

Ovid's Poetics of Exile

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An evaluation of the *Tristia* and *ex Ponto* has to take into account the tradition of poetic theory in which Ovid places himself, especially how he develops the Callimachean *apologia* commonly known as *recusatio* with all its language, imagery, and commonplaces to suit his new situation in exile.

Ovid's poetic programme both in the *Tristia* and the *Epistulae ex Ponto* manifests itself in a number of apologies¹ and in occasional statements made throughout the corpus. The distinction made by Evans between *Tristia* I–IV and *Tristia* V, *ex Ponto* I–IV² seems artificial since the real break in Ovid's career is his relegation after which he presents himself as "dead."³ Although Ovid varies his programmatic pronouncements from one poem to another the only reasonable distinction within the exile-corpus is the one the poet makes himself by deciding to name his addressees (*Pont.* I 1. 15 ff.):

inuenies, quamuis non est miserabilis index,
non minus hoc illo triste, quod ante dedi;
rebus idem, titulo differt; et epistula, cui sit
non occultato nomine missa, docet.

If Ovid did not name the addressees in the *Tristia* the naming cannot have been essential. His appeal is therefore not only to certain addressees but also generally to the *candide lector*.⁴ Though some individuals may have known that they were addressed, the majority of readers in antiquity, as in modern times, does not. Ovid's intention must therefore have been to win

¹*Trist.* I 11; II 313–56; III 14; IV 1; V 1; *Pont.* I 5, and III 9.

²H. B. Evans, *Publica Carmina—Ovid's Books from Exile* (London 1983) 151 calls the latter *publica carmina*.

³On this metaphor see below on justification of one's poetry by means of one's circumstances ("Rechtfertigung im Bios") and B. R. Nagle, *The Poetics of Exile*, Coll. Lat. 170 (Bruxelles 1980) 139. Nagle *op. cit.*, 13 n. 67 also treats the *Tristia* and *ex Ponto* as a whole.

⁴*Trist.* I 7. 32; I 11. 35; III 1. 2, 19; IV 1. 2; IV 10. 132; V 1. 66; *Pont.* II 4. 55; this was seen quite clearly by A. G. Lee, "An Appreciation of *Tristia* III 8," *G & R* 18 (1949) 114; L. P. Wilkinson, *Ovid Recalled* (Cambridge 1955) 318; W. Marg, "Zur Behandlung des Augustus in den 'Tristien,'" in *Ovid*, ed. v. Albrecht/Zinn (Darmstadt 1968) 503, and E. J. Kenney, "The Poetry of Ovid's Exile," *PCPS* n.s. 11 (1965) 39: "the *Tristia* were addressed to the public," J. Bartsby, *Ovid, G & R new surveys in the Classics* 12 (Oxford 1978) 42 f.

the Roman reading-public's *benevolentia* by means of *publica carmina* (*Trist.* V 1. 23). By naming the addressees in *ex Ponto* Ovid's appeal becomes more specific and therefore more urgent. The indirect pressure⁵ on the addressees is increased. This does not mean that the poetic programme changes, but rather that the poet's cry for help and *amicitia* is intensified.

Throughout the *Tristia* and *ex Ponto* Ovid seems to develop motifs previously found in the poetic *recusationes* of Propertius and Horace.⁶ By Ovid's time, however, such refusals to write epic have become independent of the particular circumstances of the Augustan poet justifying his choice of genre vis à vis the emperor's pressure to write a panegyric epic of some sort. Ovid therefore uses motifs from this tradition freely to serve his particular purposes in exile. His poems might be grouped with the examples of the more liberal *excusatio* like Horace *Epist.* II 2.⁷

One therefore finds Ovid proceeding selectively in a way similar to Horace. The standard reference to predecessors,⁸ for instance, only occurs at *Trist.* II 361–470 in Ovid's longest *recusatio* (*Trist.* II 313 ff.) and at V 1. 17 f.:

aptior huic Gallus blandique Propertius oris,
aptior, ingenium come, Tibullus erit.

At *Pont.* IV 16. 5 ff., however, Ovid uses a variation on this element of poetic apologies by enumerating his contemporary poets rather than his predecessors. In this catalogue Ovid seems to reverse the standard situation of the *recusatio* in that he is the predecessor of the Tiberian poets named.

The poet's treatment of the enumeration of rejected "grand" subjects is equally rare.⁹ A few instances are found at *Trist.* II 317–24, 471–538 and IV 1. 4–18. It would appear, however, that Ovid plays on this topos when he rejects spending his time in a way other than writing poetry.¹⁰ In this case he takes the apologetic topos to its opposite extreme; the obvious inversion of the topos would be to refuse to write in a low genre like satire. Ovid, however, takes it one step further. The opposite of writing in the grand manner of epic for him consists of not writing at all. In response to his new situation, Ovid therefore uses the rejection-topos in a highly idiosyncratic manner.

⁵ Marg *op. cit.* 508 on Ovid's indirect pressure on Augustus and H. B. Evans, "Ovid's Apology for *ex Ponto* I–III," *Hermes* 104 (1976) 105 on this strategy in *ex Ponto*.

⁶ W. Wimmel, *Kallimachos in Rom* (Wiesbaden 1960), *passim*.

⁷ Wimmel, *op. cit.* 283 f., J. K. Newman, *Augustus and the New Poetry* (Bruxelles 1967) 400 has shown that Ovid draws on his Augustan predecessors rather than Callimachus himself.

⁸ Wimmel *op. cit.* 119.

⁹ Wimmel *op. cit.* 119.

¹⁰ e.g. *Pont.* I 5. 43–52; IV 2. 39 ff.

Trying to find any traces of Ovid defining his "Dichtungsideal"¹¹ in exile proves futile. Instead, the poet expresses the grim reality of his exile-poetry¹² and contrasts this with his earlier poetry:

laeta fere laetus cecini, cano tristia tristis:
conueniens operi tempus utrumque suo est.¹³

By implication, then, his idea of what good poetry should be like is found in his pre-exilic works. It is his amatory elegy, the *Fasti* and the *Metamorphoses* which represent Ovid's "Dichtungsideal," whereas the exile-poetry ostensibly is the very opposite.

In some apologies the poet justifies his choice of genre by arguing that he is unable to write in a grander vein.¹⁴ This motif frequently occurs in Ovid's exile-poetry,¹⁵ e.g. *uerba mihi desunt dididicique loqui* (*Trist.* III 14. 46), since the lack of powers fits the overall picture of the exile-poetry as the opposite of Ovid's previous writings.¹⁶ Ovid then takes this apologetic motif from its original setting and applies it within the new context of justifying his choice of genre in the exile-poetry.

Most important, however, in Callimachean and Augustan poetic apology are the image-clusters of the water and the path.¹⁷ In accordance with his predecessors, Ovid uses a great number of images related to water and the path. Spring imagery, for instance, is found at *Trist.* III 14. 33 ff., V 1. 37 ff., *Pont.* III 4. 55 f., and, above all, *Pont.* IV 2. 17 ff.:

scilicet ut limus uenas excaecat in undis
laesaque suppresso fonte resistit aqua,
pectora sic mea sunt limo uitiatata malorum,
et carmen uena pauperiore fluit.

In this case, Ovid might be going back directly to Callimachus. At the end of his hymn to Apollo, Callimachus contrasted his own poetry with that of

¹¹ Wimmel *op. cit.* 119.

¹² *Trist.* V 1. 71, *Pont.* I 5. 55 f., III 9. 49 ff.

¹³ *Pont.* III 9. 35 f.; on *conueniens* and τὸ πρέπον see below.

¹⁴ Wimmel *op. cit.* 294 n. 2 mentions Lucil. *Frg.* 622 Marx, *Hor. Sat.* I 10. 46 f., II 1. 12 f.; *Epist.* II 1. 259; *Ars* 38 f.; *Prop.* II 1. 17 f., III 9. 5 (now with Fedeli's note) as examples of this development; see also M. Puelma Piwonka, *Lucilius und Kallimachos* (Frankfurt 1949) 147. 154. 167.

¹⁵ e.g. *Trist.* II 334; *Pont.* I 5. 51 f., III 3. 34, III 4. 79, III 7. 1, III 9. 18.

¹⁶ Ovid in exile seems to be particularly fond of inverting standard motifs, see J. A. Barsby, *op. cit.* 45.

¹⁷ R. Reitzenstein, "Zur Stiltheorie des Kallimachos," *Festschr. E. Reitzenstein* (Leipzig-Berlin 1931) 54 ff.; Puelma Piwonka *op. cit.* 164; Wimmel *op. cit.* 222 ff. A. Kambylis, *Die Dichterweihe und ihre Symbolik*, (Heidelberg 1965) 23 ff., 66 ff., 98 ff., 110 ff.; the image of the spring goes back to Hes. *Theog.* 5 f. καὶ τε λοισσάμεναι τέρενα χροά Περμησσοῖο / ἢ Ἰπκου κρήνης ἢ Ὀλμειοῦ ζαθέοιο via Call. *Hymn. Apoll.* 108 ff. with Williams' note on 105-13, and *Epigr.* 28. 3 f. = *Hellenistic Epigrams* 1043 Gow-Page.

writers of epic by means of the image of the great, muddy river (Apollo speaking at 108 ff.):

“Ἀσσυρίου ποταμοῖο μέγας ῥόος, ἀλλὰ τὰ πολλὰ
λύματα γῆς καὶ πολλὸν ἔφ’ ὕδατι συρφετὸν ἔλκει.
Δηοὶ δ’ οὐκ ἀπὸ παντὸς ὕδωρ φορέουσι Μέλισσαι,
ἀλλ’ ἦτις καθαρὴ τε καὶ ἀχράαντος ἀνέρπει
πίδακος ἐξ ἱερῆς ὀλίγη λιβάς ἄκρον ἄωτον.”

The comparison shows how Ovid on the one hand takes up Callimachus' ὀλίγη (112) and outdoes the master at his own game. For Ovid's spring of poetry is not only small but blocked. This provides an extreme contrast to the Ἀσσυρίου ποταμοῖο μέγας ῥόος as well as a *reductio ad absurdum* of Callimachus' concept. On the other hand, at the same time as outdoing Callimachus¹⁸ Ovid presents himself as the opposite of the Callimachean ideal. For the term *limus* seems to recall Callimachus' συρφετός¹⁹ which is clearly a negative characteristic, the opposite of καθαρὴ τε καὶ ἀχράαντος (111). The echo of Callimachus is also supported by the close parallel between ἐφ’ ὕδατι (109) and *in undis* (17). Ovid therefore presents himself as un-Callimachean on the surface, but at the same time also as more Callimachean than Callimachus. In the same image the poet therefore summarizes the dichotomy which is fundamental to the entire exile-poetry.²⁰ On the one hand the *Tristia* and *ex Ponto* purport to be the opposite of his earlier, poetically polished works, on the other hand Ovid keeps asserting clandestinely that he is still using the same standards of poetic perfection.

The other cluster of images is centered around the image of the path²¹ (Apollo speaking at Call. *Aetia* Frg. 1. 25 ff.²²):

πρὸς δέ σε] καὶ τόδ’ ἄνωγα, τὰ μὴ πατέουσιν ἄμαξαι
τὰ στεῖβειν, ἐτέρων δ’ ἔχνια μὴ καθ’ ὅμα
δίφρον ἐλ]ῆν μηδ’ οἶμον ἀνὰ πλατύν, ἀλλὰ κελεύθους
ἀτρίπτο]υς, εἰ καὶ στεινοτέρην ἐλάσεις.

From this *locus classicus* it becomes clear that the images of the path and the poet as charioteer or horseman are closely linked. Ovid draws on this concept in *ex Ponto* IV 2. 23 *studiis (studii: Heinsius) quoque frena remisi* and *immensum gloria calcar habet* (36). The former may have to be

¹⁸ On this common Augustan hallmark of *imitatio* see I. M. le M. DuQuesnay, "From Polyphemus to Corydon: Virgil, Eclogue 2 and the Idylls of Theocritus," in *Creative Imitation in Latin Poetry*, ed. Woodman/West (Cambridge 1979) 38 with n. 13.

¹⁹ This motif also occurs at Hor. *Sat.* I 1. 59, I 4. 11, I 10. 62; see C. O. Brink, *Horace on Poetry: Prolegomena to the Literary Epistles* (Cambridge 1963) 159, n. 3.

²⁰ Nagle *op. cit.* 141.

²¹ Wimmel *op. cit.* 104 ff.; O. Becker, *Das Bild des Weges* (Berlin 1937) *passim*.

²² For the literary ancestry of this motif cf. Henderson and Lucke on Ov. *Rem.* 397 f. and add Cic. *De Orat.* III 36; *Bruet.* 204; *Att.* VI 1. 12; Prop. III 9.57 f.; Manil. II 58 f. 158 f.; Juv. 1. 19 f. (with Courtney's note), Quint. *Inst.* X 1. 74, II 8. 11; Nemes. *Cyng.* 9; see also Wimmel *op. cit.* 105.

contrasted with III 9. 26: *et cupidi cursus frena retentat equi*. At *Pont.* III 9. 23 he is clearly talking about polishing his poetry (*corrigere*). Tightening the reins therefore seems to be an image of applying *ars* whereas letting them go may imply surrendering to the forces of *ingenium*. On one level Ovid wants his reader to realize that the exile-poetry is completely different from everything he had written in Rome because of its lack of polish, on another level he asserts his persistent use of *ars*.²³

Similar contradictory statements are to be found in connection with the fame of Ovid's poetry.²⁴ On the one hand he claims that he does not write for fame any more:

da ueniam scriptis, quorum non gloria nobis
causa, sed utilitas officiumque fuit.²⁵

This, however, contrasts sharply with a few claims to future fame, such as *Pont.* IV 16. 3 *famaque post cineres maior uenit*²⁶ and with the poet's previous assertiveness in this field, e.g. *Am.* I 15. 41 f.

ergo etiam cum me supremus adederit ignis,
uiuam, parsque mei multa superstes erit

and *Met.* XV 878 f.:

perque omnia saecula fama,
siquid habent ueri uatum praesagia, uiuam.

²³ The concept of poetry as a voyage or poems as ships combines the water and path images. This notion goes back to Pindar (see C. M. Bowra, *Pindar* [Oxford 1964] 230), e.g. *Pyth.* 4. 3; 11. 39; *Nem.* 3. 26 f. θυμέ, τίνα πρὸς ἀλλοδαπὰν / ἄκραν ἐμόν πλόον παραμείβεται;; 5. 51; 6. 28; Verg. *Georg.* II 41; Hor. *Carm.* IV 15. 3 f. (with Kiessling-Heinze's note); Prop. III 3. 22 (with Fedeli's note); Becker *op. cit.* 71 f.; Wimmel *op. cit.* 227 f. The motif occurs in the *Tristia* at II 329 f. (with Owen's and Luck's notes), where it may be consciously looking back to the *Ars* (I 722, II 429 f., III 26, 99 f.; Hollis on I 39 f.), and at *Trist.* II 548 where a reference to *Met.* XV 176 (with Bömer's note) seems possible. See also A. Otto, *Die Sprichwörter und sprichwörtlichen Redensarten der Römer* (Leipzig 1890) 363; E. de Saint-Denis, *La mer dans la poésie latine* (Paris 1935) 319, 367; D. R. Shackleton Bailey, *Propertiana* (Cambridge 1956) 205; Kamblyis *op. cit.* 154; most judiciously J. C. Bramble, *Persius and the Programmatic Satire* (Cambridge 1974) 167 f.; Bömer on *Met.* IX 589; Lucke on *Rem.* 811 ff.

²⁴ This topos goes as far back as Alcman *Frg.* 118 Bergk; Enn. *Ann.* 3 f. Vahlen = 12 f. Skutsch; Verg. *Ecl.* 8. 9; Hor. *Carm.* II 20. 14 with Nisbet-Hubbard's note who give numerous further examples.

²⁵ *Pont.* III 9. 55 f.; similar examples of the reversal of this motif are found at Aratus, *A.P.* XI 437 and Hor. *Epist.* I 20. 13, 18 (Nisbet-Hubbard on Hor. *Carm.* II 20. 14). Further examples in Ovid are *Trist.* I 1. 49 f., IV 1. 3 f. (with de Jonge's note), V 1. 75 f. (all with Luck's notes), *Pont.* IV 2. 33 ff. Lack of fame is, of course, a characteristic of exile, e.g. Plut. *Mor.* 604.

²⁶ Further passages where Ovid asserts his fame are *Trist.* I 6. 35 f., IV 9. 17 (with de Jonge's note), IV 10. 2, 128, V 1.74, V 14. 5 f., 13 f., *Pont.* I 5. 63 f., II 6. 33 f., III 2. 29 ff. (with Staffhorst's note), III 4. 53 ff., IV 7. 53 f., IV 8. 45 ff.

Again, the conflicting statements about the exile-corpus both have to be taken seriously. One stresses the break with the past, the other the continuity which exists all the same.²⁷

Such contradictions and reversals of apologetic elements are ultimately the effect of a heavy emphasis on the justification of the poetic genre by means of the poet's personal circumstances in the exile-poetry.²⁸ Ovid's relegation to Tomi is the most fundamental element in his later poetry not only as regards subject matter, but also as regards his poetic programme. Since exile is visualized as death²⁹ Ovid in the role of the Roman *lusor amorum* (*Trist.* IV 10. 1) or the *nequitiae poeta* (*Am.* II 1. 2) is dead as well. The exile-poetry therefore is the opposite of what a Roman reader might expect from a book of poems. Ovid makes this very clear at the very beginning of his exile in *Tristia* I 1. 3–16 where he describes the book as the very opposite of a standard edition³⁰ and at *Tristia* I 1. 39–44 where he contrasts the general requirements for writing poetry³¹ with his circumstances. Again, however, a hidden dichotomy can be detected in the case of the "programmatically charged lines"³² at *Trist.* I 1. 3 ff. This passage also contains a hidden claim to literary polish by virtue of the echoes of Catullus 22 where the *pauper poeta* contrasts his palimpsest with Stufenus' luxurious edition.³³ Although the state of Ovid's book, which is the result of the author's relegation, suggests that the content is anything but polished³⁴ the allusions to Catullus 22 imply that the content is just as polished as Catullus' work. Furthermore, the parallels suggest to the reader that he should not be intent on externals but on the content. On an ostensible level, then, the poems from exile are determined by circumstances, but at a deeper level Ovid has remained the same.

²⁷ The dichotomy between discontinuity and continuity has been pointed out by M. H. Thomson, *Detachment and Manipulation in the Exile Poems of Ovid* (diss. Berkeley 1979), 36 ff.

²⁸ This was seen clearly by Wimmel *op. cit.* 297: "ja dies Moment ist so sehr tragend, dass es sich nicht mehr auf bestimmte Abschnitte eingrenzen lässt"; see also Nagle *op. cit.* 109 ff.

²⁹ *Tristia* I 1. 27 (with Luck's note), 117 f., I 2. 42, 71 f., I 3 21 ff., 89, I 4. 27 f., I 7. 19, 38, I 8. 14, II 2. 23, III 3. 73, III 10. 1 ff., III 11. 25 f., III 13. 21 f., III 14. 19 f., IV 1. 23, IV 4. 37, IV 10. 82, V 1. 48; *ex Ponto* I 5. 85, I 9. 17, II 3. 3, II 7. 48, III 3. 46, III 5. 33 f., III 7. 40, IV 12. 43 f., IV 16. 3 f.; *Ibis* 6. 16. The notion is quite common before and after Ovid: Leonidas Tarentinus *AP* VII 711. 5 = *Hellenistic Epigrams* 2535 ff. Gow-Page; Cic. *Sen.* 27; *Att.* IV 1. 8; *Quint. Fr.* I 3. 1; *Stat. Silv.* I 5. 65 (with Vollmer's note); III 3. 154; Nagle *op. cit.* 22 ff., and E. Doblhofer, *Exil und Emigration*, *Impulse der Forschung* (Darmstadt 1987) 166 ff.

³⁰ S. E. Hinds, "Booking the Return Trip: Ovid and *Tristia* I," *PCPS* n.s. 31 (1985) 14.

³¹ Compare Catull. 50 with C. P. Segal, "Catullan *otiosi*: the Lover and the the Poet," *G & R* 17 (1970), 25 ff.

³² Hinds *op. cit.* 13.

³³ *Trist.* I 1. 5 cf. Catull. 22. 7; *Trist.* I 1.7 cf. Catull. 22. 6; *Trist.* I 1. 8 cf. Catull. 22. 7; *Trist.* I 1. 11 cf. Catull. 22. 8.

³⁴ One has to contrast Catull. 1, see Hinds *op. cit.* 14.

This ostensible contrast between Ovid's life before exile and circumstances in Tomi is reflected in the constant presentation of the latter as the opposite of Rome (*Pont.* I 3. 37):³⁵

quid melius Roma? Scythico quid frigore peius?

Furthermore, it is not only Tomi which is described as the opposite of Rome, but Scythia in general is as unlike Italy as possible. Ovid's general, cumulative picture of the region draws not only on Vergil's passage on Scythia in *Georgics* III³⁶ and the ethnographical and historiographical tradition behind Vergil;³⁷ rather, he presents the region on the lower Danube as an inversion of Italy as described at *Georgics* II 136 ff.³⁸ Vergil's *laus Italiae* is turned upside down and into Ovid's complaint about Scythia just as Libya and Scythia provided a contrast to Italy within the *Georgics*.³⁹ Vergil, for instance, dwells on the fact that no mythological horrors are reported to have taken place in Italy (*Georg.* III 139–42). This is clearly not true of the shores of the Black Sea where, as Ovid tells us in *Tristia* III 9, Medea lacerated her brother Apsyrtus thus giving Tomi its name (from Greek τέμνω).

Moreover, one of Italy's major characteristics, its fertility, (*Georg.* II 143–50),⁴⁰ is inverted by Ovid's statements that nothing grows in Tomi,

³⁵ This contrast is already present at *Trist.* I 2. 77 ff., I 3. 61 f. (with Luck's note): *denique 'quid propero? Scythia est, quo mittimur,' inquam, 'Roma relinquenda est: utraque iusta mora est!'* I 5. 61 ff.

³⁶ Verg. *Georg.* III 349 ff.; R. F. Thomas, *Lands and Peoples in Roman Poetry and the Ethnographical Tradition* (Cambridge 1982) 1 ff.

³⁷ Cf. Richter on Verg. *Georg.* III 349 ff.

³⁸ This description in turn draws on a tradition of encomia of countries and cities which is theoretically dealt with e.g. by Menander Rhetor 382. 10 ff. Thus there are similarities between Vergil and other writers of *laudes Italiae*, e.g. Varro *Rust.* I 2. 3–6. The central importance of the Vergilian passage for the time in which Ovid wrote is underlined by the close resemblances between *Georgics* II 136–76 and accounts by Ovid's contemporaries Strabo (who praises Italy at VI 4. 1; on the uncertain date see *Kl. Pauly* V 382. 33 ff.; in any case after Vergil) and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Ant. Rom.* I 36. 2–I 37. 5); further examples at Thomas (1982) 39.

³⁹ L. P. Wilkinson, *The Georgics of Virgil* (Cambridge 1969) 98. Since Vergil's praise of Italy also incorporates elements of the Golden Age (F. Klingner, *Vergils Georgica*, [Zürich-Stuttgart 1963] 80; Thomas *op. cit.* 41; Italy's fertility at *Georg.* II 143–50, for instance, recalls Hes. *Op.* 101 f. Perpetual spring is also a feature of the Golden Age at *Ov. Met.* I 107) Ovid's Tomi also implicitly inverts these elements. If the Golden Age provided the best circumstances for man to live in, Tomi by contrast has the worst.

⁴⁰ For this standard characteristic of *laudes Italiae* cf. also Varro *Rust.* I 2. 6–7; Strabo VI 4. 1; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* I 36. 3–I 37. 3; in general it is recommended as an encomiastic topos by Men. Rhet. 384. 9 ff. φυντὰ γὰρ καὶ ποταμοὺς καὶ ὄρων ὑπεροχὰς καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ὁ τῆς φύσεως παρέχει λόγος. It also occurs in descriptions of the Golden Age, e.g. Hes. *Op.* 117 f. καρπὸν δ' ἔφερε ζείδωρος ἄρουρα / αὐτομάτῃ πολλὸν τε καὶ ἄφρονον, Plato *Rep.* 272a; Verg. *Ecl.* 4. 39 f.; *Ov. Met.* I 101 ff. with Bömer's note; Thomas *op. cit.* 3. 39 f.

neither vine nor trees.⁴¹ The eternal summer or spring⁴² which generates Italy's fertility is therefore juxtaposed by Ovid's perpetual Tomitan winter (*Pont.* I 2. 24):⁴³

et quod iners hiemi continuatur hiems.

Winter is so omnipresent in Ovid's picture of Tomi that even spring—on the one occasion when it is mentioned other than in an *exemplum* or a simile—is presented as a lack of winter (*Trist.* III 12. 27 ff.)

at⁴⁴ mihi sentitur nix uerno sole soluta,
 quaeque lacu durae non fodiantur aquae,
 nec mare concrescit glacie, nec, ut ante, per Histrum
 stridula Sauromates plaustra bubulcus agit.

Scythian barbarism and deprivation also manifest themselves in the lack of cities. Where Italy has *tot egregias urbes* (Verg. *Georg.* II 155) human habitation on the lower Danube usually takes the form of carts, e.g. *onerata . . . / . . . plaustra* (*Pont.* IV 7. 9 f.). The existence of towns other than Tomi (*proxima . . . oppida* [*Pont.* IV 9. 104]) is mentioned only once. Furthermore, whereas Italy is praised for its seas, lakes, and metal-bearing rivers (*Georg.* II 158–65)⁴⁵ the lower Danube is characterized by its brackish water⁴⁶ and its complete lack of metals (*Pont.* III 8. 5):⁴⁷

nec tamen haec loca sunt ullo pretiosa metallo.

⁴¹ *Trist.* III 12.11 ff., V 13. 21; *Pont.* I 2. 25, I 3. 51 f., I 7. 13, III 1. 13, 19 f., III 8. 13 ff., IV 10. 31.

⁴² The beneficial climate is a commonplace in this context, cf. Varro *Rust.* I 2.4; Strabo VI 4. 1; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* I 37.5; in general Men. Rhet. 383. 17 f. ἐν δὲ τῷ κατὰ τοὺς ἀέρας, ὅτι ὑγιεινῶς ἔχει; Thomas *op. cit.* 3. 40. The motif also occurs in Ovid's account of the Golden Age *Met.* I 107 *uer erat aeternum* (with Bömer's note).

⁴³ E.g. *Trist.* III 10. 9 ff.; *Pont.* IV 7. 7 ff.; H. M. R. Leopold, *Exulum Trias* (diss. Utrecht 1904) 99 ff.; A. D. Fitton Brown, "The Unreality of Ovid's Tomitan Exile," *LCM* 10 (1985) 18, with his temperature chart is just as rhetorically biassed as Ovid's account. Which other scholar feels inclined to trust the Rumanian National Tourist Office's 1979 brochure to supply representative data?

⁴⁴ Together with Luck and some of the older manuscripts (AK) I read *at*, rather than *et* (GT) because it provides the required contrast between the preceding *urbe frui* (26) and Ovid's present situation.

⁴⁵ All three elements are also mentioned in Strabo's version (VI 4. 1) and in Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* I 37. 4 f. (rivers, metal, and seas); Thomas *op. cit.* 42 f.

⁴⁶ *Pont.* II 7. 74, III 1. 17 f., IV 10. 61 f.

⁴⁷ This feature is also a standard element of geographical descriptions, see Thomas *op. cit.* 44 f.

The Italian people, finally, are brave and hardy (*Georg.* II 167–72),⁴⁸ but the Getae and Scythians are wild and barbaric.⁴⁹ Almost all elements of Vergil's praise of Italy are constantly inverted by Ovid in order to stress the polarity between Rome and Tomi. The *uitium* in Ovid's surroundings becomes the cause of the *uitia* in his poetry. This may be the point of the verbal echo at *Pont.* III 9. 5 *o, quam de multis uitium reprehenditur unum* and *quid nisi de uitio scribam regionis amarae* (37). The *uitia* of Tomi affect the poet to such an extent that they intrude into his poems.

It may also be profitable to look at Ovid's account of having written a poem in Getic (*Pont.* IV 13. 19 ff.) in this light. Whether this information is true or not is only of secondary interest. Ovid's point surely is to stress the change brought about by relegation since *Ille ego qui fuerim tenerorum lusor amorum* (*Trist.* IV 10. 1) and *paene poeta Getes* (*Pont.* IV 13. 18) are worlds apart. Life among the Getae has affected him so much that he is now *paene poeta Getes*.⁵⁰ Closely linked with this motif are his complaints about linguistic isolation.⁵¹ E. Lozovan has shown that Ovid exaggerates in this respect.⁵² His point must therefore be a rhetorical one. Linguistic isolation provides another explanation of the "flaws" in his exile-poetry.⁵³ On the other hand, the same statements can be read in a completely different way. One might argue that this very difficulty of writing Latin poetry among the Getae enhances the value of the exile-poetry.

The effect of circumstances on Ovid's poetry may also be reflected in the use of *durus* and *hirsutus* as recurring epithets of the Getae,⁵⁴ for both are also used as epithets of poetry, most prominently in Horace.⁵⁵ "H. . . uses *durus* for (archaic) harshness."⁵⁶ Thus, if the people in Tomi are *duri* Ovid's poetry necessarily becomes *dura* as well by implication. This also follows from the repeated use of the phrase *durum tempus* to describe exile⁵⁷ and the key phrase *conueniens operi tempus utrumque suo est* (*Pont.* III 9. 36). This characterization in turn provides a neat contrast to Ovid's elegy written

⁴⁸ The peoples of Italy are similarly mentioned by Strabo VI 4. 1 s. f., τῶ μὲν κρατιστεύειν ἐν ἀρετῇ τε καὶ μεγέθει τὰ περιεστῶτα αὐτὴν πρὸς ἡγεμονίαν εὐφυῶς ἔχει; cf. in general Men. Rhet. 384. 18 ff., ἐπαίνεσον τὰ ἔθνη, ὡς ἐν κεφαλαίῳ τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων.

⁴⁹ *Trist.* III 10. 5, 55 ff., IV 4. 59, V 2. 69 f., V 7. 45 ff., V 10. 27 ff.; *Pont.* I 3. 57 ff.; Leopold *op. cit.* 95 f.

⁵⁰ Nagle *op. cit.* 133 ff.

⁵¹ *Trist.* III 1. 17 f. with Luck's note, III 11. 9, III 14. 47 f., V 7. 55 ff., V 10. 35 f., V 12. 57 f.

⁵² "Realités Pontiques et nécessités littéraires," *Atti del convegno internazionale Sulmoniano*, vol. II (Roma 1959) 364.

⁵³ Nagle *op. cit.* 133.

⁵⁴ *durus*: *Pont.* I 5. 12, III 2. 102, *hirsutus*: *Pont.* I 5. 74, II 5. 6.

⁵⁵ *Hor. Sat.* I 4. 8; *Epist.* II 1. 66 f. with Brink's note; *Ars* 446 with Brink's note; Fedeli on *Prop.* I 7. 19; *Thes.* V 1. 2310. 58 ff., 2314. 66 ff.

⁵⁶ Brink on *Hor. Ars* 446.

⁵⁷ *Trist.* I 5. 26, III 4. 1, V 10. 12; *Pont.* II 6. 29, and IV 9. 88.

before the exile which is described as *mollis*,⁵⁸ a standard epithet for amatory verse or elegy.⁵⁹

Hirsutus and the conceptually related *intonsus* (*Pont.* IV 2. 2) provide a similar link between reality and poetry. Both epithets are used of the Getae. They seem, however, to be also related to stylistic criticism as expressed by Horace and Vergil.⁶⁰ Furthermore, Ovid uses *hirsutus* himself to describe his first book of the *Tristia* in the programmatic passage already mentioned: *hirsutus sparsis ut uideare comis* (*Trist.* I 1. 12). It is also used in a stylistic context of Ennius at *Trist.* II 259: *Annales*, —*nihil est hirsutius illis!*,⁶¹ and at *Prop.* IV 1. 61 *Ennius hirsuta cingat sua dicta corona*. If, then, the people in Tomi are *hirsuti* Ovid's poetry, by implication, becomes *hirsuta* because it reflects its surroundings.

The ostensible change in Ovid's poetry is presented by him as caused by the principle of τὸ πρέπον⁶² *qualem decet exulis esse* (*Trist.* I 1. 3), *non est conueniens luctibus ille color* (6) and the essential (*Pont.* III 9. 35 f.):

laeta fere laetus cecini, cano tristia tristis:
conueniens operi tempus utrumque suo est.

Further examples are found at *Trist.* III 1 .10 and V 1. 5 f. The characteristically Ovidian trait about the use of τὸ πρέπον, however, is the shift in its application from the purely stylistic sphere⁶³ to the area of choice of subject. If it was a commonplace to postulate that the style be appropriate to the subject, Ovid now goes one step further by stating that his subject is appropriate to his personal circumstances, and the subject, of course, needs and appropriate style.⁶⁴

As in the case of the *Ars Poetica* scholars might object that it is "always convenient to fall back on τὸ πρέπον when everything else fails."⁶⁵ Considering, however the weight given to this concept by Ovid (see above and add *Am.* I 1. 2), Horace, and their predecessors,⁶⁶ the reservations of modern critics seem to be outweighed by the evidence found in the primary sources.

⁵⁸ *Trist.* II 307, 349.

⁵⁹ *Prop.* I 7. 19, III 1. 19 both with Fedeli's note, Bömer on *Fast.* II 3, Puelma Piwonka *op. cit.* 220 n. 1.

⁶⁰ *incomptis* [*sc. uersibus*] (*Ars* 446 with Brink's note), *uersibus incomptis ludunt* (*Georg.* II 386).

⁶¹ See Luck's note: "*hirsutius*: bezieht sich auf Stil und Sprache," rather than Owen's: "hard in subject, unsentimental."

⁶² M. Pohlenz, "Τὸ πρέπον: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des griechischen Geistes," *NGG* 11. 16 (1933) 53 ff.; Brink *op. cit.* 228–30, Brink on *Hor. Ars.* 157, 308; Nagle *op. cit.* 117 ff.

⁶³ Style has to be appropriate to subject and character, Brink *op. cit.* 229.

⁶⁴ The importance of the justification of one's poetry by means of personal circumstances or "Rechtfertigung im Bios" (Wimmel *op. cit.* 119) becomes even more obvious now.

⁶⁵ Thus Tate in his review of W. Steidle, *Studien zur Ars Poetica des Horaz*, *CR* 53 (1939) 192.

⁶⁶ *Hor. Ars* 226, *Arist. Rhet.* 1408a10 and presumably Neoptolemus; see Brink *op. cit.* 96.

The principle of τὸ πρέπον finally explains the monotony of Ovid's subject-matter in the *Tristia* and *ex Ponto* which has often been criticised.⁶⁷ If life in Tomi is monotonous the exile-poetry necessarily has to reflect this monotony (*Trist.* III 1. 10):⁶⁸

carmine temporibus conueniente suis.

It seems, then, that Ovid when dealing with the poetics of his exile, adapts some motifs of the Callimachean tradition in Augustan poetry. He uses the familiar themes and images of Augustan theorizing about poetry in the new context of his exile-poems where they have to fit in with the overall picture of Tomi as the opposite of Rome and Scythia as the opposite of Italy. The mere fact that he is still using and re-applying the same motifs and symbols as his predecessors for his own needs show that he still defines his poetic stance in those very terms. So even when he draws attention to ostensible changes in his poetics his standards remain the same. If his poetry falls short of these principles it is the effect of the change in his "bios." The point of this is rhetorical: if Ovid is to write polished verse again all one has to do is recall him from exile.

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⁶⁷ E. g. E. Norden, *Die Römische Literatur* (Leipzig 1954) 75; A. L. Wheeler, *Ovid: Tristia, ex Ponto* (London-Cambr. Mass. 1924) XXXIII; L. P. Wilkinson, *Ovid Recalled* 360 (Cambridge 1955).

⁶⁸ Ovid argues this point in *Pont.* III 9; see Nagle *op. cit.* 132.

