

## The *Consolatio ad Liuiam* and literary history

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The *Consolatio ad Liuiam* appears in the mid-fifteenth century, some time between 1433 and 1466, and has a tradition that depends on incunables as well as manuscripts. All of these attribute the poem to Ovid, and until the nineteenth century it was regularly published in volumes of Ovid's work. The transmitted work, written in elegiac couplets, has 474 lines. It describes the circumstances of the death of Drusus, son of Livia, younger brother of Tiberius, while on campaign in Germany in the late summer of 9 BC, and of his funeral in Rome. The poem proceeds through a series of addresses, mainly to members of his family; having expressed the woe of mother, brother, the army, the Roman people, their *princeps*, and their gods, the last 180 lines turn to consolation, first briefly of his wife Antonia, mother of Germanicus and the future emperor Claudius, and then at length of Livia herself, arguing that, given his mortality, Drusus' death was inevitable and his glory makes up for his short life. According to Reeve, the poem was 'generally and rightly believed... to be no older than the reign of Nero'.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the range of positions held by scholars is rather more varied than this suggests. An appendix to this chapter provides a chronological list of major editions and other concerted discussions of authorship or date, in each case noting the scholar's judgement. As will be seen, some have thought that the poem was written when it sets itself, in the period after the funeral of Drusus, while others have tried to find a home for it elsewhere in the Julio-Claudian period, or later. In a famous essay, Haupt suggested that it was a renaissance creation.<sup>2</sup> In the case of this poem, the judgement on date is perhaps more important than that on authorship. If the poem is 'authentic' in date, it can be used as a historical source, and as evidence for the public reaction to the death: it provided consolation to contemporary readers, and not just to Livia and Antonia. If it belongs to a later date, it will function as a display of rhetoric, or as a commentary on the Julio-Claudian era. But I shall begin with the question of authorship.

<sup>1</sup> Reeve (1976) 79.

<sup>2</sup> Haupt (1875), originally published in 1849.

### Author and readers

Metre shows that Ovid cannot be the author. Platnauer's book on the versification of Augustan elegy has an Appendix listing a number of features that mark the *Consolatio* as un-Ovidian in metre.<sup>3</sup> Using metrical criteria to show that a poem does not belong in the corpus of a particular author requires care: arguments that are based on details in a few lines are open to the objection that the text may there be interpolated or corrupt. However, this case includes observations on the general technique: it is most improbable that Ovid deviated significantly from his well-attested patterns of versification in mid-career. Platnauer's count of weak caesurae in the fourth foot of the hexameter ('4w') must have been 25 (10.55 per cent of 237); mine is 27; in either case significantly above the Ovidian norm of 6 per cent. A second general non-Ovidian feature is the high number of elisions of long vowels and diphthongs.<sup>4</sup> Dependent on smaller numbers, but still with weight, is the argument from the presence of hexameters without a caesura in the third foot (verses 35 *talis erit, sic occurret, sic oscula iunget*; 379 *nata quod alte es, quodque es fetibus aucta duobus*; 449 *his aeuum fuit implendum, non segnibus annis*). Verse 379 hardly belongs here,<sup>5</sup> but even two hexameters with no word end in the third foot is strikingly high as a proportion of 237, when only nine others were found by Platnauer in the rest of Ovid's elegiacs.<sup>6</sup> There are two more secure instances of elision at 3s,<sup>7</sup> of which Platnauer found only 24 in the hexameter verses of Ovidian couplets.<sup>8</sup> The list of elisions found in places where Ovid seldom allows them can be reduced from the four Platnauer cites,<sup>9</sup> but there remains the elision of -am at the third diaeresis of the pentameter in 158 *excipias hanc anim(am) ore pio*, which is unparalleled in Ovid.<sup>10</sup>

The *Consolatio*, as transmitted, has one non-disyllabic pentameter ending, the proper name *Pannonii* at 390. Such a line was not written by Ovid before his exile: he ends pentameters only with disyllabic words in the earlier works (other than lines with *est* at the close)—the norm is broken in the exilic poems, first when

<sup>3</sup> Platnauer (1951) 89.

<sup>4</sup> A particular instance of some cogency is the elision of *deae* before *immitis* at 375: Ovid in elegiac couplets never, or rarely, elides iambic words (I would favour emendation at *Am.* 2.19.20—perhaps Hall's *metum simula*—and *Her.* 17.97—either Reeve's *disce hoc* or *hoc/quo disce*).

<sup>5</sup> So already Skutsch (1901a) 943 (in another useful gathering of metrical details). The awkwardness of the versification and the repeated *es* led Heinsius to conjecture *nata quod excelse es quod fetibus aucta duobus*; alternatively perhaps *quod tu nata alte, quod...*

<sup>6</sup> Platnauer (1951) 8.

<sup>7</sup> Richmond (1981a) 2773 notes 279 *consistam lentisque oculis laetusque uidebo*, 473 *est coniunx, tutela hominum, quo sospite uestram*. He objects also to 307 *te moriens per uerba nouissima questus abesse*, which has only 2s, 3w, another Ovidian rarity (see Platnauer (1951) 9).

<sup>8</sup> Platnauer (1951) 84.

<sup>9</sup> Heinsius' *hoc* for *osque* in 34 removes the necessity of reading *oculosque* before the halfway point in the pentameter; 47 is in a passage that should be deleted on other grounds; *haec* (absent from one of the three groups of witnesses) is easily omitted in 76.

<sup>10</sup> He elides only -*ē* and -*i* here: see Platnauer (1951) 89 (who rightly doubts the authenticity of *Am.* 1.13.34).

quadrisyllabic proper names appear in *Tristia* 1. However, this line nicely illustrates the problem with using single anomalies to argue against authorship: the sequence in which it appears, a catalogue of rivers and races who have witnessed the victories of Tiberius and Drusus (385–90), interrupts the list of blessings that Fortuna has bestowed on Livia:

quod semper domito rediit tibi Caesar ab orbe,  
 gessit et inuicta prospera bella manu,  
 quod spes implerunt maternaque uota Neronēs,  
 quod pulsus totiens hostis utroque duce, —  
 Rhenus et Alpinae ualles et sanguine nigro 385  
 decolor infecta testis Isargus aqua,  
 Danuuiusque rapax et Dacius orbe remoto  
 Apulus (huic hosti perbreue Pontus iter),  
 Armeniusque fugax et tandem Dalmata supplex  
 summaque dispersi per iuga Pannonii, — 390  
 et modo Germanus Romanis cognitus orbis:  
 aspice quam<sup>11</sup> meritis culpa sit una minor.

Cons. 381–92

The fact that Caesar has always returned to you from conquering the world, and has waged successful wars with invincible hand, that the Neros have fulfilled their mother's hopes and prayers, and the enemy has so often been routed under the leadership of one or other—Rhine and Alpine valleys and Isarcus, discoloured in his waters stained with black blood, are witnesses, and rapid Danube and the Dacian Apulan in his distant world (for this enemy Pontus is a brief journey), and the Armenian, accomplished at retreat, and the Dalmatian at last humbled and the Pannonians scattered along their high ridges—and that the German world is now known to Romans: consider how the one fault is subordinate to her merits.

Verses 385–90 read like an interpolated explication of *pulsus totiens hostis* in 384.<sup>12</sup> The lines move incoherently from the Rhine, which evokes the campaign that led to Drusus' death, to (apparently) the Raetian campaigns of 15 BC, then Tiberius' Danubian campaigns, which are confused with a reference to Armenia.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Heinsius' *quot* is tempting, as a contrast to *una*.

<sup>12</sup> Details and phrasing seem to have been drawn from *Tristia* 2.192 (*Danuuii*), 225–8 (*Pannonia*, *Armenius*), 4.2.42 *decolor ipse suo sanguine Rhenus, Pont.* 3.4.108 *Rhenus et infectas sanguine portet aquas*. Cf. also *Panegyricus ad Messallam* 108–9 *testis quoque fallax | Pannonius gelidas passim disiectus in Alpes*.

<sup>13</sup> See Schoonhoven (1992) 207–11.

This straggling parenthesis falls within an already long and complicated sentence, and it is most awkward to have within it the internal parenthesis of verse 388, especially given the irrelevance of the additional information that *huic hosti perbreue Pontus iter* provides. *orbe* (387) reprises the more pointed instances of *orbis* = ‘world’ in 381 and = ‘region’ in 391. There is an ungainly mix of generic and temporary descriptions, not least in 389 *Armeniusque fugax et tandem Dalmata supplex*, which leaves uncertain whether the *Pannonii* of the following pentameter are normally dispersed or this is the result of war. The first couplet, 385–6, is unbalanced, *Rhenus et Alpinae ualles* lacking any description, while the *Isargus* is overwhelmed by the tautologous *sanguine nigro decolor infecta... aqua*. Finally, the digression confuses the point of 391 *et modo Germanus Romanis cognitus orbis*: in most editions this is linked to 385–90 and treated as the close of the parenthesis, but the line is rather an additional piece of evidence for the blessings of Fortuna than a final witness to the conquering prowess of the Nerones.

The previous paragraph contains a number of loaded terms, designed to back up my aesthetic judgements. For some scholars the inadequacies I find in these six lines match the poem as a whole. Thus Richmond (1981a) 2771–2 gives an account of the poem’s many weaknesses of style, as he perceives them, and remarks that ‘a long incoherent sentence straggles from 379 to 392’. But this negative view has not been universal: ‘[i]t is a curious commentary on the effects of classical study in former centuries that both N. Heinsius<sup>14</sup> and L. C. Valckenaer could consider the “*Consolatio*” a first-rate poem.’<sup>15</sup> Judgement on quality inevitably affects one’s view on authorship, and even date; concentration on the issue of authorship in turn obscures the poem’s qualities. Thus consideration of verse 158 has concentrated on the unlikelihood that the elision in *excipias hanc anim(am) ore pio* was written by Ovid, and distracts from another point—the loss of the last syllable of *animam* before *ore* is extraordinarily expressive, occurring just as Drusus asks his brother to catch his failing breath in his mouth. One clever line does not make a poet great, but this can serve as an initial reminder that quality of one sort or another may be found in pseudepigraphic poems. In general, the work seems to me a rhetorically effective *consolatio*, and a stylish poem. Consequently, a passage like 385–90, which bears the hallmarks of interpolation, is easy to condemn: intrusive, awkwardly expressed, metrically anomalous (in having the only quadrisyllabic pentameter ending in the poem), providing annotation, functioning as a list.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Heinsius’ words are (1.393): ‘poematium hoc quantiuis pretii, et dignum genio ac maiestate saeculi Nasoniani... Est quidem carmen longe praestantissimum indignis modis acceptum per librarium oscitiam.’

<sup>15</sup> This loaded acknowledgement of earlier admiration comes from Richmond (1981a) 2771; he continues, ‘Haupt’s brilliant examination of the work and its defects has prevented modern readers from sharing this view.’ Poor miseducated Heinsius! Poor blinded Valckenaer!

<sup>16</sup> A mix of poetic and historical knowledge is put on display here (there are close links with *AP* 9.283 [Crinagoras]), and the interpolation is more likely to belong to antiquity than the Middle Ages,

Let me return to discussion of the evidence against Ovidian authorship with a final point about versification. *saecula tota* (77) is the one instance of noun + adjective in *-a* ending the hexameter: to have even one makes this stand out among the works of Ovid before exile, though such phrasing is commoner in Tibullus (as well as the Ovid of exile), and far commoner in pre-Ovidian epic.<sup>17</sup> There is also a scattering of un-Ovidian usages, such as *functus = defunctus* (393); *tuor* (137).<sup>18</sup> However, when Liberman (1994) 1119 argues that the diction shows the poem to belong to a far later period, noting, for example, *condidit* = ‘created’ at 343 *femina digna illis quos aurea condidit aetas*, he is talking about the poem as transmitted and not, I suspect, the poem as written: in this case Ruhnken’s *prodidit* is an attractive conjecture, whatever we think about the date.<sup>19</sup> More significant perhaps is a silence: there is no mention of the *Consolatio* in *Tristia* 2, where it might have served as powerful evidence for Ovid’s support of the imperial family.<sup>20</sup>

### History and the poem’s date

The *Consolatio* is not Ovidian, then; but in general the metre and diction may be a product of the Augustan age. It is more like Propertius or (in hexameters) Vergil than Ovid;<sup>21</sup> and it is more Augustan in style than, say, Neronian (which would come with far stricter rules for elision).<sup>22</sup> If the author is someone writing decades after the supposed date of the poem, a very competent job has been done at counterfeiting Augustan versification.<sup>23</sup> Against this background, it seems worth

but given the absence of the poem from the medieval record that is what one would expect. I also suspect the following lines: 1–10 [an epigrammatic doublet of 145–52; only here is the poem represented as a text—cf. Schrijvers (1988) 384], 11–12, 45–50, 117–18, 269–70, 285–6, 301–2, 355–6; and suggest two transpositions: 283–98 after 268, 317–22 after 328 (n.b. 316 *torus*, 328 *tori*). I hope to present the arguments in detail at some later point.

<sup>17</sup> For elegy see Holmes (1995) 500–2; for hexameters Harrison (1991) 140–3.

<sup>18</sup> Ovid has only *intueor*, and even that only once, *Pont.* 2.10.47.

<sup>19</sup> Mozley (1979<sup>2</sup>) in the Loeb actually translates *condidit* ‘brought forth’. Liberman’s other claims can be dealt with similarly: in verse 75, Burman’s *uocantur* is to be preferred to the transmitted *leuantur*, while *ne* in 53 can be understood as purposive, *interdum* in 113 as ‘sometimes’ (so Mozley) rather than ‘for some time’.

<sup>20</sup> So e.g. Schantz (1889) 4, Skutsch (1901a) 934.

<sup>21</sup> On similarities to Propertius, see Hübner (1878) 161–205, especially 166–77 on the links with the Cornelia elegy (Prop. 4.11).

<sup>22</sup> The relationship with the *Elegiae in Maecenatem* is considered by e.g. Wieding (1888) 38–42, Witlox (1934) XII–XIV. Verses 1–2 *Defleram iuuenis tristi modo carmine fata; | sunt etiam merito carmina danda seni* apparently refer to *Cons.*, perhaps with the implication that the writer regarded *Cons.* as authentic in date: they are clearly not by the same author, given that the frequency of elision is 7 per 100 lines in *El.*, whereas it stands at 27 per cent in *Cons.* Peirano (2012) 220–33 gives a good account of how the rhetoric of *El.* suits a poem written well after Maecenas’ death.

<sup>23</sup> The point is due to Richmond (1981a) 2773.

observing that the most likely time for someone to write an epicedion is shortly after the death—that is when the feelings and the rewards are likely to be at their highest. If the *Consolatio* was composed in the aftermath of Drusus' funeral, its political functions belong to those months (and not some later moment in the Julio-Claudian era) and its rhetoric too: it is not simply a school exercise in consolation. In addition, it takes up a mid-point within the history of Augustan poetry. In its engagement with the imperial household, the poem can be associated with Propertius' Cornelia elegy (4.11), Horace *Epist.* 2.1, the odes in book 4 concerned with the victories of Drusus and Tiberius (*Carm.* 4.4, 4.14–15), and lost pieces such as Tiberius' lyric lament on the death of Lucius Caesar (Suet. *Tib.* 70). It is roughly contemporaneous with the deaths of Horace and Maecenas, and mediates between the early works of Ovid and those of his mid-career and exile. It is aptly placed in the notional 'Appendix Ovidiana', both as a contemporary elegy, and as the home of much Ovidian phrasing. Therein lies much of the case for later composition: since the *Consolatio* borrows from early Ovid, scholars have found it an easy assumption that phrasing shared with late Ovid is borrowing too. That is the discussion with which I shall end, but first there are things to be said about the historical, rather than the literary, arguments for date.

If the poem shows knowledge of events after 8 BC or thereabouts, it clearly cannot have been written in the period in which it sets itself. Some have been concerned with the supposed *auguria ex euentu*,<sup>24</sup> Livia's burial in the Mausoleum (161), the hope that she will see Tiberius a *senex* (412), and the prophecy of German punishment (271–80).<sup>25</sup> Other sceptics, however, have rightly accepted that such predictions are the staples of consolation and as likely to come from hope as from experience.<sup>26</sup> Though Tiberius plays a major part in the poem, that prominence is entirely natural, given his journeys to see his brother before he dies and then to bring his body back to Italy and Rome. Moreover, the focus in the poem is on their shared attributes and history; there is no out-of-place hint here that Tiberius will be the successor of Augustus.

The most promising evidence for a *terminus ante quem non* comes in the reference to the temple of the Castores:

adice Ledaeos, concordia sidera, fratres  
 templaque Romano conspicienda foro.  
 [quam paruo numeros impleuit principis aeuo,        285  
 in patriam meritis occubuitque senex!]<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> E.g. Bickel (1950) 227.        <sup>25</sup> Wieding (1888) 26.

<sup>26</sup> Richmond (1981a) 2775; Peirano (2012) 235–6.

<sup>27</sup> I bracket 285–6, which Baehrens (1879) already separates from the three surrounding couplets (he transposes them to a new home after 298). The couplet is out of place here and likely to be an interpolation, given how it anticipates 448 *acta senem faciunt, haec numeranda tibi* (cf. *aeuum* in 449).

nec sua conspiciet (miserum me) munera Drusus  
 nec sua pro templi nomina fronte leget.  
 saepe Nero illacrimans summissa uoce loquetur  
 ‘cur adeo fratres heu sine fratre deos?’ 290

*Cons.* 283–90

Add the brothers born from Leda, harmonious stars, and the temples to be admired in the Roman forum. [In how short a life he supplied in full the characteristics of a prince and died an old man in his good deeds for his fatherland.] Drusus will (to my woe) not see his benefactions nor read his own name on the front of the temple. Often Nero [i.e. Tiberius] weeping will say in a low voice, ‘Why do I approach the divine brothers (alas) without my brother?’

According to Cassius Dio 55.27.4, the temple of Castor & Pollux was dedicated in AD 6:

*καὶ ἡ πόλις καὶ ἐκ τούτων ἐταράττετο, μέχρις οὗ ἢ τε σιτοδεία ἐπαύσατο, καὶ μονομαχίας ἀγῶνες ἐπὶ τῷ Δρούσῳ πρὸς τε τοῦ Γερμανικοῦ τοῦ Καίσαρος καὶ πρὸς Τιβερίου Κλαυδίου Νέρωνος, τῶν υἱέων αὐτοῦ, ἐγένοντο. τοῦτό τε γὰρ αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ τῇ τοῦ Δρούσου μνήμῃ παρεμυθήσατο, καὶ ὅτι τὸ Διοσκόρειον ὁ Τιβέριος καθιερώσας οὐ τὸ ἑαυτοῦ μόνον ὄνομα αὐτῷ, ... ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ἐκείνου ἐπέγραψε.*

For this reason too the city was thrown into confusion, until the point when the shortage of grain was ended and gladiatorial games were given in honour of Drusus by his sons Germanicus Caesar and Tiberius Claudius Nero. As a memorial of Drusus this calmed the people, as did the dedication by Tiberius of the temple of Castor and Pollux, upon which he inscribed not only his own name...but also that of Drusus.

Dio’s main attention in talking about the temple is the inscription with which Tiberius celebrated his brother’s name as well as his own. Suetonius, *Tib.* 20–1 makes a similar point:

prandium dehinc populo mille mensis et congiarium trecenos nummos uiritim dedit. dedicauit et Concordiae aedem, item Pollucis et Castoris suo fratrisque nomine de manubiis. ac non multo post lege per consules lata, ut prouincias cum Augusto communiter administraret simulque censum ageret, condito lustrum in Illyricum profectus est.

Next he provided a banquet for the people, served on a thousand tables, and a distribution of 300 sesterces each. With the proceeds of his spoils he dedicated the temple of Concordia, as well as that of Pollux and Castor, in his own name and that of his brother. And shortly after, when a law had been brought by the consuls that he administer the provinces jointly with Augustus and at the same time conduct a census, he set off for Illyricum once the purificatory rites had been completed.

Though Suetonius' passage begins in AD 12, and has an apparently temporal structure, it is wrong in putting the dedication after that of the temple of Concordia, for Concordia is dated by Dio 56.25 to AD 10, a year that is confirmed in an addition to the *Fasti Praenestini*, which gives the names of the consuls (Dolabella and Silanus). However, Suetonius is important in associating Tiberius' rededications of the two temples that stood at opposite corners of the Forum area. Both Castor & Pollux and Concordia are easily presented as symbols of fraternal harmony, and they are linked in the calendar too: both natal dates were in the second half of January, and Ovid deals with them close together at *Fasti* 1.637–50, 705–8. But the association is visible also at *Cons.* 283 *Ledaeos, concordia sidera, fratres*: this is a neatly allusive exposition of Tiberius' design, a design that is fulfilled nearly two decades after Drusus' death, apparently far too late to fit with an authentic *Consolatio*. As Schoonhoven observes,<sup>28</sup> however, Dio 55.8.1–2 tells us that the task of rebuilding the temple of Concordia was undertaken by Tiberius at the start of his consulship in 7 BC:

Τιβέριος δὲ ἐν τῇ νομηνίᾳ ἐν ἡ ὑπατεύειν μετὰ Γναίου Πίσωνος ἤρξατο ἔς τε τὸ Ὀκταοῦειον τὴν βουλὴν ἠθροισε διὰ τὸ ἔξω τοῦ πωμηρίου αὐτὸ εἶναι, καὶ τὸ Ὀμονόειον αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ ἐπισκευάσαι προστάξας, ὅπως τό τε ἴδιον καὶ τὸ τοῦ Δρούσου ὄνομα αὐτῷ ἐπιγράψῃ, τὰ τε νικητήρια ἤγαγε κτλ.

On the Kalends on which he started as consul along with Gnaeus Piso, Tiberius convened the senate in the Porticus Octavia, because it was outside the pomerium. Having assigned to himself the restoration of the temple of Concordia, in order that he might inscribe upon it his own name and that of Drusus, he celebrated his triumph...

<sup>28</sup> Schoonhoven (1992) 17–18.



If the plan to rededicate the temple of Concordia was announced in 7 BC but not completed until AD 10, there is no reason to find it problematic that the plan to refurbish the Castores as a monument also to the brotherly pair Tiberius and Drusus should have been published at about the same time, even if it was not completed until AD 6. In other words, the one piece of historical knowledge supposedly too late for the implied date of the *Consolatio* is plausibly available already in 8 BC. The three couplets on the temple all look to the future, and can be read as celebrating just the kind of announcement that Tiberius made about the temple of Concordia. For Schoonhoven, this is part of a later author's stratagem for making a date shortly after the funeral seem plausible. In my view, this passage, as the one precise historical allusion subsequent to the funeral, actually helps confirm the authenticity of the poem's date.

Schoonhoven (1992) 22–6 rejects the notion of an authentic date because he finds hints in the poem that Drusus is being celebrated as the intended successor to Augustus. This view is developed from the links established by the Tiber and Mars passage (221–52) between the funeral of Drusus and that of Marcellus, and from the treatment of Antonia, Drusus' wife. Given that both men died young and were buried in the Mausoleum topical connexions between the two were virtually inevitable. The passage has Tiber preparing to flood and drench the pyre before the body can be burnt (221–30); Mars then intervenes and persuades the river to desist, just as he did not fight for the immortality of Remus when one of the Parcae told him that only Romulus and two Caesars were owed to heaven (245–6):

hic tibi, mox Veneri Caesar promissus uterque:  
hos debet solos Martia Roma deis.<sup>29</sup>

He [Romulus] is promised to you, each Caesar in time to come, to Venus: Mars' Rome owes only these to the gods.

As for Antonia, the key couplet is 303–4:

femina tu princeps, tu filia Caesaris illi  
nec minor es magni coniuge uisa Iouis.

You were the first lady, you were Caesar's daughter in his eyes, nor did you seem less than the wife of mighty Jove.

<sup>29</sup> For the use of *Martius* in a conversation involving Mars, cf. Ov. *Fast.* 3.232.

Although *illi* has been doubted,<sup>30</sup> Butrica (1993) 266 saw how vital its function is in 303: Antonia is represented as an equivalent to Livia<sup>31</sup> and Julia, and in the pentameter, to Juno, but, thanks to *illi*, specifically in the eyes of Drusus; without *illi* she would replace them, and that might seem offensive, even dangerous. His brother Tiberius was married to Caesar's daughter; Drusus thought Antonia matched her—this is panegyric, of course, not psychological insight.

Schoonhoven continues: '[t]he use of such a suggestive, almost manipulative approach by the poet must be considered rather spectacular if one insists on 9 BC as the date of composition. It would mean that the poet, apart from obscuring the real and only *filia Caesaris*, also neglects Augustus' provisions for the succession, since Julia's sons Gaius and Lucius had been adopted long since by Augustus.<sup>32</sup> As we have seen, the phrasing does not obscure Julia;<sup>33</sup> and as for Gaius and Lucius, they only matter if we focus on succession planning. The poem, however, focuses on what Drusus was, not on what might have been. Gaius and Lucius were 11 and 8 respectively in 9 BC; it can hardly be regarded as 'neglect' (Schoonhoven's word) when they are not mentioned in a poem that only touches on Drusus' own children in passing at 323–4:

nunc<sup>34</sup> mortem tibi maesta rogas amplexaque natos  
pignora de Druso sola relicta tenes.

Now in your sadness you ask for death for yourself and embracing your children  
you hold the only pledges left from Drusus.

Again we may find a pointer to an early date here: one of the sons embraced by Antonia will be emperor, as will the son and grandson of another, and yet the poem makes no gesture towards this fact, just as it gives no hint about the future of Tiberius (either as emperor or a recluse on Rhodes). To my mind these are significant silences and tilt the balance of the argument towards authenticity of date.

<sup>30</sup> Courtney (1986, 402) conjectured *alti*; later (1999, 398), he accepted Schoonhoven's interpretation, which is in terms of grammar identical to that given above. Witlox (1934) puts a comma before *illi* and takes it with the pentameter, but it surely works *ἀπὸ κοινοῦ*.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. the use of *femina princeps* of Livia by Ovid at *Tr.* 1.6.25–6 and *Pont.* 3.1.125. It would be putting too much weight on the earlier absence of the phrase to suppose that it was not available before 8 BC: cf. Peirano (2012) 212.

<sup>32</sup> Schoonhoven (1992) 25.

<sup>33</sup> So Butrica (1993) 266; he also points out that the flattery of Julia, alongside Livia and Antonia, arguably makes 2 BC, the year of her exile, a *terminus post quem non*.

<sup>34</sup> A conjecture (for the transmitted *quid*) suggested to me by Bruce Gibson; *tu* is another possibility. The rhetoric of the sentence (which continues to the end of 328) hardly suggests a resumption of the questioning found in 317–18.

To sum up: the *Consolatio ad Liuiam* has a notional date of c. 8 BC. Despite the profusion of references to individuals who are prominent in subsequent decades, nothing has been found that conflicts with the notional date, whereas the positive handling of Julia and the fleeting mention of Drusus' children argue against significantly later publication; and Tiberius' retirement to Rhodes in 6 BC sets an early limit.

### Intertexts and sequence

The *Consolatio* shares a considerable amount of phrasing with Augustan poetry, especially poems of Ovid, early and late.<sup>35</sup> Axelson and Witlox find it improbable that Ovid should fill the works of exile with phrases from the *Consolatio*.<sup>36</sup> But why? Because the author of the *Consolatio* was an inept poet? But that is a questionable judgement, and Ovid may not have thought him so. Ovid was deeply engaged with literary history and the poets of his own age (e.g. *Am.* 1.15, *Tr.* 4.10.41–54, and especially *Pont.* 4.16); if the *Consolatio* was written in c. 8 BC, he will surely have known the author, and the relationship between the two of them is likely to have been mutual. In exile Ovid frequently addresses members of the imperial household and may well have seen the *Consolatio* as a model for that—and for dealing with woe. Consider the very end of the poem:

est tibi (sitque, precor) multorum filius instar  
 parsque tui *partus* sit<sup>37</sup> tibi salua prior;  
 est coniunx, tutela hominum, quo sospite uestram,  
 Liuia, funestam dedecet esse domum.

*Cons.* 471–4

You have (and I pray that you continue to have) a son equivalent to many, and the earlier part of your offspring may be safe;<sup>38</sup> you have a husband, the protection of mankind, and while he lives, Livia, it is unfitting for your home to be full of mourning.

<sup>35</sup> See for example the lists given at Schoonhoven (1992) 230–2.

<sup>36</sup> Axelson (1930) and Witlox (1934) XI; and e.g. ad 46.

<sup>37</sup> Following Löfstedt, Axelson (1930) 14–15 saw the inept subjunctive as dependent on *fuertit* at *Pont.* 2.8.48, cited below (a 'particularly appealing' notion for Peirano (2012) 213, in a discussion that makes no attempt to consider Ovid as the imitator). Heinsius read *it*, and Francius *est*. The latter produces a rather weak repetition of *est tibi* in the hexameter, and thus hardly improves on *sit*. Though Heinsius shows that *saluus ire* is idiomatic, I am not convinced that it quite fits here: the context looks for a parallel to *est* (471, 473), not a dynamic verb: perhaps *stat* (*OLD* 17; for the combination with an adjective, cf. Hor. *Ars* 69 *stet... uiuax*).

<sup>38</sup> If we read *stat*, 'continues to be safe'.

Almost identical phrasing appears in *Fasti* 6:<sup>39</sup>

est mihi (sitque precor nostris diuturnior annis),  
filia, qua felix sospite semper ero.

Ov. *Fast.* 6.219–20

I have a daughter (and I pray that she continue to live longer than my lifetime);  
 and while she lives I shall always be happy.

and in *Tristia* 1.10:

Est mihi (sitque, precor), flauae tutela Mineruae,  
 nauis et a picta casside nomen habet.

Ov. *Tr.* 1.10.1–2

I have (and I pray that I continue to have) a ship, the protection of blond-haired  
 Minerva; she has a name derived from the coloured helmet.

—but in fact *Her.* 1.111 already has an identical half-line:

est tibi (sitque, precor) natus, qui mollibus annis  
 in patrias artes erudiendus erat.<sup>40</sup>

Ov. *Her.* 1.111–12

You have (and I pray that you continue to have) a son, who in his tender years  
 should be getting educated in his father's arts.

What would preclude Ovid using window allusions? In *Fasti* 6 he repeats his own neat phrasing from Penelope's letter and adds in the pentameter an echo of the poet who had already taken over his half-line. In the *Tristia* he replaces the *tutela* of Augustus with that of Minerva. Nor should we be surprised to find an echo of the *Consolatio* at *Pont.* 2.8.48, when Ovid addresses a prayer to Livia, and mentions Drusus:

tu quoque, conueniens ingenti nupta marito,  
 accipe non dura supplicis aure preces!  
 sic tibi uir sospes, sic sint cum prole nepotes,  
 cumque bonis nuribus quod peperere nurus.

45

<sup>39</sup> Again later in Martial 1.108.1 (*tibi*), 9.18.1 (*mihi*).

<sup>40</sup> Though it may be out of place after 1.110, the couplet looks unimpeachable as a piece of Ovidian writing.

sic quem dira tibi rapuit Germania Drusum  
*pars fuerit partus sola caduca tui.*  
 sic tibi mature fraterni funeris ultor  
 purpureus niueis filius instet equis.

50

Ov. *Pont.* 2.8.43–50

You too, bride matched to a great husband, please receive the prayers of a suppliant with no unyielding ear: so may your husband live, so your grandsons with their offspring, and along with your daughters-in-law what they have produced as mothers. So may the Drusus whom abominable Germany stole from you be the only part of your offspring to fall. So may your son ride purple-clad on snow-white horses, an early avenger for you of his brother's death.

Shared models, but lost ones, might be the explanation in other cases too, for example, for the shared phrasing of 362:

ecce necem intentant caelo terraeque fretoque  
 casurumque triplex uaticinatur opus.<sup>41</sup>

Cons. 361–2

Look, men threaten death for heaven and earth and sea and they prophesy that the triple construction will fall.

and *Tristia* 2.426:

explicat ut causas rapidi Lucretius ignis,  
 casurumque triplex uaticinatur opus, . . .

Ov. *Tr.* 2.425–6

Lucretius unfolds the causes of consuming fire and prophesies that the triple construction will fall.

The fact that the *Consolatio* is reporting what people say makes it possible to imagine a quotation or near quotation; and Ovid's summary of Lucretius is rather eccentric here, in privileging the destruction of the universe, and thus perhaps looks to an intermediary besides *Am.* 1.15.23–4 *carmina sublimis tunc sunt peritura Lucreti, | exitio terras cum dabit una dies*,<sup>42</sup> where he is celebrating Lucretius

<sup>41</sup> *intentant* is Bentley's conjecture for *intentam*, *uaticinantur*, Heinsius' for *uaticinatur*. See Schoonhoven (1992) 174 for the argument.

<sup>42</sup> 'The poem of sublime Lucretius will perish only when a single day hands over the earth to destruction.'

as an immortal poet and has good reason to allude to his account of the end of the world. In the *Consolatio* universal destruction is the central point, and a number of details are drawn from Lucretius' lines:

principio maria ac terras caelumque tuere;  
 quorum naturam **triplicem**, tria corpora, Memmi,  
 tris species tam dissimiles, tria talia texta,  
 una dies dabit exitio,...

Lucr. 5.92–5

First of all contemplate seas and lands and heaven, whose triple form, whose three substances, Memmius, three forms so different, three things fabricated such as they are, a single day will hand over to destruction,...

As well as a similar list of elements, *uaticinantur* evokes the Lucretian comparison of his prophecies to the Delphic oracle (5.110–12); the plural verbs allow inclusion of the Stoics too. Again, there is artfulness in the Ovidian response, assuming he is the imitator: whereas the *Consolatio* foretells the end of the world in both lines, his hexameter has Lucretius first unfolding *causae*, the origin; he glosses the generic third-person plural with the name *Lucretius*, and playfully supplies the element that is missing from *caelo terraeque fretoque*. Seneca expresses the same sentiment as *Cons.* in similar terms in the *consolatio* addressed to Polybius:<sup>43</sup>

mundo quidam minantur interitum, et hoc uniuersum quod omnia diuina  
 humanae complectitur, si fas putas credere, dies aliquis dissipabit et in  
 confusionem ueterem tenebrasque demergit: eat nunc aliquis et singulas  
 comploret animas.

Sen. *Dial.* 11.1.2

Some threaten the world with destruction, and this universe which embraces everything divine and human a day shall break apart (if you think it right to believe that) and submerge in ancient chaos and darkness: now let someone go and lament over individual lives.

The first four words are precisely parallel to *necem intentant caelo terraeque fretoque* from *Cons.* 361; the closing pay-off is equivalent to 363–4 *i nunc et rebus tanta impendente ruina | in te solam oculos et tua damna refer* ('now go, and though such destruction hangs over the world, draw attention to yourself alone and your losses').

<sup>43</sup> For discussion, see e.g. Witlox (1934) 127–9, Richmond (1981a) 2776–8.

A genetic link is all but certain; but I can see no reason for preferring the order Seneca, then *Cons.* (a point to be returned to).

Peirano saw the similarity between 362 and *Tristia* 2.426 as a key one:<sup>44</sup>

The imitation by the author of the *Cons. ad Liviam* of a text that postdates Drusus' death (9 BC) by at least 16 years confirms the hypothesis that the historical occasion for which the *epikedion* purports to be written is artificially evoked and recreated. In an effort to defend the *Cons. ad Liviam* as an authentic Augustan document, Franz Skutsch argued that the relative chronology of the two texts should be reversed. . . . The reasons for doubting Skutsch's argument are given by Bertil Axelson in a passage which is also a nice summary of the basic principles on which the establishment of priority issues in Classical philology are based. . . . an inferior poet (the author of the *Cons. ad Liviam* in this particular case) is more likely to have imitated a superior author (i.e., Ovid) than the other way round. This is followed by a distributive rationale: if many parallels are found between two authors, the text in which the most parallels are concentrated is likely to be the imitator, the one in which the parallels are spread across many works of different periods and genres, the source.

The first argument may not seem entirely unreasonable, as long as we qualify it 'other things being equal'; but things rarely are (and in this case, the putative date of the *Consolatio* stands against the assumption, so things are not at all equal). But if we test it, we quickly see major problems: few would argue that Vergil is an inferior poet to any of his predecessors or contemporaries in Latin, and yet we know that his work is full of allusions to Catullus, Cinna, and Calvus. Moreover, parallels to Catullus 64 are found in the *Eclogues*, the *Georgics*, and the *Aeneid*; according to the second principle this would make Catullus the imitator: this seems unlikely. Varius' *De Morte* provides another case, with parallels attested in *Eclogue* 8, *Georgics* 2 and 3, and *Aeneid* 6: the chronology is utterly uncertain, but it is not unthinkable that Varius alluded to one or both of Vergil's earlier works, and then Vergil returned the compliment at *Aen.* 6.621–2.<sup>45</sup> Of course one might argue that Catullus and Varius are not *markedly* inferior poets to Vergil, so the case is different; but we do not know who the poet of the *Consolatio* was—could it have been Varius, for example?<sup>46</sup>—and in any case what matters is the

<sup>44</sup> Peirano (2012) 210–11.

<sup>45</sup> Butrica (1993) 266 uses Varius to similar effect.

<sup>46</sup> He may have lived on well after Vergil's death: see Hollis (2007) 262, and on *FRP* 153a (Ovid's reference to a tragedy-writing Varius in *Pont.* 4.16.31). Porphyrio on Horace, *Carm.* 1.6.1–2 describes Varius as *epici carminis et tragoediarum et elegiorum auctor* [*FRP* 159]; unlike the other two genres, there is no additional evidence for elegiac composition. Ps.-Acro on Horace, *Epist.* 1.16.27–9 attributes a panegyric of Augustus to Varius. *FRP* 155 reports that Augustus gave a reward of 100 million sesterces to Varius for the *Thyestes* after its performance at the games celebrating victory at Actium: this suggests closeness to the imperial household. In the twelve extant hexameters of *De Morte* he has three elisions, including the anapaest *pretio* in fr. 147 (cf. *Cons.* 69 *posit(o) Agrippa*). Though I am posing an illustrative hypothesis, not attempting an identification, it is important to realize how little we know

engagement of ancient poets one with another, not some fixed league table of authorial names. Additionally, we need to acknowledge that we do not knowingly have access to any other work by the author of *Cons.*, so we cannot compare the concentration of his references to Ovidian material. The Axelsonian principles that Peirano commends are in practice useless.<sup>47</sup>

Diction and motifs are also shared with Seneca's consolations, *Dial.* 11 (*ad Polybium*), as we have seen, and 6 (*ad Marciam*). Adler provides a useful list of parallels,<sup>48</sup> and then argues that Seneca is the imitator: at the start of the *consolatio* addressed to his mother he says that he read many examples of the genre (*Dial.* 12.1.2), and he mentions celebrations of Drusus (*Dial.* 6.3.2) after talking explicitly about poems on Marcellus (6.2.5 *carmina celebrandae Marcelli memoriae composita aliosque studiorum honores reiecit et aures suas aduersus omne solacium clusit*).<sup>49</sup> Adler notes the absence of some cogent Senecan material from *Cons.*, in particular the failure to use Drusus' children as consolation for Livia: compare *Dial.* 6.5.6 *post haec ostendit illi filium incolumem, ostendit ex amisso nepotes*. This action, pointing to Tiberius and the grandchildren, comes at the end of an imagined speech addressed to Livia by the household philosopher Areus, who is introduced as follows:

illa in primo feruore, cum maxime impatientes ferocesque sunt miseriae,  
 consolandam se Areo, philosopho uiri sui, praebuit et multum eam rem  
 profuisse sibi confessa est, plus quam populum Romanum, quem nolebat tristem  
 tristitia sua facere, plus quam Augustum, . . . plus quam Tiberium filium, cuius  
 pietas efficiebat ut in illo acerbo et defleto gentibus funere nihil sibi nisi  
 numerum deesse sentiret.

Sen. *Dial.* 6.4.2

In the first ferment, when grief is at its most ungovernable and violent, she allowed herself to be consoled by Areus, her husband's philosopher, and acknowledged that this was of great benefit to her, more than the Roman people, whom she was unwilling to sadden with her own sadness, more than Augustus, . . . more than her son Tiberius, whose filial affection made her feel at

about a major poet such as Varius; amid his other works a single piece like the *Consolatio* would easily pass without notice.

<sup>47</sup> Space prevents consideration of further cases of Ovidian intertexts, but the same approach holds valid: set *Cons.* in 8 BC and the chains of allusion are plausible and often effective.

<sup>48</sup> Adler (1851) 13–15; see also Schantz (1889) 6–10, who takes the parallels to indicate imitation of Seneca, but without argument.

<sup>49</sup> 'Octavia rejected the poems composed to celebrate the memory of Marcellus and other literary honours, and shut her ears against every form of consolation.'



that bitter funeral, the cause of tears for mankind, that she had lost nothing save number.

As a philosopher Seneca stresses the importance of philosophical guidance for Livia, but he follows a similar route to the poet in recounting the approach of Areus: Livia has witnessed the grief of the people and others in the family; now she owes duties to Rome (e.g. 343–54, a passage close to *Dial.* 11.6.2–3), Augustus (473–4), and Tiberius (471–2); if she thinks about the broader picture, the achievements of her son and the inevitability of death, she will be consoled and master her grief. The poet more easily uses mythological material and divine machinery,<sup>50</sup> and a greater variety of speaking voices, including the noble voice of Drusus himself in the climactic 447–68. Seneca narrates the death of Drusus again in *Dial.* 11 (in words attributed to the Emperor Claudius):

<Ti.> Caesar patruus meus Drusum Germanicum patrem meum . . . in complexu et in osculis suis amisit; modum tamen lugendi non sibi tantum sed etiam aliis fecit, ac totum exercitum non solum maestum sed etiam attonitum, corpus Drusi sui sibi uindicantem, ad morem Romani luctus redegit.

Sen. *Dial.* 11.15.5

My uncle Tiberius Caesar lost my father Drusus Germanicus . . . in his embrace, amid his kisses; he set a limit for grieving, however, not merely for himself but also for others, and, when the whole army was not only saddened but thunder-struck and claiming for themselves possession of the body of their leader Drusus, he guided them back to Roman practices of mourning.

This is close to *Cons.* 85–98, where Tiberius himself is described as *attonitum* (85) and the embrace of the brothers at the moment of death (91) is contrasted with the absence of Livia, unable to kiss and hug (95–7), and 167–72, where Tiberius takes the body from the whole army (*exercitus omnis*, 169) before they can burn it. Richmond assumes the parallels derive from a history;<sup>51</sup> but it may be accurate as well as more economical to assume that Seneca does indeed know the *Consolatio* and uses it as a source for commonplaces as well as the historical details.

<sup>50</sup> Sen. *Dial.* 6.12.4 notes that unspecified myths present gods as not immune from death; *Cons.* 433–40 uses the example of Achilles and his divine relatives to similar effect.

<sup>51</sup> Richmond (1981a) 2780–2.

## Conclusion

If we take the *Consolatio* to be a historical fiction, it is very hard to find a time for it in the early empire: on the one hand, no interest is shown in the successors of Augustus, on the other, praise of Julia surprises in the late Augustan and early Tiberian era. Haupt's attempt to push the poem as late as possible has a kind of logic: rather than supposing any ancient poet would allude to such a fictional construction, he attributes all the shared phrasing to the author of the *Consolatio*. Far simpler, however, is to place the poem in the period after the funeral of Drusus. Nothing conflicts with this dating—as long as we are willing to read the parallels in Ovid and Seneca as due to their imitation of the *Consolatio*. The number, detail, and insight of their reworkings imply close familiarity with this text, and thus admiration.<sup>52</sup> We should respect their judgement and use it to inform our own engagement with the poem, if necessary reconsidering our aesthetic criteria. For example, Haupt criticizes the reference to Livia's absence from the deathbed both to stress her pain (89–100) and to provide consolation (393–8: she only *heard* of the death);<sup>53</sup> but declamatory rhetoric encourages such doubling, and both points are valid. Moreover, what sharpens grief at one moment may later console. Again, Richmond says that the author 'pads out his poem with a rather grotesque piece of divine machinery',<sup>54</sup> referring to 221–52, the passage in which the Tiber nearly prevents the cremation by flooding, but is dissuaded by Mars. However, in a tradition where Cicero is taught by Minerva and attends Jupiter's council (*De temporibus suis* fr. 1–2 Soubiran), where gods intervene in the battle of Actium (*Aen.* 8.698–705; *Prop.* 4.6.25–68), where Mercury saves Horace from a falling branch (*Carm.* 2.17.27–30), and where Cupid flies out to Tomi to visit Ovid (*Pont.* 3.3), we should not be surprised to find gods engaging with this poignant state occasion. Even the gods are moved to anger by Drusus' fate—but even the gods are persuaded to accept that fate: the passage is the central heart of the poem, encapsulating both the grief it expresses and the need for acceptance. Ancient Rome, for all its power, wealth, and sophistication, was a world of frequent premature death. Consolation was often wanted, and a number of writers provide fine specimens of the art,<sup>55</sup> among them, I suggest, the author of the *Consolatio ad Liviam*.

I wrote earlier, to sum up a particular argument, '[t]he Axelsonian principles... are in practice useless'. The point may bear repetition as a generalization. This poem is a very special case because it can be so precisely dated on historical grounds. Yet the false attribution to Ovid forced consideration of authenticity, and once the poem lacked an author it passed easily into the realm of the low

<sup>52</sup> And Tiberius too (not surprisingly), to judge from the links with Tac. *Ann.* 3.6 brought out by Schrijvers (1988) 383.

<sup>53</sup> Haupt (1875) 333–4; so too Schantz (1889) 7, Richmond (1981a) 2771.

<sup>54</sup> Richmond (1981a) 2771.

<sup>55</sup> Besides Seneca, I think particularly of Servius Sulpicius Rufus (*Cic. Fam.* 4.5). See further Schantz (1889) and Peirano (2012) 238–40.

grade and the fake. Despite the strength of the historical case, literary scholars have repeatedly redated it on the basis of its close intertextual relations with other works: they can get the sequence to work with the unknown poet imitating Ovid. Too rarely have they asked whether the chains of allusion can be hung from a different point. After all, why would an Ovid or a Seneca imitate the poem of some ‘no name’? But this is a grievous failure of historical imagination: for Ovid and Seneca the author was not unknown. And there is a moral to be derived from the tale: if scholars have got it wrong in this case, either the criteria they are using or their application of them are misguided. The intertextual evidence for priority is rarely decisive: we must learn to be more open-minded.

### Appendix: some judgements on the date/ authorship of the *Consolatio*

Heinsius (1758) 1.393	<i>saeculum Ovidianum</i>
Adler (1851)	AD 6–29
Maehly (1873) 3–13	inauthentic, unspecified
Haupt (1875)	fifteenth century
Hübner (1878)	AD 100–200
Baehrens (1879) 97–103	authentic <sup>56</sup>
Schenkl (1880) 67–70	AD 43–68
Wieding (1888)	early Tiberian
Schantz (1889)	AD 43–68
Skutsch (1901a)	authentic
Oldecop (1911) 74–84	AD 44–68
Radford (1921) 169 n. 41	Ovidian
Vollmer (1923) 15–16	authentic
Axelsson (1930)	Domitianic?
Witlox (1934)	AD 29–37
Kraus (1942) 1972–4	Claudian
Bickel (1950)	early Claudian
Platnauer (1951)	not Ovidian
Reeve (1976) 79	Neronian
Richmond (1981a)	Tiberian?
Schrijvers (1988)	AD 20
Schoonhoven (1992)	AD 54–5
Butrica (1993)	8–2 BC
Cogitore (1994)	rhetorical
Lieberman (1994) 1119–20	late antique?
Fraschetti (1995, 2005)	authentic
Hauptli (1996)	AD 1–100
Pinotti (1996) 500–1	post-Augustan
Amat (1997)	AD 6
Schlegelmilch (2005)	AD 33–8
Peirano (2012) 205–41	rhetorical
Stachon (2014) 237–71	AD 37–8 (before the deification of Drusilla)

<sup>56</sup> By ‘authentic’ I mean ‘written in the aftermath of the funeral’, as the poem presents itself, i.e. c. 8 BC.