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I 2

MEGAN O. DRINKWATER

Militia amoris

Fighting in love's army

militiae species amor est: discedite, segnes;
non sunt haec timidis signa tuenda uiris.
nox et hiems longaeque uiae saeuique dolores
mollibus his castris et labor omnis inest.
(Ov. *Ars* 2.233–236)¹

Love is a type of soldiery: depart, lazy ones;
these military standards are not to be observed by timid men.
Night and storm and long journeys and cruel pains
and all toil is within these tender camps.²

Roman masculine identity was oriented around warfare, as is perhaps most clearly shown in the Latin word for virtue (*uirtus*), which means specifically masculine virtue, courage and valour, with man (*uir*) at its very root. Any decision not to participate in Roman imperial expansion through military service was a failure to espouse cultural values, and could easily be construed as a renunciation of allegiance to the state. That military affairs were so integral to the cultural climate at the end of the republic is made clear by the protestations of the famed statesman and orator Cicero, one whose pen was ever mightier than his sword. His urging in the treatise *On Duties* that 'although most people believe that military affairs are more important than civil ones, this idea ought to be de-emphasized' (*cum plerique arbitrentur res bellicas maiores esse quam urbanas, minuenda est haec opinio, Off.* 1.74) well illustrates how overwhelmingly common opinion ran counter to his sentiment.³ The pose thus adopted by the Roman elegists, that they were soldiers of Amor rather than of Roma, was a rejection of *Romanitas* itself, and more specifically the *Romanitas* promoted by the emerging *princeps*,

¹ All quotations from the *Ars Amatoria* and the *Amores* are from the text of Kenney (1995).

² All translations are my own.

³ For assistance in clarifying the point, I thank Jim Abbot and Laurel Fulkerson. The text is that of Winterbottom (1994).

Augustus (Davis 1999: 438–42, Wyke 2002: 34–5).⁴ The degree to which this renunciation should be taken seriously is a subject of disagreement among scholars of elegy: is it a playful game, meant only to be humorous for its ridiculousness (Murgatroyd, 1975)? Is it a serious attempt to undermine the Augustan program (Davis 1999)? Or somewhere in between (Gale 1997, Miller 2004 144–6)?

The interlacing of love and war has a long history in the literature of Greece and Rome. With seeds planted in Homer, initially nursed by Sappho⁵ and cultivated in Greek drama, the Hellenistic poets and early Republican Roman literature, the trope comes to full flower with the Latin elegists of the first century BC (Murgatroyd 1975: 68–79; Lyne 1980: 71–2; Gale 1997: 78–9). With Tibullus, Propertius and Ovid, military imagery in love poetry developed into a sustained metaphor with several thematic variants. One such variant presents love itself as war and sex as a battle, with Love or the *puella* as a commanding officer and the lover as soldier. Another opposes love to warfare, sometimes as a career or lifestyle choice that is often linked to the poet's choice of *métier* or genre. The third variation I shall address conflates the first two through triumphal imagery, with the lover's defeat at the hands of love, or the lover's triumph over his girl. To complicate the issue, on occasion the *militia* and *seruitium amoris* tropes overlap, as in Prop. 1.1 with Cynthia's capture of the poet-speaker, with captivity and slavery as the inevitable result of war (see Fulkerson in this volume pp. 184–5). While the elegists all deploy military metaphors, each poet has his own particular preferences. As Propertius is the master of *seruitium* (see Fulkerson in this volume), so Ovid's favourite weapon is *militia*, and thus the bulk of my discussion centres on his work.

The quote that opens this chapter is from Ovid's manual of the lover's art, the *Ars Amatoria*, and is especially apt for introducing a discussion of *militia* as used by the three elegists whose work survives. I treat Tibullus, Propertius and Ovid in tandem, as the thematic focus of each loosely corresponds to the ideas the quote expresses. Because there is such extensive conflation and varied usage of the *militia amoris*, the boundaries between the sections and discussions of the poets are necessarily porous. I do not present a strict chronological development, or one that addresses each author in isolation from the others,⁶ in hope that this approach will provide an overview of how

⁴ For a suggestive discussion of Propertius' self-identification with the notorious Mark Antony see Griffin (1986): 32–47.

⁵ Cf. especially Sappho's call to Aphrodite to be her comrade-in-arms, σύμμαχος, fr. 1.28, on which see Rissman (1983). The text cited is that of Lobel and Page (1955).

⁶ The chronology of the elegiac poems is difficult, especially in the case of Ovid, who on his own account reduced his *Amores* from five books to three. For the chronological

elegy and the *militia amoris* are a conscious choice each author makes in accordance with his own poetic interests. Each thematic section focuses on the author who best exemplifies that usage, with supplementary references to the other authors in order to show how the collective exploitation of *militia* makes up part of a dynamic and self-referential poetic system.

Discedite segnes: love vs. war

As Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* insists, elegiac love, like warfare, is not for the lazy. Tibullus, in his declaration that he would prefer to lie and loaf (*tecum/dum modo sim, quaeso segnis inersque uocor*, Tib. 1.1.58 'as long as I may be with you, I pray that I am called sluggish and lazy'),⁷ clearly opposes himself to what was to become Ovid's conception of the lover. It should be no surprise, then, that Tibullus' primary mode of addressing military values is one of opposition rather than assimilation. From the very start of his elegiac collection, Tibullus renounces warlike pursuits (Tib. 1.1.4–6) declaring that it is right for his patron Messalla to fight (*te bellare decet*, Tib. 1.1.53)⁸ while instead he himself has been bound, *uinctum*, by a beautiful mistress (Tib. 1.1.55). At the close of this first poem, however, he shows the fluidity of *militia* under the elegists by engaging in the apparent assimilation of love and war:

nunc leuis est tractanda Venus, dum frangere postes
 non pudet et rixas inseruisse iuuat.
 hic ego dux milesque bonus. uos, signa tubaeque,
 ite procul; cupidis uulnera ferte uiris,
 ferte et opes . . . (Tib. 1.1.73–7)

Now is the time for delightful sex, while it is not shameful to break the doorposts and it is pleasing to engage in quarrels. Here I am a general and a good soldier: you, martial insignia and war trumpets, go far away! Bring wounds to the men who desire them, and bring them riches!

In this merging of love and battle, Tibullus' version of war is clearly opposed to 'real' martial activity. His broken-in doors (Tib. 1.1.73) and brawls (Tib. 1.1.74) are those associated with sex (*Venus*, Tib. 1.1.73). It is under the goddess of love that the poet declares he will be a good general and soldier (Tib. 1.1.75), while the battle flags and military trumpets are urged to withdraw (Tib. 1.1.75) and bring their wounds and monetary rewards

order of the works of Propertius and Tibullus, see Lee-Stecum (Chapter 4), Keith (Chapter 6) and Thorsen (Introduction).

⁷ Or *in-ers*, Lat. art-less, ⁸ All quotations of Tibullus are from Maltby (2002).

to men who want them (Tib. 1.1.76). Yet it is a mark of Tibullan wit and sophistication that even this emphatic command contains its own conflation of love and war. Those who desire the wounds and riches they may bring are *cupidi*, 'desirous', the same word used in other elegiac contexts to describe lovers. Imagery that opposes love to war, and yet seems to assimilate lovers and fighters, appears in other poems of Tibullus (Tib. 1.2.67–76, 1.3.63–4 e.g.), but this presentation of *militia* is not unique to him. Just as in poem 1.10 Tibullus insists on *Pax* (Peace) as necessary for love, Propertius asserts that Love is the god of peace (*Pacis Amor deus est*, Prop. 3.5.1) and that battles (*proelia*, Prop. 3.5.2) with his mistress are enough for him (see also Prop. 4.7.20).⁹ Similarly, Ovid asserts that war is for soldiers, while peace pleases lovers because it is during times of peace that love may be discovered (Ov. *Am.* 3.1.49–50).

An external figure, similarly named by both Tibullus (2.6) and Ovid (*Am.* 2.18), embodies a further possible connection for the elegists' use of the *militia* theme to point out the opposition between love and war. Tibullus notes that a certain Macer is off to war, and states that he will happily follow if it will free his mind of love (Tib. 2.6.1–10).¹⁰ Unfortunately, his girlfriend shuts him out, and he is forced to remain in thrall, in hopes of overcoming her resistance (Tib. 2.6.11–20). Ovid's Macer, on the other hand, is a generic foil, one who writes military poetry (Ov. *Am.* 2.18.1–2) as opposed to actually engaging in military pursuits, while Ovid can only sing of his amorous-military exploits ('I sing of affairs conducted at home and of my own wars', *resque domi gestas et mea bella cano*, Ov. *Am.* 2.18.12).¹¹ This poem also engages in a complex generic game, as Ovid includes in it references to several of his literary heroines (on which see below), who themselves are a bridge between Macer's choice of epic and Ovid's of elegy. Ovid's elegiac imperialism depicts his Macer as heading inevitably to Ovid's own poetic camp (*in mea castra uenis*, Ov. *Am.* 2.18.40), despite the epic poet's best intentions. In this poem Ovid presents writing itself as a strenuous military undertaking, with the camps of elegy and epic in opposition to each other. Propertius will do much the same when he wishfully asserts that he is done with elegy and is ready for new poetic *castra* (Prop. 2.10.19), although for him the metaphor seems less sustained. Poetry that speaks of war, that is, is for serious poets, while love poetry is the right choice

⁹ All quotations of Propertius are from Heyworth (2007c).

¹⁰ On the identity of this figure, see most recently Maltby (2002) 466–7.

¹¹ On Ovid's Macer, see McKeown (1998) 382–3 and 389. Although it is impossible to identify the characters satisfactorily, as McKeown (1998) 383 notes, 'Ovid is at least exploiting the fact that they have the same name'. See also Harrison (Chapter 8) and Sharrock (Chapter 9) in this volume.

for one of slender talents. This point is best not pressed too far in terms of *militia*, however; often the choice of genre is not simply between erotic elegy and martial epic, but between elegy and a variety of other more noble genres, such as astronomical poetry (Tib. 2.4.17–8), historical epic (Prop. 3.3) or tragedy (Ov. *Am.* 3.1). Another justification for the elegists' subject is that an inspirational power (Cupid: Ov. *Am.* 1.1.3–24, 2.1.3; Calliope: Prop. 3.3.39–50) or the capricious mistress (Tib. 2.6, Ov. *Am.* 2.1.17–20) imposes this *materia*, despite a poet's intent to treat lofty subjects.

Even given that love and war are opposites in Tibullus' usual practice, when in poem 1.10 he engages most fully with the idea of love as war the result is indeed full of Ovid's *saevi dolores* in a rather disturbing way. The poem begins with a discussion of real war and its inventor, with the root cause identified as money and men's desire for it. The poet now seems forced to engage in real *militia* (*nunc ad bella trahor*, 'now I am dragged to war' Tib. 1.10.13) while his preference is to let others have that honour (*sit alius fortis in armis*, Tib. 1.10.29). *Pax* is what the poet praises and desires (Tib. 1.10.45–50), as a necessary precedent to love, for only in times of peace can Venus heat up her own battles (Tib. 1.10.53). Yet these battles are not playful, but contain a violence that contrasts starkly with the poet's praise of peace in the preceding lines, exposing Love as a referee for sexual struggle rather than a sponsor of amorous activity:

sed Veneris tunc bella calent, scissosque capillos
 femina perfractas conqueriturque fores.
 flet teneras subtusa genas, sed uictor et ipse
 flet sibi dementes tam ualuisse manus.
 at lascivius Amor rixae mala uerba ministrat
 inter et iratum lentus utrumque sedet.
 (Tib. 1.10.53–8)

But then the wars of Venus heat up, and the woman complains that her hair has been torn and her doorposts have been broken down. She weeps with her tender cheeks beaten, but the victor himself weeps that his frenzied hands have had such strength. But lascivious Love provides the wicked words of their conflict and sits unmoving between each of the angry parties.

Here in evidence is the darker side of elegy, which presents itself especially well in soldiers' garb, for the violence that underlies this use of the metaphor is quite menacing, more like a scene of rape than 'rough sex' with a girlfriend, complete with pulled hair, broken doors, bruises and tears (Lee-Stecum 1998: 280–5). That the repentant lover is described as the 'victor' is typical of elegiac violence, on which see more below. Even what follows, a repentant summation of appropriate force in the bedroom, is not much better, but

rather softens the previous violence in a passage contrived to displace a rival who engages in real *militia*:

sit satis e membris tenuem rescindere uestem,
sit satis ornatus dissoluisse comae,
sit lacrimas mouisse satis. quater ille beatus
quo tenera irato flere puella potest.¹²
sed manibus qui saeuus erit, scutumque sudemque
is gerat et miti sit procul a Venere.

(Tib. 1.10.61–66)

Let it be enough to tear the delicate gown from her limbs; let it be enough to undo her elaborate hairstyle, let it be enough to have caused tears. He is four times blessed for whom his tender mistress can cry when he is angry. But the one who rages cruelly with his hands, let him wield his sword and his shield and be far away from soft Venus.

Even in this gentler description of sexual play there are dress-tearing and tears, tears which are in fact emphasized as a prize for the angered lover (cf. Ov. *Am* 1.7 and below). This limited attack is meant to be 'enough' (*satis*), which implies both that this is 'acceptable' violence, and that the lover would like to do more; the limit, significantly, is imposed by the male aggressor and not by his female counterpart. The next couplet seeks to reassert a separation between lovers and fighters, even following hard upon self-incriminating evidence that suggests the difference is sometimes both small and subjective.

Longae viae, saevi dolores: love as war

While the close of Tibullus 1.1 assimilates the experience of the lover and the fighter, poem 1.6 depicts Love as the general rather than the poet himself. It is Amor who has commanded him, and, as he asks, 'who carries weapons against gods?' (*iussit Amor; contra quis ferat arma deos?* Tib. 1.6.31). Similarly, Ovid posits himself as a loyal soldier of Cupid who does not deserve to be mistreated, asking 'why do you injure me, who as your soldier has never left your standards, and why am I myself wounded in my own camp?' (*quid me, qui miles numquam tua signa reliqui, laedis, et in castris uulneror ipse meis?* Ov. *Am*. 2.9.3–4). Propertius, too, assimilates love and war, asserting that he was not born for military glory, but that the fates had the *militia amoris* in mind for him instead (*hanc me militiam fata subire uolunt*, Prop. 1.6.30; Gale 1997: 80). Here, then, *militia amoris* is valorized as a type of martial activity, but one that is different from Rome's norm. Ovid,

¹² Cf. Ov. *Ars*. 2.447–8 about the psychological pain of jealousy.

too, refers to love as a type of *militia*, one in which those who help him assault his mistress's defences – such as her maid (Ov. Am. 1.11.11–2) – are comrades-in-arms, and one which figures the *puella*'s agreement to spend a night with him as a victory (Ov. Am. 1.11.25).

Just as the poets depict themselves as soldiers of love, engaged in an amorous war, on occasion they describe their erotic escapades as battles. While Tibullus resorts to blows less frequently than Propertius or Ovid, as the discussion of 1.10 shows, his conflicts can come disturbingly close to military encounters. Ovid, too describes sex as a battle, but with arguably less violence (although there are violent quarrels; cf. Am. 1.7 and below); after all, his *puella* is conquered by her own betrayal, namely her desire, in his view at least, to be conquered (*quae cum ita pugnaret, tamquam qua uincere nollet, uicta est non aegre proditione sua*, Ov. Am. 1.5.15–16; cf. Ov. Ars 2.743 and 3.1–6). It is in Propertius' writings that the theme of love as war takes more ample shape, and poem 2.15 embodies a transition in the poet's treatment of the *militia amoris*. While the poem professes to address the idea of love as an alternative to war, its threats of physical violence against the *puella* belie this stated impulse (James 2003: 184–97). The poem opens with the poet's delight at having finally spent the night with his girl, when they engaged in a great conflict (*rixa*, Prop. 2.15.8), and his girlfriend fought with him, amazon-like, with bared breasts (*nudatis mecumst luctata papillis*, Prop. 2.15.9). Even in this setting of fulfilment, however, the poet is not content, but threatens his *puella* with violence for coming to bed clothed. Should she persist in this provocation, she will feel his hands once he has torn her clothing (*scissa ueste meas experiere manus*, Prop. 2.15.18) and even have injured arms to show to her mother after their encounter (*ostendes matri brachia laesa tuae*, Prop. 2.15.20). The poet's assertion later in the poem that if all men chose to live like him, there would be no war, and more pointedly no civil strife such as that which had plagued Rome in recent years (Prop. 2.15.41–6), may come as small consolation to his battered 'beloved'.

For Propertius and Ovid in particular, love also proves a source of inspiration for poetry that is either opposed to epic or equivalent to it. For Propertius, his amorous battles are transformed into *Iliads* (Prop. 2.1.13–4), and elsewhere he envisions himself, grown strong from the worship of Venus (Prop. 2.22a.21–4), as an Achilles or Hector of love (Prop. 2.22a.33–4). In the first poem of his own second book, Ovid also presents elegy as a generic choice dictated by material and refers to his flatteries and elegies as his weapons in the war of love (*blanditias elegosque leuis, mea tela*, Ov. Am. 2.1.21). Yet as these examples show, there is a conflation not only between the opposition and assimilation of love and war, but of action and word,

living and writing. This authorial pose is emblematic of potential problems for readers of elegy; as scholars have long warned, it is dangerous to take the poets at face value and to impute to the individual authors the ideas their poetic speakers espouse.¹³

Even so, this conflation of life and poetry is apparent again in Propertius' professed joy that a law has been repealed that would require the poet to marry, and hence to terminate his affair with his mistress. He asserts that he will father no soldiers as the law seemed to require (*nullus de nostro sanguine miles erit*, Prop. 2.7.14), but follows up quickly with a reconsideration: but if he were following a real camp (*uera . . . castra* Prop. 2.7.15), that of his mistress (*meae . . . puellae*, Prop. 2.7.15), it would be an altogether different story. Propertius' relief that he need not marry runs counter to the Augustan program that encouraged marriage and childbearing in an attempt to repopulate Rome, officially depleted by years of civil conflict. That the *princeps* is specifically on his mind is made clear by his reference to Caesar in the assertion that even military accomplishments such as his are irrelevant in love (Prop. 2.7.5–6). And yet, Propertius' use of the *militia amoris* in claiming that service to his mistress is the only 'real' *militia* humorously deflates his own claim, thus prudently undercutting his objections to Augustan moral reforms (Gale 1997: 89). Thus even as words and the deeds they profess to report bleed together, the *militia amoris* trope can both provoke and demur even within the same poem.

Ovid's much-discussed *Amores* 1.9 is often viewed as the quintessential *militia amoris* poem, and links the presentation of love as war to the idea of love as conquest and success as triumph of (or for) Love. The poem's opening posits not only this poet/lover, but indeed all lovers, as recruits in Love's army (*militat omnis amans*, Ov. *Am.* 1.9.1), employing the immediacy of metaphor rather than the epic distancing of simile. The poem insists on parity in many categories: age (3), character (5), persistence (7–10; 19–20), tolerance of foul weather (11–16), and vigilance over one's foe (17–18) even in the darkest night (21–6). Indeed, love and war themselves are equally dubious affairs (Ov. *Am.* 1.9.29–30), he insists, and hence it is wrong to insist that love is 'idleness' (*desidiam*, Ov. *Am.* 1.9.31). The examples Ovid cites as proof at 33–40 are from the works most opposed to elegy, Homeric epic and Greek tragedy, as if this linkage of love and war in the 'respectable' genres is in itself proof of his claim that lovers and soldiers are on par. The lover/poet returns the focus to himself in the closing couplets, insisting that he himself had been 'lazy' (*segnis*, Ov. *Am.* 1.9.41) before love impelled him to descend into the field of battle (Ov. *Am.* 1.9.43–4). The insistence of

¹³ Among many others, see Gale (1997) 90 on 'the distinction between poet and *persona*'.

Amores 1.9 on a sustained equivalence between lovers and soldiers is grist for the mill of those who see in Ovid a rejection of Roman ideology (Davis 1999: 442), while for others Ovid's emphatic exhaustiveness of the comparisons intentionally points up the ridiculousness of the claim (Murgatroyd 1999). As with Propertius 2.7, what begins to emerge from a sustained examination of *militia amoris* is precisely the question posed at the start of this chapter: how seriously should we take the elegiac conceit of love as war?

Labor omnis inest: the triumph of love

While the theme of success in love as a triumph appears in the poetry of Propertius (cf. Prop. 2.14.23–7 for Cynthia as military plunder, *praeda*, and 4.8.63–72 for Cynthia as triumphant general), it is Ovid who exploits this idea most fully. Early on, the poet presents Cupid as triumphing over him when he surrenders himself to the god and to elegiac poetry (Ov. *Am.* 1.2.19 ff.). The detailed account of this triumph is especially resonant for scholars who see subversion in Ovid's use of *militia* in that the correspondence to an actual military triumph – the highest and rarely achieved military honor a Roman could earn – may undercut a serious institution of great importance to Augustus (Davis 1999: 439). Indeed, referring at the poem's conclusion to the victorious Love as the kinsman of Caesar (*cognati . . . Caesaris*, Ov. *Am.* 1.2.51) may be especially tactless, given that under Augustus only members of the imperial family were allowed to celebrate a triumph. Such a conflation of Caesar's subjects and those of Love may both trivialize the princeps' authority and present an unpalatable picture of citizen subjection under his rule.

Amores 1.7, on the other hand, shows the range and flexibility of Ovid's presentation of love as triumph. This poem presents the lover not as conquered victim, but instead as a triumphant general who has achieved victory over his beaten mistress. Although the poet/lover triumphs over his mistress because he has hit her, he is, however, filled with remorse: the act was one of madness (*furor*, Ov. *Am.* 1.7.2–3), of a mindless barbarian (Ov. *Am.* 1.7.19). In the face of his literally dumb-struck mistress (Ov. *Am.* 1.7.20–2) he wishes his too-violent arms removed (Ov. *Am.* 1.7.23–4) or at least placed in shackles (Ov. *Am.* 1.7.28). Indeed, the poet seemed on the verge of a proto-feminist protest: had he struck even the lowliest citizen, he asserts, he would have been made to pay; should his power over his mistress be greater? (*an, si pulsassem minimum de plebe Quiritem, / plecterer – in dominam ius mihi maius erit?* Ov. *Am.* 1.7.29–30). The sarcastic paean to his victory (Ov. *Am.* 1.7.35–48) parallels the depiction of *Amores* 1.2, where the poet was instead the captive, and yet here the focus is not on the joyous celebration of

the bystanders, but on the misery and unjust domination of the girl. Even so, this apparent invitation to readers to join in Ovid's empathy is soon undercut, deflating what seems to be a sustained critique of gender inequality at the poem's end (*contra* Cahoon 1988). The poem's close typifies the poet's vacillation between maintaining and undermining such a critique. At one moment he urges his injured mistress to scratch his face (*Ov. Am.* 1.7.64) and tear his hair in revenge (*Ov. Am.* 1.7.65). The next he asks that she at least make him feel less guilty by neatening herself up a bit: 'or so that such sad marks of my crime don't remain, redo your hair and put it back in order' (*neue mei sceleris tam tristia signa supersint, / pone recompositas in statione comas* *Ov. Am.* 1.7.1.67–8). Even here, though, when Ovid seems to return to the mundane in his request that his mistress neat her hair, the military context remains in the word he chooses to describe this process: a *statio* is an armed post, a military garrison. The girl's just-beaten hair, then, must regroup for another battle.

The poet as conqueror is once again in evidence in *Amores* 2.12, this time with victory constituted not by battery, but by sex. Ovid compares his successful siege on Corinna with that against Troy (*Ov. Am.* 2.12.9–10), asserting that his is more impressive because achieved alone, entirely through his own effort (*cura*, *Ov. Am.* 2.12.16) with no help from soldiers (*Ov. Am.* 2.12.11–14) or luck (*Ov. Am.* 2.12. 15). Bombastic as this may sound, the poem lays an overt and curious emphasis on the victory as bloodless both at its opening and its close (*Ov. Am.* 2.12.6 and 27). One need only look to the following poems, *Amores* 2.13 and 2.14, for an explanation (McKeown 1998: 275). Corinna's abortion in *Amores* 2.12 has left her on the verge of death, and the poet is self-aware enough to recognize his responsibility (*Ov. Am.* 2.13. 5), although he does not tie her predicament specifically to the 'victory' of the preceding poem. The connection between abortion and warfare is made, however, in *Amores* 2.14, as Ovid muses over what good it is for women to be free of warfare if they nonetheless suffer wounds from their own hands through abortion (*quid iuuat immunes belli cessare puellas . . . si sine Marte suis patiuntur uulnera telis*, *Ov. Am.* 2.14.1, 3; McKeown 1998: 294). Just as Ovid draws this parallel, though, he backs away from the responsibility he seemed to acknowledge in *Amores* 2.12, referring to the termination of a pregnancy, and a woman's death which may well be the result, as deserved punishment (*Ov. Am.* 2.14.37–40). The careful deflection of this view onto unnamed witnesses to such a woman's imagined funeral (*Ov. Am.* 2.14.39–40) only thinly conceals the lover/poet's view that abortion is a woman's own fault (*culpa*, *Ov. Am.* 2.14.44). This triptych of poems exposes not only the consequences of sexual intercourse, as has long been recognized, but also the casualties in the war

of love (Gamel 1989). Ovid is unique among the elegists in engaging this 'real world' question in his poems, and his doing so under the aegis of the *militia amoris* theme shows at the same time both great inventiveness and unusual pathos.

This section's fitting conclusion is *Amores* 3.11, where the poet is not defeated by love, triumphant over his girl through physical dominance or persuasion, or musing on the consequences of the *militia amoris*. He has moved on, claiming victory over love: 'I have conquered and I tread upon Love, subdued, with my feet' (*uicimus et domitum pedibus calcamus Amorem*, *Ov. Am.* 3.11.5). Even so, as we have seen is so often the case in elegiac exploitation of military themes, the poet quickly undercuts his own assertions. The next poem sets the lover/poet and his readers straight, as he admits in *Amores* 3.11b that the victory the previous poem touted is not complete. Indeed, despite his best attempts, love appears to be winning: *puto, uincat amor* (*Ov. Am.* 3.11b.2). What this points to especially well is the impossibility of escaping military and poetic endeavours imposed by a god, and brings us full circle to the programmatic first poem of Ovid's first book, where Cupid dictates both his metre (*Ov. Am.* 1.1.4) and his material (*Ov. Am.* 1.1.24). Whether one chooses to see a parallel with Roman martial obligations and loss of citizen empowerment under an emerging imperial system is, of course, up to individual readers.

Coda: Ovid's *Heroides* and elegiac imperialism

Ovid's assertion that 'every lover is a fighter' is more inclusive than it might appear, even radically so in that Propertius 4.3 and Ovid's own *Heroides* collection show that his claim includes female lovers as well. Given the chronological uncertainties of Ovid's poetic output, it is difficult to know whether this collection of letters from abandoned heroines of myth and literature to their errant heroes pre- or postdates his *Amores*.¹⁴ Further, scholars disagree as to whether Propertius' imagined letter from 'Arethusa' to her campaigning husband 'Lycotas' is the inspiration for Ovid's collection or was instead inspired by it. In either case these poems, in their use of the *militia amoris* from a female perspective, provide unique commentary on Roman masculine values, and do so from what might be termed a 'safe' distance. Propertius' 4.3 has been convincingly shown to disrupt the main line of Augustan propaganda (Janan 2001: 53–69, Wyke 2002: 87). Less

¹⁴ See Thorsen (Chapter 7) in this volume, and the discussion of Knox (1995) 3 and 5–6; consensus is in any case that the single letters are early works that predate the extant *Amores* collection.

attention of this sort has been paid to Ovid's *Heroides*, however, and they, too, may hint at an answer to the question posed at the start of this chapter.

As Thorsen has noted in this collection, *militia amoris* is among the weapons in Ovid's literary arsenal as deployed in the single letters (see Chapter 7 in this volume). In addition to the examples she notes, letter 3, from Briseis to Achilles, also conflates love and war in ways consistent with the more widely read elegies of Tibullus, Propertius and Ovid. These examples of 'female elegy', and especially their co-option of military imagery by female characters, may have particular resonance in a time of great change and uncertainty for Rome. In the nascent principate, after Rome had been so badly scarred by a generation or more of civil war, offloading covert military critiques onto women is both shockingly bold and deceptively safe. Shifting the first person narrator from an 'I' easily identified with the male poet to an 'I' that is clearly both fictional and female allows a poet critical of Augustus to speak from a safe distance. It is thus possible for Ovid's Briseis to allude (or not) to the years of Roman civil war by means of Homer's epic war, accusing her Achilles of not keeping his bargain. She asserts that she was 'an important part of her fatherland' (*patriae pars . . . magna*, Ov. *Her.* 3.46) as were Rome's citizens under the republican system, and that she had endured to be a war captive as part of a bargain for her safety, compensating for the loss of family and friends with the man responsible for their destruction: 'nevertheless, in you alone we sought compensation for so many lost' (*tot tamen amissis te compensauimus unum*, Ov. *Her.* 3.51). That this was an explicit, sustained promise and that it has not been upheld becomes clear in Briseis' reproachful reminder of this accord: 'you yourself used to tell me it was to my benefit to have been captured' (*utile dicebas ipse fuisse capi*, Ov. *Her.* 3.46). The resonances for Ovid's reader, although speculative, are clear: the bargain Rome struck with Octavian after Actium's defeat of Antony and Cleopatra in 31 BC, one that ensured Rome's safety in exchange for her citizens' traditional *libertas*, 'liberty', was one that may not have been to their unalloyed benefit.¹⁵ Similarly, Briseis' reproach of Achilles' newfound pacifism may also point to contemporary concerns when she asks him pointedly 'did you only approve fierce wars while you were capturing me?' (*an tantum, dum me caperes, fera bella probabas . . . ?* Ov. *Her.* 3.123). In the context of the newly established *Pax Augusta*, and especially the dedication of the *Ara Pacis Augustae* in 9 BC, roughly contemporary with the publication of the single *Heroides*, such a critique may point to a perceived hypocrisy on the part of Rome's new leader.

¹⁵ On the rise of Octavian as a bargain between an exhausted and decimated Roman elite and the new *princeps*, see Osgood (2006) especially 397–403.

In the case of the *Heroides*, as with much of elegy, there is a literary dimension as well: when Ovid's heroines write, they are re-writing previous and definitive literary accounts, accounts that historically have been solely in the masculine domain.¹⁶ Ovid's praxis in crafting his *Heroides* is a kind of generic imperialism related to Augustus' own political imperialism, and exposing the repercussions of both processes. As he rewrites Homeric epic, for example, Ovid shows that the translation of Homeric characters to a genre ostensibly more amenable to love is not to their benefit. The implication, tentative though it may be, is that the translation of the Roman people from the republic to the new regime, via generations of civil wars, may not be so beneficial either.

Further reading

Studies of *militia amoris* provide an excellent example of the varied scholarly approaches to elegy, depicting it as purely literary, violently misogynistic, gently renunciatory of social norms, politically subversive, and humorously self-undermining, to name a few. Murgatroyd (1975) traces in detail the origins and development of the love-as-war theme from Greek precedents to the unique Roman development in the hands of the elegists. Lyne (1980) remains essential reading; especially chapter 4, 'The Life of Love' with its particular emphasis on love's warfare at pages 71–8. Gale (1997) on Prop. 2.7 provides an excellent brief overview of *militia* as deployed by Tibullus and Propertius. Lyne (1998a) details the call and response between Propertius and Tibullus; in terms of *militia* see especially pp. 532–5. On Tibullus specifically, see Boyd (1984) and for Propertius, see Gale (1997). For Ovid, Cahoon (1988) traces the *militia* theme throughout Ovid's *Amores* in a study that shows the interpenetration of *militia* and *seruitium*, erotic war and captivity, with an emphasis on the violent underpinnings of Ovid's usage. For Ovid's quintessential *militia amoris* poem, *Amores* 1.9, McKeown (1995) urges a thorough literary appreciation while Murgatroyd (1999) responds to a series of readings of that poem, reminding readers of the humour in Ovid's manipulation of the theme. While there are numerous excellent studies of the *Heroides*, none attend much to the use of *militia* therein.

¹⁶ See Gold (1993) 84–6 for feminist readings of such disruptions in traditional 'master narratives', drawing on the work of Alice Jardine.