

THE ART OF LOVE

*BIMILLENNIAL ESSAYS ON OVID'S ARS
AMATORIA AND REMEDIA AMORIS*

Edited by

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Lessons in Love: Fifty Years of Scholarship on the *Ars Amatoria* and *Remedia Amoris*

Steven J. Green

It is a critical topos to acknowledge that Ovid has enjoyed a resurgence of scholarly interest in the past twenty-five years. Among the modes of Ovidian scholarship receiving particular attention or development in this period have been the dynamics of genre, and Ovid's own acute generic self-consciousness; the complex intertextual dialogues created between Ovid and other writers, and indeed between Ovid's own works; Ovid's often subtle negotiation with the sociopolitical Augustan context in which he is writing; and feminist readings of Ovid's text. Though these developments are evidently fruitful for the study of all Ovid's poetry, it is quite noticeable that they have so far yielded particular benefits for the understanding and appreciation of *Heroides*, *Fasti*, and, above all, *Metamorphoses*.¹ By contrast, *Ars Amatoria* and *Remedia Amoris* have suffered relative neglect, especially by Anglophone scholars: at the current rate, a new monograph on the *Ars* can be expected to appear only once every ten years.²

¹ For the dominance of *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti* in recent Ovidian scholarship, see the review article of Myers (1999), and the strong bias towards the *Metamorphoses* in the *Aetas Ovidiana* conference held in Dublin in 2002.

² Before Gibson's (2003a) extensive commentary on *Ars* 3, the last major publications in English were Sharrock (1994a) and Myerowitz (1985). German scholarship has been slightly more active during this time period: Steudel (1992); Janka (1997); and Wildberger (1998). Compare this with the bibliography for *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti*, which enjoys new books on an almost yearly basis.

The present volume represents the first collection of essays devoted exclusively to Ovid's erotodidactic corpus to appear in English.³ In order to set its contributions in context, the following pages offer a brief review—illustrative rather than comprehensive—of scholarship on *Ars Amatoria* and *Remedia* in the last fifty years, adopting a thematic and (broadly) chronological approach.⁴

1. DATING AND STRUCTURE

Despite our apparent familiarity with the details of Ovid's career, no supposed fact from the great Augustan trickster can be taken at face value without questions of its poetic purpose. Two different theories on the dating of Ovid's erotodidactic poems have been advanced over the past fifty years. It is a curious fact that, in outlining the structure for *Ars* (1. 35–40), Ovid makes no reference to his intention to instruct women: this intention is only revealed in the final (jolting) couplet of *Ars* 2 (745–6). Many readers have gone along with the poem's façade, and supposed that Ovid's poetic production occurred in two stages: *Ars* 1 and 2 were conceived together; these were then followed some years later, either separately or as part of a second edition of all the books, by *Ars* 3 and *Remedia*. All this occurred, it is

³ A small collection of largely German papers on *Ars Amatoria* and *Remedia Amoris* appeared over thirty years ago edited by Zinn (1970). It is somewhat ironic that its most influential paper—by Little (in Zinn (1970: 64–105))—worked mainly to revitalize the issue of genre in subsequent scholarship on *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti*.

⁴ For a survey of scholarship on *Ars* in the 1990s, see also Ariemma (2001). I do not deal below with contributions to the modern textual criticism of the poems. I merely point out here the immense boost that study of *Ars* and *Remedia* received with the publication in 1961 of Kenney's authoritative Oxford Latin Text. A second edition appeared in 1994 (corrected in 1995), incorporating the readings of one manuscript—the *Hamiltonensis*—which had until 1965 been wrongly classified as a fourteenth- rather than eleventh-century production (see, briefly, Gibson (2003a: 43–5)). Other major editions of the poems to appear in recent decades include those by Lenz (1969) and Ramírez de Verger (2003). As for commentaries on *Ars*, there are two single-volume editions on all three books, by Brandt (1902) (still useful) and Pianezzola, Baldo, and Cristante (1991). There are now also substantial commentaries on each of the books of the erotodidactic corpus: Hollis (1977) for *Ars* 1; Janka (1997) for *Ars* 2; Gibson (2003a) for *Ars* 3; and Henderson (1979), Lucke (1982) and Pinotti (1988) for *Remedia*.

generally agreed, between the years 2 BC and AD 2.⁵ However, some recent scholarship has rightly advised against too literal a view of Ovid's (possibly tactical) silence in the poem's preface. For example, Sharrock (1994a: 18–20) suggests that Ovid early on obscures any hint of his coming instruction to women, so as to keep his male addressees on side at the beginning of the poem; the poet's *volte-face* is revealed to them only at the last possible moment.⁶ Consequently, a consensus is growing that *Ars* 1–3 and *Remedia* were conceived as a whole (playfully mirroring the four-book structure of Vergil's didactic poem)—a view apparently strengthened by the consistent verbal and thematic links between the four books.⁷

The intrigue surrounding the last two verses of *Ars* 2 receives fresh examination in this volume in the contrasting readings of John Henderson and Niklas Holzberg. While Henderson argues that the 'surprise' of a third book has, in fact, been subtly telegraphed by Ovid's assertions in *Ars* 1–2 of the need for parity between the sexes and for the male to be vanquished, Holzberg maintains that the last couplet of *Ars* 2 is indeed a surprise, but one in keeping with Ovid's didactic strategies and the staging of reader response found elsewhere in Ovid and other poets.

2. GENRE AND LITERARY INFLUENCE

Critical attention has long been centred on the innovative 'crossing' of genres at work in Ovid's erotodidactic poems and on the range of literary influences that are visible in the text. A great deal of work has

⁵ For the history of the debate, see now Watson (2002: 141), Gibson (2003a: 37–9). There have been some notable cases put forward for a radically different dating of Ovid's output. Syme (1978: 13–20) argues that the first edition of *Ars* may go as far back as 9 BC. Murgia (1986) argues on stylistic grounds for a date for *Ars* 3 of c. AD 8, i.e. subsequent to the composition of the first seven books of *Metamorphoses*; for criticism of Murgia's methodology, however, see Gibson (2003a: 39–43).

⁶ See also Holzberg (1997: 111–12) (= (2002c: 103)), who, noting Ovid's assumption that both men and women will be readers of *Ars* 1 and 2, reads the 'silence' of Book 1 as a joke.

⁷ For verbal and thematic links between *Ars* and *Remedia*, and the coherence of the four-book structure, see especially Küppers (1981: 2530–41); Wildberger (1998: 343–7).

been done on highlighting the poems' didactic qualities, by means both of recognized features of the didactic genre and of pointed (if ironic) allusion to generic predecessors, but it has been equally clear that there is nothing straightforward about the generic status of the poems.

Kenney (1958) noted the ways in which the poems observe generic 'norms' in their systematic use of introductory and transitional formulae typical of serious didactic; Gibson (1997) studied imperatival expressions in the *Ars* in the context of conventional usage of such expressions by other instructional texts in both verse and prose; Durling (1958) drew attention to the (colourful) poetic persona of the didactic teacher; and many have commented on Ovid's varied use of mythological digressions and *exempla*, a key component of ancient didactic.⁸ Fresh observations on the vitality and innovation of Ovid's didactic project have been made recently by Volk (2002: 157–95), who highlighted Ovid's novel status as practitioner of the art he teaches—he is lover as well as teacher and poet—and his conscious strategy of forging 'simultaneity' between the progress of the poems and the stages of his teaching. The poems also establish affiliation to didactic poetry by pointed allusion to poems in the genre, although the sentiments of Ovid's predecessors are often recast to serve the ironic and incongruous function of 'proving' a point in the philosophy of love. Leach (1964) illustrated Ovid's debt to Vergil's *Georgics*; Sommariva (1980) and Shulman (1981) shed light on Ovid's use of Lucretius; and Hollis (1973: 89–93) and especially Steudel (1992) produced evidence of much wider and complex appropriation of generic predecessors both Greek and Roman.

But the fact that Ovid has chosen the elegiac metre (novel in extant didactic) for these poems highlights a generic mixing with love elegy, which, as Küppers (1981: 2509–30) has demonstrated, is reinforced by the interplay with the erotodidactic tradition carried by characters such as Priapus and the *lena* from Roman love elegy. By a brilliant sleight of hand, which slips deceptively between apparent autobiography and literary device, Ovid regularly draws on his amatory

⁸ For the mythological digressions, see Section 6 below. For the varied functions of shorter, mythological *exempla*, see Watson (1983); Davison (1996); Jones (1997: 50–9).

'experiences' from the *Amores*, adapting these emotionally turbulent encounters to the more serious purpose of rational directives to students.⁹

Other important, though perhaps less obvious influences have also been analysed. Labate (1984: 121–74) emphasized the conceptual similarities between Ovid's instructions and socio-philosophical treatises such as Cicero's *De Officiis*.¹⁰ Gibson (2003a: 13–19), drawing on the work of earlier critics, attempted to trace the history of erotodidaxis back to early Socratic traditions and, in focusing on Book 3, detected the influences of the 'anti-cosmetic tradition' (2003a: 21–5). The richness of the various sophisticated traditions behind Ovid's love teaching, thus far detected, suggests that further work in this area may produce rewards.

3. THE SEARCH FOR THE SERIOUS MESSAGE IN ARS

With the affiliation of *Ars* to (and parody of) the didactic genre acknowledged and documented, scholars started to question whether such parody, along with other forms of Ovidian humour, were a purely literary game—as had been implicitly assumed previously—or a means of saying something more serious.¹¹ From the 1970s onwards, scholarship on the poem took on a sterner aspect, as critics set out to find a 'serious' or more deeply 'controversial' message behind the laughter: no longer assumed to be simply a repository of splendid jokes, the poems began to be probed for implicit commentary on Roman love and Augustan politics.

Amor, Cultus, and Ovidian Sincerity

The *Ars* claims to offer a cultural service to its readers: it will teach us how to love. But critics have rightly asked what exactly 'love' (*amor*) is

⁹ See e.g. Dalzell (1996: 138–46). Sharrock (2002) alludes to the way in which Ovid refuses to let us know how 'seriously' to take his poetic and erotic personae.

¹⁰ See Section 3 below.

¹¹ The issue is not unconnected with wider debates on the seriousness of messages in didactic poetry, on which see Heath (1985).

in the poem, in what sense it is teachable, and ultimately, whether there is any sense in which Ovid might be acting sincerely and seriously in his erotic advice. Fyler (1971) articulated what everyone has always known—that there is a serious problem in Ovid's love teaching, the inherent paradox of controlling the uncontrollable. He argued that *amor* is an irrational passion, and that the poet's attempt to bring it under a rational framework works only by trivializing the passion and reducing it to the level of an emotionless stratagem. On a more general level, he argued that *Ars*, therefore, could be seen as a serious anti-classical treatment of art and experience, in that it offered 'a sceptical examination of the limitations of genre as an ordering principle' (1971: 196). If it had become impossible for Ovid to be serious about love, then he could at least be serious about art.

A more optimistic view of Ovid's cultural aims in *Ars* was advanced a few years later by Solodow (1977). Solodow argued that, by comparing the life of the lover to that of the soldier, farmer, orator, and philosopher, Ovid seeks to raise the status of the lover and the (love-)poet to the plane of more traditionally respectable 'career paths': Ovid simultaneously plays with the didactic tradition and seeks to ennoble the lover, to attain dignity and authority for both himself and his subject. By means of his mock-solemn tone, which can be taken either as a joke or serious comment, Ovid allows us to entertain the notion of the lover as a 'cultural ideal'. The lover is presented first and foremost as a deceiver—of others and indeed himself—in love, the game of illusions. This deception is seen as a form of art, and the lover consequently as an artist: both the lover and the poet himself are thus included within this cultural ideal. Along the same lines, but with a more specific focus, Stroh (1979a) demonstrated the ways in which Ovid equates the skills of the lover and the orator: both types of individual must be adept at the art of disguise (*dissimulatio*) and simulation (*simulatio*). The 'lover', in such analyses, has become the agent of behaviour, rather than the subject of emotions.¹²

Solodow's emphasis on a potentially serious cultural message in *Ars* anticipated the emphases of two important monographs on the

¹² This commonly felt 'essential paradox' is played out in many different ways by different critics, including in this volume. See Rosati on 'Love 1' and 'Love 2'.

poems in the mid-1980s. Labate (1984) argued that the *Ars* rejects earlier elegy's straightforward opposition between Roman civil life and the life of love, and instead sets up love as a serious ethical concern by emphasizing the connections between the relationships of lovers and other Roman social models—in particular, the social bonds between friends, between the *kolax* or flatterer and his patron, and between slave and master. In a central chapter (1984: 121–74), Labate worked through Ovid's adaptation of Cicero's *De Officiis*. Cicero had emphasized the positive personal ethics by which one might earn respect from peers, establish harmonious personal relationships, and, ultimately, contribute to the smooth running of society: importance was placed on mutual gain through reciprocity, personal *decorum*, the arts of persuasion, and the avoidance of excess. Ovid, seeing love as a natural medium for the displaying of 'erotic' social virtues, likewise encourages his students to observe the rules of reciprocity in the giving of gifts, to exercise *decorum* in both their looks and behaviour, and to be attentive to the needs of their beloved and develop the arts of persuasion; acting in this way will win the favour of the beloved and ensure the smooth running of an amorous relationship.

Just one year later, on the other side of the Atlantic, another important, yet quite different, cultural assessment of the poem was advanced by Myerowitz (1985). Whereas Labate had been working within the traditions of Italian and German philology, Myerowitz came to the poem from an American tradition of sociological and cultural approaches to text. Most significantly, she argued that Ovid makes a clear (and potentially serious) distinction in the poem between instinctual love and the culturally determined manner in which this instinctual love is played out: Ovid stresses the way in which *cultus* ('culture', 'refinement') has the power to convert wild and instinctual love (*amor/eros*) into an elaborate and dynamic cultural game played by both parties: a 'conventionalised seduction'. The playing of this game is revealed as an art form, and the successful lover is in every sense an artist: both must apply control (*ars*) to a natural energy (be it *eros* and the woman (lover) or *ingenium* (artist)).¹³

¹³ Attempts, subsequent to Labate and Myerowitz, to discover a cultural or otherwise 'serious' message behind the poem include Kennedy (1993: 64–82), who re-emphasized the culturally constructed nature of Ovid's love experiences and love

In the present volume, both Katharina Volk and Molly Myerowitz-Levine reassert a (serious) sociological significance to the *Ars*, in that they both ask what Ovid's comments on 'the mating game' have to say about love as a social phenomenon. Volk, concentrating on the rhetoric of the *praeceptor*, argues that lovemaking is presented specifically as a cultural construct, in that the poem's instructions are consciously directed towards a specific audience, namely certain sectors of Roman society, at a (broadly) specific time, namely contemporary Augustan Rome. Myerowitz-Levine, on the other hand, takes her cue from some strands of modern evolutionary science, which argue against a straightforward opposition between Nature and Culture in favour of a system of complex interaction between the two: 'human nature manifests itself on a field of reciprocity between Nature (universal) and Nurture (culturally specific...)' (Ch. 13 below). The process of sexual selection—in other words, 'the mating game', the subject of Ovid's poem—operates at the intersection between nature (physical instinct) and culture (the specific strategies adopted to achieve sexual fulfilment). Myerowitz-Levine argues that, consistent with this philosophy, Ovid shows an awareness of not only the culturally specific aspects of lovemaking, but also those aspects that are universal and paralleled in the natural world. It is suggested, therefore, that the overall tenor of the poem is one closer to the tenets of modern evolutionary science than to cultural specificity. The kind of 'love' taught and reflected in the *Ars Amatoria* has, on this reading, fundamental similarities with the erotic behaviours and feelings of the human animal in any age and place, whereas in Volk's reading it is specific to Ovid's Rome.

Augustan Politics

It is probably fair to say that before the 1970s the potential antagonism between the poem's erotic content and Augustan discourse had been acknowledged but not scrutinized in detail: any politically

teaching in *Amores* and *Ars*, and Wildberger (1998), who argued that Ovid teaches a serious lesson in how to enjoy an 'elegiac' love affair without suffering the typical elegiac pitfalls. Broadly speaking, subsequent critics have tended to respond to either Labate or Myerowitz, but rarely to both. Both, however, appear in the present volume.

controversial aspects to the poem were, on one view, outweighed by the overwhelmingly harmless and 'apolitical' atmosphere of the burlesque.¹⁴

Holleman (1971) offered a serious and detailed analysis of some of the political implications of *Ars*. In particular, he demonstrated how Ovid champions romantic love by using Augustus' own discourse against him: so, for example, Roman lovemaking is viewed as a consequence of both Augustus' much-vaunted *otium* and the subversive example set years ago by Romulus, a king with close associations with the emperor. In spite of this, the political force of the poem continued to be downplayed in the 1970s.¹⁵ Nevertheless, Holleman's broad approach eventually enjoyed serious, if critical, engagement from Labate (1984: 48–64). Labate argued that, in the *Ars*, there is no clash between the worlds of love and Augustan civil life, but rather the two are harmoniously combined as different sides of the same reality: solemn public joy could now be linked, without irony, to frivolous private joy (as in, for example, the celebration at the *naumachia* at *Ars* 1. 171–6). Clear models for this innovation, Labate (1984: 78–89) suggested, could be found in Hellenistic poetry, where the combination of the mundane (crowds of people, noise) and the public (opulence of public buildings) emphasizes the truly cosmopolitan nature of a city in which all classes of people can prosper. Moreover, the lovers' sharing of space and time with Augustan civil life is 'sanctioned' by the conduct of Romulus against the Sabine women: from that point on, public ceremony and love became intertwined.

The easy combination of unlike attitudes has not suited all readers, however. Myerowitz (1985) argued that Ovid refuses to marry the two Augustan ideals of pride in the present and respect for the past;

¹⁴ Wilkinson (1955: 133) speaks of the 'irreverent mind of the poet'; Kenney (1958: 208) labels the poem 'an immoral and subversive work' and suggests that it might foster adultery, but offers no development of these remarks. There is some evidence here, perhaps, of an older critical approach which tended to the opinion that texts could only really have political force if they specifically referred to formal political institutions and their personnel; see Kennedy (1993: 34–9).

¹⁵ Hollis (1973: 86) shies away from the political implications of the poem—'the general atmosphere of the *Ars* was unhelpful to Augustus' policy of moral reform'—emphasizing instead an atmosphere of 'sharpness and detached, ironical humour' (1973: 113). Compare also Barsby (1978: 21), who detects irreverence rather than political force.

moreover, the negative impression stamped on Romulus' orchestration of the first Roman marriages might be read as a criticism of Augustan legislative control over marriage (1985: 57–72). In direct opposition to Labate, Sharrock (1994*b*) put forward a forceful reassertion of the poem's political subversion.¹⁶ In particular, Sharrock (1994*b*: 107–13) stressed the necessarily political nature of Roman didactic poetry after Vergil and the fact that sex was an inextricably political issue in Augustan Rome.¹⁷ She emphasized the Ovidian tactic of using Augustus' maxims against him (1994*b*: 105–6, 108–9) and uncovered a deliberate violation of Augustan legislation in the Mars and Venus episode in *Ars* 2 (1994*b*: 113–22).

If one apparent trend of more recent times has been to revert back almost to the view that the poems are an essentially harmless and witty literary game,¹⁸ this volume rekindles the potential of the *Ars* for political antagonism. Sergio Casali argues that to view Ovid in *Ars* as an intentionally subversive character is an approach fully legitimized by Ovid himself, who tells us in his own (later) works about the anti-Augustan reception of the poem (most notably by Augustus himself): looking for anti-Augustan sentiment in *Ars* is, therefore, a strategy of reading which the poet prescribes for his 'Model Reader'. Focusing on the most overtly 'Augustan' part of the poem—the Parthian expedition of Gaius Caesar (1. 171–228)—Casali invites us to read the event as an episode which exposes tensions in the dynastic family and draws attention to the spectacle and theatricality of the Emperor's Parthian campaign.

Concentrating on *Ars* 3, Roy Gibson assesses the political implications of the *praeceptor's* advice of moderation in several aspects of women's lives. Instead of observing the traditional stereotypes that linked hairstyle, clothing, and use of cosmetics to either sexual purity or sexual promiscuity, Ovid advocates a principle of individual decorum, whereby each woman must choose the style that best suits her: in short, female appearance is judged to be a matter of

¹⁶ See also, along similar lines, Davis (1995).

¹⁷ See also Section 4 below.

¹⁸ See Toohey (1996: 162–9); Dalzell (1996: 156) '[The poem's] purpose is not to scandalise, but to tease'; Watson (2002: 143, 149). See also Holzberg (1997: 119–21) (= 2002*c*: 111–13) who argues that the very lack of clarity surrounding the status of the women and messages given militates against the view that the poem is politically subversive.

aesthetics rather than morality. This Ovidian strategy can be felt to clash with Augustus' *Leges Iuliae*, which had reinforced the polar stereotypes for *meretrix* and *matrona* by requiring women to dress according to their sexual status. In rising above these stereotypes, however, Ovid can be seen to criticize the extremities of the Augustan law; on a more general level, this may amount to an implicit criticism of the contradictions of Augustan discourse itself.

The political status of women in the Augustan age is also the focus of Alessandro Barchiesi's paper, which sees both the *Leges Iuliae* and the *Ars Amatoria* as creative attempts to redraw the boundaries for different groups of women. Against a backdrop of widespread anonymity in the *Ars*, Barchiesi focuses on two named individuals—the historical 'first lady' Livia and the mythological Andromache—and demonstrates the ways in which these two women at one time represent polar opposites (the ideal wife and the concubine respectively), and at another appear to occupy a 'middle ground' between the two poles. The instability of female categorization in the *Ars* is, in turn, a (playful) commentary on the negotiation of gender roles in an Augustan age that embraces both the public image of the ideal wife and the ownership and (public) display of erotic, pornographic artwork.

4. GENDER, STATUS, AND THE SPECIALIZED NATURE OF ARS 3

For many years, it would seem, little distinction was made between *Ars* 1–2 and *Ars* 3, despite the fact that each was ostensibly addressed to opposing sides in the 'sexual war': or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that *Ars* 3 was largely ignored in general discussions of the poem.¹⁹ In more recent years, however, analyses of the status of the female addressee and the diverse make-up of the internal

¹⁹ If it was the case that *Ars* 3 used to be regarded as little more than a literary experiment in reversing tactics from the earlier books, it was a partially misguided view: there are relatively few direct reversals of instruction; see Hollis (1973: 101–4); Downing (1990: 237–8); Miller (1993: 233).

audience of *Ars* 3 have opened up the text to both political and gendered readings.

Myerowitz (1985) offered an important contribution to understanding the difference between the instructions given to men and women in the poem, drawing attention to the way in which Ovid's instructions observe the traditional cultural distinctions between the 'active' male and the 'passive' female. The man's sexual journey is an active exercise that sees him progress (with any luck) from the public forum of the city at the beginning of *Ars* 1 to the private quarters of the girl's bedroom at the end of *Ars* 2;²⁰ he is taught to rein in his natural instinctual love (*eros*) by converting it into sophisticated seduction (*cultus*); the ship, representative of man's control over nature, becomes a suitable metaphor for his sexual progress. The woman, by contrast, starts and ends *Ars* 3 in her bedroom, and is encouraged to occupy herself in the 'passive' exercise of cultivating her physical appearance and hiding blemishes;²¹ her *eros* is destructive and uncontrollable; consequently, the ship metaphor is never used of her role in the games of love. In essence, Myerowitz argued that women were not being instructed in their own right but in order that they might become 'sophisticated accomplices' in the male game of love: they needed to be able to appreciate and comply with the rules of the man's game of seduction.²² Along similar lines, Downing (1990) read the *praeceptor* in *Ars* 3 as an 'anti-Pygmalion' figure. Whereas Pygmalion famously constructed a statue of the perfect woman, only to desire that it be brought to life, the *praeceptor* works in the opposite direction by starting with the live woman and attempting to turn her into a (passive) living statue by covering her up with all manner of cosmetics and garments, and keeping her movement and speech to a minimum. In short, it was argued that the *praeceptor*, essentially hostile towards the real woman, whom he regards as savage, offensive, and physically flawed, aims to make her more amenable to the male audience by replacing the natural with the

²⁰ For the progression of the instruction in *Ars* 1–2, see esp. Dalzell (1996: 138–9).

²¹ Perhaps the only discernible sense of 'progression' for women in *Ars* 3 is the general (but dimly marked) movement from 'elementary' to 'advanced' instruction; see Gibson (2003a: 1–7).

²² Myerowitz (1985: esp. 79–86, 97–101, 123–8, 134–41).

artificial.²³ The issue, although formally it refers to the *praeceptor* not to 'Ovid himself', has close affinities with a perennially intriguing question in Ovidian scholarship: whose side is he on? Such generalizing views on Ovid's treatment of women have been nuanced by other critics who have argued that the *praeceptor* should be viewed as a figure who, whilst serving male interests for the most part, does offer some instruction to women which appears to be principally for their benefit.²⁴

Male-oriented instruction in *Ars* 3 implies the presence of a male audience for the book. Miller (1993: 238–41) noted that Ovid often distances himself from his female addressees in *Ars* 3, particularly in self-reflective comments on the progress and appropriateness of the lecture he is delivering; such reflections suggest the existence of a male audience in the background, at least for part of the time. This view received further development by Gibson (2003a: 19–21), who showed that an eavesdropping male audience had long been written into the tradition of erotodidaxis to women.

But ambiguity resides not only in the question of the make-up of the internal audience. The social status of the primary, female addressee is open to question—and this carries political implications in the light of the restrictions placed on the sexual behaviour of certain groups of women under the *lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis* of c.18 BC. What was already a 'golden oldie' in Roman love elegy (the status of the *puella* and the implications of that for the moral and political ambience of the imagined world), becomes even more complex an issue in erotodidaxis, where the reading situation (and hence the implied status of the readers) has gained a new generic foundation. Many have argued against a face-value acceptance of Ovid's frequent disclaimers about married women (as the targets or

²³ Downing (1990: 240) 'the calculated, artificial effect must replace the spontaneous, natural given'. The charge of misogyny in *Ars* was prominently levelled at Ovid by Leach (1964). For further differences between the instructions given to male and female, see Sharrock (1994a: 44–6); for further observations on the male orientation behind the advice given to women in *Ars* 3, see Holzberg (1997: 111–15) (= 2002c: 103–7); Wildberger (1998: 343–80).

²⁴ For such nuanced approaches, see Volk (2002: 165–6); Gibson (2003a: 19–21 *et passim*), who detects 'gender confusion' in the figure of the *praeceptor*, in that he is both male and usurper of the position usually occupied by a woman, the *lena*.

audience of the *Ars*), on the ground that Ovid's advice elsewhere in the poem—as well as the ambiguity of the terms *puella* and *uir*—might well suggest instruction in adultery.²⁵ This approach was furthered by Gibson (1998) and (2003a: 35–6), who argued that Ovid constructs a hybrid female addressee for *Ars* 3—a mixture of both *matrona* and *meretrix*—which provocatively eschews the categories of women largely accepted by society and enshrined in the Augustan legislation.²⁶

5. *REMEDIA AMORIS*: ANTIDOTE OR POISON?

Remedia has not traditionally received as much attention in its own right as *Ars*. For a long time, *Remedia* seems to have been regarded largely as an exercise in reversing the strategies of *Ars*—one experiment too far in the eyes of some.²⁷ Granted that there are some clear examples of reversals of advice in *Remedia*,²⁸ it is now widely acknowledged that this strategy constitutes only a small part of a poem that develops in directions quite distinct from *Ars*.

This is most obviously the case in the poem's use of imagery and metaphor. In stark contrast to (male) passions in *Ars*, love in *Remedia* is consistently viewed as a destructive force, comparable to a disease or wound. Fittingly, Ovid assumes the identity of the medical doctor bringing relief to a patient. The doctor-poet makes regular use of medical terminology, and *Remedia* itself is structured along the lines of a medical assessment: the 'doctor' starts by dealing with the disease from incubation period, through to critical period and cure; he then moves to caring for the patient whilst he/she²⁹ is in convalescence.³⁰ In treating love in this way, Ovid draws on a variety of different

²⁵ See Miller (1993: 233–6); Sharrock (1994b: 109–13); Davis (1995).

²⁶ See also Section 3 above.

²⁷ See esp. Fränkel (1945: 67–72).

²⁸ See Hollis (1973: 101–4); Henderson (1979: p. xvi).

²⁹ Though the instruction is purportedly offered to women as well as men (e.g. *Rem.* 51–2), the overriding impression is that the instruction is predominantly aimed (once again) towards men: see Henderson (1979: 42); Davisson (1996: 242); see also (John) Henderson in this volume.

³⁰ For the medical imagery in general, see esp. Henderson (1979: p. xiii *et passim*); Pinotti (1988: 15–23 *et passim*); Toohey (1996: 171); Watson (2002: 162–3).

traditions: Hellenistic didactic cure-poems, such as Nicander's *Alexipharmaca* (on poisons and antidotes) and *Theriaca* (snakes and remedies for snakebites); Roman love elegy, which constantly speaks of the pain of love; and philosophical contemplation on the ruinous nature of love from Lucretius' fourth book.³¹

In more recent times, scholars have looked for deeper messages from *Remedia*. Detecting a strong metaliterary consciousness running through Ovid's love-elegiac output, Conte (1989) viewed *Remedia* not simply as a rejection of love, but more specifically as a renunciation of elegiac love and, by inference, the composing of love elegy itself. The elegiac form of love, which involves both suffering and an unwillingness/inability to relinquish the pain, is totally dismantled by a text purporting to teach a cure to willing patients.³² Coming to the poem from a different angle, Davisson (1996) argued that the *exempla* in *Remedia*, both mythological and non-mythological, fail to serve their outward function of acting as character role models for those seeking a path out of love. Instead, the reader is presented with predominantly negative foils (usually female), and many of the positive role models proffered are dubious, in that they suffer beyond love in the established mythical tradition.³³ The (playful) implication for the reader is either that love cannot be easily cured, or that the cure itself may turn out to be fatal: either way, the reader may become reluctant to abandon love after such instruction.

Underlying Davisson's piece is a view of *Remedia* as a didactic poem which, to some extent, deliberately 'backfires', in that it fails to offer convincing instruction on how to fall out of love. It is this general view of the poem which has produced some of the most interesting scholarship of the present decade. Brunelle (2000–1) has argued that *Remedia* cannot escape erotics on any level: it is not just its erotic content—handled either directly or through allusion and innuendo—that is a problem, but also the pleasurable sound and rhythm of the elegiacs themselves, a metre inextricably linked to

³¹ See Wilkinson (1955: 136); Henderson (1979: pp. xii–xvii).

³² This view is endorsed by Holzberg (1997: 115–18) (= 2002c: 107–11).

³³ For a reassertion of Ovid's logical use of mythological *exempla* in *Remedia*, however, see Jones (1997: 50–9), who conducts a detailed analysis of Ovid's rhetorical strategy of offering an enjoiner to his readers accompanied by arguments/proofs.

love.³⁴ All this is at odds with Ovid's purported attempt to rid the reader of thoughts of love. In effect, then, Ovid has created 'a poem whose elegiac form is diametrically opposed to its didactic goal' (2000–1: 129). If we want a way out of love, then, we are ultimately compelled to separate out the inseparable: be a *reader*, enjoy the poetry and be drawn into love, or be a *student*, and avoid such poetry in the first place (but how can we learn this advice without being a reader?). Taking a different approach, Fulkerson (2004) has argued for the inescapable circularity of Ovid's advice in *Remedia*. Ovid's list of apparently unerotic pursuits designed to take the lover's mind off love—forensic work in the law courts, warfare, farming, fishing, hunting, travelling—are, for the reader of Ovid's elegiac poetry, by now so tainted with erotic overtone and potential as to draw him/her back to love, and back again to the *Ars*. What ultimately emerges is the painful truth that any cure is relative: the only escape from a bad love is to replace it with another (one hopes) less painful love.

Recent scholarship stimulates both Philip Hardie and Gianpiero Rosati in their differing readings of *Remedia* in this volume. Both are concerned with Ovidian repetition and intertextuality, and with the apparently contradictory claim in *Remedia* both to cancel and not to cancel the teaching of *Ars*. Rosati, consonant with Brunelle and Fulkerson, detects in the poem's intertextual resonances a reaffirmation of the overriding power of love. Hardie, by contrast, argues for a serious and constructive message in *Remedia*: he suggests that Ovid is attempting to undo the teaching of *Ars* and replace it with the (albeit challenging) anti-erotic art of forgetting.

6. MYTHOLOGICAL 'DIGRESSIONS'

Ars and *Remedia* are peppered with various extended mythological 'digressions'—as they are still popularly (if inaccurately) known—which have long proved favourites with many readers. But their

³⁴ Interestingly, the apparent contradiction between *Remedia's* alleged purpose and the seductive pleasure of the poetic medium was noted almost two hundred years ago by August Graf von Platen; see Brunelle (2000–1: 123 n. 1).

particular function or functions within the poems—beyond being simply an inherited part of the didactic tradition going back to Hesiod—have been a matter of some debate over the past fifty years. Owing to the length and colourful subject matter of some of these episodes, some scholars have viewed them purely as entertainment, with little or no connection to the contexts in which they were placed.³⁵ By contrast, the first systematic analysis of fourteen of the mythological digressions, conducted by Weber (1983), argued for the strong logic and integrity of these episodes within Ovid's overall didactic strategy. Few, however, were convinced by the neatness of Weber's theories,³⁶ and the debate has since developed into analyses of the *complexity* of the relationship between 'digression' and 'main text'.

Myerowitz (1985: 151–74) argued that the mythological digressions involving Daedalus and Icarus and Calypso and Ulysses demonstrate that the controlling force of *ars*—as represented by Daedalus' craftsmanship and Ulysses' eloquence—has limitations, in that it is ultimately fixed by nature's absolutes. As such, these episodes can be seen to deepen the arguments of the main text—which champions the power of *ars* in the sphere of love—by introducing paradoxes and limitations. Myerowitz also identified the metaliterary potential of the Daedalus and Icarus episode by reading Daedalus as the didactic poet himself: both Daedalus and the poet offer creative ways of attempting to control nature by *ars*.

These same two mythological digressions received fuller attention from Sharrock (1994a: 78–83, 87–195), who argued for much greater complexity in the didactic function of these episodes. The Calypso and Ulysses episode is ostensibly introduced as an example of how to keep hold of a girl, and yet it is immediately problematized by the fact that Ulysses actually wants to leave. The reader has to work hard for a lesson here: if we are being taught the merits of good speaking,

³⁵ For views along these lines, see esp. Wilkinson (1955: 123–7), who speaks of these digressions as delightful and vivid narratives that help break the monotony of the poem's instructional sections; see also Galinsky (1975: 42). For a more balanced early view of these episodes, see Hollis (1973: 104–10).

³⁶ See E. J. Kenney's review in *CR* 35 (1985: 389–90). For separate attention to the mythological episodes prior to Weber, note (e.g.) the unpublished Michigan dissertation of J. D. McLaughlin, 'The Relevancy of the Mythological Episodes to Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*' (1975).

are we meant to follow the example of Ulysses (who entrances his girl with his speaking) or Calypso (who manages to detain her lover by her own rhetorical powers)? The Daedalus and Icarus episode is even more dynamic, in that it teasingly invites the astute reader to pursue a sustained metaliterary reading. Daedalus may be seen as the exiled/exilable poet, Icarus as the daring/doomed poem (*Ars*), the sun as the disapproving Augustus. But the mapping of myth onto reality is by no means exact, and the reader is encouraged to enter into playing with different meanings.

Such appreciation for the dynamic relationship between digression and main text has had a strong influence on scholarly treatment of several other mythical episodes in *Ars* and *Remedia*,³⁷ and the present volume strives to push such negotiation further. Mario Labate argues that the first digression of the poem involving Romulus and the Sabine women, which draws attention to the absence of *ars* in the process of selecting a mate, acts as an effective anti-exemplum to make more prominent the positive teaching of the *Ars* as a whole. Taking a rather different approach to the issue, Alison Sharrock invites us to rethink the relationship between 'digression' and 'main text' by concentrating on the poem's 'narrative' and, more specifically, on the temptations offered by the text to narrativize. By looking at both the narrative 'digressions' and the 'action' of central characters implicit in the instructional parts of the text, Sharrock argues that both parts can be seen to work together, rather than in opposition, in the creation of an 'implied narrative'. It might even be said, Sharrock contends, that it is the instructional parts that are obstructive, in that they slow down the instructional momentum of the 'digressional' stories.

7. THE ROLE OF THE READER

One of the first to set forth an extended analysis of the role of the (sophisticated) reader in the construction of meaning in Ovid's

³⁷ Digressions in *Ars*: for Mars and Venus, see Sharrock (1994b: 113–22); for Cephalus and Procris, see Gibson (2003a: 356–60) with his bibliography. Digressions in *Remedia*: for Circe and Ulysses, see Brunelle (2002).

erotodidactic poems was Sharrock (1994a). Sharrock identified two types of reader of *Ars*: the (internal) addressee of the text ('Reader') and the (external) addressee ('reader'), loosely defined as an educated Roman man with a mildly subversive air (1994a: 5–10). She suggested that, because the *Ars* does not have a named addressee, there is greater potential for slippage between 'Reader' and 'reader'. The text, then, creates both 'naive' and 'sophisticated' readings/readers, and we can enjoy both acting as the naive, first time reader (like the lover) and looking down with superiority on the 'Reader' (1994a: 16).

By looking closely at three passages from *Ars* 2, Sharrock argued that it is the 'reader' who brings his own literary knowledge to bear on the poem to produce pleasant 'hidden' meanings. Thus, for example, to the reader well-versed in the traditions of erotodidaxis, and Tibullus Book 1 in particular, Ovid shows, through simile and metaphor, that he is trying to establish a pederastic relationship with his pupil (1994a: 27–32). To the same literate reader, Ovid shows himself, in his use of language, to be adopting the role of the love magician (1994a: 61–86). It is not so much the (naive) 'Reader' who is being seduced here, but the knowledgeable literate 'reader' who is prey to this 'magical and pederastic seduction' (1994a: 86).

Sharrock's critical approach has helped to open up the dynamics and complexities of the text, and its influence is strongly felt in this volume. In a novel piece, Duncan Kennedy focuses on the female reader/Reader of *Ars* 3, and takes up the invitation offered by the *praeceptor* to (re)read the *Heroides* as part of an implicit love-lesson: by 're-enacting' the scenarios in the letters with a certain level of detachment, Ovid suggests that the pupil may be able both to empathize with the heroine's words and to assess their erotodidactic significance. Focusing on two of the letters—those of Ariadne and Phyllis—Kennedy demonstrates how the *Heroides* can be used by the female reader both to reinforce the *praeceptor's* advice and to offer additional, 'extra-curricular' instruction.

Other contributors to this volume focus more specifically on historical post-Ovidian readers. Markus Janka argues for creative inter-textual dialogue between Martial and Ovid's erotodidactic poems, whereby Martial can be seen to test the strengths and weaknesses of Ovid's advice when the latter is applied to the more 'extreme' amatory environment of epigram. Ralph Hexter and Genevieve Liveley analyse

the fluctuating ways in which Ovid's erotodidactic corpus has been received in more recent times. Hexter charts the curious history of Ovid's erotodidactic works as school texts over the past thousand years, in which the poems became popular for either their (innocent) Latinity or their raunchy messages. Focusing on a single poem from twentieth-century poet Robert Graves, Liveley explores Graves's close critical engagement with Ovid's *Ars* and *Remedia*—an engagement that, on a more general level, comments on the challenges of reading (and misreading) Ovid's poetry over the past millennium.

Part I

Poetics