't harsh to my talent, and although I place many poets ahead of myself, I am said to be no less than they, and in all the world I am read the most. (*Tr.* 4.10.125-128)

Corinna ensured that he was read in all the city (*totam…urbem*), and as an exile he is read in all the world (*toto…orbe*). The form of *legor* here is present, as compared with the future *legar* in the letter to Perilla. The letter to Perilla links Ovid's fame to Rome's empire; here he is claiming that his poetry and fame will transcend his own lifetime. In a sense, Caesar's victories have become Ovid's victories. As Rome has expanded her empire, the Latin language has also spread, and will therefore carry Ovid's poetry with it as Tiberius is carried along in his triumph (note the passivity of Caesar, who is carried along [*veheris*] in *Tristia* 4.2, and *legor* in *Tristia* 4.10). Augustus, in a sense, embodied the Roman world; Ovid comments in *Tristia* 5.2.50: o *uir non*

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[74] Hinds 2011, 68.

ipso, quem regis, orbe minor, "O man no less than the world which you rule." Ovid has secured

his own piece of the empire, however, through his poetry. If the parallel is extended, Ovid, like

Caesar, is not less than *his* world.

But, although he has moved beyond the bounds of the city, the broader world is not

Ovid's home; as in his boyhood in Rome, he finds a transcendent home on Mount Helicon. After

describing the difficulties of exile, Ovid returns to where he began and addresses his Muse:

> *tu dux et comes es, tu nos abducis ab Histro,*
> *in medioque mihi das Helicone locum;*
> *tu mihi, quod rarum est, vivo sublime dedisti*
> *nomen, ab exequiis quod dare fama solet.*
> You are my leader and companion, you lead me away from Hister and you
> give me a place in the middle of Helicon; while I am still alive you have
> given to me that which is rare—the sublime name that fame usually grants
> after death. (*Tr.* 4.10.119-122)

Ovid's poetry allows him to memorialize the events and enjoy the relationships he could have

experienced in Rome. He can, for a short time, be in the middle of the city. But Ovid can see

beyond the city. His poetry allows him to have a name not only among the Getae, but in all the

world. Ovid's real home is Mount Helicon, and while reconstructing his physical home, he is in a

sense already at home. His poetry allows him to put again before his mind's eye the things he

misses from Rome. He can take some comfort in the familiar, in the routines, in the relationships.

But he can also take comfort in his own enduring name as poet—a name that is sublime

(*sublime*). He has the hope that, although he has lost much, he has not lost his *ingenium*. The

world is greater than Rome. Poetry allows him to participate in the greater world that extends

beyond Rome's walls and beyond Rome's time of power. From high on Helicon, he can breathe

the air of Homer, of Virgil—the air that Dante would inhale, Du Bellay, T. S. Eliot, and all poets

whose names live after their death. As human beings subject to the limitations of time, they

managed to produce something timeless. They stretched beyond the confines of their city and

their age and touched the world. Poetry allows Ovid to reconstruct home, but at the same time

his poetry allows him to separate himself from the city and see himself as a part of the broader

world. The ability to remember home but at the same time to transcend the past allows the exile

to achieve the plurality of vision spoken of by Hana Píchová. I will close with an excerpt from

Emad Jabbar's "Do Not Live a Day in Homeland's Memory." Jabar, currently exiled from Iraq,

reconstructs scenes from his home country in his poem. Although those at home shout to stay, to

live "between the twin rivers," at the end he proclaims who he, as poet, really is: the wind, the

cloud, the water, the mountain across the ages. He is more than his homeland, and so he can

endure his exile:

> *Each time you pack up*
>   *your things to travel*
> *All the little stars flutter*
>   *in you*
> *All the bridge's lamps return*
>   *You*
> *All the house's eyes*
> *The stubborn date palms*
>   *return you*
> *Their nascent clusters have landed*
> *And the last squadrons are*
>   *startled in my heart*
> *And they shout: don't leave*
> *You are a poet*
> *You are he*
> *Who gathers people's tears*
> *In the dawn of registers*
> *You are a witness*
> *Live here between the*
>   *twin rivers and persist*
> *Live here and strew the*
>   *years of sufferance*
> *In the embers of the braziers …*
> *Do not live a day in a homeland's*
>   *memory*
> *You are this wind*
>   *This cloud*
>   *This water*

You this remaining mountain
across the ages
Do not live a day in a homeland's
memory.

Conclusion

I'm looking up
Holding out
Pressing forward
Without a doubt
Longing for the things unseen
Longing for the things I believe
My true country
Newsboys, *Hallelujah*

In exile Ovid found consolation in a transcendent place on Mount Helicon, a home more permanent than the city from which he was barred. He had a poetic community that provided companionship even when distance separated him from his fellow poets. As a participant in that community, Ovid transcends his losses and even his own time. He produces something timeless. His reconstructions of home create the poetic space where Ovid can revisit his temporal home in Rome—the physical and literary landscape, the social relationships—while at the same time creating a space for Ovid to be at home even when away. Ovid's visions of a home on Helicon sustain him in the uncertainty of exile.

Visions of home in exile take different forms. The Russian Ganin revisited in his mind the physical place from which he was exiled. Ovid's vision of home expanded to include not just the city (*urbs*) but the broader world (*orbs*). I would like to conclude by considering visions of home for the Christian exile, as discussed by St. Augustine and exemplified by John in the book of Revelation. Like Ovid, they envision a permanent and transcendent home. This home comforts those who are in the unsettled condition of not being in their true country.

St. Augustine describes the City of God as a sort of exile: *Superna est enim sanctorum civitas, quamvis hic pariat cives, in quibus peregrinatur donec regni eius tempus adveniat*, "For

the city of the saints is above, although here on earth it gives birth to its citizens, inside of whom the city wanders until the time of its kingdom will come" (*de civitate dei* 15.1). St. Augustine argues that these citizens are, specifically, the people of Christ: *populum Christianum, in quo Dei civitas peregrinator in terris*, "the people of Christ, in whom the city of God wanders on the land" (16.41). The City of God wanders, carried by its citizens. The citizens of that city are in the place of being home and being not home. They carry their true home inside of themselves, but they will not actually enter that home on earth. In this way, the Christian experience echoes that of the exiled Ovid. He carries his poetic ability with him even as he is absent from his native city.

St. Augustine encourages the residents of the City of God to pray for the peace of their land of exile (19.26). But they have a more enduring hope: *Pax autem nostra propria et hic est cum Deo per fidem et in aeternum erit cum illo per speciem*, "But our own peace we both enjoy here with God through faith, and in eternity peace will exist with God through sight" (19.27). The exile's faith in a true home with God gives them a peace even in their sojourn on earth, and they look forward to the time when they are recalled. They can then see what they believed.

This vision of home is demonstrated by John. He wrote the book of Revelation at the end of Domitian's reign (A. D. 81-96). John had been exiled to the island of Patmos, an island in the Aegean Sea off the coast of modern Turkey. John was exiled at a time when Roman authorities were trying to force all people in the Roman empire to worship the emperor.[75] John sees himself as part of a kingdom that is not an earthly one: καὶ ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς **βασιλείαν**, "and He (God) has made us a kingdom" (Revelation 1:6). He also writes: Ἐγὼ Ἰωάννης, ὁ ἀδελφὸς ὑμῶν καὶ συγκοινωνὸς ἐν τῇ θλίψει καὶ **βασιλείᾳ** καὶ ὑπομονῇ ἐν Ἰησοῦ, ἐγενόμην ἐν τῇ νήσῳ τῇ καλουμένῃ Πάτμῳ διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ, "I John, your brother and

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[75] From the "Introduction to Revelation," in the *Archeological Study Bible*. Zondervan Press.

sharer in the affliction and in the **kingdom** and endurance in Christ, I am on the island called

Patmos because of the word of God and the witness of Jesus" (Revelation 1:9). His letter looks to

this heavenly kingdom, describing God as the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end

(1:8). The permanence of God and the heavenly kingdom is a source of comfort to John and the

churches who are suffering. The return of Christ would bring and end of their suffering and the

beginning of their real residency in the kingdom that they currently carried within them. John, a

literal exile and, as a citizen of a heavenly country, a figurative exile on earth, saw visions of his

transcendent home in exile. His goal in writing was not hope for recall from Patmos. He had lost

his affection for any earthly city. He was looking for things unseen: his true country. Ovid

hoped for recall to Rome, but he too was able to achieve a vision of a more transcendent home.

His poetry gave him an enduring name, and Helicon gave him an enduring home. Visions of

home in exile take different forms, but they do come—to Russian or Iraqi political exiles, to

Christian fathers, to Roman poets. For Ovid, it is not enough to have seen. He achieves a

plurality of vision that allows him to participate in two worlds at once. He participates in

something transcendent, but in communicating that vision to others, in writing poetry, he

maintains a connection to the temporal.

It is, therefore, a source of great virtue for the practiced mind to learn, bit by bit, first to change about invisible and transitory things, so that afterwards it may be able to leave them behind altogether. The man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land. The tender soul has fixed his love on one spot in the world; the strong man has extended his love to all places; the perfect man has extinguished his. –Hugo of St. Victor, *Reflections on Exile*

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