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TRIUMPH IN OVID: BETWEEN LITERARY TRADITION AND AUGUSTAN PROPAGANDA*

The Roman triumph is treated by the Augustan poets from a literary and political perspective. Ovid in particular gives it original and ambiguous features. The topic is often presented as the prediction of a triumph, a point of view perhaps inherited from Gallus. Propertius innovates from the Gallan original, and Ovid uses Propertius' treatment for further innovations. In his exile poetry, Ovid makes further substantial changes to the use of the triumph, which raises pointed questions as to the poet's sincerity in his apparent praise of Augustus and Tiberius.

Keywords: triumph, Ovid, Gallus, propaganda, irony

Recent scholarship on the Roman triumph has highlighted some previously ignored or overlooked aspects of this institution, which is today no longer viewed only as the solemn celebration of a victory, with a clear propagandist and political agenda, but also as a complex and multifaceted ceremony, open to multiple readings and interpretations.[1] Especially emphasized has been the importance of the visual aspect of

* Uncredited translations in this article are my own. I build further on my observations developed in *Globalizing Ovid. An International Conference in Commemoration of the Bimillennium of Ovid's Death, Shanghai, May 31 – June 2, 2017*, in J. Liu (ed.), *The New Frontiers of Research on the Roman Poet Ovid in the Global Context*, Peking 2021, 57–91 (and published in Chinese).

[1] Important works on this topic are M. Beard, 'Writing Ritual: The Triumph of Ovid', in A. Barchiesi, J. Rüpke, and S. Stephens (eds.), *Ritual in Ink. A Conference on Religion and Literary Production in Ancient Rome* (Stuttgart, 2004), 115–26; T. Itgenshorst, *Tota illa pompa. Der Triumph in der römischen Republik* (Göttingen, 2005); M. Beard, *The Roman Triumph* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 2007). On the visual aspects of the triumphal ceremony, see I. Östemberg, *Staging the World. Spoils, Captives and Representation in the Roman Triumphal Procession* (Oxford, 2009) (but the changes made by Augustus are insufficiently emphasized); T. Itgenshorst, 'Der Princeps triumphiert nicht: Vom Verschwinden des Siegesrituals in augusteischer Zeit', in H. Krasser, D. Pausch and I. Petrovic (eds.), *Triplici invectus triumpho. Der römische Triumph in augusteischer Zeit* (Stuttgart, 2008); C. Lange and F. Vervaet (eds.), *The Roman Republican Triumph. Beyond the Spectacle* (Rome, 2014), on the Republican triumph; F. Goldbeck and J. Wienand (eds.), *Der römische Triumph in Prinzipat und Spätantike* (Berlin and Boston, MA, 2017) on the Imperial age.

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the triumph, often as a means of obscuring or distorting the real features of the historical event, in order to emphasize and control the message to be perceived by the spectators. Prominence has been given to the various ways in which the spectacle could be choreographed: so, for example, the defeated prisoners, often main protagonists in the historical events, could become the focus of the ceremony;[2] or other aspects could be particularly emphasized by the visual arrangements.

Due to this abundance of perspectives, the opportunity of multiple representations, and a changing, elusive, and illusory reality, the triumph inevitably struck the imagination of the Augustan poets; Ovid, in particular, who made illusion, mutability, and the play between appearance and reality the cornerstones of his poetry, treats the triumph theme most often and most variously. Given the public and official nature of the triumph, to do so was to put himself in a delicate relationship with crucial aspects of the current ideology. At the same time as Augustus 'reread' Republican institutions and customs, with the triumph undergoing substantial restrictions and taking on an aspect which was wholly focused on the dynasty in power,[3] the poets explored its different facets, taking it as a *discrimen* between public and private life, in an analysis which the new political situation made more urgent than ever.[4]

The treatment of the triumph in Augustan poetry takes two directions: the description of the ceremony can afford the opportunity for the poet to express involvement in or detachment from public affairs, or – and this is a more original approach to the subject – the triumph may be used as a metaphor for poetic glory, with the authors appropriating the theme to enhance their own works. In this perspective, Virgil describes himself leading Hesiod's Muses down in triumph from Helicon to Latium in *Georgics* 3.8–11, and Horace uses the language of the triumph to enhance his lyric works in the σφραγίς ('seal') of *Carm*. 3.30. But the triumph can also be deployed as a symbol of Augustus' glory and a synthesis of the values he represents, as in

Beard 2007 (n. 1), 110–11, 135–7. The tension between powerful victor and powerless victim is central to understanding the triumph and its performance as representation: see J. Schäfer-Schmitt, 'Candida victima im tristen Tomis: Zur Funktionalisierung des Triumphmotivs in Ovids Epistulae ex Ponto 2, 1', in Krasser, Pausch, and Petrovic (n. 1), 285–304.

[3] Beard 2007 (n. 1), 70, 296–7. M. Torelli, *Typology and Structure of Roman Historical Reliefs* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1982), 121–28, 132, distinguishes the Republican triumph, which describes the true deeds and victories of the general, and the Imperial one, in which symbols and allegories prevail, to exalt the emperor. On the remarkable changes made by Augustus to the triumph, see Itgenshorst 2005 (n. 1), 9–12, 219–6; Itgenshorst 2008 (n. 1), 27–54.

[4] Beard 2007 (n. 1), 296.

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Virgil's description of Octavian's triumph in 29 BCE at *Aen.* 8.714–28, or it can be a moment in which celebration of public aspects encroaches upon the private area, as in Horace's attempt to combine both aspects in Book 4 of his *Odes*.

Predictably, however, the most original and provocative readings of the triumph come from love elegists, who paradoxically include it in the essentially private universe of their poetry.[5] Their attention to the triumph and their original treatment may be due to the importance of this theme in Gallus, the *inventor* of their genre. The presence of the triumph in Gallan poetry is attested by lines 2–5 of the Qaṣr Ibrîm papyrus, a very complex text: the reconstruction of its precise meaning is difficult,[6] and there is wide debate as to the historical context in which it was written.[7] It is similarly difficult to understand whether the poet refers to the final moment of a triumph, when spoils were placed in a temples, or a later time, when he will read a description of the triumph in written works:[8]

> *Fata mihi Caesar tum erunt mea dulcia quom tu*
> *maxima Romanae pars eri<s> historiae*
> *postque tuum reditum multorum templa deorum*
> *fixa legam spolieis deivitiora tueis.* (PQI 1.2–5)
>
> *My fate, Caesar, will be sweet to me at that time*
> *when you become the greatest part of Roman history,*
> *and when, after your return, I survey the temples of many gods*
> *richer for being fixed with your spoils.* (transl. A. S. Hollis)

In any case, many features of these verses are remarkable. First, Gallus presents himself as far detached from the expedition of Caesar, a pose which prepares the way for an 'elegiac' vision of triumph. Secondly, his verses treat the triumph not as an event which has happened but rather as a predicted moment, echoing the features of a *propemptikòn* ('poem for a departing person'), a genre to which Gallus fr. 2.2–5 seems

[5] Propertius, in particular, makes the triumph a privileged theme in Latin love elegy: see K. Galinsky, 'The Triumph Theme in the Augustan Elegy', *WS* 3 (1969), 91.

[6] R. G. M. Nisbet, in R. D. Anderson, P. J. Parsons, and R. G. M. Nisbet, 'Elegiacs by Gallus from Qaṣr Ibrîm', *JRS* 69 (1979), 149, comments that 'this one seems contorted to the point of obscurity'.

[7] The identification of *Caesar* (Julius Ceasar just before his death or Octavian?) is problematic: for a synthesis of the debate see P. Gagliardi, 'Per la datazione dei versi di Gallo da Qasr Ibrim', *ZPE* 171 (2009), 45–63; P. Gagliardi, '*Tandem fecerunt carmina Musae*: Sui vv. 6–7 del papiro di Gallo', *Prometheus* 36 (2010), 55–6, n. 2.

[8] See debate and bibliography in P. Gagliardi, 'Il poeta, Cesare, il trionfo: Una rilettura dei vv. 2–5 del papiro di Gallo', *PapLup* 23 (2014), 31–52.

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related.[9] This perspective is destined to resonate powerfully among the Augustans.

It is Propertius who uses the triumph as a metaphor in the most original way. In 3.1.9–12 he gives this metaphor a provocative and irreverent tone, combining the solemnity of the most official of public ceremonies with the private sphere of his erotic elegy, when he represents himself on a triumphal chariot next to his Muse and to Cupids, followed by a crowd of other poets:

> *et a me*
> *nata coronatis Musa triumphat equis,*
> *et mecum in curru parvi vectantur Amores*
> *scriptorumque meas turba secuta rotas.* (9–12)
>
> *and the Muse*
> *born from me goes in triumph with crowned horses,*
> *and young Loves ride with me in the chariot,*
> *and a crowd of writers follows my wheels.*

The elegy is a *recusatio* (refusal) of war and epic, and so, unexpectedly, triumph is associated with a poetry of peace.[10] In this impressive poem, it should be particularly noted that Propertius, like Gallus, describes a triumph which is only imagined. Of course, this may have been prompted by Virgil's *Georgics* 3.10–31, but the possibility of a reference back to Gallus PQI 1.2–5 cannot be excluded.

Ovid fully understands not only the provocative impact but also the potentialities of the Propertian scene, and confronts it in a programmatic text, *Amores* 1.2, but he expands the image of Propertius and makes it the theme of the whole poem.[11] The result is a brilliant poem which anticipates many of Ovid's innovations in the treatment of the theme: the poet follows Prop. 3.1 in debasing the solemnity of the triumph ceremony by treating it as an erotic theme, but turns Propertius' viewpoint on its head, because in Ovid the triumph of *Amor* is over the poet, who takes the role of a captured prisoner. In this way, Ovid no longer advances the image of his own poetic glory, but rather his subjection to the genre.

[9] See F. Cairns, *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry* (Edinburgh, 1972), 185–6. The prophetic stance, which is prominent both in Prop. 3.4 and in Ovid's treatments (*omina fausta cano*, Prop. 3.4.9; and Ovid's later *auguror* at *Ars am.* 1.205 etc.) may develop something already probably present in Gallus *mea. . .fata* and in the prophetic tone of his quatrain.

[10] Galinsky (n. 5), 89.

[11] See Galinsky (n. 5), 94.

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But in *Amor.* 1.2 there are clear hints of a polemical attitude to official ideology that is found frequently elsewhere in Ovid: in fact, this elegy's provocativeness is directed not only to literary models, and Ovid touches also upon official aspects of Augustan propaganda, diminishing the value of the triumph by attributing it to the most frivolous of gods, in connection with the irreverent sphere of love.[12] Aspects and symbols of the ritual are trivialized: since they are attributed to *Amor*, they lose all their solemnity.[13] Thus Venus' myrtle replaces the laurel of the triumphator's crown and the chariot's white horses become doves of the goddess;[14] *Amor* is adorned with jewellery, totally inappropriate for a victorious commander;[15] and the ranks of *comites* ('fellows') comprise negative personifications such as *Error*, *Furor*, and *Blanditiae* (Error, Rage, and Flattery), while positive figures such as *Mens Bona* (Good Conscience) and *Pudor* (Modesty) are among the prisoners (*Mens Bona ducetur manibus post terga retortis, / et Pudor*, 'You'll lead Conscience, hands twisted behind her back, and Shame', 31–2), and the fact that it is two deities portrayed as prisoners is really shocking.[16] Some details touch very closely the figure of the *princeps* and his ideology: the scene has been shown to contain references to the paintings in the Forum Augusti, where the chained *Furor* was represented, which had already inspired the Virgilian scene in *Aeneid* 1.291–6.[17] That image is here reversed. Moreover, the final couplet (51–2) appears remarkably provocative:

> *adspice cognati felicia Caesaris arma:*
> *qua vicit, victos protegit ille manu.*

[12] See J. C. McKeown, *Ovid, Amores. Text, Prolegomena and Commentary in Four Volumes. Volume II, A Commentary on Book One* (Leeds, 1989), 58, on lines 51–2; Beard 2007 (n. 1), 52, 113; F. D. Harvey, '*Cognati Caesaris*: Ovid *Amores* 1, 2, 51/52', *WS* 17 (1983), 89.

[13] See L. Athanassaki, 'The Triumph of Love and Elegy in Ovid's *Amores* 1, 2', *MD* 28 (1992), 140; J. F. Miller, 'Reading Cupid's Triumph', *CJ* 90 (1995), 294. P. J. Davis, *Ovid and Augustus. A Political Reading of Ovid's Erotic Poems* (London, 2006), 74–7, reads the assimilation of the elegiac life and love to the military sphere as a refusal of the current ideology.

[14] According to McKeown (n. 12), 45, on lines 23–4, the detail of the myrtle could instead be referred to the *ovatio*: in this way the poet would to show Love's triumph as a triumph in a minor key, since Ovid has already surrendered.

[15] McKeown (n. 12), 54, on lines 41–2.

[16] On the strong provocative nature of this passage see Miller (n. 13), 289, 292–3; I. Goh, 'The End of the Beginning: Virgil's *Aeneid* in Ovid. *Amores* 1, 2', *G&R* 62 (2015), 172–3. I. M. Le M. Du Quesnay, 'The *Amores*', in J. W. Binns (ed.), *Ovid* (London, 1973), 41, sees instead absence of polemical and hostile attitudes towards the regime in the *Amores*.

[17] Miller (n. 13), 292–3; McKeown (n. 12), 48–9, on lines 31–6.

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Look at Caesar's similar fortunes of war –
what he conquers, he protects with his power. (trans. A.S. Kline)

In emphasizing the kinship between *Amor* and Augustus, Ovid not only connects the *princeps* to the frivolous god but also jokes about his celebrated *clementia* ('clemency'), invoked in the superficial context of love, and perhaps –as has been suggested – alludes to the restriction of the triumph to members of Augustus' family.[18] There is in fact enough to make this one of the most irreverent of Ovid's poems concerning the triumph.[19]

In the 'political' perspective of the triumph, the most original treatment is again in Propertius.[20]: In 3.4 apparent enthusiasm for a future expedition hides controversial ideas and the poet decisively affirms the importance of love for him and his indifference to public life. Describing himself as a mere spectator confused in the crowd, Propertius shifts the focus of the scene and takes attention away from the victor, by concentrating on the visual aspects of the ceremony (12–18):

ante meos obitus sit precor illa dies,
qua videam spoliis oneratos Caesaris axes,
...
tela fugacis equi et bracati militis arcus,
et subter captos arma sedere duces,
...
ad vulgi plausus saepe resistere equos,
inque sinu carae nixus spectare puellae
incipiam et titulis oppida capta legam![21]

I pray that the day will come before my death,
when I see Caesar's axles burdened with booty
...
the shafts from fleeing horsemen, the bows of trousered soldiers,
and the captive leaders sitting beneath their weapons
...
and horses stopping often for vulgar cheers,

[18] So Harvey (n. 12), *passim*; Miller (n. 13), 293.
[19] In other elegies of the *Amores*, Ovid uses images and metaphors of the triumph: see in particular 2.1, but also 1.7.35–8 and 2.12.
[20] There are only passing references to the triumph in Tibullus; Propertius treats the theme at length in Book 4.
[21] On the textual problems raised by this passage, see S. J. Heyworth and J. H. W. Morwood, *A Commentary on Propertius Book 3* (Oxford, 2013[2]), *ad loc.*, 131, whose reconstruction I quote.

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and then I'll begin to look, resting in the lap of my beloved girl,
and scan the names of captured cities. (transl. A. S. Kline)

His key emphasis is to present the event as an opportunity to enjoy the company of his beloved girl (17–18).

Ovid does not fail to note the originality of this Propertian poem, which he recalls, expanding and exploiting its potential. Perhaps the origin of this vision of the triumph may have appeared first in Gallus.[22] Even if Gallus made a decisive commitment to an illustrious political and military career, we might still imagine that in his poems he would depict himself as unconcerned about public activity, a pose inherited from the Neoterics which may possibly even be the basis of his elegiac ideology. So, leaving aside the endless debate on the Gallus papyrus, an objective analysis of lines 2–5 sees the poet worried about the outcome of Caesar's expedition, but at the same time detached from it, as emphasized by the contrast between first and second person – *mihi*, *mea*, *tu* ('to me', 'my own', 'you') at 2; *tuum* ('your') at 4; and *legam* ('I will read') and *tueis* ('your') at 5 – and by the statement that he will only read about the success of the achievement.[23] Naturally, we do not know whether Gallus might also have included references to his *puella* ('beloved girl') somehow in his treatment of the triumph theme,[24] but lines 2–5 clearly show his interest in the topic, and his attitude towards it is not dissimilar to that of his successors. In comparison to them, Gallus demonstrates a greater interest in the actual achievements, but he, too, preserves his distance.

Another aspect of Prop. 3.4 (and of Ovid after him) which seems to come from Gallus is the theme of predicting, or even prophesying, a triumph. This is not unique to Gallus, of course: Hor. *Carm*. 4.2 is structured in the same way; even *Aen*. 8.714–28, while written after the events, is figured as predicting all of Rome's future history.[25] The model of Prop. 3.4, however, is, explicitly and exclusively, Gallus, as the almost *verbatim* quotations of his verses make clear: see line 1 (*Arma deus Caesar*, 'the god Caesar plots war') and PQI 1.2 (*Fata*

[22] Cairns (n. 9), 404 and 429, thinks that both Prop. 3.4 and Ov. *Ars am.* 1.177–228 come from Gallus.

[23] On the different interpretations of *legere*, see Gagliardi (n. 8), 37–43 and notes.

[24] The problem, of course, is the relationship between lines 2–5 and 6–9: do they belong to the same elegy? In this case the triumph would be connected to the theme of love poetry, rather than love. But the possibility that lines 2–5 and 6–9 were part of a single poem is in my view very remote. See Gagliardi 2010 (n. 7), 55–8, nn. 2–5.

[25] See A. De Vivo, *Frammenti di discorsi ovidiani* (Naples, 2011), 80–1.

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mihi Caesar, 'My fate, Caesar'); line 10 (*ite et Romanae consulite historiae*, 'go and take care of Roman history') and PQI 1.2 (*maxima Romanae pars eris historiae*, 'you will be the most important part of Roman history').[26] Propertius clearly wanted to enter into a 'dialogue' with his predecessor, to resume and 'correct' some of his statements and to take them to the extreme in terms of amatory elegy.[27] Here, Propertius sets Gallus' interest in Caesar's expedition against his own purely and solely elegiac choice of life, which leaves no room for any other interest, and in which the triumph is merely an opportunity to share an impressive spectacle with his beloved girl.[28] Where Gallus created an opposition between first and second person, Propertius inserts a long apostrophe, marked by second-person imperatives, within which he only fleetingly appears to reaffirm his role as a prophetic singer (*omina fausta cano*, 'I sing auspicious omens'; 9[29]). These expressions (*ite, agite. . .date. . .ducite*, 'go, do. . .give. . .drive'; 7–8; *ite. . .consulate*, 'go. . .take care'; 10) suggest his complete detachment from the departing soldiers, while *legam* ('I will read') at line 18 quotes Gallus' verb, but only to bring out the difference: where Gallus hopes to read the *tituli* ('names') of the spoils in temples, after the triumph (to follow the most plausible interpretation of the vexed line 5[30]), Propertius imagines reading them during the procession, underlining that they are part of the spectacle and focusing on the ceremony as an opportunity to meet Cynthia: he will applaud on the Via Sacra *in. . .sinu carae nixus. . .puellae* ('resting in the lap of my beloved girl'; 17).

Recognition of the dialogue between Prop. 3.4 and Gallus is an essential prerequisite for understanding Ovid's further evolution of the same situation. In his most provocative treatment of the triumph, *Ars am.* 1.177–228,[31] he makes his imitation of Prop. 3.4 absolutely clear by means of the parallel situation and precise quotations: good

[26] The direct relationship of Prop. 3.4 with Gallus is affirmed by Cairns (n. 9), 429.

[27] This attitude seems typical of his 'dialogue' with Gallus: see e.g. 2.13.14 (on which P. Gagliardi, '*Carmina domina digna*: Riflessioni sul ruolo della *domina* nel papiro di Gallo', *MH* 69 [2012], 156–76) and 2.1.3–4 (on which P. Gagliardi, '*Non haec Calliope, non haec mihi cantat Apollo*: Prop. 2, 1 e il papiro di Gallo', *Hermes* 145 [2017], 159–73).

[28] A different view is given in De Vivo (n. 25), 79, who reads Prop. 3.4 as a *recusatio* of political involvement, but attributes to the poet a spiritual closeness to the expedition of Augustus.

[29] According to Cairns (n. 9), 405, in this expression can be read an echo of Virg. *Aen.* 1.1 (*arma virumque cano*).

[30] See debate and bibliography in Gagliardi (n. 8).

[31] Scholars have noted that this passage, like the previous naumachia, seem to interrupt the logical sequence of the discourse. On this basis, Cairns (n. 9), 412–13, thinks that it could previously have been a different poem, only later included in the *Ars*.

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wishes for the departing expedition (here too, just as in Prop. 3.4, against the Parthians[32]); praise of the young leader, fuller and perhaps more sincere than the Propertian one;[33] mention of Carrhae; hope of divine protection; and foreshadowing of victory and triumph.[34] The key feature of Ovid's passage is how he amplifies the τόπος (theme): his emphasis on the youth and inexperience of Gaius is noteworthy (191–6), but the compliments on the young prince raise some doubts about the sincerity of the praise, especially given the unexpected finale, where the poet ceases to play the 'official' bard of the event and returns to his role as *praeceptor amoris* ('master of love'), suggesting to his imaginary pupil how to use the triumphal process as an opportunity to win over girls.[35] Confused in the joyful crowd, his pupil is to satisfy the curiosity of girls who may ask for explanations about the *tituli* or the identification of the prisoners, and he should parade his knowledge of the events and details; where he is ignorant, he should shamelessly invent these:

Atque aliqua ex illis cum regum nomina quaeret,
quae loca, qui montes, quaeve ferantur aquae,
omnia responde, nec tantum siqua rogabit;
et quae nescieris, ut bene nota refer.
Hic est Euphrates, praecinctus harundine frontem:
cui coma dependet caerula, Tigris erit.
Hos facito Armenios; haec est Danaeia Persis:
urbs in Achaemeniis vallibus ista fuit.
Ille vel ille, duces; et erunt quae nomina dicas,
si poteris, vere, si minus, apta tamen. (219–28)

[32] This is Gaius Caesar's expedition to the East (1 CE), which, with the naumachia mentioned in lines 171–6, which occurred in the previous year, allows us to date the *Ars*: see E. Pianezzola, *Ovidio. L'arte di amare* (Milan, 2005[6]), 209, on lines 177–8). P. A. Miller, *Subjecting Verses. Latin Love Elegy and the Emergence of the Real* (Princeton, NJ, 2004), 76, and Cairns (n. 9), 406–11, 436–7, see the fact that it is a Parthian expedition as confirmation of the hypothesis that the verses of Gallus may also have been written for a Parthian expedition – that planned by Caesar just before his death.

[33] M. Labate, 'Poetica ovidiana dell'elegia: La retorica della città', *MD* 3 (1979), 48–9, judges the lofty tone of these verses as sincere, evaluating them as an example of encomiastic poetry. See also H. D. Meyer, *Die außenpolitik des Augustus und die augusteische Dichtung* (Cologne and Graz, 1961), 82–6; *contra*, Galinsky (n. 5), 97–9.

[34] Pianezzola (n. 32), 210.

[35] E. Pianezzola, *Ovidio. Modelli retorici e forma narrativa* (Bologna, 1999), 12–13, thinks that the praise of Gaius is sincere and expresses the hope of the poet that the young prince will succeed Augustus; so these verses would be the proof of an often underestimated interest on the part of Ovid for politics, and of his appreciation of the official propaganda (Pianezzola [n. 33], 212).

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And if a girl among them asks the name of a king,
what place, what mountains, and what stream's displayed,
you can reply to all, and more if she asks:
and what you don't know, reply as memory prompts.
That's Euphrates, his brow crowned with reeds:
That should be Tigris with the long green hair.
Say that those are Armenians, that's Persia's Danaan crown:
that was a town in the hills of Achaemenia.
This and this are generals: and say what are their names,
if you can, the true ones, if not the most fitting. (transl. A. S. Kline)

So, like Propertius, Ovid brings the triumph into his elegiac vision and incorporates it into the theme and the features of his work: the marginal perspective of the viewer becomes a propitious occasion for love conquest, and the spectacle is no more than a means to effect the strategies of courtship. In other words, Ovid uses the description of the triumph to enhance his didactic poetry: if Propertius, thanks to the foreshadowing of the ceremony, can reaffirm two exquisitely elegiac themes – the detachment from public life and the centrality of his love affair – for Ovid the triumph is a good time to put in practice the teachings of the *praeceptor amoris*. The debasement of the ceremony is complete; its really important feature is simply the crowd that it attracts, in which the seducer can find his prey: the triumph is no different from any other opportune occasion, such as a banquet or a show in the circus.[36]

Ovid's detachment from triumph itself is made clear by the protagonist's readiness to invent information and details, without any concern for the truth.[37] The detail of reading *tituli* is interesting in showing differences between the respective treatments by Gallus, Propertius, and Ovid. In Gallus it is a fundamental element of his future joy (he will be happy when he 'reads' the booty that enriches the temples). Propertius opportunely repeats this, perhaps in homage to his predecessor, but only as an element of curiosity about the places and peoples conquered (15–16); above all, he moves the focus back from the moment in which the spoils are already in the temples to the actual ceremony (17–18), thereby taking the opportunity to show that he is

[36] Not all scholars agree on this interpretation: among those who believe that the attitude shown by Ovid in his didactic poem is not hostile to the Augustan regime, see M. Labate, 'Elegia triste ed elegia lieta: Un caso di riconversione letteraria', *MD* 19 (1987), 96.

[37] In the ease with which responses can also be invented, Beard 2007 (n. 1), 184, sees a reflection of the spectacular and often illusory nature of the triumph, in which images, reconstructions, and even the prisoners could be misleading.

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unconcerned with the triumph. Ovid, in turn, understands Propertius' strategy, and uses the detail of the *tituli* to characterize his didactic poetry: he recommends that his pupil makes a show of his knowledge in reading the *tituli*, even if he has to pretend and invent (222; 227–8). Thereby the *tituli* become an instrument of seduction, fully meeting the purpose and reflecting the nature of Ovidian didactic love poetry. For Ovid, the utility of the triumphal ceremony, however, does not even have the justification of Propertius, who places his private life and his absorption in his feelings above an event of public celebration; Ovid replaces all-engaging love for a woman with the frivolity of a chance to pick up girls, free of any moral depth and emotional justification.[38]

With this in mind, the long praise of the young Gaius must sound incongruous, at the least, if not deliberately ironic.[39] In comparison with the end of the passage and with the triviality of its aims, the solemn tone of the *incipit* and the poet's proposal to incite soldiers with his verses and then to celebrate the victory surely lose their credibility.[40] Indeed, the initial emphasis seems made just to be overturned and ridiculed by the irreverent frivolity of the finale.

In adapting his didactic purpose to the triumph theme, Ovid makes another reversal from both Gallus and Propertius, for whom the idea of the poet's personal participation in the triumphal ceremony has considerable importance. Gallus says that he will be happy only after, and because of, the future success of Caesar, and thus he shows himself deeply involved, at least putatively, in the triumphal event. Propertius, shifting the focus to the procession, necessarily describes himself as participating in it, even if he wants to declare his indifference to the ideology which it represents.[41] In this respect, too, Ovid innovates, according to the agenda of his didactic poetry, by eliminating the fundamental relationship between poet and triumph: with his praise of Gaius, the promise to become a singer of his glory, and the

[38] In this very transition from an absolute love to a multiplicity of erotic conquests lies the novelty of Ovidian elegy and the premise for the destruction of the genre: see Labate (n. 33), 29.

[39] Two tendencies divide Ovidian scholars between those who think the poet had a critical (or even hostile) position to the regime and those who think that he was loyal to the *princeps* and somehow grateful for his political work, which allowed citizens a quiet and refined life in a peaceful world: see Labate (n. 33).

[40] For the promise of a poem for the winner, Pianezzola (n. 32), 24, on line 206, suggests a reference to Virg. *Geo*. 3.294. The proposal by Ovid seems ironic to Davis (n. 13), 101.

[41] The detachment is affirmed at the end, with *me* opening the last verse, which definitively isolates Propertius from the participants to the victorious expedition.

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description of the parade, he does indeed seem impatient to be present in person, but when he gives his suggestions to his pupil, he disappears from the scene. It becomes obvious that the subject matter of the particular triumph is of little importance; it is simply a moment when a crowd has gathered and the seducer can meet girls more easily. The trivialization of the event is complete: this reading of the triumph could not be more transgressive.[42]

So the triumph's official character is utterly overturned by this passage of the *Ars*, and the event paradoxically becomes an occasion to meditate on the new genre of erotic didactic poetry and to affirm its most provocative features.[43] But the triumph *topos* also affords an opportunity for Ovid to engage in a dialogue with Propertius (and with Gallus) within the elegiac genre.[44] And so elegy, with its 'marginality' and frequent 'otherness', as compared to the prevailing ideology, allows its authors, when they analyse the Roman triumph, to advance a different viewpoint to the official one and a perspective richer in historical and sociological implications, but also more fruitful of poetic achievement.

Ovid does not finish his exploration of triumph with the *Ars*. The circumstances of his life led him to return to the subject from the completely different perspective of exile, when he had to reinvent his role

[42] The imitation of Virg. *Geo*. 3.15 at line 223 also contributes to the provocative effect: see Galinsky (n. 5), 101–2, who, however, emphasizes that this does not come from Ovid's desire to be anti-Augustan, but only from his intention to play down the solemn theme of triumph.

[43] Opinions on this passage are widely different: some scholars read these verses as ironic and perhaps hostile towards the regime (e.g. J. P. Sullivan, *Propertius* [Cambridge, 1976], 65), and consider irreverent the tone and the combination of triumph and frivolous courtship; others feel a sincere participation of the poet with the departing expedition (Labate [n. 34], 48–9) and deny any polemical attitude toward the regime (M. Labate, *L'arte di farsi amare. Modelli culturali e progetto didascalico nell'elegia ovidiana* [Pisa, 1984], 107; L. Galasso, *Ovidio. Epistulae ex Ponto* [Milan, 2011^2], 255). Pianezzola (n. 35), 9–27, recognizes in the *Ars* a provocative attitude towards some of the political and moral directives of the regime, but not a really hostile or polemic intent towards the Augustan ideology. A. S. Hollis, '*Ars Amatoria* and *Remedia Amoris*', in J. W. Binns, (ed.), *Ovid* (London, 1973), 87, thinks that Ovid in the *Ars* is not opposing the regime, but demythologizes the pretentious nature of certain of its official features. Similarly A. Barchiesi, *The Poet and the Prince. Ovid and Augustan Discourse* (Berkeley, CA, 1997) (= A. Barchiesi, *Il poeta e il principe. Ovidio e il discorso augusteo* [Rome and Bari, 1994]), 4, states that the *Ars* was never intended to be provocative, because Ovid preferred to stay away from political concerns: it appeared hostile in the eyes of Augustus, who had made morality one of the pivotal points of his regime.

[44] Labate (n. 33), 32–4, says that Ovid tends to reduce the transgressive features of Latin elegy, multiplying the number of beloved women and presenting love as a youthful experience: in this way he aligns himself with the traditional Roman view, which granted freedom and amorous transgressions to young people before the commitments and responsibilities of adulthood imposed a far more serious way of life.

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as a poet, to reflect on his previous production, and to rethink his relationship with imperial power. The poetry of exile has received particular attention in recent years.[45] It raises several questions for scholars, who no longer judge it the product of a tired poet, by now lacking inspiration (as for a long time it was seen); nor are these works today considered simply as a polemic outburst against the regime, disguised as apparent flattery.[46] The exile poetry is now seen as complex and multifaceted, where subtle dialogue with the emperor allows Ovid to acquire a new awareness of his own resources as a poet, and of the value of his art, following on from, not necessarily in opposition to, his previous works.[47] So his relationship with the emperor – very difficult to understand, but even more delicate in exile[48] – should be seen in the broader perspective that behind the inevitable flattery there is a glimpse of ample room for independent evaluation, and of the same freedom of thought that in previous years brought the poet to treat with humour some choices and tendencies of official ideology. Therefore, while we should not expect to see behind every phrase some hint of irony or polemic, yet sometimes flattering expressions cleverly disguise criticism and the poet's naivety is only seemingly sincere.[49] Accordingly, Ovid's protests that he repents of the excessive freedom of his erotic works seem to be, in fact, contradicted by his very choice of elegy for his exile poetry:[50] a choice made not to erase

[45] Extensive bibliography in J. M. Claassen, *Displaced Persons. The Literature of Exile from Cicero to Boethius* (London, 1999); J. M. Claassen, '*Mutatis mutandis*: The Poetry and Poetics of Isolation in Ovid and Breitenbach', *Scholia* 13 (2004), 71–107; J. M. Claassen, 'Literary Anamnesis: Boethius Remembers Ovid', *Helios* 34 (2007), 1–35.

[46] According to W. Marg, 'Zur Behandlung des Augustus in den *Tristien*', in *Atti del convegno internazionale ovidiano* (Rome, 1959), 345–54, followed, e.g., by R. Syme, *History in Ovid* (Oxford, 1978), esp. 190, 215; U. Bernhardt, *Die Funktion der Kataloge in Ovids Exilpoesie* (Hildesheim, 1986), 110; J. M. Claassen, '*Error* and the Imperial Household: An Angry God and the Exiled Ovid's Fate', *AClass* 30 (1987), 31–47. *Contra*, H. B. Evans, *Publica Carmina. Ovid's Books from Exile* (Lincoln, NE, 1983), 10 ff.; Labate (n. 36), 125 n. 65; L. Galasso, *P. Ovidii Nasonis. Epistularum ex Ponto liber II* (Florence, 1995), 41 and n. 8; Galasso (n. 43), vii.

[47] E. Oliensis, 'The Power of Image-Makers: Representation and Revenge in Ovid *Metamorphoses* 6 and *Tristia* 4', *ClAnt* 23 (2004), 296; Claassen (n. 46), 39–40.

[48] See S. Citroni Marchetti, *Amicizia e potere nelle lettere di Cicerone e nelle elegie ovidiane dall'esilio* (Florence, 2000), esp. 213.

[49] So A. Luisi, *Il perdono negato. Ovidio e la corrente filoantoniana* (Bari, 2001), 76; Claassen (n. 46), 40; Evans (n. 46), 181 n. 4; G. D. Williams, 'Ovid's Exile Poetry: *Tristia*, *Epistulae ex Ponto* and *Ibis*', in P. R. Hardie (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid* (Cambridge, 2003^2), 240. On the difficulty of defining the actual attitude of Ovid towards Augustus, see J. M. Claassen, '*Tristia*', in P. E. Knox (ed.), *A Companion to Ovid* (Chichester and Malden, MA, 2013), 181; cf. R. Maltby, 'Tibullus and Ovid', in *ibid.*, 283; G. D. Williams, *Banished Voices. Readings in Ovid's Exile Poetry* (Cambridge, 2007^2), 154–8.

[50] Labate (n. 36), 92–128.

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the immoral or scandalous features of his previous elegy,[51] but to maintain continuity with respect to it. In this way, *mutatis mutandis*, the poet reaffirms the validity of his erotic poetry, often reproducing not only formal elements but also direct reminiscences.[52]

All this is particularly clear in the triumph theme, frequently treated in Ovid's exile poetry. His apparent purpose is to show himself conforming with the directives and propaganda of the regime, and moreover to offer himself as a *vates* (poet) capable of celebrating (and thus perpetuating) the glories of the dynasty.[53] Nevertheless, his treatment of the triumph is ambiguous and polyvalent, to the extent that one cannot take the new image of himself that Ovid gives very seriously: the frequent references to *Ars am.* 1.177–228, even from an opposing point of view, in fact affirm rather than correct the vitality of that poem.[54] Even where the triumph is treated as an official celebration, it does not lose its polysemy and its ambiguity.[55] In the three elegies in which the topic is treated extensively, *Tristia* 4.2, *Pont.* 2.1, and *Pont.* 3.4, we can follow not only Ovid's ideological path but also his ongoing dialogue with his models, which in the 'reflective' exile works are primarily his own previous poems.

Tr. 4.2, the first in chronological order, contains the most interesting discussion of the triumph among the three exile poems on this theme. It has been judged a 'palinody' (retraction) of the irreverent triumph of *Ars am.* 1.177–228,[56] but a closer look reveals the text to be far more complex.[57] The relationship with the passage in the *Ars* is conspicuous: again, only an imagined, not a real, triumph,[58] a description of the

[51] Galinsky (n. 5), 106; *contra*, Labate (n. 36), 95.

[52] See Labate (n. 36), 92–5; Galasso (n. 43), xx. For Claassen (n. 46), 40, choosing in the exile poetry the same genre (elegy) that has caused his ruin, Ovid aims to demonstrate to Augustus the absence in it of polemic purposes. See also Williams 2003[2] (n. 49), 241.

[53] In his exile production Ovid shows himself as the one who through poetry can guarantee immortality: L. Galasso, '*Epistulae ex Ponto*', in Knox (n. 49), 200. The term *vates* ('poet') is used by Ovid in its solemnity in exile poetry, whereas in his previous production it appears in frivolous contexts or is used to highlight the scarce credibility of the poets: see Galasso (n. 46), 123, on line 55.

[54] Labate (n. 36), 99–101.

[55] Williams 2007 (n. 49), 157–60.

[56] Galinsky (n. 5), 106. *Contra*, Galasso (n. 46), 93.

[57] According to P. R. Hardie, *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion* (Cambridge, 2002), 308–11, the poem is more than a palinody, and its prevailing feature is the skill in reproducing the reality. S. J. Heyworth, 'Notes on Ovid's *Tristia*', *PCPS* 41 (1995), 145–9, reads it as a way to actualize the triumph of the *Ars*.

[58] The poem, written probably in 10 CE (Beard 2004 [n. 1], 118), alludes perhaps to a possible, future triumph of Tiberius for his campaign in Germany. According to Syme (n. 46), 39 and 45, the poem could be dated to 11 CE.

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spectacle, attention to the prisoners, the spectators' queries, and the sometimes untrue answers.[59] A dialogue with the earlier models can again be discerned. From Gallus comes the fusion of the public and private spheres and the treatment of the triumph as an omen for a glorious expedition. Here, however, Ovid highlights his incapability of being precise because of the distance and the vagueness with which he has news from Rome. The reference to Prop. 3.4 is even more explicit, with the quotation almost verbatim of Prop. 3.14.18 (*titulis oppida capta legam*, 'and scan the names of captured cities') at *Tr.* 4.2.20 (*cumque ducum titulis oppida capta leget*, 'people will read on placards the names of captured cities and leaders'). Moreover, in the conflation of public and private aspects a disposition comparable to Hor. *Carm.* 3.14 and 4.2 can be seen.

References and allusions aim, of course, not only to show the poet's ability to engage with previous texts,[60] but also to highlight differences from them: so Ovid, who now takes on the role of model citizen and loyal subject of Augustus, rewrites the description of the triumph in an official register, rethinking from the opposite perspective the most disrespectful features of his predecessors and of his own previous work. In this way, he goes back to an official perspective, giving the central focus to the victor (47–50); when the focus is turned to the crowd, the poet describes it as united and sharing the joy of the moment (15–16, 19, 47–52, 65–6): even the detail of questions and answers is put to use to depict the curiosity and interest of the viewers.[61] This is very far from the perspective of the seducer in the *Ars*, but here Ovid moves a step further back from Propertius, who described the ceremony only as a moment of encounter with his *puella*. Horace, too, had shown himself somewhat distant from participation in the event, both when he presented the triumph as a moment to be celebrated in private (*Carm.* 3.14) and when he had entrusted to Iullus Antonius the task of celebrating it in verse (*Carm.* 4.2).[62]

[59] Labate (n. 36), 97–101, compares the passages and finds in their descriptions the identical emotion and feeling of shared joy.

[60] Heyworth (n. 57), 146, considers *Tr.* 4.2 (in particular 47–56) a sort of anthology of quotations and *topoi* of earlier triumphal poetry.

[61] Beard 2004 (n. 1), 123–4.

[62] According to Oliensis (n. 47), 308, the analogies between *Tr.* 4.2 and Hor. *Carm.* 4.2 reveal the will of Ovid to show himself to Augustus as a 'new Horace', able to celebrate him.

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Ovid's conception is different: although plagued by his exile and physically distant, he shows himself to be fully participating, at least emotionally, in the triumph:

> *haec ego summotus, qua possum, mente videbo:*
> *erepti nobis ius habet illa loci;* (57–8)
>
> *and I, the exile, will see all this only with my mind, as I may:*
> *it still has a right to the place that was taken from me;*
>
> *is quoque iam serum referet veteremque triumphum:*
> *quo tamen audiero tempore, laetus ero.*
> *illa dies veniet, mea qua lugubria ponam,*
> *causaque privata publica maior erit.* (71–4)
>
> *He will tell of a late triumph, already out of date,*
> *still I'll be glad to hear of it, whenever.*
> *That day will come: I will lay aside my gloom,*
> *and the public fate will outweigh the private.* (transl. A. S. Kline)

However, behind this flawless façade, many glimmers tell another story, and many details allow the text to be read in a different light. First of all, there is the idea, repeatedly emphasized, that the description is simply a reverie, a game of imagination: the poet is not describing a triumph that has really happened, but is predicting that one day it will take place. Nor is the focus on the victor so clear, since frequent and empathetic digressions on the prisoners eventually shift the attention to them.[63] Indeed, the insistence on their humiliation, the blood, the pain, and the defeat, makes an implicit counterpoint to exaltation of the victory, bringing to mind that the other side of a triumph is death and suffering.[64] Furthermore, with the questions and the responses of the crowd (25–6) we hear an echo of the playful suggestions of the *praeceptor amoris* and of his substantial indifference to the real event.

In this way Ovid plays off one of the most remarkable aspects of the triumph, its illusory character, which in this poem finds its fullest expression. If the described event does not really exist, and Ovid does not know if it will ever really happen, it is only the visual elements

[63] Beard 2004 (n. 1), 124, points out that the representation of the prisoner king, dressed in purple and still proud, is not very different from the figure of the winner himself.

[64] Beard 2004 (n. 1), 122–3, stressing the importance of the other side of the triumph, notes the allusion of Ovid to grief and mourning suffered by the Romans in Germany (Teutoburg, the death of Drusus).

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which have substantial importance: the image of the celebrated victor and the humiliated losers (19–24, 27–50); the jubilation of the crowd, watching without knowing or exactly understanding what the spectators are seeing (19–22, 49–52). But Ovid's description is imaginary only because the event it describes has not actually happened. In the details, it remains faithful to real aspects of the triumphal ceremony, which is itself a spectacle, an illusion in which what is shown may not reflect reality, and what only matters is what people see. The triumph itself comprises images, symbols, and reconstructions, the reliability of which no one knows, and is thus capable of multiple interpretations. For this reason, the triumph loses its intrinsic importance; an entirely fictional triumph is equated with a true ceremony, where everything is similarly illusory,[65] just as the names invented by the seducer in the *Ars* proved as valuable as the real ones that no one knew.[66] In this light, the triumph of *Tr.* 4.2 is perhaps even more provocative than the nonchalant and essentially naive representation in *Ars am.* 1.177–228. In *Tr.* 4.2 the contradictions of the ceremony are exposed, but with a subtlety and dissimulation perhaps even more provocative because it undermines the solemnity of the triumph in an underhand manner.

Let us complete the reading of the elegy with a few further thoughts. First there is the contrast, emphatically repeated in the closing lines, between the collective joy and the isolation of the poet. He is forced to wait for late and sporadic news, and therefore he can only imagine what others will see: the very emphatic *ego* at line 57 suddenly breaks the illusion so far described, and the *verba videndi* ('words of seeing'), previously referring to the crowd (*omnis populus poterit spectare triumphos*, 'so all the people will be able to watch the triumph', 19; *vinclaque captiva reges cervice gerentes / ante coronatos ire videbit equos, / et cernet vultus*, 'and they will see the captive kings with chains round their necks, marching in front of the garlanded horses, and their faces', 21–3), are now used for Ovid himself (*haec ego summotus, qua possum, mente videbo*,

[65] Hardie (n. 57), 309, defines *Tr.* 4.2 as an 'illusion of an illusion'.

[66] I think that the theme 'triumph as fiction' is rooted ultimately in Gallus, who chose to describe a *praedictio triumphi* rather than an actual triumph. Propertius and Ovid use this possibility of a fictional triumph for different purposes. Gallus' choice was highly influential not only on them (and, for Propertius, not only in 3.4), but also – I believe– on Virg. *Geo.* 3.16–39, where the features of the temple negotiate both Octavian's prior achievements and also *anticipated* achievements (e.g. Britain and Parthia). Perhaps, Gallan influence can be seen even on the shield in *Aen.* 8, which treats historical events by means of (in essence) a *praedictio triumphi* from the yet more ancient historical past.

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'and I, the exile, will see all this only with my mind, as I may', 57; *illa* (sc. *mens*) *meos oculos mediam deducit in urbem*, 'my mind leads my eyes into the middle of the city', 61; *invenietque animus, qua currus spectet eburnos*, 'so my spirit will find a place to see the ivory car', 63). The regret of being able to be in Rome only in his imagination, for a brief fiction, sheds a grim light on the festive scene:

> *nos procul expulsos communia gaudia fallunt,*
> *famaque tam longe non nisi parva venit;* (17–18)
>
> *but I miss the communal joy, I'm driven far away,*
> *and only faint rumour travels so far;*
>
> *at mihi fingendo tantum longeque remotis*
> *auribus hic fructus percipiendus erit,*
> *aque procul Latio diversum missus in orbem*
> *qui narret cupido, vix erit, ista mihi.* (67–70)
>
> *and I will enjoy the fruits only in imagination,*
> *and far removed, in hearing, from it all,*
> *and there will be scarcely anyone, sent so far from Italy*
> *to this distant world, to tell me what I long for.* (transl. A. S. Kline)

The conclusion, with its bitter detail of Ovid's anguish, seems to be a tacit denial of the collective joy.[67] His joy will come only in the future, when he knows the reality of what he has so far only imagined, and this statement destroys the entire depiction of the triumph, evoking its vanity and unreality. The dependence of his own joy on the triumph of a leader recalls Gallus' verses, but Ovid expands the idea and places it at the end of the poem, leaving a painful impression and closing the text with a bitter tone.

The most important element of this elegy is undoubtedly the exaltation of poetry, whose not only imaginative, but moreover 'poietic' power (namely, poetry in its fundamental sense of 'poiesis', a *construction* of the imagination) allows Ovid to return for a moment to Rome and to invent a credible triumph.[68] In this way, he challenges the emperor and violates the interdiction that keeps him banished in

[67] See Oliensis (n. 47), 310. G. Danesi Marioni, 'Una reminiscenza di Cornelio Gallo nella *Consolatio ad Liviam* e il tema del trionfo negli elegiaci', in V. Tandoi (ed.), *Disiecti membra poetae. Studi di poesia latina in frammenti*, vol. II (Foggia, 1985), 95, finds instead in the public joy exceeding the private sorrow a common feature between *Tr.* 4.2 and the Gallan verses.

[68] M. Bonvicini, *Ovidio. Tristia* (Milan, 2013[4]), 361–2.

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Tomis, even appropriating the prerogative of the *princeps* to proclaim and choreograph a triumph. The strongest emphasis is on the power of poetic inspiration at lines 57–64,[69] a matter of pride for Ovid and a point emphatically addressed to Augustus,[70] almost a proof that the emperor's decree has not weakened the poet, but rather made him perhaps even more valuable as an ally and more formidable as an opponent. As often in the poems from exile, Ovid reflects on poetry itself, on not only its imaginative power but also its consolatory functions: through poetry, he is confident that he can present himself on an equal, if not superior, footing with respect to the emperor.[71] In this beautiful hymn to poetry, in this 'triumph of the imagination',[72] Ovid writes his most complex and perhaps most provocative verses on the Roman triumph, no longer simply a matter for playful variations in dialogue with other poets, but an opportunity to reflect on the meaning and value of art.

Ovid returns to the triumph in *Pont.* 2.1, in particular placing himself in dialogue with the immediate precedent of *Tr.* 4.2.[73] Remarkable in the poem are the explicit dedication to Germanicus, the compliments addressed to him, and the proposal to be his court poet. The pretext for the composition is the triumph of Tiberius for Illyria (23 October 12 CE), but in fact the victor is overshadowed and never named; instead, Germanicus is described and accompanied by the prophecy of another triumph (53–66).[74] The double triumph complicates the structure of the poem: there is a real ceremony, not seen but only imagined by the distant poet, and an imagined one, which has not happened and is only wished for. The joyful beginning and the claim that the happy news gladdens Ovid's painful exile (5–12) seem to reverse *Tr.* 4.2,

[69] See G. Rosati, 'L'esistenza letteraria: Ovidio e l'autocoscienza della poesia', *MD* 2 (1979), 101–23.

[70] Oliensis (n. 47), 311, argues that the poem could be a test to show to Augustus what Ovid could write for him, if the *princeps* wanted.

[71] Galasso (n. 46), 44.

[72] Williams 2003 (n. 49), 237.

[73] See analysis and discussion of this elegy in Schäfer-Schmitt 2008 (n. 2).

[74] In this way Ovid indicates his preference for Germanicus compared to Tiberius as the successor of Augustus: according to P. E. Knox, 'Il poeta e il "secondo" principe: Ovidio e la politica all'epoca di Tiberio', *Maecenas* 1 (2001), 179–81, the antipathy of Tiberius towards him could date back to the time of *Ars am.* 1.177–228, in which the praise for the young Gaius shows the hope that it would be him and not Tiberius to succeed the *princeps*; this could be a possible cause of the exile of Ovid, when the influence of Tiberius on Augustus increased (see also Luisi [n. 50], 87, 131, 141). On Ovid's preference for Germanicus, perhaps owing to the fact that the young prince was a poet, see also Barchiesi (n. 43), 177–80. On the dating of the poem, see Galasso (n. 43), xxv; for the period of composition of *Pontica* 1–3, see Claassen (n. 46), 32; Galasso (n. 46), 15.

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with its bitter conclusion. However, *Pont.* 2.1 in fact repeats the most important aspects of *Tr.* 4.2, including the play between illusion and reality, taken a step further by a double level of unreality in Ovid's description (in *Tr.* 4.2 the imagination addresses an actual triumph, but here it invents the entire occasion), and the importance of poetry, able to create from nothing something that has either taken place or never even existed, and in this way capable of 'negotiating' with Germanicus a new official role for the poet (55, 63–68).[75]

This aspect, however, marks the poem's distance from *Tr.* 4.2 and shows its inferiority. Ovid's aim to show himself as the official poet of Germanicus in fact occludes the most ambiguous and interesting features of *Tr.* 4.2 in favour of a more solemn and oracular tone and a viewpoint restricted to the official nature of the ceremony: the description of the triumph loses its vitality, becoming weak and conventional, presented, as it is, as the report of *Fama* rather than the poet's free creation (19–25). We therefore get the impression – intended to emphasize the poet's forced distance from the event – of a tale detached from historical reality, of an event reduced to a symbol. Compared to *Tr.* 4.2, Ovid seems to take the verisimilitude of the façade seriously in this poem, although the device of a predicted triumph, only vaguely recalling Gallus at 17–18 (*gaudia Caesareae mentis pro parte uirili / sunt mea: priuati nil habet illa domus*, 'the delights of Caesar's heart are mine too, as far as my powers allow: his house cannot be a private one', reminiscent of PQI 1.2–3), the tension between reality and fiction, and above all the role of poetry betray the influence of the multifaceted and multivalent vision of the triumph in *Tr.* 4.2.[76] The other texts to which *Pont.* 2.1 alludes, Tib. 2.5 and Hor. *Carm.* 3.14 and 4.2, are not evoked in a critical way;[77] the poet shows himself as sharing their apparent enthusiasm, without recreating the detachment mostly found in Horace.[78] It could not be otherwise, when Ovid is proposing himself as an official poet and is trying to be credible in this role.

[75] Galasso (n. 43), xx–xxii.

[76] In particular, Ovid emphasizes his role as a powerful poetic *triumphator*, who through his verses retains the capacity of writing triumph, hereby creating for Rome's leaders an everlasting monument of their success: on this point, which continues a topic of *Trist.* 4.2, see Schäfer-Schmitt 2008 (n. 2), *passim*.

[77] Galasso (n. 43), 254. On the models of *Pont.* 2.1, see Galinsky (n. 5), 103–4; Galasso (n. 46), 92–3.

[78] Galinsky (n. 5), 75.

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Even less original is the last occurrence of the theme of the triumph in *Pont*. 3.4, modelled on *Pont*. 2.1. The poem, long and boring,[79] retains features already experienced: so there is again the device of foreshadowing (17–20, 88–90, 95–112),[80] which in exile poetry becomes necessary to justify the treatment of the theme, as well as mention of the fantastic power of poetry, but here Ovid complains rather of the lack of potency caused by his distance from the events (11–12, 21–32, 79–80). The physical absence is underlined (17–20, 57–60), and the contrast between Ovid's loneliness and the festive crowd is repeatedly stressed (23–36). Yet even here he claims his role as *vates* with greater solemnity than in *Pont*. 2.1 (93–4), but with less confidence in the success of his attempt.[81] Perhaps the most significant feature is the concern (39–44) to apologize for the inaccuracy and ignorance of the details in the description:

> *Nec mihi nota ducum nec sunt mihi nota locorum*
> *nomina: materiam non habuere manus.*
> *Pars quota de tantis rebus, quam fama referre*
> *aut aliquis nobis scribere posset, erat?*
> *Quo magis, o lector, debes ignoscere, si quid*
> *erratum est illic praeteritumve mihi.*
>
> *The names of the leaders and the places*
> *are not known to me. Nothing is to hand.*
> *What portion of such things could rumour bring*
> *or someone writing to me about it?*
> *The more you ought to forgive me, reader,*
> *if I have made errors in it, or neglected anything.* (transl. A. S. Kline)

There is a clear reversal of the brilliant and amusing character of *Ars am*. 1.177–228, an attitude understandable in the new image the poet wants to give of himself. Thus, in this elegy the triumph appears more conventional and symbolic than ever; the invention of the ceremony lacks any historical reality and confirms the vanity, but also the trivialization, of the theme. After this last, tired occurrence of the motif, Ovid has nothing more to say and abandons the topic.

To conclude, the Ovidian treatments of the theme of predicting a triumph, often in a *propemptikòn*, draw in particular from the earlier

[79] So De Vivo (n. 25), 87. *Contra*, C. Newlands, *Ovid* (London, 2015), 41–2, argues that *Pont*. 3.4 represents the culmination of the poet's interest in the triumph as a focal point of artistic illusion.

[80] He is probably alluding to the campaign of Germanicus in Germany: Galasso (n. 43), 292.

[81] On the sincerity with which Ovid here interprets his role of *vates*, see Galinsky (n. 5), 105.

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elegists, both from Gallus directly and resuming the dialogue of Propertius with his predecessor. Ovid's own contribution is not only the exploitation of all the possible perspectives from which to treat the topic, but also the skill to adapt it to different circumstances and purposes, moving from the playful lightness of the *Ars* to the ambiguity, full of reservations and overtones, of *Tr.* 4.2. From a chance of seduction the triumph becomes, in this way, a moment of official celebration in the poet's hands, but above all it gives the author the opportunity to glorify poetry, a useful bargaining chip to negotiate his return with the emperor.

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