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2014

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### Recommended Citation

Godzich, Tara N., "Politicizing Apollo: Ovid's Commentary on Augustan Marriage Legislation in the *Ars Amatoria* and the *Metamorphoses*" (2014). *Scripps Senior Theses*. Paper 466.  
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**POLITICIZING APOLLO: OVID'S COMMENTARY ON AUGUSTAN MARRIAGE  
LEGISLATION IN THE *ARS AMATORIA* AND THE *METAMORPHOSES***

by

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**SUBMITTED TO SCRIPPS COLLEGE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS**

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**APRIL 25, 2014**

**ABSTRACT:** Augustan propaganda surrounding Apollo provided the perfect literary device through which Augustan poets could express their sentiments about the new regime. Augustus transformed Apollo from a relatively insignificant god in the Roman pantheon to his own multi-faceted god whose various attributes were meant to legitimize his new position within the Roman Empire. In this thesis I discuss how Ovid uses Augustus' political affiliation with Apollo to comment on Augustan marriage legislation in two of his texts. In Ovid's manual on seduction, the *Ars Amatoria*, he denies poetic inspiration from Apollo at the beginning of his work, preferring instead to draw from his own experiences. However, Ovid seemingly contradicts himself by having Apollo appear later on to offer him advice. In his *Metamorphoses*, Ovid ridicules Apollo's failed pursuit of Daphne. However, Apollo is seemingly victorious after all, since he uses Daphne's laurel as his perpetual victory symbol. In both these instances, Ovid veils his political commentary by initially ridiculing Apollo in matters of love, only to seemingly glorify him shortly after. By excluding Apollo from matters of love, Ovid indirectly is disapproving of Augustus' involvement in social affairs in Rome. Ovid proves to be a master of language yet again as he plays with the literary tradition and political implication of Apollo in these two texts to convey his discontent regarding Augustan marriage legislation.

## Introduction

With the change from Republic to Empire, Augustan poetry is inevitably politically charged. By appointing Maecenas to seek out talent, Augustus was able to convey his political messages not only through reforms and building programs but also through poetry. Although these poets were meant to reinforce the Augustan propaganda, many of them used their position to convey their own opinions about the new regime. One way Augustan poets did this was through their use of Apollo. Because Apollo was such an integral part of Augustan propaganda, the mention of Apollo in Augustan poetry is often not only literary but political as well. Although every mention of Apollo is not necessarily political, Augustan poets did sometimes use Apollo to express their feelings about Augustus and the new regime. This is particularly apparent in the works of Ovid. Ovid's works are known for being playful and lighthearted, but much of his poetry also has a serious political undertone.

Scholars over time have read the extent to which Augustan poetry is political differently.<sup>1</sup> In the nineteenth century, scholars viewed Augustan poets as being either "Pro-Augustan" or "Anti-Augustan". The works of Horace and Virgil were interpreted as "Pro-Augustan" texts, since Horace and Virgil often spoke directly about the new regime in a seemingly laudatory manner. Authors such as Tibullus and Propertius were not as seriously considered in the political context, since they focused more on elegy. Their references to Augustan Rome were generally read as having little political agenda, since they professed to be concerned more with matter of love than politics. On the other hand,

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<sup>1</sup> On the history of scholarly interpretations of Augustan literature, see Thorpe 1967:326-36, Phillips 1983:780-818, Otis 1938:188-222, Davis 1999:429-433.

Ovid's works were interpreted as "Anti-Augustan" because of his enigmatic exile. Scholars reconciled this mystery by labeling Ovid as an "Anti-Augustan", attributing his exile to the political opposition in his works. Eventually twentieth century scholars began to see these texts as more complex and rejected the view that Augustan poets were "Pro-Augustan". Instead, the poets were read as being ironic in their praise and were all labeled as "Anti-Augustan". In recent years, scholars have found the validity in both interpretations by noting that the Augustan poets are much more complex and intricate than being either "Pro-Augustan" or "Anti-Augustan". The complexity of the works was being lost by defining the poets under a specific political ideology. As scholarship has progressed, Augustan poets have been interpreted as more "ambivalent" in their attitude towards Augustus than stuck in this "antithesis" between "Pro-Augustan" and "Anti-Augustan."<sup>2</sup> They see texts like Virgil's *Aeneid* as perhaps laudatory on the surface but with more complex underlining messages.<sup>3</sup>

Ovid has been an enigma to scholars throughout this trend of scholarship. Ovid's exile shows that the content of his earlier works upset Augustus enough to ban him from

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<sup>2</sup> In his article "Rethinking Augustan poetry", Charles Phillips makes this distinction between "ambivalence" and "antithesis". Phillips says that scholars who interpret the poets as "ambivalent" view them as having diverse, complex opinions on Augustus, while the other view interprets the Augustan poets as within this "antithesis" of being either "Pro-Augustan" or "Anti-Augustan" (Phillips 1983:782).

<sup>3</sup> Virgil's *Aeneid* has been highly debated by scholars over time and provides a good case study for tracing the change in scholarly interpretations. In his article "The Aeneid in the Twentieth Century", Harrison provides a comprehensive overview of this scholarly trend. Eighteenth and nineteenth century scholars (such as Heinze and Pöschl) interpreted the *Aeneid* as promoting order and victory, in other words extremely Augustan ideals. In the mid-twentieth century, scholars (such as Clausen, Parry, and Putnam- all from the 'Harvard School') interpreted the *Aeneid* as having a pessimistic view towards imperialism and its effects. Harrison interprets this change in scholarly thought as a reflection of the contemporary concerns of American scholars of the 1960's in the wake of their own qualms with American imperialism. In recent years, scholars have become significantly less focused on a strictly "pro" or "anti" reading of the *Aeneid* and more focused on specific aspects of the text in a greater context. This overview of the scholarship on Virgil's *Aeneid* reflects the general trend of attitudes towards Augustan poets: originally optimistic, then pessimistic, and now somewhere in between with a focus on specific aspects of the poem rather than a political generalization (Harrison1990:1-20).

Rome, but Ovid's later texts written during his exile seem to be quite favorable towards Augustus. While this change could be due to Ovid's desire to appease Augustus' anger, Ovid's change of tone over the course of his works gives a sense of just how complicated it is to understand Ovid in a political context. In my interpretations of Ovid's texts, I read Ovid as more "ambivalent" in his views on Augustus and think it is overly simplistic to label him as either "Pro-Augustan" or "Anti-Augustan". Rather than label Ovid as having a specific political ideology, we should examine what possible political messages Ovid was trying to convey in his different texts. One way to examine Ovid's potential political commentary is in his use of Apollo. Since Augustan propaganda made the association between Augustus and Apollo ever present in the Roman mind, Apollo held a particular political weight for Augustan poets. Broad generalizations about Ovid's use of Apollo can greatly miss the intricacy of his references to the god, but a careful examination of paralleled passages can reveal Ovid's genius. Ovid demonstrates just how complicated the use of Apollo in Augustan poetry is. Throughout Ovid's several works, Apollo takes on many different guises. Even when just considering the *Metamorphoses*, Apollo at one moment is a ruthless god punishing Marsyas, then a warrior god defending the world from a vicious python, then a love-struck god pursuing a virgin nymph. And so, interpreting Ovid's text as "Pro-Augustan" or "Anti-Augustan" simply based on his mentions of Apollo can even be overly simplistic. However, by recognizing particular patterns connecting the texts, some conclusions can be drawn.

Although Apollo is mentioned throughout Ovid's works, the god appears in two contexts that I find are linked in their political messages: Apollo's epiphany in the *Ars*

*Amatoria* and the story of Apollo and Daphne in the *Metamorphoses*.<sup>4</sup> In these two instances, when Apollo gets involved in matters of love, Ovid ridicules and dismisses him. In the *Ars Amatoria*, Ovid deliberately states that he will not need the help of Apollo in his didactic work on seduction, only to allow Apollo to give him pointless advice later on. In the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid ridicules Apollo in his failed pursuit of Daphne, only to have him use her laurel as a victory symbol later on. These instances in which Ovid seemingly takes back his ridicule of Apollo by pretending to glorify him later on show his veiled political commentary in the works. I argue that in these two instances Ovid uses the literary traditions and political propaganda surrounding Apollo in order to subtly convey his desire to exclude Augustus from private social matters. Part of Augustus' political program was to restore traditional values in Rome. Augustan marriage legislation encouraged marriage and procreation, while discouraging adultery and celibacy.<sup>5</sup> Romans had become accustomed to living a less traditional lifestyle and were most likely irritated by Augustus' involvement in private matters. Because of this tension in Rome, I argue that Ovid dismisses Apollo from matters of love in these two instances as a political commentary on Augustan marriage legislation.

In this thesis, I will first give an account of the historical development of the political association between Apollo and Augustus in order to contextualize Ovid's works. Then, I will examine the epiphany of Apollo in the *Ars Amatoria* within the Callimachean tradition to show how Ovid's treatment of Apollo conveys his commentary on Augustan marriage legislation. Then, before discussing the story of Apollo and

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<sup>4</sup> *Ars Amatoria* I.25-30 & II.493-502, *Met.* I. 438-567

<sup>5</sup> These reforms will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, since the details of the reforms are more relevant to the story of Apollo and Daphne.

Daphne, I will examine the two preceding stories (Apollo's victory over the Python and the encounter between Apollo and Cupid) as they are important for creating the Augustan presence in the story of Apollo and Daphne. I will then finish with an analysis of Apollo's failed pursuit of Daphne as it relates to Augustan marriage legislation. In all these instances, I will discuss how Ovid uses the literary and political significance of Apollo to dismiss him from matters of love which consequently expresses his political message of discontent regarding Augustan marriage legislation.



## Chapter 1: The Political Affiliation between Augustus and Apollo

Scholars have had difficulty pinpointing when Augustus' affiliation with Apollo began and exactly how he built up the association. Literary, numismatic, and archaeological evidence show that Augustus was associated with Apollo before the Second Triumvirate was created, but scholars have debated about the extent to which these early associations were part of an intentional political program. Some scholars think of the affiliation as being an extremely intentional political strategy set out by Augustus<sup>6</sup> from the beginning, while others scholars see the affinity between Apollo and Augustus as naturally acquiring a political tone over time. In his book *Actium and Augustus*, Robert Gurval examines the affiliation between Apollo and Augustus in the context of the Battle of Actium. He sees Augustus' early associations with Apollo as a sign of growing fondness for the god, but argues that Augustus had no political intention regarding the affiliation until after the Battle of Actium.<sup>7</sup> In her article "Political and Religious Propaganda between 44 and 27 B.C.", Marie-Laure Freyburger-Galland gives an account of the various deities used as political propaganda from 44 to 27 B.C.E. Unlike Gurval, she argues that the early Augustan associations with Apollo were a crucial part of the development of Augustus' political propaganda.<sup>8</sup> In his book *Apollo, Augustus, and the Poets*, John Miller examines the association between Apollo and Augustus in the context of the Augustan poets. He also argues that Augustus' affiliation with Apollo began with these earlier associations, since Augustus would have seen the value in obtaining Apollo

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<sup>6</sup> Octavian received the title of Augustus by the Senate in 27 B.C.E. For the purpose of this paper, I will refer to him as Octavian when the chronology deems it appropriate and use the title "Augustus" when referring to his intentions and acts as emperor. Even though this title did not legally give Octavian any hard power, the title represented his position with the empire.

<sup>7</sup> Gurval 1995: 89

<sup>8</sup> Freyburger-Galland 2009:19-23

as his deity of choice during times of civil strife.<sup>9</sup> In his book *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, Paul Zanker discusses the many forms of propaganda used by Augustus. He argues that the affiliation between Apollo and Augustus developed both organically and intentionally. Zanker states that this political affiliation “appears in retrospect as a subtle program (that) resulted in fact from the interplay of the image that the emperor himself projected and the honor bestowed on him more or less spontaneously, a process that evolved naturally over long periods of time.”<sup>10</sup> Zanker here argues that Augustus had always intended to build this association with Apollo. However, the actual development of the association came about both intentionally through his political program and organically through the perception of others. And so, scholars debate about just how much Augustus intended his early association with Apollo to be political, but they all recognize the importance of these early associations in creating a complete picture of the development of the affiliation.

### *Augustus, son of Apollo*

Augustus was rumored to be the son of Apollo.<sup>11</sup> Even though the presence of this myth in the ancient world is well attested, the origin of this myth is very difficult to decipher. Suetonius<sup>12</sup> gives an account of the myth surrounding Augustus’ birth. His

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<sup>9</sup> Miller 2009a: 10

<sup>10</sup> Zanker 1988: 3

<sup>11</sup> For more accounts of the myth, see Freyburger-Galland 2009: 19-21, which includes Cassius Dio 45.1.2-3, epigrams, and archaeological evidence.

<sup>12</sup> Using Suetonius as a reliable source for Augustus presents some problems. Ancient historians often have their own agenda when creating a history that is not necessarily concerned with giving an accurate account of past events. Because of this, scholars have been cautious when using ancient historians, such as Suetonius, as proof of historical events. The separation in time also presents a problem in using Suetonius as a source for Augustus, since he wrote nearly a century after the Augustan Age. However, when compared to other archaeological, literary, and epigraphic evidence, Suetonius can be a valuable source for the Augustan period.

mother, Atia, is said to have fallen asleep in Apollo's temple after attending to his rites. As she was sleeping, a snake approached her. When she woke up, Atia purified herself as if she had just slept with her husband. After the purification, a mark of a snake appeared on her body that she could not remove. Suetonius relates the results of this incident:

*Augustus natum mense decimo et ob hoc Apollinis fillum existimatum. Eadem Atia, prius quam pareret somniavit intestina sua ferri ad sidera explicarique per omnem terrarum et caeli ambitum. Somniavit et pater Octavius utero Atiae iubar solis exortum*<sup>13</sup>

(Augustus was born ten months later and for this reason is believed to be the son of Apollo. It was Atia, too, who before she gave birth, dreamed that her insides were carried to the stars and spread over all the earth and the skies. Octavius, the father, dreamed that the sun rose from Atia's womb.)<sup>14</sup>

As in any account of a mythical birth, Suetonius suggests that the story originated from the moment of Augustus' conception. The nature of myth makes it difficult to know when and from whom the story originated. Scholars have attempted to use the sources we do have to pinpoint the origins of the myth. Although scholars disagree about the origins of the myth, most scholars agree that the story of Augustus' birth was meant to establish his divine origins. In his book *Divus Julius*, Stefan Weinstock argues that it was Julius Caesar who spread the rumor of Octavian's divine birth in order to establish Octavian as his divine and rightful successor.<sup>15</sup> The Julian gens had already been associated with Apollo, since a consul from the Julian family had dedicated a temple to Apollo in the Campus Martius in 431 B.C.E.<sup>16</sup> Although the evidence is sparse for other concrete instances of this association, the evidence we do have suggests that the association of the

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<sup>13</sup> Suetonius *Divus Augustus* 94

<sup>14</sup> Translations of Suetonius come from Catherine Edwards' 2008 Oxford edition.

<sup>15</sup> Weinstock 1971: 14-15

<sup>16</sup> Gurval 1995: 111

Julian gens with Apollo was well-established. Caesar's familial ties to Apollo seem to support Weinstock's proposed origin of the myth. And yet, other scholars deem this as much too early.

Miller argues that the myth originated during the period of the Second Triumvirate.<sup>17</sup> He notes how at this time Octavian and his opponents were eager to establish their own ancestries as well as defame the ancestries of others. Octavian would have wanted to establish divine origins in order to declare himself as rightful successor to the deified Julius Caesar. Freyburger-Galland also argues that the myth was Octavian's response to the attacks on his modest birth at this time. By establishing himself as son of Apollo, Octavian could further create a divine ancestry for himself.<sup>18</sup> Zanker states that the myth developed "as early as the 30s", a bit later than Miller and Freyburger-Galland suggest.<sup>19</sup> Gurval proposes an even later date, suggesting that the story was circulated shortly after Octavian's victory at Actium:

At this time the victor first received extravagant praise from the poets, and stories may have circulated in Rome about his extended stay in Alexandria and his celebrated visit to the tomb of the famous Macedonian conqueror. The legends surrounding the birth of Alexander and the nocturnal visit provide an impetus for the similar tale of Atia and the snake.<sup>20</sup>

After the Battle of Actium, Octavian spent some time in the East visiting Alexandria. As the story spread that Octavian was visiting the tomb of Alexander the Great, an association between the two men became prominent in the Roman mind. Gurval suggests that it is not a coincidence that the story of Octavian's birth strongly echoes the myth of

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<sup>17</sup> Miller 2009a: 18-19

<sup>18</sup> Freyburger-Galland 2009: 20

<sup>19</sup> Zanker 1988: 50

<sup>20</sup> Gurval 1995: 102

Alexander's birth. Alexander's mother had a dream on the night before her wedding that a thunderbolt entered her, igniting a fire that spread everywhere. Then, Alexander's father supposedly found his wife lying with a snake which was thought to be Ammon, the Egyptian god. Because the myth of Octavian's birth echoes this story so closely, Gurval suggests that the myth was created during Octavian's travels in Alexandria. After his victory at Actium, Octavian was Caesar's only rightful successor left. The myth would have further legitimized his position as rightful successor to Caesar.

Both connecting himself to the Julian tradition and glorifying his victory at Actium do seem to be adequate motivations for Octavian to circulate the story of his divine birth. However, Gurval also argues that the myth could have been circulated as late as the end of Augustan rule, "when deification seemed imminent and only awaited the death of the aged princeps."<sup>21</sup> Augustus could have created the myth at the end of his principate as an assurance that he would be deified like Caesar before him. Since his association with Apollo would have already been established, the myth would not have been out of place within Augustan propaganda. Since the nature of myth makes it difficult to know when the story was first circulated, these are all possible origins of the myth of Augustus' divine birth. Regardless of when the myth was created, the story of Augustus' divine birth does reflect a tradition of an association made between Apollo and Augustus.

### *Quindecimviri sacris faciundis*

Numismatic evidence from 37 B.C.E. shows Apollo featured on Octavian's coins, perhaps suggesting an early affiliation with the god. However, scholars see this imagery

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<sup>21</sup> Gurval 1995: 102

as more of his religious rather than political affiliation.<sup>22</sup> At this time Octavian was a member of the *quindecimviri sacris faciundis*. As one of the fifteen members who oversaw the Sibylline Books, Octavian would have developed a particular affinity with Apollo as a prophetic god. Octavian had already inherited the Julian gens' connection with Apollo, but his membership as a *quindecimvir* marked his first choice to interact with the god outside his family context. Because of this, Gurval argues that his membership as a *quindecimvir* created his original fondness for the deity.<sup>23</sup> Scholars generally agree that Augustus probably did not join in order to create a political connection with Apollo, but the experience could have inspired his later use of the god as propaganda. In order to appropriate Apollo's prophetic nature, Augustus eventually moves the Sibylline Books to his temple to Apollo on the Palatine, a temple whose significance will be discussed later on.

### *Banquet of the Twelve Gods*

Suetonius gives an account of Octavian dressing up as Apollo at his Banquet of the Twelve Gods. He describes the event as follows:

*Cena quoque eius secretior in fabulis fuit, quae vulgo δωδεκάθεος vocabatur; in qua deorum dearumque habitu discubuisse convivas et ipsum pro Apolline ornatum.*<sup>24</sup>

(There were also stories about a rather secret dinner he arranged, which was commonly referred to as the dinner of the Twelve Gods. For this the guests reclined in the dress of one or other of the gods and goddesses, with Augustus himself attired as Apollo.)

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<sup>22</sup> Miller 2009a: 19

<sup>23</sup> Gurval 1995: 112

<sup>24</sup> Suetonius *Divus Augustus* 70

Although the exact date of this banquet is debated, the feast is generally thought to have occurred before the Battle of Actium. It is the first evidence of Augustus actually taking on the guise of Apollo. Gurval states that the Banquet of the Twelve Gods has become “the most well-known example of Octavian’s early attempt to claim Apollo as his divine counterpart on earth.”<sup>25</sup> Because of the curious nature of this event, scholars have tried to determine its significance in the development of the connection between Apollo and Augustus. Scholars have scrutinized over the extent to which Octavian intended to connect himself politically with Apollo through this event.

Gurval argues that the private nature of the banquet (*cena...secretior*) removes any political agenda from the event, “Octavian, presumably the host of the party, was not using the festive occasion to make any public declarations, whether of political or religious import.”<sup>26</sup> He argues that if Octavian had truly wanted to manifest a connection with the god, he would have done it in a more public manner. As the host of the party, he would have been more preoccupied with the affairs of his guests than with political exclamations. However, Miller argues that excluding politics from a banquet would be “sharply at variance with the normal practice of elite Roman banqueting, which amounted to a kind of public theater.”<sup>27</sup> Common Roman banqueting practices could suggest that Octavian did have an intention of beginning his political connection with Apollo through this event. Since Roman banquets were often a demonstration of wealth and status, these dinner parties were often discussed outside of the private context.<sup>28</sup> He

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<sup>25</sup> Gurval 1995: 94

<sup>26</sup> Gurval 1995: 96

<sup>27</sup> Miller 2009a: 17

<sup>28</sup> On Miller’s references to common Roman banqueting practices, see Jones 1991:185-98 and D’Arms 1999: 301-19.

could have seen the advantage of introducing this political connection with Apollo through a private dinner party. And yet, the title of the event implies that eleven other people were dressed up as the rest of the Olympic gods so Octavian's attire would have blended in among the others. Because of this, I see the event as more of an indicator of Octavian's developing fondness for the god rather than an intentional expression of his political connection with Apollo.

Regardless of Octavian's intentions in hosting the banquet, Gurval suggests that Octavian probably would have regretted the negative stigma that emerged around the event, especially since he develops the affiliation with Apollo more explicitly later on in his political career:

He must have later regretted the incident's unexpected consequences. His private display may have provoked some initial resentment among the city's unfortunate, but the incident did not acquire political consequence until his enemies later made use of it to substantiate the allegations of a young upstart's arrogance.<sup>29</sup>

Because there was a famine during the time of the feast, the people were angered by Octavian's lavish dinner party. According to Suetonius, the people gave Octavian the title of *Apollo Tortor* ("Apollo the Tormentor") in response to Octavian's blatant disregard of the famine. Whether Octavian organized the event simply to dress up as his favorite god or to begin a political affiliation with Apollo, the banquet did not help his propaganda. Octavian probably would have also regretted this event because of how negatively his enemies portrayed him for taking on the guise of a god. Freyburger-Galland notes how the event was the perfect opportunity for Octavian's rivals to criticize him.<sup>30</sup> Some

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<sup>29</sup> Gurval 1995: 97

<sup>30</sup> Freyburger-Galland 2009: 21-22



scholars take Freyburger-Galland's point a step further by suggesting that the event didn't occur at all.

Suetonius' account of the banquet comes from critical letters circulated by Octavian's opponents. Suetonius includes a letter written by Marc Antony about the event as one of his sources:

*Impia dum Phoebi Caesar mendacia ludit,  
Dum nova divorum cenat adulteria*<sup>31</sup>

(While Caesar impiously dared to play at being Apollo  
and represented new adulteries of the gods at his banquet.)

Antony here uses the event as a criticism of Octavian's character, portraying the banquet as a series of improper indulgences. Antony does not focus specifically on Octavian's appropriation of Apollo's appearance but rather on the general enterprise of dressing up as gods and performing their vices. Since this event provided such a perfect opportunity for Antony to defame Augustus, some scholars question the occurrence of the event at all.<sup>32</sup> The banquet could have been a creation of Octavian's rivals in order to demean him for hosting such a sacrilegious event. However, Octavian's rivals probably could not have succeeded in fabricating the event entirely from nothing. It seems more likely that the event did occur but was villanized to an extreme degree by Octavian's rivals and consequently received poorly by the people. While the banquet at least indicates Octavian's early fondness for the god, the banquet did not help Augustus' later affiliation with Apollo.

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<sup>31</sup> Suetonius *Divus Augustus* 70

<sup>32</sup> Charlesworth 1933: 175, Scott 1933: 30

*Divine counterparts as political legitimizers*

The association between Apollo and Augustus most likely gained its political tone with the emergence of civil war. The Second Triumvirate was created during a very politically unstable time. The different political factions of this time had to create propaganda to justify their place in the government and to convince the people that they were the solution to Rome's problems. Gurval argues that part of this propaganda was to associate with a divine counterpart:

The beginnings of this long and famous relationship have been located in the fiercely contested struggle of politics and propaganda that characterized the turbulent ten-year period from Philippi to Actium. During this time, the chief actors in the political drama in Rome were playing various divine roles to satisfy their ambitions and justify their causes.<sup>33</sup>

With all the turmoil of civil war, the Roman people were looking for stability and peace. Therefore, the political factions would attempt to win the favor of the people by manifesting close relationships with a god who would justify their political agendas. Numismatic evidence shows that the Liberator side, the party of Brutus and Cassius, was strongly associated with Apollo during this time.<sup>34</sup> Even though this seems to counteract Octavian's affiliation with Apollo, Zanker suggests that Apollo was a mutual political tool exploited by both sides.<sup>35</sup> At the Battle of Philippi, both sides would have seen the advantage of invoking Apollo as a prophetic god. The victor would then obtain the additional victory of being favored by Apollo in battle. Freyburger-Galland argues that Octavian intentionally picked up the same association with Apollo as a way of

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<sup>33</sup> Gurval 1995: 91

<sup>34</sup> Gurval 1995: 99, Miller 2009a: 25-26

<sup>35</sup> Zanker 1988: 49

repatriating the god when Brutus and Cassius were eventually defeated.<sup>36</sup> Winning Apollo from Caesar's assassins became yet another act of vengeance for Octavian.

After the Battle of Philippi, Marc Antony and Octavian took up their own divine associations to justify their place as Caesar's successors. Antony used the fertility associated with Dionysus while Octavian used the healing aspect of Apollo to inspire the people to believe in their ability to restore the state.<sup>37</sup> As Antony's association with Cleopatra and the East grew, the Romans became less confident in Antony's abilities to restore the Roman state. Antony's adoption of Eastern ways began to change his association with Dionysus in the Roman mind. Dionysus was no longer seen as the god who would help Antony restore peace and fertility, but rather became associated with Antony's reputation for partying and indulging in pleasure. As the enmity developed between the two triumvirs, Octavian saw the opportunity to use this change in the association with Dionysus to his advantage. Octavian began to promote Apollo's medicinal abilities not only as a cure for the Roman state but also a remedy for Dionysus' and consequently Antony's indulgence in excess.<sup>38</sup> Miller summarizes how the divine counterparts of Antony and Octavian were eventually both advantageous for Octavian:

The Octavianic patron Apollo as god of ordered calm and civilized restraint in opposition to Bacchus the deity of drunkenness and oriental excess would be all of a piece with Octavian's self-representation as the champion of Italy and the West pitted against Antony and Cleopatra's degenerate East.<sup>39</sup>

The divine counterparts of Antony and Octavian were originally meant to promote a unified goal to restore the Roman state, but the growing tensions between the two

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<sup>36</sup> Freyburger-Galland 2009: 21

<sup>37</sup> Zanker 1988: 44

<sup>38</sup> Zanker 1988: 52-53

<sup>39</sup> Miller 2009a: 27

triumvirs changed the original purpose of the divine counterparts. The growing unpopularity of Antony's association with the East created the perfect opportunity for Octavian to further glorify his divine counterpart through the debasement of Antony's chosen deity.

As Antony's association with Dionysus faltered, Octavian created an even stronger connection with Apollo. The conflict with Antony gave Octavian a reason to manifest this connection with Apollo more seriously. During this time of tension, Octavian began placing laurel wreaths in his hair during public occasions to reinforce his growing association with Apollo.<sup>40</sup> This physical reference to Apollo served to emphasize Octavian's victories in the presence of Roman people. Unlike the private Banquet of the Twelve Gods, this public appropriation of the guise of Apollo seemed to serve a more intentional political purpose. This was just the beginning of Octavian's appropriation of Apollo for his political propaganda.

The Battle of Actium signified the beginning of Octavian's sole power over Rome which necessitated an individualized political program. Part of this political program was to manifest his connection with Apollo even further than it had been during the Second Triumvirate. After his victory at Actium, Octavian restored a temple to Apollo in Egypt and established quinquennial games in tribute to Apollo for his help during the Battle of Actium.<sup>41</sup> Although the Battle of Actium has been thought of as an epic termination of the conflict between Antony and Octavian, scholars have questioned the actual grandeur of the battle. Because the battle was so crucial for establishing Octavian as sole successor

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<sup>40</sup> Zanker 1988: 49-50

<sup>41</sup> Suetonius *Divus Augustus* 18

of Caesar, scholars have wondered whether the battle was exaggerated as a political strategy. Sir Ronald Syme argues that the battle itself was not quite as grand as portrayed, but that Octavian carefully created a propaganda surrounding the battle to promote the legitimacy of his Principate.<sup>42</sup> Gurval argues that the glorious victory at Actium was an exaggerated by the poets<sup>43</sup> rather than Octavian himself as a symbol of Augustan success.<sup>44</sup> Miller falls somewhere in between the two interpretations. Even though Octavian did honor Apollo by restoring his temple in Egypt after his victory, Miller argues that this does not necessarily suggest an intentional glorification of the battle.<sup>45</sup> He sees this restoration as a foreshadowing of the temple to Apollo that Octavian would erect in Rome which more obviously celebrated the victory at Actium. Eventually the Augustan poets respond to this celebration of the Battle of Actium by glorifying it in their poetry as well. Whether the battle was as grand as it is portrayed or not, the Battle of Actium served as the perfect propaganda with which Augustus could establish his place in Rome.

### *Palatine Apollo*

The Battle of Actium marked the end of civil war and the emergence of Augustus' program for peace. Augustus had to be careful to establish his position as victor but not remind the people too much of civil war. Gurval comments on how difficult it would have been for Augustus to present the Battle of Actium in a favorable light to the public as his political program for peace was commencing, "Exaltation of Actium would stir

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<sup>42</sup> Syme 1939: 297

<sup>43</sup> For poetic references to Apollo's aid at the Battle of Actium, see Propertius 4.6, Virgil *Aeneid* 8.671-713, Greek epigrams (quoted in Miller 2009a: 57-66), Ovid *Metamorphoses* 13. 713-715.

<sup>44</sup> Gurval 1995: 36 & 85

<sup>45</sup> Miller 2009a: 56-57

only resentment and bitter memories of civil conflict, however successful the nationalistic fervor and slander might have been in rousing widespread support and gaining victory”<sup>46</sup> With the stigma of civil conflict surrounding the Battle of Actium, Octavian had to make some sort of gesture to assert his position in Rome, alluding to but not flaunting his victory. Since Octavian attributed his victory at Actium to Apollo, a temple to Apollo served as the perfect political tool to reinforce his connection to the god while gently reminding the public of his victory without flaunting it. This temple served as the physical manifestation of Augustus’ connection with Apollo which allowed Augustus to transform Apollo into a god that could serve his political agenda. Octavian vowed to build this temple to Apollo around 36 B.C.E. during his Battle against Sextus Pompey at Naulochoi, but he did not officially erect the temple until six years later.<sup>47</sup> On the ninth day of October in 28 B.C.E., Octavian erected the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine, attached to his already existing residence. Even though the temple was vowed long before the Battle of Actium, the temple was closely associated with the victory.<sup>48</sup>

Art and architecture were a crucial part of Augustan propaganda because it was the best way for Augustus to translate his political messages to the mostly illiterate population of Rome.<sup>49</sup> For the Roman people, this temple on the Palatine was the most physically obvious representation of Augustus’ connection with Apollo. All the Augustan poets mention the location in their poetry as it provided the perfect setting for discussing

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<sup>46</sup> Gurval 1995: 135

<sup>47</sup> Velleius Paterculus 2.81.3, Cassius Dio 49.15.5

<sup>48</sup> Gurval 1995: 87

<sup>49</sup> In the article “Augustus’ Divine Authority and Vergil’s *Aeneid*,” Sabine Grebe discusses the importance of architecture and art in Augustan imagery, including Augustus Prima Porta, the Gemma Augustea, the Ara Pacis, and the temples to Mars Ultor, Apollo on the Palatine, and Divus Julius (Grebe 2004: 60).

the new regime through Apollo.<sup>50</sup> Since the temple was destroyed in a fire in 363 C.E.,<sup>51</sup> we have incomplete evidence of the temple's original appearance. From literary references and archaeological finds,<sup>52</sup> we can reconstruct a fragmentary account of what the temple would have looked like. We know that the temple was made with materials from all over the empire, signifying conquest and victory.<sup>53</sup> The complex as a whole contained multiple libraries, Augustus' residence, and the temple itself. Even with the fragmentary knowledge we have about the temple, we can make conjectures about what possible political messages Augustus intended by building this temple.

The layout of the temple complex immediately connected Augustus with Apollo. The temple was connected to Augustus' already existing house on the Palatine. Gurval suggests that the proximity to the temple could have been seen as a mere demonstration of devotion to the god.<sup>54</sup> However, the ramp connecting the two complexes seems to suggest more than just personal devotion. Throughout his Principate, Augustus sought to humble his position as sole ruler while still establishing his power. The layout of the temple reflects this juxtaposition Augustus struggled with. By connecting his residence to Apollo's temple, Augustus could indirectly promote his own image by glorifying Apollo. Zanker comments on how Augustus blurs the line between himself and the god through the layout of the temple: "The bond between the god and his protégé could not have been more explicitly conveyed. The house itself was relatively modest, but the temple area,

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<sup>50</sup> Propertius 2.31, Virgil *Aeneid* 8.714-22, Ovid *Tristia* 4.2.1-6, Horace *Odes* 1.31, Tibullus 2.5

<sup>51</sup> Ammian 23.3.3

<sup>52</sup> For a complete account of the archaeological finds on the temple, see archaeologist Gianfilippo Carettoni's many summaries of his 1960's excavations of the site.

<sup>53</sup> Welch 2005: 85

<sup>54</sup> Gurval 1995: 115

because of its close proximity, became like a part of the whole complex.”<sup>55</sup> By living in a modest house, Augustus could maintain his humble image. However, by connecting this modest residence to the elaborate temple to Apollo, he could create a close association with the god so that any exaltation of Apollo would indirectly ennoble himself as well.

Augustus also sought to resolve this juxtaposition by melting down silver statues of himself to pay for golden tripods for Palatine Apollo. Augustus mentions this act in his *Res Gestae*:

Statuae meae pedestres et equestres et in quadrigis argenteae steterunt in urbe XXC circiter, quas ipse sustuli, exque ea pecunia dona aurea in aede Apollinis meo nomine et illorum qui mihi statuarum honorem habuerunt posui.<sup>56</sup>

(The statues of myself in the city, whether standing or on horseback or in the quadriga, numbering eighty in all and all of silver, I had removed, and from this money I dedicated golden offerings in the Temple of Apollo, in my own name and in the names of those who had honored me with these statues.)

Since he was establishing himself as emperor slowly, Augustus sought to represent himself as humble healer of the Roman state. By melting down these statues of himself, Augustus hoped to show humility as well as religious devotion to Apollo. Even though he dedicated the offerings in his own name, he also includes the names of those who created the statues so he seems all the more humble and gracious. Miller suggests that by melting down these statues to fund the offerings for this temple, Augustus made the temple a center for his own *pietas*.<sup>57</sup> He not only displays himself as pious and humble but can control his own political image by destroying others' representation of him. Through this

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<sup>55</sup> Zanker 1988: 51

<sup>56</sup> Augustus *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* 24

<sup>57</sup> Miller 2009a: 193



act, Augustus seems humble but actually exalts himself through the donation of the golden tripods to his divine counterpart, Apollo.

In *The Elegiac Cityscape*, Tara Welch carefully considers the meaning of Roman monuments during the Augustan Age, specifically in the context of Propertius' works. In her chapter on the Palatine Apollo, she points out how the ramp connecting the temple to Augustus' residence reflected the layout of palace complexes in Alexandria and Pergamum from the Hellenistic monarchy. Welch remarks how the purpose of these palace complexes reflected Augustus' intentions for his temple complex, "Such Hellenistic structures served to aggrandize the builder by setting him in the context of his chosen divine patron."<sup>58</sup> By using a similar layout, Augustus automatically associated himself with the Hellenistic monarchs who used their structures to create a tight association with their divine patrons. By modeling his complex after theirs, Augustus nominated Apollo as his own divine patron and indirectly established himself as divine ruler. Miller not only recognizes the complex's connection with the architecture of Hellenistic palaces, but also notices its connection with contemporary elite housing.<sup>59</sup> In the late Republic, the elite were particularly preoccupied with how the layout of their homes reflected their status, experimenting with different architectural models to ennoble themselves among their peers. The elaborate layout of Augustus' temple complex reflected this trend of elite domestic housing. During a time when the elite were conscious of how their homes reflected their place in society, the extravagance of the complex as a whole would have been proof of Augustus' superior status. All in all, the

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<sup>58</sup>Welch 2005: 83

<sup>59</sup> Miller 2009a: 186

ramp between Augustus' home and his temple to Apollo acted as a physical manifestation of his connection with the god, while reconciling the juxtaposition between Augustus' feigned humility and establishment of power.

The iconography on the temple created a multi-faceted image of Apollo that Augustus could identify with.<sup>60</sup> Welch cautions against deciding on a single interpretation of the iconography, because "while the monument may have "meant" many things to its builder, it must have also been "read" in many ways by its visitors."<sup>61</sup> The iconography was not only intended to convey a message by Augustus but was also read by the Roman audience in a variety of ways. Therefore, when considering the fragmentary evidence we do have, scholars must be careful to consider the difference between Augustus' intentions and the possible interpretations of the visitors.

The entrance of the temple was flanked by impressive ivory doors with mythological scenes of Apollo's successes, including the Niobids story and Apollo defending Delphi from the Gauls. The entrance has been interpreted as exalting Apollo's successes with a theme of rightful vengeance. Reliefs have also been found that present a variety of mythological scenes, including Perseus and Athena with the Gorgon's head, a maiden with a *betyl*,<sup>62</sup> and the struggle between Hercules and Apollo over the golden tripod. The reliefs have been interpreted in a variety of ways, but scholars put the most significant on the struggle between Hercules and Apollo since it is interpreted as the struggle between Antony and Augustus.<sup>63</sup> Although this seems like it would have made

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<sup>60</sup> For an account of the iconography on the Palatine Apollo see Welch 2005: 85-89, Kellum 1993: 75-84 and Miller 2009a: 186-189.

<sup>61</sup> Welch 2005: 86-87

<sup>62</sup> A *betyl* is an object usually associated with the sun god.

<sup>63</sup> Welch 2005: 87, Miller 2009a: 193

Antony look too noble, Augustus' elevation of Antony to Herculean status could be interpreted as a way of glorifying himself even more. Hercules as a demi-god would be a fierce competitor, but would still be second to Apollo as a god. And so, even though comparing Antony to Hercules seems to be favorable to Antony, this association could be seen as Augustus' way of glorifying his defeat of such a fierce opponent. The portico portrayed the mythological scene of the Danaids, African maidens who killed their fiancés on their wedding nights at the urging of their father. The interpretations of why the Danaids story is present in a Temple to Apollo vary but they are generally thought to represent some form of Cleopatra's involvement in the Battle of Actium.<sup>64</sup> Within this same portico, there were two statues of Apollo, one as patron of the arts and the other as victor at Actium.<sup>65</sup> The iconography within the temple reflects a variety of seemingly unrelated stories. However, the temple generally seems to aggrandize Apollo either through a myth about Apollo or a myth related to the Battle of Actium.

Interpreting the iconography of the temple as conveying one unified message can be misleading. Welch cautions against the temple being interpreted as simply a product of the Battle of Actium, "Rather than interpreting the monument primarily as an Actian celebration, it is more prudent instead to see thematic complexity in this monument."<sup>66</sup> The grand variety of mythological stories on the temple shows how Augustus probably meant the different aspects of the temple to convey a variety of messages. Due to our fragmentary evidence and the mystery of the iconography, Augustus' intentions are

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<sup>64</sup> For a compilation of scholarly interpretations of the meaning of the Danaids, see Gurval 1995: 124-125 and Welch 2005: 86.

<sup>65</sup> Zanker 1988: 85

<sup>66</sup> Welch 2005: 89

unclear at best. Gurval even suggests that the presence of these mythological stories has no political intentions:

The murderous Danaids, the vengeful slaying of Niobe's children, and the divine struggle over the Delphic tripod require neither artful sophistication nor Augustan allusions to explain their inclusion in the artwork of a temple of Apollo. The sanctuary honored the god and the myths associated with the god.<sup>67</sup>

Due to Augustus' prominent use of Apollo in his political propaganda, it seems unlikely that the iconography was not a product of Augustus' political agenda. However, even if Gurval is correct in suggesting that the iconography was simply meant to ennoble the god, then it still had a place in Augustan propaganda. Because of the close association created by the ramp connecting Augustus' house with the temple, the iconography ennobling Apollo would consequently aggrandize Augustus. Despite the complexity of the temple's iconography, Augustus' temple to Apollo on the Palatine served as a constant physical representation of the connection between Augustus and Apollo.

### *Augustan Apollo*

Although Octavian's early associations with Apollo are important for understanding the development of their political affiliation, it was the growing tensions between Antony and Octavian that caused Octavian to take his association with Apollo more seriously as a form of political propaganda. Although the iconography throughout the Palatine Temple to Apollo can be interpreted in a variety of ways, the temple acted as a physical manifestation of Augustus' connection with the god. An exact outline of Augustus' political use of Apollo is difficult to determine, but the evidence we do have establishes that Augustus took a previously insignificant god in the Roman pantheon and

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<sup>67</sup> Gurval 1995: 126

transformed him into a god that would convey his message of peace and restoration. Augustus created a political affiliation with not only the traditional Greek Apollo but also Augustan Apollo, a god whose attributes Augustus combined to represent healing, restoration, victory, and the arts all at once.

Before the Augustan Age, Apollo was a fairly insignificant god to the Romans. Because Apollo lacked a Roman tradition, Augustus could transform him into a multi-faceted god that could serve his political agenda. Gurval describes the original Apollo before his Augustan transformation:

Before the end of the first century B.C.E., Apollo had been a god of inconsiderable attention and minor significance in Rome. More than any other member of the Roman pantheon, Apollo maintained his distinctively Hellenic character and proclaimed his origin and legacy through the retention of his Greek name.<sup>68</sup>

As one of the only gods in the Roman pantheon who retained his Greek name, Apollo preserved his Greek tradition as prophetic god of healing. Augustus had already developed a connection with Apollo as prophetic god in his position as a *quindecimvir sacris faciundis*. Augustus also appropriated Apollo's prophetic nature into his propaganda by moving the Sibylline texts to the Palatine Apollo. While Apollo was important to the Romans because of his oracular abilities, the Romans mainly appreciated him for his medicinal aid.<sup>69</sup> In 433 B.C.E, the Romans erected a shrine to Apollo Medicus in response to a disease that had infected the people. The shrine provided a space in which Apollo could continually be appreciated by the Romans for his medicinal

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<sup>68</sup> Gurval 1995: 22

<sup>69</sup> Miller 2009a: 28

aid. The Romans mainly appreciated Apollo for this Greek tradition of healing until the Augustan Age.

These Greek aspects of Apollo received an Augustan stamp as well. Augustus constantly had to reaffirm his position in Rome as rightful successor to Caesar and the healer of the Roman Republic. The Greek tradition of Apollo as the god of healing fit perfectly with Augustus' political program that claimed to be restoring the Republic.<sup>70</sup>

Gurval suggests that this tradition of healing was reflected on Apollo's Palatine temple:

His role as a god of healing and protector of health was well known and publicly recognized in Rome (...) The Apollo of the Palatine sanctuary may have assumed similar duties, now on behalf of the man who rescued his people from the perils and devastation of civil war.<sup>71</sup>

After the destruction caused by years of civil war, Augustus' political program focused on the restoration of Rome. The Battle of Actium as victory over the East marked the end of civil strife in the Roman mind. By dedicating a temple to Apollo closely associated with this battle, Augustus expanded Apollo's Greek tradition of healing to include his propaganda of restoring Rome from years of civil strife.

While Augustus did draw from Apollo's Greek tradition, he also drew from other attributes of Apollo as well. Augustus exploited and emphasized different aspects of Apollo depending on his political agenda. After his victory at Actium, Augustus developed a much more multi-faceted representation of Apollo. Zanker expresses the many different aspects attributed to Apollo during the Augustan Age, "after the victory was won, then Apollo took on the role as singer, lyre player, and god of peace and reconciliation. And as the prophetic god, with sibyl and sphinx, it was he who proclaimed

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<sup>70</sup> Zanker 1988: 50

<sup>71</sup> Gurval 1995: 123

the long awaited new age.”<sup>72</sup> As Augustus’ political position in Rome gained complexity, Augustus used the many different facets he attributed to Apollo to continue to justify his position. For example, Apollo’s archery skills and aid at Actium could establish Augustus as military victor. At the same time, Apollo’s role as patron of the arts could justify Augustus’ patronage of the artists in Rome. All the while, Apollo’s peaceful nature would reaffirm Augustus’ victory in Actium as a transition into a period of peace in Rome. Augustus exploited these different faces of Apollo to establish his own emerging roles within the empire—providing a breadth of Apolline references for the Augustan poets to use when referring to the new regime. Writing in such a politically charged time, Augustan poets would have seen the potential in using Apollo as a tool with which they could indirectly reflect their feelings about the regime. Ovid not only draws from these political implications of Apollo, but Apollo’s literary tradition as well.

### *Apollo in his different guises*

Before I begin my analysis of the *Ars* and the story of Apollo and Daphne, I will first give a brief description of the different Apolline titles I will be referring to throughout. When Ovid plays with the affinity between Apollo and Augustus, he uses a variety of different literary, historical, and political guises of Apollo to convey certain messages. “Actian Apollo” is the valiant god with powerful archery skills who Augustus claims helped him defeat Marc Antony at the Battle of Actium. He is also strongly associated with the iconography on the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine. “Pythian Apollo” is the oracular god associated with the Temple at Delphi as well as the originator of the Pythian games. He is associated with laurel wreaths, since the victors of the games

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<sup>72</sup> Zanker 1988: 53

were crowned with these. “Lycian Apollo” refers to the Apollo characteristically adorned with a golden lyre and associated with the cult at Lycia. As early as Homer, poets referred to a cult to Apollo at Lycia, including Callimachus’ reference to the god at Lycia at the introduction of his *Aetia*. “Callimachean Apollo” refers to the Callimachean literary tradition behind Apollo. For the Augustan poets, Callimachean Apollo usually refers to Callimachus’ Apolline motifs in the *Hymn to Apollo* or *Aetia*. “Augustan Apollo” is the Apollo deeply politically connected with Augustus whose traditional attributes have been enhanced to serve Augustan propaganda. With the political affiliation between Augustus and Apollo established and these different guises of Apollo described, I begin my analysis of Ovid’s use of Apollo in the *Ars Amatoria* and the story of Apollo and Daphne.



## Chapter 2: The Epiphany of Apollo in the *Ars Amatoria*

Augustan poets writing elegy, lyric, and pastoral poetry saw the benefit in drawing out the musical and poetic qualities of Apollo found within the Callimachean tradition. In the Callimachean tradition, Apollo famously prohibits poets from attempting lofty verse. Augustan poets often feigned attempts at epic, only to be redirected by Apollo to a different form of poetry instead. Apollo as both patron of the arts and military victor created a juxtaposition that Augustan poets often liked to use to their advantage. Ovid's contemporaries saw no problem with praising Apollo's military feats in one moment and then calling to him for elegiac advice in the next. In fact, many Augustan poets portrayed Apollo as encouraging them to write on matters of love.

In Propertius 3.3, the poet has a dream in which he was preparing to write a history of kings and their grand deeds. However, Apollo appears to him in order to instruct him to abandon his attempts at epic and to remain in the realm of elegy. In Propertius 4.1.71-74, Horos interrupts Propertius' historical account of Rome to tell him that Apollo does not approve of his attempts at epic and that he should remain within his realm of elegy. In Horace's Ode 4.15, Apollo tells Horace to abandon his attempts at epic and to continue writing lyric. Even though this Ode is a tribute to Augustus, Apollo demands that it be written in lyric verse. In his Eclogue 6.3-5, Apollo warns Virgil to not get caught up in epic themes, but rather to focus on more slender verse. From these examples, Apollo seems to be an advocate for elegy, lyric, and pastoral poetry among the Augustan poets, all except for Ovid.

Ovid creates his own literary trope with Apollo by continually dismissing him in matters of love. He diverts from the normal tradition among Augustan poets by not

presenting Apollo as an advocate for elegy, lyric, and pastoral poetry. In the *Ars Amatoria*, Ovid immediately denies poetic inspiration from Apollo regarding matters of seduction. In Ovid's *Amores*, Cupid instead of Apollo changes Ovid's epic poem into elegy. Ovid subverts the tradition by still participating in this idea of a god stopping attempts at epic but choosing Cupid to be that god instead. In the *Metamorphoses*, his poem that most closely resembles epic, Ovid first shows Apollo as an arrogant bowman only to change him into a foolish lover. Ovid again subverts the tradition by being the one to change epic Apollo into an elegiac lover instead of having Apollo change his work from epic to elegy. Ovid completely subverts the Callimachean tradition followed by the Augustan poets by dismissing Apollo in matters of love. I argue that Ovid's creation of a new literary trope reflects his political commentary on Augustan marriage legislation. Perhaps, Ovid's exclusion of Apollo in matters of love reflects his criticism of Augustan involvement in the social affairs of Rome. With a close consideration of these places in which Ovid subverts this literary tradition, Ovid's sentiments about Augustan marriage legislation begin to emerge.

### *The Ars Amatoria*

Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* was a controversial work during a time in which Augustan marriage legislation was promoting a higher standard of sexual morality. As a manual of seduction under an emperor seeking to return to traditional values, the *Ars Amatoria* is inevitably political, even if it was not intended to be. Because of the controversial nature of this work, scholars have greatly associated the *Ars Amatoria* with the "carmen" of Ovid's *Tristia*, which Ovid ambiguously says is the cause of his exile along with an

undefined “error”.<sup>73</sup> On the one hand, considering the *Ars Amatoria* simply as a playful parody does not give due credit to Ovid who has proven to be a master of language even in his most playful moments. On the other hand, labeling the *Ars Amatoria* as an “Anti-Augustan” text is oversimplifying the text as a whole. Instead, it is best to look at particular instances in which Ovid is playing with Augustan propaganda to cleverly comment on the politics of his time. I will examine one particularly intriguing instance in the *Ars Amatoria*, the epiphany of Apollo. I will focus on how Ovid draws from the Callimachean tradition along with the Propertian *recusatio* in this instance to subtly convey his political commentary regarding Augustan marriage legislation.

### *Callimachean tradition*

When Augustan poets included Apollo in their works, they had to consider both the literary tradition and the political realities surrounding Apollo. A literary tradition that the Augustan poets were particularly fond of interacting with was the Callimachean tradition. In her article “Political Apollo: From Callimachus to the Augustans”, Anne Gosling discusses how Callimachus and the Augustan poets used Apollo politically in their works. Even though the Augustan poets drew from the Callimachean use of Apollo, Gosling argues that their intentions were ultimately different:

Callimachus’ use of Apollo to give authority to his own poetic statements was restricted to the field of literary theory, but was developed in Augustan literature to include the poets’ interpretation of their times and pronouncements on matters of public and political significance.<sup>74</sup>

Callimachus sought to establish a personal literary relationship with Apollo as patron of the arts by paying particular attention to him in his works. Although Callimachus had an

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<sup>73</sup> Ovid *Tristia* II.207

<sup>74</sup> Gosling 1992: 512

elite patron like the Augustan poets, his use of Apollo reflected a desire to connect artistically with the deity rather than politically. The Augustan poets drew from Callimachus' use of Apollo with a different intention in mind. While Callimachus intended his connection with Apollo to be purely literary, the Augustan poets often referred to his uses of Apollo as a filter through which they could subtly comment on their contemporary politics.

The ways in which the Augustan poets interact with the Callimachean tradition are endless. Gosling duly notes that “the many passages in Callimachus relating to aspects of Apollo's nature or appearance, or recounting an aetiology connected with him, form a rich body of poetic tradition which is fully represented in Callimachus' Augustan successors.”<sup>75</sup> Callimachus' use of Apollo provided many attributes and circumstances that the poets could draw from when mentioning Apollo in their works. Callimachus provided a grand literary history of Apollo for the Augustan poets that they could draw from and veil their commentary on contemporary politics.

For the purpose of this chapter, I will focus on two aspects of the Callimachean tradition that are relevant to Apollo's epiphany in the *Ars Amatoria*: Apollo's epiphany to great poets in the *Hymn to Apollo* and Lycian Apollo's didactic nature in the *Aetia*. In the *Hymn to Apollo*, Callimachus created a tradition of an Apolline epiphany to great poets.<sup>76</sup> Callimachus made Apollo a symbol of poetic greatness, by establishing that Apollo only made himself known to great poets.<sup>77</sup> The significance of Apollo's epiphany is twofold

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<sup>75</sup> Gosling 1992: 505

<sup>76</sup> For other instances in which Augustan poets use this Callimachean tradition, see Horace *Odes* 3.4, Propertius 3.1, Ovid *Ars Amatoria* 2

<sup>77</sup> Callimachus *Hymn to Apollo* 2.9-10

for the Augustan poets. In a literary context, Apollo's presence in their poetry validated them by putting them among the ranks of great poets. This validation can also be read in a political context since only great poets were recognized by the Augustan administration. In fragment 1 of the *Aetia*, Lycian Apollo appears to Callimachus instructing him to abandon elevated verse for short, concise poetry. With the iconography surrounding Lycian Apollo, the Augustan poets draw on this didactic aspect of Apollo simply by describing him in a Lycian manner.<sup>78</sup> Augustan poets also invoke Lycian Apollo as an excuse to abandon lofty verse. In the *Ars Amatoria*, Ovid plays with these two aspects of the tradition in an unusual manner.

*The Epiphany of Apollo in the Ars Amatoria*

In the *Ars Amatoria*, Ovid immediately swears off divine inspiration, especially from the Muses and Apollo. Since the *Ars Amatoria* is a manual on seduction, Ovid claims that his own personal experience will be a better source of poetic inspiration than the traditionally invoked deities:

*Non ego, Phoebe, datas a te mihi mentiar artes,  
Nec nos aerae voce monemur avis,  
nec mihi sunt visae Clio Clisque sorores  
servanti pecudes vallibus, Ascra, tuis:  
usus opus movet hoc: vati parete perito;  
vera canam: coeptis, mater Amoris, ades!*<sup>79</sup>

(Nor shall I falsely ascribe my arts to Apollo: No airy bird comes twittering advice into my ear, I never had a vision of the Muses herding sheep in Ascra's valleys. This work is based on experience: what I write, believe me, I have practiced. My poem will deal in truth. Aid my enterprise, Venus!)<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> For other instances in which Augustan poets use this Callimachean tradition, see Propertius 3.3 and 4.1, Horace *Odes* 4.15, Ovid *Ars Amatoria* 2

<sup>79</sup> Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* I.25-30

<sup>80</sup> Translations of the *Ars Amatoria* are from Peter Green's Penguin Edition.

Ovid claims to not need poetic inspiration from the Muses and Apollo because his experiences will be much more fruitful in speaking on matters of seduction. This kind of *recusatio* was not a new literary device, since Propertius had already famously denied poetic inspiration from Apollo and the Muses in his book of elegies.<sup>81</sup> Both Propertius and Ovid suggest that the traditional gods invoked for poetry are not appropriate for the works they are composing. Miller argues that Propertius' denial of Apollo has little political significance and is simply a denial of Apollo as a poetic patron.<sup>82</sup> He suggests that in this instance Propertius denies Apollo and the Muses simply so that he can be inspired by his love, Cynthia. I see Propertius' denial of Apollo as potentially a political *recusatio* in the sense that he wants to avoid mentioning Apollo due to the political stigma surrounding the god. Either way, Propertius' denial of the god seems secondary to his goal for his elegies. On the other hand, Ovid's denial of Apollo seems to have a much more political connotation due to the controversial content of the *Ars*. Perhaps, this instance alone is not sufficient for applying a political context to Ovid's use of Apollo, but the fact that Ovid brings Apollo back later strikes me as potentially curious. Ovid complicates his *recusatio* even further by bringing Apollo back in Book II of the *Ars*.

After Ovid gives an extensive account of the places in Rome to find women and the manners in which to seduce them, Apollo appears to him in a Callimachean way:

*Haec ego cum canerem, subito manifestus Apollo  
Movit inauratae pollice fila lyrae.  
In manibus laurus, sacris inducta capillis  
laurus erat; vates ille videndus adit.*

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<sup>81</sup> Propertius 2.1.3-4

<sup>82</sup> Miller 2009a: 313

*Is mihi 'Lascivi' dixit 'praeceptor Amoris,  
 Duc, age, discipulos ad mea templa tuos,  
 est ubi diversum fama celebrata per orbem  
 Littera, cognosci quae sibi quemque iubet.  
 Qui sibi notus erit, solus sapienter amabit,  
 Atque opus ad vires exiget omne suas.*<sup>83</sup>

(As I was reciting these lines, Apollo abruptly materialized beside me, thrumming chord on his gilded lyre, bay in hand, bay wreathed about his sacred hair (to poets he will sometimes appear in visible form). "Preceptor," he told me, "of wanton love, come, lead your disciples to my shrine, show them the world-famous sign, that brief commandment: *Know yourself*. Only with true self-knowledge will a man love wisely, pursue the matter by exploiting the gifts he's got.)

Ovid immediately draws from the Callimachean tradition in a variety of ways.<sup>84</sup> The epiphany of Apollo itself refers to Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo*. Since Callimachus had established that Apollo only appears to great poets, Ovid places himself among these poets. However, the epiphany is oddly placed since Apollo usually provides inspiration to the best of poets at the beginning of their work. Both his original denial of Apollo and this delayed epiphany put an Ovidian stamp on this Callimachean tradition. Ovid also plays on the didactic nature of Apollo found in the *Aetia*. As a handbook on seduction, the *Ars Amatoria* is already didactic in nature, making Lycian Apollo the appropriate god to invoke. Ovid refers to Lycian Apollo by describing his gilded lyre and hair bound with a laurel wreath, *inauratae...lyrae; in manibus laurus, sacris induta capillis // laurus erat* ("his gilded lyre" II.494; "laurel in hand, laurel wreathed about his sacred hair" II.495-6). In the Callimachean tradition, Lycian Apollo would usually continue by offering advice regarding lofty verse. However, in Ovid's account, Lycian Apollo quickly becomes

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<sup>83</sup> Ovid *Ars Amatoria* II. 493-502

<sup>84</sup> For a more detailed account of how Ovid draws on different aspects of Apollo in this passage, see Miller 2009a: 325.

Pythian Apollo by taking Ovid's students of seduction to his temple in Delphi which was famously inscribed with the phrase "Know yourself". This incident with Apollo draws from multiple Callimachean traditions but does not seem to settle on one Callimachean message. Scholars have tried to decode what Ovid's intent in this passage was.

### *Unwelcome Apollo*

Many scholars have debated the seriousness of the *Ars Amatoria* and its political intention. The work as a whole has so many mocking overtones and playful references that Ovid makes it difficult for the reader to draw one cohesive message out of the whole work. And yet, scholars have considered the epiphany of Apollo as an incident worth closely examining due to its unusual nature. Augustan poets are accustomed to either invoking Apollo or leaving him out of their work. In the *Ars Amatoria*, Ovid manages to do both. His immediate dismissal of Apollo and the Muses seems to be in keeping with the elegiac tradition of *recusatio*. And yet, Apollo's epiphany later seems to be drawing on multiple Callimachean traditions instead. I will be discussing several ways in which scholars have read this apparent paradox while then adding my own interpretation based on theirs.

In his article "Apollo, Ovid, and the Foreknowledge of Criticism (Ars 2.493-592)", Sergio Casali sees the epiphany of Apollo as Ovid playing with the Callimachean tradition with little mention to the possible political significance of the scene.<sup>85</sup> Casali argues that Ovid includes Apollo's epiphany later in his work in order to counteract the criticism he will receive for his original dismissal of Apollo and the Muses. Casali's interpretation of Apollo's epiphany is perfectly summed up here, "If Ovid had "known

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<sup>85</sup> Casali 1997: 19-27



himself," he would have remembered his anti-Callimachean prologue of *Ars* 1.25-30, and he would not have caused the Apollo of the *Aetia* to intervene. The Callimachean Apollo appears to reprimand the poet for the fact that he had made him appear."<sup>86</sup> Casali here comments on the complicated nature of the scene. He argues that Ovid makes Apollo appear so that he is not criticized for his earlier denial of Apollo. However, when Apollo does appear, he reprimands Ovid for not standing firm with his original anti-Callimachean denial of him. Casali reads Apollo's advice to "know yourself" as Apollo reprimanding Ovid for invoking him after having professed to be poetically self-sufficient. By calling on Apollo after claiming that he does not need him, Ovid has forgotten who he has professed to be. Casali reads the epiphany of Apollo mainly in relation to the Callimachean tradition and how Ovid manipulates the tradition in his characteristically playful manner. While this reading is in keeping with Ovid's cleverness and quite possibly part of Ovid's intent, there seems to be even more significance in the incident outside the Callimachean tradition. It is hard to believe that Ovid would choose to bring up the patron god of Augustus in such a random manner simply to play with the Callimachean tradition.

In her article "Retiring Apollo", Rebecca Armstrong argues that the epiphany of Apollo helps Ovid's claim to poetic self-sufficiency.<sup>87</sup> At the beginning of the *Ars*, Ovid claims that he does not need poetic inspiration outside of his own experiences. While Apollo's epiphany seems to counteract this claim, Armstrong argues that Apollo's advice shows that he has nothing to offer in comparison to Ovid's vast amount of experience.

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<sup>86</sup> Casali 1997: 26

<sup>87</sup> Armstrong 2004: 528-50

Apollo's advice to "know yourself" is extremely vague. Armstrong suggests that this ambiguity is due to the fact that Apollo can in no way add to the vast amount of knowledge Ovid has already provided on love and seduction, since Ovid had already exhausted the places for and methods of seduction.<sup>88</sup> Armstrong suggests that Ovid's denial of Apolline inspiration has political connotations, "Ovid does not always deny that he is inspired; it is just that he is not inspired by Apollo. And here comes the political sting in the tail: when Ovid rejects Apollo, he is rejecting not only the god of poetry, but also a god closely connected to Augustus."<sup>89</sup> Armstrong takes Ovid's interactions with Apollo a step further than Casali by acknowledging that Ovid's dismissal of Apollo is probably not just confined to literary tradition but also has legitimate political connotations.

In *Apollo, Augustus, and the Poets*, Miller offers a comprehensive overview of how Augustan poets use Apollo. In his chapter "Apolline poetics and Augustus", he examines how Ovid puts literary Apollo and political Apollo in tension with each other in the *Ars Amatoria*. Considering the different aspects of Apollo mentioned in Apollo's epiphany to Ovid, Miller sees the difficulty in managing one clear reading of what Ovid is doing here.<sup>90</sup> He makes the issue even more complicated by arguing that Ovid at one point pretends to be invoking Augustan Apollo, but then changes the reference to Pythian Apollo.<sup>91</sup> Since Ovid spent Book I of the *Ars* listing locations in Rome where men could pick up women, Rome becomes the setting for Ovid's manual on seduction. Because of

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<sup>88</sup> Armstrong 2004: 541-42

<sup>89</sup> Armstrong 2004: 549

<sup>90</sup> Miller 2009a: 325

<sup>91</sup> Miller 2009a: 326

this, Miller argues that Apollo's invitation *ad mea templa* (II. 498) would have been ambiguous. A Roman reader would probably have first thought Apollo was referring to his temple on the Palatine erected by Augustus, only to be corrected when Apollo mentions the inscription found on his temple in Delphi. In his examination of Apollo's epiphany, Miller points out this instance to show how Ovid produces a disorienting effect by drawing on different aspects of Apollo to seemingly make political claims only to take them back directly after. I argue that this disorientation is a political tool in itself. Perhaps, Ovid clarifies the temple as the one in Delphi not to confuse the reader but rather to veil his deliberate connection to Augustan Apollo.

Having claimed poetic self-sufficiency at the beginning of the text, Ovid continues his work by instructing Roman men how to seduce women in various locations around Rome. With all these places listed, Roman readers would have had Rome on their mind. They would have certainly been aware of how contradictory Ovid's teachings were to Augustan marriage legislation that discouraged the exact methods of seduction Ovid was promoting. When Apollo shows up, the readers almost expect him as the patron god of Augustus to reprimand Ovid for his teachings. Instead, Apollo has little if nothing innovative to add to Ovid's extensive account, as Armstrong suggested. Ovid makes Apollo's epiphany feel unwelcome because of his claim to self-sufficiency. The epiphany also feels out of place because of its placement halfway through the text and pointless because of Apollo's vague advice. I argue that, by putting this unusual scene in a manual on seduction, Ovid perhaps is subtly commenting on how unwelcome Augustan marriage legislation felt in a Rome not empty of promiscuity.

Apollo's epiphany is further distanced from Ovid's text by how he concludes the interaction. After Apollo gives his advice to "know yourself", Ovid moves back to his topic in a way that dismisses Apollo's epiphany by saying, *Ad propiora vocor* ("Back to my theme, then" II.511).<sup>92</sup> Even though Ovid lets Apollo offer his few words of advice, Ovid here acts as if Apollo has nothing to do with the matters at hand and is simply an interruption. Ovid almost cuts off the encounter with Apollo, by reintroducing himself as the main voice on matters of seduction. By making Apollo's interjection seem pointless and unwelcome, Ovid perhaps is remarking on how Augustan marriage legislation felt in a Rome more interested in casual sexual encounters than traditional marriage—out of place and unwanted.

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<sup>92</sup> In his translation, Green captures the general mood of Ovid's words. Although it is not quite an exact translation of Ovid's words, the idea of returning to "former" or "near" things is there.

### Chapter 3: Apollo's Failed Pursuit of Daphne in Roman marriage

Augustus' marriage legislation was an essential part of his propaganda to restore the Republic.<sup>93</sup> Although we do not have a list of the exact laws he created, the general content can be deduced from other sources we do have. In his article "Augustus' Legislation on Marriage and Children", Richard Frank accurately portrays the general content of Augustan marriage legislation which he says was meant to "penalize sexual indulgence, promote child-bearing, and restore the family."<sup>94</sup> Augustus established three sets of laws to restore the traditional moral standards in Rome that lasted 300 years after his rule: the *Lex Julia* on adultery, the *Lex de maritandis ordinibus* to regulate the social status of marriages, and the *Lex Papia-Poppaea*. When Augustus came into power, he felt that he must not only pick up the pieces of the civil wars but also restore traditional values to the Roman people. Augustus attempted to install a series of laws in 29 B.C.E. that punished the unmarried and encouraged proper marriage. However, since Augustus had not yet built up enough popularity in Rome, the laws were not very well received. After undergoing ten years of military conquests and obtaining both the title of proconsul over all provinces and of *tribunicia potestas* in Rome, Augustus became popular enough to execute his legislation successfully.

Augustan marriage legislation was concerned with marriage and procreation. Marriage became an obligation for men between 25 and 60 and women between 20 and 50. People who were divorced or widowed were expected to remarry, unless they were a free-born citizen with three children or a freedman with four. The reforms penalized

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<sup>93</sup> For the history of Augustan marriage legislation, see Frank 1975:41-52, Haight 1922: 367-368, Field 1945:398-416, Davis 1999: 435.

<sup>94</sup> Frank 1975: 41

those who didn't procreate by limiting or taking away their inheritances. Those who produced many children were rewarded by being taxed less and were given preference in whatever political office they desired. Augustan marriage legislation also encouraged marriages between people of the same rank and class by deeming children from any other marriage illegitimate. These *matrimonia iniusta* were seen as contrary to Rome's best interest, since they caused an undesired mixing of classes. The state also became much more involved in private matters by charging adulterers publicly rather than leaving the matter to the discretion of the family.

Scholars have interpreted what motivated Augustus to enact these laws in a variety of ways. In his article "Augustus' Legislation on Marriage and Children", Richard Frank argues that the laws stemmed from a desire to return to traditional values.<sup>95</sup> Around 100 B.C.E., Romans became less interested in marriage for the sake of procreation and more interested in romantic love, giving rise to the elegiac poets.<sup>96</sup> These elegiac poets wrote on matters unconcerned with marriage and procreation. Because these poets promoted the appeal of romantic love to the Romans, Frank argues that elite men and women began to value "culture, sophistication, and pleasure" over traditional values of the Roman family.<sup>97</sup> Augustan marriage legislation was intended to make the Romans return to valuing marriage as a means of procreation. In her article "Reconstructing the Augustan Age", Elizabeth Hazelton Haight also argued that the decrease of traditional values and the increase of women's freedom motivated Augustus to enact these laws.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Frank 1975: 41–52

<sup>96</sup> Frank 1975: 41

<sup>97</sup> Frank 1975: 43

<sup>98</sup> Haight 1922: 355–76

She also suggests that the decrease in population could have been a factor as well, since the Roman demographic of elite families had significantly changed with more Romans choosing celibacy and having illegitimate children.<sup>99</sup> In his article “The Purpose of the *Lex Iulia et Papia Poppaea*”, James Field sees Augustan marriage legislation as a response to the effects of civil war on the Roman population.<sup>100</sup> The elite classes had diminished in number significantly due to proscriptions and warfare. The constant turmoil of civil war discouraged people from raising families and the influx of luxury post-war encouraged a more sensual way of life. Field argues that Augustan marriage legislation was meant to counteract these damages of civil war. All of these factors seem quite likely to have motivated Augustus to instigate his marriage legislation. Whether these laws were all that successful or just caused dissension from the public is difficult to say. However, some citizens were most likely displeased with the laws, since many were intent on continuing their less traditional way of life. Perhaps, Ovid’s subtle comments on Augustan marriage legislation in his poetry were in response to a popular discontent with the return to traditional values. Regardless of the public response, Augustan marriage legislation sought to return traditional values to the Roman people. Just as he did through Apollo’s epiphany in the *Ars Amatoria*, Ovid uses the story of Apollo and Daphne to once again convey discontent regarding Augustan marriage legislation.

### *The history of Apollo and Daphne*

As a book of myths, the *Metamorphoses* is inevitably inspired by past literary history. Since these myths have been told countless times, Ovid can convey his own

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<sup>99</sup> Haight 1922: 367-8

<sup>100</sup> Field 1945: 398-99

message through the stories by changing details and adding to past versions of the myth. He does just such a thing in his account of Apollo and Daphne. The story of Apollo and Daphne is not an Ovidian invention, but the earlier versions do not follow the same themes and construction as the Ovidian account. Parthenius of Nicaea, a Greek poet of the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C.E., gives an account of the story in his *Erotica Pathemata* 15. He introduces the poem by acknowledging the two sources from which he got his account of the story: the elegiac poems of Diodorus and the 25<sup>th</sup> book of Phylarchus.<sup>101</sup> These two works have since been lost, but we can deduce what they entailed from Parthenius' version of the myth. In his account, Daphne is a huntress dear to Artemis who catches the attention of a man named Leucippas. In pursuit of Daphne, Leucippas takes on the guise of a woman and becomes close friends with her. Apollo, having fallen in love with Daphne as well, reveals Leucippas' deceit by encouraging Daphne and her maidens to bathe with him. When he refuses to strip, the maidens forcibly remove his clothing and stab him in punishment for his deceit. When Apollo pursues Daphne afterwards, Zeus responds to Daphne's entreaties for help by transforming her into a laurel tree. And so, while the outline of the two stories follows a similar pattern (an erotic pursuit terminating in the transformation of Daphne into a laurel tree), the content of the two accounts differs greatly.

In Ovid's account, the stories preceding Apollo and Daphne are just as important for setting up the scene as the story itself. Apollo's pursuit of Daphne comes as a direct result of Apollo's victory over the Python. Because Apollo boasts about his victory over the beast, Cupid deflates his arrogance by piercing him with an arrow of love for Daphne

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<sup>101</sup> Diodorus is unknown otherwise, Phylarchus was a Greek historian of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.E.



which begins Apollo's pursuit of Daphne. While Daphne is said to have been courted by many men,<sup>102</sup> Leucippas himself is not included by name. By excluding Leucippas from his account, Ovid is able to focus solely on Apollo's pursuit of Daphne. Eventually Daphne is saved by her father, the river god Peneus, instead of Zeus. These differences raise questions about why Ovid chose to add the preceding stories and change details of the already existent myth. What is the significance of Ovid connecting the preceding stories to the story of Apollo and Daphne? Why is Apollo the sole pursuer of Daphne? Why does Daphne's father save her instead of Zeus? In this Chapter, I will be focusing on these differences to see how Ovid changes his account of Apollo and Daphne from the literary history surrounding it. I will start by examining the preceding stories, Apollo's victory over the Python and the encounter between Apollo and Cupid, since they are important for how Ovid creates an Augustan context for the story of Apollo and Daphne. Then, I will examine how two aspects of the Apollo and Daphne story reflect Ovidian commentary on Augustan marriage legislation: the theme of marriage and Apollo's "victory" over the laurel.

### *Apollo's victory over the Python*

In Ovid's account, the story of Apollo and Daphne truly begins with Apollo's victory over the Python. After the world was restored from the flood, Earth unintentionally produced the Python, a fierce beast who accosted the new race of humans. Apollo heroically saves humanity from the terrors of the Python by killing him with his archery skills. Because of this glorious victory, Apollo boasts to Cupid that his arrows have more power than the son of Venus himself. As punishment for his overt

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<sup>102</sup> Ovid *Metamorphoses* I.478

arrogance and as an assertion of his superiority, Cupid strikes Apollo with an arrow of love for Daphne and Daphne with an arrow of repulsion towards Apollo. Thus, the story of Apollo and Daphne begins. Because these myths are so intertwined, the significance of Apollo's victory over the Python should be considered as it sets up the context for Ovid's Apollo and Daphne. I will focus on three literary traditions Ovid draws on for his account of Apollo's victory over the Python: the Hellenistic poets, his contemporary Augustan poets, and epic. Ovid uses these literary traditions to set up the Apollo and Daphne story in an Augustan context.

The story of Apollo's victory over the Python originated from the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* and Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo*. Ovid's version follow a similar pattern as the original accounts: an enormous python is wreaking havoc on humanity, so Apollo kills the creature with his iconic arrows which brings about the nomenclature for Apollo's Pythian Games.<sup>103</sup> In the Homeric and Callimachean Hymns, Apollo's victory over the Python is the origin myth for the laurel wreath used at the Pythian Games. Ovid delays this etiology by using the story of Apollo and Daphne as the origin myth for the laurel instead. Even though traditionally the laurel crowned the victors' heads at the Pythian games, Ovid delays this tradition by saying that at this point Apollo just wreathed his hair with other trees since the laurel wreath did not exist yet.<sup>104</sup> In his article "Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1,445ff.: Apollo, Daphne, and the Pythian Crown", Adrian Hollis remarks on how Ovid's delay of this etiology interacts with multiple Hellenistic

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<sup>103</sup> For a list of the paralleled passages, see Miller 2009a: 339 and Hollis 1996: 70.

<sup>104</sup> *iuvenum...aesculeae capiebat frondis honorem: // nondum laurus erat, longoque decentia crine // tempora cingebat de qualibet arbore Phoebus* ("the youth...received the honor of an oaken garland. For as yet the laurel-tree was not, and Phoebus was wont to wreath his temples, comely with flowing locks, with a garland from any tree" I.449-451)

traditions. When Ovid states that *nondum laurus erat* (“As yet the laurel-tree was not” I.450), he follows the Hellenistic “not yet” motif, which was used to connect different myths to each other.<sup>105</sup> By saying that the laurel wreath was not yet present, Ovid informs the reader that this connection will be present in a later myth, connecting Apollo’s victory over the Python to Apollo’s pursuit of Daphne. Hollis also remarks on how Ovid echoes Hellenistic poets, such as Callimachus and Euphorion, who were interested in the origins of the garlands used to adorn victors at games.<sup>106</sup> Ovid puts importance on the etiology of the laurel by making it the connecting force from Apollo’s victory over the Python to Daphne’s transformation into the laurel tree. The story of Daphne and Apollo becomes a kind of bookend to Apollo’s victory over the Python, since Daphne provides the missing laurel wreath for the Pythian Games. In earlier accounts of Apollo and Daphne, Daphne is also the etiology of the laurel so Ovid combines these two versions to make them both the origin of the laurel.

Ovid’s contemporaries drew from the Apollo and Python myth before Ovid, by connecting Apollo’s victory over the Python with Apollo’s victory at Actium.<sup>107</sup> With this tradition behind him, Ovid refers to Propertius 4.6, in which Apollo appears to Octavian at the Battle of Actium, to bring Augustan Apollo to the forefront of the reader’s mind. In the poem, shortly before Apollo addresses Octavian, Propertius says that Apollo appeared the same “as when he slew the serpent Python, the terror of the peaceful Muses, and relaxed its coils in death” (...*quails flexos solvit Pythona per orbis //*

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<sup>105</sup> Hollis 1996: 69

<sup>106</sup> Hollis 1996: 70

<sup>107</sup> For more instances of this connection, see Miller 2009a: 341-42.

*serpentem, imbelles quem timuere lyrae* 4.6.35-36).<sup>108</sup> Apollo's victory over the Python had already been an archetype for the god's military expertise. Propertius cleverly refers to this Apolline myth directly before Apollo's speech at Actium so that Apollo is further glorified in his military prowess. The extent to which Propertius meant to connect Apollo's victory over the Python with Apollo's victory at Actium has been debated.<sup>109</sup> Regardless, Ovid seems to encourage this connection by transforming Propertius' brief reference to Apollo with the Python into a whole account of the myth. In his book *Apollo, Augustus, and the Poets*, John Miller recognizes parallels between Propertius' Actian Apollo and Ovid's Apollo with the Python.<sup>110</sup> Miller points out that the two accounts follow the same "sequence of motifs": Apollo uses countless of arrows to defeat a fierce opponent and commemorates his victory with a tribute.<sup>111</sup> In his account of Apollo's victory over the Python, Ovid follows a similar pattern to Propertius' poem about Actian Apollo so that he can connect his story to Actian Apollo, the god whose military victory is closely associated with Augustus. In short, Ovid is drawing from this contemporary reference so that he can connect his Apollo indirectly to Augustus.

Ovid's account of the victory also draws on epic themes.<sup>112</sup> In epic, the fierceness of an opponent is often emphasized in order to glorify the difficulty of defeating such a fierce contender. Ovid goes to great length to describe the enormous size of the Python, emphasizing the epic glory of defeating such a creature (*maxime* "huge" l.438; *tantum*

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<sup>108</sup> Translation from the Loeb Classical Library.

<sup>109</sup> Buchheit most famously emphasizes this connection between Apollo/Python and Apollo at Actium in his 1966 work, "Mythos und Geschichte in Ovids *Metamorphosen* I".

<sup>110</sup> For a detailed account of the paralleled passages, see Miller 2009a: 341-42.

<sup>111</sup> In Propertius 4.6 Augustus erects the Palatine Apollo in tribute to Actian Apollo, while in Ovid's *Met.* Apollo creates the Pythian games in tribute to his victory over the Python.

<sup>112</sup> Keith 2002:246-47

*spatii de monte tenebas* “so huge a space of mountain-side didst thou fill” I.440).<sup>113</sup> Ovid also curiously addresses the Python in second person, almost as if introducing a fighter in an epic duel (*te...maxime Python* “you...huge Python” I.438). The hyperbolic number of arrows needed to kill the Python also glorifies Apollo’s victory by emphasizing the amount of power needed to take down such a grand creature (*mille gravem telis exhausta paene pharetra* “crushing him with countless darts, well-nigh emptying his quiver” I.443). Apollo gains eternal glory through this noble feat, an essential theme in epic. His victory is perpetually honored by the creation of the Pythian games, named after the serpent he conquered (I.445-51). In these ways, Ovid’s rendition of Apollo’s victory over the Python takes on epic themes. At a time when Virgil’s *Aeneid* was strongly in the Roman mind, Ovid’s allusion to epic would have been automatically associated with the *Aeneid*. Since Ovid had already connected the Python story with Augustus’ victory at Actium through his references to Propertius 4.6, perhaps the epic allusions are meant to praise Augustus in his victorious actions at Actium. However, the issue of genre in the *Metamorphoses* has been highly contested by scholars and to consider the epic allusions as merely laudatory would be a grand oversimplification.<sup>114</sup> In this particular context, Ovid is emphasizing the allusions to epic if only to dismiss them shortly after.

#### *Apollo and Cupid: the battle of genres*

The transition from Apollo defeating the Python to Apollo and Daphne perfectly demonstrates how difficult it is to pinpoint a cohesive genre throughout the *Metamorphoses*. The stories are connected by a conflict between Cupid and Apollo.

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<sup>113</sup> All translations for the *Metamorphoses* are taken from the Loeb Classical Library.

<sup>114</sup> For an overview on how scholars have interpreted the issue of genre in the *Met.*, see Keith 2002: 235-36.

Since the encounter between Apollo and Cupid is thought to be an Ovidian invention,<sup>115</sup> Ovid was free to refer to his other works in order to strengthen the meaning of the incident. Ovid does so by reflecting the battle between elegy and epic at the beginning of his *Amores*. The encounter is introduced by a sentence that intertwines both epic and elegy, *Primus amor Phoebi Daphne Peneia, quem non/ fors ignara dedit sed saeva Cupidinis ira* (“Now the first love of Phoebe was Daphne, daughter of Peneus, the river-god. It was no blind chance that gave this love, but the malicious wrath of Cupid” I.452-53). After the story of Apollo slaying the Python, epic is prevalent in the reader’s mind. The next story begins with *primus amor Phoebi*, a much more elegiac beginning. In his article “Primus Amor Phoebi”, Miller explores how this introductory line invokes other literary beginnings and the significance of these connections.<sup>116</sup> He connects these first words to Propertius I.1.1 which reads, *Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis* (“Ah! Woe is me! ’twas Cynthia first ensnared me with her eyes”).<sup>117</sup> Propertius begins his elegiac poems by introducing his first object of desire, Cynthia. Just like Apollo, Propertius is forced into love by Cupid and both love affairs end unsuccessfully.<sup>118</sup> By beginning the encounter between Apollo and Cupid with this mention of Apollo’s first love, Ovid is alluding to the beginning of Propertius’ elegies in language and context. Even though the first line begins in an elegiac manner it ends with the *saeva Cupidinis ira* (“the malicious wrath of Cupid”). Miller argues that this divine anger refers to several epic literary beginnings such as Poseidon’s anger in the *Odyssey*, Achilles’ (and even

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<sup>115</sup> Nicoll 1980: 174

<sup>116</sup> Miller 2009b: 168–72

<sup>117</sup> Translation from the Loeb Classical Library.

<sup>118</sup> Nicoll 1980: 177

Apollo's) anger in the *Iliad*, and Juno's anger in the *Aeneid*.<sup>119</sup> And so, the first line already creates a tension between elegy and epic, a tension which defines the entire encounter between Cupid and Apollo.

In her article "Sources and Genres in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*", Alison Keith discusses the difficulty of defining a cohesive genre throughout Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.<sup>120</sup> She examines how the encounter between Apollo and Cupid reflects this tension between different genres in the following ways.<sup>121</sup> The epic allusions from Apollo's victory over the Python continue as he boasts to Cupid about his achievements with epic arrogance, *nuper victa serpente superbus* ("still exulting over his victory over the serpent" I.454). The two gods challenge each other in an epic duel, both claiming to have more glory with the same weapon. Apollo disdainfully tells Cupid that he should be focusing on matters of love instead of trying to claim glory with his weapons.<sup>122</sup> Cupid retorts by saying that Apollo's skills in archery are just as inferior to his own skills as animals are inferior to the gods.<sup>123</sup> After this epic standoff, Cupid strikes Apollo with a love arrow, deflating Apollo's epic arrogance and transforming him into an elegiac lover. Keith argues that by transforming Apollo into an elegiac lover, Ovid emphasizes the "elegiac provenance" of the encounter: the beginning of his *Amores*.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Miller 2009b: 170

<sup>120</sup> Keith 2002: 235-69

<sup>121</sup> Keith 2002: 245-251

<sup>122</sup> *Tu face nescio quos istos contentus amores // inritare tua, nec laudes adsere nostras* "Do thou be content with thou torch to light the hidden fires of love, and lay not claim to my honors" I.461-62

<sup>123</sup> *quantoque Animalia cedunt // cuncta deo tanto minor est tua Gloria nostra* "by as much as all living things are less than deity, by so much less is thy glory than mine" I.464-65

<sup>124</sup> Keith 2002: 247-8

At the beginning of the *Amores*, Ovid claims to be writing an epic,<sup>125</sup> but Cupid immediately changes his work to elegy by stealing a metrical foot. In the article “Cupid, Apollo and Daphne”, W.S.M. Nicoll connects the conflict between the two encounters with Cupid quite well, “Cupid's arrow forces Apollo to abandon his epic-style arrogance just as the poet had been forced to abandon his attempts at epic.”<sup>126</sup> In both instances, Cupid is forcing someone to abandon epic concerns for elegiac ones. Apollo criticizes Cupid for using his arrows in such a foolish way, while Ovid expresses disdain towards Cupid for intruding on the world of poetry.<sup>127</sup> In punishment for their contempt, Cupid forces both of them to abandon their arrogance by making them fall in love. While Ovid continues on to write beautiful elegy, Apollo’s transformation into an elegiac lover is tainted by being defeated by Cupid. And so, the story of Apollo and Daphne begins with the epic Apollo having been conquered by the master of love.

*Setting the stage for Apollo and Daphne*

Ovid goes to great lengths to establish himself among several literary histories before beginning the actual story of Apollo and Daphne. The two stories preceding it set up the stage to read the Apollo and Daphne story in a political context. For Apollo’s victory over the Python, Ovid refers to the original accounts of the myth in order to postpone the expected etiology of the laurel, so that Daphne can be Apollo’s emblem of victory instead.<sup>128</sup> Ovid also refers to the myth’s contemporary reference to the Battle of

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<sup>125</sup> *arma gravi numero violentaque bella parabam // edere, materia conveniente modis* (“Arms, and the violent deeds of war, I was making ready to sound forth, in weighty numbers, with matters suited to the measure” I.1.1-2)

<sup>126</sup> Nicoll 1980: 176

<sup>127</sup> Nicoll 1980: 176

<sup>128</sup> Daphne as Apollo’s emblem of victory brings in its own complications, since the failed erotic pursuit will always in some sense taint Apolline victories. The significance of this tension is discussed further in later sections.



Actium in order to bring Augustan Apollo to the forefront. Without these Actian Apollo references, Apollo's victory over the Python does not gain its context in Augustan propaganda. The dispute between Apollo and Cupid reflects a literary tradition of battle between epic and elegy that Ovid also plays with in his *Amores*. This exclusion of Apollo from elegy already separates Apollo from matters of love, even before his failed erotic pursuit. This separation, also present in the *Ars*, could be seen as setting up Ovid's commentary on Augustus in social matters. And so, with these two preceding stories, Ovid sets the stage for the story of Apollo and Daphne. With Apollo having already been both praised for his military achievements and deflated by the master of love, Ovid begins his account of Apollo and Daphne. I will look at how Ovid uses the theme of marriage and Apollo's "victory" over the laurel to make a similar commentary in his story of Apollo and Daphne as he did in the *Ars Amatoria*.

*Apollo and Daphne: Transgressors of Augustan Marriage Legislation*

Marriage is a key theme in the story of Apollo and Daphne, which does not usually appear when a god seeks to rape a virgin. In every account of Apollo's love affairs throughout the *Metamorphoses*, marriage is never mentioned as the goal.<sup>129</sup> Apollo is said to be in love with the others, but not once does it say he seeks to marry them. With one word, Ovid defines the whole context of Apollo's pursuit of Daphne: *conubia*. He falls in love with Daphne at first sight and immediately wants to marry her, *Phoebus amat visaeque cupit conubia Daphnes* ("Phoebus loves Daphne at sight, and longs to wed her" I.490). When his pursuit fails, he laments that she will not be his wife,

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<sup>129</sup> For reference to Apollo's other lovers in the *Metamorphoses*, see Coronis, 2.542-632; Cypris, 10.106-42; Hyacinthus, 10.162-219; Chione 11.301-17; the Sibyl, 14.130-53.

consoling himself by making her his tree instead, *At quoniam coniunx mea non potes esse, // arbor eris certe, dixit, mea* (“Since thou canst not be my bride, thou shalt at least be my tree” I. 557-58). Apollo’s focus on marriage is odd for a god pursuing a mortal. His love-at-first-sight causes him to desire marriage over bodily pleasure, a sentiment not shared by many gods pursuing women. Apollo’s pursuit is not defined simply by erotic passion but by his desire to capture Daphne as his wife. Since marriage was a crucial part of Augustan propaganda, the theme of marriage would have caught the attention of Roman readers. As Augustus’ divine counterpart, Apollo seemingly upholds Augustan marriage legislation by valuing marriage over sexual pleasure. However, if the whole episode is taken in the context of a Roman marriage, then both Apollo and Daphne would be transgressing multiple Augustan marriage laws.<sup>130</sup>

By seeking perpetual virginity, Daphne transgresses Augustan legislation. Even though many men attempt to court her, she disregards both men and marriage, *Multi illam petiere, illa aversata petentes // inpatiens expersque viri nemora avia lustrat // nec quid Hymen, quid Amor, quid sint conubia curat* (“Many sought her; but she, averse to all suitors, impatient of control and without thought for man, roamed the pathless woods, nor cared at all what Hymen, love, or wedlock might be” I.478-80). As a young woman of fertile age, Daphne would have had a civic duty to be married under Augustan marriage legislation. Completely averse to the idea of marriage, Daphne begs her father to allow her to live in perpetual virginity.<sup>131</sup> Even though her father eventually grants her request,

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<sup>130</sup> Although these connections with Augustan legislation are my own, Holzberg (1999:324-25, quoted in Miller 2009a: 344) also wrote an article examining Apollo’s pursuit of Daphne in the context of Augustan social reform. In his reading of the account, he argues that Apollo is following the *Lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus* by seeking marriage, but also transgressing the *lex Iulia de adulteriis* by threatening an unmarried woman with rape in his violent chase.

<sup>131</sup> Met. I.486-87

his main objection is that he wants grandchildren and a son-in-law, *generum mihi, filia debes...debes mihi nata, nepotes* (“Daughter you owe me a son-in law...Daughter you owe me grandsons” I.481-82). This seems like an odd concern for Peneus to have as a river god, since an immortal would not be concerned with the perpetuation of his family line. However, if the scene is put into the context of Augustan marriage legislation, Peneus’ objection to her perpetual virginity reflects the traditional ideal of marriage as procreation that Augustus was seeking to revive. Since Augustan marriage legislation prevented Romans from receiving familial inheritances unless they had children, a father would be rightly concerned if his only daughter did not have children. And so, if the story is put into the context of Augustan marriage legislation, the odd nature of Peneus’ concern are explained.

Since Apollo pursues Daphne in marriage, he seemingly coincides with Augustan values. However, the context of this marriage should be carefully scrutinized. Apollo goes to great length to establish his status as a god, not a shepherd.<sup>132</sup> In other words, he is trying to convince Daphne that he is worthy marriage material.<sup>133</sup> And yet, Daphne never proves herself to be worthy of marriage. Certainly she is said to be beautiful, but she is nowhere near ranked as a god. In a Roman context, Daphne’s Greek name would have marked her as a foreigner. Even though the story takes place in Greece, the pursuit is established in the context of Roman marriage legislation so Daphne as a foreigner would have been deemed unfit for marriage. This marriage would not only be between two different classes but also with a foreigner which is exactly the kind of marriage that

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<sup>132</sup> Met. I.512-14.

<sup>133</sup> Throughout literary history, this idea that a god attempting to establish themselves as a worthy candidate for marriage to a person of lower status exists, such as Hades to Persephone in the *Hymn to Demeter* and Cupid to Psyche in the *Golden Ass*.

Augustus was seeking to avoid. Augustus was attempting to purify the Roman elite by only deeming marriages between people of the same class and rank legitimate. While Apollo pursuing Daphne in marriage seems to conform to Augustan laws on the surface, the context of the marriage shows that the marriage would not have been legitimate under Augustan marriage legislation, ridiculing the very god Augustus stood behind.

*The “victory” of the laurel*

When Apollo is in love with Daphne, he seems to lose all that makes him Apollo. Miller recognizes the different characteristics Apollo loses in his love-stricken state, rightly pointing out that Apollo’s musical talent is the only attribute that remains.<sup>134</sup> Miller notes the following instances in which Apollo loses his attributes. The moment Apollo falls in love with Daphne, he loses his prophetic abilities by not foreseeing the impending failure of his pursuit of Daphne.<sup>135</sup> Apollo’s love-stricken state has robbed him of his prophetic abilities so he cannot perceive that his pursuit of Daphne will end poorly. During his pursuit, Apollo attempts to persuade Daphne to give in to his advances by listing his various attributes. Apollo notes that many of these are not properly functioning in his love-stricken state, including his archery skills<sup>136</sup> and his

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<sup>134</sup> Miller 2009a: 345

<sup>135</sup> *Phoebus amat visaeque cupit conubia Daphnes, // quodque cupit, sperat, suaque illum oracula fallunt* (“Phoebus loves Daphne at sight, and longs to wed her; and what he longs for, that he hopes; and his own gifts of prophecy deceive him” I.490-91)

<sup>136</sup> His archery skills: *Certa quidem nostra est, nostra tamen una sagitta // certior, in vacuo quae vulnera pectore fecit* (“My arrow is sure of aim, but oh, one arrow, surer than my own, has wounded my heart but now so fancy free” I.519-20)

medicinal abilities.<sup>137</sup> However, his musical ability is the only attribute not compromised by being in love.<sup>138</sup>

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Augustus drew on these various aspects of Apollo to fit his propaganda. With his attributes lost, Apollo here cannot help Augustus “heal” the Roman Republic, cannot fight alongside Augustus in the Battle of Actium with his arrows, and cannot prophesy that Augustus is the rightful ruler. Only his musical abilities remain.<sup>139</sup> Miller suggests that his musical ability could be a reference to Augustus in itself, “Perhaps it is just a coincidence that the most conspicuous figuration of Apollo in Augustan Rome was as citharode in the cella of his Palatine Temple. Perhaps not.”<sup>140</sup> This potential reference to the iconography of Augustan Apollo could be Ovid’s way of continuing to associate Apollo in this account with Augustus, even though many of his attributes have been lost. And yet, even if it is a coincidence that his musical abilities correspond with this iconography, Ovid could still be suggesting something further by the loss of attributes.

In Chapter 2, I argue that Ovid’s dismissal of Apollo from matters of love in the *Ars Amatoria* could be read as a negative commentary on Augustan intrusion on social matters. Perhaps, here too Ovid is commenting on Augustan influence on the social sphere in Rome. The juxtaposition of the two narratives suggests that when Augustus meddles in social matters of love, he loses all the other aspects of his reign that make him

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<sup>137</sup> His healing power: *ei mihi, quod nullis amor est sanabilis herbis // nec prosunt domino, quae prosunt omnibus, artes.* (“and all the potency of herbs is given unto me. Alas, that love is curable by no herbs, and the arts which heal all others cannot heal their lord” I.523-24).

<sup>138</sup> ...*per me concordant carmina nervis*, “by me the lyre responds in harmony to song” I.518

<sup>139</sup> Miller 2009a: 345n36 also refers to Knox’s 1990 argument that Apollo’s maintained musical abilities could refer to an potentially unknown earlier version in literary history in which Apollo sang to Daphne in an attempt to woo her before pursuing her more violently.

<sup>140</sup> Miller 2009a: 345

great, in the same way that Apollo lost all his attributes in his love-stricken state. Ovid does not criticize Augustus for any of his military and political achievements, but does seem to be suggesting that these victories are somewhat erased by his unwelcome marriage legislation. Just like Apollo loses all that makes him great when he is in love, Augustus loses all his other victories when he meddles with social matters in Rome.

Perhaps Apollo's victory over Daphne should not be read as a complete victory after all. When Daphne changes from a woman into a laurel tree, Apollo finally regains his attributes.<sup>141</sup> Even though Daphne escaped being raped by the god, he still has dominion over her as his perpetual symbol of victory.<sup>142</sup> As a laurel tree, Daphne can no longer be pursued by Apollo in marriage so she becomes a Roman symbol of victory instead. As Apollo transforms Daphne into his symbol of victory, he regains his militaristic abilities and maintains his musical attributes by telling the newly transformed Daphne that her laurel will forever adorn his hair, lyre, and quiver.<sup>143</sup> His prophetic abilities are also restored by accurately predicting that the laurel will symbolize victories from then on.<sup>144</sup> In his list of victories, Apollo invokes Augustan Rome.<sup>145</sup> First, he refers to the Republican tradition of victorious generals with laurel wreaths marching in their triumph to the Capitoline Hill.<sup>146</sup> Then, Apollo connects these victories to his temple complex on the Palatine by mentioning the same laurel wreath now placed on the

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<sup>141</sup> Miller 2009a: 347

<sup>142</sup> *At quoniam coniunx mea non potes esse, // arbor eris certe, dixit, mea* ("Since thou canst not be my bride, thou shalt at least be my tree" I. 557-58)

<sup>143</sup> Ovid *Metamorphoses* I.557-58

<sup>144</sup> Ovid *Metamorphoses* I.559-63

<sup>145</sup> Miller gives a comprehensive account of the various imperial triumphs referred to in these lines, Miller 2009a: 346-7.

<sup>146</sup> *tu ducibus Latiis aderis, cum laeta triumphum // vox canet et visent longas Capitolia pompas*, ("With thee shall Roman generals wreath their heads, when shouts of joy shall acclaim their triumph, and long processions climb the Capitol" I.559-60)

temple's doors, transferring the Republic *honores* to the imperial family.<sup>147</sup> Because Apollo regains his characteristic attributes and wins his iconic laurel wreath, he seems to be victorious. However, the laurel as Apollo's victory symbol is forever tainted by his failed pursuit of Daphne. Perhaps, Ovid is making a similar comment about Augustus. The juxtaposition of these two circumstances seems to suggest that, even though Augustus had celebrated plenty of victories while "restoring" the Roman Republic, his unwelcome marriage legislation would always taint his rule just like Apollo's tainted laurel wreath.

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<sup>147</sup> *postibus Augustus eadem fidissima custos // ante fores stabis mediamque tuebere quercum* ("Thou at Augustus' portals shalt stand a trusty guardian, and keep watch over the civic crown of oak which hangs between" I.561-2)

## Conclusion

As I began my exploration of Ovid's poetry in a political context, I stumbled upon John Miller's book *Apollo, Augustus, and the Poets*. His book covers a topic, the breadth of which most scholars have hardly dared to touch: how the Augustan Poets used Augustus' affiliation with Apollo to convey their own political messages. In 2010 Miller's book received the Goodwin Award from the American Philological Association for his remarkable contribution to classical scholarship. In an interview regarding his award, Miller commented on his original intent for the book:

I set out specifically not to focus on two things: politics and poetics, because, in my view, we over-privilege those topics in criticism about Latin literature these days (...) The more I worked on the project, I saw that in fact those were the things that the poets were most interested in, as regards the figure of Apollo.<sup>148</sup>

Miller's comment struck me as particularly revealing about how scholars understand ancient poetry today. While many may overemphasize the political aspects of ancient poetry, Miller notes that politics in Augustan poetry is to a certain extent inevitable. Scholars have begun to see the value in paying attention to the small details of these works since they often reveal much larger political issues. By looking closely at these instances in Ovid, I must agree with Miller that the Augustan poets were just as strongly invested in creating great poetry as they were with conveying their own political messages. While my examination of these two instances in Ovidian poetry may seem all too specific and small in the grand scheme of Augustan poetry, the significance of my study has huge implications on poetics and politics in general. Ovid's clever use of countless literary traditions and political imagery reveal the way in which poets must go

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<sup>148</sup> For the rest of this interview, see <http://apaclassics.org/awards-and-fellowships/questions-john-miller-university-of-virginia>



to great lengths to subtly maneuver through difficult political circumstances in order to comment on their contemporary politics. As scholars continue to examine the Augustan poets, these political messages will continue to emerge. From the Augustan poets, we can learn just how much poetics can act as a tool for free speech in troublesome political situations. Because of this, separating politics from poetics would be a great injustice to the Augustan poets who were consciously infusing their poetry with political messages.

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