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Chronology¹

Ovid tells us that he began reciting poems inspired by Corinna when his beard had been cut just once or twice:

carmina cum primum populo iuuenilia legi,
barba resecta mihi bisue semelue fuit.
mouerat ingenium totam cantata per Vrbem
nomine non uero dicta Corinna mihi (*Trist.* 4.10.57ff.).

It may be that he is looking to literature as much as to his own life in using this means to signify the date of his earliest poetry, for Callimachus seems to have described himself as ἀρτιγένειος when he received his poetic inspiration from the Muses:

ὄς κ' αὖτ' ὄναρ σ(υ)μείξας ταῖς Μούσαις ἐν Ἑλικῶνι εἰλήφοι
π(αρ') αὐτ(ῶν) τ(ῆν) τ(ῶν) αἰτίων [ἐξήγησιν ἀρτιγένειος ὦν,
†ὠνκ' ὕμνησε† (Schol. Flor. 16ff. *Aet. frag.* 2)².

If Ovid's declaration is stylised, the information which it provides may be even less precise than it would be if interpreted at face-value. Nevertheless, we may infer that the earliest *Amores*-poems were probably written when Ovid was about seventeen or eighteen years old, i.e. in 26 or 25 B.C.³ Such an early dating would accord well with his boast of rapid success:

ut...ego maiores, sic me coluere minores,
notaque non tarde facta Thalia mea est (*Trist.* 4.10.55f.).

¹ The chronology of the *Amores* and the related problem of the two editions have been much discussed: see Emonds (1941) 236ff., Oliver (1945), Munari *xiii*ff., D'Elia (1958), Giomini (1959), Luck (1961) 166ff. and (1969) 151ff., Cameron (1968), Jacobson (1974) 300ff., Sabot (1976) 49ff., Hollis (1977) *xif.* and 150f., Syme (1978) 1ff., Goold (1983) 96ff., Murgia (1986a) and (1986b), della Corte (1986).

² Pfeiffer compares Quint. Smyrn. 12.309f. Μούσαι...μοι ἐνὶ φρεσὶ θήκατ' ἀοιδίην, / πρὶν γέ μοι ἀμφὶ παρεια κατασκίδνασθαι ἱούλον. Ovid's *cum primum* (57) possibly echoes Callimachus' ὅτε πρῶτιστον (*frag.* 1.21 [quoted on p. 37]).

³ This need not seem unduly precocious; compare the youthful successes of figures such as Archias (cf. Cic. *Arch.* 4f., 19) and Statius' father (cf. *Silu.* 5.3.134ff., with Hardie [1983] 6f.).

Further evidence that Ovid was moving in literary circles by the mid-twenties may be given by the inclusion of Horace among the *maiores* whom he admired, while himself receiving admiration:

...tenuit nostras numerosus Horatius aures,
dum ferit Ausonia carmina culta lyra (*Trist.* 4.10.49f.).

Horace is there referred to specifically as a lyric poet, and his most productive period of lyric composition seems to have culminated in 23 B.C. with the publication of *Odes* 1-3⁴.

The recitation of individual poems must, of course, be distinguished from the publication of a collection of poems as a book. 1.1-3 are likely to have been the first three poems in the original first book; none would have been appropriate in any later position, since they all deal with the early stages of Ovid's amatory career, and there is no reason to suppose that any of them appeared for the first time in the second edition. 1.1 has very close affinities with Prop. 3.3, 1.2 with Prop. 3.1, 1.3 with Prop. 3.2 (see the introduction to the respective elegies). Ovid is probably the imitator, since his three poems, unlike Propertius', have a dramatic continuity (see p. 92), which suggests that they draw on a common source. Moreover, it seems more likely that Ovid, in 1.2 and 3, is deflating Propertius' assertive claims for his love-poetry in 3.1 and 2 than that Propertius is exploiting Ovid's humorous poetry for his own more serious purposes. Propertius' third book was published c. 22-21 B.C.⁵ It is not, however, necessary to assume that the publication of Ovid's first book was later than that of Propertius' third; as Propertius' *sodalis* (cf. *Trist.* 4.10.45f., quoted on p. 36), Ovid presumably heard 3.1-3 before their publication. Even so, it seems more likely that Ovid's first book was published after Prop. 3, since the point of the exploitation of those particular three Propertian elegies would have been considerably enhanced if it were already known that they, like Ovid's poems which imitate them, stood consecutively at the beginning of a book.

To date the publication of the original first book (or books) to c. 22-21 B.C. is not incompatible with the view that Ovid began writing *Amores*-poems c. 26-25 B.C. Horace's earliest odes may

⁴ See Nisbet-Hubbard's introduction to Book 1, pp. xxxvff.

⁵ The latest datable reference, in poem 18, is to the death of Marcellus (in or about September 23 B.C.; see Woodman on Vell. 2.93.1). At 5.47f. *uos, quibus arma / grata magis, Crassi signa referte domum!*, Propertius shows no knowledge of the return of the standards by the Parthians in 20 B.C.

belong to the mid-thirties, but there is no evidence that any were published in book-form before 23 B.C. (see above). Publication in book-form certainly contributed to Ovid's imitation of the older elegists, as, for example, in the matching of the sequence in Prop. 3.1-3 with that in *Am.* 1.1-3. That consideration apart, however, one may reasonably doubt whether Ovid felt any pressing motivation to collect his elegies for publication. He was not interested in earning money through book-sales or in gratifying a patron with the dedication of a book. The recitation and circulation of individual elegies would have sufficed to gain him celebrity where it mattered most to him, among the members of fashionable society and in the literary circles at Rome⁶.

We know from the epigram which prefaces the second edition that Ovid originally wrote five books of *Amores*. It may be that they were all published separately. In 3.12, Ovid laments that he has lost Corinna's love because other men have been attracted to her by his praises of her in his *libelli*. Unless that poem first appeared in the second edition, we may infer that the original books were published in at least two instalments. Other evidence for the separate publication of the original books is more tenuous. The repetition of *quoque* at 2.1.1ff. most naturally suggests a new beginning:

Hoc quoque composui, Paelignis natus aquosis,
ille ego nequitiae Naso poeta meae.
hoc quoque iussit Amor;

compare the opening lines of *Trist.* 5.1:

Hunc quoque de Getico, nostri studiose, libellum
litore praemissis quattuor adde meis;
hic quoque talis erit, qualis fortuna poetae⁷.

1.15, being a *σφραγίς*-poem, may once have stood at the end of a collection separate from that concluded by the other *σφραγίς*-poem, 3.15. Quite apart, however, from the possibility that one or both may not have appeared before the second edition, this is by no means certain, given that both *σφραγίς*-poems now stand in the same collection and that Horace admits such poems at the end of two of the three books in *Odes* 1-3 (2.20, 3.30), which seem to have been

⁶ Despite the *Amores*' evident popularity, the first edition has disappeared without trace. This may indicate that the original books had a very limited circulation.

⁷ For a single *quoque*, however, in the introduction to books not published separately, cf. e.g. Verg. *Georg.* 3.1, *Aen.* 7.1, *Fast.* 6.1.

published together (see n. 4). At 2.17.29f., Ovid refers to a girl who claims falsely that she is Corinna. That does not necessarily imply that a book or books of Corinna-poems had already been published; the recitation of individual poems would have been enough to stimulate such a claim or, if the girl is merely a convenient fiction, to render plausible Ovid's assertion that the claim had been made.

There is no evidence to suggest that the original five books were ever published as a single unit, but the prefatory epigram indicates that the three books of the second edition were published together. If the text of *Ars* 3.343 is sound (see p. 103), Ovid there refers to the second edition. We cannot, however, establish a firm date for that book of the *Ars*. It is reasonable to assume that the *Ars* was complete before its sequel, the *Remedia*, was begun; at *Rem.* 155ff., Ovid shows no awareness of the pact which Gaius concluded with Phraataces in or before the spring of A.D. 2. Since, however, the third book of the *Ars* is distinct from the first two, in that it offers advice to women rather than to men, the possibility cannot be ruled out that that book was written after the *Remedia*, at any time before Ovid's relegation in A.D. 8. At *Ars* 3.811f.:

ut quondam iuuenes, ita nunc, mea turba, puellae
inscribant spoliis NASO MAGISTER ERAT,

a considerable interval between the first two books and the third seems to be implied by *quondam*. That is compatible with the view that *Ars* 3 was written after the *Remedia*. It is equally compatible, however, with the more persuasive view (see n. 11) that a two-book version of the *Ars* was produced at some indeterminable date, perhaps well before 2 B.C., and that the poem was revised⁸ and Book 3 added c. 2 B.C.-A.D. 1.

Even without the uncertain and insubstantial testimony of *Ars* 3.343, the *terminus post quem non* should probably be set some time before 2 B.C. Between 26 B.C. and A.D. 8, Ovid produced the *Amores* (five books), the *Heroides* (almost 4,000 lines = five books), the *Ars* (three books), the *Medicamina* (one book), the *Remedia* (one book), the *Metamorphoses* (fifteen books), the *Fasti* (at least six books; at *Trist.* 2.549, he claims to have drafted the whole poem [i.e. twelve books]), the *Medea* and sundry other now lost works, at an average rate of over one book per year for nearly thirty-five years. It

⁸ Note especially the references to Augustus' Naumachia of August 2 B.C. (1.171ff.), and to C. Caesar's imminent Parthian campaign, for which he seems to have set out early in 1 B.C. (1.177ff.).

may be unprofitable to speculate on the basis of estimates of the time required for composition, especially in the case of a poet as fluent as Ovid seems to have been⁹. Nevertheless, even if one supposes that he was relatively or entirely inactive as a poet for some considerable period or periods in his early life, because of his public career or his Grand Tour (see p. 82), or for some other reason, it seems unlikely that both the *Metamorphoses* and the *Fasti*, which together account for rather more than half of his poetic output before his relegation, should have been composed entirely in the brief period from A.D. 2 (i.e. after the *Remedia*) to A.D. 8. Ovid may have begun one or both of those major works¹⁰ rather earlier, breaking off for a final period of love-elegy c. 2 B.C.-A.D. 2, during which he seems to have published the *Ars* in its final form¹¹, the *Remedia* and, possibly, the double *Heroides*. If, as suggested above (pp. 26ff.), the *Ars* displays an awareness of political realities which is absent from the *Amores*, and if that difference is attributable to the shock to the *jeunesse dorée* caused by Augustus' punitive reaction to the scandal surrounding his daughter Julia in 2 B.C., the second edition of the *Amores* should not be dated to that final period of love-elegy. Very tentatively, therefore, we may conjecture that Ovid published the second edition before beginning work on the *Fasti* or the *Metamorphoses* (perhaps at some time between 12 and 7 B.C.?).

Very few poems in the *Amores* afford clues which allow us to date them with any precision. At 1.14.45ff., Ovid refers to the subjugation of a German tribe, the Sygambri:

nunc tibi captiuos mittit Germania crines;
tuta triumphatae munere gentis eris.
o quam saepe comas aliquo mirante rubebis
et dices 'empta nunc ego merce probor;
nescioquam pro me laudat nunc iste Sygambriam...'

⁹ Pont. 1-3, totalling rather more than 2,000 lines, seem to have been produced in barely more than one year, in A.D. 12-13; see Syme (1978) 39ff. Q. Cicero claimed to have composed four tragedies in sixteen days. (His brother thought this so unusually rapid that he asked: *tu quicquam ab alio mutuaris?* [Cic. *Ad Q. Fr.* 3.5.7].) Ovid's exclamation at 2.18.27f. has more point if Sabinus' replies to the heroines (at least six) were composed in a matter of days or weeks, than if they (and the world-tour which they necessitated!) occupied him for months or years.

¹⁰ Knox (1986) 4f. argues plausibly that the *Fasti* preceded the *Metamorphoses*.

¹¹ The *Ars* seems to have been conceived originally as a two-book work, offering advice only to young men, and a version in that form may have appeared several years earlier; see Syme (1978) 13ff. If that is so, a reference to the *Ars* at *Am.* 2.18.19f. (see p. 88) presents no obstacle to the hypothesis proposed below, that the second edition of the *Amores* may have appeared by c. 7 B.C.

The Sygambri did not come to the notice of the Roman public in the Augustan period until 16 B.C., when they crossed the Rhine and defeated a Roman army under M. Lollius¹². They made peace and gave hostages to Augustus in the same year. Drusus campaigned against them in 11 B.C., celebrating an *ouatio* in the following year. In 8 B.C., they were crushed and resettled by Tiberius, who celebrated a triumph over them in January 7 B.C. This passage cannot therefore have been written before 16 B.C. and, if *triumphatae...gentis* (46) is to be taken literally, it will have to be dated, at the earliest, to the later months of 8 B.C.

Vergil died on September 21st 19 B.C., and Tibullus at about the same time (see the introduction to 3.9). They are praised together, in balancing couplets, at 1.15.25ff., as poets whose works live on although they themselves are dead¹³:

Tityrus et segetes Aeneiaque arma legentur,
Roma triumphati dum caput orbis erit;
donec erunt ignes arcusque Cupidinis arma,
discentur numeri, culte Tibulle, tui.

These lines cannot therefore have been written before the autumn of 19 B.C. Vergil is referred to in a similar context, which again implies that the passage was not written in his life-time¹⁴, at 3.15.7:

Mantua Vergilio gaudet, Verona Catullo,

and the lament in 3.9 would have been written most appropriately within a short time after Tibullus' death.

One might wish to infer from the absence of Horace from the catalogue of immortal poets in 1.15 that that elegy was completed before 8 B.C., the year of his death¹⁵. Nothing, however, can be inferred from the absence of Propertius. The latest datable references in his poetry are to the consulship of P. Cornelius Scipio in 16 B.C. (4.11.66) and to the subjugation of the Sygambri, not earlier than that year (4.6.77). He may, however, have lived on well after his career as an elegist was over, as seems to have been the case with Gallus. At *Rem.* 763f.:

¹² Syme (1933) 17ff. and (1978) 4 dates the *clades Lolliana* to 17 B.C., but see Woodman on Vell. 2.97.1.

¹³ Cf. 39f. *pascitur in uiuis Liur; post fata quiescit, / cum suus ex merito quemque tuetur honos.*

¹⁴ Cf. 3.15.20 *post mea mansurum fata superstes opus.*

¹⁵ See, however, on 1.15.9-30.

carmina quis potuit tuto legisse Tibulli
uel tua, cuius opus Cynthia sola fuit?

the past tense of *fuit* tells us only that Propertius was no longer writing poetry about Cynthia. The first certain indication that he was dead is given by Ovid at lines 467f. of *Trist.* 2, which was probably written in A.D. 9; having mentioned the love-elegies of Gallus, Tibullus and Propertius, he goes on:

his ego successi, quoniam praesentia candor
nomina uiuorum dissimulare iubet¹⁶.

2.10 is addressed to Graecinus, who is probably to be identified as C. Pomponius Graecinus, consul *suffectus* in A.D. 16¹⁷. The consulship could not normally be held by a *nouus homo* before the age of forty-two, and Graecinus may have had to wait for several more years. If we may assume (in order to set the earliest reasonable date for his birth) that he attained the consulship when he was forty-eight, he will have been born in 34 B.C. Since, therefore, he would have been almost a decade younger than Ovid, he can hardly have become his *sodalis* until he was seventeen or eighteen, in 17 or 16 B.C., and since, in 2.10, Ovid attributes to him the opinion that no one can be in love with two women simultaneously, one might wish to argue for a somewhat later date for the poem, in order to allow Graecinus time and experience to formulate such an opinion. In the second edition, 3.7 presents a sequel to the boast at 2.10.26ff. (see p. 93), but it could have been written independently at an earlier date.

Apart from 1.1-3 (see p. 92), these are the only passages and poems in the *Amores* for which it seems possible to establish with confidence even such an approximate dating. None falls earlier than 19 B.C. and some are, or may be, considerably later. Two others may be mentioned more briefly. If Propertius wrote his Acanthis-elegy (4.5) after Book 3 was completed, Ovid's Dipsas-elegy (1.8), if modelled on that poem, was not written earlier than c. 22-21 B.C. (see n. 5). It is by no means certain, however, that Ovid is dependent on Propertius; see the introduction to 1.8. At 3.12.38, in a catalogue of poetic fantasies, Ovid refers to the transformation of Aeneas' ships into sea-nymphs:

quae...rates fuerint, nunc maris esse deas.

¹⁶ Propertius seems to have married eventually; see p. 29, n. 29.

¹⁷ On Graecinus, see the introduction to 2.10.

Vergil recounts that story at *Aen.* 9.77ff., and was criticised for having invented such a far-fetched conceit¹⁸. Echoes of the *Aeneid* cannot normally be used to date *Amores*-poems to the period after Vergil's death, since substantial but, for the most part, indeterminable portions of the *Aeneid* were known earlier. In this case, however, we may perhaps assume that Ovid was writing after its posthumous publication, when the controversy had gained momentum. As can be seen on other grounds, 3.12 is certainly a relatively late elegy: it cannot have appeared before, at the earliest, the original third book, since Ovid there laments that the praise of Corinna in his *libelli* has attracted other lovers to her.

It is sometimes maintained that Ovid may have published all of the original five books by 20 B.C.¹⁹ I have argued, however, that the original first book may not have appeared in published form before c. 22-21 B.C. (i.e. after Propertius' third [see p. 75]). Moreover, if the five books were complete by 20 B.C., we must accept the remarkable coincidence that almost every elegy for which a date can be estimated was either first published in, or revised for, the second edition. It seems reasonable to assume that, if all those poems were added or revised, many others which offer no such clues to their dating were also added or revised. In the epigram which prefaces the second edition, however, Ovid speaks only of excisions (4 *demptis...duobus*). *Trist.* 4.10.61f. may also refer to the re-editing of the *Amores*:

multa quidem scripsi, sed, quae uitiosa putauī,
emendaturis ignibus ipse dedi;

there also Ovid says nothing of additions or revisions²⁰. Although the argument from silence is not conclusive, nevertheless it seems unlikely that additions and revisions would have gone unremarked if they were on so comprehensive a scale as a dating of the original fifth book to about 20 B.C. would seem to entail. Moreover, for every new poem added to the second edition, a further poem would presumably have been removed from those in the original books, over and above those which Ovid declares that he has removed, i.e. the equivalent of two books; large-scale additions in the second edition would render *demptis...duobus* inaccurate, and not simply vague. It is preferable,

¹⁸ See on 3.12.38.

¹⁹ For example, by Oliver (1945) 192f., cited with guarded approval by Munari xivf.

²⁰ Contrast Mart. 10.2.1ff. *Festinata prior, decimi mihi cura libelli / elapsum manibus nunc reuocauit opus. / nota leges quaedam, sed lima rasa recenti; / pars noua maior erit.*

therefore, to assume that Ovid was still writing elegies for the original books until well after 20 B.C.

That most of the few significant datable references are restricted to the period after 20 B.C. might, in fact, suggest that that was the period in which Ovid worked most intensively on the *Amores*, with perhaps no more than one or two of the original five books being composed earlier. That would accord well with the view proposed above that the original first book did not appear before c. 22-21 B.C. I have argued that Ovid was in no hurry to collect his elegies for publication. One could, however, speculate that the number of individual poems which he produced in those early years was quite small. Certainly, it seems likely that at least two books were not complete before 19 B.C. 1.15 and 3.15 are both σφραγίς-poems, and may have stood in the final position in books of the first edition, as they do in the second. Both refer to Vergil, 1.15 also to Tibullus, as being dead. It is, of course, possible that the references to Vergil and Tibullus in 1.15 are later additions but, since that elegy is a defence against *Liur*, there is good reason to suppose that the whole poem was written relatively late, when Ovid's reputation had become established. With 3.15, we are on firmer ground, since that poem sets the seal on the whole collection, being a valediction to the genre. In support of the view that most of the original five books were composed after 20 B.C., one might suppose that Ovid's public career²¹ initially distracted him from poetry. He seems to have renounced such ambitions by the time he wrote 1.15; cf. 5f.:

nec me uerbosas leges ediscere, nec me
ingrato uocem prostituisse foro.

(That renunciation is a further reason for dating this elegy relatively late.) Again, Ovid's output may have been modest to begin with because of his Grand Tour of Sicily, Greece and Asia Minor²², which may have deprived him of the stimulus of books and a congenial audience²³. We do not know when that tour took place, but it is natural to suppose that Ovid was still quite young²⁴. Nor do we know

²¹ See on 1.15.5f.

²² Cf. *Fast.* 6.417ff., *Trist.* 1.2.77f., *Pont.* 2.10.21ff.

²³ The lack of books and of a congenial audience was to be, in very different circumstances, a recurrent cause for complaint in Ovid's exile-poetry; see pp. 35 and 63.

²⁴ *Fast.* 6.417 *puerilibus annis* would confirm this, if Ovid is there referring specifically to his visit to Troy.

for how long he was absent from Rome, but the period was presumably quite substantial; he spent *pars anni magna* (*Pont.* 2.10.29) in Sicily. The lack of datable references earlier than 19 B.C. may, however, be due largely to Ovid's re-editing of the poems. In the *Amores*-epigram, he does not explain his reasons for making the second edition, but it is a fair assumption that he was motivated by artistic considerations, as is confirmed by *Trist.* 4.10.61f. (quoted above [p. 81]), if that passage refers to the re-editing of the *Amores*²⁵. If that is the case, it was presumably the earlier, less mature, books which suffered most from excisions.

The elegies of Propertius, written over a period of about sixteen years, from c. 30 to c. 15 B.C., display a considerable development in style from book to book, and there are less marked, but still tangible, stylistic differences between the single and the double *Heroides* and in Ovid's elegiac poetry in general before and after his relegation. My attempts to detect a development in style within the *Amores*, however, have been entirely without success.

Consider, for example, the practice of postponing enclitics to follow quadrisyllabic words in the second hemistich of the pentameter²⁶. That trick of style is more common in Ovid's other elegiac works. In the *Amores*, it occurs only at 1.8.112, 3.7.10, 3.10.12, 3.13.30 and 3.14.12. 3.13 seems to be a relatively late poem (see p. 96), as is 1.8 (the Dipsas-elegy), if inspired by Prop 4.5 (the Acanthis-elegy) and 3.7, if written as a sequel to 2.10.26ff. (see p. 93). It would, however, be hazardous to assert that all the poems which display this feature are relatively late since, although very rare in Propertius (only 2.20.12), it was already well established in Tibullus' first book.

Consider also the use of 'non-caesural' hexameters, i.e. hexameters without a caesura in the third foot²⁷. There are forty-six such lines in Propertius (1:4, 2:27, 3:8, 4:7), nine in Tibullus (1:4, 2:5), four in the *Amores* (2.10.25, 3.1.25, 3.9.53, 3.15.5), but only six²⁸ in the rest of Ovid's elegiac corpus (*Epist.* 2.37, *Fast.* 3.585, 4.401, 483, 6.443, *Trist.* 4.10.7 [= *Am.* 3.15.5]). Their proportionally much greater

²⁵ The view that Ovid bowdlerised the collection (see Martini [1933] 14, Emonds [1941] 239ff.) has now lost ground. If that were the case, 3.7 and perhaps 2.13 and 14 would hardly have been retained.

²⁶ For statistics, see Platnauer (1951) 91ff.

²⁷ For statistics, see Platnauer (1951) 6ff. I do not here make Platnauer's distinction between 'non-caesural' and 'quasi-caesural', nor do I include 3.11.33. On that very unusual line, see p. 120.

²⁸ I do not include *Epist.* *Sapph.* 113.

frequency in the *Amores* than elsewhere in Ovid's elegiac corpus might seem to indicate that the *Amores*-poems in which they are found were written earlier than most of the rest of the extant collection, in the period when the influence of the other elegists on Ovid was at its strongest. In fact, however, as argued above, 2.10 and 3.9 were written many years after Ovid began writing *Amores*-poems, and 3.1 and 3.15 appeared first in the original fifth book.

Diminutives, which had been such a prominent neoteric mannerism, are used freely by Propertius in his early poetry, but become much less frequent as his style develops²⁹. No comparable decline can be perceived in the *Amores*. For example, *ocellus* occurs seven times in Catullus, ten and eight times respectively in Propertius' first two books. It is not found at all in Vergil, Horace, Tibullus or Propertius' later books. Ovid has it ten times in the *Amores* and at *Epist.* 5.47, 11.37, *Ars* 1.129, 2.453, 691 and *Fast.* 3.19. Its comparative rarity in the *Heroides* may indicate that the *Amores* were substantially complete before that work was begun (see pp. 86ff.). Its distribution within the *Amores*, however, tells us nothing. Discounting 3.[5.1], *ocellus* occurs at 1.8.37, 1.14.37, 2.8.15, 2.19.19, 3.1.33, 3.2.83, 3.3.9, 3.6.57, 79 and 3.9.49. Of the nine poems which employ the word, five, namely 1.8, 1.14, 2.19, 3.1 and 3.9, either are or may be relatively late (on 1.8, 1.14, 3.1 and 3.9, see above; in 2.19, the Corinna-affair is over [cf. 9ff.]), and none of the remaining four is demonstrably early.

The stylistic uniformity of the extant collection, however, need not weigh heavily against the view that the *Amores* were originally composed over a long period, longer perhaps than that covered by Propertius' elegies. As suggested above, the early poems, those most likely to display immaturity, in style as in other respects, are probably the least well represented in the second edition, and it is reasonable to suppose that such early poems as have survived underwent a certain degree of polishing, which resulted in stylistic uniformity.

The conclusions which it is possible and reasonable to draw are jejune and imprecise: Ovid began writing *Amores*-poems c. 26-25 B.C., a large number of those now extant were written after 20 B.C. and the second edition may have appeared by c. 7 B.C. These conclusions are jejune and imprecise largely because so few of the poems contain references to contemporary events which would

²⁹ See Gow (1932), Axelson (1945) 38ff., Tränkle (1960) 28f., Ross (1969) 22ff.

permit more definite dating. For exactly that same reason, however, the sparsity of contemporary references, our inability to date the *Amores* precisely is of little consequence to our appreciation of them. The only really significant problem raised by our uncertainty about the dating is that it obscures the relative chronology of the *Amores* and, in particular, the later books of Propertius and Tibullus. It is often assumed without debate or qualification that, in the *Amores*, Ovid is a mere ἐπίγονος, exerting no creative influence on the development of the genre of love-elegy. That view may be encouraged by the fact that the bulk of his output was produced when all or most of the other great Augustan poets were dead. It may also be encouraged by Ovid's own canon of love-elegists at *Trist.* 4.10.53f.:

successor fuit hic (sc. Tibullus) tibi, Galle, Propertius illi;
quartus ab his serie temporis ipse fui,

where the phrasing³⁰ might easily be taken to suggest that the couplet tells us more than it actually does, namely that Ovid was the last to begin his career as an elegist. There are very few passages in the *Amores*, however, which demonstrably could not have been written in the mid-twenties; Propertius' third book may not have been published before 21 B.C. (see n. 5), his fourth appeared at least as late as 16 B.C. (see p. 79) and Tibullus' second book may well have been published posthumously, in or after 19 B.C. At least in theory, therefore, Ovid may have exercised a considerable influence on the development of the genre. That possibility would be the more seductive if one maintained the view that his work on the *Amores* was so intensive as to have produced all of the original five books by 20 B.C. I have argued, however, that this was not the case, and that many of the *Amores*-poems now extant were written later. Where there is borrowing of subject-matter or diction between the *Amores* and the later books of Propertius and Tibullus, it is probable that, as is *a priori* the more likely, it is more often Ovid, the junior elegist, who is the imitator. Each instance must, however, be examined individually, on its own merits³¹.

³⁰ Cf. also *Trist.* 2.467 *his* (sc. Gallus, Tibullus and Propertius) *ego successi*.

³¹ In fact, I shall argue only once, and very tentatively, that Tibullus might be echoing the *Amores*; see on 1.2.34. If Tibullus did not draw much, or at all, on Ovid, that may be attributed largely to the fact that they were not closely acquainted; cf. *Trist.* 4.10.51f. Propertius, on the other hand, was presumably present at the first recital of many of the *Amores*-poems (cf. *Trist.* 4.10.45f.), and it seems quite probable that he was, on occasion, influenced by Ovid.

One further elegy must be mentioned in this context, and I have reserved it for separate discussion because of the special nature of the issues which it involves. 2.18 offers several tantalising hints about the relative chronology of Ovid's early works. In line 4, Ovid relates how Cupid curtailed his attempt to write in a grand genre:

tener ausuros grandia frangit Amor.

As is implied by the contrast with Macer's *Antehomerica* (1f.), and made explicit in line 11:

uincor, et ingenium sumptis reuocatur ab armis,

that genre was epic. Ovid then turned to tragedy, with rather more success, but was again foiled by Cupid:

sceptra tamen sumpsit, curaque Tragoedia nostra
creuit (et huic operi quamlibet aptus eram).
risit Amor pallamque meam pictosque cothurnos
sceptraque priuata tam cito sumpta manu;
hinc quoque me dominae numen deduxit iniquae,
deque cothurnato uate triumphat Amor (13ff.).

He goes on to describe the works which Cupid does permit him to write, declaring first:

quod licet, aut artes teneri profitemur Amoris
(ei mihi, praeceptis urgeor ipse meis!) (19f.),

and then cataloguing nine of the single *Heroides* (21ff.).

The reference to an abortive epic tells us nothing about the dating of 2.18, for that epic, like those mentioned in 1.1 and 2.1, probably never existed, and, even if it did exist, we have no further information about it beyond that given in this elegy itself. Nor is the reference to the *Heroides* very enlightening. They could have been written at any time, simultaneously with, or in intervals between, work on *Amores*-poems. That Ovid should mention so many of the single *Heroides* indicates that that collection was nearly complete³²,

³² The letter of Penelope is the first in the catalogue, that of Sappho the last. This is sometimes taken as an indication that the single *Heroides* had already been published in book-form, since those letters are respectively the first and last in the collection as now traditionally arranged; see e.g. Jacoby (1905) 71, n. 2, Rand (1907) 288. In fact, the extant letter of Sappho (which I regard as spurious) owes its present position to D. Heinsius, who may have placed it there largely on the evidence of *Am.* 2.18. (He may indeed have had access to a copy of the twelfth-century *florilegium Gallicum*, which includes excerpts from the *Epistula Sapphus* between those from *Epist.* 14 and *Epist.* 16; see Ullman [1932] 13, Dörrie [1975] 52ff., Tarrant [1981] 135f. and [1983] 272.)

but there is no difficulty in accommodating that substantial work within the period in which Ovid was writing *Amores*-poems for the original books, especially if, as argued above, that period extended until well after 20 B.C. The present tense of *profitemur* (19) and *scribimus* (22) seems to suggest that Ovid was actively engaged on more than one of his amatory works when 2.18 was written, perhaps not only the *Amores* and *Heroides*, but also, if line 19 refers to the *Ars* (see below), that poem as well. Jacobson (1974) 311 is disinclined to accept the view that Ovid wrote the *Heroides* concurrently with *Amores*-poems, on the grounds that that would be 'a striking achievement since the works are so completely different in subject, style and intent'. The validity of that objection is doubtful. It may well be that Ovid generally devoted specific periods of his career to the composition of specific works. That this was the case may be inferred from 3.1 and 3.15. In 3.1, Ovid assures Tragedy that he will devote himself to her genre after a final period as a love-elegist; in 3.15, he bids farewell to love-elegy in order to write tragedy. Similarly, in 2.1, Ovid would have us believe that he stopped writing love-elegies in order to write a *Gigantomachia*. (Ovid's failure to continue writing love-elegies in her honour is the reason why his mistress closed her door to him.) It is difficult to imagine him engaged simultaneously on, for example, the *Metamorphoses* and the *Ars Amatoria*, or the *Remedia Amoris* and the *Fasti*. The *Amores*, however, are exceptional among the significant works which Ovid composed before his relegation, in that they are small in scale. (Even the single *Heroides* have an average length more than three times that of the *Amores*-poems.) To write *Amores*-poems would not seriously distract him from a larger project. It may be that Ovid composed perhaps two or three of the original books of the *Amores*, establishing his reputation by following in the tradition of subjective love-elegy, and that he then became more ambitious and independent, writing the *Heroides* and the *Medea*, but continuing to produce his ever-popular *Amores*-poems occasionally for the amusement of his friends in the *uinosa...conuiuia* (3.1.17). Against the simultaneous composition of the *Amores* and *Heroides*, Jacobson argues further that 'the response-letters of Sabinus are more likely to have been a collection of letters in answer to Ovid's [sc. full collection] rather than separate responses issued every time Ovid wrote one of his *Epistulae*' (312). Certainly, the phrasing of 27f.:

quam cito de toto rediit meus orbe Sabinus
scriptaque diuersis rettulit ipse locis!

seems to suggest that Sabinus composed all his responses together very quickly, but he could have done so having heard Ovid recite individual *Heroides* over a somewhat more considerable period.

The declaration in line 19: *artes teneri profiteamur Amoris* is problematic. It refers either to the *Amores* or to the *Ars Amatoria*³³. If to the *Amores*, it tells us nothing about the poem's dating. If to the *Ars*, it is only slightly more instructive. Ovid may have produced a version of the *Ars* in two books at a fairly early date (see n. 11), and we do not know whether he had finished writing *Amores*-poems for the original books before he began work on the *Ars*. All that can be asserted with confidence is that a reference here to the *Ars*, like that to the *Heroides*, would hint strongly that 2.18, or at least this passage, was written at a relatively late stage in the composition of the *Amores*.

Examination of the reference to tragedy (13ff.) is rather more profitable. Ovid refers to his aspirations to be a tragedian in two other poems in the *Amores*. In 3.1, the goddess Tragedy orders him to write in her genre, and he promises to comply, but not until he has devoted a little more time to composing *Amores*-poems:

'exiguum uati concede, Tragoedia, tempus:
tu labor aeternus; quod petit illa, breue est.'
mota dedit ueniam. teneri properentur Amores,
dum uacat: a tergo grandius urget opus (67ff.).

In 3.15, Ovid bids farewell to love-elegy and announces that Bacchus, the god associated most specifically with tragedy, has summoned him to a higher genre:

Quaere nouum uatem, tenerorum mater Amorum!
raditur haec elegis ultima meta meis...
culte puer puerique parens Amathusia culti,
aurea de campo uellite signa meo;
corniger increpuit thyrsos grauiore Lyaeus:
pulsanda est magnis area maior equis.
imbelles elegi, genialis Musa, ualete (1f., 15ff.).

There is no strong reason to doubt that 3.1 and 3.15, elegies which display close verbal affinities (3.1.23 / 3.15.17, 3.1.43 / 3.15.1), were originally written as the first and last poems respectively of the fifth

³³ For a discussion of this problem, see the introduction to 2.18.

book³⁴. Neither poem contains any suggestion that Ovid has actually begun work on a tragedy. At 2.18.13f., however, he boasts that he has done so with considerable success. 2.18, therefore, or at least the passage referring to tragedy, will have appeared first in the second edition.

³⁴ The only passage which may cause some hesitation is 3.1.28 *prima...per numeros acta iuuenta suos*. If, as I have argued, Ovid may have been over thirty before the original books of the *Amores* were completed, the expression *prima iuuenta* may seem inappropriate and therefore hint at an earlier dating. Perhaps, however, it need not be pressed too closely, since it may have been borrowed from a similar context at Prop. 3.5.19 *me iuuet in prima coluisse Helicon iuuenta*.

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ISSN 0309-5541

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