

his friends by the exploitation in unfamiliar contexts of *sententiae* made familiar by the rhetoricians and of well-worn themes for declamation (see pp. 68ff.), so he amused them by the vitality with which he inspired the austere scholastic study of etymology. The etymologies themselves will have caused no difficulty; Ovid demanded of his readers only the ingenuity to recognise them in their new surroundings.

3

Recitatio

It is difficult to suppose that Ovid could have expected the full subtlety of the *Amores* to be appreciated without careful and leisurely study. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that the poems were written for oral delivery as well as for private reading. Asinius Pollio seems to have made the *recitatio* fashionable at Rome in the years following his triumph in 39 or 38 B.C.¹, and Ovid greatly favoured the institution. It was to become a source of much sorrow to him at Tomis that he had no appreciative audience to whom he could recite his poetry; cf. *Trist.* 3.14.39f.:

nullus in hac terra, recitem si carmina, cuius
intellecturis auribus utar, adest,

4.1.89ff., 4.10.113f., 5.12.53f., *Pont.* 1.5.57ff. Writing poetry under such circumstances seemed pointless:

in tenebris numerosos ponere gestus,
quodque legas nulli scribere carmen, idem est.
excitat auditor studium, laudataque uirtus
crescit, et immensum gloria calcar habet.
hic mea cui recitem nisi flauis scripta Corallis,
quasque alias gentes barbarus Hister habet?

(*Pont.* 4.2.33ff.)

At *Trist.* 4.10.57ff. (quoted on p. 74), Ovid records specifically that he recited Corinna-poems in his youth. The *Amores* themselves show an awareness both of a readership and of an audience. In the epigram, the personified books of the *Amores* address their reader:

ut iam nulla tibi nos sit legisse uoluptas,
at leuior demptis poena duobus erit (3f.).

¹ Cf. Sen. *Contr.* 4 Pref. 2 *primus... omnium Romanorum aduocatis hominibus scripta sua recitauit* with Dalzell (1956), also Mayor on Juv. 3.9, *RE* 2.1.435ff., Williams (1978) 303ff., Rawson (1985) 52.

For reading, cf. also 1.15.38:

a sollicito multus amante legar

and 2.1.5f.:

me legat in sponsi facie non frigida uirgo
et rudis ignoto tactus amore puer.

At 2.1.3f., however, Ovid is thinking rather of an audience:

procul hinc, procul este, seueri!
non estis teneris apta theatra modis,

as again in the final couplet of that poem:

ad mea formosos uultus adhibete, puellae,
carmina purpureus quae mihi dictat Amor (37f.);

cf. also 1.1.24, 2.17.33. 1.8 begins with an address directed specifically to an audience:

Est quaedam (quicumque uolet cognoscere lenam,
audiat), est quaedam nomine Dipsas anus,

as perhaps do 1.7:

Adde manus in uincla meas (meruere catenas),
dum furor omnis abit, si quis amicus ades

and 1.12:

Flete meos casus; tristes rediere tabellae;
infelix hodie littera posse negat.

The acknowledgment of the audience's presence has no effect on the development of any of these poems, for to implicate the audience in any way would violate the conventions of the genre. It is precisely by such a violation, however, that Ovid achieves the stunningly unexpected conclusion to 3.12, in which he laments that his poems in praise of Corinna have attracted other lovers to her:

et mea debuerat falso laudata uideri
femina; credulitas nunc mihi uestra nocet (43f.).

We are to imagine Ovid pointing an accusing finger at his audience, who must have been greatly surprised and amused to find themselves drawn into the poem so unconventionally. Performance, though not by Ovid himself, is envisaged also at 1.3.25, 1.15.8, 3.1.27:

quod tenerae cantent lusit tua Musa puellae

and *Ars* 3.341ff.:

atque aliquis dicet 'nostri lege culta magistri
carmina, quis partes instruit ille duas,
deue tribus libris, titulo quos signat AMORVM,
elige, quod docili molliter ore legas,
uel tibi composita cantetur EPISTVLA uoce'².

The elegies of Tibullus are for the most part contemplative rather than dramatic, being concerned primarily with the expression of the lover's emotions. Although he offers some notable exceptions, the same is true of Propertius also. In the *Amores*, however, Ovid handles the genre in a markedly dramatic manner. This difference may be attributed substantially to his awareness that he was writing for an audience, an awareness which is almost never apparent in Tibullus and only occasionally in Propertius, even though it is known that he, like Ovid, frequently gave *recitationes* (cf. *Trist.* 4.10.45f. [quoted on p. 36]). It should also be borne in mind that Ovid had a natural gift for drama. His *Rezitationsdrama* (cf. *Trist.* 5.7B.3f.), the *Medea*, won great acclaim; cf. Tac. *Dial.* 12.6, Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.98³.

The fullest exploitation of drama is in 3.2, a poem with no counterpart in either Tibullus or Propertius. Ovid gives a marvellously evocative impression of the excited atmosphere at the races in the Circus. There is very little static *narratio*; many of the details of the scene, the jostling crowds (19ff.), the heat (37ff.), the dust (41f.), the waving of togas (74ff.), are introduced incidentally, as Ovid performs some small *officium* for the girl whom he is trying to seduce. The same technique is used on a smaller scale in many other elegies. In 2.8, in which Ovid is trying to seduce Cypassis, the scene is enlivened by Cypassis' reaction at line 23:

quid renuis fingisque nouos, ingrata, timores?

Similarly, in 1.14, Ovid's mistress reacts to his tirade against her ill-judged attempt to dye her hair:

me miserum, lacrimas male continet oraue dextra
protegit, ingenuas picta rubore genas;

² Cf. also *Ars* 2.283f. (quoted on p. 61).

³ Here again, the influence of Callimachus should not be neglected. Compare especially Ovid's role as 'master of ceremonies' in 2.6.1ff., 3.2.43ff. and 3.9.1ff. with that of Callimachus in *Ap.* 1ff., *Lau. Pall. passim*, *Cer.* 1ff., 118ff.

sustinet antiquos gremio spectatque capillos,
ei mihi, non illo munera digna loco (51ff.).

There is no such dramatic development in the equivalent attacks on excessive *ornatio* at Tib. 1.8.9ff. or in Prop. 1.2 and 2.18B, nor does Dipsas' aside at 1.8.35, *erubuit!*, commenting on the girl's reaction to her improper suggestions, have any parallel in Acanthis' speech at Prop. 4.5.21ff. Propertius' version of the komos in 1.16 is undramatic, the komast's complaints and laments being reported at second-hand by the house-door, which delivers a static monologue. In Tib. 1.2, so little prominence is given to the dramatic setting that the identification of the poem as a komos has been doubted⁴, while, in 1.5, it does not become apparent until line 67, ten lines from the end of the poem, that Tibullus is portraying himself as a komast. By contrast, when Ovid handles the theme in 1.6, the dramatic setting is made clear at once:

Ianitor (indignum!) dura religate catena,
difficilem moto cardine pande forem (1f.),

while the refrain:

tempora noctis eunt; excute poste seram (24 etc.)

and the reference to imminent day-break:

iamque pruinosos molitur Lucifer axes,
inque suum miseros excitat ales opus (65f.)

convey a lively impression of Ovid's desperation at the swift passing of the night. The komos is a particularly unpromising theme for dramatic development: the komast's aim is to provoke a reaction to his serenade, the opening of the door, but, if that were to happen, the komos would lose its *raison d'être*. At least momentarily, however, Ovid seems to have provoked that reaction:

fallimur, an uerso sonuerunt cardine postes
raucaque concussae signa dedere fores? (49f.)

That couplet may be inspired by the goat-herd's optimistic speculation at Theocr. 3.37f. that Amaryllis has yielded to his serenade:

ἄλλεται ὀφθαλμός μου ὁ δέξιός· ἀρά γ' ἰδησῶ
αὐτάν;

⁴ See Murgatroyd's introduction.

or it may be a dramatisation of the conceit expressed by Tibullus at 1.8.65f.:

dum mihi uenturam fingo, quodcumque mouetur,
illius credo tunc sonuisse pedes.

Ovid's expectation is quickly disappointed:

fallimur; impulsa est animoso ianua uento.
ei mihi, quam longe spem tulit aura meam! (51f.),

and the disappointment motivates a transition from wheedling to threats and abuse directed against the door-keeper. 3.6 is also a komos, the obstruction being caused by a mountain-torrent in flood, rather than by a door or door-keeper. There again, the setting is made clear at once:

Amnis harundinibus limosas obsite ripas,
ad dominam proporo: siste parumper aquas (1f.).

In this komos, there actually is a dramatic development, but it is not that for which Ovid had been hoping:

dum loquor, increuit latis spatiosus in undis,
nec capit admissas alueus altus aquas (85f.),

and it motivates the same change of attitude by Ovid as does his disappointment at the lack of dramatic development at 1.6.49ff. Perhaps the most remarkable exploitation of drama in the *Amores*, however, is in the opening lines of 3.9. There, Ovid summons Elegy to Tibullus' funeral and then invites us to behold Cupid's mournful appearance:

ecce, puer Veneris fert euersamque pharetram
et fractos arcus et sine luce facem;
aspice, demissis ut eat miserabilis alis
pectoraque infesta tunda aperta manu (7ff.).

Ovid sets a similar scene at 2.6.1ff.:

Psittacus, Eois imitatrix ales ab Indis,
occidit: exsequias ite frequenter, aues;
ite, piaue uolucres...

but the fantasising portrayal of the funeral of a perhaps fictional parrot is quite a different matter from the dramatised account of the presence of deities at the funeral of a contemporary poet.

1.6.49-52, 1.8.35 (*erubuit!*), 1.14.51-4 and 3.6.85-6 (all discussed

above) are spoken aside, as are 1.4.45 (or 47) -8, 59-60 (or 62), 1.14.17-22, 2.18.20, 3.11.44 (or 43-4) and perhaps also *qui te male perdat* at 1.6.41 (see the note)⁵. That dramatic technique is strongly reminiscent of Comedy⁶, but is used little or not at all by Tibullus and Propertius. The marked dramatic element in the *Amores* is displayed also in small details such as the unusually frequent use of *ecce* (*en*): that deictic interjection occurs fifteen times in the *Amores*, but only four times in Tibullus and seven times in Propertius⁷. Ovid employs apostrophe rather more than do the other elegists (see on 1.9.24); that may be a further indication of his awareness that he is writing for performance. Moreover, Ovid often enlivens his elegies with the (usually very brief) quotation of direct speech; there are thirty-seven such passages in the collection. In this case, however, there is not a clear contrast with the practice of the other elegists: although Tibullus admits direct quotation only ten times, there are fifty-six instances in Propertius, i.e. their frequency is not much less than in the *Amores*.

The *recitatio* not only stimulated Ovid to present his love-elegies in a dramatic manner, it also, and perhaps more significantly, stimulated him to exploit his rhetorical training. The circumstances in which a poem was recited must have been very much the same as those in which a declamation was delivered and, as noted above (p. 12), the composition of love-elegies offered much the same intellectual challenge as did the composition of declamations. When he recited his earliest *Amores*-poems, Ovid may still have been attending the schools of declamation, in which he was so successful⁸. He incorporated into his poetry many of the *sententiae* of Porcius Latro, the rhetor whom he most admired; cf. Sen. *Contr.* 2.2.8:

adeo autem studiose Latronem audit ut multas illius sententias
in uersus suos transtulerit. in armorum iudicio dixerat Latro:
mittamus arma in hostis et petamus. Naso dixit [*Met.* 13.121f.]:
arma uiri fortis medios mittantur in hostis;
inde iubete peti.

et alium ex illa suasoria sensum aequae Latrone mutuatus est.
memini Latronem in praefatione quadam dicere quod scholas-
tici quasi carmen didicerunt: non uides ut immota fax torpeat,

⁵ To read *corrumpit...suo* (PYS₅) at 2.19.58 would add that couplet to this list.

⁶ See Davis (1979).

⁷ See also on 1.1.25 *me miserum!* and 1.6.52 *ei mihi*.

⁸ Cf. Sen. *Contr.* 2.2.8ff.

ut exagitata reddat ignes? mollit uiros otium, ferrum situ
carpitur et rubiginem ducit, desidia dedocet. Naso dixit [*Am.*
1.2.11f.]:

uidi ego iactatas mota face crescere flammās
et rursus nullo concutiente mori⁹.

Moreover, Ovid himself explicitly declares that he regards the arts of poetry and oratory as being closely akin and complementary; cf. *Pont.* 2.5.65ff. (to the rhetor Cassius Salanus):

distat opus nostrum sed fontibus exit ab isdem,
artis et ingenuae cultor uterque sumus.
thyrsus abest a te gustata et laurea nobis,
sed tamen ambobus debet inesse calor;
utque meis numeris tua dat facundia neruos,
sic uenit a nobis in tua uerba nitor.
iure igitur studio confinia carmina uestro
et commilitii sacra tuenda putas.

The *Amores* are thoroughly rhetorical not only in their general style¹⁰ but also in their construction and content. In the manner of *declamationes*, but in contrast particularly to Tibullus, many of whose elegies admit subtle transitions from one theme to another, most *Amores*-poems are devoted to the treatment of a single theme, which is almost always announced clearly in the opening lines. Many are, in fact, eroticised versions of *declamationes*. By far the commonest type is the *suasoria*, the exercise which Ovid found most congenial when he attended the schools of declamation¹¹: in 1.3, 2.17 and 3.2, he attempts to persuade a girl to accept him as her lover; in 1.6, 1.13, 2.2 and 3, 3.6 and 3.10, to persuade respectively a door-keeper, Aurora, a chaperon, a mountain-torrent and Ceres not to obstruct his love-affair; in 1.10, to persuade his mistress not to demand gifts; in 2.19, to persuade a husband to guard his wife more closely and the wife to be less readily accessible; in 3.4, to persuade the husband to guard her less closely; in 3.14, to persuade his mistress to dissemble her infidelities to him. The opening couplet of 1.8:

Est quaedam (quicumque uolet cognoscere lenam,
audiat), est quaedam nomine Dipsas anus

⁹ See also on 1.8.43 *casta est quam nemo rogauit* and on 3.8.55f. Ovid was not the only poet of the period to exploit Latro in this way; cf. Sen. *Suas.* 2.19f.

¹⁰ I have not attempted to give an appreciation of Ovid's style here. That is a vast subject and seems best reserved for discussion in the commentary as specific points arise.

¹¹ Cf. Sen. *Contr.* 2.2.12.

could hardly announce more unambiguously that the poem is to be an *ethopoia*, a delineation of the character of a *lena*¹². Similarly, it is clear from the opening words of 3.3:

Esse deos, i, crede

that that elegy is based on the thesis εἰ θεοὶ εἰσίν. 2.6 and 3.9 are *epikedia*, lamenting the death of Corinna's parrot and of Tibullus respectively, 2.11 is a *propemptikon*, bidding farewell to Corinna, 2.16 is a *kletikon*, inviting his mistress to join him, 1.9 and 3.1 are *comparationes*, the former comparing the way of life of a lover with that of a soldier, the latter comparing the relative merits of elegy and tragedy. The influence of declamation on 1.9 is particularly clear. At *Inst.* 2.4.24, Quintilian reports *iuris periti an militaris uiri laus maior?* as a standard subject for *comparatio*. Ovid has eroticised that exercise by substituting the lover for the lawyer. (Later in that same passage, Quintilian refers to another such exercise: *quid ita crederetur Cupido puer atque uolucer et sagittis ac face armatus*; Propertius makes detailed use of that subject in 2.12.) Several elegies develop themes most closely associated with epigram (see, for example, the introductions to 1.13, 1.14, 2.6, 2.15 and 3.7). In those poems, Ovid is exploiting his expertise in the rhetorical device of *amplificatio*, for which cf. e.g. Quint. *Inst.* 10.5.11:

illud uirtutis indicium est, fundere quae natura contracta sunt,
augere parua, uarietatem similibus uoluptatem expositis dare,
et bene dicere multa de paucis.

Almost all our information about the form and content of school-declamations is derived from handbooks written considerably later than the Augustan period, but it is reasonable to assume that comparable material must have been used in the schools in Ovid's time¹³. *Faute de mieux*, I shall on occasion refer freely to those later handbooks. In some poems, e.g. the *epikedia* (2.6 and 3.9) and the *propemptikon* (2.11), the *topoi* used and the order in which they appear correspond closely to the prescriptions given for speeches on those themes in the handbooks. Elsewhere, however, it is clear that Ovid's debt to declamation is less specific. As noted above, 3.3 is based on the thesis εἰ θεοὶ εἰσίν. No declamation on that theme is

¹² Dipsas' speech at 23ff. is yet another *suasoria*, an attempt to persuade Ovid's mistress to embark on a career of general prostitution.

¹³ This point is, however, controversial; see Russell-Wilson (1981) xxxiff., Du Quesnay (1983) 57ff., Hardie (1983) 91ff.

extant, nor any prescription for composing one¹⁴, but presumably one argued either that the gods do exist or that they do not. Ovid, however, begins by arguing that they do not, on the grounds that his mistress' perjury would not go unpunished if they did, but, by the end of the poem, he has undermined that argument by conceding that, if he were a god himself, he would allow women to swear falsely by his divinity with impunity. No disclaimer could afford to weaken his case with that broadmindedness. Such poems do not, therefore, lend themselves to systematic rhetorical analysis based on declamations or prescriptions for declamations. In particular, it is not possible to draw conclusions about significant omissions of *topoi* or about their ordering. Seneca remarks on Ovid's casual attitude to this latter point:

hanc certe controuersiam ante Arellium Fuscum declamauit, ut
mihi uidebatur, longe ingeniosius, excepto eo quod sine certo
ordine per locos discurrebat (*Contr.* 2.2.9).

A further reason why we should bear in mind that the *Amores* were written for performance as well as for reading is that there are several passages which affect an audience more pointedly than a reader. For example, at 1.5.25, Ovid brings the account of his love-making with Corinna to an abrupt halt:

cetera quis nescit?

A reader can see that the poem has reached its final couplet, but an audience has no means of knowing in advance that its salacious expectation of further revelations is to be cut short so wittily. Conversely, at 2.4.31f.:

ut taceam de me, qui causa tangor ab omni,
illic Hippolytum pone, Priapus erit,

a reader can see that the poem, and therefore perhaps also the catalogue of the types of women whom Ovid finds attractive, has by no means run its course. An audience, however, having listened to the catalogue for twenty lines, could fairly expect the rhetorical *praeteritio* in 31f. to be a signal that the catalogue, and perhaps also the poem, has reached its conclusion; cf. e.g. *Pont.* 1.2.145 *sed de me ut sileam*, where Ovid actually is marking a transition to the brief final section of the poem. Indeed, if, in *causa tangor ab omni*, they

¹⁴ The evidence for it is a brief reference by Theon (2.120 Spengel), who was probably a contemporary of Quintilian.

perceived the echo of the declaration which prefaces the catalogue, *centum sunt causae cur ego semper amem* (10)¹⁵, they would have been the more surprised when Ovid launched into a further series of confessions about his erotic predilections¹⁶. A reader is aware that 1.1 is written in elegiacs, but an audience, hearing the opening words:

Arma graui numero uiolentaque bella,

naturally expects a martial epic in hexameters. There may be a comparable joke at the beginning of 2.11, which, like 1.1, is one of the few cases in the collection where the subject of the poem is not made clear at once:

Prima malas docuit, mirantibus aequoris undis,
Peliaco pinus...

Especially if Ovid's *sodales* knew that he was preparing a poem on the subject of Medea, but not that it was a tragedy, they may have thought that these words were the beginning of an epic or of an epyllion like Catullus 64. At 3.1.63f., Ovid says to Tragedy:

altera me sceptro decoras altoque cothurno:
iam nunc contracto magnus in ore sonus.

The statement in the pentameter is rather puzzling, since the diction of the couplet is not noticeably elevated. Perhaps Ovid deepened his voice as he recited it; the pentameter, with its slightly ponderous first hemistich¹⁷, the assonance of *o* and frequent nasal sounds, would lend itself to sonorous delivery. Changes of intonation would also help to identify passages spoken aside (see above), and might ensure that there was no uncertainty as to whether the aside *erubuit!* at 1.8.35 is spoken by Dipsas or by Ovid, and whether 3.2.84 reports Ovid's words to the girl or her unspoken promise to him (see the notes). In several passages, e.g. 1.10.17, 35, 2.11.27, 2.13.27, 2.14.27, 3.1.57, the addressee is changed abruptly and without indication. Although the context is always sufficiently clear to prevent a reader's confusion, such changes would be easier in recitation, since they would presumably be accompanied by a change of intonation. 2.9

¹⁵ I owe this suggestion to Mr. I.D. Jordan. Compare the close similarity in the structure of the first and last couplets in the catalogue of rivers in love in 3.6 (25f., 81f.) and see also on 3.13.29f.; for the related technique whereby verbal ring-composition links the end of an entire elegy with the beginning, see on 1.5.26 *medii...dies*.

¹⁶ For a further possible example of this type of 'false ending', see on 2.10.22.

¹⁷ Note, however, that Elegy employs exactly the same rhythm at line 38.

and 3.11 are divided into two poems by many editors, largely because of the radical change of argument at 2.9.25 and 3.11.33. That change would perhaps not have seemed quite so drastic when the poems were recited; a pause, accompanied by a gesture of despair and perplexity, would be sufficient to overcome any difficulty which an audience might feel in understanding the shift in Ovid's attitude.

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