Varying Virtue : Mythological Paragons of Wifely Virtues in Roman Elegy

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Mythological Paragons of Wifely Virtues in Roman Elegy

Magdalena Öhrman

To my mother

Acknowledgements

Lund and Manchester

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Contents

Introduction

Like Augustan art, [Augustan literature] delighted in being a complex mixture of different traditions, many of them Greek, which provided an unprecedented range of allusiveness and resonance. As the most immediate and available predecessor, Hellenistic poetry with its elegance, learning, and sophistication was more than congenial. Accordingly, the ideal audience for the Augustan poets possessed similar qualities and such an audience would be able to appreciate the full extent of the poetry's associative wealth.

(Galinsky, 1996, 229)

THIS INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER indicates the overarching aims of the study. Furthermore, it explains the motivation for the selection of mythological characters to be examined while delimiting the study to include only the appearance of mentions of these characters in elegy, rather than references to these or other characters as *exempla* in prose, or in historical and rhetorical texts. It also provides a brief overview of the elegiac genre and trends in current elegiac scholarship. A brief summary of the literary tradition concerning the selected mythological characters Penelope, Laodamia, Andromache, Alcestis and Euadne is to be found in Appendix One.

The main part of this study is dived into four chapters, each dealing with a specific work, or group of works, of elegy: in Chapter One I discuss references to the five mythological characters selected for this study in 'canonical' elegy,[1] in Chapter Two the letters of Penelope and Laodamia in Ovid's *Heroides*, together with two minor mentions of Andromache in the same collection.[2] Chapter Three then focuses on references in erotodidactic elegy, first and foremost Ovid's *Ars*

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[1] The term is defined below.

[2] The order of Chapters One and Two depends in part on the relative chronology of Ovid's *Amores* and his *Heroides*. The mentions of Penelope and Laodamia as writers of poetic letters in Ov. *Am.* 2,18 prompts discussion of these issues at the outset of Chapter One (cf. I.i.).

Amatoria but also a number of related references to Penelope and Andromache in erotodidactic poems in other writings by Ovid and by Propertius. Finally, I turn to Ovid's exile poetry in Chapter Four.

In my last chapter (Chapter Five: Concluding Remarks) I review the results of the interpretations suggested in Chapters One to Four, and suggest some uses to which the results of this study could feasibly be put.

<div align="center">***</div>

The aim of this study is twofold. First, my objective is to provide close readings of references in Roman elegy of the Augustan period to five mythological and literary characters often drawn on as paradigms of wifely virtues – Penelope, Laodamia, Andromache, Alcestis and Euadne. Such references are, more often than not, brushed aside as stereotypical points of comparison for an elegiac beloved whom the elegiac narrator[3] wishes either to praise or to rebuke. In contrast, this study considers each such reference carefully, paying particular attention to narratological and intertextual aspects and any reflection on generic issues the shaping of these mythological references may afford (for the latter, see further below). Although commentaries on elegy and studies on individual poems or texts have made many valuable comments on these issues in the respective texts, there has been no previous comprehensive investigation encompassing all these characters while considering the elegiac corpus in its entirety.[4] Literary theory, especially concepts of intertextuality, narratology and reader response theory have shaped my approach to the text,[5] but – given the wide range of texts considered in this study and current practise in literary Classical scholarship – they have been used diversely according to the demands of each passage.

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[3] It is generally necessary to distinguish between two levels of authorship in elegy. On the one hand the narrator, speaking either in the poet's own name (the German, more telling, term is Ich-Sprecher) or in that of a mythological character, in the following referred to as the narrator or specifically in the *Ars amatoria* as the *praeceptor amoris*, and on the other hand the 'real' or implied author, referred to as Propertius, Tibullus or Ovid, or the external author. For discussions of multiple levels of authorship and voice in Ovid's *Heroides*, cf. Spentzou, 2003; Fulkerson, 2005.

[4] Such studies focussing on selected works include (e.g.) Lechi, 1979; Davis, 1980; Watson, 1983; Bernhardt, 1986; Schubert, 1992; Davisson, 1993.

[5] On intertextuality in Classical scholarship, Hinds, 1998; Fowler, 2000. For examples of reader response oriented readings cf. (e.g.) Sharrock, 1994, esp. 1–27; Pedrick, 1986. For studies in narratology informing my approach, see Chapter Three.

I shall return presently to the wider benefits of taking into consideration all fully transmitted elegiac texts of the period – from Propertius to the exilic poems of Ovid – but in terms of close reading and interpretation of individual passages this approach allows us to pay more consistent attention both to the way in which the authors relate their references to earlier literary tradition, and to what extent the elegiac references to these characters are interdependent, building on each other as much as on literary tradition. Although the texts themselves are quite disparate (so that subsequently, a certain measure of disparateness is inherent in the chapters of this study, see further below), and although the references fulfil different narratological functions in the respective texts, the mentions of mythological paradigms of wifely virtues in elegy are linked to oneanother. For instance, the characterization of Penelope and Laodamia in the *Heroides* draw on intertexts in Propertius, Tibullus and Ovid's *Amores* mentioning or alluding to Penelope,[6] and the catalogue of virtuous wives in the proem of *Ars Amatoria* 3 in turn draws on the *Heroides* letters of Laodamia and Penelope (*Epist.* 13 and 1 respectively; Chapters One to Three). Furthermore, I will argue that mentions of these paradigms of female virtue in 'canonical' elegy, the *Heroides* and the *Ars* are all highly relevant intertexts for a fuller understanding of the exile poetry of Ovid (Chapter Four). The comprehensive examination of the passages undertaken in this study highlights these relations between the works.

However, careful interpretation of elegiac references to Penelope, Laodamia, Andromache, Alcestis and Euadne from the entire corpus of elegiac texts from the Augustan period may also be signifcant for our understanding of the elegiac genre as a whole, and throw light on the aims and objectives of the genre. The second aim of this study, therefore, is to show that elegy's usage of mythological and literary characters primarily associated with other literary genres may contribute towards a more nuanced definition of the elegiac genre itself.

In order to demonstrate this, I will first draw on close readings of separate passages across the whole corpus showing that the reader is continually encouraged to compare the representation of the selected heroines in elegy with what we might call the vulgate tradition of characterization,[7] and that these comparisons have considerable influence on the reader's appreciation of the narrator. For example, every mention of Penelope in elegy invites comparison with the notion of Penelope as the proverbially faithful wife, a notion loosely based on, but not necessarily explicitly tied to, the dominating intertext of Homer's *Odyssey*.

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[6] For my use of the term *intertext*, Edmunds, 2001, 137–139.

[7] Jacobson, 1974, 246 uses this expression in his discussion of the literary tradition on Penelope.

Numerous references to the selected heroines as being known for their wifely virtues both elsewhere in literature and in a wide range of mythographical texts attest the existence of such vulgate traditions.[8] Particularly intersting is the list of virtuous wives in Hyginus' *Fab.* 256, which under the very brief heading and without more than genealogical detail pronounces Penelope, Euadne, Laodamia, and Alcestis as *castissimae* ('most virtuous'), together with Hecuba, Theone and, for the Romans, Lucretia. The brevity of Hyginus' introduction here indicates that the stories surrounding these characters were so well known as not to merit further explanation. In an essay on the *Heroides* but with relevance also for elegiac texts in general, Alessandro Barchiesi states that

> [e]legists base their work upon this type of 'external' provenance of the characters only then to assimilate them into the elegiac context. The paradigms have [sc. rhetorical] value precisely because they are summoned from 'the outside', from a different and pre-existing literary world.
> (Barchiesi, 2001, 42)

Elegy will, at times, suggest characterizations of these mythological wives distinctly at odds with that background (cf. esp. Penelope in Ov. *Am.* 1,8,47f and Andromache in Ov. *Ars* 2,709f; 3,777f, all in Chapter Three), but one key point of this study is to show that in such cases, the text contains a number of markers alerting the reader to a certain measure of unreliability in the narrator. Moreover, the study will suggest that the presence of the vulgate or previous literary tradition in the mind of the reader is such that the necessity for the elegiac narrator to re-interpret or tweak the mythological material to make it compliant with his or her interpretation does itself constitute a marker of unreliability.

The manner in which elegiac narrators employ mythological or literary paradigms of wifely virtues also reflects on the credibility of the narrator when the mythological reference has implications seemingly overlooked by the narrator. Particularly in 'canonical' elegy, we shall see that purportedly flattering comparisons between the *puella* and mythological paradigms of wifely virtues will contain elements of jarring, hinting that the narrator's appreciation of his relationship with the *puella* is skewed in significant ways. I will highlight similar

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[8] Cf. Aristoph. *Th.* 549 (Penelope); Verg. *Aen.* 3,294–355 (Andromache); 6,477f (Laodamia and Euadne), Plat. *Symp.* 208D (Alcestis), Ael. *VH* 14,45 (Penelope, Alcestis, Laodamia); *NA* 1,15 (Euadne and Alcestis), Philostr. *Her.* 2,3 (Alcestis), Hyg. *Fab.* 103 (Laodamia); 104 (Laodamia); 243 (Alestis, Laodamia, Euadne); 251 (Alcestis, Laodamia); 256 (Penelope, Euadne, Laodamia, Alcestis), V. Max. 4,6,1 (Alcestis). For the tradition on Laodamia, cf. Jacobson, 1974, 195–198, for Penelope, Jacobson, 1974, 245–249, for Euadne, Escher, 1907, 818, for Andromache Wagner, 1894, 2151f and for Alcestis, Wentzel, 1894, 377–380. According to Otto, 1890, 401, Penelope's faithfulness was proverbial (*Penelopae fides*). See also Appendix One.

poetic techniques present in Laodamia's letter in the *Heroides*, where her beloved Protesilaus is idealized in a way that stands in sharp contrast with the traditional version of the myth. Even in passages where the male narrator draws on these paradigms to indicate dissimilarities between his beloved and, for instance, Penelope or Andromache, the comparison often implies seemingly unfortunate analogies between the narrator himself and the male counterparts of the heroine in question. These analogies, as we shall see, frequently call into question the claims the male narrators make for themselves about their fidelity and steadfast devotion to their *puella*. At this junction, we need to bear in mind that although the narrators may appear not to be in complete control of their texts, we must not necessarily infer that the same is true of the external or implied authors. I will propose that it casts the narrator in an ironic (or possibly humorous) light, and that it, particularly given the frequency with which it occurs, in the long term undermines the credibility of the narrator.

By analysing references to mythological paradigms of wifely virtues, this study will show that elegiac narrators are, more often than not, not entirely reliable and sometimes even conspicuously unreliable. I will suggest that this outcome of interpretations of the use of mythology in various types of elegy should be allowed to influence our evaluation of the literary, social and political commentary ostensibly provided by elegiac narrators. Consequently, we might call into question the narrator's world-view as a whole, including the rejection of the traditional *cursus honorum*, military or familial duties, and the devaluation of literary genres traditionally considered to be of higher standing in favour of elegy, and so forth. If the individual who voices such opposition against traditional, Roman values is frequently revealed as being unreliable, potentially ridiculous and perhaps a source of amusement, the elegiac *Gegenwelt* proposed in particularly 'canonical' elegy cannot plausibly offer a viable alternative to these traditional values. By detracting from the credibility of the opposing alternative, elegy comes ultimately to confirm the values of traditional Roman society.[9]

This is but one way that close reading of references to mythological paradigms of wifely virtue in this particular text corpus may assist in gaining a more nuanced understanding of the aims of the elegiac genre. While their handling of mythological paradigms influences the credibility of the narrators first and foremost in 'canonical' and erotodidactic elegy (see especially Chapters One and Three),[10] the second and fourth chapter of this study will argue that due to their origins in

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[9] On Roman values in the Augustan period, Galinsky, 1996, 80–140.

[10] It is also prominent in the letters of Penelope and Laodamia in the *Heroides*, cf. Chapter Two.

other literary genres (most notably epic and tragedy) these five female paragons of virtue often themselves become vehicles for a discussion of the elegiac genre. My interpretations of the letters of Penelope and Laodamia in Ovid's *Heroides* will indicate that the (attempted) transposition of characters previously associated primarily with epic and tragedy to elegy cause these characters to include in their letters implicit reflections on elegy's relationship with literary tradition, as well as on the aims and limitations of that genre (Chapter Two). Such reflection may also be found in Ovid's exile poetry although its mythological catalogues of virtuous wives of predominately non-elegiac intertextual origins and motivations usually dramatizes the isolation of the narrator's exile. The narrator, as we shall see, is closely associated with the elegiac genre, but the wife he is parted from is repeatedly likened to several mythological wives and therefore placed within a different genre system. However, there is also one instance in Ov. *Trist.* 5,5 where Penelope, Euadne, Alcestis and Euadne are placed in opposition to the character of the (purportedly) real-life wife of 'Ovid'. I will suggest that by means of this juxtaposition the text may be said to comment both on the validity of the elegiac world view as it is presented in 'canonical' elegy and, more importantly, on the potential influence of 'canonical' and erotodidactic elegy on the morality of Ovid's contemporaries, and on whether these types of elegy were at all concerned with exerting any such influence (Chapter Four, esp. IV.iv.).

The five mythological characters around which this study is centred were originally chosen solely because of their frequent appearance, together or separately, in elegiac writings of the Augustan periods, particularly in Ovid's exile poetry and in the *Ars amatoria*. The selection of characters is limited to include faithful wives only, whose appearance in elegy must seem more striking than the use of examples like Briseis or Tecmessa, proverbially loyal but – just like most elegiac *puellae* seem to be – not married to the men they love.[11] Traditionally, little attention has been paid to the possible intertextual relations between these mythological references; the comparison of elegiac *puellae* to for instance Penelope have often been considered stereotypical, and the catalogues of virtuous wives in the *Ars* and in the exile poetry have often been thought to have been taken over from mythological handbooks.[12] With renewed interest in elegy in the later half

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[11] The charactersiation of for instance Briseis and Tecmessa is, however, discussed when they appear together with one of the five selected heroines. For the social status of the *puella*, James, 2003, 35–41.

[12] Renz, 1935, 43f and 52; Bernhardt, 1986, 176. For very brief characterizations of the use of the example Penelope as 'typical' cf. Fedeli, 1985, 411; Spoth, 1992, 37; Gilchrist, 1997, 249 (on Prop. 3,13) and Richardson, 1977, 236; Barchiesi, 2001, 34f; Fedeli, 2005, 277f (on Prop. 2,9).

of the twentieth century such statements are becoming increasingly less frequent, and I am much indebted to interpretations of mythological references in several recent commentaries on elegiac works and studies of individual poems. This study builds on the results of such previous research, but also further emphasizes the intertextual relations between the various passages mentioning characters other than the main protagonists.

However, as the five selected characters Penelope, Laodamia, Andromache, Alcestis and Euadne are predominately associated with other literary genres than elegy – most notably epic and tragedy – a close examination of their role in elegy also throws light on the way elegy interacts with other genres, and on the way it defines its own boundaries and limitations. The fact that I have limited the selection of characters to include only married women known for their faithfulness, also ensures the presence of tension between *comparans* and *comparandum*, between formally recognized wives and lovers in a union that is, more often than not, placed outside of normative society.[13] In the introduction to Chapter One I will argue that the interpretations presented in that chapter may be read as a case study of Conte's statement that elegy thrives on the awareness of tension and contradiction which arise when elegiac narrators attempt to make their own words and values which have, in their original form, no place within the universe of the elegiac genre, like fidelity and simplicity.[14] As this introduction has indicated, this is in fact demonstrated throughout the study. The interpretation of references to the five selected mythological characters provides samples from across the entire elegiac corpus of the Augustan period, probing and defining the boundaries of the genre. The sample allows us to define and highlight similarities in attitude and poetic technique between these seemingly disparate works.

The choice of these five characters is not, therefore, based on whether they are used as rhetorical *exempla* in other texts. The emphasis of my analysis is narratological and intertextual rather than rhetorical in its approach, and the study delimits itself to only include mentions of these characters in elegy, rather than references to these or other characters as *exempla* in rhetoric, prose fiction, historiography *et cetera*, whether Greek or Roman. The study of exemplarity *per se* thus falls outside the delimitations of this study.[15]

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[13] Cf. the programmatic […] *me docuit castas odisse puellas* ([Amor] taught me to dislike the chaste girls') in Prop. 1,1,5.

[14] Conte, 1989, 445.

[15] Recent works on exemplarity in Latin literature include Dueck, 2000; Rodríguez Herrera, 2000; Gärtner, 2001; Haltenhoff, 2001; Roller, 2004. Cf. also Bernhardt, 1986, 8–12; Schubert, 1992, 23.

This study refers frequently to 'elegy', that is, *Roman* elegy, and more precisely 'Roman elegy of the Augustan period'. Some further clarifying remarks should be made at this junction. Throughout, I tentatively use the term 'canonical' elegy for the form of Roman love elegy that survives as a relatively coherent genre in Propertius, Tibullus and Ovid's *Amores*.[16] The term serves to distinguish this seminal form of elegy from later, related but not entirely akin elegiac works such as Ovid's *Heroides*, the erotodidactic *Ars amatoria*, and Ovid's exilic poetry. Given the fragmentary state of Gallus' poetry, it is in these works of 'canonical' elegy that we first see what scholars often refer to as 'the elegiac system' take form.[17] In brief 'canonical' elegy introduces the combination of first-person narrative in elegiac verse, a seeming inversion of traditional Roman gender roles,[18] and disregard of social convention for the sake of love (equally superficial, as this study will argue), all coupled with an ongoing reflection on poetics. The three authors draw on similar *topoi* of love's warfare and slavery (*militia* and *seruitium amoris*). They let their narrators celebrate the eternal bond between lovers (*foedus aeternum*) while at the same time making clear (as this study will show) that there is in fact little room for the ostensibly celebrated values like fidelity and simplicity within the elegiac lifestyle. Furthermore, the paradigmatic role reversal between male and female dominating partners proves on closer consideration to be a chimera; several studies have argued that the female *puella* or *domina* remains in the control of the narrator (and even more so in the control of the external author), who alone has the power to celebrate her (or not) in his poetry.[19] A sense of paradox permeates the whole genre.[20]

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[16] Others have used terms such as 'mainstream' elegy to make a similar distinction, cf. Fear, 2005, 17, esp. n. 5. R. K. Gibson, 2005, 160–173 also uses the term 'canonical' elegy.

[17] Certainly themes and motives that become the cornerstones of Roman love elegy appear first in Catullus' elegiac poems but contemporary criticism did not count him among the elegists, cf. Ov. *Ars* 3,535–538; *Rem.* 763–766; *Trist.* 4,10,51–54 and Quint. *Inst.* 10,93 for lists of elegists not including Catullus.

[18] Griffin, 1985, 54f; Hallett and Skinner, 1997, 130; Holzberg, 2001, 17 and 19–21, cf. also Kennedy, 1993, 30f.

[19] Seminal studies on the manipulation of the *puella* include e.g. Wyke, 1987b; 1987a; Wyke, 1989; Sharrock, 1991; Greene, 1994; Miller, 1994; Wyke, 1994; Greene, 1995; 1998; Sharrock, 2000; Wyke, 2002.

[20] Whereas the similarities between these works are pronounced, and although patterns introduced in 'canonical' elegy continue to be of paramount significance in Ovid's later writings, we should also bear in mind that 'the elegiac system' is a construction of modern day scholars rather than a rigid measuring system which the authors themselves have imposed on their work. For the paradoxical nature of elegy, cf. also Miller, 2004, 1–30.

As stated above, this study will suggest that we understand elegy as a genre more concerned with sophisticated literary play and allusion, as well as with humour,[21] than with either the depiction of a real relationship or with a wish for real changes in Roman society.[22] Generally speaking, since the 1990s scholarship on elegy has gradually moved away from the perception of elegy as a predominately political and subversive genre to emphasize other aspects.[23] Constructions of gender, genre and intertextuality have become chief concerns in a field of research so lively and diverse that it neither could nor should be summarily overviewed within the scope of this study. Important inroads to current elegiac scholarship are provided by the many recent and extensive commentaries following the McKeown commentaries on Ovid's *Amores*,[24] as well as by collection volumes like the Brill and Cambridge Companions to Ovid or, for gender studies, Ancona and Greene's *Gendered Dynamics in Latin Love Poetry*, to mention but one example.[25] Thus, this study has been informed by, and attempts to complement, earlier and current works on elegy focussing on the genre's *womanufacture* and its manipulation of female characters, coherence with traditional Roman gender patterns, as well as the wider discussion of genre in elegy.[26]

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Finally, a word on the practice of reading elegy in this volume. The paradoxical attraction of the elegiac genre often consists in the existence of contrasting first and second readings[27] which are, at some level, simultaneously valid. As Galinsky points out in the quotation which opened this introduction, ideal contemporary readers of elegy would certainly have possessed a far greater knowledge of mytho-

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[21] Such interpretations of 'canoncial' elegy have been put forward by, for instance, Veyne, 1988, 26–28; 44 and 153–155; Fantham, 1996, 108; Holzberg, 2001, 21–27.

[22] For recent but slightly different approaches to elegy, cf. James 2003.

[23] Recent works on elegy as an anti-establishment art form include (e.g.) Lyne, 1980; Stahl, 1985; Glatt, 1991; Davies, 2006. Kennedy's 1992 essay contributed to the shift away from thinking about elegy in terms of political dichotomy, cf. Kennedy, 1992.

[24] Fedeli, 1965; 1980; Fedeli, 1985; 2005 on Propertius, Murgatroyd, 1994 and Maltby, 2002 on Tibullus, McKeown, 1987; 1989; Janka, 1997; McKeown, 1998; Reeson, 2001; R. K. Gibson, 2003; Gaertner, 2005 on Ovid.

[25] Boyd, 2002; Hardie, 2002b; Greene and Ancona, 2005; Knox, 2006.

[26] For studies on the *puella*, cf. above n. 19. On the conservative tendency of elegy cf. (e.g) Burck, 1966; Gale, 1997; Fear, 2005, and now R. K. Gibson, 2007. Miller, 2004 focuses on the development of the genre.

[27] On first and second readings, cf. Sharrock, 1994, 15–17.

logical and literary tradition than most modern-day readers, allowing them to access and follow sequences of association such as the ones I suggest here with more ease.[28] In the following, I have endeavoured to provide evidence for how such allusive and associative chains may be traced through the texts, by means of literary parallels, similarities in wording, and so forth. Translations have been included throughout to facilitate this, although in some cases I have chosen not to repeat the translation of certain recurrent phrases in order to avoid distracting the reader.[29] While readers – of elegy as well as of this study – ultimately must choose for themselves where to draw the line between irrelevant and relevant, or between far-fetched and fitting, it is important to bear in mind that although more wordy than most modern poetry, elegy is poetry, and in poetry each and every word demands interpretation.

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[28] Galinsky, 1996, 229.

[29] With minor alterations, I rely on the following editions: Propertius, Fedeli, 1994. Tibullus, Luck, 1988. Ovid, *Amores*, *Med. Fac.*, *Ars amatoria* 1–3, Kenney, 1961; *Heroides*, Dörrie, 1971; *Tristia* and *Epistulae Ex Ponto*, Owen, 1915.

'Canonical' Elegy

T HIS CHAPTER PROVIDES close readings of the instances where Propertius and Ovid (in the *Amores*) refer directly to Penelope, Alcestis, Euadne, Laodamia and Andromache.[1] The section 'Digression' deals with three passages for which the character of Penelope has often been considered an important point of reference, but where there is no direct mention of her or any other paragon of virtue. As the last of these passages the interpretation of Prop. 4,8 prompts general reflections on the genre and provides a close to the main part of the chapter. In the course of my interpretations, this study will continually stress that the use of the well-known mythological female characters within the scope of this study plays an important part in the way the external author forms the reader's perception of the narrator of the various poems. Though scholars have touched on these matters when dealing with separate passages and poems – discussions to which I am naturally much indebted – a comprehensive in-depth discussion of the references made to mythological examples of wifely virtue may still yield further insights.

References in 'canonical' elegy to mythological characters known from other sources as paragons of wifely virtues tend to be brushed aside as stereotype references to virtuous women acting as foils for the beloved, either to praise her or to entreat her to be more virtuous. However, by close consideration of the passages I intend to show that the elegists' use even of brief mythological references to these examples of wifely virtues is more complex than previously assumed: I will argue that the elegists shape their references to these particular mythological characters in a way that is defined by the elegiac genre; a way, moreover, that raises important questions about what that genre really entails.

The first main section of this chapter focusses on the ever-present contrast between the ideals professed by the elegiac narrators and the 'actual' workings of the elegiac world; a contrast which – as the interpretations in this chapter will

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[1] Prop. 2,22a,29–34; 4,5,7f and Ov. Am. 1,8,47; 1,9,32–40 are discussed in Chapter Three.

make obvious – informs all references to paradigms of wifely virtues in 'canonical' elegy. Although infidelity and luxury are often described in negative terms in 'canonical' elegy, they are also indispensable parts of the elegist's world, whereas values like simplicity or fidelity must remain celebrated but fundamentally unattainable ideals. The interpretations suggested in this chapter are, in a way, a case study illustrating Conte's insistence that elegy thrives precisely on the full awareness of tension between the contradictions arising as the elegiac narrators try to recuperate for their own use words and values which have, in their original form, no place within the universe of the genre.[2] The first main section of this chapter examines two passages mentioning examples of wifely virtues which in particular reflect this overarching paradox of the genre, Prop. 2,9,3–8 and Prop. 3,13,9f and 23f (I.ii. The Absence of Light).

The contrast between the ostensibly professed ideals of 'canonical' elegy and its fictional reality, which causes mythological examples of wifely virtues to be surrounded by what I shall describe as a sense of jarring does not, of course, always immediately suggest itself to the reader. On several instances the narrators draw quite aptly on mythological examples of female virtue to describe similarities or, more frequently, dissimilarities with their *puellae*.[3] On these instances, however, the careful reader may also note that the likening of the respective beloved *puella* to certain female mythological characters also implies an analogy between her male counterpart and the narrator, and this is the focus of the second main section of this chapter (I.iii. Keeping Her in the Dark). As we shall see, this has not escaped the attention of earlier critics dealing with specific passages, but I will emphasize how the authors repeatedly employ such analogies to cast their first-person narrators in an ironic or perhaps even comical light. At first glance, the analogies between a narrator and, for instance, Odysseus, may seem flattering, but more careful study of the text and its intertexts reveals a disconcerting gap between the self-image the narrator seems to wish to project and what conclusions we may draw about him from the text. I hope to bring to the fore here the frequency with which it occurs, as well as the cumulative effects it may have on the reader in making him or her increasingly more suspicious of the narrator's claims.

More obvious is the way these mythological references reflect ironically on the respective narrator's understanding of his relationship with the *puella* or on her character; the supposedly flattering comparison of her to paragons of virtue will often be found jarring and the reader is invited to conclude that she is, in fact,

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[2] Conte, 1989, 445.

[3] When used of the protagonists in the elegiac relationship, I have not translated the terms *puella(e)*, meaning girl-friend(s) or female lover(s), or *amator*, male lover.

no Penelope. The third main section is devoted to such passages (I.iv. Through A Glass Darkly).

Though centred around the three above-mentioned main sections, the chapter opens and closes with interpretations of two passages where the examples of Penelope and Laodamia serve a different purpose. In the section following immediately on this introduction, the mention of Penelope and Laodamia in Ov. *Am.* 2,18 prompts some brief remarks on the relative chronology of Ovid's early works, and provides further motivation for making the chapter on 'canonical' elegy the first chapter of this study (I.i. On relative chronology). At the close of the chapter, an interpretation of the reference to Penelope in Ov. *Am.* 3,4 points forward to the third chapter and the usage of mythological paradigms of wifely virtue in the *Ars amatoria* and other erotodidactic elegies (I.v. Taking up teaching). It should also be noted that poetic texts cannot, per definition, be easily categorized. Though hopefully helpful to the reader in making obvious tendencies in the texts, the divisions made in this chapter are not clear-cut – some passages could very well be said to belong to more than one of the categories employed here.

Reviewing the results of my readings in the concluding remarks to this chapter, I will argue that the impact of such discrepancies as outlined above is cumulative and may in the end affect the validity of the world view ostensibly presented in 'canonical' elegy. If the narrator who proffers it is repeatedly shown to have a deficient sense of reality and to exaggerate his own qualities, or those of his beloved, or if the love story he is telling is constantly undermined by the very text itself, there will be reason to question whether his social and political commentary is skewed in the same way (I.vi. Concluding Remarks).

I.i. On relative chronology: Ov. *Am.* 2,18,21; 29 and 38

Ovid's *Am.* 2,18 takes the form of a defence of the narrator's decision to write love poetry. Like the Propertian narrator in the similar poem in Propertius' first book (Prop. 1,7) the Ovidian narrator bases his choice of genre – love poetry over epic and tragedy – on commands received from Amor, and implicitly also from the *puella*. As in Propertius 1,7 the internal addressee of the poem is a fellow poet.[4] Little may be said with certainty about Ovid's addressee Macer (later mentioned twice in the *Epistulae Ex Ponto*), but within this poem he serves as a foil to Ovid's

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[4] The internal addressee in Prop. 1,7 is Ponticus. On the correspondences between Ov. *Am.* 2,18 and Prop. 1,7, cf. Fedeli, 1980, 185–188; Davis, 1981, 2477f; C. Neumeister, 1982; Heldmann, 1994, 194; McKeown, 1998, 382.

love poet, working, or so the Ovidian narrator claims, on an epic, but nevertheless having a predilection for the love stories featuring in the background even of that genre (Ov. *Am.* 2,18,35–40).[5]

The poem is relevant here for two reasons. First, it contains mentions of two of the mythological characters selected for this study: Penelope in Ov. *Am.* 2,18,21 and 29 respectively, and Laodamia in 38, to which I shall return presently. The mentions of Penelope appear in a list of genres compatible with the commands of both Amor and the *puella*, and in which the narrator claims to have worked. This catalogue of literary works in Ov. *Am.* 2,18,11–26 is of great importance for establishing a relative chronology of Ovid's early works as well as for the discussion of the authenticity of several letters in the *Heroides*.[6] The narrator mentions nine letters of the *Heroides* explicitly (letters by Penelope, Phyllis, Phaedra, Oenone, Hypsipyle, Dido, Ariadne, Canace and Sappho, Ov. *Am.* 2,18,21–26) and alludes to *Amores* (Ov. *Am.* 2,18,11f and possibly 19f), the *Medea* (Ov. *Am* 2,18,15–18) and possibly the *Ars amatoria* (Ov. *Am.* 2,18,19f).

That this poem allows some conclusions regarding the relative chronology of Ovid's works is the second reason it is particularly relevant here. Mostly due to the possible mention of the *Ars amatoria* with *quod licet aut artes teneri profitemur Amoris / (ei mihi, praeceptis urgeor ipse meis!)*, 'This, namely, is granted to me, either to teach the art of tender Amor (alas, my own teachings haunt me!')' in Ov. *Am.* 2,18,19f, scholars have thought that this poem belongs to the second edition of the *Amores*.[7] This revised edition, mentioned in the epigram preceding the first book of the *Amores*, would have appeared after the single *Heroides*, the *Medea* and the *Ars amatoria*.[8] The notion of a second edition of the *Amores* is still widely accepted in scholarly circles, but critics understanding the epigram and its mention of five books shortened to three as a playful allusion to Callimachean aesthetics have suggested that it did in fact never exist. The *Amores* and the *Heroides* were, if that theory holds, written and perhaps also publicly recited at approximately

[5] On the identity of Macer, McKeown, 1998, 382f with references to Ov. *Pont.* 2,10 and 4,16,6.

[6] Heldmann, 1994, 200–215; McKeown, 1998, 386f evaluate the usefulness of this poem for establishing the authenticity of several of the *Heroides*.

[7] For Ov. *Am.* 2,18,19f as a reference to the *Ars*, cf. Stroh, 1971, 143; C. Neumeister, 1982, 98 n. 17; Spoth, 1992, 35 n. 1–3 ; Heldmann, 1994, 195; Harrison, 2002, 81 with further references in n. 9; Hollis, 1977, 150f. Other scholars understand this line as a reference to the didactic element present already in the *Amores*, Holzberg, 1997, 41–45; 65f; Holzberg, 2001, 110–113; 127–129; McKeown, 1998, 385f; Breitzigheimer, 2001, 273f.

[8] E.g. Jacobson, 1974, 301f; C. Neumeister, 1982, 94; McKeown, 1989, 1–4.

the same time, although in written form, the publication of the *Amores* is likely to have preceded that of the *Heroides*.[9]

Thus, regardless of whether there was a second edition of the *Amores*, the relative chronology of Ovid's work suggested by the evidence of Ov. *Am.* 2,18 is reasonably paralleled by the organisation of first two chapters of this study. As previously outlined, I shall turn first to the references to Penelope, Laodamia, Andromache, Alcestis and Euadne in the 'canonical' elegies by Propertius, Tibullus and Ovid, and only then to the more extensive treatments of the Penelope and Laodamia myths in Ovid's *Heroides*.

In Ov. *Am.* 2,18,21–26 Ovid mentions nine of the female letter writers of the *Heroides*, Penelope the first among them: *aut quod Penelopes uerbis reddatur Ulixi / scribimus* […] ('or that I write down what Penelope's words to Odysseus were') in line 21f. Following the list of his own *Heroides*, the narrator also refers to the answering letters written by Sabinus to Penelope, Phaedra, Dido, Phyllis, Hypsipyle and Sappho (Ov. *Am.* 2,18,27–34).[10] The reference to Ovid's own Penelope is very brief. It is not suggestive of any particular interpretation of the Penelope letter and amounts to little more than a point on the narrator's (and Ovid's) *curriculum vitae*. The description of Sabinus' Penelope, however, may be more illuminating. After expressing surprise at the quick response of Sabinus in lines 27f, the narrator expounds *candida Penelope signum cognouit Ulixis* ('fair Penelope recognized the seal of Odysseus') in Ov. *Am.* 2,18,21. McKeown notes that the adjective *candidus* ('fair') often refers to a radiant complexion and beauty, so that the statement would contradict the Ovidian Penelope's claims that she has aged in the absence of Odysseus (cf. Ov. *Epist.* 1,115f). McKeown also suggests that the word more probably is supposed to recall Penelope's renowned chastity.[11] That in turn may indicate that Sabinus' letter, and possibly his reading of Ovid's letter, focussed on the vulgate image of Penelope as a faithfully waiting wife.

The reference to Laodamia does not occur in the list of *Heroides* letters the narrator claims to have written. Instead, Laodamia is mentioned towards the end of the poem, where the narrator protests that even now, Macer's epic writings contains elements that are strongly reminiscent of love poetry. Firstly, the narrator claims, there is Paris and Helen and their *nobile crimen* ('famous crime'), and then *et comes extincto Laodamia uiro* ('and Laodamia, companion of her dead

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[9] Holzberg, 1997, 41–45; 2001, 110–112; Weiden Boyd 142–147.

[10] On the identity of Sabinus, Vollmer, 1920, 1598f; McKeown, 1998, 383f with reference to Ov. *Pont.* 4,16,13–16, which again – very briefly – mentions Sabinus as the author of a letter from Odysseus to Penelope.

[11] McKeown, 1998, 383f.

husband'), both in Ov. *Am.* 2,18,37f. As McKeown points out, there is a neat contrast between the description of Helen as an *adultera* ('adultress') committing a *nobile crimen* ('famous crime') in the first line, and the reference to Laodamia's loyalty in the second. There may be a measure of humorous irony at work here too for as the distich progresses, Laodamia does in fact follow not only her husband (*extincto uiro*, 'dead husband') but, being second to be mentioned, she also follows the adulterous Helen.

Against the background of the mentions of Ovid's own *Heroides* and the Sabinus letters earlier in the poem, it seems reasonable to take these lines as an allusion to those of the single *Heroides* where Helen and Laodamia play significant parts – Oenone's letter to Paris (*Epist.* 5), emphatically placing Helen in the role of the interloper and thus corresponding to *adultera* ('adultress') here, and, of course, Laodamia's letter to Protesilaus (*Epist.* 13). This allusion, McKeown argues, underlines the affinity between the writings of the narrator and Macer, and so supports the narrator's thesis that Macer is slowly coming to write love poetry as well. [12]

Chronologically, this is the first instance on which Ovid refers to Laodamia as *comes*. With slight variations, this phrase recurs frequently throughout Ovid's work and it is, as I shall argue presently, especially important in *Epist.* 13. If we accept that *Epist.* 13 was either already written, or in the process of being written, at the time of the publication of *Am.* 2,18, then the use of this Ovidian catchphrase in the description of Macer's work is another way to highlight the pervasiveness of love as a literary theme and so prove the narrator's point.

I.ii. The Absence of light: References reflecting the impossibility of fidelity in the elegiac world

This section looks at two instances from Propertius where the use of mythological examples for wifely virtues makes obvious the fundamental contrast between the professed values of the elegiac narrator(s) and their fictional reality. Here, the references to Penelope (in Prop. 2,9 and 3,13) and Euadne (in Prop. 3,13) are subtly shaped in such a way as to reflect on overarching issues of the genre, for instance its inability to offer a valid lifestyle alternative by means of its *Gegenwelt* and subsequently, its conformity with traditional Roman ideals. I shall turn first to the extensive reference to Penelope in Prop. 2,9, and finally to the mentions of Penelope and Euadne in Prop. 3,13.

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[12] "A fine contrast", McKeown, 1998, 402.

Prop. 2,9 laments the unfaithfulness of a girlfriend, sharply criticizing both the girlfriend herself and the man who is currently her lover. By the use of the mythological examples of Penelope and Briseis already in the third line of the poem, the narrator creates a sharp contrast to his girlfriend's behaviour:

Penelope poterat bis denos salua per annos
    uiuere, tam multis femina digna procis;
coniugium falsa poterat differre Minerua,
    nocturno soluens texta diurna dolo;
uisura et quamuis numquam speraret Ulixen,
    illum exspectando facta remansit anus.
nec non exanimem amplectens Briseis Achillem
    candida uesana uerberat ora manu,
et dominum lauit maerens captiua cruentum,
    propositum flauis in Simoente uadis,
foedauitque comas, et tanti corpus Achilli
    maximaque in parua sustulit ossa manu;
cum tibi nec Peleus aderat nec caerula mater,
    Scyria nec uiduo Deidamia toro.
tunc igitur ueris gaudebat Graecia natis,
    tunc etiam felix inter et arma pudor.
at tu non una potuisti nocte uacare,
    impia, non unum sola manere diem!
quin etiam multo duxistis pocula risu:
    forsitan et de me uerba fuere mala.

Prop. 2,9,3

(Penelope was able to live safely for twice ten years, a lady worthy of that many suitors. With her deceitful craft she managed to put off her marriage, undoing with nightly cunning what she wove in the day. Though she could not hope to see Odysseus ever again, she remained, and became, waiting for him, an old woman. Briseis, too, embraced the dead Achilles, striking with raging hand her white cheeks, and she, the captive, grieved and washed her master, soiled with blood, laying him out by the yellow waves of the Simois. She soiled her hair, and lifted in her small hands the huge body of Achilles, when neither Peleus was there for you, Achilles, nor your cerulean mother, nor Skyrian Deidamia of the deserted matrimonial couch. In those days, Greece took pleasure in children of proper birth, in those days virtue prospered even when surrounded by battle. But you, you could not be on your own for a single night, you wretch, not one day could you remain alone! No, you two were raising you goblets and laughing, and mayhap there were mean words about me, too.)

This passage is often quoted as one where Penelope figures as a typical *exemplum* of virtue whose ideal behaviour stands in sharp contrast with that of the narrator's ex-girlfriend.[13] However, it is also one of the most elaborate references to Penelope in elegy.

First, it is interesting to note that the longevity of Penelope's and Briseis' fidelity and their sufferings is made evident not merely by the way they are described, but also by the number of verses that the narrator devotes to them: six lines for Penelope and eight for Briseis. Again in contrast with these exempla, the inconstancy of the ex-girlfriend is brought out by the very shortness of the description the narrator gives of her. For it is in fact only in one single distich (2,9,19f) that the girlfriend occupies the stage alone; even in the opening distich, the narrator's focus is on his own rival rather than on his ex-girlfriend. Again, already in 2,9,21 the narrator is imagining her together with her new lover and in 2,9,22 he himself re-enters the stage as a topic of their (imagined) conversation.

Moreover, the sense of contrast permeates the whole passage. Whitaker points to the correspondences present in the descriptions of Penelope and the ex-girlfriend respectively that serve to make the differences between them stand out more clearly. *Nocte* ('night') and *diem* ('day') in the brief fantasies of what his girlfriend may be doing recall Penelope's *texta diurna* ('what she wove in the day') and *nocturna dolo* ('by nightly cunning'), as does the distinct measure of time mentioned in both cases – *bis denos annos* ('twice ten years') in the case of Penelope and *unum diem* ('one day') of the girlfriend in 2,9,20. These correspondences serve to further underline the contrast the narrator has set up between Penelope and his girlfriend, working, of course, to the disadvantage of the latter.[14]

Furthermore, we should note how the examples are differentiated – in his description of Penelope, the narrator stresses the long duration of her waiting for Odysseus in every possible way. Line three begins with two dactyls and the alliteration of *Penelope poterat* ('Penelope was able') adds to a sense of quick pacing. The conclusion of the phrase, however, is interrupted at the penthemimer. There is a marked sense of hiatus before we reach *uiuere* ('live') at the beginning of line four, which is suggestive of the hiatus of Penelope's life during the *bis denos annos* ('twice ten years') that fill the syntactical hiatus of the line. The feeling of time passing Penelope by is retained in the following distich by the reference to her famous weaving trick, demanding her to work both day and night without accomplishing anything else than ensuring that she may remain as she is, waiting and hoping for Odysseus' return. In the final line devoted to Penelope the use of

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[13] Cf. Richardson, 1977, 236; Barchiesi, 2001, 34f; Fedeli, 2005, 277f.
[14] Whitaker, 1983, 124.

the static *remansit* ('remained') and *expectando* ('waiting') reinforces this impression, but one could perhaps also argue that there is a sense of passivity in the phrase *facta anus* ('became an old woman'). However, there is also a certain measure of incongruity inherent in the phrase, for the description *facta anus* is not exclusively flattering, recalling, as it were, satire's descriptions of old women as violently repulsive and unimaginable as sexual partners.[15] The proximity to phrases used in invectives could possibly indicate that although fidelity is perhaps the most important of the elegiac ideals, it has little place in elegiac practice.

If in the description of Penelope care is taken to emphasize the wearying passing of years, Briseis on the other hand has been captured in the one dramatic moment of her mourning for Achilles.[16] Hence, we have all the more reason to assume that the references to these two exemplary women are shaped to complement and contrast with each other, representing two opposites that give the narrator's claims a sense of universal validity. In the same manner the description of Brieseis' appearance is significant for the shaping of her own example as well as for the effect of the combination of her and Penelope. As Briseis embraces the dying Achilles, her hand is *parva* ('small', 2,9,14) and her skin still delicately white (2,9,10). While the emphasis on the delicacy of her appearance stands in dramatic contrast to the dirt and blood of the setting, and not least to the huge body of the dead hero,[17] it also brings to mind a sense of youth. Furthermore, the references to Achilles' parents Peleus and Thetis (notably described as *caerula mater*, 'cerulean mother') in 2,9,15 cause us to see Achilles for a moment as much like a son to loving parents as like a lover, and him and Briseis as belonging to new, younger generation. The young Briseis and the aged Penelope appear once more as different sides of one coin.

A further point of contrast between Penelope and Briseis brought out in Prop. 2,9 is their legal status. The mention of Penelope's many suitors together with the word *coniugium* ('marriage') in 2,9,5 hints that the character of Penelope appeals to the narrator for being a wife as well as a lover. This may seem commonplace if one considers the lines on Penelope only, but becomes relevant for a full interpretation of the Briseis example. In 2,9,11 Propertius refers to Briseis as *captiva* ('captive') and Achilles as her *dominus* ('master'),[18] and in the final line of the Briseis example

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[15]   Richlin, 1984, 69f.

[16]   Rothstein, 1920, 269 distinguishes between three different points of time present within this one dramatic setting, but I do not believe that this detracts from my point.

[17]   Camps, 1967, 105 mentions *parva manu* ('small hands') as a pathetic contrast to *maxima ossa* ('huge body') in the same line, Prop. 2,9,15.

[18]   Indeed the hyperbaton of *dominum cruentum* ('blood-soiled master') enclosing Briseis as

(2,9,16) we are reminded once more and more forcefully that Briseis was but a concubine – Achilles' wife Deidamia has remained at Skyrus. Thus, by the means of the combination of Penelope and Briseis the narrator conveys the idea that a faithful woman will persist in her love no matter the circumstances, whether she is his lawful wife like Penelope, or a captive slave like Briseis.

However, Dué suggests another interpretation of the Briseis example. It recalls the subversive reading of the Alcestis and Penelope examples in Prop. 2,6 (see below, I.iv.) and depends in part on the mention of Deidamia in Prop. 2,9,16. Dué points out that Propertius casts the sufferings of his narrator in a heroic light by implying that he could be Achilles to his girlfriend's Briseis. However, when the reader arrives at the mention of Deidamia, it turns out that the analogy between the narrator and Achilles may also cast doubts on the narrator's professed fidelity.[19] Similarly, though it is likely that Briseis lamented the death of Achilles in literary works lost to us but known to Propertius, our passage also recalls her lament for Patroclus in *Il.* 19,282–300.[20] According to Dué, the fact that Briseis lament two different men echoes the many lovers of the narrator's girlfriend – especially if one bears in mind that Prop. 2,8 has already established an analogy between Briseis and the narrator's girlfriend. This way, the relationship between the narrator and his former girlfriend is revealed to be a lot more complex than he would have us believe.[21]

As we shall see also in Prop. 2,6, the subversive reading – though not impossible – is unlikely to be a primary one. It can be reached only through minute scrutiny of the text, but it is pointless unless it is seen against the backdrop of the more accessible reading of Briseis as an example of faithful love. In fact, while I believe that Dué makes a valid point about the mention of Deidamia throwing a somewhat doubtful light on the narrator's own fidelity, I strongly doubt that she is right in assuming that the poem implicitly also calls Briseis' faithfulness in question. The originally epic characters of Penelope and Briseis brought up in Prop. 2,9 are endowed with a certain measure of elegiac motivation as the narrator rewrites their stories as being about love alone. The fact that Briseis' lament over Patroclus in the *Iliad* reverberates through her lament over her lover's dead body in Propertius' poem says more, in my opinion, about the narrator who has undertaken that adaptation than about the object of it. To put it differently, in

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maerens captiva (lit. 'grieving captive') in 2,9,11 is highly suggestive of how Achilles influences Briseis' fate even after his death.

[19] Dué, 2002, 105.

[20] Dué, 2002, 105.

[21] Dué, 2002, 105f.

Propertius' poem there is simply no room for the *puella* to mourn anyone but her lover.

2,9,17f sums up the passage on Penelope and Briseis, and with its opening words *tunc igitur* ('in those days') it establishes them as heroines of a past firmly separated from the poem's present time. The contrast between them – and as Whitaker points out,[22] especially Penelope – and Cynthia is reinforced by the emphatic accusatory *at tu* ('but you') in 2,9,19f and the statement that Cynthia was not able to abstain from taking a new lover for even one night. It is further developed in the following lines where the narrator expresses his suspicions that Cynthia may have been unfaithful to him even when he himself felt most confident about their relationship (Prop. 2,9,25–28). At this point, it would seem that the exemplary women referred to earlier are no longer particularly relevant either to the narrator's argument or to our interpretation of this later part of the poem. However, the general claim made in 2,9,31f has some bearing on the Penelope example:

sed uobis facile est uerba et componere fraudes: Prop. 2,9,31
   hoc unum didicit femina semper opus.

(But it comes easy to you, putting together words and tricks: this is the one task that women have always learned.)

Richardson remarks that Propertius by using *semper* ('always') here contradicts his previous claim that at least historically, there have been virtuous women.[23] Bearing that in mind while looking back at the Penelope passage, there are two phrases that stand out in 2,9,5f: *falsa Minerua* ('deceitful craft') and *nocturno dolo* ('nightly cunning'). Both expressions usually carry distinctly negative connotations,[24] but did not seem to reflect negatively on Penelope in our first reading. Rather, Penelope's use of trickery here has been considered merely befitting of the wife of the great trickster Odysseus.[25] Still, as Cynthia, and every woman with her, is accused of being ever able to cheat and deceive in both word and deed, we may note that what the narrator accuses Cynthia of here is something that he has in fact already lauded in Penelope.[26]

This resembles the manner of self-contradiction we will see the narrator

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[22] Whitaker, 1983, 124.

[23] Richardson, 1977, 239.

[24] Fedeli, 2005, 279.

[25] Barchiesi, 2001, 35.

[26] Cf. Sharrock, 2000, 281, noting how Propertius undermines the opposition between the innocent and simple past and the corrupt present by praising Penelope's trickery.

present on several earlier instances.[27] However, this time the mythological example has not been manipulated in order to reflect directly on the claims of fidelity or infidelity made by either the *amator* or the *puella*, nor on the *amator*'s blinkered perception of his beloved. The self-contradictory statements in Prop. 2,9 rather alert the reader to the high degree of subjectivity that permeates the genre of Roman elegy in general, and to how that will sometimes distort the rhetorical devices employed by its narrators.

In a wider perspective, inconsistencies such as these may even be drawing attention to the fact that the elegiac *Gegenwelt* is not, upon closer inspection, the consistent system it claims to be, and that we for that reason may question whether it really could provide a real lifestyle alternative.

Turning instead to the references in Prop. 3,13 to Penelope and Euadne, we must first note that this poem differs markedly from most of the love elegies discussed in this chapter. The poem is not set at any particular point in a personalized love story, but laments the decline of simplicity and moral standards in contemporary Rome from a purportedly general point of view. Commentators have puzzled over the interpretation of this poem and its form, as well as over its place in Propertius' development as a poet, judging it less engaging and less inventive than the personal poems.[28] While it is true that the claiming of a general perspective and the theme of lost virtue recalls the tone of Horace, Lucretius and Virgil,[29] we should note that the theme itself and its *topoi* occur no less frequently in elegy.[30] The first mention of Penelope and Euadne follows on a catalogue of oriental luxuries that lead the women in Rome into corruption (Prop. 3,13,5–8):

haec etiam clausas expugnant arma pudicas,	Prop. 3,13,9
quaeque terunt fastus, Iciarioti, tuos.	

[…]

hoc genus infidum nuptarum, hic nulla puella	Prop. 3,13,23f
nec fida Euadne nec pia Penelope.	

(These weapons win even the chaste ones that have been locked away, who, insisting on it, wear out your pride, Penelope. […] This is a people of faithless

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[27] For self-contradiction as typically Propertian, cf. R. K. Gibson, 2007, 43–49.
[28] Hubbard, 1974, 88f; Richardson, 1977, 371f. But cf. differently Warden, 1980, 97.
[29] Cf. Hubbard, 1974, 89.
[30] Rothstein, 1924, 95. Cf. also Burck, 1966, 196–202; Nethercut, 1970, 101f.

wives, here not a single girl is true, here, there is no faithful Euadne and no virtuous Penelope.)

We must also take notice of the fact that the two women are described with a curious sense o f ambivalence. Most notably, this is conveyed by the choice of the word *fastus* to describe Penelope's moral attitude – its connotations are mainly negative.[31] Additionally, there is a critical problem of whether to amend *terunt* ('wear out', Prop. 3,13,10) of the Mss, or how to interpret it, if we retain it. Most editors prefer *gerunt* (wear) as it can be supported by a parallel in Servius *ad Verg.* Aen. 2,78,[32] which yields translations like 'and all those who exercise your kind of fastidiousness, Penelope.' Rothstein, however, defends the Mss *terunt*, seeing the peculiar use of the verb as a way to stress the eagerness of these women to emulate Penelope at every opportunity.[33] I believe we can indeed make sense of *terunt*, if we take it in its figurative sense, 'wear out', and as connoting overzealousness.[34] This corresponds to the negative associations awakened by *fastus* ('pride'), and underlines the ambivalent attitude to these virtuous women: contrary to the narrator's claims, the ambivalence is due not so much to their being overcome by means of material goods as to their excessive zeal. It is a telltale sign of the contradictions inherent in the elegiac system that fidelity is at the same time both a hindrance to the forming of *liasons* and something to be desired, recalling other instances where the elegiac narrator casts doubt on the examples of female virtue to whom he himself is referring.[35]

Lines 11–22 further describe the decline of female morals in Rome and the narrator turns to the East to find examples of women who still pay fitting tribute to moral concerns. Perhaps we should note especially that with the reference to suttee, the narrator draws on a foreign phenomenon that was never practised in Rome. This may be understood as another hint that the stricter morals the narrator ostensibly yearns for are foreign also to the genre he himself belongs to. The passage on female morals ends with the final reference to Euadne and Penelope in line 24, the mention of Euadne recalling the lines on the suttees, and the mention of Penelope completing the ring-composition by recalling 3,13,9f.[36] Nevertheless, this final line has something of the same ambiguity which surrounds the first ref-

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[31] *OLD* s.v. *fastus* 2, *ThLL* s.v. *fastus* II.

[32] Butler and Barber, 1933, 295; Shackleton-Bailey, 1956, 178f; Barber, 1960; Fedeli, 1985, 422; Fedeli, 1994, 181.

[33] Rothstein, 1924, 96f.

[34] *OLD* s.v. *tero* 4b and 5a.

[35] Cf. Prop. 2,9,5f, and see further III.iii.i.

[36] Williams, 1980, 97f.

erence to Penelope in 3,13,10. The epithet *pia* ('virtuous') is used of Penelope only on one other instance in elegy (Ov. *Ars* 3,15). That instance may well draw on the Propertian passage and its praise of Penelope is, as we shall see, also considerably less straightforward than it may seem at first glance.[37] Although it is difficult to tell what effect the alliteration *pia Penelope* ('virtuous Penelope') would have had on a contemporary reader, whether it would have seemed anomalous at all, or whether it may possibly have added a slightly ridiculous sheen to the phrase as a rhyme or an assonance may to a modern ear, it is possible that the alliteration may very well have served to draw the reader's attention to the passage. If we are right in assuming an intrusion of humour in the description of Penelope here, it appears (in yet another way) that traditional examples of wifely virtues rooted in other genres cannot be transferred to elegy without a slight jarring note remaining to signal how foreign they are to their new setting.[38]

Following the second part of the poem lamenting the loss of rural simplicity (Prop. 3,13,25–58), the narrator closes by wishing that his prediction of the spread of luxury and greed as the cause of the fall of Rome may, after all, not be realized (59f). In these final lines the narrator likens himself to Cassandra – *certa loquor, sed nulla fides* ('I tell the truth, but no one has faith in me', 61). This final retreat of the moralist into the role of the never-heeded seer ensures the stability of the elegiac system as well as the genre, where fidelity and agricultural simple life may be present only as unattainable ideals.

I.iii. Keeping her in the dark: References casting doubt on the narrator's self-representation and fidelity

The previous section highlighted the impossibility of marital fidelity within the universe of 'canonical' elegy by means of examining general passages alluding to mythological paradigms of wifely virtues. The present section will look rather at passages where the use of such examples at first glance appears innocuous enough, but where the suspicious reader may discover analogies reflecting on the narrator's self-representation in a most disconcerting manner. We shall see that comparing the beloved to a mythological mistress or wife also establishes a parallel between their male counterparts and the narrators themselves. As I will show in this section, such analogies sometimes also serve to indicate that the character of the narrator is less straightforward than he would have the reader

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[37] See below, III.ii.

[38] Cf. Conte, 1994, 40.

believe, thus yet again prompting the reader to question facts and opinions ostensibly presented by the narrator. The section deals in turn with four passages, Prop. 2,6,23f; 1,15,21f; 2,20,1f and 3,12,23f and 37f respectively, but the reader of this study will also recognize traits similar to those highlighted here in passages from 'canonical' elegy examined in Chapter Three, in Ov. *Am.* 1,9,33–40.

First, however, I will focus on the mentions of Penelope and Alcestis in Prop. 2,6, which differ from the use of mythological examples poems discussed so far. In this poem, the narrator begins by implying that Cynthia is less than faithful and indeed surpasses several Greek courtesans famous from literature in the number of men she is attracting, that she tells lies and makes excuses to be able to see more men (2,6,1–8). Thus far into the text, the poem may still be felt to be part of an ongoing narrative continuing from Prop. 2,5, where the narrator also accuses Cynthia of breaking her vows of fidelity. Since the beginning of 2,6 thus seems to encourage a linear reading of poems 2,5 and 2,6, the reader is likely to be predisposed to expect the new poem (2,6) to expand the motive that has been implied in its first verses – that of Cynthia's infidelity.

However, in 2,6,9–14 the narrator seems to go back on his words, claiming instead that it is he who is overreacting in voicing concerns about Cynthia's faithfulness to him, that even the most innocent situations are enough to make him feel jealous and overly anxious. He then goes on to claim that it was such faults that brought about the fall of Troy (2,6,15f). It is tempting to make an associative jump here and take these lines to be a reference to Helen's unfaithfulness as the well-established cause of the Trojan war, but as Dunn points out, the examples following immediately afterwards contradict such a reading: the subject of the following examples (the centaurs and the Lapiths, Romulus, the Romans and the Sabine women) both involve a condemnation of *male* rather than female immorality.[39] However, after stating that Romulus' abduction of the Sabine women has caused a general decline of lover's morals in Rome, it seems that the focus of the poem shifts back to female immorality once more:

felix Admeti coniunx et lectus Ulixis   Prop. 2,6,23
    et quaecumque uiri femina limen amat!
templa Pudicitiae quid opus statuisse puellis,
    si cuiuis nuptae quidlibet esse licet?

(Ah, fortunate the wife of Admetus and the marriage couch of Odysseus, and every wife who has esteem for the threshold of her husband! What use is it that

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[39] Dunn, 1985, 253f.

we have built a temple to Pudicitia for the women, if the wedded wife can be anyone's?)

This reference to Alcestis and Penelope in Prop. 2,6,23f seems at first glance to be another instance of the traditional (and purportedly straightforward) use of these two mythological characters as examples of wifely virtues from which their husbands are the first to benefit, merely another exclamation of the poet lover wishing for his Cynthia to be as faithful and honourable as the heroines of old.[40]

Moreover, by once more choosing his examples from Greek literature, the narrator brings to the fore the difference between the courtesans of the introductory verses of the poem and the virtuous wives he now refers to. This dichotomy is further underlined as we note that since the narrator carefully avoided explicitly mentioning Helen in 2,6,15f, Alcestis and Penelope are in fact the first female mythological (or literary) characters to appear as examples since Phryne ended the list of courtesans in 2,6,6.

Several commentators have found the phrasing of the reference to Alcestis and Penelope odd or harsh – both women are identified only by metonyms.[41] I would like to suggest that the oddest expression, the use of *lectus Ulixis* ('the marriage couch of Odysseus') for Penelope, especially taken in conjunction with the following line, *et quaecumque uiri femina limen amat!* ('and every wife who has esteem for the threshold of her husband!') serves to emphasize the opposition between Penelope and Alcestis on the one hand, and Lais, Thais and Phryne on the other. The words *lectus Ulixis* ('the marriage couch of Odysseus') may not only be deciphered as a metonym for either Penelope herself or for her marriage to Odysseus. It may also make us think of Penelope in a specific situation known from Homer; that is, Penelope setting a final test for the returning Odysseus by giving the order to have her bed removed from her bedchamber for his benefit in *Od.* 23,173–230. Even though she has at that point good reason to believe that Odysseus really is her returning husband, she takes care to try him one last time. Thus Penelope safeguards not merely the house of her husband, but his prerogative of being the only man to pass the threshold of her bedchamber, which takes us, quite literally, to the following line *et quaecumque uiri femina limen amat!* ('and every wife who has esteem for her husband's threshold!') The line also, in addition to the interpretation just suggested, characterizes Penelope (and Alcestis)

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[40] Interestingly, Whitaker, 1983, does not mention Prop. 2,6,23f. Richardson, 1977, 228 simply refers to them as 'examples of fidelity', similarly in Enk, 1962, 106.

[41] Dunn, 1985, 254f, Rothstein, 1920, 249. Enk, 1962, 106 refers the use of *lectus* ('couch') in the sense 'wife' to the Greek *lechos*, also used in that sense.

as *domiseda*, adhering to the Roman ideal which emphasized the home as the woman's proper sphere.[42]

At this juncture we may thus note that Propertius has placed two of his explicitly named female *exempla* in similar situations: Lais admitting throngs of men into her house and having yet more begging for entrance by her door (Prop. 2,6,1f *Non ita complebant Ephyraeae Laidos aedes, / ad cuius iacuit Graecia tota fores*, 'men never thus filled the house of the Ephyrian Lais, in front of whose doors all of Greece kept vigil') and Penelope, anxious to admit only her lawful husband. By establishing an antithesis between Alcestis, Penelope and other faithful women on the one hand, and the likes of Lais on the other, Propertius implicitly creates an opposition between Penelope *et cetera* and Cynthia – a rather traditional way of using Penelope (and Alcestis) to call for higher standards of morality.

Still, a close scrutiny of the passage may yield yet another perspective relevant to the interpretation of the final lines of the poem. According to Dunn, the wording of lines 15f is significant in that it allows for a twofold reading of the line: "One could argue either that Admetus and Odysseus were blessed in having faithful wives *or that Alcestis and Penelope were blessed in having faithful husbands* […]." We may glean this second meaning only because of the change in subject from the male characters of the preceding examples (2,6,17–22) to the female ones in our passage.[43] The effect of this alternative interpretation of the lines resembles the backtracking of lines 2,6,9–14 and ties the passage more closely to the previous lines and the examples condemning male immorality. It is suggestive (but certainly not conclusive) of the notion that the narrator himself may not be as faithful to Cynthia as he would have us believe. I shall return to this point presently.

Following on the example of Alcestis and Penelope, the narrator juxtaposes his reference to the women of old with a sketch of the current state of female morality and its lack of *pudicitia*. However, upon this harsh condemnation follows yet another surprising shift of focus; this time to blame the painters of erotic tableaux for the decline in female morality, (2,6,27–34). Then again, the narrator seemingly returns to his previous argument by stating that this did happen *non immerito* ('not for no reason', Prop. 2,6,35) and that the temples are overgrown with weeds and spider-webs. That *non immerito* ('not for no reason') should be taken to mean that the women themselves have brought about the decline seems likely as the narrator has previously hinted that women lack proper regard for religion; this is brought out in the reference to the temple of Pudicitia. Furthermore, the following distich (which also may be considered the first of the poems final sec-

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[42] Cf. *CIL* 6, 11602; 34045.

[43] Dunn, 1985, 254f, italics mine.

tion) with its *quos igitur tibi custodes […] ponam* ('so, what kind of guard should I set you?') forms a conclusion to the narrator's reasoning that takes into account all the signs of declining morals that the poem has outlined.[44]

The use of *igitur* ('so') connects this distich to the previous sections of the poem, but the final verses also place Cynthia explicitly in the situation in which we have already seen Lais and Penelope, and in which she hitherto has figured only implicitly. Here, Cynthia finally emerges as the mistress by (or perhaps better, behind) the door. This now specifically described setting will bring to the reader's mind once more the accusations which the narrator has directed against Cynthia by the use of literary parallels earlier in the poem.[45] Moreover, as the conjunction *nam* ('for') also suggests a pronounced break with the scenario the narrator has envisaged in the previous distich (his mistress remaining safe indoors and seeing no visitors that could be considered unfriendly to him), it is tempting to assume that *nam nihil inuitae tristis custodia prodest: / quam peccare pudet, Cynthia, tuta sat est* ('for a grim guard is no use if the girl is unwilling: she who is ashamed to sin, is safe enough', Prop. 2,6,39f) is in fact aimed at Cynthia herself.[46]

Several editors have moved or deleted the verses given in the Mss as 2,6,40f, but I believe they can be meaningfully retained in the Mss position.[47] The final distich is not, as we might have expected, an exhortation to Cynthia to change her ways, but a vow from the narrator that he will never take another wife or girlfriend:

nos uxor numquam, numquam me ducet amica:　　　Prop. 2,6,41
　semper amica mihi, semper et uxor eris.

(No wife, no mistress shall ever take me away. For ever you shall be my mistress, for ever you shall be my wife.)

Could the narrator be hinting here that he too has been less than faithful in the past, as it is necessary for him to assure Cynthia here that there is and never will be any other woman? Recalling the second possible interpretation of the examples of Alcestis and Penelope brought forward by Dunn, that they should be considered lucky not because of their own faithfulness but because of their

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[44] Cf. Enk, 1962, 110.

[45] Cf. Dunn, 1985, 257, who also stresses the use of Cynthia's name here.

[46] Again, cf. Dunn, 1985, 257.

[47] The main reasons editors claim for transposing the distich to form the final lines of Prop. 2,7 are that a shift of focus disrupts the logic of the poem and provides a weak ending, cf. Enk, 1962, 111f; Richardson, 1977, 229 and 232. But cf. also Butler and Barber, 1933, 201; Barber, 1960; Fedeli, 2005, 218f, who retain the distich in the Mss position.

husbands', should we perhaps suspect that the narrator has, in fact, been playing Odysseus to Cynthia's Penelope – maybe even seeing a Roman Calypso? The construction of the examples in 2,6,23f taken in conjunction with the repeated emphasis on male immorality throughout the poem would at least theoretically allow such an interpretation. It could be argued that the linear reading of Prop. 2,5 and 2,6 mentioned at the beginning of this section suggests something similar, for in 2,5,5f the narrator reacts to the rumours of Cynthia's infidelity by entertaining the idea of finding a new girlfriend who is willing both to be celebrated in his poems and to remain faithful exclusively to him.

However, the structural function of the female exempla discourages such a reading. We have seen that the first group of exempla (Lais, Thais and Phryne) corresponds to and is set up in opposition to the faithful Alcestis, Penelope and all the women who love the homes of their husbands. In the first and major part of the poem, it is implied that Cynthia (so far unnamed) not only belongs in the first group, but indeed surpasses it. When the narrator finally gives her name and thus explicitly places her in the same situation as the exempla he has referred to, it is again strongly implied that she belongs among the women to whom fidelity is of little importance. Certainly the narrator continually shifts the blame to male immorality in general or even to himself, but the references to female exempla for morality and immorality cast in the role of 'the mistress (or wife) behind the door' do provide a constant frame for the poem from its very first line to its end. Given their role as important parts of a structuring device for the entire poem, it becomes less likely that the examples of Alcestis and Penelope would be key points for uncovering yet another, different meaning to the poem.

Whereas we may not fully refute the reading tentatively brought forward above, it is more likely to see in the final distich of Prop. 2,6 the same kind of reversal that we have encountered several times in the poem – an accusation against Cynthia turned into a statement that focuses on male morality or the lack thereof. There are several reasons that could motivate this technique of argument on the part of the narrator, ranging from practical (he might lose Cynthia by risking direct criticism) to rhetorical (Cynthia will be made to feel guilty and subsequently reform).[48] On an external level, the discrepancies, the backtracking and the exaggerations are all means to display the narrator's lacking sense of reality.[49]

Turning back to Propertius' first book, we find a similar passage in Prop. 1,15,9–22. Among mythological heroines like Calypso, Hypsipyle and Alphesiboea, it makes reference to Euadne the suttee as an example of remarkable fidel-

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[48] Dunn, 1985, 258.
[49] See also, below, I.v.

ity. We should note, however, that the interpretation of the series of exemplary women in Prop. 1,15,9–22 is complicated by the fact that the passage is fraught with textual problems. It is difficult to establish the sequence of examples. The distich on Alphesiboea, which in the Mss stands as 15f, is often transposed and set either after the lines on Hypsipyle and preceeding the example of Euadne,[50] or at the very end of the series.[51] Furthermore, several editors have considered lines 23f to be the end of 1,15 – which of course is significant for all efforts to interpret the poem.[52]

In the opening of 1,15 the narrator states that though he has come to expect thoughtlessness from Cynthia, she has now committed a particular kind of transgression by not immediately rushing to his side while he is beset by danger.[53] He goes on to describe how she finds time to braid her hair and put on make-up, like a woman preparing to meet a new lover.[54] The following line then launches the series of mythological examples in 1,15,9–22.

at non sic Ithaci digressu mota Calypso   Prop. 1,15,9
    desertis olim fleuerat aequoribus:
multos illa dies incomptis maesta capillis
    sederat, iniusto multa locuta salo,
et quamuis numquam post haec uisura, dolebat
    illa tamen, longae conscia laetitiae.
nec sic Aesoniden rapientibus anxia uentis
    Hypsipyle uacuo constitit in thalamo:
Hypsipyle nullos post illos sensit amores,
    ut semel Haemonio tabuit hospitio.
coniugis Euadne miseros elata per ignis
    occidit, Argiuae fama pudicitiae.

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[50] Whitaker, 1983, 108 esp. n. 53 and Barber, 1960, 20.

[51] Fedeli, 1994, 32.

[52] Ribbeck *non uidi*, as referenced in Fedeli, 1994, 31.

[53] Most commentators take *periculum* ('danger') in 1,15,3 to mean that the narrator is suffering from a possibly life-threatening illness, cf. Allen, 1973, 381–385; Hubbard, 1974, 29, or that he is undertaking a dangerous journey, cf. Butler and Barber, 1933, 174; Enk, 1946, 127f. Bennett, however, understands *periculum* ('danger') already in 1,15,3 as pertaining to the narrator's concern about Cynthia's devastating perjury, Bennett, 1972, 28–39. Cf. also Fedeli, 1980, 338f.

[54] Cf. also Prop. 1,2; where esp. 1,2,23f implies that applying make-up is used as a strategy to attract a new lover – as opposed to pleasing an existing partner.

Alphesiboea suos ulta est pro coniuge fratres,
    sanguinis et cari uincula rupit amor.
quarum nulla tuos potuit conuertere mores,
    tu quoque uti fieres nobilis historia.

(Calypso was not like that when she cried, saddened by the departure of Odysseus, by the empty sea. Many days she sat there with her hair in disarray, speaking much to the unfair sea, and though she would never see him again thereafter, she suffered nevertheless, recalling long days of happiness. Not so did Hypsipyle stand anxiously in her empty chamber after the ravaging winds had taken Iason away; Hypsipyle did not know any love after that, once she melted for her Haemonian guest. Euadne was carried to the sad pyre of her husband, and died, the pride of Argivian virtue. Alphesiboea avenged her husband on her brothers – love rent the bonds even of dear blood. Neither of these were able to alter your ways, so that you also could become a famous name.)

The ostensible function of these examples is to illustrate to Cynthia that most women would not pay any attention to such trivial details if their lover was in danger in some way. This connection between lack of adornment in a woman and devotion to her lover is one that the narrator has made before: in Prop. 1,2 he endeavours to discourage his mistress from using cosmetics and luxurious dress, claiming instead that fidelity alone is adornment enough.[55] Whitaker has shown how contrastive correspondences are developed between Cynthia at the dressing table and Calypso on the beach. In the course of the poem, attention is drawn to first to the state of their hair (Prop. 1,15,5 and 11 respectively), then to their tears (honest ones in the case of Calypso and 1,15,10; feigned ones in Cynthia's in 1,15,40), and eventually to their awareness of happiness lost (*longae conscia laetitiae* 'recalling long days of happiness', in 1,15,14) or crimes committed (1,15,38, *admissae conscia nequitiae* 'recalling past vices').[56] Still, even within this example, the focus seems to shift from Calypso's lack of adornment to her devotion for Odysseus from whom she has been parted. As we shall see, this shift in emphasis becomes more evident in the further examples.[57]

The opening words of the Hypsipyle lines, *nec sic* ('not so'), remind the reader of the point the Calypso example set out to illustrate.[58] Furthermore, the setting

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[55] Prop. 1,2, esp. 23–26.

[56] Rothstein, 1920, 151f; Gaisser, 1977, 388; Whitaker, 1983, 107f.

[57] Whitaker, 1983, 107–109, cf. also Fedeli, 2004, 243f.

[58] Whitaker, 1983, 108. Hypsipyle was the queen of Lemnos, where the Argonauts sought harbour on their way to Colchis. The most detailed version of the myth is told in A. R., 1,610–909 but cf. also Ov. *Epist.* 6; Fedeli, 1980, 345f.

of Hypsipyle's empty sleeping chambers (*uacuo thalamo* in 1,15,18) coincides with the background hinted at in the lines about Cynthia (1,15,5–8), which reinforces the connection and the contrast between Hypsipyle and Cynthia. However, the mention of *rapientibus uentis* ('ravaging winds') in 1,15,17 also recalls the sea shore setting of the immediately preceding lines and in the final distich, emphasis is solely on Hypsipyle ever keeping faith to Iason. Staying true to one's beloved remains the key point in the following examples of Euadne[59] and Alphesiboea[60] as well, where there is no longer any overt connection to the ostensible function of the catalogue.[61] The explicit identification of Euadne as *Argiuae fama pudicitiae* ('the pride of Argivian virtue') in 1,15,22 forcefully brings out the importance of fidelity in the final examples, while the Alphesiboea distich stresses that the obligations of love have precedence to any demands blood ties could make. Allen suggests that the series is composed so that each example is expanded by another one, each one briefer and grimmer. There is an escalating emotional movement from Calypso grieving by the sea, to the suffering Hypsipyle, who – though it is not explicitly mentioned in Propertius – eventually commits suicide, to Euadne the suttee and finally to Alphesiboea who is willing to commit murder of her own brothers in order to avenge her husband's death.[62]

That these examples do have a moral content is evident from the narrator's concluding line – *quarum nulla tuos potuit conuertere mores* ('neither of these were able to alter you ways') in 1,15,23. Bennet has made a distinction between infidelity and untruthfulness,[63] arguing that although it is possible to interpret the beginning of the poem in that way, using this series of examples would be a heavy-handed way of implying that Cynthia is unfaithful. He points out that neither Calypso nor Alphesiboea are known for actually proving their faith and that they in fact had little opportunity to be unfaithful to their former lovers.[64] Instead, Bennett

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[59] Euadne was the wife of Capaneus, one of the seven against Thebes. At his death, she throws herself on his pyre, Eur. *Suppl.* 990–1071. Cf. Fedeli, 1980, 348–350 and Escher, 1907, 818.

[60] Alphesiboea loved Alcmeon, who abandoned her and remarried. He was, according to the all other sources, killed by Alphesiboea's brothers as he returned to her country to retrieve a necklace promised to his new wife, so A. R. 3,90–92. That Alphesiboea in turn took revenge on her brothers for killing her husband is known only from Propertius, cf. Fedeli, 1980, 350 and Knaak, 1894, 1636.

[61] Whitaker, 1983, 108f.

[62] Allen, 1973, 383f. Allen places the Alphesiboea distich before that on Euadne, considering suicide a more dramatic measure than fratricide.

[63] Without offering any further interpretation, commentators have sometimes merely noted that these women were known for their fidelity and their grief. Cf. Otis, 1965, 17f.

[64] Bennett, 1972, 36f.

believes that the narrator refers to Calypso, Hypsipyle, Euadne and Alphesiboea because of the sincerity and credibility of their respective ways of displaying their undying love. The behaviour of the exemplary women would thus stand in contrast with Cynthia's *perfidia* ('faithlessness') in line 1,15,2 and her duplicitous protestations and fake despair at the end of the poem (1,15,34–40).[65]

In addition, there is one point of agreement between Cynthia and these mythological examples that further emphasizes how Cynthia, in comparison, fails to fulfil her obligations. All the four mythological examples given in 1,15,9–22 have at some point transgressed traditionally accepted boundaries for their lover's sake: Calypso has loved a mortal, and given the history of the Lemnian women, Hypsipyle's choice of loving Iason represents a break with prevailing patterns of behaviour on Lemnos.[66] Euadne, moreover, choose to die with Capaneus in spite of her father's pleas to spare her own life, and Alphesiboea oversteps bonds both of blood and of reason as she kills her brothers to avenge a lover and husband who has in fact himself abandoned her for another woman. This corresponds to the tendency of the elegiac lovers to continually deviate from the norms of traditional Roman society, and indeed the elegiac *foedus aeternum* is sometimes given precedence to blood relationships – the final distich of Prop. 2,7: *tu mihi sola places: placeam tibi, Cynthia, solus: / hic erit et patrio sanguine pluris amor* ('you alone are pleasing to me; I alone shall be pleasing, Cynthia, to you. This will be worth more than fatherhood to me') explicitly makes this claim.[67] Furthermore, in the light of the elegiac context, we are also able to make sense of Alphesiboea's insistence on avenging her husband's death even though he has left her and entered into a new relationship, for her behaviour resembles the many protestations of the elegiac lover (in particular the Propertian narrator) that he will remain faithful to his beloved, although she herself has taken a new lover.[68] Mythological awareness allows the reader to conclude that although Cynthia may be said to fulfil the same preconditions as these women, and to be like them, she is, due to her alleged failures, also unlike to them. The contrast between them will thus appear the sharper and highlight Cynthia's deficiencies.

So far, we have pointed to how the mythological references contribute to supporting the narrator's point. They do, however, also expose another facet of

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[65] Bennett, 1972, 37f. According to Bennett, this is first touched upon with *periculo* ('danger', 1,15,3) and *timore* ('fear', 1,15,4) and is the foil against which the entire poem should be seen, Bennett, 1972, 28–39.

[66] Jacobson, 1974, 105f. Cf. A. R. 1,609–909.

[67] Cf. also Prop. 2,6,41f.

[68] Prop. 1,8,24–26; arguably also 1,12 esp. 19f; 2,6, esp. 41f; 2,9. Cf. also Prop. 1,15,29–32.

the character of the narrator. Gaisser stresses that of the four exemplary women mentioned, three were in fact abandoned by their lovers who, on their own accord, moved on to other women. To the suspicious reader, the narrator may slip into the damning role of playing the unfaithful Iason to Cynthia's abandoned Hypsipyle, or Alcmeon to her Alphesioboea. Even in the fourth case, Euadne's, we may consider death an ultimate expression of desertion.[69] If the female examples provide a counterpoint for Cynthia, so do their male counterparts for the Propertian narrator, and it is one that may make the reader question the professed fidelity of the narrator himself.[70] Throughout the poem, he has claimed to worry about whether Cynthia is faithful to him, but careful consideration of the mythological background may also arouse suspicion that he himself has been less than faithful, and, perhaps more importantly, less than forthright to his reader. In the following, we shall see further instances of such ironies seeping, seemingly without the narrator's knowledge, into the text. In Prop. 1,15 and elsewhere, the external author forms the way the reader perceives the narrator by means of the mythological examples he uses.

In Prop. 2,20 the narrator employs the same manner of negative comparison as in Prop. 1,15 – this time he claims the beloved is nothing like Briseis or Andromache, let alone Philomela and Niobe:

> quid fles abducta grauius Briseide? quid fles   Prop. 2,20,1
>   anxia captiua tristius Andromacha?
> quidue mea de fraude deos, insane, fatigas?
>   quid quereris nostram sic cecidisse fidem?
> non tam nocturna uolucris funesta querela
>   Attica Cecropiis obstrepit in foliis,
> nec tantum Niobe, bis sex ad busta superba,
>   sollicito lacrimans defluit a Sipylo.

(Why are you crying harder than Briseis when she was taken away? Why are you crying more desperately than captive Andromache? And why are you wearying the gods with raging laments about my treachery? Why are you complaining that my promise was broken thus? Not even the sorrowing bird of Attica, in the Cecropian woods, makes such nightly laments, and not even Niobe by the twice six graves, who had so prided herself, let so much tears flow from sorrowing Sipylus.)

The reference to Briseis and Andromache in the first lines of Prop. 2,20 is yet another instance where the mythological characters are used as a point of

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[69] Gaisser, 1977, 389f.

[70] Gaisser, 1977, 390.

contrast for the narrator's lover. As several commentators have pointed out, the narrator's demand that his beloved explain what is the cause of her distress is a largely rhetorical one.[71]

In this first half of the series of examples comprising lines 1-8 the narrator compares the beloved to mythological characters the reader has previously encountered as a foil for Cynthia or an unnamed beloved of the narrator. Hence, a linear reading of Propertius may make the reader more ready to accept a beloved cast in the role of Briseis – yet a linear reading may also make the careful reader more prone to question it. In the first distich of Prop. 2,20, only the generic differences between the elegiac mistress and the originally epic and tragic characters Briseis and Andromache may lead us to suspect that her situation is really not comparable to that of either Briseis or Andromache. It is, however, not until the second distich that the ironic quality of the identification with Briseis and Andromache to illustrate the cause for the beloved's lament becomes clear. Until that point, we may note that syntactically, the stress in the first distich is on the beloved as the subject and the active party, and thus it is almost as if she herself rather than the narrator is casting her in the role of Briseis and Andromache, recalling the way she spoke of herself in terms reminiscent of Lucretia or Penelope in Prop. 1,3,35–46. Whitaker expresses a similar idea, claiming that for these examples to be efficient, the reader must recall how Briseis and Andromache suffered separation from their lovers without any fault of their own, so that the beloved may appear in the role of injured innocence.[72] That the *puella* is cast in that role also has wide-reaching implications for our appreciation of the narrator, a point to which I shall return presently.

Although there is a brief interruption as the narrator addresses his beloved directly in lines 3f, the references to Briseis and Andromache are in fact the first two in a series of four examples that add to the description of the lamenting mistress. The two final examples are Philomela and Niobe, with whom the second half of the series moves away from the characters to whom the beloved has previously been compared. We may suspect that she is not a true Briseis or Andromache, but we can be sure from the beginning that the comparison to Philomela and Niobe will be jarring at certain points. The constellation of characters significant in the myths of Niobe and Philomela is not one we would expect to find in 'canonical' elegy, whose key players renounce the importance of all family ties but to those to their lover: Philomela's lament is for her sister

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[71] Richardson, 1977, 269; Fedeli, 2005, 587. For an interpretation of the passage as a statement of Propertius' Callimachean ideals, Dué, 2002, 106–110.

[72] Whitaker, 1983, 88f.

and her son, Niobe's for her lost children. Furthermore, the emphasis is now entirely on the examples, and although on one level they insist that the beloved's grief is greater than that of the mentioned heroines, the negative expressions *non tam nocturna* ('not […] such nightly', in 2,20,5) and *nec tantum Niobe* ('not […] so much', in 2,20,7) may also serve to introduce the notion that the beloved is, in fact, nothing like Niobe.

Once more we have a series of examples that are not as suitable to the subject matter as they may seem at first glance. However, this time the discrepancies between the beloved and the heroines referred to seem not to appear unbeknownst to the narrator but to be deployed by him to reflect ironically on the beloved's behaviour and make clear to the reader that she – unlike Briseis *et cetera* – has no real reason to grieve. Close consideration of the female mythological examples gives away nothing about the beloved woman of which the narrator does not already seem aware.

Nevertheless, there is a distinctly subversive element to these examples, calling into question the self-representation of the narrator. We shall even see that though her reaction is perhaps exaggerated, the beloved may have some cause for concern. Williams has suggested that one could argue that conclusion as Briseis and Andromache both had very real cause for their lament.[73] Rather than stressing what the examples imply about the female lover, I would like to examine closer what they may say about the male narrator. As we have seen in several earlier passages, the comparison of the beloved with certain female mythological characters also implies similarities between their male counterparts and the narrator. In Prop. 2,20,1–8, the narrator mirrors his own character in the images of Achilles and Hector, thus casting himself as the hero.[74] In this context it is interesting to note that Prop. 2,20,9f shifts focus from the beloved to the narrator without much ado; it is a good hint that the analogy between Achilles/Hector and the narrator is indeed relevant for the interpretation of the previous passage.

This analogy is far from uncomplicated. According to Whitaker, it is a means for the narrator to support his claim that he has remained faithful to his beloved, just like these heroes did. In the case of Hector, this approach is largely unproblematic. Still, although Andromache was first and foremost known as the wife of Hector, even long after his death at Troy,[75] the description of her as *captiva* ('captive') in 2,9,2 indicates that the reference is not merely to a time after Hector's death, but indeed to the time she was held captive by Neoptolemus. This results

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[73] Williams, 1980, 68.

[74] Whitaker, 1983, 89.

[75] Cf. Verg. *Aen.* 3,319 and esp. 3,486–488.

in an additional analogy between Neoptolemus and the narrator, which can but reflect negatively on the narrator, for Neoptolemus least of all was known for being faithful to Andromache.[76]

The analogy between Achilles and the narrator throws a similarly dubious light on the narrator's assertions of fidelity. As we have seen in the discussion of Prop. 2,9 (esp. 16), Achilles is not entirely suitable as a role model of marital fidelity. In Prop. 2,20 there is no explicit mention of his wife Deidamia waiting in Skyrus (as in Prop. 2,9,16), nor of the amazon Penthiseleia with whom Achilles was also associated,[77] and no immediate reason to think of Achilles as an unfaithful lover. Yet Williams has noted that the mythological examples to whom the narrator next compares himself (Prop. 2,20,9–12 and 31f) are suggestive of a baser side to the narrator's character. As the narrator endeavours to show his beloved through what hardships he would come to her, he in fact figures himself as an adulterer and a rapist by likening himself to Jupiter breaking into Danae's prison (9–12) and to Tityos and Sisphos (31f).[78] Male violence is also a significant trait in the myths concerning Philomela.[79] Considering the implied identification of the narrator with Achilles in the light of these examples, one may easily recall that Achilles too loved several women. Furthermore, it may also cause us to consider another, additional meaning of *abducta Briseide* ('Briseis, when she was taken away') in the poem's opening line. Usually, commentators understand this phrase as a reference to how Briseis is forced to leave Achilles on Agamemnon's command,[80] but in retrospect, this wording also brings to mind the actual nature of Briseis and Achilles' relationship – Briseis is the bounty slave robbed of and from her family and the beginnings of the relationship is steeped in violence.

The narrator's oath of fidelity *ossa tibi iuro per matris et ossa parentis* [...] *me tibi ad extremas mansurum, uita, tenebras* ('I swear to you by the ashes of my mother and my father [...] that I will stay with you till the final darkness') in 2,20,15–17 is equally charged with double meanings, given that the narrator has previously renounced any family ties but those to his beloved.[81] Thus, the subversive elements of the series of mythological examples in Prop. 2,20 reflect ironically not on the narrator's image of his beloved, but rather on the image he is presenting of himself and his fidelity.

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[76] Cf. Reinke, 1935, 2440–2463.

[77] Prop. 3,11,13–16. Cf. Schwenn, 1940, 872.

[78] Williams, 1980, 68.

[79] Cf. Ov. *Met.* 6,422–674.

[80] For the most extensive discussion, see Fedeli, 2005, 587–592.

[81] Cf. Prop. 2,7, esp. 13f and 19f.

The final example of a reference to a mythological paragon of wifely virtues implying disconcerting analogies between a male mythological or literary character and the narrator appears in Prop. 3,12.

Postumus alter erit miranda coniuge Ulixes   Prop. 3,12,23
   (non illi longae tot nocuere morae,
[…]
nec frustra, quia casta domi persederat uxor):   Prop. 3,12,37
   uincit Penelopes Aelia Galla fidem.

(Postumus shall be another Odysseus thanks to his admirable wife, (the long delays were not harmful to him, […] and it was not in vain, for at home his wife continued to sit chaste). Aelia Galla surpasses Penelope in faithfulness.)

Homeric imagery plays a central part in Prop. 3,12 even as in Prop. 2,20. Here, the dedicatee Postumus is likened to Odysseus and his wife Aelia Galla to Penelope. Postumus has often been identified as a kinsman of the poet, and a C. Propertius Postumus.[82] However, as this identification may not be conclusively ascertained, it may be better to approach this poem regarding characters and setting as mostly fictive and borrowing only certain traits from actual circumstances in contemporary Rome.[83] Set at Postumus' leave-taking from Rome to join a military campaign against Parthia, this is the first in a group of three poems where Propertius is not primarily concerned with an elegiac relationship. Nevertheless, elegiac values dominate the poem through the prominent structural position given to Postumus' virtuous wife Galla and her *fides* ('faithfulness').[84]

After an introductory passage addressing Postumus and berating him for going off to war in pursuit of riches and glory in spite of the grief this will impose on his wife (3,12,1–14), the narrator states that it is really his wife Galla that Postumus may be envied, as she, strengthened by her concern for her husband, shall remain virtuous and chaste during his absence (3,12,15–22). Prop. 3,12,23f introduces the comparison between Galla and Penelope in a way that is not entirely flattering for Postumus – only through Galla will he ever be as outstanding as Odysseus. Odysseus' adventures are thereupon sketched briefly in lines 25–37, but even they were, according to the narrator, validated only by the fact that Penelope patiently awaited Odysseus' return. The final line of the poem then returns to the circumstances of the addressee as the narrator concludes that Galla's faithfulness will outshine even that of Penelope.

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[82] Rothstein, 1924, 90; Butler and Barber, 1933, 293; Fedeli, 1985, 397f; Cairns, 2006, 18f.
[83] Richardson, 1977, 369f.
[84] Boucher, 1980, 97. Cf. also Nethercut, 1970, 101f.

Though elegy has in this way reasserted itself over the non-elegiac subject matter of a soldier leaving his wife behind to join the imperial army in the East, there is little to imply that the correspondences between Aelia Galla and the elegiac *puella* would extend any further – for instance that Galla would, despite the narrator's assertions to the contrary, share the fickleness of which the Propertian narrator so often has accused his beloved. Instead, the inverted gender pattern of elegy[85] has been re-inverted in this poem,[86] so that the male protagonist Postumus shares several characteristics with the *puella* of elegy: according to the narrator, Postumus is governed by his lust for material goods (3,12,3–6). The comparison with Odysseus furthermore suggests that he is likely to be unfaithful to his wife during his travels, particularly as Odysseus' erotic adventures have been brought to the fore in Propertius' review,[87] Aelia Galla, on the other hand, resembles the male elegiac lover. Her concerns for her husband's safety are expressed in a way that recalls the worries of the elegiac lover on hearing rumours about his beloved (*tabescet fama inani*, 'she will waste away because of empty rumours', in 3,12,9),[88] the power of her love for Postumus enables her to reject luxury 3,12,17–20), and she endures the *duritia* of her husband during their separation (*duritiaeque tuae non erit illa memor*, 'and she will not remember your cruelty', in 3,12,20). She will remain faithful, just like the narrator in other elegies has many times asserted he will.

We have, however, noted that comparisons between the female beloved in 'canonical' elegy and mythological paragons of wifely virtue often are skewed in a way that casts doubt either on the applicability of the comparison or on the virtue of the mythological character him or herself, or possibly both. Rulli suggests that the doubts that surrounded Penelope's chastity in ancient times reflect ironically on the narrator's praise of Galla's fidelity.[89] Though it is well known that Penelope's virtue was a question of debate in antiquity,[90] I do not think it is warranted to see any allusion to that issue in Prop. 3,12. I have indicated the inversion of the elegiac structure of power relations between the male and the female: that is one reason to assume that Galla is quite possibly just as virtuous a wife as the narrator claims.[91] As Holzberg has proposed, the position of the poem

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[85] Griffin, 1985, 54f; Hallett and Skinner, 1997, 130; Holzberg, 2001, 17 and 19–21, cf. also Kennedy, 1993, 30f.

[86] Cf. Holzberg, 2001, 62.

[87] Benediktson, 1985, 19f.

[88] Cf. Prop. 1,11,17f; 15,1f; *ThLL* s.v. *inanis* II (beta).

[89] Rulli, 1995, 313.

[90] For a full overview of the literary tradition, Jacobson, 1974, 245–249.

[91] As we have seen in several previously discussed poems, however, the first-person elegiac

in Book 3 is another. The virtuous Aelia Galla (and with her, Penelope) stands in sharp contrast to the lascivious Cleopatra portrayed in Prop. 3,11 as well as to the women won over by greed and luxury in the satirical lament of Prop. 3,13.[92] Still, one might ask whether the position of the Galla poem does not rather imply that Galla, too, is unfaithful – that she is, in fact, one of the haughty Penelopes at last defeated by riches in 3,13,9f. This question is bound up with the matter of whether Propertius, or even elegy in general, serves any particular political cause. I have argued that elegy embraces the values of traditional Roman society, which makes it reasonable to assume an opposition between Cleopatra and Galla that reflects negatively on the foreign queen and enemy of state but positively on the Roman matron. Most notably, however, the faithful Galla (who does everything right, whether from an elegiac perspective or from a traditional Roman one) is deployed to highlight the deficiencies the elegiac narrator sees in the addressee Postumus.

Thus, the many commentators who point to Prop. 3,12,23f and 37f as typical for the use of Penelope as a paragon of virtue seem to be correct – though I would not agree that this straightforward use of mythological examples of wifely virtue is typical for elegy.[93]

I.iv. Through a glass darkly: References revealing the narrator's skewed perception of his relationship

In the third main section of the chapter, I examine one mention of Laodamia (Prop. 1,19,7–10) and three possible allusions to Penelope from Propertius (Prop. 1,3,39–46; 4,8) and Tibullus (Tib. 1,3,83–92). I will suggest that in these four passages, the mythological references allow the reader to see the narrator's perception of his beloved as seriously flawed, hinting that the world-view the narrators claim to propose is equally distorted.

In the passages in Prop. 1,3 and Tib. 1,3 the suspicious reader finds indications similar to those in Prop. 1,19 that the narrator's perception of his relationship with the *puella* is skewed in a significant way which, in turn, casts doubt on the world view he ostensibly represents. The final instance discussed in this section (Prop. 4,8) is more difficult to categorize – it could, for example, have been

narrators often proclaim their loyalty and faithfulness to their *puellae* while nevertheless letting slip hints to the careful reader that they may in fact be unfaithful, cf. below on Prop. 2,9,3–8; 20,1f.

[92] Holzberg, 2001, 62.

[93] Cf. Fedeli, 1985, 411; Spoth, 1992, 37; Gilchrist, 1997, 249.

discussed in the first main section of the chapter, as the use of the final books of the *Odyssey* as an intertext also prompts more general reflections on the genre. It is included here as this intertext is not explicitly signposted and its place at the close of the main part of the chapter is in fact well suited to observations of a general character.

First, however, let us turn to the mention of Laodamia and Protesilaus in Prop. 1,19:

non adeo leuiter nostris puer haesit ocellis,   Prop. 1,19,5
    ut meus oblito puluis amore uacet.
illic Phylacides iucundae coniugis heros
    non potuit caecis immemor esse locis,
sed cupidus falsis attingere gaudia palmis
    Thessalus antiquam uenerat umbra domum.
illic quidquid ero, semper tua dicar imago:
    traicit et fati litora magnus amor.

(The boy did not hang on to my eyes lightly enough that my ashes could be free and my love forgotten. There, in the dark abodes, the hero from Phylace could not forget his lovely wife, but he, the Thessalian, went as a shadow to his old home to greedily touch his joy with unreal hands. There, whatever I shall be, I shall be called your image: great love traverses even the shores of fate.)

In Prop. 1,19 the narrator wishes for the love between him and Cynthia to last beyond death, despite his fears that she will find another lover when he himself is dead. As an illustration of a love that is stronger than death he refers to the story of Protesilaus and Laodamia (1,19,7–10). The narrator then goes on to assure his beloved Cynthia that a love as strong as his for her will overcome any and every trial, and imagines how he, after his own death, will long to be reunited with her. However, even the beginning of the poem (Prop. 1,19,3f) implies that the narrator fears that Cynthia will not be faithful to him; this fear also reverberates throughout the closing lines *quare, dum licet, inter nos laetemur amantes: / non satis est ullo tempore longus amor* ('therefore, so long as we may, let us rejoice together and love; never, though it is long, does love last long enough' Prop. 1,19,25f) and their exhortation that the couple should enjoy their love and life together for as long as they may.

In Propertius' version of Protesilaus and Laodamia's story, the renunion of the lovers is brought about by the love of Protesilaus for Laodamia (7–10); Protesilaus, not Laodamia, is the active party. Other, more widespread versions bring to the fore Laodamia's love and grief for her husband; so for instance Catullus in

Cat. 68,73–130.[94] By means of this change the pattern of male and female agents remains the same in the mythological parallel as in the main part of the poem, thus making the impact of the mythological example more forceful.[95]

As in other versions of this story Propertius' reference to Protesilaus and Laodamia is steeped in sensuality and eroticism, although the use of Protesilaus as the more active party transfers these feelings to him rather than to Laodamia. Papanghelis states that the memories of Protesilaus are of a tactile nature, as *iucundae* ('lovely', 7) recalls rather the 'ripples of delicious sensation' which Laodamia causes in Protesilaus than particularly deep emotions. The use of *gaudia* ('joy'), *cupidus* ('greedily') and *attingere* ('touch') in 1,19,9 contributes to reinforce this impression and we should also bear the erotic associations of these words in mind. [96]

Earlier references to the myth brought to the fore the fact that Laodamia and Protesilaus were a married couple, and the wedding itself has a central part in earlier tradition.[97] In Prop. 1,19,7, the narrator makes sure to remind the reader of that by referring to Laodamia as *coniunx* ('wife'). Though *coniunx* is also used of the beloved in elegy, the mention of Laodamia's status as a wife invokes the constancy associated with marriage. This allows the narrator to support his assertions of everlasting love to Cynthia with as efficient arguments as possible.

However, even within the example itself there are hints that this myth may not be enough to convince the addressee (or the reader) of the feasibility of a love surpassing the boundaries of life.[98] The narrator refers to a version of the myth also found in Statius and Servius,[99] according to which Protesilaus returned to

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94 Cf. Laev. *Frg.* 13–19; Hyg. *Fab.* 103–104. According to Mayer, 1885, 101–104, in Euripides' *Protesilaos*, Protesilaus himself convinced the gods to allow him to return to Laodamia for a limited time, but the play seems also to have emphasized Laodamia's passion. Cf. *TGF* 647a–657 (Nauck). In Cat. 68,73–130 it is Lesbia who is likened to Laodamia, but several scholars have argued that her deep passion seem in fact to recall the narrator's own, rather than his lover's feelings, Lyne, 1980, 57f; Macleod, 1982, 159–165.

95 Whitaker, 1983, 128; Lyne, 1998, 210.

96 Papanghelis, 1987, 11f. The visuality of the memories arises due to *caecis* ('dark') and *immemor* (lit. 'forgetful', translated above as 'could not forget') in 1,19,8. These words, placed on either side of the cesura, stand in contrast with each other. On the erotic associations of *gaudia* ('joy') and *attingere* ('touch'), Adams, 1982, 197f and 185f.

97 So in particular Laevius, Courtney, 1993, 130–135. Cf. also Cat. 68,71–130, Williams, 1980, 56–58 and Öhrman, forthcoming a.

98 Lyne, 1980, 210; Papanghelis, 1987, 11f; Lyne, 1998, 101.

99 Stat. *Silv.* 5,3,273; Serv. *Aen.* 6,477f and *Mythogr.* 1,158. Lyne's "by tradition Protesilaus returned to Laodamia in full, satisfaying form," does not hold, Lyne, 1980, 101; 1998, 209.

Laodamia as a ghost only. The choice of this particular mythological variant over the versions where Protesilaus temporarily resumes a full corporeal shape may be a means of throwing doubt on whether the myth may in truth support the narrator's claims of love being possible after death. Papanghelis suggests that the hyperbaton *falsis* [...] *palmis* ('unreal hands') in 1,19,9 destroys the unity of *cupidus attingere* ('greedily touch') in a foreboding manner. The impression of oppressive darkness is further reinforced by the many dark vowels and the word *umbra* ('shadow') in line 10, as well as by the phrase *antiquam domum* ('old home'), that we may understand in a double sense as the house in which Protesilaus no longer lives, and in which all life has therefore come to a halt.[100]

Lyne sees an allusion to the statue Laodamia made of Protesilaus in the following distich and the word *imago* ('image').[101] Comparing the Propertian passage with the description of Admetus' image of Alcestis in Euripides' tragedy (Eur. *Alc*. 348–353), where the consolation brought to Admetus by the image are furthermore referred to as cold, the reader may surmise that all hopes for a reunion after death, either for Protesilaus or the narrator, are vain.[102] The two lines of interpretation suggested above contribute to revealing the narrator's perception of his relationship as an eternally lasting one as seriously flawed.

This subversive interpretation is mainly dependent on intertextual association generated by the use of *imago*. However, it is also supported by the proclamation in Prop. 1,19,12 of great love transcending the borders of life and death, which may pertain to Protesilaus as well as to the narrator. As in 7–10 the way Propertius has varied the story of Protesilaus and Laodamia is decisive for the interpretation. Here, too, we may note a change of roles between the male and the female.

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[100] Papanghelis, 1987, 11f. Papanghelis claims that Prop. 1,19 deals with the impossibility of love after death, as love always implies a physical element. Therefore, the efforts of Protesilaus and the promises of the narrator to remain steadfast in their love even after death will fail, and an opposition of abstract and concrete is present throughout the poem, e.g. in *falsis palmis* ('unreal hands', 1,19,9) which Papanghelis translates "disappointed hands", and most notably in the notion that the ashes of the narrator would greet Cynthia (17–20), Papanghelis, 1987, 10–15. Williams, 1968, 766–782 also stresses the opposition between abstract and concrete in Prop. 1,19.

[101] Lyne, 1998, 211f, translates: "There, whatever I shall be, I shall always be called your image" and brings to the fore the broad semantic field of *imago*, "'image', 'apparition', 'likeness', and 'statue'".

[102] Lyne, 1998, 211f. Cf. Whitaker, 1983, 129, claiming that 1,19,11 sets Protesilaus up as a hero "of posthumous faithfulness". For a different view, Fedeli, 1980, 447, translating *imago* with "shadow image of a dead" and taking the line as an allusion to the wished-for union of the lovers after death.

In other versions Laodamia made the statue of Protesilaus out of longing for him, and as a sign of *her* devotion.[103] The Propertian narrator, however, refers to an *imago* in order to prove his devotion to the still living loved one he has been parted from. He thus creates his own image in death, hoping to be forever called *tua imago* ('your image').[104] Moreover, contrasting with the notion of mutual and everlasting love, the phrasing *tua imago* may be interpreted in two different ways. Will the narrator be an image or a shadow of himself, belonging to Cynthia, or will he utterly obliterate his own self and become his own image of her?

In the scenario envisaged by the narrator, Amor entices Cynthia to fall in love again (21–24). Since these lines are set against the backdrop of the story of Laodamia and Protesilaus, Cynthia's behaviour stands in contrast with that of the widowed Laodamia, who in the more frequently told versions of the myth clung to her love for Protesilaus in every way. This contrast once more brings to the fore the narrator's fears that Cynthia will not return his love.

Hence, the reference to the myth of Protesilaus and Laodamia's love undermines the assertions of the narrator in a way that makes obvious how skewed his perception of his relationship with Cynthia really is. As we have seen, such discrepancies between the function of mythological examples proffered by the narrator on the one hand and what the careful (and knowledgeable) reader may garner from the text on the other are not uncommon in Propertius.[105] The effect of these discrepancies is likely to be cumulative and, in the course of a linear reading, to make the reader question the view the narrator presents of his relationship with his beloved. As previously noted, this suspiciousness does not contain itself to the narrator's approach to his love story, but has implications also for the seemingly ideological message of his elegies.

Digression: Possibly Penelope

In this section, I will briefly address the matter of possible allusions to Penelope in three poems – Prop. 1,3; 4,8 and Tib. 1,3. In neither of these poems is there any mention of her name, any overt reference to motives exclusively associated with the character of Penelope – her weaving, or the presence of the suitors *et cetera* – and it may be wise to question the need to invoke a specifically Homeric

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[103] The point of time on which Laodamia has the image made differs in the accounts, in Ov. *Epist.* 13,150–156 it is after Protesilaus has left for Troy, in Hyg. *Fab.* 104 only after his death. See further II.ii.

[104] Cf. Viarre, 1969, 770, on Prop. 1,19,11.

[105] On Prop. 1,19 Lyne, 1998, 209–212, cf. on Prop. 1,3 Harrison, 1994, 18–26, on Prop. 1,2 and 1,15 Gaisser, 1977, 381–391 and see above, I.iii.

intertext here. While I feel it is necessary for the completeness of my argument in this chapter to include an overview of the relevant interpretations of these poems here, it is not my objective to narrow down the possible field of interpretation by arguing that any reader interested in delving deeper into the text *has* to arrive at the character of Penelope. In this digression, I hope rather to show that *if* one presupposes the Homeric backdrop many scholars have suggested, the way Propertius and Tibullus shape their references to it is entirely in keeping with the way direct allusions to Penelope and other paradigms of wifely virtues are used elsewhere in 'canonical' elegy, that is, that they contribute to casting doubt on the reliability of the manner in which the narrator presents his relationship with the *puella*, and by extension even on the alternative world view the narrator ostensibly represents.

The third poem of the Propertian *Monobiblos* sees the narrator coming home late from a night on the town, and contains his description of the sleeping Cynthia, her awakening and ensuing harsh criticism of her all-too tardy lover. As Cynthia tells the narrator how she spent her evening waiting for him, she claims to have worked the spindle and played the lyre to fend off sleep, all the while lamenting his lack of concern for her.

'O utinam talis producas, improbe, noctes,   Prop. 1,3,39
    me miseram qualis semper habere iubes!
nam modo purpureo fallebam stamine somnum,
    rursus et Orpheae carmine, fessa, lyrae;
interdum leuiter mecum deserta querebar
    externo longas saepe in amore moras:
dum me iucundis lapsam Sopor impulit alis.
    illa fuit lacrimis ultima cura meis.'

(I wish you get to spend such nights, you wretch, that you are forever forcing me to have. For I have been fooling sleep now with the purple thread on the spindle, then, exhausted, with song on the Orphean lyre. All the while I lamented quietly to myself how long you delay with someone else's love, untill I fell down and Sleep vanquished me with her soft wings. She brought, at last, a cure for my tears.)

Several commentators have seen here a reminiscence of women like Penelope and Lucretia, virtuously awaiting the return of their husbands and busying them-selves with woolwork.[106] However, set in relief against the incorrigibly unfaithful Cynthia described by the narrator in other Cynthia-centric poems and implied already in the first two poems of the collection, the reader may suspect that

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[106] Cf. Fedeli, 1980, 134; Lyne, 1980, 118f; Whitaker, 1983, 93; J. Booth, 1995, 28.

Cynthia is exaggerating her virtue and suffering – Lyne has pointed to the obvious exaggeration of *semper* ('forever') in 1,3,40.[107] Therefore, Cynthia's protestations that she has spent the night working and waiting for her lover suggest a more familiar contrast between her and the wool-working paragons of wifely virtue.

This contrast and the exaggerations of Cynthia become more obvious if we assume that Cynthia's claim of having spent the night waiting for the narrator is merely a smokescreen erected for the benefit of the narrator, and that the narrator is already suspicious that she may have met with another lover in his absence.[108] Harrison has pointed out that by their allusions to the situations where Theseus has just left the sleeping Ariadne and the Bacchic frenzy (and hence the god) of the maenad, the mythological examples in the beginning of the poem (Prop. 1,3,1–6) imply that another lover has just left Cynthia.[109] Furthermore, the comparison of the narrator to Argos also suggests that the woman he is gazing so intently upon has still managed to meet another lover.[110] If we accept these implications of the mythological examples, they further underline the contrasts between Cynthia and the paragons of wifely virtues which she seems to evoke in her speech (1,3,35–46) and clearly display the narrator's gullibility, reducing him to the comical character of the cuckold.

Not only the mythological parallels are slightly jarring in Cynthia's description of her lonesome evening: Cynthia herself appears to remain firmly rooted in the demi-monde in which the narrator has previously placed her. She works the spindle, but she spins a purple thread, connoting luxury and decadence rather than faithful abstinence. She sings to the lyre, evoking the image of a hetaira rather than that of a housewife.[111] These details all reinforce the impression of the narrator as ridiculously impressionable by what one may suspect is but a lie. Thus the non-personalized paradigm of wifely virtue as an object for contrast is manipulated in the same way as mythological characters well known for these

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[107] Lyne, 1980, 119.

[108] Harrison, 1994, 20 stresses that this rival could also be present only as a *Hirngespenst* of the narrator himself, but the phrase 'just because you're paranoid it doesn't mean they're not out to get you' may also apply.

[109] Harrison, 1994, 18–22. According to other interpretations, the examples anticipate Cynthia's behaviour on awakening (cf. Lyne, 1980, 98–102), or hint that Cynthia, like the mythological parallels, has in some way been mistreated by her lover, cf. Williams, 1980, 72f; J. Booth, 1995, 25f.

[110] Harrison, 1994, 21f.

[111] Cf. Harrison, 1994, 23 and R. K. Gibson, 2003, 223f on Ov. *Ars* 3,311–328. Or, conversely, cf. Davidson, 1997, 86–89 for a discussion of possible evidence that prostitutes in Greece often supported themselves by a combination of spinning and prostitution.

virtues are on other instances in 'canonical' elegy. As on most of those instances, the incongruity of the comparison between Cynthia and the ideal wife (possibly named Penelope) reflects not so much on the woman described as on the narrator himself, and implicitly on his (in)ability to create and maintain a lifestyle that provides a valid alternative to the traditional Roman way of life.

Tibullus 1,3 invokes the (possible) presence of Penelope in a similar way as Prop. 1,3. The Tibullan narrator relates his thoughts after being forced to give up his participation in a military expedition headed East to recover from illness at the island of Corcyra. He there dreams of Rome and his beloved Delia and imagines his homecoming and Delia greeting him in a manner vaguely reminiscent of Penelope.[112] There is no explicit mention of Penelope, but as Homeric imagery is present throughout the poem in the parallels established between the narrator and Odysseus, we may also, by implication, consider Delia a mirror of Penelope.[113]

at tu casta precor maneas, sanctique pudoris	Tib. 1,3,83
assideat custos sedula semper anus.	
haec tibi fabellas referat positaque lucerna	
deducat plena stamina longa colu,	
at circa grauibus pensis adfixa puella	
paulatim somno fessa remittat opus.	
tunc ueniam subito, nec quisquam nuntiet ante,	
sed uidear caelo missus adesse tibi.	
tunc mihi, qualis eris, longos turbata capillos,	
obuia nudato, Delia curre pede.	

(But I pray that you remain chaste, and that the sedulous old woman always assist you and guard your sacred honour. She will tell you tales in lamplight, and trail long threads from her rich distaff. And at her side, tied to the heavy load, my love will by and by be overcome by sleep and let go of her work. Then, of a sudden I will arrive, with no message sent on ahead, but like I was sent from the skies it will seem to you. Then come running to me, Delia, just the way you are, with bare feet and with long hair flying.)

The narrator dreams of a Delia who may be favourably compared to the faithless daughters of Danaus in Tib. 1,3,79, and a Delia remaining faithful to him

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[112] Maltby, 2002, 183 and 210.

[113] The most obvious point of correspondence between Homer and Tibullus is the setting of the poem at Phaeacia. For extensive interpretations, see Mills, 1974, 226–233; Bright, 1978, 16–37; Maltby, 2002, 183. Cf. also Gilchrist, 1997, 279.

even though she is courted by other men, as *illic sit quicumque meos uiolauit amores* ('there they should all be, who sully my love') in Tib. 1,3,81 suggests. However, the described homecoming also contains elements that may hint that the narrator is giving an idealized picture of Delia, and that she has not, in fact, awaited him faithfully but sought another lover. Firstly, it is suggestive that the narrator sees the need to beg Delia to remain true – is it mere rhetoric, or something past experience has taught him?[114] Previous poems in Book 1 have established Delia as someone capable of illicit affairs: in Tib. 1,1,55f the narrator holds a vigil before her barred doors, and in 1,2,15f he encourages her to fool the guards set there, and in the next Delia-centric poem (Tib. 1,5), the narrator claims that she has taken a wealthy rival to be her lover.

Within Tib. 1,3, Lee-Stecum has noted that although Delia is surrounded by studiously weaving servants, she herself does not seem to partake in this work. This also implies that Delia does not fulfil the ideal of the wool-working wife.[115] The appearance of Delia, furthermore, may have similar implications. According to Shea, Delia's tangled hair and bare feet suggest not only emotion but also haste.[116] The reader, Shea proposes, may rather suspect that Delia has in fact just risen hastily from the bed of another lover.[117]

If we accept the interpretation of Shea we arrive once more at that incongruous comparison between Delia, the elegiac beloved, and a paragon of wifely virtue. As I have argued before, this incongruity reflects mostly on the narrator who presents the comparison as a valid and congruous one, seemingly unaware that elements in his own text continually undermine his statements. Tibullus creates comical effects at the expense of his own narrator in describing the narrator as naïve enough to dream of a happy end with a lover who, as the context of Book One implies, may very well already have moved on to a new relationship, and, secondly, by allowing the reader to wonder whether even within the narrator's own daydream, Delia is not deceiving him.

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[114] Lee-Stecum, 1998, 126f. Interestingly, Lee-Stecum's interpretation stresses the importance of Livy's account of Lucretia in Liv. 1,57–59 for Tibullus' poem. Lee-Stecum points out that by casting Delia as Lucretia, the narrator himself also assumes the role not only of the rightful husband Collatinus, but also of the rapist Tarquinus, see Lee-Stecum, 1998, 127f.

[115] Lee-Stecum, 1998, 127.

[116] Cf. also Maltby, 2002, 212.

[117] Shea, 1998, 22f and 28f. It is interesting to note that accepting Shea's interpretation, the scene also bears some resemblance to the 'adultery mime', which featured an adulterous couple narrowly avoiding being caught. Cf. R. K. Gibson, 2003, 331 on Ov. *Ars* 3,601–610. Other commentators take Delia's appearance and behaviour as proof of her love and haste to greet the narrator, cf. Flower Smith, 1964, 262; Putnam, 1979, 87.

It has been suggested that the association with the possibly unfaithful elegiac beloved (in this case with Delia, in Prop. 1,3 with Cynthia) would cast doubt also on the morality of Penelope, not only in elegy but in the *Odyssey* as well.[118] As Penelope is mentioned explicitly on several instances in Roman elegy,[119] it seems unlikely that a poem where the identification of Homer's account of Penelope's story as an intertext relies on analogy alone should have a subtext dealing specifically with her character. Furthermore, the notion that the comic reflection on the narrator's skewed world view is quite an important point of the comparisons between the elegiac beloved and any paragon of virtue, presupposes that the text does not essentially challenge the view of either Penelope or Lucretia as faithful wives as otherwise, there would be no contrast, nor any means of making incongruous comparisons.

As previously noted, the possible allusion to Penelope in Prop. 4,8 balances between the categories used to classify the passages in this chapter. Although it reflects on issues of genre in a more general way and therefore reasonably could have been included in the first main section of this chapter, I have chosen to discuss it together with Prop. 1,3 and Tib. 1,3. As in those poems, the reader is not explicitly guided towards drawing on Homer or any other text featuring Penelope to interpret Prop. 4,8 – but if one does, the mythological background makes for comical and ironical effects.

The resemblances between Prop. 4,8 and the twenty-second book of the *Odyssey* have been noted in several interpretations, for Prop. 4,8 tells how Cynthia, unexpectedly returning from a frivolous (if we are to believe the narrator) outing, finds the narrator in drunken celebrations with two other girls, whom she dramatically dismisses from the house. After a verbal dressing-down of the narrator, the house is cleansed with sulphur and the lovers reconciled.[120] The mock-heroism of Cynthia type-cast as the returning Odysseus taking revenge on the suitors has generally been a cause for amusement, and scholars have brought to the fore the comical differences between Propertius and his intertext: Cynthia

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[118] Gilchrist, 1997, 282–284.

[119] Propertius refers directly to Penelope five times, at Prop. 2,9,3; 3,12,38; 3,13,10 (by patronymicon) and 24; 4,5,7, and once by a metonym, Prop. 2,6,23.

[120] S. Evans, 1971, 51–53; Komp, 1988, 122–128 deals specifically with verbal echoes of Homer. Currie, 1973, 616–622, followed by Hubbard, 1974, 153–156 stresses Propertius' playfulness and the structural resemblances between the texts. The assumption of a Homeric intertext is all the more plausible as Prop. 4,8 has often been considered to form a pair with the other Cynthia-poem of the book (4,7), seeing Cynthia's ghost there as an allusion to the appearance of Patroclus' ghost to Achilles in *Il.* 24, see Warden, 1996, 118–129.

does not return from war or perilous journeys, but from a one-day outing of pleasure. On her return, she is met with characters equally suited for a comedy, not by the circumstances of an epic court.[121]

Previously, I have discussed instances on which Cynthia or the female lover is compared to Penelope, but to Cynthia's Odysseus it is the narrator himself who appears in that role. The contrasts between the patiently waiting Penelope, holding the suitors off to the best of her ability on the one hand, and the narrator (who does no such thing) on the other must certainly be comical.[122] Given the status of epic as the most respected literary genre in the ancient world, the narrator's cheek to compare his own bedroom melodrama to an epic scenario also hints at a rather overblown ego. Like the overt allusions to paragons of wifely virtue discussed earlier, the association of Prop. 4,8 with the *Odyssey* not only adds an amusing twist to the poem, but furthermore serves as a means to undermine the narrator's credibility, and suggest a striking lack of self-knowledge.[123]

However, any correspondences between the narrator and Penelope *in particular* are likely to take a back seat in relation to the general play with the Roman ideals of the power relations between male and female in the poem, for the analogy between Cynthia and Odysseus and Cynthia's authoritative behaviour throughout the poem turn the Roman gender roles resolutely upside-down.[124] In the context of Roman society, a woman judging the actions of a man in the way Cynthia does in Prop. 4,8 is likely to have appeared both absurd and comical – and a male accepting it as meekly as the narrator even more so.[125]

Although it is an argument that may be made *e silentio* only, it is intriguing that on this final appearance of the typical elegiac characters known from Propertius' earliest books, the character of the narrator has been reduced to being an elegiac lover, and *only* an elegiac lover: in Prop. 4,8, there is no mention of the writing

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[121] Wyke, 1987b, 169, cf. Fedeli, 1965, 205.

[122] Hubbard, 1974, 155 points to the comical qualities of the analogy, but also believes it to pose the question whether the high themes of epic would not seem less noble if more of the context was known.

[123] Nevertheless, Gilchrist, 1997, 276 argues that the behaviour of the Propertian 'Penelope' casts doubt even on the Homeric model. In my opinion, this is unlikely. The more evident point of the analogy between the narrator and Penelope is, as I have argued above, one of humorous contrast. This contrast would be seriously undermined if the analogy were at the same time to render the example relative.

[124] Cf. also Komp, 1988, 158.

[125] Komp, 1988, 122–160, esp. 127f and 142. For gender patterns in Roman society as reflected in elegy, cf. Kennedy, 1993, 30f; Holzberg, 2001, 19–22.

the narrator prided himself with in earlier poems, nor any of patrons or friends outside the elegiac world. The elegiac world of Prop. 4,8 appears as a closed system with no external points of reference; in a sense, it has become relevant only to itself.[126] Given its place in Propertius last book, it is tempting to read this as elegy's own commentary on the genre of elegy.[127] Thus, as a whole, the poem effectively highlights how the values of the elegiac narrator diverge from those prevalent in the Roman society, without proposing a real lifestyle alternative but in a way which contemporary readers may quite possibly have found humorous.

I.v. Taking up teaching: Ov. *Am*. 3,4,23f

Amores 3,4 is one of three poems[128] in the *Amores* where the elegiac narrator adopts an erotodidactic pose, as he tries to convince a *uir* to abstain from guarding his *puella* against rivals. The poem is full of break-neck twists. At the outset, the narrator claims that each woman's mindset is her most efficient defence against adultery ([…] *ingenio est quaeque tuenda suo* in line 2).[129] In the main part of the poem the narrator gives various methods of avoiding rivals, focussing first on the possible actions of the *puella* (1–24), then on the actions of the *uir* (25–40), advising him not to place any guard over the *puella* as it is the setting of a watch itself that arouses the rival's love, so 3,4,25f. In the final, much shorter, part of the poem beginning in 3,4,41 (quoted below), however, the narrator suddenly turns to ask the uir what he wants with a beautiful girl, who can please him only as long as she is chaste, seeing that those two criteria can never be met at the same time. Thereupon follows the advice not to meddle in the affairs of one's beloved but to treat rivals in a friendly manner, all to one's own benefit (3,4,43–48).

Chastity in a woman already in a relationship, then, is related to two factors:

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[126] One may compare Conte's insistence that elegy thrives precisely on the full awareness of tension between the contradictions arising as the elegiac narrators try to recuperate for their own use words and values which have, in their original form, no place within the universe of the genre, Conte, 1994, 40. While Conte's discussion is by no means limited to the actual appearance of things or characters of the non-elegiac world within elegy, their absence in Prop. 4,8 represents a beginning collapse of one of the genre's prerequisites. Cf. also Sharrock, 2000, 269–271 on the *Monobiblos* and the narrator's need to contrast himself with men leading their lives according to traditional Roman ideals.

[127] Cf. Veyne, 1988, 48; Janan, 2001, 117.

[128] The other erotodidactic poems in the *Amores* are 1,8 and 2,19.

[129] Ov. *Am*. 3,4,2, ('By her own character is each and every woman to be kept safe').

first, the *ingenium* of the woman herself (1–24), and secondly, the amount of affection that her partner displays publicly by watching over her (25–40). In the middle of this line of reasoning, the narrator invokes a series of mythological examples, Io (19f), Danae (21f) and Penelope (23f). Penelope is mentioned as a contrast to the closely guarded Io and Danae, who, despite the precautions taken by Hera and Acrisius, were visited by Iuppiter because they themselves were not averse to committing adultery, whereas Penelope, who wished to do so, could remain chaste, even though she was not guarded.

Penelope mansit, quamuis custode carebat,   Ov. *Am.* 3,4,23
* inter tot iuuenes intemerata procos.*

(Penelope remained, unsullied, even though there was no guard, amongst so many young suitors.)

The fact that these examples are brought up at a turning point in the poem has led to confusion amongst the interpreters. Especially the stories of Danae and Io are implicitly invoked in the second half of the poem too, but the emphasis in the series of examples preceding them (3,4,13–18, a horse fighting against the reins, people in general wanting that which is denied them, a sick man longing to drink) lies on the reactions of the one restrained and ties the Danae-series to the introductory section about how the mindset of the woman is crucial to her faithfulness. Only in 3,4,25 the focus shifts, as the narrator turns his attention to how the actions of the *uir* influence other men's attraction to his *puella*. Therefore, it is reasonable to relate Penelope's chastity first and foremost to her own strength of character, as is suggested by the general principle in 3,4,3: *si qua metu dempto casta est, ea denique casta est*; ('if a woman is chaste though she has nothing to fear, then she really is chaste').[130] Some philologists suggest that we read the description of Penelope here as another humorous reinterpretation of myth: Penelope remained chaste only because Odysseus could not be bothered to guard her, not of her own volition.[131] Schmidt contends that this would seriously undermine her credibility as a example of virtue elsewhere as well.[132] It *is* an erotodidactic rereading, but it is not as radical as some have claimed. The change which the erotodidactic discourse imposes upon the use of a traditional example of wifely virtue is not a change in the description of the example itself but in the narrator's attitude towards it, which is now one of disinterest. Penelope may be

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[130] Cf. Gilchrist, 1997, 247.
[131] Whitaker, 1983, 154; Schmidt, 1987, 138.
[132] Schmidt, 1987, 138.v

as chaste as she wishes, but wanting to remain *intemerata* ('unsullied'), she will never be an object of interest to the narrator, neither, if he has his way, should she be one to his student, the uir:[133]

quo tibi formosam, si non nisi casta placebat?   Ov. *Am.* 3,4,41
    non possunt ullis ista coire modis.

(What do you want with a beautiful girl, if she pleases you only when she is chaste? Those things do not ever come together.)

    Am. 3,4 is the first example of how an erotodidactic narrator uses a known paragon of female virtue so that he acknowledges her virtue but also, at the same time, pronounces her uninteresting and irrelevant; a technique that will be developed and used on several instances in the entirely erotodidactic *Ars amatoria*.

I.vi. Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I have examined passages from 'canonical' elegies by Propertius, Tibullus and Ovid mentioning or alluding to Penelope, Laodamia, Andromache, Alcestis and Euadne. In most cases, these mentions are surrounded by a sense of jarring – either they appear to be not quite applicable, or they create analogies at odds with the purported aim of the passage. It seems to be next to impossible for the narrators of 'canonical' elegy to draw on these mythological and literary characters without hinting at their roots in literary genres with aims and objectives very different from their new context.

    The survey presented above shows that either the text implies that the comparison between the *puella* and the mythological character famous for her virtue is not as apt as the narrator would have us believe, thus indicating that the narrator's perception of his beloved and possibly his entire surroundings and life choices are also lacking in their sense of reality. The same seeming lack of control over the text on the part of the narrator becomes apparent when the narrator comes to establish parallels between himself and male mythological characters who, from an elegiac perspective, are less than laudable – the unsavoury Neoptolemus in Prop. 2,20, or Odysseus lingering with Calypso in Prop. 2,6.

    Furthermore, this sense of jarring surrounding examples of wifely virtues in 'canonical' elegy is not limited to a discrepancy between *comparans* and *comparandum* pertaining to one or both of the lovers. It also extends to passages where the

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[133] Cf. also Prop. 1,1,5: [...] *me docuit* [sc. Amor] *castas odisse puellas* ('Amor taught me to dislike the chaste girls').

examples do fulfil the purported function of being different than the faithless lover (Prop. 2,9) or the purported decadence of contemporary Rome (Prop. 3,13), but where the supposed praise nevertheless takes on a less laudatory undertone. This indicates that while many voices of 'canonical' elegy rail against infidelity and (at least ostensibly) call for loyalty and faithfulness between lovers, infidelity is in fact part of the foundations of the genre. Subsequently, marital fidelity cannot be comfortably incorporated in the elegiac world.

The appreciation of these inconsistencies requires careful reading of the text, in addition to extensive knowledge of earlier literary (and sometimes pictorial) treatments of the myths. The effect of such contradictions or inconsistencies on the reader is cumulative, so that a reader grows more suspicious of the narrator's statements over the course of his or her reading. It is also important to note that the cross-purpose elements of these mythological references are not always apparent on a first reading, and considerable wit arises from the fact that the texts often allow both an 'innocent' and a 'suspicious' reading.

That the narrator does not appear to be in complete control of his text does not, of course, mean that the same holds true for the external author. The readings presented in this chapter suggest that the external authors manipulate their narrator's handling of mythological material so as to reveal deficiencies and inconsistencies in the images the narrators present of themselves, their girlfriends and their surroundings for humorous effects. These aspects will be further highlighted in the next chapters, as they play important parts both in explicitly erotodidactic elegies and particularly in the *Ars amatoria* and the *Remedia amoris*.

Related to the discussion of what impact these inconsistencies have on the reader, the question of whether 'canonical' elegy is political or not, Augustan or anti-Augustan, has long been a bone of contention among scholars. It is not the aim of this study to explore the issue extensively, but one could feasibly use the results from this chapter to suggest that as the inconsistencies and exaggerations in his handling of mythology undermine the credibility of the narrator on a number of instances, the reader is encouraged to call into question the narrator's worldview as a whole – including the rejection of the traditional *cursus honorum*, military or familial duties, and traditionally valued literary genres which scholars have often taken as indication of an anti-traditional political agenda. Thus, a detailed study of the references to mythological paradigms of wifely virtues can contribute to a fuller understanding of what the genre of 'canonical' elegy entails.

Ovid's *Heroides*

Building on the previous chapter on 'canonical' elegy, this chapter examines the references to Penelope, Laodamia and Andromache in Ovid's *Heroides*. The references to Andromache are the ones most similar to the shorter mentions of female mythological examples we have seen in 'canonical' elegy (below, II.III. Minor mentions in the *Heroides*). However, the main emphasis of this chapter lies on the full-length treatments of the myths concerning Penelope (*Epist.* 1) and Laodamia (*Epist.* 13).

There is currently a lively scholarly debate on the single *Heroides* or *Epistulae Heroidum*.[1] A number of publications in the 1980s and 90s sparked a growing scholarly interest in the collection of the *Heroides* as a whole, and specifically in the issues of authorship and genre embodied by the collection.[2] In publications that have had a formative influence on this work, critics drew particularly on Penelope's letter to discuss and illustrate Ovid's complex use of canonical literary texts and mythology, the interplay of elegy and epic, and how form and content together influence the reader's appreciation of the writing woman; all issues central to all the chapters of the present study. In the following years, these discussions of literary genre in the collection proved useful background for several studies dealing specifically with of Ovid's fiction of female voices in the letters.[3]

My interpretations of the two letters falling within the scope of this study – those by Penelope and Laodamia – differ from this most recent trend in scholarship on the *Heroides* focussing on women's voice analysis, in that I am

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[1] Quotes from the *Epistulae Heroidum* will be given with the *ThLL* abbreviation *Epist.*, or, for quotes from *Epist.* 1 and 13 within their respective chapter sections by line number only, but the collection referred to as *Heroides*.

[2] Cf. Kennedy, 1984, 413–422; Barchiesi, 1987, 63–90, later included in Barchiesi, 2001, 29–47 to which I refer in the following; Spoth, 1992, 42–46; Knox, 1995, 92. Cf. also in particular Rosati, 1992, 71–94; Hinds, 1993, 9–47; Casali, 1995b, 1–15; 1995a and Casali, 1995c.

[3] Lindheim, 2003; Spentzou, 2003; Fulkerson, 2005.

primarily interested in what this version of elegy, with its novel perspective on the mythological characters selected for this study, may suggest not so much about writing or written women, as about the genre of elegy. The present chapter will deal extensively with correspondences – and incongruities – to that generic framework in which the meter encourages us to place the heroines. This chapter is not, therefore, intended as an exhaustive interpretation of Penelope's letter to Odysseus nor of Laodamia's to Protesilaus, but it addresses issues central to all the chapters of this study: the more or less noticeable adaptation of previously epic or tragic characters to the elegiac genre, how this interplay of literary genres reflects on the narrator, and what, if any, conclusions it may permit us to draw about elegy as a genre.

With the exception of the minor mentions of Andromache, to which I turn last, the structure of this chapter follows that of the *Heroides* themselves, focussing first on Penelope's letter to Odysseus, then on Laodamia's to Protesilaus. In the Concluding Remarks (II.iv.) I summarize the findings of the chapter and suggest that on this basis, we may surmise that characters of Penelope and Laodamia shift from being – as they were in 'canonical' elegy and indeed continue to be here – mostly used to expose the blinkered world view of the male elegiac narrators to take on the additional function of vehicles for a metapoetic discussion of what the elegiac world view entails.

II.1. Penelope's Letter to Odysseus

Ov. *Epist.* 1

This, the first of the *Heroides*, the letter to Odysseus, has perhaps received more attention from scholars than any other letter in the collection. Thus, while studies like Barchiesi's "Narratività e convenzione nelle Heroides" and Spoth's detailed *Ovids Heroides als Elegien* form a natural point of departure for this and any chapter of this study, I shall focus mainly on three features of Ovid's letter from Penelope that may shed further light on the complex relation between literary genres in the *Heroides* as well as on the genre of elegy itself: the often-discussed divergences from the Homeric account of events at Troy and in Ithaca, the (failed) ekphrasis in 31–36 and Penelope's closing line in 115f, *certe ego, quae fueram te discedente puella, / protinus ut uenias, facta uidebor anus* ('certainly I, who when you left was a young girl, will seem to have become an old woman, no matter how soon you would come') discussed in the final section of this part of the chapter.

II.1.i. *Reading Homer From Afar*

While most scholars today agree that the writings of Ovid's Penelope share many characteristics with the poems of 'canonical' elegy, several early examinations focus primarily on the relationship between the letter of Penelope and Homer's *Odyssey*. Of particular interest are the inconsistencies between the two texts in Penelope's account of the events during the Trojan war and its aftermath. First, Penelope singles Hector out as the killer of Antilochus in line 15 – in Homer, the killer is Memnon (*Od.*4,187f),[4] then her account deviates from the version given by Homer regarding Telemachus' journey to Pylus and Sparta. Ovid's Penelope seems to imply that she had some hand in sending him there and is party to the information he gains from Nestor. In the *Odyssey*, however, Penelope is kept in the dark at the time of Telemachus' departure and told only an edited version in Book 15 – and by then, of course, Telemachus is already keeping to himself the much bigger secret of Odysseus' return to Ithaca.[5] There is also the matter of Penelope's account of the killing of Rhesus and Dolon in 41–46, where, contrary to Homer, Ovid's Penelope assigns the most active role to Odysseus rather than to his (unnamed) helper Diomedes.[6]

Critics have often perceived inconsistencies such as these as embarrassing blemishes on Ovid's poem, or attempted to explain them as references to less well-known mythological sources.[7] Kennedy discusses them in his essay on the timing of Penelope's writing and the ironic effect it causes, concluding that these deviations from the reader's pre-knowledge of the mythological events lead her or him to call into question Penelope's reasons for writing, and for formulating and editing her letter in this particular manner.[8] Firstly, the 'mistaken' identity of Antilochus' killer and other events at Troy serve to underline Penelope's situation on the fringe of events, with no access to reliable dispatches.[9] It may increase the reader's sympathy for her position, particularly given its place in the first part of

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[4] Palmer, 1898, 279; Jacobson, 1974, 243f; Barchiesi, 1992, 72; Knox, 1995, 92.

[5] Palmer, 1898, 281; Jacobson, 1974, 243f; Barchiesi, 1992, 79f; Knox, 1995, 96f. Knox and Barchiesi both rightly note that Penelope's words in 15 could also refer to Telemachus having been sent, not by Penelope, but by a divine agent, i.e. Athena.

[6] Palmer, 1898, 281f; Jacobson, 1974, 256f; Barchiesi, 1992, 80; Knox, 1995, 97f.

[7] Cf. Palmer, 1898, 277: "Whatever materials Ovid wanted for his epistles he drew directly from the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*. His perusal of those works either had not been very recent, or was cursory and careless, as the discrepancies between him and Homer […] show." Cf. also Jacobson, 1974, 244f.

[8] Kennedy, 1984, 421.

[9] Barchiesi, 1992, 72.

the letter. Later on, Penelope's place on the outskirts of another group of chains of communication, between lovers, husbands and wives sharing stories of events at Troy in lines 29–38 will serve the same end, eliciting sympathy for Penelope in her loneliness.[10] However, this does not account for Penelope's re-representation of the motivation for Telemachus' expedition to meet with Nestor and Menelaus; we would expect her to be well-informed about events in Ithaca. This, as well as any other inconsistency with Homeric canon, becomes meaningful only if we bear in mind that throughout the letter, Penelope's fragmented story of the Trojan war and its aftermath interprets all the events of the war in a personal manner and evaluates them according to their effect on Penelope's own (love-)life and circumstances.[11] To Ovid's Penelope, it is the threat to Odysseus, her beloved, that matters. Exactly who poses that threat is of less interest. In the same way, to the elegiac lover telling a story, there can be only one other person worthy of one's undivided attention – the beloved – and thus Penelope's version features Odysseus as the main character of the Dolon episode and herself as the mastermind behind Telemachus' journey to Pylus and Sparta, changing the motivation behind that journey from filial affection to the concern of an abandoned lover.[12] Far from being deceived by her son who in Homer's version sets out on his journey unbeknownst to her, Ovid's Penelope initiates the expedition to Pylus out of concern (and possibly jealousy) for her lover. To some extent these changes also serve to defuse what could have been a disruptive element to the new elegiac setting – the fact that Telemachus is the nearly-grown son of Penelope. The change of motivation places him rather in the role of the elegiac go-between[13] than in that of the son of the hero.

A reader well familiar with the literary canon of Homer and Vergil[14] is nevertheless likely to experience these 'inconsistencies' as disruptions, as indeed decades of Ovidian criticism demonstrate. Subsequently, and particularly under the

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[10] On 31–36 in particular, see below II.I.iv.

[11] Jacobson, 1974, 252; 257f and Spoth, 1992, 42–46.

[12] For the beloved as the sole focus of the elegiac narrators, cf. Prop. 2,1,3–16. For a different interpretation, cf. Jacobson, 1974, 256f, who understands Penelope's re–write of the Dolon episode as disparaging and pointedly insulting to Odysseus. Lindheim, 2003, 41 understands the changes to the Telemachus' episode rather as one of several ways in which Penelope repeatedly lends higher rank to speech than to writing as a communication tool, thus underlining to the reader the ironic aspects of her attempts at a dialogue with her absent husband.

[13] Cf. the role of Lygdamus in Prop. 3,6.

[14] Jacobson, 1974, 257 n. 47 points particularly to Verg. *Aen*. 1,469–473 as an intertext for the Dolon episode of Penelope's letter.

cumulative effect of such 'mistakes', this reader is less likely to sympathize with the narrator and more likely to suspect that her world-view may be flawed.[15] This corresponds to the use of mythological paradigms of female virtues in 'canonical' elegy, where (as I have shown in more detail in the previous chapter) references to such paradigms on closer scrutiny nearly always suggest some ambiguity on the part of the narrator, either in his perception of his beloved or in his self-representation. For instance, in Prop. 2,20,1–8 it is in fact the narrator himself who attempts to draw the reader's attention to the unsuitable elements in the comparison of the girlfriend lamenting a lover's slight to Briseis, Andromache, Philomela and Niobe, implying a limited or highly biased perception of these myths on the part of the beloved. However, he also (inadvertently, it would seem) comes to place himself in the role of the unsympathetic lover of these women – Achilles taking Briseis as a bounty slave, Neoptolemus as the captor of Andromache, and Tereus raping Philomela.[16] More often, this seemingly inept likening of the beloved to mythological paradigms of virtue implies that the narrator has a distinctly blinkered perception of his beloved and her love for him, so for instance in Prop. 1,19 and Tib. 1,3,83–92.[17] The presence of similar disruptions in Penelope's letter to Odysseus emphasizes Penelope's affinity with the male narrators of 'canonical' elegy. Even as in elegy, these intertextual 'hiccups' draw attention to the artificiality of Penelope's letter, highlighting to the reader that this is Ovid's – rather than Penelope's own – rendering of the thoughts of a literary and mythological character, to be seen against the background of a varied literary tradition.[18]

II.1.ii. *Painting Elegy*

As mentioned above, a considerable amount of modern scholarship on the *Heroides* and on Penelope's letter is devoted to the relationship between Ovid's Penelope letter and its intertexts, especially to the elegiac influence on the letter. One of the most important elegiac features of *Heroides* 1 has already been hinted at, but Penelope's eroticizing of myth (or intertext) extends well beyond the shift in perspective caused by her re-representation of Homeric details. The discussions of both Jacobson and Spoth bring to the fore that Ovid's elegiac Penelope continually selects as her focus erotically charged motives of the myths, leaving the traditionally more important military and national consequences of Paris'

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[15] Cf. Kennedy, 1984, 421.

[16] For a full interpretation of Prop. 2,20,1–8, see above I.iii.

[17] For full interpretations of these passages, see above I.iv.

[18] Hinds, 1998.

abduction of Helen largely without regard.[19] Spoth argues that this change of emphasis makes obvious the high degree of egocentricity adhering to the elegiac way of life, and that they, to the reader comparing Penelope's subjective version of the events with the more familiar and 'objective' Homeric one, underline how the elegiac outlook on life permits only a blinkered interpretation of the world.[20] In addition to the arguments made by Spoth and Holzberg for this,[21] I will argue that Ovid's text explicitly thematizes elegy's inability or unwillingness to present anything but a fragmented or selective description of the world.

In 31–36, following a description of how the Greek troops returned to their homes and their wives tell their spell-bound audiences of their fortunes at Troy, Penelope relates how a returning soldier tells of his experiences at Troy by drawing a map of the battlefield in droplets of wine on the table.

atque aliquis posita monstrat fera proelia mensa   *Epist.* 1,31
    pingit et exiguo Pergama tota mero:
'hac ibat Simois, haec est Sigeia tellus,
    hic steterat Priami regia celsa senis;
illic Aeacides, illic tendebat Ulixes,
    hic lacer admissos terruit Hector equos.'

(And one of them shows on the laden table the savage battles, he paints all of Troy in a droplet of wine: 'Here ran the Simois, here is the Trojan land, over here stood the tall castle of ancient Priam, there Achilles fought, and Odysseus, here Hector, mutilated, sent the horses galloping with fright.)

Several commentators have noted the suggestiveness of this scene in terms of generic interplay; the drawing of images or signs in spilt wine is associated both with the elegiac repudiation of epic qualities like military honour and the exchange of furtive signs between lovers.[22] Spoth argues that where the Tibullan narrator contrasts epic and elegiac as he imagines a soldier bragging about battle scenes and painting them in wine (Tib. 1,20,29–32), Ovid attempts rather to reconcile the two. The little droplet (*exiguo mero*) of wine that encompasses all of Troy in 32 may also stand also for elegy itself – *exiguus* indicating the Callimachean ideals of the genre.[23] Ovid's Penelope, then, would have found a successful way of

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[19] Spoth, 1992, 38; 42–46; Jacobson, 1974, 252. Cf. also Barchiesi, 2001, 35–37, on the weaving of the shroud for Laertes.

[20] Spoth, 1992, 42f; 51–53.

[21] Spoth, 1992, 42f; 51–53, Holzberg, 1997, 80–84, cf. Barchiesi, 2001, 32–34; 39.

[22] Palmer, 1898, 280; Barchiesi, 1992, 78; Spoth, 1992, 44; Knox, 1995, 95f.

[23] Spoth, 1992, 44. On the poignant word order, Knox, 1995, 95.

incorporating influences from an 'epic' world within her own 'elegiac' reality. At this point, it is relevant to probe whether we may not also view the transposition of the discourse of elegy to an essentially epic context as a parallel for the relationship between 'canonical' elegy and contemporary reality and lifestyle. If we regard Penelope's superimposition of elegiac patterns of motivation and behaviour onto the more well-known and hence dominant mythological and literary epic context as an analogy for an attempt to adopt the lifestyle ostensibly proposed in elegy in real life, we might feel that tested against and fitted in with the 'objective' facts of epic 'reality', Penelope's outlook on the world could be found feasible. By implication, so would that proposed by the male narrators of 'canonical' elegy.

However, several details in the passage should make us wary of this interpretation. To highlight them, I will examine this passage in terms of *ekphrasis*. While Ovid does not insert a description of a work of fine art proper into Penelope's letter, the passage nevertheless entails a "verbal representation of a visual representation."[24] Therefore looking at Penelope's account of this wine drawing in the same way we would consider a more typical instance of *ekphrasis* may assist us in identifying key issues for interpretation within this passage. I will argue that in combination with the elegiac *topos* of drawing in wine the medium change itself – from Penelope's rendering of spoken word, to a rendering instead of an interpretation of an image the reader is not allowed even to glimpse – invites us to reflect on issues of generic development in the letter. First, however, we should note the following matters often brought to the fore by the insertion of an *ekphrasis*: the notion that the point of an *ekphrasis* is 'to bring the scene before our eyes,' that is to achieve *enargeia*, further the strong challenge to interpretation posed by the halted narrative, the necessity of an observer and the ensuing question of focalisation.[25]

In this context we should note how in the passages immediately before and after the description of the wine-drawing *ekphrasis*, there is a pronounced emphasis on the presence of two active parties involved in the process of verbal communication, and particularly on the effect of the spoken words on the receiver: the stories told by returning soldiers (*illi uicta suis Troica fata canunt*: ('they sing of the fate of Troy to their wives') in 28) fill old men and eager girls with amazement in 29. Moreover, the following line (30) focuses more precisely on the (once more verbal) exchange of a married couple, wistfully indicating what conversations Penelope and Odysseus might have had, had Odysseus returned safely to Ithaca. Even the

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[24] Heffernan, 1994, 7. We should also note that the choice of the word *pinguit* ('he paints') may indicate an artistic intention on the part of the veteran, cf. *ThLL* sv. *pingo* 1, *OLD* sv. *pingo* 2.
[25] Fowler, 1991, 26–29.

subsequent distich, following immediately on the staged ekphrasis of the wine drawing, refers to a successful exchange of information by means of words: *omnia* […] *rettulerat nato Nestor, et ille mihi* ('Nestor told it all to my child, and he to me'). Lindheim relates this to the recurring contrast between Penelope's unsuccessful attempts at communicating by writing and successful male communication by means of the spoken word,[26] which may be further illuminated by the parallel passage in the *Ars amatoria* 2,123–140, where Odysseus illustrates his stories of the Trojan war to the eagerly listening Calypso by drawing a miniature Troy in the sand.[27] The *ekphrasis* passage is thus surrounded by examples of successful verbal communication.

In contrast to this, within the *ekphrasis* passage with its soldier speaker and its attempt at pictorial communication, the recipient is conspicuously absent. This is a striking deviation from the common way of inserting an *ekphrasis* into a narrative, in my opinion a significant one. If we assume that Penelope is relating a scene she has been witness to herself, we should be aware that this is not only never made explicit, but it also raises questions about how she came to be there. Is the veteran directing his tale to Penelope herself, or (as I think the context implies) to a beloved of his own? In *Ars* 2,123–140, Odysseus, telling Calypso of his exploits at Troy serves as an example for using rhetoric as a means of seduction, words his tale in a manner that almost word for word follows what the veteran soldier says in 33–36.[28] The similarities between the passages suggest this might be present also in the mind of the veteran. If so, the former alternative places Penelope in the position of a passive eavesdropper, at the very fringes of a chain of communication not primarily intended for her; the latter raises questions about why Penelope (who claims to spend her lonely nights by the loom, cf. 9f) is at the drinking table with an unnamed soldier, who possibly is attempting to seduce her. The first option is thus suggestive of a lack of communication associated with a most elegiac medium, and the latter implies a measure of untrustworthiness in the narrator.[29] Every rendering of a work of art in words implies the adopting of

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[26] Lindheim, 2003, 40f.

[27] For Ov. *Ars* 2,123–144 as a parallel, Barchiesi, 1992, 78; Spoth, 1992, 44; Knox, 1995, 95.

[28] Sharrock, 1987, 411. Sharrock, 1994, 79–83 argues that in Ov. *Ars* 2,123–144 Calypso is the more successful seducer, who delays and keeps Odysseus on the beach by inviting him to re-tell his story to her. If we allow that later passage to reflect back on Penelope's letter in the *Heroides*, the question of Penelope's reliability becomes even more pressing.

[29] Cf. also Sharrock, 1987, 411 for how Penelope's assessment of her situation and suspicions about Odysseus' being unfaithful to her (esp. 77–80) is retrospectively undermined by the description of Odysseus on the beach in *Ars* 2,123–140 – the veteran Penelope describes in 31–36 does in fact act precisely as Odysseus does himself.

a focalization point of which the reader needs to be aware in order to make an informed interpretation. In the case of the wine-drawing in Penelope's letter, a close reading of the passage reveals that the reader is left in the dark as to who would present this focal point.[30]

It is furthermore noteworthy that the drawing does not appear able to convey its message on its own; it does not bring the scene to life the way we would expect an *ekphrasis* to do. Instead, it has to be accompanied by an interpretive commentary by the artist veteran. This alerts us to two different generic issues vital to the Penelope letter and to the collection as a whole: first, due to the epic motives of the drawing and the commentary, it implies that epic no longer is able to carry any meaning for its intended audience. The absence of an obvious listener or recipient of the veteran's story as mentioned above would appear to underscore this. However, this seemingly negative reflection on the meaningfulness of epic poetry is balanced by the quite successful conveyance of equally epic stories between other speakers and listeners described in the lines preceding and following immediately upon the *ekphrasis* passage. This leads us to the second issue: if the veteran's drawing, due to the medium's association with elegiac situations, serves rather as an image for elegy coming to terms with motives traditionally connected with the epic genre, then this passage, an *ekphrasis* left wanting, seems in fact to underline elegy's continual inability to give a complete and comprehensible interpretation of the world or even to provide a real means of communication.[31] In addition to being a generic statement in its own right, this interpretation is in keeping with and perhaps lends a wider, generic significance to other readings of the *Heroides* (and particularly Penelope's letter) that stress the theme of non-communication in the collection, obvious for instance in that none of the letters succeeds in influencing the internal addressee or changing the course of the myth within which they are set.[32]

II.1.iii. *Excluding Penelope*

The resemblance to the elegiac *paraklausithyra* provides another starting point for reading Penelope's letter as a commentary on 'canonical' elegy. Although Penelope is parted from Odysseus by the sea rather than a bedroom door, she comes in many ways to resemble the male *exclusus amator* of 'canonical' elegy. From its very

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[30] Fowler, 1991, 29f.

[31] Cf. on Prop. 4,8, above I.iv.

[32] Cf. Barchiesi, 2001, 30. See also on the Laodamia letter below, II.ii. Lindheim, 2003, 37–51 emphasizes how Penelope continually marginalizes herself and the story she may have told in order to cede the position of main protagonist to Odysseus.

first line, Penelope's letter indicates that she suspects that Odysseus is absent by choice and not unwillingly, sharp-pointedly calling him *lentus* ('tardy') in the first line, and again in 66. It is furthermore significant that Penelope imagines Odysseus with a rival (of course curiously reminiscent of Homer's Calypso) in 75–78,[33] not unlike anxious fantasies of the male narrators of 'canonical' elegy.[34] That Penelope adopts the role of the *amator* fearing a rival may contribute to her downplaying of the famous trick of the shroud, the absence of which has puzzled several critics of Ovid's letter.[35] The ruse of the shroud in Homer's version ultimately serves the same ends as the straightforward refusal of Icarius' suggestion that she remarry, described by Ovid's Penelope in 81f and to which I shall return presently. However, Homer also connects it more closely to Penelope's interaction with the suitors and describes it as a preventive measure taken against them rather than against Penelope's own family – in fact it is from one of the suitors that we first learn of this ruse, *Od.* 2,85–110. The pressure Penelope responds to by means of this trick, then, is of a more erotic nature than the social and perhaps financial pressure exerted upon her by Icarius.[36] This is paralleled by the rhetoric employed by male elegiac narrators to win back their *puellae* from a rival. While the narrator of Prop. 2,22a,37–40 recommends playing two *puellae* off against each other,[37] and although the careful reader of 'canonical' elegy may often find reason to question the veracity of the narrators' repeated claims of fidelity to their *puellae*,[38] the male elegiac narrators tend not to use their power to attract other women as an argument for the *puella* taking them back into her favour, nor do they make overt mention of it.[39]

In addition to the similarities with the interaction between the lovers of

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[33] On *lentus*, Barchiesi, 1992, 66; on Penelope's suspicions, Barchiesi, 1992, 90f; Knox, 1995, 103f; Barchiesi, 2001, 36f.

[34] Spoth, 1992, 40f, pointing esp. to Prop. 2,6,13 and 2,34,20 for examples from 'canonical' elegy.

[35] The problem is resolved in a slightly different manner by Barchiesi, 2001, 35f, according to whom the elegiac perspective makes any positive representation of nights spent apart from one's lover impossible.

[36] Penelope's own description of the suitors in 87–96 presents her as being the passive victim of their actions, and does not hint at deliberate interaction of any kind. Though slightly different, cf. Jacobson, 1974, 260–263.

[37] Cf. also the recommendations of the *lena* Dipsas and the *praeceptor amoris* in Ov. *Am.* 1,8,95f and *Ars* 3,599f.

[38] Poems like Prop. 2,22a; Ov. *Am.* 2,10 obviously contribute to this impression. For a careful reading casting doubts on the narrator's claims of fidelity, see above I.iv.

[39] The exceptions are Prop. 2,5,5–8 and Tib. 1,9,79f, but cf. Prop. 1,8,21f; 12,19f; 18,10–12;

'canonical' elegy, we may consider Penelope's refusal to give in to the urgings of her father and remarry (*me pater Icarius uiduo discedere lecto / cogit et immensas increpat usque moras*, 'my father Icarius urges me to leave my widowed chamber, ever reproaching me for the long delay', in 81f) a parallel to the constant rejection of military or civic duties by male elegiac lovers, as Penelope refuses to act the way characters which the reader may see as representing normative society would wish her to act.[40]

In spite of these correspondences between Penelope's position and that of the 'canonical' *amator*, there is no straight-forward re-inversion of elegiac gender patterns[41] in the letter. Just as we shall presently see Laodamia doing in *Epist.* 13,[42] Penelope alternates between describing herself in terms reminiscent of the male lovers in 'canonical' elegy on the one hand, and on the other in terms very like those used by elegiac narrators in benign fantasies about their girlfriends' nightly doings: she is working her wool, and impatiently waiting for her lover's return. Barchiesi has indicated the similarities particularly with the description of Cynthia in Prop. 1,3,35–46, who like Penelope suspects a rival and tires herself out by the spindle.[43] It corresponds nicely to this idealized reversal of the *paraklausithyron* scene so well known from 'canonical' elegy that Penelope, instead of perceiving the servants of her husband's household as obstacles like the *exclusus amator* or the 'real' *puella* of 'canonical' elegy would,[44] in fact considers Philoetius, Eumaeus and Eurykleia to be on her side (103f).

Despite this, Ovid's Penelope is not a *puella* as known from 'canonical' elegy. Indicating the Ovidian Penelope's concern for the maintenance of Odysseus' goods and household in the third part of the letter (87–110) as wifely qualities, Spoth concludes: "[h]inter der Stilisierung zur *puella* […] erscheint die Ehefrau, die gut römische *uniuira*. Das elegische *tua sum* (83) erklärt sich als *coniunx* […] (84)."[45] What Jacobson has termed 'the vulgate Penelope,'[46] the paragon known

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2,6,41f; 17,17f (the narrator rejects the notion of finding another girlfriend although he would be in a position to do so). Cf. also Ov. *Am.* 1,10,59f.

[40] Barchiesi, 1992, 93 indicates the similar wording in Prop. 1,4,1f but does not take this line of reasoning further. Cf. also Prop. 2,7,19f.

[41] Cf. Spoth, 1992, 107f and below, II.ii.

[42] See below, II.ii.i.

[43] Barchiesi, 2001, 36. Cf. also the narrator's fantasy of Delia in Tib. 1,3,91f, (above, I.iv) and Prop. 3,6.

[44] Esp. Tib. 1,2,15f; 8,55f; 2,1,75–78; Ov. *Am.* 3,1,49f where the *puella* rather than the *amator* appears to outsmart the door wardens.

[45] Spoth, 1992, 49f.

[46] Jacobson, 1974, 246.

for her constant faithfulness to Odysseus, remains the paradigm from which Ovid's Penelope can only unsuccessfully attempt to deviate. Again, I believe the text itself comments on its intrinsic inability to cause any lasting change in the way its readers perceive its main character, not only by means of the import given to non-elegiac concerns towards the end of her letter,[47] but also by using terms alerting the reader to a discussion of generic issues in the final lines of the poem.

certe ego, quae fueram te discedente puella,   115
    protinus ut uenias, facta uidebor anus.

(Certainly I, who when you left was a young girl, will seem to have become an old woman, no matter how soon you would come.)

    Penelope claims to have been a young girl using the word *puella* (115), which of course has strong elegiac connotations. Through her claim of youth she also makes a claim on belonging to a certain literary genre. In the following line, however, she states that to the returning Odysseus, she will appear to have aged, regardless how speedy his return. Though not in the same way self-evidently associated with any particular literary genre, the word *anus* often appears in 'canonical' elegy with distinctly negative connotations.[48] The women described as *anus* ('old woman') in 'canonical' elegy are bystanders rather than parties in the elegiac relationship; they are nurses, witches, or bawds.[49] When Propertius refers to Penelope as *anus* in Prop. 2,9,8, we saw that the phrasing betrays uneasiness with the ostensibly celebrated paradigm, reminding the reader that the narrator's attitude to fidelity cannot be as straightforward as he would like the reader to think.[50] As the Propertius passage seems to be very much in Ovid's mind here,[51] the distich implies that Penelope will be as she is in Homer, or the vulgate tradition, a middle-aged housewife, whose prime interest is not in passionate love affairs. Although by no means uncommon in poetry,[52] it could also be that the substitution of pluperfect *fueram* (lit. 'I had been') for the imperfect *eram* (lit. 'I was') in 115 retains some

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[47] Indeed, Penelope's concern that she and Odysseus be allowed to reach old age together (101f) could be connected to the elegiac ideal of a life-long love, cf.; Tib. 1,1,59f; Tib. 1,6,85f.

[48] Cf. R. K. Gibson, 2003, 116 on the parallel Ov. *Ars.* 3,70, closely related to Ov. *Epist.* 1,116.

[49] Used about nurses or mothers, Tib. 1,3,84; 6,58 and 63. About witches, Tib. 1,5,12; 8,18; Prop. 2,4,16; Ov. *Am.* 1,14,40. About *lenae*, Ov. *Am.* 1,8,2; 3,5,40.

[50] See above, I.ii.

[51] Though the exact date may not be ascertained, most scholars assume that the *Heroides* should be placed chronologically after Propertius' work. Cf. Jacobson, 1974, 300–318; Barchiesi, 1992, 53f.

[52] J. B. Hofmann, 1965, 320f; Knox, 1995, 96.

weight in the change from the imperfective to the perfective aspect, suggesting that Penelope's appearance as a *puella* is a moment's illusion rather than a lasting state of being.[53] Penelope's own letter thus acknowledges that if at all convincing, Penelope's existence as an elegiac character will be a paranthetical episode at best in a long literary life that is essentially not elegiac but epic.

In the context of this reading, the shift to the passive voice in 116 (*uidebor*, 'will seem', and possibly *facta*, 'have become') is particularly interesting. It causes the authority to pass judgement on Penelope's literary affiliation to pass from Penelope herself to the 'you' gazing upon her.[54] As the internal addressee of the letter this 'you' is in the first instance Odysseus, but I also wonder if we may not, in this final line, perceive a subtle change in the focalization to include the external reader within the 'you'. If so, the line refers also to the critical literary judgement of readers on Penelope's appearance as an elegiac *puella*, a judgement, moreover, that Penelope and the text itself predict will be a negative one. In addition, since the form *facta* may be construed both as the perfect passive of *fieri* ('become', or in the passive, 'be made'), which would seem to indicate a process indigenous to Penelope herself, as well as the perfect passive of *facere* ('make'), it is also possible that the text reflects on this outcome as being the result of a creative, literary process, that is, of literary tradition shaping the myth. The text may, for a short time, attempt to create an impression of an elegiac Penelope. On a closer look, however, the reader (the 'you') will find that even Ovid's text indicates that Penelope will continue to be an *anus* ('old woman'), an anomalous character in elegy, firmly rooted and widely useful in a different literary tradition.

Several scholars have noted the programmatic character of the Penelope letter. As the first letter in the collection, this letter is likely to provide us with pointers for interpreting not only its own text, but the collection as a whole.[55] As Penelope and Odysseus together will tower over almost every other imaginable mythological couple,[56] Penelope remains a paradigm for the other female writers of the collection – this time paradigmatical not in her fidelity, but in her ambition to adopt an 'elegiac' agenda and in the way the male elegiac discourse continually undermines her efforts to convey her own version of her situation.

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[53] Cf. Barchiesi, 1992, 104, grouping this instance with other examples of the pluperfect expressing a transitional state, Verg. *Aen.* 5,397f; Prop. 1,12,11; Ov. *Trist.* 3,11,25.

[54] Cf. also Lindheim, 2003, 49–51, emphasizing that Penelope underscores Odysseus' significance for her story while minimising her own.

[55] Jacobson, 1974, 276; Spoth, 1992, 36f; Barchiesi, 2001, 30; 34.

[56] Cf. Spoth, 1992, 36, "Die Promachos aller Heroinen spielt Penelope als Reprästentantin des mythologischen Stoffs schlechtin, des trojanischen Krieges und der *Odyssee*."

II.11. Laodamia's Letter to Protesilaus

Ov. *Epist.* 13

In a generalized argument, one might say that the inverted gender-scheme of 'canonical' elegy has been re-inverted in the *Heroides*. When the writing woman begs her lover to return to her, be it from a military expedition (cf. Penelope in *Epist.* 1 or Dido in *Epist.* 7) or from another woman, who, like the rival lover in 'canonical' elegy, offers material advantages (cf. Phyllis about Medea in *Epist.* 2, and Deianira about Omphale in *Epist.* 9), she shares many characteristics with the male elegiac lover of Propertius, Tibullus or Ovid's *Amores*. Furthermore, the female letter writers beg their lovers to acknowledge them in whichever capacity they choose and are willing to give up their standing in society for the sake of their love, just like the male narrators in 'canonical' elegy refuse military and civic honours. It corresponds to *servitium amoris* and contributes to placing the female writers in the role of the (*exclusus*) *amator*. According to this pattern, one may also argue that the male counterparts in the *Heroides* take on not the part of the *amator* but that of the *puella*.[57]

To some extent, this holds true in the case of Laodamia's letter. However, I will argue that it is equally important to note how the characters in *Epist.* 13 are made to alternate between the roles available to them especially within the elegiac genre system. In the course of this chapter, I will emphasize how Laodamia herself assimilates traits typical of the *amator* but also comes interestingly close to those ideal *puellae* described by narrators of 'canonical' elegy as objects of comparison for their own, sometimes less ideal, girlfriends. I will furthermore stress how Laodamia in her descriptions of Protesilaus strives to portray him as an ideal *amator*, though he in some respects also comes to resemble the elegiac *puella*. That we may see Laodamia, and to some extent Protesilaus, as *ideal* elegiac characters will provide a basis for a discussion of what the transposition of the elegiac framework to a previously epic setting may tell us about the genre of elegy itself.

Nevertheless, in order to stress how complex the use of the epic and elegiac frameworks is in *Epist.* 13 I shall first endeavour to show that in this letter, Ovid places the love of his characters firmly within both the confines of the non-formalized relationship familiar from 'canonical' elegy and within the frame of an officially sanctioned marriage better known from the epic and tragic genres. In the context of the *Heroides* as a whole, this latter frame is not in itself particularly surprising,[58] but the immediately following section of the chapter will bring to the fore the recurring gliding shifts between these two so different frameworks

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[57] Cf. Spoth, 1992, 107f. For a different approach altogether, cf. Spentzou, 2003, 24–29.

[58] Nine of the first fifteen heroines of the single letter collection claim the title 'wife', and

of love. One might say that Ovid thus creates a space *between* the two worlds of elegy and normative society as represented by epic and tragedy, and I will later draw on these observations in order to suggest briefly that only in that particular space will we encounter a character like Laodamia, behaving just like the narrators of 'canonical' elegy repeatedly wish their *puellae* to behave.

However, in spite of existing in this 'in-between' space, we will note that *Epist.* 13 is just as riddled with irony and incongruities as 'canonical' elegy itself. Giving the reader pause as to whether the world is *really* like Laodamia (the narrator) claims it to be, suggesting that even if the circumstances are tweaked like Laodamia tweaks her world as she describes and imagines the perfect Protesilaus, and casts herself as a perfect *puella*, elegy remains to a high degree a daydream and a literary game. The final part of the section will argue that this, too, is reflected on in Laodamia's letter.

II.ii.i. *A Marriage Of Genres*

In his work on the elegiac in the *Heroides*, Spoth remarks that Laodamia's letter corresponds to elegy as a *parnaenesis* – an exhortation, in early Greek elegy to bravery in battle,[59] but in Laodamia's version catering instead to the values of the narrators in contemporary Roman elegy: Protesilaus should refrain from endangering himself in the front lines and make sure to stay safe for the sake of his love. Likewise, though Jacobson does not specifically refer to Laodamia's viewpoint as elegiac, he hints at the way she re-interprets events of the mythological world known to the reader from other texts according to her own narrow and deeply personal perspective.[60] Choosing another angle, this section of the chapter will argue that though Ovid undoubtedly lets his Laodamia adopt the voice of an elegiac character, the epic and traditional models of normative society continue to influence Laodamia's descriptions even of her relationship with Protesilaus.

Already the greeting formula is typical of the gradual shifts between an epic and an elegiac way of speaking about love. The line *mittit et optat amans, quo mittitur, ire salutem / Haemonis Haemonio Laodamia uiro* ('Laodamia from Thessaly sends her well-wishes to her Thessalian man, and loving she hopes that they go where they are sent', in 1f), makes evident that Laodamia stands in a close relationship to Protesilaus, but well into the third part of the collection, the reader of the *Heroides* will be aware that its letters are just as often written by

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especially in the case of Penelope (1), Deianira (9), Laodamia (13) and Hypermenstra (14) this claim is also recognized by their surroundings as a rightful one.

[59] Spoth, 1992, 92, cf. Hor. *Ars* 402.

[60] Jacobson, 1974, 202f.

past (or even would-be) lovers as by wives to their absent husbands. Only previous knowledge of the myth will allow the reader to conclude what the exact nature of the relationship between Laodamia and Protesilaus may be. Thus it seems initially to be of little importance that the letter is written by a wife to her husband. Also, in the second line, Laodamia greets Protesilaus with a simple *uir*, which may be taken either merely as 'man' (that is 'lover') or more specifically, 'husband'. *Uir* is the word most frequently used of Protesilaus in the letter; only once does Laodamia call him *Protesilaus meus* ('my Protesilaus', 16) and *coniunx* ('husband', 155).[61] To my reading, it is essential to note that throughout the letter, Ovid chooses to let Laodamia use terms to describe her husband that are not exclusively associated either with his role in traditional society or the elegiac world.[62] This distinguishes Ovid's version of the story from the renderings of Euripides, Laevius and Catullus 68b, works where the wedding ceremony is or is likely to have been an important part.[63]

Still, we seem thus far into the poem to have moved away from the epic context into an elegiac world. An allusion to 'canonical' elegy underlines this seeming unimportance of Protesilaus and Laodamia being husband and wife – an allusion to Ovid's own *Amores*. The word order in the opening lines of *Epist.* 13 recalls the beginning of Ov. *Am.* 1,9 as the opening of Laodamia's letter, *mittit et optat amans* ('well-wishes she sends, and loving she hopes'), echoes *militat omnis amans* ('everyone who loves, is at war') of the *Amores* poem.[64] The association with Ov. *Am.* 1,9 contributes to establish Laodamia as an elegiac lover rather than as a

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[61] However, *uir* may also be used in the sense of 'husband', cf. *OLD* s.v. *uir* 2.a. Conversely, *coniunx* can also connote a beloved who is not a spouse. Stroh, 1979, 329–335, esp. 333f provides a full discussion of elegiac usage of these terms.

[62] Cf. R. K. Gibson, 2003, 359f on how marital terminology permeates the account of Cephalus and Procris in *Met.* 7,690–862 but terms less distinctive (*iuuenis* and *uir* of Cephalus, *puella*, *domina*, *coniunx* and *uxor* of Procris) feature in the version given in Ov. *Ars* 3,683–746.

[63] For an overview of the literary tradition on Laodamia, cf. Jacobson, 1974, 195–198; Fulkerson, 2002, 62–65. On the reconstruction of Euripides *Protesilaos*, Mayer, 1885 and Jouan, 1966. On Laevius *Frg.* 13–19, Courtney, 1993, 118–120; 130–135. For interpretations of the Laodamia motive in Cat. 68b, cf. Feeney, 1992, 33–44, Lyne, 1998, 200–212; Öhrman, forthcoming a.

[64] Apart from the similarities in the first distich, there are several correspondences between Ov. *Am.* 1,9 and *Epist.* 13. *Am.* 1,9 describes the life of the elegiac lover in terms of *militia*, and stresses for instance that the lover should follow his beloved everywhere, cf. *Am.* 1,9,9–14). This corresponds to the *comes*-motive in Laodamia's letter (see below). Rosati points to *Il.* 6,390–496, the farewell scene of Hector and Andromache, as an intertexts for *Epist.* 13 and mentions that the scene is eroticized in a similar manner in *Am.* 1,9,35f, cf. Rosati, 1991, 104–108. Further on Ov. *Am.* 1,9 see below, III.ii.

wife, and hints at the motive of lover's warfare expanded on later in the letter (see below).

There is, in fact, no explicit mention of the marriage between Laodamia and Protesilaus until line 25f, where Laodamia mentions several relatives of herself and Protesilaus, some of whom are blood relations but some relations by marriage.

uix socer Iphiclus, uix me grandaeuus Acastus,   *Epist.* 13,25
     uix mater gelida maesta refecit aqua.

(Hardly could my father-in-law Iphiclus awaken me, hardly the aged Acastus, hardly could my saddened mother wake me with icy water.)

The mention of the different relationships (*socer* 'father in law' and *mater* 'mother') along with the mention of the aged Acastus, make evident Laodamia's position in the family and its hierarchy. Mythological foreknowledge, moreover, allows the reader to identify Laodamia as wife of the heir to the throne and thus add a social-hierarchical dimension to her position; a dimension that also implies certain responsibilities and expectations. In lines 30–42 Laodamia refuses to wear royal clothing in order to imitate her husband's *squalor*. I shall return to this passage presently, but here it suffices to note that the passage stresses Laodamia's position as the king's daughter-in-law and future queen, a position whose expectations she is loath to live up to.

In Laodamia's wish to imitate Protesilaus' hardships in 30–42 and also in 135–146, where she expresses her envy of the Trojan wife she imagines able to follow and assist her soldier husband before and after the battle, we may furthermore see an allusion to Prop. 4,3,43–52 (esp. 4,3,49), where Propertius describes how the Roman wife Arethusa claims she would have wanted to accompany her husband Lycotas on the military expedition he is involved in, had women been allowed in the camps, and how she refuses luxurious clothing as a means of expressing her longing for him.[65] In this context, Arethusa also claims that the love within the marriage is the greatest: *omnis amor magnus, sed aperto in coniuge maior*: ('all love is powerful, but the love to a recognized husband is more powerful still', Prop. 4,3,49).[66] Ovid alludes to this in *Epist.* 13,30 as the line *pectora legitimus casta momordit amor* ('legitimate love burned my chaste heart') provides a transition from the parting scene to Laodamia's refusal to wear clothing appropriate for a future queen during the absence of her husband. In Propertius, the power of the matrimonial love is the reason for Arethusa to seclude herself in a way reminiscent

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[65] Palmer, 1898, 403; Reeson, 2001, 129.

[66] On Prop. 4,3,49, Fedeli, 1965, 130, with further references to the critical discussion. Merklin, 1968, 467f translates *in aperto coniuge*, "wenn der Mann zugänglich ist."

of a widow's grieving during the absence of her husband. In spite of how little importance Laodamia has seemingly given to her position as a wife rather than a lover, she adopts Arethusa's way of reasoning, pointing to her right as wife to defend her insistence on grieving with an objective argument in front of her family and the people of Phylace. Laodamia's description of her love as *legitimus* arguably is a case of what Genette refers to as paralepsis, an overabundance of information constituting a temporary deviance from, in this case, the seeming internal focalization of the narrative.[67] That Laodamia's love is legal or righteous is really only relevant to a reader well familiar with elegy's non-formalized relationships and so again highlights the need for the reader of her letter to continually compare it to the pattern of 'canonical' elegy. The awareness of an intertext supportive of Laodamia's argument may augment the reader's sympathy for Laodamia, but could also make it appear more artificial and contrived.

Still, the greater part of Laodamia's letter (31–154) contains no overt references to Laodamia's marriage. In her admonishments to Protesilaus to be careful on the battlefield, Ovid refers to Laodamia and Protesilaus as if they were elegiac lovers rather than a married couple: Laodamia describes Protesilaus as an obedient lover slave saying *"parcere me iussit Laodamia sibi."* ("Laodamia ordered me to save myself for her") in 70, and […] *tu tantum vivere pugna / inque pios dominae posse redire sinus!* ('[…] you, fight only to live and to be able to return to the faithful embrace of your mistress!') in 75f. In the following line (76) she refers to herself as *domina* ('mistress'), an elegiac term. In 103f she compares herself to the fortunate *puellae* who rest sleeping on the arm of a man.[68] As I will stress shortly, this impression of Laodamia as an elegiac character is underlined by the curse she utters over the rival she imagines; it recalls curses cast on rivals by first-person male elegiac narrators.

However, at the same time the text implicitly encourages the reader to bear in mind that Laodamia's beloved is also her husband. Even when speaking about herself as an elegiac *domina* in 76, Laodamia also calls her embrace a virtuous one, *pios sinus* ('faithful embrace'). Another subtle reminder of her civil status occurs when Laodamia (113–120) imagines Protesilaus' return in terms reminiscent of Odysseus returning to Penelope in *Od.* 23,288–348,[69] thus creating a parallel between herself and Protesilaus and another famous married couple. In the same way, Laodamia's daydream about a Trojan wife assisting her soldier husband before and after the battle (135–146) indicates possible similarities not only

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[67] Genette, 1980, 197f.

[68] Rosati, 1991, 104–108; cf. Spoth, 1992, 92–94.

[69] Cf. Reeson, 2001, 181–183.

between Laodamia and the unnamed Trojan wife, but also between Laodamia and Andromache, the wife of Hector. Many critics have perceived Laodamia's description of life at Troy as an elegiac paraphrase of the scene between Hector and Andromache in *Il.* 6,390–496,[70] but in spite of the elegiac perspective superimposed on that intertext, Laodamia describes this Trojan couple in juridical terms (*nova nupta* and *marito*, 'new bride', and 'husband' respectively, both in 137) although she does not usually refer to herself or to Protesilaus as married people. An aspect common to both the daydream and the return passage is the longing for mutual concern and consideration between husband and wife, highlighted by the Homeric intertexts.

When later in the letter Laodamia speaks of the wax image she has had made for comfort during Protesilaus' absence (149–156), it is significant that she refers to her use of the wax image as *pro coniuge uero* ('in the stead of my true husband', 155), so that the passage indicates Laodamia's understanding of her relationship to her husband as encompassing both physical as well as psychological aspects. The promise Laodamia makes in the next few lines, to follow her husband everywhere, further underlines the complexity of their relationship.

per reditus corpusque tuum, mea numina, iuro,   157
    perque pares animi coniugiique faces
perque quod ut uideam canis albere capillis,
    quod tecum possis ipse referre, caput,
me tibi uenturam comitem, quocumque vocaris,
    siue… quod heu! timeo – siue superstes eris.

(By your return and your body, my gods, I swear, and by the twin torches of our wedding and soul, and by your head, which I will see grow white with age and which you will bring home yourself, that I will come to you as your companion, wherever you may call me, either… that which alas! I fear, or you be safe.)

Laodamia's use of *reditus* ('return') recalls the return scenes imagined in 113–120 and 135–146, which both had elegiac as well as epic characteristics and thus defined Laodamia's and Protesilaus' love in elegiac *and* epic terms. The mention of Protesilaus' body and the apposition to it, *mea numina* ('my gods'), calls to mind the high value placed throughout Laodamia's letter on the physical aspects of love. In 158 finally even the structure of the sentence places particular emphasis on

[70] Jacobson, 1974, 204; Rosati, 1991, 104–108; Spoth, 1992, 104. Rosati also points out that the similarities with Propertius description of Hector rising from Andromache's bed to go to battle in Prop. 2,22,31 (see below, III.ii.) further underlines the analogy between Andromache and Laodamia, see Rosati, 1991, 105.

the words *pares faces* ('twin torches') which may be constructed with the objective genitive of *animi* ('soul') as well as of *coniugii*[71] ('wedding'), emphasizing the union of elegiac love and love within the traditional framework of marriage.

The descriptions of Laodamia's relationship to Protesilaus implied by parallel and association in the return scenes thus create a blurring of distinctions between elegiac 'free' love (which dominated the beginning of the letter) and love within the marriage, circumscribed by formal and juridical conditions.

II.11.ii. *An Ideal Elegiac World?*

II.11.ii.i. Protesilaus

In her letter, Laodamia presents an image of Protesilaus as an ideal lover – it is remarkable that unlike so many of the writers and addressees of the *Heroides*, there seems to be no animosity between the two lovers.[72] Indeed, in the departure scene (7–24) Laodamia claims that the winds, not Protesilaus' or her own will, bring about his departure (11f). Protesilaus is the subject of but one sentence in that scene; a sentence, furthermore, which has the verb in the passive voice: *raptus es hinc praeceps et qui tua uela uocaret, / quem cuperent nautae, non ego, uentus erat* ('you were torn away from here head over heals, and what called you, for whom the seamen longed, was the wind, not I') in 9f. We may compare this to how the narrator's own ability to act is emphasized (and his acts in fact lamented) in Prop. 1,17,1f: *et merito, quoniam potui fugisse puellam, / nunc ego desertas alloquor alcyonas* ('and by rights, because I dared to escape from my love, I now talk to the lonely halcyons'). Although it may constitute a bad omen to look back upon that which one is leaving,[73] Laodamia seems not to understand it as such. Instead, she appears to find a measure of comfort in meeting Protesilaus' gaze as the ship slips away (*spectare iuuabat*, 'it gave solace to see it', 17). When Protesilaus looks back towards Laodamia in 17–20, he does what male elegiac lovers do when trying to rectify the mistake of leaving their beloveds: he looks back towards her from the ship. Laodamia appears unaware of the slightly disconcerting parallels of Prop. 2,7,9f and Leander in Ov. *Epist.* 18,117f.[74] Disregarding Laodamia's benevolent

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[71] Reeson, 2001, 205. In Öhrman, forthcoming a, I argue that Cat. 68b places Laodamia's love within a traditional framework of marriage and wider family obligations, which mitigates the potentially disruptive force of her passion.

[72] Jacobson, 1974, 199f; Hardie, 2002b, 132.

[73] Reeson, 2001, 126; 161–165.

[74] Prop. 2,7,9f: *aut ego transirem tua limina clausa maritus, / respiciens udis prodita luminibus.* ('or that I, a husband, should pass by your closed door that I betrayed, glancing back with tearful

interpretation of Protesilaus' behaviour at their parting (or, more to the point, of the fact that he is departing at all), we should note that on the only instance where the reader's impression of Protesilaus does not rely solely on Laodamia's daydreams in his absence, it seems that while Protesilaus may be said to be behaving in a manner appropriate for an elegiac lover in strained circumstances, he does not yet appear as the *ideal* elegiac lover Laodamia will describe him as later on in her letter. Rather, the mere fact of his departure implies that Protesilaus has placed a higher value on his patriotic responsibilities than on his love, differing for instance from the narrator in Prop. 1,6 who begs off national and patriotic responsibility for the sake of love.[75] As the leap between patriotic responsibility and personal gain is a small one in elegy, where military expeditions are frequently described as a chance to gain material riches in foreign countries,[76] we may say that Protesilaus also fits the generalized pre-conception that the male addressees of the *Heroides* take on the part of the *puella* of 'canonical' elegy, leaving the narrator for material or social gain.[77]

From the end of the departure scene onward the reader gains his or her image of Protesilaus entirely from Laodamia's writings about her hopes and fears for him and for her own future. Laodamia encourages Protesilaus to avoid engaging in battle rather than risking his life. His only goal should be to save his own life, so that Laodamia too may be saved and he may return to her bed, 65–76; 89–100. Laodamia's description of the way she would like Protesilaus to act in battle emphatically replaces traditional, heroic values with elegiac ones; like the male narrators of 'canonical' elegy proclaim to do, Protesilaus should abandon warfare to devote himself to love – *bella gerant alii, Protesilaus amet!* ('let others wage war, Proteilaus must love!' in *Epist.* 13,82.[78] The same may be said for the analogy Laodamia creates between herself and Protesilaus on the one hand and an

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eyes'). Ov. *Epist.* 18,117f: *digredimur flentes repetoque ego uirginis aequor / respiciens dominam, dum licet, usque meam.* ('crying we parted, and I turned back to the sea of the virgin, glancing back at my mistress whenever I could.) Cf. Rosati, 1991, 106, offering the parallel from *Epist.* 18,117f in his discussion of *pugnabit caute respicietque domum* ('he must fight with care, with an eye to his home') in *Epist.* 13,144.

[75] Cf. Prop. 1,6,19–21.

[76] Cf. Tib. 1,1,1–4; 75–79, Prop. 3,4,21f.

[77] Cf. Prop. 2,16. The slippage between the roles of the *puella* and the *amator* that we shall observe in the following in Ovid's characterization of both Protesilaus and Laodamia may also, in a disconcerting way, recall the slippage present in the Laodamia simile in Cat. 68b, where the reader might come to suspect that Laodamia is as much an image of the narrator himself as of his beloved, cf. Feeney, 1992, 33–44.

[78] Rosati, 1991, 106.

unnamed Trojan soldier and his wife on the other, where Laodamia's imagined Trojan soldier constantly bears the well-being of his loving wife in mind during the battle, avoiding risks and staying safe for the sake of love.[79]

One might, however, sense a contradiction between Laodamia's demands that Protesilaus take the utmost care to stay safe and away from battle on the one hand and her daydream of listening to him recounting his *militiae* [...] *splendida facta* [...] ('splendid deeds in battle') in 116 on the other, which reflects negatively on Laodamia's credibility. However, the language also invites another interpretation: the wording of the passage 113–120 is distinctly eroticized.

quando ego te reducem cupidis amplexa lacertis   113
      languida laetitia soluar ab ipsa mea
quando erit, ut lecto mecum bene iunctus in uno
      militiae referas splendida facta tuae?
quae mihi dum referes, quamuis audire iuuabit,
      multa tamen rapies oscula, multa dabis.
semper in his apte narrantia uerba resistunt;
      promptior est dulci lingua refecta mora.

(When will it be that I, on your return, may embrace you with greedy arms and exhausted may gain release in my joy? When will it be that you, well united with me in bed may tell of your splendid deeds in battle? While you tell me of these, although it will be sweet to listen, you will snatch many kisses too, and give many in turn. Again and again the words of the tale will pause among our kisses – more readily runs the tongue when it is refreshed by sweet interruptions.)

As Reeson has pointed out, both *solvor* ('gain release') and *languidus* ('exhausted') suggest physical exhaustion after sex.[80] In addition, Protesilaus is described as *bene iunctus* ('well united') with Laodamia herself; this is of course highly suggestive of limbs entangled from love-making. In 'canonical' elegy, both love and love-making are often described as being a battle, or referred to in military terms.[81] Could it be, then, that Laodamia in asking Protesilaus to recite his *splendida facta* ('splendid deeds') does in effect envision him engaging in dirty pillow-talk? The following lines, interspersing kissing and talking, would surely support such an

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[79] As this couple also prefigures Hector and Andromache (*the* Trojan couple, one might say) Laodamia's description of war at Troy has been held to propose an image of the epic heroes standing in opposition to the traditional one. Cf. Merklin, 1968, 481.

[80] Reeson, 2001, 181–183, with references to Verg. *Georg.* 4,198f (*solvor*) and Ov. *Epist.* 15,50; *Ars* 2,692; *Fast.* 3,25 (for examples related to *languidus*). Cf. Adams, 1982, 196.

[81] Cf. esp. Prop. 3,8,31f about Paris and Helen; Ov. *Am.* 1,9,45f.

interpretation. Accepting this reading would resolve the contradiction of avoiding battles and winning them at the same time, and Protesilaus would remain an ideal elegiac lover.

However, as these images of Protesilaus' fate after their parting more often than not are based on rumour and Laodamia's snapshots of the war at Troy abound with hints that she herself is not entirely sure of her information,[82] the reader has good reason to be suspicious of the idealized image she suggests of her husband and his doings. The reader's knowledge of literary precedents will underline this impression. In his interpretation of *Epist.* 13, Rosati points out that while Laodamia's letter, with for instance the allusion to Hector and Andromache's meeting in *Il.* 6, incorporates Homeric motives and embellishes them with elegiac detail, these motives cannot be smoothly transferred to the new elegiac setting but continue to evoke a sense of contrast and incongruity as the reader remains aware of the previous epic setting. Despite Laodamia's descriptions of him in elegiac terms, for instance, Protesilaus' wish to be the first Greek to come ashore in Troy remains stubbornly inscribed in his very name and must come in constant conflict with Laodamia's wish for him to *de nave novissimus exi!* ('leave the ship last!', 97). Ironically, by his return after his death, Laodamia will be proven right about Protesilaus' great love for her, but only after all the things she warns him of have already come to pass. Rosati also indicates that the behaviour Laodamia wishes for in Protesilaus in many ways would correspond to Homeric descriptions of Paris. Paris is well known from the epic context as deviating from the heroic pattern – Rosati refers to Paris as a "non-eroe" – and for avoiding battle like Protesilaus is encouraged to do, and escaping into the feminine sphere.[83] The association with Paris potentially influences (or damages) Laodamia's credibility; undertaking a re-evaluation of a character like his may hint at a skewed perspective of whoever undertakes it.[84]

II.11.ii.ii. Laodamia

Turning instead to the characterization of Laodamia herself, the next part of the section indicates how Laodamia, too, alternates between patterns of behaviour

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[82] *Fama est* ('rumour has it') in 3; *ut fama est,* ('as rumour has it') in 57; cf. also *nos sumus incertae,* ('we do not know for certain') in 147, and cf. *Hectora nescio quem timeo,* ('I fear someone called Hector', 63); *Hectora, quisquis is est* ('Hector, whoever that is') in 65.

[83] Rosati, 1991, 107–111.

[84] Rosati, 1991, 107–111. We should also note that despite begging Protesilaus to behave in a way similar to Paris, Laodamia has condemned Paris' behaviour in 43f.

familiar from 'canonical' elegy, although she, as we shall see, corresponds closely to one stereotype much talked about but never actually appearing in elegy, namely that of the ideal *puella*.

Although Laodamia cannot realize her fantasies about physically accompanying Protesilaus to Troy and being to him what she imagines the Trojan wife being to her soldier husband (cf. above, on 135–148), she lays claims to an almost psychic bond between them by insisting on imitating Protesilaus' sufferings in her own dress and behaviour (41f). Likewise, her fainting on Protesilaus leaving and her prayers for his safe return also indicate her perception of a strong bond between the two. According to Merklin, however, Laodamia's letter actually depicts a full fusion of their persons, as shown in the phrase *ne meus ex illo corpore sanguis eat* ('that my blood shall not run from his body') in 78 and in the final lines – *sit tibi cura tui, sit tibi cura mei,* ('your care should be for youself, your care should be for me', 163f). The notion of such a fusion between the bodies of two lovers goes back on ancient *topoi*, literally developed in i.e. Plato's *Symposion* and often referred to by the Roman elegists.[85] Bréguet does not mention Laodamia, and none of her examples takes the fusion as far as Laodamia suggests in line 78. H. Fränkel refers to the Laodamia line to illustrate the existence of an extraordinary 'mystic union' of lovers in Ovid. Even though his further theory that this would indicate a change in the ancient way of thinking foreshadowing Christian mysticism, is not relevant to this study, Fränkel's collection of the very few similar passages in ancient literature shows how peculiar (and hence potentially powerful) Laodamia's expression is.[86]

The final part of the letter re-shapes the motive of this near-psychic connection, associating it with the reunion of Laodamia and Protesilaus after his death as well as with her suicide, hinted at in 161. Though Ovid does not make explicit mention of it, there are allusions to the tragic end of Laodamia's story in the letter. By means of the imagined scenes in Troy (36–64; 135–148), Laodamia's exhortations directed at Protesilaus (65–82; 89–100 – recalling Protesilaus' death according to Homer) and recurring references to the influence of Protesilaus' life on Laodamia's own existence in Phylace (37–42; 85–89; 103–112), the reader

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[85] Bréguet, 1960, 205–214. Bréguet points to Hor. *Carm.* 1,3,8; 2,75, 5–9; 3,9,24; Prop. 2,28,41f; Ov. *Am.* 2,13,15; 2,19,4; *Epist.* 11,60; *Trist.* 4,4,72; 10,32; further Ov. *Met.* 3,473; 11,388. In Ov. *Am.* 2,13,15 and in *Epist.* 11,60 however, the expression *in una parce duobus* ('in saving one, save both') alludes primarily to mother and child.

[86] Laodamia's words in 163f do, however, also arguably recall the funerary phrase *sit tibi terra leuis* ('may the soil rest lightly on you'), that fit the ironic tone of the passage as a whole, implying that it is into death that Laodamia will follow Protesilaus. Fränkel, 1969, 183 n. 37.

is likely to recall the conclusion to these events – Laodamia's suicide following Protesilaus' death.[87]

Critics have, accordingly, seen allusions to motives from the later story of Laodamia in Ovid's letter. Reeson probably goes the furthest, understanding the apparition of Laodamia's dreams (102–108) to be Protesilaus himself, returned from the dead but unable to make contact with his wife.[88] Ironic in itself, this lends undertones of dramatic irony to Laodamia's account of her wax image as Reeson points out that the making of the image expresses "loneliness and extreme love for a beloved believed absent but alive", whereas the reader would, at that point of the letter, be aware that Protesilaus is in fact already dead.[89] Indeed, this would be the kind of irony a reader of Ovid – and especially of the *Heroides* – would be well attuned to. However, in order to support such a reading, one must presuppose that Laodamia is mistaken in assuming that the Greek fleet is still held back at Aulis (3). Although Laodamia has but *fama* to rely on for that claim, I believe that Fulkerson is right in arguing that Laodamia's statement here merely provides the reader with a time frame for her writing;[90] this is all the more likely as Laodamia's letter consequently retains the fiction of being a piece of actual correspondence throughout, without such breaks or interruptions of the fictional time as occur in several other *Heroides*. It is, I think, more reasonable to view the futile dream apparition as foreshadowing of events to come – Protesilaus will return, either in body or as a ghost, but even so, there will be no happy end.[91]

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[87] For the suicide of Laodamia, cf. Ov. *Rem*. 723f; Hyg. *Fab*. 104; Apollod. *Epit*. 3,30; the reconstructions of Euripides *Protesilaos* based on *TGF* 647a–657 (Nauck).

[88] Cf. above, I.iii. on Prop. 1,19.

[89] This way, however, Reeson, 2001, 199–205, supports his hypothesis that the dream image of 102–108 is Protesilaus returning from Hades with the versions given in Prop. 1,19,9f; Stat. *Silv*. 5,3,273; Serv. *Aen*. 6,477f and *Mythogr*. 1,158. According to these sources, Protesilaus returned as a ghost only. Reeson's most convincing argument is, that Ovid quite likely could assume that his readers would be familiar with the Propertian version of 1,19, where Protesilaus as *umbra* ('shadow') reaches for Laodamia with *falsis palmis* ('unreal hands'). If we assume that Ovid responds specifically to this point of Proptertius' poem, Reeson's interpretation seems more relevant. The Propertian narrator is pessimistic about a reunion with Cynthia after his death, and we might see this as confirmed by Ovid if we, like Reeson, considers Laodamia's dream experiences to be, in fact, the ghost of Protesilaus returning.

[90] Cf. Fulkerson's review of Reeson in *BMCRev* 2001.12.19.

[91] For Protesilaus' return after his death, cf. Prop. 1,19,9f; Stat. *Silv*. 5,3,273; Serv. *Aen*. 6,477f; *Mythogr*. 1,158 as a ghost, according to Apollod. *Epit*. 3,30 und Lucian *DMort*. 23 in the flesh, and further Jacobson, 1974, 211f. Jacobson rejects the notion of the apparition as a foreshadowing of Protesilaus' return from the dead, and draws on its appearance to argue that Ovid departs

The references to Laodamia's waxen image of Protesilaus evoke the end of her story, which in most variants is closely connected with the making, discovery and destruction of the statue of Protesilaus.[92] Both Jacobson and Reeson seem to understand the image rather than Protesilaus' death as the immediate cause of Laodamia's suicide. According to Jacobson, Laodamia is dragged down by desperation after giving free rein to her superstitions and sexual fantasies,[93] whereas Reeson argues that Ovid's mention of the wax image brings to mind the version of the myth where Laodamia throws herself on the pyre after being deprived of the image; "the wax image is, the reader suspects, no harmless expression of Laodamia's frustrations. It will cause her to be burnt alive."[94]

Though I agree with Reeson that the mention of the waxen image of Protesilaus may foreshadow the manner of Laodamia's death, I would argue that the final lines of Ovid's poem imply another, perhaps more significant, reason for Laodamia's suicide. The final verses of Laodamia's letter associates Laodamia's yearning to follow her husband to the battlefield with her later decision to take her own life. Line 160f deals with Protesilaus' return from battle and thereby recalls 135–146, which expressed Laodamia's envy of the Trojan woman allowed to assist her husband before and after battle. A possible description of that woman (and of Laodamia, were she to take on the same role) would be the word *comes* ('companion'), used of Laodamia in Verg. *Aen*. 6,447f. In Vergil, Laodamia is the follower of other women driven to death by unlucky or unhappy love.[95] In the elegiac version, Laodamia defines herself as her beloved's companion only, in 161: *me tibi uenturam comitem, quocumque uocaris* ('I will come as your companion, wherever you may call me'). Laodamia's solemn oath in this second final distich may be understood both as a promise to partake in Protesilaus' toil at Troy, physically or in her mind, but as an allusion to Laodamia's willingness to follow her husband into death.[96] The openness of the distich to two different interpreta-

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from the earlier versions of the myth in order to re–create his own story. He argues that the dream apparition is but an isolated allusion of the earlier versions and that Laodamia, overwrought and superstitious, need no further cause to commit suicide than the hauntings of her own imagination, Jacobson, 1974, 211f.

[92] Cf. Apollodorus *Epit*. 3,30; Eust. 3,671–672D.

[93] Jacobson, 1974, 211f.

[94] Reeson, 2001, 204f.

[95] She appears as a companion of Phaedra, Procris, Eriphyle, Euadne and Pasiphae, Verg. *Aen*. 6,445–448.

[96] Cf. also Merklin, 1968, 492: "[...] die Psychologie der Angst [...] lässt im Schlussteil unseres Gedichtes auch Gegenwärtiges und Zukünftiges ineinander fließen."

tions is given form in 162, where Laodamia tries to name the ways her oath could be realized but shies away from mentioning that Protesilaus could die.

me tibi uenturam comitem, quocumque uocaris, 161
  siue… quod heu! timeo – siue superstes eris.

(I will come to you as your companion, wherever you may call me, either… that which alas! I fear, or you be safe.)

The *comes*-motive, then, is realized in two different ways in the letter. One concerns Laodamia's efforts to share in spirit in her husband's labours at Troy, the other her willingness to die with him. I will argue that this twofold meaning of the motive is important for our understanding of Ovid's later references to Laodamia as *comes*.[97] They both stem from Laodamia's perception of a special bond between herself and her husband.

In this interpretation, I have stressed how the reader is merely presented with Laodamia's side of the story. As always in the *Heroides*, there is a strong undercurrent of dramatic irony in Laodamia's letter. Every claim Laodamia makes on a sense of love and mutual protectiveness between herself and Protesilaus is undermined by the reader's mythological foreknowledge of the Protesilaus story: Protesilaus did not avoid battle for Laodamia's sake, and, perhaps even more interestingly, Laodamia has to be told of his death. I shall return to this lack of communication presently.

Interestingly, not only mythological foreknowledge will allow the reader to come to this conclusion – for Laodamia's wish to be constantly at her husband's side places her in the position of the *amator* of 'canonical' elegy. Rosati argues that Laodamia's wish to follow Protesilaus could be considered a variation on the *topos* where one lover follows his or her beloved into a formerly foreign sphere.[98] He quotes Phaedra going hunting in her desire to come closer to Hipplytus as the first known example,[99] Gallus and Lycoris following another lover in Verg. *Ecl.* 10,22 and Milanion following Atalante in Prop. 1,1,9–16, both of programmatic impact in elegy, as later realizations. That, furthermore, is precisely the behaviour prescribed for the *amator* in Ov. *Am.* 1,9,1–30, a text we have previously found to be significant for Laodamia's letter. Laodamia, then, in her efforts to imitate Protesilaus' sufferings, fulfils at least one of the expectations on an abandoned

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[97] Cf. Chapters Three and Four.

[98] On the *topos* of hunting due to love, cf Maass, 1885, 523–527, mostly providing Greek evidence, but also referring to Ov. *Ars* 2,185–192, where Milanion wins Atalante thanks to his hunting. For this passage, cf. Janka, 1997, 167–173.

[99] Eur. *Hipp.* 215–238, and later Ov. *Epist.* 4,41–44.

lover inherent in the elegiac genre, and to some extent within the collection of the single *Heroides*. Moreover, we might very well take this further. There is also a parallel between the re-orientation in lifestyle as well as literary ambition to which the first-person narrators of 'mainstream' elegy submit under the influence of love and Laodamia's wish to undergo the same hardships as her husband. However, the fact that her behaviour may thus be described in terms of elegiac conventions also hints that the union is more one-sided than Laodamia herself appears aware: Gallus' love for Lycoris is scorned, and Milanion wins Atalante by a trick, not by his fearless hunting.[100]

There are further points of correspondence between the behaviour of the *amator* of 'canonical' elegy and Laodamia, as one of which we may note Laodamia's willingness to take responsibility for the preservation of the relationship. At several points in her letter, she claims to have warded off potentially bad omens in order to protect her beloved.[101] Reeson compares the reckless behaviour of Catullus' Laodamia who ignores religious protocol at the wedding (Cat. 68b,75f), and to the Laodamia of *Epist.* 13, who represses her wish to call Protesilaus back in the parting scene (83f).[102]

We may also compare Laodamia's exhortations to Protesilaus to be careful in battle and especially to avoid Hector, of whom she has heard rumours. She does this although she disapproves of the reason for her husband's journey (cf. 43–48, where Laodamia wishes ill on Menelaus and Paris), in a way similar to the first-person narrators of Propertius and Tibullus do when their beloved embarks on a journey, again placing her in the role of the male *exclusus amator*.[103] Laodamia's way of expressing her hopes of spending old age with Protesilaus (159f) also resembles daydreams of the Tibullan narrator:

haec aliis maledicta cadant: nos, Delia, amoris   Tib. 1,6,85
    exemplum cana simus uterque coma

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[100] Similarly, the reader may be worried by the recollection of the Laodamia simile in Cat. 68b, where a reference to Laodamia contributes to the characterization of Lesbia and, in fact, also to the characterization of the Catullan narrator himself, cf. Feeney, 1992, 33–44. The association of Ovid's character with the disastrous love story depicted in Catullus may well disconcert the reader of Laodamia's letter here.

[101] But cf. Fulkerson, interpreting Laodamia's manner of dealing with this omen in a more sinister manner, Fulkerson, 2002, 68–70, and see further below, II.ii.iii.

[102] Reeson, 2001, 161–164, cf. esp. Ov. *Am.* 3,7,15.

[103] Cf. Prop. 1,8,17–20; Prop. 2,19,1–16 where Cynthia is leaving for the countryside and the *amator* feels comforted as she at least will be out of reach of potential rivals; Ov. *Am.* 2,11.

(Such curses may fall upon others, Delia – we shall be an example of love even when our hair has gone white.)

So far, the re-inversion of the elegiac gender pattern has shown Laodamia in an essentially flattering light, proving her as an earnest lover, if slightly overconfident that her feelings are returned with the same overwhelming passion. However, to Laodamia's curse on Paris there may be another dimension.

dyspari Priamide, damno formose tuorum,   43
    tam sis hostis iners, quam malus hospes eras!

(Unfortunate son of Priam, you lovely curse on your own, be you as useless as an enemy as you were bad a guest!)

The wording of these lines recalls curses of rivals uttered by male elegiac narrators, particularly if one considers the erotic connotations of the word *iners* highlighted by Reeson. In a letter with such an emphasis on the physical aspects of love as Laodamia's, this should not surprise us. By means of this double entendre Ovid could very well be implying that Laodamia wishes impotency on Paris, whom she may consider her rival for Protesilaus' time and attention. Several similar ill-wishes occur in 'canonical' elegy as the *amator* hopes that his rival will break down in the middle of making love to the *puella*, e.g. Prop. 2,9,48: *ille uir medio fiat amore lapis* ('may that man turn to stone in the middle of loving you').[104] That Laodamia thus incongruously assimilates a line of reasoning founded in male imagination both casts a somewhat humorous light on her character, and draws the reader's attention to the artificiality of the letter and its constant interplay with 'canonical' elegy.

Although Laodamia in this way, for better or worse, recalls the *amator* of 'canonical' elegy, she is also placed in close relation to a number of female characters who are described as behaving ideally when abandoned,[105] but who would, were they to appear as independent characters rather than objects of comparison in elegy, cause the foundations of the genre to collapse. Like the grief of these women mentioned by both Propertius and Tibullus, Laodamia's longing for Protesilaus

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[104] Cf. also Prop. 2,16,13, *at tu nunc nostro, Uenus, o succurre dolori, / rumpat ut assiduis membra libidinibus*, ('but help me now in my suffering, Venus, so that his limbs may rupture from his constant wantoness') as well as Ov. *Am.* 1,4,66: *sitque maligna Uenus* ('and may Venus be averse to him'). Ov. *Am.* 3,7,15 uses the word *iners* ('useless') of the impotent narrator.

[105] Torn clothing, tearing one's hair and cheeks, and beating one's breast as expressions of grief or mourning are known in literature since the Homeric hymns and topical already in Euripides, cf. Herzog-Hauser, 1937, 2226, on Roman mourning, Herzog-Hauser, 1937, 2229–2231.

demands an almost physical expression. Laodamia faints at the seashore watching Protesilaus' ship disappear, and following his departure she expresses her grief by neglecting her appearance. The series of examples in Prop. 1,15,9–14, beginning with Calypso and continuing with Hypsipyle, Alphesiboia and Euadne, places the faithless Cynthia in contrast with the topically mourning woman at the sea shore.[106]

at non sic Ithaci digressu mota Calypso Prop. 1,15,9
    desertis olim fleuerat aequoribus:
multos illa dies incomptis maesta capillis
    sederat, iniusto multa locuta salo,

(Calypso was not like that when she cried, saddened by the departure of Odysseus, by the empty sea. Many days she sat there with her hair in disarray, speaking much to the unfair sea.)

In Prop. 2,13b,27f, the narrator imagines his beloved Cynthia's behaviour after his own death – in this idealistic dream, she shall follow his bier to the grave, beat herself on her chest and call out his name. In the same poem, the narrator describes Venus rushing to the side of the dying Adonis with her hair flowing freely (Prop. 2,13b,55f). In the following distich Venus, like the women of the Calypso catalogue in Prop. 1,15, is held up to Cynthia as an example of how to remain faithful even in death. The same motives recur in Prop. 2,24c,51f:

hi tibi nos erimus: sed tu potius precor ut me Prop. 2,24c,51
    demissis plangas pectora nuda comis.

(I will do this for you, but I pray that it will rather be you who, with hair in disarray, shall strike your naked breast, lamenting me.)

nam mihi quo Poenis nunc purpura fulgeat ostris Prop. 4,3,51f
    crystallusque meas ornet aquosa manus?[107]

(For what does it help me now, the splendour of Carthaginian purple, and that a crystal as clear as water adorns my hand?)

Given the many thematic correspondences of the two poems it is not surprising that Arethusa in Prop. 4,3,51f (quoted above), pronounces the splendour of contemporary fashion of no use to her, now that she is parted from her husband, even as Laodamia does. Arethusa's words compare to an early part of Laodamia's letter:

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[106] For an interpretation of Prop. 1,15,9–22, see I.iii.
[107] On the textual problems of this passage, above all the interpretation of the subjunctive, cf. Fedeli, 1965, 131; Merklin, 1968, 468; Fedeli, 1994, 223; Rothstein, 1924, 239.

nec mihi pectendos cura est praebere capillos   31
    nec libet aurata corpora ueste tegi.
ut quas pampinea tetigisse Bicorniger hasta
    creditur, huc illuc, qua furor egit, eo.
conueniunt matres Phylleides et mihi clamant:
    „indue regales, Laodamia, sinus!"
scilicet ipsa geram saturatas murice uestes,
    bella sub Iliacis moenibus ille gerat?
ipsa comas pectar? galea caput ille prematur?
    ipsa nouas uestes, dura uir arma ferat.   40
qua possum, squalore tuos imitata labores
    dicar et haec belli tempora tristis agam.

(I do not care about offering to have my hair combed, nor does it appeal to me to array my body in gold-stitched clothing. Like those, who they say have been touched by the double-horned god's vine-covered staff, I rush here and there, wherever my madness drives me. The wives of Phylace assemble and call to me, 'Laodamia, don your royal robes!' But should I wear clothing soaked in purple, while he wages war below the battlements of Troy? Should I comb my hair, while the helmet presses down on his head? I wear new raiments, while he wears hard armour? As far as I can, I will be said to have imitated your toil, and I will spend these times of war in mourning.)

Laodamia's insistence on imitating the *squalor* of her husband is generally interpreted as a topical expression of her grief,[108] but Reeson also suggests it is connected to ceremonial clothing worn for Bacchic rites performed by Laodamia, which may have formed part of Euripides' tragedy *Protesilaos*.[109] Though this, as well as Fulkerson's proposal that Laodamia's disorganized clothing is related to her efforts to perform love magic, seems plausible, I would point rather to how Laodamia's behaviour comes to correspond so closely to a way of behaving repeatedly held up as ideal – especially in 'canonical' elegy.[110]

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[108] For Ovid possibly being influenced by pictorial works depticting Laodamia with her hair falling freely, cf. III.iii.

[109] Reeson, 2001, 131–134 and cf. Hardie, 2002b, 135. Fulkerson, 2002, 76 points out that Laodamia's disorganized clothing would also correspond nicely to standard descriptions of women performing magic.

[110] Additionally, Laodamia's rejection of luxury (37) corresponds nicely to the many complaints voiced by the narrators of 'canonical' elegy over the greed of modern women, cf. Prop. 2,16,15–22; 3,13; Tib. 2,3,49–58; 4,21–30. In Ov. *Am.* 1,8 Dipsas the bawd encourages the puella to take material advantage of a rich lover; in Ov. *Am.* 1,10,61f the narrator promises the *puella* fame

Thus far, I have strived to bring out how Laodamia's letter to Protesilaus even more markedly than 'canonical' elegy itself tries to present its protagonists as ideal elegiac characters – we have seen that Laodamia attempts to cast both Protesilaus and herself in the role of the ideal lover, but that additionally she herself takes on characteristics of the ideal *puella* described by the narrators of 'canonical' elegy. In 'canonical' elegy, however, the apparent claims of the narrators about themselves and their beloveds are almost constantly undermined by incongruity and irony, as the close readings of 'canonical' elegiac references to mythological paradigms of wifely virtues presented in the previous chapter confirmed. For that reason, Laodamia's attempts to convince her reader (internal as well as external) that Protesilaus is an ideal lover may come to naught, as may her representation of herself as an ideal *amator*, but there is less reason for us to be suspicious of her appearance in the role of an ideal abandoned *puella*. As stated previously, the faithful *puella* is a much longed-for ideal in 'canonical' elegy – but she has no place in elegiac practice. I would like to suggest that casting a character as ideally elegiac is possible precisely due to the blurring between the literary genres influencing the letter that I emphasized in the first section of this chapter. Here, in the intersection between the epic, tragic and elegiac, Laodamia may take on that role. In 'real' elegy, she could not.

II.11.iii. *The Impossibility of Communication*

The first two sections of this chapter have focussed on how Laodamia presents events and emotions, and suggested interpretations emphasizing the importance of the interplay between literary genres in her descriptions of herself and Protesilaus. In the course of these interpretations, I have hinted on several instances that the poem is not wholly under the control of its (internal) narrator and that irony frequently undermines the story as it is presented by Laodamia. These issues will be the focus point of the present section.

Other works on the Laodamia letter have, of course, also brought to the fore the frequent appearance of dramatic irony in the poem. Fulkerson treats the theme perhaps most extensively, arguing that by misguided use of magic, Laodamia herself causes the events she fears. Laodamia appears, according to Fulkerson, overwrought or paranoid as she is ready to accept that supernatural phenomena influence her and Protesilaus' fate and constantly tries to counteract them. In her effort, for instance, to cancel out the bad omen of Protesilaus stumbling on

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through his poetry instead of material gifts. The motive is generally not as important in Ovid as in his predecessors, see Laigneau, 1999, 231–240.

the threshold as he is leaving the house (87f) she commits the significant error of telling Protesilaus about it – thus unwittingly providing the omen with the power to affect him.[111] Likewise, Laodamia's wish that her worries and fear may disperse before the winds stands in ironic contrast to the fact that it is only when wind finally rises in Aulis that Protesilaus is ultimately doomed.[112] Fulkerson furthermore notes ominous ironies in Laodamia's description of the lives of the Trojan wives she envies, pointing especially to 135f: *Troasin inuideo, quae si lacrimosa suorum / funera conspicient* [...] ('I envy the Trojan women, who may see the mournful burials of their men'). A primary reading would be that Laodamia simply worries about her husband and would like to be close to him, whatever is happening to him. However, as Fulkerson observes, Laodamia does in effect say that she would like to be present at Protesilaus' funeral.[113]

On the comparison to the couple in Troy follows the description of Laodamia's wax image of Protesilaus and how she cherishes it. Other scholars have characterized the passage and its content as openly erotic and morbid, understanding it to indicate how Laodamia's mental health is deteriorating.[114] More usefully, Fulkerson shows how this motive, too, contributes to depicting Laodamia as unintentionally bringing about exactly that which she fears. Most versions mentioning the statue of Protesilaus describe these events as taking place after Protesilaus' death and as an expression of Laodamia's grief. In Ovid, Laodamia manufactures the statue while she still assumes Protesilaus to be alive and well. Fulkerson argues that Laodamia's waxen image combines two functions of statuary – the funerary monument and the plastic/pictorial reminder of someone absent, thus in her writing (and subsequently in reality) transferring Protesilaus more and more to the realm of the dead.[115]

Fulkerson thus points particularly to ironies connected to Laodamia's active influence on the chain of events. In the following, I will focus instead on issues throwing an ironic light on Laodamia's telling of her story and on her as a narrator claiming a specific, mutual bond between herself and her husband, particularly in relation to the wax image. I agree with scholars claiming that the reader is indeed encouraged to think that Laodamia uses the image for sexual satisfaction; the context of *amplexus meos* ('my embrace', 152) and the ambiguity of the phrase *teneo sinu* (155), its literal meaning being 'I hold it on my lap' but an

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[111] Fulkerson, 2002, 67; 69f, Fulkerson, 2005, 112f.

[112] Fulkerson, 2002, 70; 2005, 113.

[113] Fulkerson, 2002, 70; 2005, 113f.

[114] Jacobson, 1974, 211; Reeson, 2001, 199–205.

[115] Fulkerson, 2002, 77–83; 2005, 114f.

implied sense of 'I sleep with it' also conceivable, all support such an interpretation.[116] Reeson has furthermore noticed that both *queror* ('lament') and *spectare* ('gaze upon') carry erotic undertones, as *spectare* on several instances signifies the lustful gaze on one lover from another, and *queri* the catching of one's breath or moaning during intercourse.[117] Still, this erotic interpretation does not exclude a more literal understanding of the phrases – the meanings 'to hold on one's lap', 'to gaze upon', and to 'lament' remain valid for a full understanding of the passage. Then, another motive central to the passage becomes that of Laodamia's longing for intimate colloquy with her husband.[118] That being able to talk to her husband is indeed very much on Laodamia's mind may be concluded from the amassment of words concerned with the act of speaking or listening in 151–156: *blanditias* ('sweet words') and *debita uerba* ('appropriate words') in 151, *dicimus* ('we say') in 152, *sonum* ('voice') in 154 and *uerba referre* ('answer') in 156. We may also compare how the dream image that appears to Laodamia during the night time strives for verbal communication as well, prompting Laodamia to wonder *cur uenit a uerbis multa querela tuis* ('why do your words bring so much lament?', 108). Through the combination of the motives of sexual release and intimate conversation there emerges a scene quite similar to the return scene Laodamia imagined in 113–120, where the returning husband regales his wife with stories of his achievements in battle. For the time being, Laodamia strives to realize that daydream with the wax image.

However, the interpretation suggested above has so far failed to take into account that the letter does in fact in itself constitute a failed attempt at communication and describes several more, rather than depicting or constituting communication successfully taking place. The communicative efforts in the letter remain conspicuously one-sided. Laodamia does not understand the meaning of the ghostly apparition haunting her during the night;[119] and, as Ovid later reminds the reader of the *Remedia amoris* by referring to Laodamia's likeness of Protesilaus as *imagine muta* ('mute image', Ov. *Rem.* 723f), the wax image does not actually respond to her endearments.[120] Most notably, Laodamia may feel a

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[116] Adams, 1982, 181.

[117] Reeson, 2001, 200f. For *specto* Reeson mentions Ov. *Am.* 3,2,5; 2,16; 2,28; *Ars* 1,99; 573; 2,503; 3,513; 675; 774; *Epist.* 17,79; 21,105, for *queror* Ov. *Ars* 2,723f. Adams, 1982, does not list these words.

[118] But cf. Spoth, 1992, 94: "die Erzählungen [sind] nur angenehmes Beiwerk".

[119] Reeson, 2001, 200.

[120] Ov. *Rem.* 723f: *si potes, et cera remoue: quid imagine muta / carperis? hoc periit Laodamia modo,* ('if you can, remove the wax images as well, for what can you gain from a mute image? That

sense of connection to Protesilaus in the field, but she nevertheless feels the need to write him a letter to inform him about events taking place in Phylace.[121] This must have considerable impact on how we perceive the claims Laodamia makes about a special, near-psychic connection to Protesilaus – in fact, it turns out that the more Laodamia tells us about it, the more reason do we have to doubt its existence. Laodamia, then, appears to have the same skewed and constantly idealizing appreciation of the relationship she is involved in as the male narrators of 'canonical' elegy do. We should note, I think, that although Ovid has transposed elegiac elements to a situation that is not wholly elegiac, the relationship he depicts stubbornly remains as unequally balanced as the relationships featuring in 'canonical' elegy. Despite the agony and longing with which Laodamia relates her daydreams, to a reader attuned to literary and mythological allusion her idealization of Protesilaus (and of herself) is likely to appear questionable. Thus, particularly if we view the *Heroides* as trial run of the elegiac system in life-like circumstances, it lies close on hand to consider this as another indication that the world view proclaimed by the narrators of elegy is in fact not a feasible lifestyle alternative. As interpreted through the medium of Laodamia's letter, the ambition of the elegiac poets seems to lie elsewhere.

When seeking for that 'elsewhere', we should remember that one of the most important themes in elegy is poetry and the writing of poetry itself.[122] Fulkerson suggests that Laodamia is trying to create an elegiac Protesilaus through the wax of her letter,[123] but that creation is also tantalizingly paralleled by the waxen image Laodamia has made. Although the *Heroides* almost certainly pre-dates the *Metamorphoses* a comparison between the Pygmalion episode in *Met.* 10,148–739 and Laodamia adoring her statue of Protesilaus may shed further light on the

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was the way Laodamia perished.') Although the narrator of the *Remedia* undermines his admonishments in the same manner as does the praeceptor of the *Ars amatoria* (cf. Althea's fatal burning of the stick bound up with Meleager's life or death seemingly proposed as a positive example in *Rem.* 721f), it is interesting to note that the lines preceeding the Laodamia example do themselves deal with communication as the prime prerequisite of love. The narrator recommends that all love letters be burnt, as re-reading them could cause passion to flare up again, cf. Ov. *Rem.* 715–720.

[121] Spoth, 1992, 104f and further the general observation of Lindheim, 2003, 14 about the *Epist.*: "Why, when seemingly offering her a long-awaited chance to speak, does he grant her a medium that she then undermines by manipulating it against herself? We the readers know that ultimately no hero returns to the heroine he has left behind because he has been persuaded by her mail."

[122] Cf. Sharrock, 1991, 37.

[123] Fulkerson, 2002, 83, with further references.

development of generic issues in the Laodamia's letter.[124] In a widely influential article, Sharrock has shown that we may interpret the Pygmalion episode as an embodiment of the elegiac poet designing the inanimate stage props of his own drama; that for all the trappings of realism in elegy, the elegiac *puella* is in fact an artefact made by and entirely in the power of the artist.[125] Pygmalion, prefiguring the elegiac poet and *amator*, thus creates an elegiac *puella*, telling us something of the self-centredness and self-referential workings of elegy. The incentives to a similar reading of Laodamia's letter are present already in the letter itself. The text suggests that the image is more than it seems: *crede mihi, plus est, quam quod uidetur, imago* ('trust me, the image is more than it seems') Laodamia writes in 153. She goes on to say that the only thing missing for her statue to turn into (a) Protesilaus is sound or speech, which seems a curious if not implausible remark if directed to Protesilaus himself. Instead, it is tempting to read this as a comment intended for a third party – the external reader of the letter. If the external reader is thus acknowledged by the text itself, we have all the more reason to examine these lines carefully for interpretive keys to the text and its messages. Furthermore, Protesilaus has been approximated to the *puella* and Laodamia certainly acts as an elegiac writer, in many aspects appearing alike to the male *amatores* of 'canonical' elegy, so to view the Protesilaus statue as a telling parallel for the elegiac *puella* is possible even if we rely solely on Laodamia's letter itself. The similarities with the 'master key' passage of the *Metamorphoses* further underline the relevance of this metapoetical approach. Laodamia fashions, once by the idealized descriptions in her letter and once by means of the statue, a character that she tries to visualize to the reader in the role of the elegiac *amator* but which continually slips rather into that of the *puella* of 'canonical' elegy.

The fiction of the *Heroides*, however, is that the letters provide a means of self-expression to women whose viewpoint has been suppressed in earlier (epic or tragic) renderings of their stories. In the introduction to this chapter, I indicated that the greater part of current research on the *Heroides* is concerned with uncovering the woman's voice (or understanding the fiction of a woman's voice) in the collection. In that context, the metapoetical interpretation of Laodamia's creation of the wax statue can be usefully related to her position as a female writer, and to the suppression of female voices that takes place in 'canonical' elegy. As

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[124] Drawing on the *Met.* for an interpretation of the *Heroides* passage seems particularly justified given that Laodamia is the only elegiac lover to make a wax statue of her beloved. Pygmalion's statue is, though made of ivory, is at the most crucial stage of its transformation (*Met.* 10,284f), said to resemble wax.

[125] Sharrock, 1991, 37f.

an elegiac *amator /amatrix*, Laodamia displays a high awareness of the artificiality of the elegiac love-object when she emphasizes that what is missing for her wax Protesilaus to be exactly like his flesh-and-blood counterpart is in fact a voice (*adde sonum cerae, Protesilaus erit*, 'add a voice to the wax, and Protesilaus it will be', 154), something that must be of tantamount importance to one who is at that precise moment involved in using or expressing her *own* voice. It is quite ironic that it is a female narrator of a text that essentially represents a failure at communication who points out that the elegiac *puella* does not have any means to express her voice. This irony emphasizes once more the one-sidedness of the *Heroides* (and of 'canonical' elegy).

II.iii. Minor Mentions in the *Heroides*

In addition to the full-length treatments of the myths involving Penelope and Laodamia, the *Heroides* also contain two minor references to one of the heroines selected for this study. Andromache appears briefly in Oenone's and Hermione's letters (Ov. *Epist.* 5,107f and 8,13f respectively). Both mentions draw on what we might call the vulgate image of Andromache, based but not explicitly associated with, descriptions in Homer (*Il.* 6), tragedy and Vergil, where Andromache features as the widow (or widow-to-be) of an heroic and faithful husband, Hector.[126] To both letter-writers, the example of Andromache is probably also attractive because by analogy, it assigns to them, too, the role of the legal wife. To Oenone, striving to refute Helen's claim on Paris, and to Hermione, refusing to be forced into a new marriage, this must seem their rightful role.

II.iii.i. *Not Quite Sisters-in-Law: Oenone (Epist. 5,107f)*

In her letter to Paris, Oenone pronounces Andromache a fortunate woman because Andromache has a husband on whose loyalty she can rely. First and foremost, this mention focuses on Hector's faithfulness rather than on Andromache, and as such it serves Oenone's purpose of a less than flattering comparison for the faithless Paris well.[127] The Andromache reference also ties in with the recurring motive of status and nobility in her letter. It is established early on in the letter that Paris was but a shepherd slave, yet Oenone, a nymph claiming divine ancestry

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[126] On epic influence on Ov. *Epist.* 5,107f, Knox, 1995, 161; on Ov. *Epist.* 8,13f, Palmer, 1898, 352.
[127] Knox, 1995, 161.

took him for a lover (*Epist.* 5,9–12). Later on, Oenone argues she is worthy of the life of royalty (*Epist.* 5,79–86) and so should not be discarded even though Paris' royal ancestry has since been acknowledged. When she places herself on one level with Andromache, the wife of one of Troy's princes and its mightiest warrior, it too hints at her insistence on her status as nobility, even royalty.

felix Andromache, certo bene nupta marito;   Ov. *Epist.* 5,107f
   uxor ad exemplum fratris habenda fui.

(Fortunate Andromache, happily married to a trustworthy husband. I should have been a wife after the fashion of your brother's.)

As so often when elegiac narrators appropriate well-known mythological and literary characters for rhetorical purposes, one may also detect an undertone of irony. Oenone has described herself at length as a creature of the woodlands on mount Ida (cf. *Epist.* 5,13–20), so that one wonders how much truth there really is to her claims that she would be more suited to the purple couch (*purpureo sum magis apta toro*, 'I am better suited to the purple couch' in *Epist.* 5,88).[128] Just as Paris is no Hector, the elegiac Oenone does not quite compare to the epic Andromache.

II.III.ii. *Mistress of the Text: Hermione (Epist. 8,13f)*

Writing to Orestes, to whom she considers herself betrothed, Ovid's Hermione laments the way she, now given away to Achilles' son Pyrrhus, has fared in the aftermath of the Trojan war. Her misfortune, she claims, is larger even than Andromache's:

parcius Andromachen uexauit Achaia uictrix,   Ov. *Epist.* 8,13f
   cum Danaus Phrygias ureret ignis opes.

(Victorious Achaia was more merciful to Andromache when Greek fire burned the Phrygian riches.)

That Hermione should have been treated more cruelly than even Andromache by the Greek victors at Troy seems highly ironic, as Euripides' *Andromache* depicts Hermione herself as the chief tormentor of precisely this woman (cf. the exposition in Eur. *Andr.* 29–39).[129] However, in Hermione's letter to Orestes

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[128] Cf. Jacobson, 1974, 185 with slightly different emphasis, and 189–192 on Oenone's rustic background.
[129] Jacobson, 1974, 43f.

(*Epist.* 8), there is otherwise little to remind the reader of Euripides tragedy,[130] and scholars have suggested that it rather is Sophocles' and Pacuvius' versions of the Hermione story which have influenced Ovid's poem.[131] If we accept this hypothesis, Hermione's statement may serve not only to indicate the suffering Ovid's Hermione feels she has been through, but also to signpost to the external reader the intertextual nexus in which he or she should place Ovid's text.

II.iv. Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I hope to have shown that Ovid's use of literary and mythological characters known as examples of wifely virtues in the *Heroides* shares at least certain traits with the way these examples are used in 'canonical' elegy. As the tweaking of mythological material did in 'canonical' elegy, so does Penelope's fragmented story of the war at Troy invite the reader to compare her version with the one that is dominant within literary tradition, and, more importantly, to come to the conclusion that the limitations of Penelope's perspective may have implications for the validity of her general world view. The same holds true for Laodamia, who strives to fashion herself and Protesilaus as ideal elegiac characters while the reader's pre-knowledge of the myth continually undermines her efforts.

Furthermore, I have suggested that both Penelope's and Laodamia's letters thematize the partial blindness or blinkered perspective peculiar to 'canonical' elegy, and encourage us to examine more closely the objectives of that genre. In Penelope's letter, Ovid develops this theme by means of the *ekphrasis* passage in *Epist.* 1,31–36, where the careful reader finds that elegy is neither able or interested in giving a comprehensive interpretation of the world, nor indeed in providing a real means of communication between lovers. The emphasis on non-communication is more pronounced in Laodamia's letter; despite Laodamia's claims on having a near-psychic connection with Protesilaus, he does not adhere to her wishes of avoiding battle, and at the point where Laodamia comes closest to realizing her daydreams of intimate colloquy with her husband, she does, in fact, attempt to do so with a waxen image lacking the single most important prerequisite for a real exchange – a voice. I have drawn on Sharrock's interpretation of the Pygmalion episode in the *Metamorphoses* to show that Laodamia's letter, if read carefully, displays the same awareness of the artificiality of the elegiac love object as Pygmalion's fashioning of his statue in the *Metamorphoses* highlights for us.

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[130] Jacobson, 1974, 43: "It is almost as if Euripides' play never existed […]."
[131] Palmer, 1898, 350f; Jacobson, 1974, 44f; Fulkerson, 2005, 89, both with further references.

To the metapoetic discussion of 'canonical' elegy in the *Heroides* I have also related the possibility of seeing the *Heroides*, with their transposition of the elegiac discourse to a context determined by epic and tragic parameters, as a parallel for the way 'canonical' elegy relates to contemporary reality and lifestyle. I have argued that we may feasibly view Penelope's and Laodamia's superimposition of elegiac patterns of speech and behaviour onto the better-known mythological and literary epic (or, in the case of Laodamia, tragic) context as an analogy for an attempt to adopt the lifestyle celebrated as ideal in 'canonical' elegy in real life. It is telling, then, that although the letter writers of the *Heroides* strive to interpret events and motivations in an elegiac way, their versions are constantly undermined by the sense of dramatic irony that arises from the reader's pre-knowledge of the wider literary tradition.

That 'canonical' elegy, and indeed the *Heroides*, are not concerned with offering an alternative to the traditional Roman life, but rather with consolidating it, is a conclusion we may reach also by looking at the manner in which Ovid has allowed 'un-elegiac' subject matter to enter into Penelope's letter. I have indicated how Jacobson as well as Spoth have discovered worries and concerns more befitting of the vulgate Penelope – the faithfully waiting wife, based loosely on Homer's character – in the first of the *Heroides*. In this context, I have emphasized the importance of the final distich of Penelope's letter (*certe ego, quae fueram te discedente puella / protinus ut uenias, facta uidebo*r *anus*, 'certainly I, who when you left was a young girl, will seem to have become an old woman, no matter how soon you would come', 115f) and suggested that we see in these lines an indication that the elegization of Penelope in *Epist.* 1 will not be a lastingly successful one. Instead, Penelope will continue to be a character strange to elegy, an *anus* inexorably rooted within a different literary tradition. Elegy, we may surmise, does not cause lasting change in the way we perceive the myths with which the genre sometimes plays. In Ovid's exile poetry, we shall once more note how Ovid draws on the character of Penelope to express this notion.[132]

132 See below, on Ov. *Trist.* 5,5.

CHAPTER THREE

Erotodidactic Elegy

Thisᴄʜᴀᴘᴛᴇʀ ᴡɪʟʟ ᴅɪsᴄᴜss how the use of the mythological examples for
female virtues in erotodidactic texts like Ovid's erotodidactic *Ars amatoria*,
Remedia amoris and erotodidactic passages in elegy differs from their use in other
poetry in form, content, and narratological function. It would be possible to
give an overview of the use of mythological examples in the *Ars amatoria* without
burdening the reader with a full account of every example that fits the overall
pattern (this is indeed done in Patricia Watson's article "Mythological exempla
in Ovid's *Ars amatoria*", to which I am much indebted), but my interest lies with
the comparative development of these female characters in the entire corpus of
elegiac texts of the Augustan period. This is what motivates the more detailed
discussion.

    Following a discussion of my approach to the *Ars amatoria* (in which the major-
ity of this type of references occurs) in the first section, I then distinguish between
references marking a dissociation of narrator from the values the mythological
characters traditionally represent (i.), further references building on but also con-
trasting with literary tradition (ii.), which also includes a most striking example
of references that appear to wilfully neglect earlier tradition. I will argue that the
mythological examples for wifely virtue are constructed in a manner that reflects
on the credibility of the narrator – on some instances in a positive way, but on
most so that the reader gradually comes to question his authority over both his
subject matter and his text. It is a deliberate poetic technique familiar from the
use of mythological examples in 'canonical' elegy (cf. Chapter One) and to some
extent from the *Heroides* (cf. Chapter Two), but it is used more extensively and
more poignantly in the *Ars amatoria*. Thus, the references to traditional exam-
ples of wifely virtues – Penelope, Laodamia, Andromache, Alcestis and Euadne
– contribute to displaying the difference between the world view and values
prevalent in Roman society on the one hand and the narrator of the *Ars amatoria*
on the other, and they allow the external author to play on these discrepancies
for humorous effect.

First, however, a few words on how we may approach Ovid's *Ars amatoria*. I will first consider the poem as a whole together with related passages from 'canonical' elegy, then the premises of erotodidactic discourse in elegy, and finally the particular critical approaches these poems demand. The *Ars* itself has often been called a puzzling poem.[1] In the following interpretations of single passages utilizing female mythological characters, who elsewhere appear as examples of wifely virtue, I will emphasize the comic and humorous effects of the book. I will highlight here how the allure of the *Ars amatoria* lies in the challenge it poses: it dares its readers to use their literary, philological and mythological competence to unmask the narrator and it rewards them with the smile they may share with the author who set up the whole ploy.

My understanding of the *Ars* as a work where humour plays a significant part is to a certain extent founded on the understanding of 'canonical' elegy as a genre which pokes fun at the extreme pose of the characters speaking rather than as a critique of the Roman or Augustan society these characters ostensibly reject.[2] Thus, in the previous chapter on 'canonical' elegy, we saw that the use of mythological examples of wifely virtues in 'canonical' elegy often 'backfires' on the purported intent of the narrators, with ironic or comical effects. Such an understanding of elegy makes it reasonable to expect similar techniques at work in the case of the narrator of the *Ars amatoria* as he has appropriated the elegists' world and associates himself closely with the narrator of Ovid's *Amores*.[3]

Partly, too, I base this approach to the *Ars* on the tradition of erotodidactic discourse in Roman elegy. There is a handful of elegiac poems dominated by their erotodidactic content, in Tibullus (1,4), in Propertius (4,5) and in Ovid's own *Amores* (1,8). Admittedly, erotodidaxis is touched upon in several elegies (one might mention Prop. 1,6 or Ov. *Am*. 1,4; 2,19; 3,4) but in the abovementioned poems, it is the main motive. The *lenae* in Prop. 4,5 and Ov. *Am*. 1,8 together with Priapus in Tibullus 1,4 offer the most complete teachings of love in 'canonical' elegy. Furthermore, in these poems, we have a clear-cut division of roles: the characters appearing as teachers of love are not themselves immediately involved in the elegiac relationship on which they offer advice. In fact, one finds that in Propertius 4,5 and Ovid's *Am*. 1,8 the teacher of love is a *lena* ('bawd'), a stock elegiac character but always considered a threat to the elegiac relationship, and

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[1] Dalzell, 1996, 132–134 offers a summary of the divergent opinions on the *Ars* in earlier scholarship.

[2] This interpretation of 'canoncial' elegy has been put forward by, for instance, Veyne, 1988, 26–28; 44 and 153–155; Holzberg, 2001, 21–27.

[3] Cf. Dalzell, 1996, 140–144 and *Ars* 2,169–174; 547–554.

in Tibullus 1,4 the god Priapus lectures the narrator on the loving of boys. Both Priapus and the two *lenae* are – here as elsewhere – represented by the narrators as morally corrupt characters from whom we may not expect anything less than deviation from the norms of traditional Roman society. By association, resting on the use of similar poetic technique as well as on the subject matter they share, we have good reason to look for a similar attitude in the case of the narrator of the *Ars*. Additionally, the fringe-position of the erotodidactic speakers in elegy coincides with what we may assume about real erotodidactics. Fragmentary handbooks in prose are usually presented as being the work of female slave courtesans living on the fringes of the society, be it Greek or Roman.[4] It would seem that in order to teach the handiwork of love, one had at least to pretend to thrive on the fringes of society.

Furthermore, the three erotodidactic narrators within the corpus of 'canonical' elegy (Acanthis in Prop. 4,5, Priapus in Tib. 1,4 and Dipsas in *Am.* 1,8) are literary characters constructed for a particular purpose. The bawds Acanthis and Dipsas are, more specifically, stage characters whose generic history imply that they are just a mask for someone else. There is a sense of doubling here, as Dipsas' speech and actions in Ov. *Am.* 1,8 are relayed to the reader by the male narrator, claiming to eavesdrop on her conversation. Myers argues that Dipsas in Ov. *Am.* 1,8 is introduced precisely as a stage character lent from Comedy to be unmasked by the elegiac narrator (and his audience) "seeking moral high ground".[5] Thus, Dipsas' moral deficiencies are exposed throughout the poem in order to enhance the reader's sympathy for the narrator – even as they obliquely hint at similarities between Dipsas and himself which make obvious the self-contradictions inherent in the elegiac system.[6] By analyzing his use of mythological examples of wifely virtues, I will show that the poetic technique of the *praeceptor amoris* ('teacher of love') in the *Ars amatoria* is closely related to the one used by erotodidactic speakers in the *Amores*, particularly by Dipsas. This invites us to unmask the *praeceptor amoris* as we have Dipsas and the narrator of the *Amores*.

The *Ars amatoria* is not a wholly narrative text, but contains lengthy narrative passages and the study of narrative will lend us useful tools.[7] We can define the *praeceptor amoris'* pose more succinctly if we use the concepts of *unreliable narration* and *unreliable narrator*. Current in literary theory since the 1960s, these concepts signify the use of a narrator who, through inconsistencies in the text (between

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4 Parker, 1992, 92.

5 Myers, 1996, 12.

6 Myers, 1996, 20f.

7 Sharrock, 2006, 23–39 underscores the usefulness of a narratological approach to the *Ars*.

the narrator and the whole of the work) or between the text and the facts the reader knows to be true according to his own world view, reveals himself to be less than accurate. The term unreliable narration as introduced by Wayne Booth in 1961 based on inconsistencies between the narrator and the implied author: "I have called a narrator *reliable* when he speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say, the implied author's norms), *unreliable* when he does not."[8] Though many scholars still refer to the level of consistency of the narrator's world view with that of the implied author for the evaluation of a narrator's reliability, Nünning emphasizes the role of the reader. He stresses that the reader resolves and measures the tensions in the texts by recurring to his or hers – rather than the implied author's – own culturally encoded expectations on the work and on the world.[9]

Unreliable narrators often make use of utterances ostensibly meant to reassure the reader of his, the narrator's, credibility, like emphatic speech and addresses to the reader, subjective and interpretive comments on the narrated 'facts'. An unreliable narrator is focussed above all on him- or herself and tend to harangue the reader in long monologues.[10] Though unreliable narration is generally found (and studied) in explicitly narrative texts like 18th century to modern novels, these features are all quite frequent in the *Ars amatoria*, and of course not only in Ovid's treatment of female mythological examples of virtue. Another passage, where the unreliability of the narrator becomes especially palpable, is the epiphany of Apollo in *Ars* 2,493–510[11] as well as the use of the term *uates* ('seer') in the proem of the first book (*Ars* 1,25–30).[12] The way Ovid creates a distance between the nar-

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[8] W. C. Booth, 1961, 302.

[9] Nünning, 1998, 23–26. I quote from p. 23: [...] dass es sich bei unreliable narration nicht um ein rein textimmanentes – sei es strukturelles oder semantisches Phänomen handelt, sondern um eine relationales bzw. interaktionales, bei dem die Informationen und Strukturen des Textes und das von Rezipienten an den Text herangetragene Weltwissen und Werte- und Normensystem gleichermaßen zu berücksichtigen sind.

[10] Nünning, 1998, 27f.

[11] Cf. Janka, 1997, 376: "Kunstvolles Trinken als Klimax der Auslegung delphischer Weisheitslehre müsse grotesk anmuten […] Die komischen Kontraste, die sich aus dieser 'Vereinnahmung' Apolls ergeben, sind natürlich unverkennbar."

[12] The concept of *uates* ('seer') in the sense of a divinely inspired poet/seer foretelling Roman/Augustan greatness is developed by Vergil and adopted by Horace. It is present, though not completely appropriated, in Propertius and Tibullus. In Ovid, *uates* and *poeta* have become practically interchangeable, yet Ovid sometimes plays with the Vergilian sense of the word, Newman, 1967, 181–195; Ahern, 1990, 44–48.

rator's interpretation of the events and the interpretation the reader is prompted to, is thus by no means without parallel. This will support the interpretations suggested below which emphasize this trait in Ovid's text.[13]

It was noted early on that unreliable narration calls for especially scrutinizing readings since the particular effects of unreliable narration are not explicit, but ensue from information which is merely implicitly present in the text.[14] The reader is asked, to a higher extent than in other kinds of narrative, to compare the information presented by the narrator (the 'facts' as well as the narrator's interpretation of the 'facts') with what he or she knows to be true according to the whole of the work or to other extra-textual instances. This means that if we do suspect that we are dealing with an unreliable narrator, the light that intertextuality and context may shed on the text is of utmost importance. Reading the *Ars* thus demands a heightened sensitivity with regards to the influence of possible intertexts and allusions.

In humour theory incongruity is put forward as a major cause of amusement.[15] This is highly relevant to the interpretation of the 'irreverent' and sometimes internally conflicting renderings of myth in the *Ars* which reveal the unreliability of the narrator.[16] An established and largely constant tradition is a prerequisite for Ovid's use of myth. If the ironic or comical effects of the *praeceptor*'s seemingly inept use of mythological material is a significant feature of the text, it follows that the text does not essentially challenge the traditional or vulgate versions of the myths in question. The sometimes irreverent play with myth and literary traditon in texts like the *Ars* or 'canonical' elegy rests on the reader's appreciation of subtle changes to the dominant strands of tradition – changes which nevertheless imply that they will not significantly alter the reader's perception of the myth, or, to paraphrase, change his or hers view on 'what *really* happened'. What they do change, is, as I will argue, the appreciation of the narrator who suggests them. For instance, references to the mythological examples of female virtue made by more neutral *personae* in other writings of Propertius and Ovid, both earlier and later, are consistent with the traditional image of these women as virtuous wives and

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[13] Philological discussion focussing on the incongruities between the narrator and the author of the *Ars* but making no reference to the theoretical framework sketched here include Fyler, 1971; Blodgett, 1972 and Myerowitz, 1985. Differently, Volk, 2002.

[14] W. C. Booth, 1961, 302; Nünning, 1998, 19: "[…] erfordert […] eine erhöhte Rezeptionsleistung."

[15] Clark, 1987, 139–155; Morreall, 1987, 212–224; Evrard, 1996, 28f.

[16] The same holds true for other kinds of incongruities that arise from the narrator's peculiar interpretations of traditional Roman lifestyle (cf. the use of rhetoric, *Ars* 1,455–464).

widows.[17] As I have suggested in the chapter on the *Heroides* (see II.I.iii.) and as we will see again in the chapter on Ovid's exile poetry (cf. esp. on Ov. *Trist.* 5,5), the elegists may toy with the notion of an elegiac Penelope or Andromache, but such renderings do not seem designed to influence the morality of their contemporaries or even lastingly change their appreciation of the myths.

Furthermore, when comparing Ovid's text to other texts featuring unreliable narrators, it is evident that the narrator in the *Ars amatoria* does not twist the facts of the 'story' because he is skirting the issue of his murdering someone in cold blood (in which case his unreliability may be intimidating and potentially thought-provoking, cf. Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (1926) or Bierce's short story *The Parenticide Club* (1888)), nor because he is resorting to psychological defence mechanisms for fear of being rejected (like one might suppose in the case of Briony in McEwan's *Atonement* (2001), where one feels rather sorry for the narrator). Ovid's *praeceptor amoris* is forced to twist his facts to fit his story (or, as we shall see, his mythology to fit his precepts) because he is advocating a way of life entirely foreign to readers idealizing or accepting a idealized traditional Roman lifestyle. Using Nünning's definition of how to determine whether a narrator is reliable or not, which beside intratextual signals brings to the fore the importance of the reader's value frames and context,[18] we may assume that contemporary reader response to the *Ars amatoria* could range between amusement and contempt for the narrator's misconceptions of his world. In addition, there would be variations within that range both between different readers and between the response of one reader to different passages in the text.

Still, we must pay heed to the fact that the unveiling of the *praeceptor amoris* as an unreliable narrator does not *per se* provide any guidance as to whether we are to understand the *Ars amatoria* as a predominately humorous or serious work of art, if we are to detect humorous aspects in the seriousness, or seriousness hidden in humour.

Equally, I would like to stress that even if we do accept that the outside-of-society position the narrators in 'canonical' elegy occupied was intended and understood as entertainment rather than it was a means of making a politically radical statement, this does not necessarily hold true for the *Ars amatoria* as well. The *Ars* may very well be more concerned with literary genre-games than with politics, but on the other hand, literary techniques very similar to the ones used in early elegy, a genre condoned by Maecenas through his patronage of Propertius,

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[17] E.g. Prop. 3,12,23–25; 37f; 3,13,23f. Ov. *Trist.* 1,6,19–22; 4,3,29 (Andromache alone); 5,5,44–58; 14,35–40.

[18] Nünning, 1998, 23–26.

may just as well be used as a cover-up for a message which is politically charged. This message would then be conveyed by the means of a humorous decoy: the unreliable narrator, the *praeceptor amoris*. Ultimately, the text of the *Ars amatoria* allows both interpretations.[19] The literary technique remains the same.

III.1. All Very Well, Just Not My Style: References in keeping with the narrator's claims for himself

The traditional examples of wifely virtues appear in some erotodidactic passages endowed with the same qualities of womanly virtue ascribed to them in the earlier main literary tradition and, though they are formally described as exemplary and put to rhetorical use in that capacity, the narrator emphasizes his wish to dissociate him/herself and his (or her) disciples from these women as models since he (or she) considers the example's specific behaviour less relevant for the audience. This poetic technique was foreshadowed in the *Amores* in the partly erotodidactic 3,4 with its reference to Penelope, where the narrator, as we have seen, did acknowledge Penelope's virtue but at the same time conveyed his disinterest or disassociation from her character (see above, I.vi. Taking up teaching). Dealing in turn with four different passages (*Ars* 3,15–22; 109f; 519–524; *Rem.* 383f), this section will show how this dissociation is entirely in keeping with the *praeceptor*'s claim to teach nothing but light-hearted love games and that by placing references of this kind especially in the beginning of his books, Ovid carefully establishes the narrator as a competent teacher of love.

The proem of the third book of the *Ars amatoria* (*Ars* 3,1–100) consists of two main parts. In the first 56 verses, the *praeceptor* justifies his writing of a lover's handbook for women both by referring to mythological examples and by an epiphany of Venus, commanding him to hand the women the same weapons that were given to the men in the two earlier books. This first part of the introduction, and in particular the verses 1–28, are ostensibly aimed at male readers possibly disapproving of the narrator's undertaking. In anticipation thereof, the *praeceptor* admits to the existence of women who have brought their lovers or husbands sufferings and disaster, as he names Helen, Clytaimnestra and Eriphyle in *Ars* 3,11–14, but juxtaposes them with Penelope, Laodamia, Alcestis and Euadne (*Ars* 3,15–22), all four of whom are evidence of moral strength and bravery in women. This catalogue is capped by the argument that since Virtue is personified by a woman and is indeed of feminine grammatical gender, women must be especially virtuous.

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[19] Holzberg, 1997, 119–121.

est pia Penelope lustris errante duobus   Ov. Ars 3,15
    et totidem lustris bella gerente uiro.
respice Phylaciden, et quae comes isse marito
    fertur et ante annos occubuisse suos.
fata Pheretiadae coniunx Pagasaea redemit
    proque uiro est uxor funere lata uiri.
'accipe me, Capaneu: cineres miscebimur' inquit
    Iphias in medios desiluitque rogos.
ipsa quoque et cultu est et nomine femina Uirtus
    non mirum, populo si placet illa suo.

(There is Penelope, faithful ten years long as her husband was travelling, and another ten as he waged war. Think of the man from Phylace, and of her, who they say went as her husband's companion and died before her time. The wife in Pagasae bought back Admetus' fate and instead of the husband, the wife was carried to her man's grave. 'Take me, Capaneus! As ashes we will be blended together,' spoke Iphis' daughter, and sprang into the midst of the pyre. Virtue herself is in raiment and name a woman: small wonder, that she pleases her own people.)

However, the narrator immediately and forcefully distances himself from women of this character, saying:

nec tamen hae mentes nostra poscuntur ab arte;   Ov. Ars 3,25
    conueniunt cumbae uela minora meae.

(Still, my art does not ask for such hearts: smaller sails become my ship.)

This explicit distancing of his readers from the heroines of old, to whom they would have been supposed to look when searching for role models and whose reputation he himself relies on to lend rhetorical weight to his argument that there are indeed virtuous women, encourages the reader to go back and examine more closely the *praeceptor*'s statements about the women he just listed as exemplary. First, however, we must consider the immediate context of the catalogue.

Following the Penelope-catalogue, the narrator lists a number of mythological heroines to demonstrate the need of instruction. These were deceived by their lovers due to their lack of preparation: Medea, Ariadne, Phyllis and Dido (*Ars* 3,33–40, referred to below as the Medea-catalogue).

Phasida, iam matrem, fallax dimisit Iason;   Ov. Ars 3,33
    uenit in Aesonios altera nupta sinus.
quantum in te, Theseu, uolucres Ariadna marinas
    pauit in ignoto sola relicta loco.

quaere, Nouem cur una Uiae dicatur, et audi
   depositis siluas Phyllida flesse comis.
et famam pietatis habet, tamen hospes et ensem
   praebuit et causam mortis, Elissa, tuae.

(Iason, the treacherous man, sent the woman from Phasis away, though she was already a mother; a new wife came into the arms of Aesonius' son. How much did not Ariadne fear the birds of the sea, all for your sake, Theseus, as she was left alone in an unknown place. Ask why there is a road called Nine roads, and you will hear that the woods wept for Phyllis as they let their leaves fall. And your guest, Elissa, famous for his piety, still offered you both sword and reason to die.)

The four women catalogued here form a counterpart to Penelope, Laodamia, Alcestis and Euadne in 15–22. The unifying factor in the Medea-catalogue is that these women neither knew how to start out in love nor how to keep a lover.[20] The reader will most likely start at this interpretation of events, especially in the case of Dido.[21] In *Ars* 3,25 the *praeceptor* has with *nec tamen hae mentes* already claimed that Penelope's and Alcestis' bravery is of little relevancy to his intended audience – according to himself young, unattached women who were allowed some extent of erotic license[22] – but that audience will have arrived at the turning point where the *praeceptor* claims that the women in the Medea-catalogue made disastrous choices or failed in technique. The women of the Penelope-catalogue

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[20] Cf. *Ars* 3,41f: *quid uos perdiderit, dicam: nescistis amare; / defuit ars uobis: arte perennat amor.* ('I will tell you what it was that destroyed you: you did not know how to love; you did not have the art: it is art that makes love eternal.') This passage of course concerns the inability of the mythological examples to make their relationship last, but I think we may infer from the recurring image of men in armour going to battle against helpless women (*Ars* 3,1–6 and 45f respectively) that the parties Ovid is writing for are not already involved and that men envision new (rather than renewed) equal battle with trepidation (3,7f). Cf. also Kennedy, 2006, 62–64.

[21] In Dido's case, the reader will recall Vergil's version which has Dido unwittingly falling victim to the schemes of Iuno and Venus. The re-interpretion certainly suggests to the reader that the narrator may offer a slightly biased and over-enthusiastic version of the myths, but it does not yet seriously undermine his claims for himself. The effects of re-interpretation leading the reader to question the narrator's ability to judge his own capacities adequately is cumulative.

[22] Obviously to be separated from the intended audience of Ovid, which was significantly wider. On the audience, see Holzberg, 1997, 119f; Giebel, 1999, 245–254; R. K. Gibson, 2003, 35f.

on the other hand are known as loving wives, partners in a marital union approved of by the community they lived in, and the juridical aspects of marriage, inheritance and remarriage are of some importance in earlier versions of their stories. The difficulties in which Penelope and so forth prove themselves and their loyalty to their husbands ensue not as a result of their respective choice of partner or of their failing to keep their lover interested, but are inflicted externally, and the narrator takes care to remind us of that by mentioning the Trojan war in the verses focussing on Penelope. When he proceeds to the Medea-catalogue, though, the wording of his first example makes no mention of the mythological context but reduces the myth of Medea to the bare story of a woman thwarted in love. Looking backwards we note that the dramatic juncture of the stories of the women of the Penelope-catalogue thus differs significantly from the one in which the narrator sees his readers. In the Penelope-catalogue, the *praeceptor* uses *maritus*, 'husband' (of Protesilaus in 3,17), *coniunx*, 'wife' (of Alcestis in 3,19) and *uxor*, 'wife' (also of Alcestis in 3,20); in the Medea-catalogue, there are no such terms, except that Creusa, Medea's rival, is called *altera nupta* ('another wife') in 3,34. This difference reinforces the narrator's dissociation from the women of the Penelope-catalogue in 3,25f.

The impression of increasing distance between the examples in the Penelope-catalogue and the readers is further enhanced by the reverse chronological order in which the examples are presented. The narrator sets out with the most recent one, Penelope's waiting for Odysseus at the end of the Trojan war. Even within the distich on Penelope, the narrator first points to the *lustris duobus* ('ten years') of Odysseus' travels, then to the ten years of war by Troy (*totidem lustris*, 'as many years'). From Penelope, the narrator turns to Laodamia, whose story takes place not at the end, but at the very beginning of the Trojan War, thus moving further away from the readers' temporal context. The stories of Alcestis and Euadne belong to a still more remote mythological era, the *Supplicants* playing just after the war of the Seven against Thebes, the *Alcestis* presumably in the same age. Considering also the importance of the myths concerning the fall of Troy in Augustan culture, this movement away from the reader's own temporal and mythological context is a subtle means of distancing the readers from the examples in the catalogue.

This movement has its counterpart in the Medea-catalogue (3,33–40), which starts with Medea and the Argonauts, continues with Ariadne and Theseus, who we may place in the same age, then moves on to the next generation with Theseus' son Demophoon and finally, turning to the Trojan and hence to the Roman, Dido and Aeneas, setting out to found Rome.

The two catalogues furthermore display a movement from the *Odyssey* to the

Aeneid, to Penelope from Dido, the Roman classic emulating the Greek, moving over the works of Euripides, Apollonius of Rhodes, Catullus and Callimachus. Still more, it is a movement from one Ovidian heroine to another, and the fact that all but two heroines (Alcestis and Euadne, the ones where the impression of distance is at its peak) have been treated extensively in the *Heroides* establishes the *praeceptor*, speaking in Ovid's own name, as a competent and well-read teacher of love.[23] The reference to the *Heroides* is clear as the narrator in *Ars* 3,33–40 sides unanimously with the betrayed women and particularly the closing words *et famam pietatis habet, tamen hospes et ensem / praebuit et causam mortis, Elissa, tuae* ('and your guest, Elissa, famous for his piety, still offered you both sword and reason to die') in *Ars* 3,39f recall *Epist*. 7,195: *praebuit Aeneas et causam mortis et ensem* ('Aeneas offered both source and cause to die').[24]

In the Penelope-catalogue, consideration of the *Heroides* contributes to the distinction of the heroines. The emphasis on the passing of time in the distich on Penelope and the repetitive manner of presentation (*lustris* is spelled out twice) forcefully brings out the long duration of Penelope's sufferings.[25] I see this as an allusion to the prominence of the motives of time and aging in Penelope's letter, where they feature significantly both at the beginning and at the end of the letter, revealing the less than heroic frustration of Penelope peculiar to her letter.[26] In *Epist*. 1 Penelope further distinguishes clearly between the more bearable waiting for Odysseus while the war was still on, and the difficult time after the return of the other Greek survivors; this may be alluded to by *lustris* […] *lustris* in the *Ars*.[27] In the *Ars amatoria*, the recollection of Penelope's own version, even though it

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[23] Cf. the recommendation of especially the *Heroides* as instructive reading for would-be lovers in *Ars* 3,345f, with detailed interpretation of the ironic effects of this advice in Kennedy, 2006, 54–74.

[24] Cf. R. K. Gibson, 2003, 102f.

[25] The parallel Prop. 2,9,3f: (*Penelope poterat bis denos salua per annos / uiuere, tam multis femina digna procis*, 'Penelope was able to live chaste twenty years, a woman worthy of so many suitors') has been noted by Brandt, 1902, 133, but in Propertius, Penelope is referred to as an largely positive example contrasted with the fickle Cynthia, cf. I.ii.

[26] The motives of time and ageing are overall present in her letter, but poignantly formulated in Ov. *Epist*. 1,8–10; 53–56. In the final verses (1,115f), Penelope writes *certe ego, quae fueram te discedente puella, / protinus ut redeas, facta uidebor anus*. ('certainly I, who when you left was a young girl, will seem to have become an old woman, no matter how soon you would come'). Cf. Jacobson, 1974, 262f.

[27] Ov. *Epist*. 1,13–36 recounts first Penelope's worries for Odysseus during the war, then how other couples are reunited. In *Epist*. 1,67–70 Penelope wishes that the war was still on, so that she at least would not be alone worrying about her husband, like she is now.

makes her no less virtuous, reminds the reader not only of her faithfulness, but of the wearying everyday sacrifices demanded by heroism as well.

Laodamia is the catalogue's second example, but the first of the three women to have given her own life for her husbands. The tragic brevity of Laodamia's life is stressed by the comparison with Penelope in the distich above. After the historic present tense in Penelope's lines, Laodamia's story is recounted in an ACI with the perfect infinitives *isse* ('went') and *occubuisse* ('died'), both governed by *fertur* ('they say'). On the first glance, *isse* and *occubuisse* seems like a hendiadys joined by an *et explicativum* in 3,18, assuming that *isse* means *isse in mortem*, 'went to her death'.[28] This would mean that the distich on Laodamia contains only one piece of action as the two phrases bring minimal variation of a motive, saying she died with her husband and she died before her time. In comparison, though it encompasses only one piece of action, the distich on Penelope is carefully divided into two different periods. In 3,19f Alcestis buys her husband free in her first line and is carried to the grave in his place in her second. Euadne first speaks to Capaneus, then jumps onto his pyre. I think one must turn again to the *Heroides* and Laodamia's letter (Nr. 13) in order to resolve the seeming hendiadys of *isse* and *occubuisse*. One may reject the possibility that Laodamia would have followed her husband to Troy with a reference to Homer's statement that she was left alone in Thessaly after Protesilaus' death (*Il.* 2,700),[29] and whereas it is of course correct that Laodamia did not in flesh follow Protesilaus, this interpretation does not take the complexity of the *comes*-motive in *Epist.* 13 into account. As we have seen in Chapter Two, the first variation of the *comes*-motive in Laodamia's letter has Laodamia imaging herself, by force of her close relationship with her husband, as Protesilaus' companion in Troy; the second variation shows her willingness to die with him.[30] As we have seen in the *Heroides* chapter, Laodamia's assertions of closeness to Protesilaus are undermined by the intrusion of dramatic irony, but the naïve reading of the Laodamia distich in the *Ars* might play on a similarly naïve or overly sympathetic reading of the *Heroides* letter. In *Ars* 3,15f the repeated references to the Trojan war in the proem and to the fact that so many lovers were closely involved in it (Menelaus and Helen, Clytaemnestra and Agamemnon, Penelope and Odysseus, Dido and Aeneas) as well as the metaphorical description of love as war (3,1–6) justifies a twofold reading of Laodamia as *comes*.

However, this allusion to the compassionate description of Laodamia in *Epist.*

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[28] So Brandt, 1902, 133. R. K. Gibson, 2003, 94, too, seems to take it this way, remarking that *comes* is often used of those following beloveds or friends into death.

[29] So Brandt, 1902, 133.

[30] Above, II.ii.ii.

13 does not prevent the narrator from demonstrating dissociation from her as a model. He does this by using the slightly archaic word *occumbere* ('die'), which in its non-military sense occurs mainly in early poetry and sounds quite solemn[31] and by the introduction of an intermediary instance. The use of *fertur* implies a dissociation from the events retold, whether we take it to mean 'rumour has it' or a way of making a reference to an earlier literary tradition[32] which includes not least Ovid's own *Heroides* and thus once more lends support to his claim of mastering his subject. Still, the ensuing ACI-construction of indirect speech lessens the impact of the dramatic action as compared to the other examples: the change of tense and mode to a finite perfect with punctual aspect in the distichs on Alcestis and Euadne and finally the change to direct speech by Euadne (3,21) gradually increase the dramatic tension in the passage. One would perhaps expect the tragic and the heroic to increase with it, but humour undercuts the seriousness of the descriptions of both Alcestis and Euadne: in Alcestis' case there is a pun on *uir* by polyptoton (3,20: *proque uiro est uxor funere lata uiri*, 'and instead of the husband, the wife was carried to her man's grave'),[33] which on the one hand is merely witty, still on the other recalls the recriminations of Pheres in Euripides' *Alcestis* (Eur. *Alc.* 694–701), namely that Admetus acts unmanly as he allows Alcestis to take his place. One may further note that this means shifting the focus from Alcestis to Admetus, perhaps even implying that Alcestis is a fool to sacrifice herself for such an unworthy partner, thus causing a dissociation from her as a paragon of virtue.[34]

In the next distich, Euadne's lines are orientated mainly on her monologue before the pyre of Capaneus in Euripides' *Supplicants* (Eur. *Suppl.* 1014–1025).[35] As Euadne's call is full of i- and k-sounds, phonetic unity heightens the dramatic tension, but this, as well as the weight that might have been lent to Ovid's text by allusions to literary tradition, is undermined by the intrusion of humour. In Euripides, Euadne addresses Death (*Suppl.* 1006), not the already dead Cap-

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[31] *ThLL* s.v. *occumbo* I. In Ovid only in *Epist.* 9,141; *Met.* 7,437; 12,207; 15,499; *Fast.* 6,364; all with a note of solemnity.

[32] *Fertur* is characterized as an external marker of allusion suggestive of another source, Wills, 1996, 31.

[33] R. K. Gibson, 2003, 274f; Wills, 1996, 213–216.

[34] R. K. Gibson, 2003, 94 notes the similarity to *Ars* 3,431 *funere saepe uiri uir quaeritur*: […] ('often they seek new men at their husbands' burials') that in hindsight reinforces the dissociation from Alcestis in the proem by suggesting she should have taken rather a different attitude to her husband's potential death.

[35] Brandt, 1902, 134; R. K. Gibson, 2003, 95.

aneus himself. She speaks of joining her breast to Capaneus', but describes the unreciprocated touch of a grieving spouse (*Suppl.* 1019–1025), whereas Ovid's Euadne uses the first person plural in active future, thus implying immediately impending reciprocation.[36] Further, in Euripides Euadne provides motivation for her decision to die first in another monologue (*Suppl.* 990–1008), then in the abovementioned one, then again in the *agon* with her father (*Suppl.* 1048–1071). In the *Ars amatoria* the *praeceptor*'s version is so condensed and allows so little time for reflection between word and action, that Euadne no longer seems tragic or elevated, but instead rather frivolous.

The final argument, that of virtue being peculiar to women because the word *per se* is of feminine gender and has a feminine personification though it is derived from *uir* and generally connotes male virtue, Gibson describes as a "sparkling paradox" between the demand for individual evaluation with *spectetur meritis quaeque puella suis* ('let every girl be judged on her own merits') in 3,10 and the claim that women are virtuous in general.[37] This incongruity, and the re-interpretation of the myths alluded to in the Medea-catalogue as merely being stories of women inept at the game of love, is so far the only hint we get that the narrator has to tweak his material to make it fit comfortably with his teachings. Only gradually (or only under the influence of the similar tactics of the *praeceptor amoris* in *Ars* 1 and 2) will the constant re-interpretations of mythological material make the reader suspicious of the narrator's claims for himself.

In these series of examples the *praeceptor* takes care to establish himself as someone completely in command of his subject by repeated self-references to the *Heroides*, but while making use of them for his rhetorical purposes, he explicitly assures his readers that they will not be expected to go through the hardships of the virtuous wives he has referred to in the Penelope-catalogue. Indeed, re-reading the Penelope-catalogue with that promise in mind, we do discover that the narrator makes his dissociation from the traditional examples of womanly virtue evident already in the catalogue by the means of literary allusion to texts emphasizing the drawbacks of heroism, by syntax and by allowing the humorous to undermine the tragic perception of the stories of the heroines. Therefore, the gradual dissociation from the virtuous heroines of old is in fact an important means for the narrator to establish his authorial credibility as a teacher of *nil nisi*

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[36] If Heinsius' emendation *miscebimur* for the Mss *miscebimus* is correct, as most editors assume (Brandt, 1902, 133; Kenney, 1961, 185; R. K. Gibson, 2003, 95), Euadne also prefers an unusual and subsequently striking formulation, so R. K. Gibson, 2003, 95.

[37] R. K. Gibson, 2003, 95. Ov. *Ars* 3,10, ('Each and every girl should be tried by her own merits').

lascivi amores ('nothing but love for fun') at the opening of his book. At this stage of the text and on a first reading, we might just about be willing to let ourselves be fooled.

Another case of dissociation from a woman elsewhere drawn upon as exemplary occurs in *Ars* 3,109f, where Andromache and Hector serve as an example of the inferiority of archaic rudeness to Augustan refinement.

corpora si ueteres non sic coluere puellae,	Ov. *Ars* 3,107
nec ueteres cultos sic habuere uiros.	
si fuit Andromache tunicas induta ualentes,	
quid mirum? duri militis uxor erat.	
scilicet Aiaci coniunx ornata uenires,	
cui tegumen septem terga fuere boum!	
simplicitas rudis ante fuit; nunc aurea Roma est	
et domiti magnas possidet orbis opes.	

(If the girls of old didn't care about their bodies, then neither did they have very fashionable men in ancient times. If Andromache wore coarse dresses, what wonder? She was the wife of a rough soldier. Imagine, you would, as Aias' lady, come all dressed up to him, who had the hides of seven oxen for cover! Before, there was rude simplicity, now the city of Rome is golden and possesses great treasures of the world she has conquered.)

Ostensibly, the *praeceptor* seeks to create a strong division between the *rusticitas* of the past and the *cultus* of present-day Rome (113f), which is introduced by means of our passage and developed further in the following, and present already within the examples of Andromache and Tecmessa with the opposition of *ante* ('before') and *nunc* ('now'). This division pegs the traditional Andromache as outdated and irrelevant as a model for Ovid's contemporary female readers.[38] However, a close reading of the passage will reveal that Andromache did in fact act correctly and quite in keeping with teachings the narrator has proposed elsewhere: she adjusted

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[38] Myerowitz stresses the debasement of the mythological characters, Myerowitz, 1985, 146: '[…] Andromache and Aias are not colossal figures which bestride time but two rustic louts who are no paradigm for the cultivated lovers of the present age […]'. Myerowitz thus overlooks the fact that Andromache and Tecmessa do actually offer a – outdated though it is – realization of precepts the narrator has offered elsewhere. R. K. Gibson, 2003, 306f suggests that the passage may also contain a metapoetical statement as the mention of Andromache's coarse dress might be interpreted metaphorically as a reference to Ennius' tragedy *Andromache*, and that Ovid subsequently is distancing himself from this too rough style of writing as well. There are, however, no other indications of this being a metapoetical statement and we know of only one other early Roman tragedy featuring Andromache, cf. Jocelyn, 1969, 236.

her dress to fit her husband's taste and position.[39] When the reader notes that Andromache's behaviour can be considered fitting and governed by consideration for her husband, then he or she is also reminded of the traditional image of Andromache as a virtuous and considerate wife, who would show the appropriate restraint in dress.[40] The same holds true for Tecmessa, the beloved of the greater Aias, who is mentioned in the following verses. Though this by no means is the main point of the passage, I think we may note that this, like the example of Andromeda and Andromache in *Ars* 2,643–646 (below) puts Andromache wittily at one level with the presumed disciples of the narrator.

The *praeceptor*'s dissociation from Andromache in 3,109f and from the traditional examples of womanly virtue in 3,15–22 does not reflect negatively on him, though that rejection ultimately also means a rejection of traditional norms of society. Rather, this dissociation is consistent with the *praeceptor*'s stated ambition of teaching nothing but love for fun (*nil nisi lascivi per me discuntur amores*, 'I teach only love for fun', in *Ars* 3,27) and with his description of himself as someone living in an elegiac manner.[41] Thus, with regard to the poetic technique, these instances of dissociation from traditional examples of female virtue serve to reinforce the narrator's credibility and are quite aptly placed early on in the book.

It is with regard to its poetical function that the dissociation from Andromache and Tecmessa in *Ars* 3,517–524 differs from the instances above.

odimus et maestas; Tecmessam diligat Aiax,   Ov. *Ars* 3,517
     nos hilarem populum, femina laeta capit.
numquam ego te, Andromache, nec te, Tecmessa, rogarem
     ut mea de uobis altera amica foret.
credere uix uideor, cum cogar credere partu,
     uos ego cum uestris concubuisse uiris.
scilicet Aiaci mulier maestissima dixit
     'lux mea' quaeque solent uerba iuvare uiros!

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[39] Most notably by the overall impact of Book 3 of the *Ars* with its insistence that the woman is to take pains to appear attractive to the men, summed up in *cura placere uiro* ('the wish to please a man') in *Ars* 3,380. Cf. also Ov. *Med. fac.* 23f: *nec tamen indignum, si uobis cura placendi / cum comptos habeant saecula nostra uiros*: ('but still it is no shame, if you take care to please them, in our time there are smart men') and further on, 27f: *cui se quaeque parent quos et uenentur amores, / refert; munditia crimina nulla merent* ('it matters for whom each one prepares herself and what kind of lover one is hunting for: but an elegant appearance is never wrong').

[40] In the pictorial tradition, Andromache is usually displayed wearing simple clothing, see below III.iii.

[41] Cf. *Ars* 2,169–172; 547–554, and cf. Brescia, 1996, 30f.

(I detest the sullen ones too, Aias may love Tecmessa, but we are the merry people and it is the cheerful girl who catches our eye. I would never ask you, Andromache, nor you, Tecmessa, that either of you would be my girlfriend. I can hardly believe it, even though I have to because of your children, that you ever did sleep with your husbands. Really, did that most sorrowful lady of Aias say 'my love' and such words that usually please a man!)

The narrator brings out the opposition between the detestable past and the enjoyable present by metrical, formal and syntactical means as well by an explicit statement on Tecmessa's depressing appearance. Illustrating his advice always to wear happy looks with negative examples, the *praeceptor* emphasizes the statement of how unattractive Tecmessa must have been with a change in meter. The heavy spondees in the hexameter are replaced by a swifter, anapestic rhythm in the pentameter with the words *hilarem populum* ('merry people'),[42] which describe the contemporaries of the *praeceptor*.

Moreover, the frequent personal and possessive pronouns (*nos, ego, te, te, uobis, uos, ego* as well as *mea* and *uestris* respectively) underline the opposition between the narrator and his contemporaries on the one hand and the heroines of the past on the other, and thus further emphasize the dissociation of the *praeceptor* from the two heroines.[43]

The poetical function of this dissociation, however, is not the same as in the three instances I have discussed so far, since the reasoning behind it is based on a partially blind interpretation of myth. The *praeceptor* refuses to consider either Tecmessa or Andromache as possible girlfriends because of their sullen demeanour, and suggests that the male party was confronted with a grieving woman already at the initial stage of their relationship.[44] Again, the evidence offered by the *praeceptor* seems to have some merit. The reader will be aware that Tecmessa was abducted by Aias as a slave during the early stages of the Trojan war and made his concubine. In Sophocles' *Aias* it is Tecmessa herself who gives the most concise description of her life story in her pleading speech to Aias (*Aj.* 485–524) and I believe that passage is invoked as a chief intertext for Ovid's use of Tecmessa in 3,517–524. Although in her pleading speech in the *Aias* of Sophocles

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[42] R. K. Gibson, 2003, 306f.

[43] R. K. Gibson, 2003, 307 suggests that this line also is an allusion to the rhetorical exercise *anaskeue* wich underlines the distance between past and present. I would also say that the distance is created by the rhetorical use of *cogar credere* since it implies that the otherwise well known stories of Andromache and Tecmessa should be subjected to doubt.

[44] The *praeceptor*'s insistence on men avoiding grieving women stand in amusing contrast with his advice to women readers in *Ars* 3,431f. Are his female disciples bound to fail?

(*Aj.* 485–524), Tecmessa has long since come to peace with her life as slave wife, the stress on the difference in her position as the freeborn daughter of a powerful man and her fate as captive slave to Aias (see esp. Soph. *Aj.* 487–490) makes it reasonable to assume, with the *praeceptor*, that the circumstances of the first beginning of her relationship with Aias were not happy ones.

Furthermore, this specific pair of examples combining two heroines from different sides in the Trojan war suggests that the *praeceptor*'s statement has universal validity.[45] However, as the *praeceptor* moves on to the example of Andromache things become more complicated. I have pointed to Tecmessa's speech in Soph. *Aj.* 485–524 as a particularly important intertext for our passage because it contains a description of the beginnings of Tecmessa's relationship with Aias that seems to be in keeping with the *praeceptor*'s claims about it. Furthermore, the speech of Sophocles' Tecmessa is relevant for the interpretation of *Ars* 3,517–524 because it also creates a link between the examples of Tecmessa and Andromache: Tecmessa's lament in front of Aias closely mirrors Andromache's pleading with Hector in the farewell scene of *Iliad* 6. Like Sophocles' Tecmessa, Andromache laments her fate in front of her husband in *Il.* 6 and their circumstances may seem similar to begin with: both women claim to have only their partner left to them in the world, and they both envision a life as destitute, captive slaves for themselves and worry about the fate of their children should their male protectors be killed.[46]

It always lies close at hand to assume that the Homeric farewell scene or Vergil's description of Andromache as Hector's devoted widow (Verg. *Aen.* 3,300–356; 482–491) feature as intertexts (although their importance certainly varies) for passages about Andromache. In our passage in the *Ars*, Ovid furthermore describes a grieving Andromache and mentions that she has at least one child (3,521), which makes it even more reasonable to see here a reference particularly to the Homeric passage since Andromache's son Astyanax plays a most important role in that scene. The fact that even the example of Tecmessa in the previous lines can be related to *Il.* 6 reinforces its importance for the understanding of our passage.

However, establishing *Il.* 6 as an intertext for our passage in the *Ars* has considerable impact on the way the character of Andromache works as an example. By setting up *Il.* 6 as a central intertext, the *praeceptor* makes clear that he means to support his precept with references to the beginning of two specific relationships – Tecmessa and Aias and Andromache and Hector respectively. Indeed

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[45] Cf. the combined examples of Hector and Achilles in Ov. *Am* 1,9,33–36 and Prop. 2,22a,29–34. See below III.ii.

[46] On the relation between Soph. *Aj.* 485–524 and *Il.* 6, cf. Easterling, 1984, 1–8 and Farmer, 1998, 19–45, with further references.

we may also recall that the *praeceptor* has used exactly this combination once before in *Ars* 3,104.

As Hector enters the equation as Andromache's partner, the use of Andromache here turns out to be a more complicated matter than it may have seemed at first glance. In spite of the above-mentioned parallels between the two relationships, it is important to note that in our passage, Ovid strongly implies that he is discussing not the affirmation of an existing *liason* but giving advice on how to attract a new partner.[47] However, the one extant description of Andromache and Hector before the beginning of the war, Sappho's *Frg.* 44, provides a festive and most harmonious setting for their wedding procession,[48] so we may safely assume that Andromache's relationship with her husband did not start out in tears. Indeed, what the *praeceptor* draws on in his example are events that took place towards the end of Hector and Andromache's relationship, or even after Hector's death. By hinting that Andromache was an unattractive, grieving woman even when she first met Hector, the *praeceptor* neglects not only the fact that Andromache did remain attractive to the opposite sex after the death of Hector (as a captive slave she was considered a real threat by Hermione, the legal wife of Neoptolemus; upon his death, she was married to Helenus) but above all, the *praeceptor amoris* neglects that, in Augustan literature, Andromache is known above all for her grief for her husband's death.[49]

Thus, one might say that the *praeceptor* brings all the characteristics of Andromache according to literary tradition (i.e. on one hand her love for Hector, and on the other her grief at her lover's death, feared and factual) and fuses them together on one chronological level so that Hector, like Aias, is confronted with a grieving woman already at the initial stage of the relationship. This notion is likely to stand in sharp contrast with the reader's superior knowledge of the myth and will therefore effectively pre-empt the *praeceptor*'s argument of Andromache's being unable to attract men even of her own time due to her sullenness and reveal

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[47] Within the quoted passage, esp. *Ars* 3,519f. See also the general introduction of the passage on cheerful appearances in *Ars* 3,509f: *nec minus in uultu damnosa superbia uestro: / comibus est oculis alliciendus Amor*, ('And no less disastrous is haughtiness on your faces: with graceful eyes you must attract Amor') and the description of the Amor's abandoning his toy-weapons in favour of the real ones, *Ars* 3,515f: *sic ubi prolusit, rudibus puer ille relictis / spicula de pharetra promit acuta sua*, ('when he has played up that way, the boy leaves the blunt ones aside and gets from his quiver the sharpened arrows').

[48] Cf. *Il.* 6,396–398 indicating that the match between Hector and Andromache was made before the destruction of Andromache's family through Achilles.

[49] Verg. *Aen.* 3,300–356; 482–491.

a certain level of mythological incompetence in the *praeceptor*, that can but place him in a comical light. In the long run, this will seriously undermine his credibility as he cannot seem to find examples to support his precepts that do not require tweaking to fit the picture he wishes to present.[50]

Further, the *praeceptor* has chosen to ignore not only a well-known mythological 'fact' but also that he himself uses Hector and Andromache as a positive examples on several instances, there endowing their epic characters with new, elegiac motivation.[51] Hence, this mention of Andromache contains the same moment of straightforward dissociation from heroines of the past which we have discussed so far, but it also shares important characteristics with the instances I shall turn to in the next section (iii.).

We find another, similar instance of undermined disassociation from an 'old-fashioned' example of wifely virtue in the *Remedia amoris*. As in the Andromache and Tecmessa example in Ov. *Ars* 3,517–524, the narrator in Ov. *Rem.* 383–386 seems surprisingly forgetful of the contents of his own previous works.

The passage in question again features Andromache, and appears in the most obviously metapoetic section of the *Remedia*, where the narrator strives to allay complaints raised against his earlier writings, most likely the *Ars amatoria*, in lines 361–396. The narrator argues that those who have found his previous works too daring (*musa proterva*, 'impudent muse', Ov. *Rem.* 362) or too licentious (*licentia laedit*, 'the forwardness causes offence', Ov. *Rem.* 371) have neglected to take into account that different literary genres (and meters) call for different approaches to one's material. The epic meter is appropriate for descriptions of epic material, iambics are most apt for invective verse, and elegiac distichs demands the literary treatment of lovers and their hardships (Ov. *Rem.* 373–382). Then follow the lines on Andromache:

quis ferat Andromaches peragentem Thaida partes?   Ov. *Rem.* 383
    peccet, in Andromache Thaida quisquis agat.
Thais in arte mea est: lasciuia libera nostra est;
    nil mihi cum uitta; Thais in arte mea est.
si mea materiae respondet Musa iocosae,
    uicimus, et falsi criminis acta rea est.

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[50] R. K. Gibson, 2003, 306, cf. Watson, 1983, 126. Parallel is the distortion of the mythological material concerning Penelope, Phyllis and Laodamia in *Ars* 2,351–358, where the *praeceptor* uses theses heroines to display the positive effects of brief separation when courting, see below III.ii.

[51] *Ars* 2,645f; 709f; 3,778f (see below, III.ii). Cf. R. K. Gibson, 2003, 306.

(Who could stand Andromache to act the part of Thais? He commits a mistake, who does an Andromache in Thais' role. Thais belongs in my art, my licentiousness is allowed, I have nothing to do with the head-bands of wives – it is Thais who belongs in my art. If my Muse responds to her lighthearted content, then I have won, and she has been accused of an invented crime.)

This passage draws on typical appearances of Andromache in tragic or epic settings, that is, on the way she is depicted in the influential treatments by Homer, Euripides and Vergil, and on some instances even in 'canonical' elegy.[52] The mention of Thais, on the other hand, invokes a different literary tradition altogether. Although Ovid's text does not necessarily allude directly to the precise features of Menander's *Thais*, surviving in fragments only, she and her name function as shorthand for the stock character of the free courtesan of comedy.[53]

The narrator defends his previous works (and the twice repeated *in arte mea*, 'in my art', in lines 385f can but bring the *Ars amatoria* to mind) by saying that he has restricted his daring writings to forms and characters suited to such texts, suggesting that he has had nothing to do either with the Andromaches of literature or with the *uittae* ('head-bands') of Roman housewives (Ov. *Rem*. 386).[54] So far, so good. The narrator disassociates himself from a character and a genre that is different from his own, much in the same way as he has done in, for instance, the proemium of *Ars* 3. This potentially underlines his credibility as he shows himself aware of his strengths and limitations.

As Barchiesi has pointed out and as this study will make obvious, however, this claim is entirely at odds with the actual contents of the *Ars*.[55] We have already seen that in *Ars* 3,519–524 the text implicitly places Andromache in the role of an ideal disciple of the *praeceptor amoris*. On other instances in the book, the *praeceptor* employs the example of Andromache to give explicit sexual advice, in *Ars* 2,645f on the benefits of foreplay, and in *Ars* 3,777f on positions for intercourse (both below, III.ii.). In both passages, the striking contrast between the epic and tragic intertexts and Ovid's description is emphasized by means of meter and vocabulary. Thais, on the other hand, who according to the narrator of the *Remedia* is at home in his *Ars*, is mentioned but once.[56] These inconsistencies add considerable wit to the passages, but in all likelihood they also detract from the reader's appreciation of the narrator's credibility. It is in keeping with the tendency of

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[52] Cf. Henderson, 1979, 90.

[53] Henderson, 1979, 90; Traill, 2001, 292.

[54] For these lines as referring to the *Ars*, cf. Henderson, 1979, 90.

[55] Barchiesi, 2006, 107f.

[56] Cf. Barchiesi, 2006, 108.

the *praeceptor* in the *Remedia* to undermine his claim of offering a straightforward way to fall *out* of love by using rhetorical devices and recommending techniques suspiciously similar to those employed in the *Ars amatoria*.[57] These, too, suggest that we should perhaps appreciate the *Remedia*, like the *Ars*, not so much because of the teachings ostensibly offered but rather because of the incongruous and amusing shortcomings revealed in its narrator.

III.III.iv. Concluding Remarks. Minor Details and Major Misgivings: References casting doubts on the narrator's credibility

Most mythological examples for wifely virtues in Ovid's erotodidactic texts aim at a contrast between the mythological 'facts' professed by the *praeceptor* and those known to the reader; this, too, is a poetic technique familiar from 'canonical' elegy. Ovid has on many instances in the *Ars amatoria* chosen not to present new versions of myths, but simply to stress details present in the earlier literary tradition and to put these to novel use, which stands in comical[58] contrast to their traditional context.[59] Where the motivation of the (formerly epic or tragic) character is reinterpreted from an elegiac point of view, it casts a slightly humorous light on the mythological character as well as on the narrator suggesting such an interpretation.[60] As I have shown in Chapter One, 'canonical' elegy employs mythological examples of wifely virtues in a similar way. However, in erotodidactic

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[57] Cf. Fulkerson, 2004, 211–223 for how the *praeceptor* of the *Remedia* employs methods closely related to those recommended in the *Ars amatoria* for *finding* love in the first place; Brunelle, 2000–2001, 123.

[58] I believe Ovid's alterations to the characters to be humorous rather than radical. The rendering of female moral examples changes with the poetic persona speaking and irreverent renderings are given exclusively by personae, whose reliability is doubtful and who represent a very specific viewpoint (e.g. the elegiac lover or, in the case of Penelope in Ov. *Am.* 1,8,47f, the *lena*). In the *Ars amatoria* the inconsistencies in the use of especially Andromache (she is used as a positive example, then again in the next passage as a negatively connoted one) lessens the narrator's credibility. Further, in the case of Andromache the lack of literary precedents makes it more likely that Ovid intends to present a witty perversion of myth. References to moral examples by more neutral person ae are consistent with the traditional image of these women as virtuous wives and widows, e.g. Prop. 3,12,23–25; 37f; 3,13,23f. Ov. *Trist.* 1,6,19–22; 4,3,29 (Andromache alone); 5,5,44–58; 14,35–40.

[59] On exempla in the *Ars* in general, see Watson, 1983, 122f; Davisson, 1993, 217–219 (on the *Amores* and the *Ars*).

[60] Watson, 1983, 123–125; Davisson, 1993, 219.

elegy, and particularly the *Ars amatoria*, it is – more often than not – explicitly sexual or physical motives that are exaggerated in this manner. This section sets out to demonstrate that the erotodidactic speaker can use the examples of virtue as positive examples in his own discourse only if allowed to reinterpret their actions or, as we have seen, to dissociate from them.

This section will discuss four instances of such minor changes aiming for humorous contrast, featuring Penelope and Andromache. One further passage on Laodamia is treated below in the subsection on pictorial intertexts (III.iii.). These examples all contain a varying degree of changes to the myths, the most striking being *Ars* 3,777f where the narrator refers to Andromache in order to exemplify a specific position for sexual intercourse, but I will show that the same poetic technique is employed even where the changes to myth are more subtle. The first of the single passages is taken from Ovid's *Amores* and will require consideration of Prop. 4,5 as well, the others are to be found in the *Ars amatoria*. Finally, I turn to three passages in Propertius and in Ovid's works, which are closely connected intertexts and involve a motive-nexus of especial importance in elegy, the *militia amoris*.

Ov. *Am.* 1,8 describes the old bawd Dipsas lecturing the beloved of the narrator. The portrait of Dipsas is modelled in dialogue with *lenae*-poems in Propertius and Tibullus as well as erotodidactic passages in comedy.[61] One of the motives which *Am.* 1,8 has in common with the *lena*-poem of Propertius (Prop. 4,5) is the mention of Penelope.[62] In Propertius the narrator claims that the *lena* Acanthis, later in the poem admonishing his *puella* (4,5,21–62), would have been able to make even Penelope forget her duties as a wife and give way to Antinoos.

> *concordivque toro pessima semper auis,*　　　　　Prop. 4,5,6
> *Penelopen quoque neglecto rumore mariti*
> 　　*nubere lasciuo cogeret Antinoo.*

(A bad sign always for the harmonious marriage, she would have forced even Penelope, forgetful of the rumours about her husband, to marry the lascivious Antinoos.)

Penelope's renown as a paragon of virtue is a prerequisite for Propertius' use of her here; it enables her to represent the ultimate test of the bawd's powers. It is important to note that the positive appraisal of Penelope's faithfulness in Homer is plainly reflected and shared by the Propertian narrator even as he

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[61] Prop. 4,5 and Tib. 1,5. See McKeown, 1989, 198–201; Myers, 1996, 3f.

[62] For a full discussion of the connection between Prop. 4,5 and Ov. *Am.* 1,8 see Morgan, 1977, 59–68; McKeown, 1989, 198–201, both with extensive notes.

envisages another scenario under the influence of Acanthis. Within our distich, *cogere* ('force') and *neglegere* ('neglect' or 'forget') describe the power of the *lena* in negative terms. This is consistent with the way the use of Penelope and other examples of traditional female virtues is elsewhere transferred into the elegiac world and used to illustrate and promote the *foedus aeternum* of elegy.[63] In Ov. *Am.* 1,8,47f however, Dipsas offers an interpretation of the contest of the bow (*Od.* 21) and refers to Penelope not because of her faithfulness but due to her resourcefulness in finding out what her various suitors have to offer,[64] even though she is reputedly counted among the chaste and, to Dipsas, hypocritical women referred to in the previous lines.[65]

> *has quoque, quae frontis rugas in uertice portant,*   Ov. *Am.* 1,8,45
>   *excute, de rugis crimina multa cadent.*
> *Penelope iuuenum uires temptabat in arcu;*
>   *qui latus argueret corneus arcus erat.*

(Those too, who wear frowns on their foreheads, shake them up, and many a crime will fall from their frowns. Penelope tested the strength of the young men by the bow. Made out of horn was the bow that tested their prowess.)

The sexual implications of *uires* ('strength'), *latus* ('prowess') and *arcus* ('bow') have been discussed by McKeown and are, I think, obvious. Dipsas imagines a Penelope making the most of the opportunity of having a number of young men courting her, testing their sexual prowess (*latus* and *uires*) by the *corneus arcus*, which may be taken as a double entendre for penis.[66] The context of the previous verses supports this interpretation, where Dipsas claims that only the women never desired by men remain chaste, *casta est quam nemo rogauit* (*Am.* 1,8,42, 'she remains chaste, whom no one cares to ask'); this, of course does not include Penelope.

Such a statement would be quite radical if one did not consider the speaker's limited perspective and Dipsas' function in the text.[67] Throughout the poem

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[63] Cf. esp. the use of Penelope in Prop. 2,6,9 and Penelope and Euadne in Prop. 3,13,23f, above I.iii and I.ii.

[64] Cf. Hubbard, 1974, 141: "no moral exemplar she but a pattern of utility."

[65] On the text, Öhrman, forthcoming b.

[66] Adams, 1982, 21; McKeown, 1989, 226f.

[67] To see here an earnest Ovidian reinterpretation of the events in the Odyssey is unwarranted. Gilchrist, 1997, 273f is correct in pointing out that Homer is the most important intertext for this passage too, even if there are similar ones in the *Priapea* (68,29–45), but to regard *Am.* 1,8,47f as an serious reinterpretation of Homer, as Gilchrist seems to do, is to go too far. She

Dipsas is depicted as a threat to the exclusiveness of the elegiac relationship and to the narrator's relationship with the *puella* in particular (57f),[68] and therefore it would be unreasonable to expect her to refer to Penelope in the reverent manner of elegiac lovers longing for eternal love. The question of Penelope's faithfulness during her husband's absence was certainly debated by ancient writers, and there was a mainly Hellenistic tradition that made her less-than-virtuous.[69] In order to establish a link to those much less known texts, however, and to see Dipsas' comment on Penelope as something more than an allusion to the passage of the contest of the bow in the *Odyssey* (especially as that episode is of pivotal significance in Homer) we would need a more specific indication of the relevance of the Hellenistic texts to Ovid's. Thus, to the reader comparing Dipsas' racy reinterpretation of Penelope's story with the vulgate image of Penelope as a paragon of virtue, Dipsas' interpretation will emphasize the moral deficiencies of the bawd herself by means of humorous exaggeration,[70] as only someone already morally corrupt could come up with such a 'sacrilegious' portrait of Penelope. This way, it will increase the reader's sympathy for the narrator of the poem in which it is included. This foreshadows Ovid's poetic technique in the *Ars amatoria*, where mythological examples are pressed for an erotodidactic meaning in a manner that leads to humorous incongruities with the literary tradition and thus reflect negatively on the credibility of the *praeceptor amoris*.

Writing love-letters is suggested by the *praeceptor* as a strategy of courtship in the first book of the *Ars* (1,437–487), where he claims that letters and eloquence slowly wear down the beloved's reluctance to engage in a love affair. To exemplify the heights the disciple-lover may eventually reach, though at first his letters remain unanswered and seemingly disregarded, the *praeceptor* refers to Penelope.

Penelopen ipsam, persta modo, tempore uinces: Ov. *Ars* 1, 477
    capta uides sero Pergama, capta tamen.

(p. 274) says „[...]and the shock of the unorthodox reading of Penelope would be great, but it is not going too far to say that the poem challenges the reader to try to disprove this new version by looking at Homer – and that this new interpretation can be seen […] as consistent with the 'facts'."

[68] Ov. *Am.* 1,8,57f runs: *ecce, quid iste tuus praeter noua carmina uates / donat? amatoris milia multa leges*. In paraphrase by McKeown, 1989, 233: "all you will get from a lover like that is many thousands of verses to read".

[69] For an extensive discussion of the literary tradition, see Jacobson, 1974, 245–249.

[70] Several commentators claim that the impertinent reference to Penelope is meant to cause "a shocked amusement" (Whitaker, 1983, 148, but see also Gross, 1995–1996, 203), still Schubert, 1992, 147f is the only one to point briefly to the fact that the reinterpretation of the contest of the bow is vital to the characterization of Dipsas.

(Penelope herself you will defeat in due time, if only you persist: You know how Troy was taken late, but taken nevertheless.)

Just like in Ov. *Am.* 1,8 the proverbial use of Penelope as an example for wifely virtue is a prerequisite for her function in this passage. Here, however, she represents the ultimate conquest,[71] and there is no specific mention of the traditional reasons for her refusal to take a new lover, which makes it easier for the narrator to cast her in the elegiac role of a *dura puella*.[72] I think we may infer from the context of the *Ars* that the *praeceptor* assumes that she even in refusing her admirer is flattered (at the very least) to be courted.[73] This results in an oversimplified reading of Penelope's story as described by Homer, which – if the reader chooses to consider it more closely – reflects in a humorous way on the narrator's ability to interpret the classic mythological material he uses to support his precepts.[74] Another detail working against the professed ambition of the narrator is the fact that the reader is implicitly invited to identify the disciples of the *Ars amatoria* with the suitors in the *Odyssey*; hardly a flattering comparison and certainly off-putting for the reader who knows his Homer.[75] The subtext reads: If you follow the *praeceptor*'s advice, you will not only not get the girl but be beheaded to boot. If the reader chooses to accept the narrator's selective use of Homeric content as supportive of the precepts put forth in the passage, he or she will come up with a reading that certainly is coherent and sensible in itself, but one that, in much the same way as the narrator's reading of Homer, does not take into account all the implications of the text.

The wit of the passage is also enhanced by an intertextual reference to Penelope's letter in Ovid's own *Heroides*. In *Ars* 1,469f the *praeceptor* foresees the difficulty of progress being slow and admonishes: *si non accipiet scriptum illectumque*

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[71] Hollis, 1977, 115; Dimundo, 2003, 185f on the language of triumph in this passage.

[72] Otherwise, Penelope is mentioned alone only in Ov. *Trist.* 1,6,21f and Prop. 3,13,9f; 23f. This is to be compared to 18 mentions of her with either suitors or Odysseus or a combination of these.

[73] Ov. *Ars* 1,345: *quae dant, quaeque negant, gaudent tamen esse rogatae*: ('Those who give themselves [i.e. to you as a lover] and those who say no, they are nevertheless happy to have been asked.')

[74] I think Gilchrist, 1997, 273 misses the mark when she claims that the narrator implicitly gives a picture of a wanton Penelope, saying "this last [sc. *Ars* 1,477] shows how the ideal is invoked in such a way that its opposite may also be drawn to mind".

[75] With a sligthly different take on the passage, Dimundo, 2003, 185f points out that the disciples will thus be able to overcome Odysseus himself. Dimundo also highlights the presence of irony here.

remittet, / lecturam spera propositumque tene ('If she does not accept your writings and send them back unread, have faith that she still will read them and stick to your plan'). Penelope is then brought up as an example of what one may achieve if remaining steadfast. This recalls in a contrastive manner the second line of Penelope's letter in the *Heroides*, where she asks Odysseus not to bother writing back to her, but to come in person.[76]

hanc tua Penelope lento tibi mittit, Ulixe.   Ov. *Epist.* 1,1
    nil mihi rescribas tu tamen; ipse ueni!

(Odysseus, you laggard, your own Penelope sends you this letter. Do not write back to me, though, come yourself!)

    This allusion would strengthen the argument of the *praeceptor* if, yet again, the motives for Penelope to refuse Odysseus' prospective letters did not decisively differ from what is implied in the *Ars*. In her letter Penelope stresses time and again that she feels abandoned by her husband and lover and that she suspects that his absence may be voluntary.[77] Spoth points out that Penelope asks Odysseus to come in person partly in order to avoid having to engage in lengthy correspondence with him, as he, being well-versed in rhetoric, in that case would be able to come up with excuses for his absence.[78] The Penelope of the *Heroides* would have her lover abstain from correspondence actively to ensure her position as his beloved wife, but the Penelope envisioned in *Ars* 1,477 tries to ward off the man courting her by the same method, though perhaps flattered by his attention. In comparison with Ovid's own text too the motivation of the character has been subjected to changes, making the Penelope of *Ars* 1,477f more elegiac still as she is set up as the *dura puella* of elegy, not like in the *Heroides* as the *exclusus amator*. This new cast of roles is, compared with Homer, the more striking one, since it shifts the power to determine the relationship from the male opponent to the female – to Penelope – which is a far cry from the constellation of power in the *Odyssey*.

    One may further note that the reference to *Epist.* 1,2 is of some significance for the relevance of the second example brought by the *praeceptor* to prove his case, that namely of Troy having fallen at long last (*Ars* 1,478). To the Ovidian Penelope writing *Epist.* 1, Troy has in some sense never really fallen at all, as she

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[76] That we may indeed take the mention of Penelope in *Ars* 1,477 as an allusion to *Epist.* 1,1 is confirmed by the corresponding, immediately following reference to Troy, taken and overthrown: *Troia iacet* in *Epist.* 1,3 and *capta* […] *Pergama* in *Ars* 1,478.

[77] Cf. Ov. *Epist.* 1,7–10; 47–50; 75–80.

[78] Spoth, 1992, 38.

says *diruta sunt aliis, uni mihi Pergama restant* ('to others it has been laid in ruins, to me alone, Troy still stands') in *Epist.* 1,51. Though this is of course a rhetorical exaggeration and Penelope is well aware that the war is over,[79] the resemblance between the two texts will reinforce the impression that the *praeceptor*'s arguments are not quite to be trusted. Whether the reader is likely to consider the *praeceptor* simply a little too cocky or downright deluded (or somewhere in between) is a matter of cumulative effect, both within the interpretation of one mythological example and the work as a whole.[80]

The changes to Andromache in *Ars* 3,777f seem more striking still, as she is mentioned in the closing section of the book where the reader is advised on positions for sexual intercourse suitable to each woman's height.

parua uehatur equo: quod erat longissima, numquam   Ov. *Ars* 3,777
    Thebais Hectoreo nupta resedit equo.

(The small one should ride; because she was very tall, the bride from Thebe never rode on the horse of Hector.)

Andromache is the final of two mythological examples but for most of the advised positions no mythological examples are given. The first example is Atalante,[81] to whom Ovid refers as famous for her beautiful legs. There are several references in Ovid to Atalante as athletic (*Am.* 3,9,29f; *Ars* 2,185–192; *Met.* 6,560–707) and previously, Prop. 1,1,9–16 refers to her hunting and her speed. Though there are several lines of mythological tradition concerning Atalante – the tradition provides us with divergent evidence both for her origin and the

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[79] Indeed *Epist.* 1,3 reads *Troia iacet, certe Danais inuisa puellis* ('Troy has fallen, certainly detested by the Greek women').

[80] This particular passage occurs fairly late in Book 1 of the *Ars*, but already the *uates*-passage in *Ars* 1,25–30 would have made the attentive reader suspicious of the narrator's claims for himself, cf. Ahern, 1990, 44–48.

[81] Escher, 1896, 1890–1894 (with full references to the sources) discusses two different strands of tradition concerning Atalante. The Boetian Atalante is daughter of Schoineus and being a brilliant athlete, she consents to be married only to the man who can defeat her in a footrace. By the aid of Aphrodite, Hippomenes does so and wins her as his wife. However, even on the way back to his home, the couple are transformed into lions as a punishment for having sex in a temple. The Arcadian Atalante (in most sources the daughter of Iasios) of the Mainalos mountains is said to have been exposed as a child, nurtured by a female bear and later taken in by shepherds. As she grew up, she was a huntress and follower of Artemis. She was loved by Milanion who, in spite of many hardships, followed her through the woods and mountains and finally gained her love. The Arcadian tradition also names Atalante as a participant of the Caledonian boar hunt and as an accomplished athlete.

developments of her love life – they all associate Atalante with athletic activities and even sex. In the *Metamorphoses* (6,681–707) Ovid tells how Atalante and her male partner are transformed into lions as punishment for having sex nearby a temple; Suetonius mentions a painting of Atalante and a man engaging in sexual games (Suet. *Tib.* 44,2).[82] These precedents make her appearance in this context seem hardly surprising.[83]

In contrast to this, evidence for Andromache's being known for her height before Ovid is scanty. Ovid himself refers to her as such on no less than two instances (*Ars* 3,777f and 2,645f). In order to assess his use of earlier tradition[84] in these two passages I shall first review the evidence still available to us and the connection between the two *Ars*-passages before turning again to the interpretation of the function of Andromache's example in their respective contexts.

The most commonly suggested source for Ovid's reference is a comment by Cicero on a very short actor in a staging of Ennius' play *Andromache*, which would be more to the point if the character he played had elsewhere been depicted as conspicuously tall, and several commentators therefore assume that Ovid is referring to a dramatic tradition (whether to the praxis of staging or to the tragic text itself can, due to the fragmentary state of the texts, not be ascertained).[85] I do not see that it is necessary to infer from Cicero that the actor Antiphon actually played Andromache's part, which is implied by Jocelyn in his analysis of Cicero's note.[86] Therefore, unless we can be sure of the link between the short actor and the supposedly tall Andromache, Cicero's reference must be considered poor evidence that Andromache was generally known to have been spectacularly tall.

On *Ars* 2,645f, where Ovid mentions Andromache's height again, Janka proposes that the notion of a tall Andromache could derive from the *topos* of all heroines of old being extremely tall, and compares Ov. *Am.* 2,4,33f: *tu, quia tam longa es, ueteres heroidas aequas / et potes in toto multa iacere toro*, ('you, in that you are tall, equal the heroines of old and can stretch all over the bed').[87] Janka's sug-

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[82] Incidentally, the painting of Atalante and Meleager could, according to Suetonius (Suet. *Tib.* 43–44), have served erotodidactic purposes and been accompanied by quotations from Elephantis' erotic handbook, thus making it tempting to assume that mentioning Atalante in such a context was not without parallel. See Clarke, 1998, 92f.

[83] Watson, 1983, 122f; R. K. Gibson, 2003, 392

[84] For the later references in Mart. and Iuv., see III.iii.

[85] Cic. *Att.* 4,15,6. Cf. Brandt, 1902, 117; Jocelyn, 1969, 253; Watson, 1983, 125; Janka, 1997, 449f. After Ovid, cf. Iuv. 6,503.

[86] Jocelyn, 1969, 253.

[87] Janka, 1997, 450. On *Am.* 2,4, see McKeown, 1989, 78f.

gestion may seem appealing as there is a thematic correspondence between *Am.* 2,4 and our first passage, *Ars* 3,777f: in *Am.* 2,4,33–36 the narrator discusses the differences between tall and short women as sexual partners, but concludes that he finds both just as attractive. As we have seen, this bears some resemblance to the point *Ars* 3,777f is to illustrate.

Nevertheless, Janka's suggestion begs the question of the choice of Andromache over any other archaic heroine. It becomes increasingly problematic as Andromache in the passage Janka is commenting on (*Ars* 2,645f), is said to have seemed to tall to everyone, even among her contemporaries. Two mythological examples are used to introduce the precept that the lover does best to redefine his girlfriend's physical flaws as assets, Andromeda and Perseus followed by Andromache and Hector. Descriptions of Andromeda and Perseus' rescue of her often emphasize Andromeda's exotic origin, but this is mainly directed at the country of Ethiopia as a suitable setting for a remarkable tale rather than at her person.[88] We may note the similarity to the embedding of Andromache's example *Ars* 3,777f, which was preceded by the uncontroversial example of Atalante. Thus, the reader's attention is focussed on the novel use of Andromache and Hector.

parcite praecipue uitia exprobare puellis,   Ov. *Ars* 2,641
    utile quae multis dissimulasse fuit.
nec suus Andromedae color est obiectus ab illo,
    mobilis in gemino cui pede pinna fuit;
omnibus Andromache uisa est spatiosior aequo,
    unus, qui modicam diceret, Hector erat.

(Avoid especially to recite their faults to the ladies, faults which it has served many well to disregard. He, who wore quick wings on either foot, never blamed Andromeda for the colour of her skin; Andromache seemed to everyone too tall, the only one to call her 'neat' was Hector.)

It would be pointless to single out Andromache as tall, had all women around her been of the same stature, as in the *Amores* passage. We may also note a slight difference in the judgement of great height in a woman between the *Amores* and the *Ars.* In *Am.* 2,4,33–34, height is considered of positive value; in *Ars* 3 it has merited a place in a list which is just as much concerned with how a woman may disguise her physical flaws as with how she can enhance the impression of her beauty.[89] The fact that Andromache in 3,777f was too tall to enjoy the position

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[88] Cf. Ov. *Ars* 1,53; *Met.* 4,665–771.

[89] On Ov. *Ars* 3,772 [...] *non omnes una figura decet* ('there is no such thing as one position suitable to everyone') follows a list of positive physical features (beautiful face, back, long

suggested in these lines, defines her tallness as a negative trait. This ties *Ars* 3,777f closer to the other passage in the *Ars* (2,645f) where, as we have seen, the *praeceptor* mentions the exceptional height of Andromache as the male reader is advised not to find faults with the physical appearance of his girlfriend and to redefine those that he does find as attractive assets. This connection discourages the efforts to explain the reference to Andromache as particularly tall with the *topos* of tall (and hence beautiful) women of archaic times.

Thus, the remnants of the literary tradition known to Ovid allows us to draw no conclusions as to his sources or his intertexts. Ovid may refer to a text unknown to us, or he may in fact have invented the tall Andromache himself. This makes it all the more tempting to speculate about Ovid having been influenced by pictorial tradition, a point I will discuss further below (see III. iii.).

Though the background of the tall Andromache remains unknown, I think it is reasonable to assume that it would have been a minor detail in the works centred on her. Of a major trait we surely would have some more enlightening traces. This way, we may still infer something about the poetic technique used in both passages. I have noted above how less controversial examples leave the scene free for Andromache to be the most impressive one, but the similarities between the passages do not end there. In *Ars* 2,645f Ovid uses not only a less-known mythological detail, but also equips the male characters (Perseus and Hector) with the strategy the *praeceptor* is advocating. Watson notes that this rendering of Andromeda and Andromache thus is typical for Ovid's way of "reducing heroic characters to the level of contemporary elegiac lovers" for the sake of amusement.[90] Perseus and Hector do not overlook the faults of their beloveds due to the power of all forgiving love but rather thanks to hardy endurance.[91] It also detracts from the heroic stature of Hector in a humorous way as he, according to the *praeceptor*, has to resort to courting a woman less than perfect.

The effects of Andromache's example in *Ars* 3,777f are quite similar, though there it is the female party who knows to apply the *praeceptor*'s advice. A mythological detail, the fact that Hector and Andromache were lovers, is expounded in a manner which bears no proportion to its place in earlier tradition and which

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legs) but with the distich on Andromache, the tone changes slightly – it is never made explicit if the petite woman must ride because this position allows her to show herself in the best way or because the alternatives would be to ungainly. *Ars* 3,779f is then again positive, 781 mentions blemished breasts, whereupon follows the advice to let her hair fall freely, and finally *Ars* 3,785f is directed immediately to women marked by childbirth.

[90] Watson, 1983, 125. Cf. also Durling, 1957, 160.

[91] Watson, 1983, 123–125, followed by Janka, 1997, 448–450.

stands in contrast with other renderings of the mythological characters. Highly poetic language invites comparison between the earlier literary tradition and Ovid's version; Watson points especially to the unusual reference to Andromache as *Thebais nupta* ('the bride from Thebes') and further to *Hectoreo equo* ('the horse of Hector').[92] That Andromache avoided a particular sexual practice in order to appear as attractive as possible to her husband, just as a student of the *praeceptor* ought to, is stressed by the prominently placed causal *quod*-clause, and makes the tongue-in-cheek implication of Andromache's being a model student of love especially strong.[93]

I have discussed several examples of how the contrast between the old and the new setting or motivation of a mythological detail may be brought out by the vocabulary. This occurs once more in *Ars* 2,709f, where the *praeceptor* proceeds from demanding mutual pleasure in sex (2,681–702) to recur to the heroes of the Trojan war to exemplify the value of manually administered foreplay, pronouncing as exemplary Hector and Andromache and Achilles and Briseis respectively.

sponte sua sine te celeberrima uerba loquentur,   Ov. *Ars* 2,705
    nec manus in lecto laeua iacebit iners;
inuenient digiti quod agant in partibus illis,
    in quibus occulte spicula tingit Amor.
fecit in Andromache prius hoc fortissimus Hector
    nec solum bellis utilis ille fuit;
fecit et in capta Lyrneside magnus Achilles,
    cum premeret mollem lassus ab hoste torum.

(Swift words will fall on their own accord, without your [sc. Venus'] direction, and the left hand won't rest useless on the bed; the fingers will find what to do in those parts where Amor colours his arrows in secret. In the earlier days, the valiant Hector did this with Andromache, and it was not just in war he was quite a useful man. Achilles the great, too, did it with the captive from Lyrnesus, as he rested on the soft couch exhausted by the enemy.)

To indicate the traditional context of these characters, as Watson convincingly argues, Ovid uses *fortissimus* ('valiant') of Hector, *magnus* ('great') and, a few lines further on (716), *uictrices manus* ('victorious hands') of Achilles as well as a poetic periphrasis to signify Briseis, *capta Lyrneside* ('the captive from Lyrnesus').[94] The

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92 Watson, 1983, 122f; R. K. Gibson, 2003, 393.

93 Martial alludes clearly to Ovid in Mart. 11,104,113f, but makes no mention of Andromache's height and turns the argument around, saying that Andromache often chose this position.

94 Watson, 1983, 122f. *Ars* 2,713–716 is quoted in full in n. 105 below.

twofold meaning of *fortissimus* and *utilis* ('useful'), connoting on the one hand military valour, on the other sexual potency, are both relevant to the *praeceptor*.[95] The similarities between warfare and love are stressed by the use of *lassus* ('exhausted'), frequently used in elegy for the exhaustion following on sex, but here clearly referring to fighting.[96]

Though Hellenistic writers may have eroticized the Briseis-episode of the *Iliad*, the earliest transmitted evidence for such a tradition is found in Propertius (2,8,9–16; 2,9,29–38) and it is treated extensively only in Ovid's *Heroides* 3, Briseis' letter to Achilles.[97] There is little to indicate that an explicitly sexual component was added to the Hector-Andromache motive. At the most, we see Hector and Andromache in a context of loving intimacy in Sappho *Frg.* 44. Ovid's use of the couple here contrasts nicely with epic and tragic tradition, presenting (by implication of the following verses 2,717–724) an Andromache ecstatically enjoying a sexual experience.

This is consistent with and conditioned by the use of the same characters as examples elsewhere in elegy. In Propertius 2,22a,29–34 the narrator compares his own prowess in lovemaking with the powers of Hector and Achilles in warfare, having introduced them to the elegiac sphere as lovers as well as soldiers, but in his comparison to himself he draws primarily on their military valour and uses it within the elegiac metaphor of *militia amoris*.[98]

quid? cum e complexu Briseidos iret Achilles,	Prop. 2,22a,29
num fugere minus Thessala tela Phryges?	
quid? ferus Andromachae lecto cum surgeret Hector,	
bella Mycenaeae non timuere rates?	
ille uel hic classis poterant uel perdere muros:	
hic ego Pelides, hic ferus Hector ego.	

(What? Did the Trojans flee any less before the spears of Thessaly because Achilles came from the embrace of Briseis? What? Did the fleet from Mycenae fear the war any less because the ferocious Hector rose from Andromache's bed? The first could destroy navies, the other city walls: here, I shall be Achilles, here, I shall be the ferocious Hector.)

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[95] On the erotic connotations of *fortis* and *utilis* in Ovid, Janka, 1997, 490f.

[96] *ThLL* s.v. *lassus* I a, Adams, 1982, 196; Janka, 1997, 491, cf. Ov. *Am.* 1,5,25; 3,7,80; 11,13.

[97] On Prop., Dué, 2002, 91–113, on Ov. (esp. Ov. *Epist.* 3,99f) ib. 131f. Jacobson, 1974, 16–21; Spoth, 1992, 63; McKeown, 1989, 272.

[98] Whitaker, 1983, 117f, K. Neumeister, 1983, 70. Cf. also Dué, 2002, 110f. On the metaphor of *militia*, Murgatroyd, 1975, 59–79; Lyne, 1980, 71–78.

The Propertian narrator states that the valour of Achilles and Hector was not diminished by their love. The meter reinforces the impression that love and war are intertwined as the traditional metrical aptum is overturned: the traditionally heroic hexameters describe lovers rising from the beds of their beloveds, the soft pentameters their performance as warriors.[99] However, the narrator then proceeds by placing the heroes of old in a sphere distinctly different from his own, describing first their military tasks of overthrowing city walls and naval forces (2,22a,33), then proclaiming that here, he shall be Achilles, here, he shall be Hector (2,22a,34, *hic ego – hic* […] *ego*). These lines restore the metrical aptum and the division of *militia* and *amor*. As has been noted before, *hic ego* recalls Tib. 1,1,75, where a similar renouncement of real *militia* is made in favour of the metaphorical *militia amoris*;[100] the allusion serves to underline the still present difference between the heroes and the elegiac narrator.

Prop. 2,22a,29–34 forms the background for Ov. *Am.* 1,9, which also features Hector and Achilles as lovers as well as prominent soldiers. In that poem, Ovid strains the metaphor of *milita amoris* to the point of absurdity, claiming that a lover performs tasks identical with those of a soldier, night watches, long marches, the tricking of guards etc, and renounces the statement that love is idleness, since great warriors have also been lovers. Elsewhere in elegy, the metaphor of *militia amoris* involves contrasting the *negotium* of military service with the socially unacceptable idleness of the elegiac lover, not conflating them.[101]

> […] *ingenii est experientis Amor.*　　　　　　Ov. *Am.* 1,9,32
> *ardet in abducta Briseide magnus Achilles*
> 　　*(dum licet, Argeas frangite, Troes, opes);*
> *Hector ab Andromaches complexibus ibat ad arma,*
> 　　*et galeam capiti quae daret, uxor erat;*
> *summa ducum, Atrides uisa Priameide fertur*
> 　　*Maenadis effusis obstipuisse comis.*
> *Mars quoque deprensus fabrilia uincula sensit:*
> 　　*notior in caelo fabula nulla fuit.*

([…] Love has an enterprising mind. Mighty Achilles burned for Briseis, as she was taken away (Trojans, overthrow the Argive troops while you still may!). Hec-

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[99] Ovid refers repeatedly to the rules of metrical aptum, cf. programatically in *Am.* 1,1,17–28; *Rem.* 371–386 (where Andromache exemplifies a subject matter not suitable for the elegiac distich, *Rem.* 383f and see above, III.i).

[100] Enk, 1962, 295.

[101]　McKeown, 1989, 257–259; Breitzigheimer, 2001, 225–237.

tor went from Andromache's embrace to the arms, and his wife was the one to place the helmet on his head. They say that the greatest of the commanders, the Atride, was stunned by the look of Priam's daughter, by the flowing hair of the maenad. And Mars, when he was caught, got to know the blacksmith's chains, there wasn't ever a tale more well known in the heavens than that one.)

The statement *ingenii est experientis amor* ('love has an enterprising mind', Ov. *Am.* 1,9,32) is illustrated by four mythological examples: Achilles, Hector, Agamemnon and Mars, which ought to prove that love is not idle but compatible with the greatest of military heroics. On closer consideration, however, Achilles as the first example seems to indicate rather the opposite; in his absence, caused by his love for Briseis, the Greeks are seriously threatened by the Trojans. Agamemnon as the second example freezes in his tracks at the sight of Cassandra. The description of Cassandra in bacchic frenzy or mind-blowing grief with flowing hair underlines the impact of the clash between rational decision associated with Agamemnon's military command and his irrational passion for Cassandra.[102] Mars, in turn, is literally cast in chains as a result of his love affair and thus rendered incapable to uphold his responsibilities as the god of war. The example of Hector, taken at face value, is the only example to support the narrator's point. According to the narrator, Hector went to battle leaving the embrace of Andromache, and she helped him prepare for battle. The rendering of Andromache in Ov. *Am.* 1,9 seemingly resembles the vulgate image of her more closely than the description of her in Propertius 2,22a, as Ovid expounds the reciprocity of her relationship with Hector and her participation, in a way suitable for a wife, in her husband's duties outside of their home. Love seems to have a positive influence on military effort, possibly to motivate it. Yet this closeness to tradition is illusive. A compound of the known literary renderings of Andromache will support the *praeceptor*'s argument but the main intertext, the meeting of Hector and Andromache in *Iliad* 6, rather weakens it. As observed by McKeown, Ovid's text differs from Homer's version on two significant points. In Homer, Andromache does not assist Hector with his helmet and more importantly, she tries to dissuade him from going back to the battle.[103] This, certainly present in the mind of Ovid's reader, further undermines the efficiency of the examples and the credibility of the narrator. Elegiac love cannot coexist with traditional epic values, it must reinterpret them,

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[102] Cf. McKeown, 1989, 275.

[103] McKeown, 1989, 272. McKeown also points to Ov. *Epist.* 13,137–139 where Laodamia dreams of assisting her husband Protesilaus before battle (ib. 274). The additional intertext confirms that Andromache's warnings to Hector in *Iliad* 6 are relevant for the interpretation of Ov. *Am.* 1,9,35f. Cf. also Rosati, 1991, 105.

casting the heroes (with the exception of Hector) in the role of the elegiac lover, smitten by love and incapable of action, or, like Propertius, use them metaphorically within the framework of *militia amoris*.[104]

In contrast to this, it is essential for the *praeceptor amoris* in *Ars* 2,709–714 to acknowledge the military achievements of Hector and Achilles and secure their position as suitable authority figures in order to use them effectively as examples of a sexual practice, from which the narrator fears that his disciples might abstain as it could be considered shameful (cf. Ov. *Ars* 2,719f). Ovid acknowledges their double competence by letting already his narrator refer to Hector's prowess in warfare (as well as in love) and by stressing Achilles' role as the conqueror of Briseis' people in his suggestion that this especially woke Briseis' desire.[105] The use of Hector and Achilles, well known for achievements outside of the world of love, enables the *praeceptor* to make his point with the greatest force possible. Unlike in Ov. *Am.* 1,9 the use of exempla in *Ars* 2,709–714 is straightforward enough. In all three passages, the combination of two known opponents in the example brings into prominence the universality of the narrator's argument.[106]

The reference to Hector and Achilles in *Ars* 2,709–716 as lovers as well as soldiers is also in keeping with the general tendency of the *Ars amatoria* to transcend the limits of the elegiac system, and open up for the possibility of a different interpretation of reality, adhering to another set of values.[107] Conte states that the claim for objectivity inherent in the didactic genre presupposes a wider perspective than the subjective perspective of early elegy. It is evident also from the *praeceptor*'s way of motivating the sufferings the disciple-lover is to take upon himself with references to their efficiency (*utile*), that the erotodidactic allows of an instance outside of the world of love unasked for in elegy.[108] Thus, although the *Ars amatoria* retains many of the traits constituting the elegiac system,[109] the

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[104] Burck, 1966, 193–207; Conte, 1989, 441–446. Dué exemplifies this in her analysis of Propertius' elegization of Briseis, esp. Dué, 2002, 111.

[105] Ov. *Ars* 2,713–716: *illis te manibus tangi, Brisei, sinebas, / imbutae Phrygia quae nece semper erant. / an fuit hoc ipsum quod te, lasciua, iuuaret, / ad tua uictrices membra uenire manus?* ('Briseis, you naughty girl, you allowed these hands to touch you, which were always coloured by Phrygian killing. Or was it, perchance, just this that you enjoyed – that the victorious hands approached your body?'). The mention of Achilles' blood-drenched hands is probably an allusion to *Il.* 24,478f, where Priam kisses the hands of Achilles, Watson, 1983, 123; Janka, 1997, 491–493.

[106] This also applies to the combination of Tecmessa and Aias and Andromache and Hector respectively in *Ars* 3,107–112; 517–524.

[107] Besides Conte (below n. 404) cf. Wildberger, 1998, 14–17.

[108] Conte, 1989, 458–460.

[109] Elegiac motives like *servitium amoris* and *militia amoris* do appear in the *Ars*, but always as

erotodidactic does not in the same way need to constantly reinterpret key motives of the traditional society (the ideas of *militia*, *negotium* and *fides*, for instance) within its own world of love but relates to them in un-altered form.[110]

Though the use of Hector as an example of manual stimulation of the woman's sexual organs would correspond nicely to the in itself extremely difficult sexual interpretation of Laevius *Frg.* 4 suggested by Pöschl, according to which Laevius has Hector satisfy Andromache in part, at least with his hand,[111] I believe the literary background in elegy to be more important in making them effective as exempla in *Ars* 2,709f. Already in its first manifestation in Propertius it drew not only on the military valour of the heroes but on their sexual prowess as well.

The references to traditionally exemplary women from mythology and literature discussed in the section above all have in common that the author develops some minor trait present already in earlier literary tradition, and transforms it so that, in its new setting, it will reveal the narrator's perspective as limited or all too specific in some way. There is, however, one instance where this 'over-development' of one mythological motive means neglecting other motives, and, what is more, motives that are infinitely more important in the literary tradition than the one the narrator puts in focus.[112] This instance is important not only because it is much more radical and wilful in ignoring main motives of the literary tradition it refers to, but also because it causes the reader to examine (perhaps in retrospect) the other mythological examples of the *Ars* more critically as well. As we shall see, the series of mythological examples given in the second book of the *Ars* in verses 353–356 is certainly among the most challenging in the *Ars amatoria*.

> *da requiem: requietus ager bene credita reddit,*   Ov. *Ars* 2,351
>   *terraque caelestes arrida sorbet aquas.*
> *Phyllida Demophoon praesens moderatius ussit,*
>   *exarsit uelis acrius illa datis;*

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strategies facilitating the ulterior motive of winning the girl, Holzberg, 1981, 197–204; 1997, 104f; 107–109; Myerowitz, 1985, 34f; Wildberger, 1998, 214–241.

[110] Conte, 1989, 460: "The presupposition of the *Ars amatoria*'s teachings is that elegy must renounce its ambition to reformulate the world: its daring attempt to transcodify into its own language values which are, strictly speaking, heterogeneous is usefully abandoned." Cf. Wildberger, 1998, 237–241; Conte, 1999, 344–346.

[111] Pöschl, 1995, 59–68.

[112] The rendering of Andromache and Tecmessa as incapable of attract men due to their sullenness in *Ars* 3,517–524 forces the literary tradition in a very dramatic way too, but as these women are depicted as grieving, albeit in decisively different circumstances, it is not a complete parallel to *Ars* 2,353–356.

Penelopen absens sollers torquebat Ulixes;
  Phylacides aberat, Laodamia, tuus.
sed mora tuta breuis: lentescunt tempore curae
  uanescitque absens et nouus intrat amor.

(Let it be: the field laid fallow well returns what it has been entrusted and the scorched earth absorbs the rain. Demophoon, while there, set Phyllis moderately aflame; she flared wilder once he had set sail. Clever Odysseus plagued, while absent, Penelope. Phylace's son, your love, Laodamia, was away. But the safe break is short: concerns relax with time, the absent love disappears and a new one enters.)

Ostensibly, the three couples illustrate the precept succinctly summed up in 2,351 with the words *da requiem* ('let it be'). This precept is introduced in 2,349 as an advice to the disciple-lover who, by remaining constantly in his beloved's presence, has already successfully roused her affection for him (as described in 2,339–350). The disciple-lover is then to allow himself to rest slightly on his laurels, withdraw from the company of his beloved and wait for her affection to flare yet more intensively (2,349f). To prove the benefits of this course of action, the *praeceptor* brings examples from farming, both of which are cyclical – the positive effects of laying land fallow and the longing for water by dried-out lands (2,351f). Thereupon follow the mythological examples of Phyllis, Penelope and Laodamia, obviously thought to offer further support of the point of *da requiem*. After these examples, the *praeceptor* sees fit to elucidate his precept: *sed mora tuta brevis: lentescunt tempore curae / vanescitque absens et novus intrat amor*, ('but the safe break is short: concerns relax with time, the absent love disappears and a new one enters'). Then, the *praeceptor* expounds this clarification with the negative example of how Helen was willingly abducted in the absence of Menelaus (2,359–372).

The choice of Phyllis, Penelope and Laodamia is remarkable in several ways. Watson notes that the *praeceptor* sees the excessive grief of the three women as a result of how their love grew in their lovers' absence rather than as proof of their deep feelings toward their lovers already before the separation.[113] Watson has further pointed to the reinterpretation of the characters' motives as a source of wit: the meaning of *sollers*, used in 2,355 of Odysseus, is twofold. The fitting epithet for the cunning Odysseus now also carries the implication of him using clever tactics to enhance Penelope's love by deliberately staying away from home. By association, the same is implied in the case of Demophoon and Protesilaus.

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[113] Watson, 1983, 124f.

This will clash incongruously and comically with the traditional representation of these mythological characters.[114]

Janka too refers to the witty tension this passage causes when compared to the traditional renderings of the myths of Phyllis, Penelope and Laodamia. However, for Janka the humour of the passage originates in the fact that the three otherwise exemplary loyal wives and beloveds are placed at one level with the adulterous Helen in the clause following *sed mora tuta brevis* (2,357). There, the *praeceptor* implies that given time, Phyllis, Penelope and Laodamia would also have given way to other suitors.[115] Whereas this is certainly correct, I believe that it also is a humorous play at the *praeceptor*'s own expense with mythological tradition in general and Ovidian texts in particular. According to the prevalent tradition, Phyllis and Laodamia both committed suicide in their lovers' absence, Phyllis after assuming that Demophoon had abandoned her for another woman, Laodamia upon hearing of her husband's death at the landing by Troy. Penelope is, just before Odysseus at long last returns to Ithaka, nearly overcome by the suitors. As is noted by all commentators, these myths have all been extensively described by Ovid himself, most notably in the *Heroides* (Letters 1, 2 and 13) and later in the *Remedia amoris* (the Phyllis-episode, *Rem.* 591–608). In *Ars* 2,357 the *praeceptor* attempts to calculate the risks connected to the deliberate[116] separation, but in the case of his three examples, the reader knows that danger lay not so much in their alleged willingness to succumb to other men as to despair and hopelessness caused by the absence of their beloveds.

Furthermore, the section *Ars* 2,349–372 as a whole proposes the advantages of brief separation when courting: the length of the period of separation suggested is to be seen in comparison with the constant presence of the disciple-lover at the side of his beloved advocated in 2,345–348 for the earlier stages of courting.[117] The strain that the assiduous courting puts on the disciple-lover is expressed at the end of 2,346: *taedia nulla fuge* ('shy away from no effort'). In the following, *semper* […] *semper* ('always […[always') in 2,347 and *noxque* […] *diesque* ('night […] and day') in 2,348 are the counterparts to *requiem* in 2,351. As mentioned above, both of the illustrative examples from farming in 2,351f have a cyclical character which indicates that the absence of the disciple-lover is to be intermittent only. That brief separation is indeed intended is confirmed by *sed mora tuta brevis* ('but the

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[114] Watson, 1983, 124, followed by Steudel, 1992, 160f, and to some extent by Janka, 1997, 277.

[115] Janka, 1997, 277.

[116] Incidentally, in Ov. *Epist.* 2,3 Phyllis states that Demophoon had promised to return after one month.

[117] Cf. Weber, 1983, 89f; Janka, 1997, 274.

safe break is short') in 2,357 and in my opinion the ensuing example of Helen is the only one to illustrate the negative consequences of staying away from one's beloved for too long. In this way, the examples of Phyllis, Penelope and Laodamia are framed by references to advisable brief separation, making it reasonable to assume that this is what the narrator intends them to illustrate. Thus, I doubt that the *praeceptor* already with the series of examples of Phyllis, Penelope and Laodamia tries to warn the disciple-lover not to leave his beloved for too long by alluding to the unhappy endings of the stories mentioned.[118] Seeing already in this series of examples a reference to what too long separation may involve, would break the train of thought leading up to the elaborate reference to the beginning of the affair between Helen and Paris (2,359–372), which with its 13 lines and repeated emphatic addresses to Menelaus (2,361–367) is the climax of the passage as a whole.[119] Subsequently, I believe that the *praeceptor* chooses to disregard the end of the stories of Phyllis, Penelope and Laodamia.

The telling of events prior to the Trojan war in 2,359–372 may also indicate that the temporal focus lies at the very beginning of the stories invoked rather than at their end in the other examples as well, thus encouraging the reader to recall descriptions of Laodamia swooning by the farewell from Protesilaus rather than such of her committing suicide after hearing of his death, which would be required if we were to consider Phyllis, Penelope and Laodamia intended as negative examples by the narrator himself.

Although the statement that absence of their lovers let their love burn more intensively may be considered true and though the reference to the end of their

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[118] Janka, 1997, 277f and 280, takes this standpoint too, at least on Phyllis and Laodamia, "Sein erstes Beispiel […] kann Ovid nur unter extremer Zuspitzung und singulärer Umdeutung in den Dienst seiner Argumentation hier stellen. Auf die Sage […] nimmt man […] sonst Bezug, um das lange vergebliche Warten der Phyllis, ihre Verzweiflung und ihren Selbstmord […] zu beklagen" and on Laodamia, „[…] verschweigt Ovid auch hier geflissentlich den unseligen Ausgang dieser Liebe […]." But cf. Weber, 1983, 90f, who argues that *sed mora tuta brevis* ('but the safe break is short') in 2,357 is a rectification necessitated by the flawed examples of Phyllis, Penelope and Laodamia.

[119] In Ov. *Ars* 2,359–372 the narrator pronounces Helen free of all blame in order to focus instead on how the conspicuous failings of Menelaus as a lover by necessity lead to the union between Paris and Helen. The passage is discussed fully by Steudel, 1992, 161–163; Janka, 1997, 282–291. The discussion of its audacious allusion to the lex Iulia de adulteriis still draws mainly on Stroh, 1979, 347f. Ovid's use of Helen falls outside of the limitations of this study, but one cannot fail to notice that the positive evaluation of Helen and Paris is entirely in keeping with the narrator's need to dissociate from or to rewrite the traditional examples of virtue like Penelope.

stories is not explicit, the reader's knowledge of tradition's unhappy ending of the stories of Laodamia and especially Phyllis will flaw the examples to the disadvantage of the narrator. The inability of the *praeceptor* to find examples more suitable for his precept will undermine his credibility in a most serious manner.[120]

III.iii. Digression: The possibility of pictorial intertexts

Before the close of this chapter, I will now consider briefly the possibility of pictorial intertexts for two of the references discussed above – the particular hairstyle ascribed to Laodamia in Ov. *Ars* 3,137f, and the notion of a tall Andromache in *Ars* 3,777f.

Though deviance from literary tradition seems to be a goal in itself and furthermore appears to fulfil an important poetic function, it is tempting to speculate on the existence of an established tradition of a tall Andromache in plastics or in painting as a source of inspiration for Ovid's remarks on her height. There seems, however, to be little evidence to support such an assumption. *LIMC* suggests merely one instance, a mural painting which shows Andromache as particularly tall. This painting supposedly displays Hector setting out to war, already dressed in armour, together with three women, one holding up a baby towards him, two waiting in a portal to the right. The woman in the middle, standing in the portal, is slightly taller than the other two. Touchefeu-Meynier thus assumes her to be Andromache and takes the two shorter women to be servants. However, the differences in height are almost negligible and in all likelihood, Andromache's height is a result of the need to demonstrate the social standing of the characters and does not go back on pictorial nor indeed literary tradition. Furthermore, this painting dates to the first century A.D. and is situated in the Domus Aurea.[121] Even if we do take Andromache's height in this painting to be more than a means of expressing her social superiority to the other women in it, it is, considering the late date, more likely that literary tradition from Ovid and onwards has influenced the artist's rendering of Andromache, than that this painting is the single remnant of an established artistic tradition inspiring Ovid; especially given the fact that Ovid's renderings of Andromache were remembered in the literary circles in Rome for a long time, as Martial in the late first century A.D. alludes

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[120] Cf. Sharrock, 1994, 34–39 with further instance of mythological examples being used for reader manipulation.

[121] Touchefeu–Meynier, 1981, 768.

to Andromache as an example for sexual practices (Mart. 11,104,13) in a manner conditioned by Ovid's.[122] Further, the heroines with whom Andromache is combined lend no support to the hypothesis that Ovid's depiction of Andromache goes back on pictorial intertexts. In vase paintings, Atalante's (*Ars* 3,775f) legs are often emphasized as most pictures of her focus on her as an athlete, but they are not shown as overly long,[123] and though the archeological material on Andromeda (*Ars* 2,643) is quite wide-ranging, she is never shown with black skin.[124] Therefore, the consideration of pictorial evidence for a tradition of a tall Andromache takes us no further than the discussion of the earlier literary tradition did. We still cannot be sure whether Ovid draws upon some text unknown to us, or if he has in fact invented the tall Andromache to suit his own purposes.

The *praeceptor*'s statement that Andromache dressed in a simple manner (Ov. *Ars* 3,109f), however, is confirmed by pictorial tradition: Andromache is often depicted in simple garments and without jewellery, and, just like in Ovid, this appears not only to be an expression of her grief but occurs already in vase-paintings from the sixth and fifth century B.C. showing both Andromache and Hector.[125]

Turning to the other reference with a possible pictorial background, we note that in *Ars* 3,137f Laodamia is said to know to wear her hair unadorned with a simple parting, as is suitable for her facial form. In this case it is reasonable to assume that representations in art form at least a backdrop for Ovid's depiction of her.[126]

longa probat facies capitis discrimina puri: Ov. *Ars* 3,137f
    sic erat ornatis Laodamia comis.

(A parting in the simple hair suits the oval face: Laodamia wore her hair this way.)

In the literary sources there is nothing to indicate that Laodamia was known for this particular hairstyle. Turning instead to pictorial evidence, one finds no examples of Laodamia wearing a parting before the death of Protesilaus. Indeed, the only known Roman artefact displaying such a scene is a gem in the Sangiorgi

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[122] The allusion to Ovid is clear, but Martial actually contradicts Ovid (saying 'often' instead of 'never') and makes no mention of Andromache's height. Much the same holds true for Iuv. 6,503, which implies that Andromache was a woman of particular hight. Cf. Janka, 2006.

[123] Boardman, 1984, 940–950.

[124] Schauenburg, 1981, 788.

[125] Touchefeu-Meynier, 1981, 773, s.v. Andromache 4 and 6.

[126] Viarre, 1969, 774; Schubert, 1992, 222; Reeson, 2001, 130f.

collections, which dates roughly to Ovid's own time (third quarter of the first century B.C.) and shows the couple's last meeting before Protesilaus' departure for Troy.[127] Here, Laodamia wears a small, slightly pointed cap, so that the arrangement of her hair is obscured to the viewer, but there is no suggestion of a parting and her hair seems to be held up in some way, rather than falling freely, which is what I assume Ovid has in mind in *Ars* 3,137f.[128] In later art, however, the story of Protesilaus and Laodamia seems to have enjoyed some popularity as a motive for funeral sarcophagi in the second century A.D. but there, the emphasis lies on scenes taking place after the death of Protesilaus. The sarcophagus offering the most detailed version of Laodamia's story shows her in one scene seated on a bed with her hair falling freely from what may be called a parting, while Protesilaus is waiting at the foot of the bed.[129]

This piece of evidence is relatively late and could, just like the tall Andromache of the Domus Aurea, be a result of literary influence on the pictorial arts, or, of course, purely coincidental. Still, in the *Ars amatoria*, the mention of Laodamia is followed by the examples of Apollo (3,141f), Diana (3,143f), Iole (3,155f) and Ariadne (3,157f), the first two of whom are highly likely to be inspired by and allude to famous works of art.[130] Though the passage in *Ars* 3 is by no means the only literary text to depict Apollo with his hair falling freely over his shoulders[131] or Ariadne with hair in disarray,[132] the fact that hairstyles displayed on statues apparently influenced the fashion of hairddressing will support the assumption that Ovid draws on pictorial as well as literary works of art for these examples.[133] The context, therefore, increases the probability of Ovid having known a pictorial representation of Laodamia with a severe parting.

An allusion to a work of art does not rule out the possibility of further, literary, intertexts which may add typical Ovidian wit to the passage. When reading Ovid, the first place to look for intertexts must be among Ovid's own works. In *Epist.* 13, Ovid repeatedly stresses that Laodamia refuses to pay attention to her

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[127] Dating according to Caciani, 1994, 558.

[128] The identification of the couple on the gem with Laodamia and Protesilaus is suggested by Zwierlein-Diehl, 1976, 24–26, who also has a clear reproduction of the gem, Taf. 1, Abb. 3), see further Caciani, 1994, 555, s.v. Protesilaos 8.

[129] Caciani, 1994, 558, s.v. Protesilaos 27; Rodenwaldt, 1890–1952, 3, p. 499f, tav. 132.

[130] On Apollo and Artemis, Reeson, 2001, 130.

[131] Nor indeed in Ovid, cf. *Met.* 3,421. Further see McKeown, 1989, 376 on *Am.* 1,14,31.

[132] Ariadne's torn hair is mentioned several times in her letter to Theseus, cf. *Epist.* 10,13; 47; 137; 147, further in *Am.* 1,7,15f, all recalling Cat. 64,63.

[133] Cf. R. K. Gibson, 2003, 149; Wood, 1999, 18f.

appearance as a token of her grief after the departure of Protesilaus for Troy. She says *nec mihi pectendos cura est praebere capillos* ('and I do not care about offering to have my hair combed') in *Epist.* 13,31 and in 13,39, she asks rhetorically *ipsa comas pectar?* ('should I comb my hair?').[134] Laodamia's hairstyle in *Epist.* 13 is not so much a result of cosmetic considerations as one of lack of care caused by emotional distress.

The hairstyle described in *Ars* 3,137f with a parting suitable for an oval face is probably not to be identified with the disarrayed fashion Laodamia's hair must take on in *Epist.* 13, even though they do coincide on the Roman sarcophagus mentioned above. That kind of hairdo the *praeceptor amoris* exemplifies instead with Ariadne and Iole (*Ars* 3,153–158). Therefore, one cannot interpret the fact that the *praeceptor* implies that Laodamia carefully considered her hairstyle so as to appear as attractive as possible as a misreading of myth by the *praeceptor* like I suggested in the case of the sad Tecmessa and Andromache (*Ars* 3,517–524), but mentioning Laodamia's hair does invite comparison with Ovid's own description of Laodamia in the *Epist.*, where her hairdo or lack of such has great symbolic value. The reader of *Ars* 3,137f (especially if well-versed in Ovid's own texts) would have known that Laodamia was not primarily famous for her beauty prior to Protesilaus departure for Troy, but for her grief for him thereafter. The differences between the two texts display how the *praeceptor amoris* must look to less well known or less important episodes of mythology to be able to illustrate his teachings.

III.iv. Concluding Remarks

Ovid's use of traditional examples of wifely virtues invites the reader to engage in a game of discovering allusions and intertexts and examine the way they reflect on Ovid's texts. Though the possibility of pictorial intertexts cannot be excluded, the literary background seems to be of overwhelming importance. We have seen that Penelope and Andromache are mentioned more frequently than the other female mythological paradigms of virtue, which is in keeping with the fact that Ovid in the *Ars amatoria* often recurs to the myths concerning Troy,[135] but especially in the case of Andromache one further point about the narrator's use of her story may be made. When combined with that of a Greek soldier's wife or beloved, the example of Andromache will emphasize the universal validity

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[134] As opposed to Protesilaus, who must endure the dirt of the battlefield, *Epist.* 13,37–40.
[135] Blodgett, 1972, 327; Durling, 1957, 160.

of the narrator's point. Andromache is the one heroine that most easily will fit such a scheme and this motivates the frequent references to her.[136] Moreover, the effect of contrast between Andromache's elevated status as a paragon of wifely virtues in epic and tragedy on the one hand and Ovid's use of her as an example for sexual instruction on the other may have been heightened by the fact that Andromache as a personification of the sufferings inflicted on the Trojans during and after the war held a special place in the mythic history of the Romans themselves which few other women of mythology would equal.[137] Thus, the choice of Andromache as an example allows the external author to make his points with the greatest effect possible.

However, for the reader sufficiently knowledgeable in literary tradition the use of traditional mythological examples is also a playful way of rendering the teachings of the Ovidian narrator relative and to show to what great extent the use of examples is dependent on the narrator's specific perspective and ambition. The erotodidactic narrator must either dissociate from or cast these mythological heroines in roles more apt for his own work, thereby changing the emphasis of their stories as compared to the way in which they are described in the invoked intertexts.

In some instances of dissociation from the model function of these mythological characters (all occurring in the *Ars amatoria*) the 'new' rendering of them will serve to reinforce the narrator's credibility. By means of the dissociation he displays an attitude which is, though deviating from the norms of traditional society, nevertheless consistent with the programmatic statements he, the *praeceptor amoris*, has made elsewhere. In most cases, however, renderings contrasting with or even neglecting earlier literary tradition will detract from the narrator's credibility by exposing how he has to transform or radically modify mythological 'facts' well known to the readers in order to support his precepts with mythological examples, thus making evident that he looks at the world in a manner distinctly foreign to all those favouring the ideal of the traditional Roman way of life. In 'canonical' elegy, we saw that 'mishandled' mythological examples often contributed to revealing the narrator's skewed appreciation and representation of himself and his relationships and so led us to question the validity of his professed world view. In the erotodidactic elegy, it is the ironic relativisation of the *praeceptor*'s teachings that prompts the reader to question the way of life purportedly celebrated in, for example, the *Ars*.

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[136] Cf. Barchiesi, 2006, 107–113, who approaches the frequent references to Andromache in the *Ars* in a different way.

[137] Auhagen, 2000, 203.

The fact that the first rendering of a mythological character of this kind is to be found in Ovid's *Amores*, put there in the mouth of a *lena*, a stage character lent from comedy, and serve to increase the reader's sympathy for the elegiac narrator recounting the *lena*'s speech by making her appear morally deficient, is a good indication that Ovid may be aiming for the same effect of discrediting the narrator presenting such transformed versions of myth in the *Ars amatoria* as well. I will only briefly hint here at the discussion of whether Ovid's untraditional use of some myths may eventually cause a change in the perception of them, as has been argued by some scholars.[138] Discussing Prop. 4,8 at the close of the first chapter of this study, I suggested that if we take the comic contrast arising from the 'mishandling' by elegiac narrators of traditional Roman ideals, as for instance mythological paradigms of wifely virtues, to be one of the key features of 'canonical' elegy, it also presupposes a well-established and essentially stable literary tradition; a mainstream tradition against which the quirkiness of the narrator may become visible. Certainly the sexualization of these myths in the *Ars* and other erotodidactic texts may appear more striking than elsewhere, but, as I hope to have made obvious in this chapter, the literary techniques used in the *Ars* are closely related to those employed in 'canonical' elegy. Therefore, I do not believe that Ovid's intent in presenting irreverent renderings of mythological material is to radically change our views on, for instance, Penelope or Hector, but to achieve comic and humorous effects. This question is addressed in passing in Durling's article on the *Ars*[139]: "If we mistake the persona's Phaedra for a real Phaedra, or this pretended world for the real world, we lose the effect of the wit […]."

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[138] Schubert, 1992, 132f on Ov. *Am.* 1,9,33–40; Gilchrist, 1997, 273f, on Ov. *Am.* 1,8,47f.
[139] Durling, 1957, 162.

Ovid's Exile Poetry

D ESPITE ITS STRAIGHTFORWARD appearance Ovid's exilic poetry is perhaps the most challenging part of his oeuvre.[1] In most of his earlier works, Ovid draws to great effect on the blurring or clear-cut emphasis of the line between the narrator of his texts and himself as their real-life author. The *Heroides* are particularly poignant to readers well aware that a male author is appropriating the voice of a female character. The narrator of the *Amores*, as well as of the erotodidactic works, refers to himself as Naso, to name but a few instances on which the choice of narrator is especially significant. The exile poetry makes a still more explicit claim on presenting autobiographical content.[2]

Partly for that reason the biographical approach remained prevalent in scholarly interpretations of the exile poems longer than it did with regards to Ovid's other works, and scholars have long sought to solve the puzzle of the historical Ovid's exile by means of the hints and riddles provided by the narrator in the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*.[3] The recurring hints that the *Ars amatoria* was one of the causes of Ovid's exile[4] has prompted many a critic to evaluate retrospectively the political or apolitical stance of the poet's earlier works.[5] Although not

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[1] Cf. Casali, 1997; Hinds, 2007.

[2] Cf. Holzberg, 1997, 31–37; Gaertner, 2005, 6f.

[3] Extensively surveyed by Thibault, 1964; cf. Syme, 1978, 216–222; Nugent, 1990, 239–248; Verdière, 1992. Leaving the issue of the reasons for the exile aside, the introduction of H. B. Evans, 1983, 2; 4 implies a biographical approach: "[…] a subject which has captured the attention of scholars for much too long." The biographical background remains important also to Claassen, 1988 (esp. p. 161–169) although she stresses that the exile poetry presents a highly stylized reaction to Ovid's experience of "totalitarian oppression" (the quotation on p. 169).

[4] Ov. *Trist.* 1,1,111–116; 9,57–64; 2,7f; 61; 207f; 211f; 239–252; 345–358; 543–546; 3,1,7f; 14,5f; 17f; 7,31f; 12,47f; Ov. *Pont.* 1,1,11f; 2,9,73–76; 10,11f; 11,1f; 3,3,37–50.

[5] Cf. Nugent, 1990, 240f; B. Gibson, 1999, 2of.

concerned with these overt references to the *Ars* or its alleged culpability, I will draw on interpretations of references to the five mythological characters selected for this study to show that the *Ars* is indeed a highly important intertext for Ovid's exile poetry, and that the exile corpus does reflect retrospectively on the aims of Ovid's amatory poetry.

In line with the move away from biographical interpretation of 'canonical' elegy, more recent research into Ovid's exile poetry has emphasized that these poems present an Ovidian illusion of autobiography.[6] While some scholars have gone so far as to suggest that the exile of Ovid is entirely fictitious, a scenario created exclusively for literary purposes,[7] most accept some basis in fact.[8] Instead of attempting to glean information about Ovid's real life from his exile poetry, however, such critics have shifted the focus of studies of the exile poetry to placing it within the continuum of Ovid's artistic development and its relationship to earlier and contemporary literature.[9] Studies like Kenney's "The Poetry of Ovid's Exile" and Nagle's *The Poetics of Exile* illustrate the importance of letting the knowledge of the workings of 'canonical' and erotodidactic elegy inform our readings of Ovid's exilic poetry.[10] Thus for instance Nagle, Williams, and Barchiesi all indicate that description of the exiled narrator's surroundings in Tomi as hostile and threatening can be plausibly understood not as a factual report of the situation in a distant part of the Roman empire, but as evidence of Ovid's ability to use and transform literary conventions for artistic purposes.[11]

Due to their purported autobiographical content, the impression of poems appearing in chronological sequence is especially striking in the exilic books. For that reason, the present chapter differs from the previous three in its structure: with the exception of my discussion of *Trist.* 2,375f included in this chapter introduction (see below), it follows the linear structure of the exilic works themselves rather than separating the references to the mythological paradigms according

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[6] Cf. Gaertner, 2005, 6, referring to the *Ex Ponto* as an illusion of private correspondence.

[7] Fitton Brown, 1985, 18–22; H. Hofmann, 1987, 23; cf. overviews of this approach in Chwalek, 1996, 28–30.

[8] Explicitly on this point, cf. e.g. Ehlers, 1988, 154f; Breitzigheimer, 1991, 39; Williams, 1994, 3–5; Chwalek, 1996, 30f; Holzberg, 1997, 36f n. 1.

[9] Cf. Williams, 2002, 378–381, explicitly stressing the continuity of Ovid's works.

[10] Kenney, 1967 and Nagle, 1980. Cf. also Rosenmeyer, 1997, for correspondences between the *Tristia* and the *Heroides*.

[11] Williams, 1994, 3–49, esp. 48f; Nagle, 1980, 55–61; cf. also Ehlers, 1988, 148f; Barchiesi, 1997, 15f; 24. This is not to deny that one may draw on Ovid's poetry for historical or regional fact, but that one must take into account the literariness of the text when doing so.

to their narratological function.[12] Instead, my interpretations of the poems featuring the five characters selected for this study will continually highlight three issues that appear to be significant across the two collections of *Tristia* and *Ex Ponto*: first, the inscription of the *Ars amatoria* into the exile poetry. We shall see that the exiled narrator refers to these mythological characters in a way which on the surface is consistent with traditional Roman ideals or marital morality. For instance, contrary to the handling of the same examples of wifely virtues in 'canonical' and erotodidactic elegy, as well as in the *Heroides*, there is little elegization of the motivations of these characters in the exile poetry, which makes the impression of being richer in autobiographical content than Ovid's earlier writings. This supports the narrator's argument that although he has written poetry accused of immorality, he himself has (and does) not behaved inappropriately (see below, on Ov. *Trist.* 5,14). As we shall also see, however, this claim is undermined by other elements in the text: I will argue that contrasting with the ostensive disavowals of the *Ars amatoria* in the exile poetry, the references to the selected five heroines inscribe the successful dissemination of the *Ars amatoria* in the new, allegedly apologetic, collection. On four instances and with minimal variation, Ovid uses a catalogue of four mythological heroines, which he has also drawn upon in the prominent position of the introduction to the *Ars amatoria* (Ov. *Ars* 3,15–28). I will suggest that in comparison with the often muddled pleas the narrator ostensibly makes for his case in front of Augustus, this continuous inscription of the work which supposedly contributed to Ovid's exile is by far a more defiant statement of poetic autonomy (see below, on Ov. *Trist.* 1,6; 4,3; 5,5; 14; *Pont.* 3,1). Finally, I will also show that such re-occurring similarities between mythological catalogues in the *Ars* on the one hand and in the exilic works on the other emphasize the limitations of the narrator's chosen format both in and prior to the exile poetry. I will argue that they pose the question whether the *Ars* did not provide the better reading experience after all – and that they encourage us to answer in the affirmative.

Secondly, I will argue that Ovid associates the exiled narrator closely with the elegiac genre, most obviously by making him write elegiac verse, but also by having him adopt poses familiar from 'canonical' elegy. Subsequently, we would perhaps assume the narrator's wife to be assigned the role of the elegiac beloved. However, the text meets this expectation only to a certain extent. I hope to show that Ovid in fact frequently refers to the narrator's wife in terms more reminiscent of a moral or epic discourse than of 'canonical' elegy, so that the different generic

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[12] For the brief mention of Sabinus as the author of a letter from Odysseus to Penelope in Ov. *Pont.* 4,16,13f, cf. I.i. n. 39.

affiliation of the two main characters appearing in the poems addressed to the narrator's wife creates a sense of widening distance between them. This, I will suggest, proves another way in which Ovid plays on the boundaries of and the affiliation to certain literary genres to represent the isolation of exile (see below, particularly on Ov. *Trist.* 1,6).

Thirdly, I will emphasize the way the exile poetry reflects on the objectives of earlier elegiac writings (see particularly on Ov. *Trist.* 5,5). I will illustrate that the exile poetry employs these mythological characters set in contrast with characters presented as real-life men and women in order to comment not only on the validity of the elegiac world view as it is presented in 'canonical' elegy, but on the potential influence of 'canonical' and erotodidactic elegy on contemporary morality, and on whether these genres did set out to exert any such influence (see below, on Ov. *Trist.* 5,5). Similarly to observations made about their function in certain passages in 'canonical' elegy and above all in the *Heroides* in previous chapters, the five selected mythological characters become vehicles for a poetological discussion.

Following these close readings, I review the outcomes of the chapter in Concluding Remarks (IV.viii.).

First, however, let us turn to the passage excluded from the sequence of linearly presented readings. As we shall see, this passage has a different emphasis from the majority of the references discussed in this chapter. This poetic letter addressed to Augustus himself, *Tristia* 2, deals directly with the potential of literature to represent or indirectly reflect on a certain political standpoint[13] and many of the issues central to the exilic poetry come to a head in this second book of the exile poetry.[14] Although *Tristia* 2 ostensibly combines aspects of apology and appeal for leniency in punishing him for the offences the narrator admits to,[15] it – like the surrounding books – has often been felt to contain a high degree of subversive irony pointedly aimed at Augustus.[16]

It is roughly in the middle section of *Tristia* 2 that we find a brief reference to the *Odyssey* and Penelope (Ov. *Trist.* 2,375f). We must acknowledge that this reference belongs to a poem very much different from the shorter poems of the

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[13] B. Gibson, 1999, 19.

[14] Cf. Nugent, 1990, 242: "It is not surprising that *Tristia* 2, in which the emperor himself is also Ovid's expressly intended reader, raises these questions of attitude and sincerity with a vengeance."

[15] Cf. Nugent, 1990, 243 with extensive bibliography.

[16] H. B. Evans, 1983, 14–16; Nugent, 1990, 246; Breitzigheimer, 1991, 68–76; Claassen, 1988, 165; Barchiesi, 1997, 28–34; Williams, 2002, 327f.

other exile books, and any extensive interpretation would need to take into consideration texts and issues well beyond the scope of this study. It will, however, become clear during the course of this chapter that this mention of Penelope differs from the other references to paragons of wifely virtues in the exile poetry. The *Odyssey* passage in *Tristia* 2 belongs to the second part of the book concerned with interpretation of other authors. There is a clearly advertised metapoetic discussion of other literary works, supposedly intended to support the narrator's defence of the *Ars amatoria*. Ovid's narrator claims that all literature deals with the subjects he has been faulted for treating in the *Ars amatoria* and his love poetry: Anacreon, Sappho, Catullus and Callimachus all wrote first-person narrated love stories (Ov. *Trist.* 2,361–368). Indeed, according to the exiled narrator, even the most epic of literary works may be reduced to stories of sex and illicit love. The references to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in *Trist.* 2,371–374 and 375–380 respectively are prime examples of the re-reading undertaken by the narrator of the *Tristia* to support his case:

Ilias ipsa quid est aliud, nisi adultera, de qua   Ov. *Trist.* 2,371
    inter amatorem pugna uirumque fuit?
quid prius est illi flamma Briseidos, utque
    fecerit iratos rapta puella duces?
aut quid Odyssea est, nisi femina propter amorem,
    dum uir abest, multis una petita procis?

(What is the *Iliad* other than an adultress, about whom the husband and the lover fought? What happens in it before the the burning passion for Briseis arises and causes the generals to fight over the captured girl? Or, what is the *Odyssey*, if not a woman sought by many suitors in love, while her husband is absent?)

Bruce Gibson has shown that the re-reading of Homer here plays on the beginnings of both epics, reversing the order of presentation to mention Briseis before the wrath of Achilles and giving primacy to Penelope with the word *femina* ('woman', *Trist.* 2,375) rather than Odysseus, to whom Homer, as the reader will be aware, refers in the first line of the *Odyssey* as "the man". Gibson also indicates that Ovid's wording here leaves open the question of whether Penelope resisted the suitors or not, and could be compliant with readings like that of Dipsas in Ov. *Am.* 1,8,47f, where a rather wanton Penelope uses the situation to her utmost advantage.[17] However, the phrase *multis procis* ('many suitors') in Ov. *Trist.* 2,376 alludes to Propertius 2,9,3f using the same expression.[18] As we have seen,

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[17] B. Gibson, 1999, 29f, and cf. Chapter III.ii. on Ov. *Am.* 1,8,47f.
[18] Luck, 1977, 134.

the Propertius passage draws primarily on the vulgate image of Penelope as a paragon of virtue.[19] The presence of an allusion to that passage in Ovid's exile poem illustrates the irreverence of the scenario hinted at by the exiled narrator, that is, that of Penelope wantonly enjoying herself in Odysseus' absence. Thus highlighted, these irreverent[20] readings of Homer, along with those of other authors mentioned in *Tristia* 2, contribute to make clear Ovid's interest in the reader's power over the text.[21]

Do they, however, help the defence of the *Ars amatoria* or its author? Ovid can count on his readers measuring the interpretation of Homer suggested in *Trist.* 2,371–380 against more traditional interpretations of the epics, and on them placing the new interpretation anywhere on the scale between the ridiculous, the burlesque or the witty.[22] Hence, when he is judged against the background of traditional readings in the classics, the narrator of *Tristia* 2 may be found to have just as skewed a world view as the *praeceptor* of the *Ars*.[23] It does not seem to make a very good case for the defence. What it does do is establish a parallel of misreadings. As the narrator of *Tristia* 2 misreads Homer, so Augustus has misread Ovid. In a poem much concerned with the ability of the reader to exercise control over a text, to mine it wisely or unwisely for a meaning, this must be a challenging notion. Thus Ovid turns the tables on the emperor; he has not committed any crime in his writing, but Augustus has in his reading.[24]

We have seen that in *Tristia* 2 Ovid makes use of two female mythological characters, Helen and Penelope, to address the issue of the reader's – rather than the author's – impact on the text. It is on this account that the *Tristia* 2 reference to Penelope differs significantly from other references to mythological and literary characters known for their wifely virtues in the exile corpus. Not only are these passages ostensibly concerned with relations between the exiled narrator and his wife (whose loyalty is either praised or encouraged) rather than a clearly signposted metapoetical discussion, but the survey in this chapter will also show that on other instances Ovid employs the five mythological characters selected for this study for authorial, metapoetical comments and reflections on his *own* works, particularly the *Ars amatoria*.

One may recognize this use of mythological characters rooted in genres other

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[19] Cf. I.ii.

[20] Cf. Luck, 1977, 134.

[21] B. Gibson, 1999, 27.

[22] For burlesque, B. Gibson, 1999, 30; for astonishing, Luck, 1977, 134.

[23] Cf. Nugent, 1990, 250 referring to the narrator here as "literary *praeceptor*".

[24] Cf. Ov. *Trist.* 2,237–240; Nugent, 1990, 249–251; B. Gibson, 1999, 23.

than 'canonical' elegy from discussions in earlier chapters of this thesis, where I argued that the references to, among others, the mythological paradigms of Penelope, Laodamia, Andromache, Alcestis and Euadne are (more often than not) shaped in such a way as to allow the reader to discover the unreliability of the elegiac narrator and the cracks inherent in the world view ostensibly presented in 'his' poetry. While there are parallels for this in the exile poetry (see below, on Ov. *Trist.* 5,14), the three recurring issues listed above will, more often than not, take precedence.

IV.1. Faith in the *Ars*? Ov. *Trist.* 1,6,19–22

Stephen Hinds notes in his article on the first book of the *Tristia* that we may understand *Trist.* 1,7 as a manual for a re-reading/writing of the *Metamorphoses*; a re-reading adding one further layer of meaning to Ovid's fifteen book epic by reflecting the poet's life in exile.[25] In the course of his poetic books from exile, the narrator ('Ovid') repeatedly describes the *Metamorphoses* as an unfinished, but already widely circulated, poem, so that it in fact lends itself quite easily to a re-reading under new instructions from its author.

In the same way Hinds suggests that the first poem in the book addressed to Ovid's wife, *Trist.* 1,6, toys with the idea of a another re-write, this time of the *Heroides*. In the catalogue of virtuous wives that is the focus of the present section, the narrator claims that his wife surpasses Andromache and Laodamia in her virtue – the word used is *probitas* ('honesty'), to which I shall return presently – and that the faithful Penelope would have had to cede the prime place in Homer's poetry to Ovid's wife, had Homer been allotted the writing about her character. After a digression complimenting the house of Augustus as setting an example for wifely virtue, the narrator laments that the sufferings of exile have caused him to lose the ability to write slight poetry in her honour. Thereupon follow the verses central to Hinds' interpretation of the poem:

prima locum sanctas heroidas inter haberes,   Ov. *Trist.* 1,6,33
  prima bonis animi conspicerere tui.
quantumcumque tamen praeconia nostra ualebunt,
  carminibus uiues tempus in omne meis.

(You would have the first place among the sacred heroines, you would be noted as the first because of your good heart. Nevertheless, so far as it is in the power of my praise, you shall live forever in my songs.)

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[25] Hinds, 1985, 13–32.

Hinds asserts that *heroidas* ('heroines') indicates a subtle reference to Ovid's own *Heroides*, suggesting the narrator now realizes that the prime place of that collection, held by Penelope, should rather go to his own real-life wife. Thus, the narrator would make exactly the same editorial decision predicted for Homer in *Trist.* 1,6,21f, placing himself on one level with his famous (and approved-of) predecessor.[26] The poem then concludes with the slightly contradictory statement that the wife will nevertheless live on in his verse as long as his praises (*praeconia*) maintain their power. Hinds resolves the contradiction of that claim by stressing the many echoes of the *Heroides* contained within the *Tristia*, which lets us look on the *Tristia* as a re-writing in exile of the *Heroides*. By lending his wife a central space in his new book, the narrator does in fact accomplish – on a larger scale, too – the feat described only in the previous distich as an impossible one.

The *Heroides* is of paramount importance to the *Tristia*. However, in the following I will suggest that although *Trist.* 1,6 provides a suggested re-read of the *Heroides* along the lines of Hinds' interpretation, it is also to a high degree concerned with the evaluation of the *Ars amatoria*. Regardless of the real circumstances of Ovid's exile, the narrator of the exilic corpus continually draws on the *Ars* and on what he tells us of the reception of the *Ars* for the characterization of his own persona.[27] It is vital to bear in mind that within the *Tristia*, the image of both is but the exiled narrator's representation of the earlier work and its reception. As they stand, most of the references to the *Ars* appear deferential at first glance, bowing, it may seem, to the wishes of Augustus.[28] Equally important are the repeated references to the *Metamorphoses*, allowing the narrator to fashion himself as a modern day Vergil.[29] As mentioned above, Hinds has shown that *Trist.* 1,7 investigates possible retrospective readings of the *Met.* If we accept that *Trist.* 1,6 undertakes a less deferential probing of the objectives and limitations of the *Ars* – and I hope to establish this below – the two poems 1,6 and 1,7 would form a strategically placed metapoetical exploration of what in terms of self-characterization are the two most important intertexts of the *Tristia*.

In the following, I will first highlight the connections of this part of *Trist.* 1,6 with the *Ars* by discussing the first half of the poem, which leads up to the

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[26] Rosenmeyer, 1997, 45–47 also argues that the main concern of the narrator here is his own reputation.

[27] Cf. Kenney, 1967, 44–47; Nagle, 1980, 83–86; B. Gibson, 1999 esp 17–20; Hinds, 1985; 1998, 17–20.

[28] Such references easily lend themselves to ironic or subversive readings, again cf. Casali, 1997.

[29] Williams, 1994, 80–83, on *Trist.* 1,7.

mythological catalogue, and by focussing on the catalogue as a whole. In that initial section, I intend to illustrate that the text on the one hand disassociates itself from this earlier work, but on the other presupposes detailed knowledge of the ostensibly rejected text. In the second part of my interpretation of *Trist.* 1,6 I undertake a close reading of the catalogue and the narrator's praise of his wife, comparing it to language conventionally used in 'canonical' elegy. Together, these readings will allow us to draw some conclusions about Ovid's use of generic interplay in this poem.

When investigating the intersection of genres in *Trist.* 1,6 one must first note the invocation of the characters of Lyde and Bittis in the first distich. These were the women celebrated in the verse of the Hellenistic poets Antimachus and Philetas, both mentioned several times in Propertius as inspirational forerunners of 'canonical' elegy in Rome.[30] Hence, the reference to Lyde and Bittis is a most distinctive generic marker, leading one to expect the poem to constitute a return to the themes of 'canonical' elegy.[31] The second distich then returns to the familiar premise of the *Tristia*, evoking the narrator's misery in exile, and the loyalty of his wife. This contrast is the first indication that the poem will focus not only on the faithfulness of the narrator's real-life wife, but also on the differences between the narrator's 'reality' as it is presented, possibly in a tendentious way, in the *Tristia*, and what one would have expected in a poem by 'the old' Ovid.

In lines 5–18 the narrator tells of how his wife has proved herself in his absence. Compared to the pattern known from 'canonical' elegy, this makes for an interesting role reversal – here, we have the female lover being mindful of spending and conservation of her lover's reputation, indeed even interacting with his friends in order to preserve the narrator's estate.[32] It recalls the later part of Penelope's letter in the *Heroides* (*Epist.* 1,87–110), where Ovid's Penelope describes her (not altogether successful) efforts to defend Odysseus' household against the ravages of the suitors. In the *Heroides* letter, these rather pragmatic concerns stood out as unconventional in their elegiac setting, recalling Penelope's epic intertextual origins.[33] The meter continually prompts us to read the *Tristia* with 'canonical' elegy in mind, particularly elegies written to absent lovers; the *Heroides* are highly relevant, but also poems like Prop. 1,8 and 11, and Ovid's *Am.* 2,19 and 3,4 to mention just a few. These poems all deal with an explicit erotic threat: the *amator*

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[30] Cf. Prop. 2,34,31; 3,1,1, both with programmatic implications, and Hinds, 1999, 129.

[31] Cf. Kenney, 1967, 39; Luck, 1977, 58f; Nagle, 1980, 52 esp. n. 87.

[32] For elegiac *puellae* presented as eager to spend their lover's money, cf. e.g. Prop. 2,16,1f; 9f; 24b; Ov. *Am.* 1,8,55f.

[33] Cf. above, II.i.iii., and Spoth, 1992, 49f.

fears a rival, or is himself posing that threat to another man.[34] In *Trist.* 1,6,5–18 only the mention of an opponent trying to gain access to the narrator's estate in Rome (1,6,13f) could be construed this way; one might see erotic undertones in the likening of him to a ravaging wolf (1,6,9f). However, as the similar passage towards the end of Penelope's letter in the *Heroides*, this potentially erotic threat is also tied to pragmatic concerns of material wealth and assistance lent to the wife by friends of the narrator. The attempted elegization of the wife is not made quite complete.

Thereupon, the narrator extols the virtue of his wife by means of the mytho-logical catalogue mentioned above:

nec probitate tua prior est aut Hectoris uxor,   Ov. *Trist.* 1,6,19
    aut comes extincto Laodamia uiro.
tu si Maeonium uatem sortita fuisses,
    Penelopes esset fama secunda tuae:
siue tibi hoc debes, nullo pia facta magistro,
    cumque noua mores sunt tibi luce dati,

(In honesty neither Hector's wife or Laodamia, companion of her dead husband, stand ahead of you. Had you been allotted to the Maeonian bard, Penelope's fame would have been second to yours. Whether this is down to you yourself, and no teacher has taught you to be virtuous, and such a character was innate to you when you were first born […].)

Although it is often remarked that mythological catalogues of this type appear put together without particular regard for detail and in reliance on mythological handbooks[35] we should also note that this catalogue itself constitutes a generic marker, recalling catalogue-like mentions of virtuous wives in 'canonical' elegy.[36] There is also, I believe, a connection between the *Ars* 3 catalogue, where the *praeceptor amoris* draws on the examples of Penelope, Laodamia, Alcestis and Euadne (*Ars* 3,15–22) to allay potential protests against his assisting women who cause their lovers to come to grief,[37] and the one in *Tristia* 1,6. Here, Penelope and

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[34] Incidentally, the catalogue of mythological examples in Ov. *Am.* 3,4,17–30 draws on Penelope as an example *e contrario*. Cf. above, Chapter I.v.

[35] Luck, 1977, 60; Bernhardt, 1986, 176. These authors also note the similarities with *Ars* 3,15–22 but do not fully explore their generic significance. Cf. also Hinds, 1999, 125.

[36] Such catalogues are a common feature of 'canonical' elegy, often but not exclusively concerned with fidelity. Cf. Prop. 1,15,9–16; 2,6,23f; 9,3–16; 20,1f; 22,29–34; 3,13,23f; Ov. *Am.* 1,9,34–40; 3,4,21–24. Cf. also Davisson, 1993, 220f.

[37] Chapter III.i.

Laodamia appear together for the first time since *Ars* 3. Furthermore, the narrator states as one of his explanations for the virtue of his wife that she (even as the heroines mentioned in *Ars* 3,15–22) had no need of a teacher (note *nullo magistro* ('no teacher') in *Trist.* 1,6,23) to be faithful and brave, a phrase that can but recall the final line of his book to female lovers: *NASO MAGISTER ERAT* ('Naso was the teacher') in *Ars* 3,812.[38] The association with Penelope and Laodamia of the *Ars* 3 catalogue characters supposedly irrelevant to the *praeceptor* and his readers, together with the emphasized *nullo magistro* sets Ovid's wife apart from the potential readers of the *Ars amatoria*.

Ostensibly, the narrator continues to distance himself from the teachings of the *Ars*. Allowing an argument *e silentio*, other differences between the two catalogues suggest themselves as significant. The absence of Euadne or the final jokingly made reference to the etymology of *uirtus* ('virtue') and the goddess by the same name (*Ars* 3,21–24) in *Trist.* 1,6 deserves mention. It enables the narrator of *Trist.* 1,6 to emphasize the difference in his current aims as compared to those of the *Ars*. In the interpretation of *Ars* 3 I stressed that the description of Euadne the suttee (*Ars* 3,21f) was the one where the intrusion of humour most obviously undermined an appreciation of the given example as unquestionably laudable. Excluding her and any reference to the irreverent personification of *uirtus* in the present catalogue allows the narrator of the *Tristia* to signpost his shift of focus toward more serious topics than those of the *Ars*. The fact that only intimate knowledge of Ovid's previous (and according to the narrator of the *Tristia* much less serious) works will allow the reader to appreciate it fully nevertheless adds considerable wit to the passage. Consequently, the success of the *Ars amatoria* is inscribed even in this new book.

So far I have mostly discussed the intertextual relationship of our passages with mythological catalogues of virtuous women in 'canonical' and erotodidactic elegy in terms of similarities. For a full understanding of *Trist.* 1,6, however, we must also take into account the points where the catalogue in *Trist.* 1,6,19–22 deviates from such lists of women. The word *probitas* ('honesty'), prominentely placed in 1,6,19 as a key word to the *Tristia* catalogue, appears only twice in Ovid's pre-exilic works (Ov. *Epist.* 17,174 and *Med. Fac.* 49), but on eleven instances in *Tristia* and *Ex Ponto*.[39] Neither does it appear in Propertius' and Tibullus' descriptions of

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[38] For the need of teaching in all women but the extraordinarily beautiful, cf. Ov. *Ars* 3,251–258 and *Am.* 2,5,61f. Moreover, the use of the in and by itself common word *uates* ('seer') to describe Homer in *Trist.* 1,6,21 may recall the prominently placed self-description of the *praeceptor amoris* as *uates* in *Ars* 1,29f.

[39] However, forms of the adjective *probus* ('honest') appears in Ov. *Am.* 3,4,29; 14,14; *Epist.* 17,2 and *Rem.* 330, cf. Deferrari, 1939, s.v. *probus* and *probitas*. Cf. Johnson, 1996–1997, 412.

virtuous women, who tend instead to use variations on *fides* ('faithfulness'), *pietas* ('virtue') or *pudicitia* ('chastity') on those instances.[40] Ovid's choice of word, then, alerts the reader to the fact that although the meter and, to some extent at least, the subject matter of faithful women are elegiac, what follows will also contain elements that are at odds with their current setting.[41]

Within the catalogue Ovid stresses this by means of the choice and the order of heroines mentioned. Unlike the characters of Laodamia and Penelope, Andromache has never been the main character explored in a full-scale elegiac letter, and on the instances where the *praeceptor amoris* and the narrator of the *Amores* referred to her character, her epic and tragic intertextual background played a most important part in rendering the passages efficient – though they did not, as we have seen, necessarily serve the purpose seemingly intended by the narrator. The placement of Andromache at the beginning of the catalogue contributes to widening the gap between Ovid's previous and present writings, and encourages us to remain mindful of the differences.

Next, the narrator praises Laodamia as *comes extincto uiro* ('companion of her dead husband') , while claiming that not even she could have surpassed his own wife in virtue. Several commentators note the description of Laodamia as *comes* ('companion') as an Ovidian commonplace,[42] but I believe there is more to the expression here, especially given the inclusion of the phrase *extincto uiro* ('dead husband'). Laodamia, says the narrator, followed her deceased husband, referring to her giving up her life to follow him in death. The phrase recalls the couple's full story in a more explicit way than on most instances invoking the myth in Ovid's works:[43] it was Protesilaus' great love for Laodamia that caused him to be granted the favour of returning from the dead for a limited period of time, to meet his wife.[44] Therefore, although Laodamia displays her love as she follows

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[40] E.g., cf. the use in passages discussed in Chapter One, Prop. 1,15,22; 2,6,25; 9,18; 3,12,15; 22 and 38; 13,9–24; Tib. 1,3,83f; Ov. *Am.* 3,3,1; cf. also in Ov. *Am.* 3,4 where *casta* is a key phrase (above, Chapter I.v.); *pudica* in Ov. *Am.* 3,14,3; 13; 18.

[41] O'Gorman, 1997, 116f notes that Ovid moves the female object of his poem into the discourse of *pietas* while at the same time eroticising that discourse, but does not provide a detailed reading.

[42] R. K. Gibson, 2003, 94.

[43] The phrase is first used in *Am.* 2,18,38. Laodamia's letter in the *Heroides* (*Epist.* 13) draws on this motive of the story for ironic effect. The motive reappears in *Pont.* 3,1,109f, see below IV.v.

[44] On the return of Protesilaus, cf. Prop. 1,19,9f; Stat. *Silv.* 5,3,273; Serv. *Aen.* 6,477f and *Mythogr.* 1,158; Apollod. *Epit.* 3,30 and Lucian *DMort.* 23. Cf. also Jacobson, 1974, 211f.

Protesilaus in dying, she remains, in a sense, second to him in devotion.[45] She is second, so how could she ever have been first? To surpass her, then, actually leaves Ovid's wife with a second place, and, by implication, the narrator himself in the place of pride.

The following distich, on how Homer's Penelope would have had to relinquish her place of honour in favour of Ovid's wife, had Homer undertaken to describe her, does, like the Laodamia distich, subtly imply an increasing emphasis on the suffering or accomplishment of the husband – particularly given the phrase *extincto uiro* in *Trist.* 1,6,20 and the number of times the exiled narrator describes himself as already virtually dead.[46] In the case of the Penelope distich, the narrator implicitly places himself in the role of the long-suffering Odysseus,[47] thus stressing his own troubles and heroic status, as much as those of his loyal wife.

After suggesting another possibility of how Ovid's wife came to acquire her high moral standards, while at the same time paying a compliment to a lady of Augustus' household,[48] the narrator goes on to deplore that he does not possess adequate poetic powers to praise his wife's virtues the way they deserve (*Trist.* 1,6,29f). Again, the text of *Tristia* is thrown in sharp relief against the background of 'canonical' elegy, where such *recusationes* are commonplace as a means for the narrators to pay tribute to patrons and friends while devoting themselves to writing about and for their love.[49] Here, the narrator protests that he is unable to treat properly in verse the one subject that usually is the chief inspiration of the elegiac poet – his love.[50] On one hand, the adaptation (or indeed reversal) of this elegiac *topos* allows the narrator to compliment his wife in a most grandiose way. However, it also implies a generic boundary parting narrator from addressee, marking the former as trapped within his chosen medium of elegiac verse and the latter, as it were, continually barred from it.

There is one further juncture in *Trist.* 1,6 at which the sense of a widening abyss, achieved by means of generic markers, between the narrator and his wife is reinforced. Firstly, as the narrator states he would, were he only able, grant

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[45] Hinds, 1999, 126.

[46] Nagle, 1980, 23–32, with readings of several passages.

[47] Rahn, 1958, 115–118, particularly relevant for the poem before the one on hand, *Trist.* 1,5.

[48] According to Luck, the *femina princeps* ('first among women') is likely to be Atia the younger, aunt of Augustus, Luck, 1977, 61. Wheeler and Goold, 1988, 36 understands the phrase as a reference to Livia.

[49] Luck, 1977, 61, taken further by Nagle, 1980, 120f.

[50] On the *puella* as the chief poetic inspiration of the elegists, cf. programmatically Prop. 2,1,1–16.

his wife the prime place among the sacred heroines (*sanctas heroidas*, *Trist.* 1,6,33), Ovid again chooses an odd turn of phrase. Used of things other than altars, gods or temples, *sanctus* ('sacred') appears in Ovid's elegiac writings on three instances only, once in conjunction with the *maiestas* of poets (*Ars* 3,407), once of the senate (*Pont.* 4,9,17) and once in the phrase *sanctum nomen amicitiae* ('sacred name of friendship', *Trist.* 1,8,15).[51] Although I believe Hinds is right in assuming that we are supposed to think of the ordering of the *Heroides* here, the use of *sanctas* alerts us to a further dimension to the text. We may of course translate the word as 'virtuous',[52] but the choice of an 'un-elegiac' word over topical expressions like *pia* ('virtuous') or *fida* ('faithful') is a significant one. Once more the language of faithfulness makes obvious the differences between the characterization of the wife in *Trist.* 1,6 on the one hand, and the portrayal of female lovers in 'canonical' elegy on the other.

The final distich *quantumcumque tamen praeconia nostra ualebunt, / carminibus uiues tempus in omne meis*, ('Nevertheless, so far as it is in the power of my praise, you shall live forever in my songs', *Trist.* 1,6,35f) may seem to reconcile the two, but even here we may sense a contrast being set up between narrator and addressee. After all, given the narrator's way of speaking of his exile as death (as in the previous elegy to the same addressee, *Trist.* 1,3), and his promise of life for his wife in this distich, the couple are parted by the boundary between life and death.

This interpretation has highlighted a number of instances where it would appear that the narrator of the *Tristia* trespasses against the generic convention of elegy. I have suggested that invoking his own elegiac past by means of the references to the *Ars amatoria* and the *Heroides*, and by describing his wife in terms that ring just slightly off-key to a reader well familiar with 'canonical' elegy and Ovid's other elegiac works, the choice of genre actually comes to embody the isolation of the narrator. Elegy, then, is both cause and expression of his exile.

However, bearing in mind that that 'canonical' elegy is a construction of modern day scholars rather than a rigid measuring system imposed on their work by the authors themselves, we would also be justified in viewing this as a re-invention or a subtle change of the boundaries of the genre. We have noted that we need to draw on a developed reading of the *Ars* (in the case of *Trist.* 1,6,19–22 it was *Ars* 3,21–24) in order fully to appreciate the text of the *Tristia* and the subtle shifts of focus taking place within it. These changes to the genre, along with the inscrip-

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[51] Deferrari, 1939 s.v. *sanctus*. In Ov. *Ars* 3,407 the word constitutes an allusion to Cic. *Pis.* 24 and *Trist.* 1,8,5 may allude to Cat. 109,6, so R. K. Gibson, 2003, 267. The wish to create a discernible allusion may explain the oddity of Ovid's choice of word.

[52] *OLD* s.v. *sanctus* 4.

tion of the earlier work into the new one, also raise the question which was the most successful reincarnation of elegy; that is, which was the best read.

IV.11. Attempts to overcome a widening abyss? Ov. *Trist.* 4,3,29f and 63f

As in *Trist.* 1,6 the first reference to a mythological example of wifely virtue – the comparison of 'Ovid's' wife to Andromache in *Trist.* 4,3,29f – opens up a gap between the elegiac world of exilic poetry in which the narrator comes alive, and the reality of exile.[53]

The poem is one of the verse letters most strongly reminiscent of the *Heroides*, or of Propertian elegy, in that it continually vacillates between anxiety and surety about the devotion of the loved one.[54] As the vacillating structure will have some significance for my interpretation and the references to be discussed in this section fall in either half of the poem, I first provide a brief outline: At the beginning of the poem, the narrator begs reassurance of the Bear constellation that his wife is thinking of him (*Trist.* 4,3,1–10) but interrupts himself, chastizing himself for his lack of faith.[55] The narrator then poses a series of hopeful, rhetorical questions and protestations describing a dream scenario: his wife lies sleepless and tearful with longing (11–30), in as much pain as Andromache when she saw Hector drawn about Troy by Achilles (29f). Thereupon follows a passage on that the narrator does not know how best to comfort her (31–38), leading him to wish that he was dead rather than exiled (39–48), and on to state that it would pain him to know she now felt ashamed to be his wife, who was earlier proud to be so (51–60). Mythological examples are brought up as possible sources of inspiration: Euadne (63f), the friends of Phaethon, and finally Cadmus. The narrator encourages his wife to be an example herself, so as to win herself glory (73f), and closes with the statement that only unfortunate men have been able to show their full value. He now has given her the opportunity to do so (71–84).

Before we focus on the phrasing of the reference to Andromache in *Trist.* 4,3,29f, we must consider the passage leading up to it: lines 21–28 detailing the

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[53] Cf. Nagle, 1980, 50.

[54] Spoth shows how the two first letters of Ovid's *Heroides* illustrate this, by emphasizing anxiety in Penelope's letter and wilful credulity in Phyllis', Spoth, 1992, 40–42 and 53–59, with further examples from 'canonical' elegy. Cf. also Hardie, 2002a, 290f, arguing that the movement between illusion and disillusion is typical of the exile poetry.

[55] For this self-reproach as typically elegiac, Nagle, 1980, 49; H. B. Evans, 1983, 78f.

narrator's daydream of how his wife lies sleepless with worry. This passage places the wife in the role of the *miser amator*,[56] ascribing to her symptoms of lovesickness known both from the elegiac corpus and elsewhere,[57] but we need to consider the impact of two similar scenes in the *Heroides*. For *tunc subeunt curae, dum te lectusque locusque / tangit et oblitam non sinit esse mei* ('Then worries sneak in upon you, when the bed and the place touch you and do not let you forget me', *Trist.* 4,3,23f) Luck indicates parallels in *Epist.* 10,51–58 and, interestingly, *Epist.* 15,145–150.[58] The Sappho letter,[59] however, might also throw light on the two following distichs:

et ueniunt aestus, et nox immensa uidetur,　　　　　　　*Trist.* 4,3,25
　　fessaque iactati corporis ossa dolent
non equidem dubito, quin haec et cetera fiant,
　　detque tuus maesti signa doloris amor,

(And you get feverish, and the night seems endless, and your limbs ache, exhausted with tossing. I do not doubt that this, and more, does happen, and your love leaves marks of grieving pain.)

One may, of course, read these lines as indicating nothing but longing for an absent lover, but I wonder if we might not also read them as the narrator's sexual fantasies about his wife. *Aestus*, firstly, can mean both 'fever' and 'passion',[60] and the effect that her sleepless night has on her is described in words with erotic associations, as the adjective *fessus* often signifies the exhaustion following on lovemaking.[61] Furthermore, the next line literally invites the reader to imagine that more events are taking place than the ones he has just described – saying *non equidem dubito, quin haec et cetera fiant* ('I do not doubt that this and more does happen', *Trist.* 4,3,27).[62] Consideration of two elegiac intertexts gives us a fair idea of what the narrator is suggesting. The fifth poem in the *Amores* recounts a passionate meeting between the narrator and Corinna, where the narrator teasingly

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[56] Colakis, 1987, 214.

[57] Luck, 1977, 245 provides several typical examples, Ov. *Am.* 1,2,3f; Cic. *Cat.* 1,31; Lucr. 2,35f; Hor. *Sat.* 2,3,131.

[58] Cf. also Ov. *Epist.* 1,7–10.

[59] On the authenticity of the Sappho letter, Dörrie, 1971, 287–296; McKeown, 1989, 398, but cf. also Knox, 1995, 12–14.

[60] *OLD* s.v. *aestus* 3, 5a and b. *ThLL* s.v. *aestus* III.iii. 1 and 2.

[61] Adams, 1982, 196, cf. Ov. *Am.* 1,5,25.

[62] Cf. also *Trist.* 1,1,21 for an invitation to look for more possible readings in the text than the ones that immediately present themselves. The study of Casali, 1997, 80–112 effectively highlights this issue.

avoids providing a description of their lovemaking with the rhetorical question *cetera quis nescit?* ('who does not know the rest?', *Am.* 1,5,25).[63] Moreover, the Sappho letter – of which we have already located reminiscences in our passage – provides an example of *fio* (lit. 'happen', 'take place') used in a sexual context as, just like the narrator of *Am.* 1,5,25, Ovid's Sappho shies away from explicitly describing how she reaches sexual climax by dreaming about her absent lover, with the words *ulteriora pudet narrare, sed omnia fiunt / et iuuat – et siccae non licet esse mihi* ('I am ashamed to tell the rest, but everything happens, and it is sweet – and it is impossible to remain dry', Ov. *Epist.* 15,133f). In reliance on Sappho's letter, one might even wonder whether the signs given her by her love (*maesti signa doloris*, *Trist.* 4,3,28), normally interpreted as tears,[64] might not also hint at other physical signs of excitement or passion. Furthermore, if read in this way, the narrator's fantasy about his wife fantasizing in one sense outdoes the description the Ovidian Sappho gives of her erotic dreams and their effect on her. The wife's fantasy in *Trist.* 4,3 consists of conscious thoughts rather than mere dreams like the ones Sappho has. Conversely, though, the impression of distance between the two lovers is effectively underscored by chain of interlinking fantasies here – the narrator fantasizing about his wife fantasizing about him, in phrases recalling another fictitious fantasy.

This reading, however, appears broken in the light of the immediately following line comparing the pain of the narrator's wife to that of Andromache watching Achilles drag Hector's body after his chariot, *nec cruciere minus, quam cum Thebana cruentum / Hectora Thessalico uidit ab axe rapi* ('and no less do you hurt than Theban Andromache when she saw Hector dragged away by the Thessalian chariot', *Trist.* 4,3,29f). Indeed, several details in this line break up the highly elegiac atmosphere of the preceding passage. Ovid refers to Andromache as *Thebana* for the first time, an elaborate phrase that perhaps has been chosen to evoke the epic and tragic background of the character.[65] The line may furthermore draw on a description from Ennius' *Andromache*, where *Frg.* 78 *uidi, uidere quod me passa aegerrume / Hectorem curru quadriiguo raptarier* ('I saw what I could hardly bear to see, Hector

[63] It is interesting to note that while the meeting in Ov. *Am.* 1,5 takes place during the day, the opening word of the poem is, coincidentally, *aestus*.

[64] Luck, 1977, 245 indicates parallels for the translation of *signa* here as tears, Ov. *Rem.* 510; *Met.* 15,782.

[65] Cf. the elaborate reference to Andromache as *Thebais nupta* ('the bride from Thebes') in Ov. *Ars* 3,778, where the *praeceptor* advises on positions during sex, see above III.ii. Cf. also Nisbet, 1982, 52, arguing that *Thebana* ('Theban [sc. Andromache]') and *Thessalico* ('Thessalian') together "give the allusion dignity and detachment."

dragged by a four-horse chariot') is attributed to Andromache.[66] This, in combination with the epic subject matter, makes for a break with the elegiac tone of the previous lines, and as Nagle puts it, reminds us "that Ovid's wife really is not like an elegiac mistress whose lover has abandoned her voluntarily".[67]

Following this assertion the narrator returns to his mind games of knowing and not-knowing, wondering whether his wife is sad, or not, and encouraging her to cry for him (*Trist.* 4,3,31–36). We seem to have returned to the 'real' sorrows of a couple parted by relegation. Interestingly, however, the themes of grief and pleasure are combined in a retrospectively enlightening remark in *Trist.* 4,3,37f, *est quaedam flere uoluptas; / expletur lacrimis egeriturque dolor* ('crying is a relief of sorts – the pain is sated by the tears and driven out'). Could it be that we here get retrospective confirmation of our reading of *Trist.* 4,3,21–28? Further, as the reader well familiar with Ovid's earlier writings will know that Andromache is one of the most explicitly sexualized paragons of virtue in the *Ars amatoria* as well as in the *Amores* (*Am.* 1,9,33–40),[68] it is tempting to assume that in the lines 29f we are invited to envision a conflation of pain and pleasure, so that the narrator's wife not only suffers as Andromache, but also takes as intense pleasure in sex as she does, at least in the narrator's fantasy.

In my discussion of references to Andromache in the *Ars amatoria* above, I argued that the (over-)sexualisation of this character is an indication of the skewed perspective of the *praeceptor amoris*. Here, the more innocent reading of the passage presents no interpretational problems – it is perfectly possible to see the Andromache reference as no more than a mythological example adding to the pathos of the narrator's description of his wife's suffering in his absence. Yet to the attentive reader, there is also a possibility of seeing more in these lines. Although the motive of erotic fantasy flickers in and out of focus, the passage in which Andromache appears certainly employs eroticised language. Like my reading of *Trist.* 1,6, the interpretation outlined here presupposes familiarity not only with the characterization of Andromache in epic and tragedy, but also with Andromache's appearances in the *Ars amatoria*. In this way, the success of the *Ars* as a book well known to the audience of Ovid's later works is inscribed even in his new collection from exile.

The reference to Euadne, the wife of Capaneus, appears in the final, hortatory

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[66] Luck, 1977, 245, cf. Jocelyn, 1969, 243.

[67] Nagle, 1980, 50. Also Luck, 1977, 60; Bernhardt, 1986, 176 arguing that the gruesome way of Hector's death allows the narrator to make a slur against the methods of his own enemies.

[68] As mentioned above, *Ars* 2,705–724 implies a description of Andromache reaching a climax through hand stimulation, but cf. also *Ars* 3,377f. Cf. also Barchiesi, 2006, 107–113.

part of the poem, where Euadne is one of several mythological characters who did not abandon their relations after they were stricken by misfortunes.

cum cecidit Capaneus subito temerarius ictu,   Trist. 4,3,63
   num legis Euadnen erubuisse uiro?

(When rash Capaneus fell for a sudden stroke, you do not read that Euadne blushed for her husband, do you?)

    The narrator brings up Euadne as she continued to take pride in her husband even after he had failed in his conquest of Thebes,[69] and like we saw in the catalogue in *Trist.* 1,6,19–22, an example familiar from the *Ars* is altered to fit the specific situation of the exile. We saw in the opening catalogue in *Ars* 3 that there is an element of frivolity to Euadne's jump onto the pyre of Capaneus (*Ars* 3,21f). Here, it is Capaneus' and by implication, the narrator's) actions that are described as *temerarius* ('rash'), something that fits well into the narrator's fiction of an error, or temporary lapse of judgement, as one of the causes of his exile. Even as in the case of *Trist.* 1,6,19–22 and the reference to Andromache in 4,3,29, however, only the reader well familiar with the details of the *Ars amatoria* will be able to appreciate the meaning of these alterations fully. Again, the *Ars* is inscribed in a work that on the surface describes it as something deserving of the emperor's punishment.[70]

    There is some reason, nevertheless, not to accept Euadne's adoption into elegy too easily. There may well be something just as irreverent as her light-hearted jump onto the pyre in *Ars* 3,21f in Ovid's choice of *erubuisse* ('blushed') here. The phrase *num legis* ('you do not read [...], do you?') encourages us to consider written accounts of Euadne's fate, and in the first instance, Ovid's own works. Particularly in conjunction with the following line on the burning of Phaethon, which uses the word *ignis* ('fire') not once but twice, one could argue that what we do read, in Ovid's *Ars* 3,21f and elsewhere, is that Euadne did go red – that she burned red on Capaneus' pyre.[71] Though the signals that women like Euadne cannot be transferred to an elegiac setting without the text betraying that they remain different are subtler here (this interpretation would certainly suggest itself to the suspicious reader only), the narrator of the *Tristia* thus shows himself to

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[69] Capaneus, one of the seven against Thebes, cf. Fedeli, 1980, 348–350 and Escher, 1907, 818.

[70] Programatically, Ov. *Trist.* 1,1,68 and 2,4; 29f.

[71] *Erubesco* typically means 'blush' or 'feel shame', *ThLL* s.v. *erubesco* I: *OLD* s.v. *erubesco* 1, but cf. also *ThLL* s.v. *erubesco* II, limited by "in rerum natura", and *OLD* s.v. *erubesco* 2 for 'become red' in a general sense.

understand virtuous women even as little as the *praeceptor amoris* does. Like in *Trist.* 1,6, the narrator continues to present himself as firmly rooted in the elegiac world while characterising his wife as generically different from him, dramatizing the distance of exile by means of literary genre.

IV.iii. On the abyss between elegy and 'real life': Ov. Trist. 5,5,3f and 43–60

annuus assuetum dominae natalis honorem   Trist. 5,5,1
    exigit: ite manus ad pia sacra meae.
sic quondam festum Laertius egerat heros
    forsan in extremo coniugis orbe diem.

(The birthday of my lady demands its customary honour, go, my hands, to the pious rites. So, maybe, did once the Laertian hero spend his wife's feast day at the end of the world.)

edidit haec mores illis heroisin aequos,   Trist. 5,5,43
    quis erat Eetion Icariusque pater.
nata pudicitia est, uirtus probitasque, fidesque,
    at non sunt ista gaudia nata die,
sed labor et curae fortunaque moribus inpar,
    iustaque de uiduo paene querela toro.
scilicet aduersis probitas exercita rebus
    tristi materiam tempore laudis habet.   5,5,50
si nihil infesti durus uidisset Ulixes,
    Penelope felix sed sine laude foret.
uictor Echionias si uir penetrasset in arces,
    forsitan Euadnen uix sua nosset humus.
cum Pelia genitae tot sint, cur nobilis una est?   5,5,55
    nempe fuit misero nupta quod una uiro.
effice ut Iliacas tangat prior alter harenas,
    Laodamia nihil cur referatur erit.
et tua, quod malles, pietas ignota maneret,
    implerent uenti si mea uela sui.   5,5,60

(This brought forth a heart equal to those heroines, whom Eetion and Icarius fathered. Chastity was born, virtue and honesty, and faith, but happiness not on this day, but labour and sorrow and a fortune ill fitted to your heart, and near-true laments over the empty marriage bed. Certainly chastity upheld in the face

of adversity and in times of grief offers grounds for praise. If the hardy Odysseus had not suffered any misfortune, Penelope would have been happy but without fame. If Capaneus, Echion's son, had penetrated the castle as a conqueror, maybe even her own country would hardly have known about Euadne. Though Pelias had so many daughters, why is it that only one of them is well-known? Without a doubt because she alone was the bride of an unfortunate man. Make another land as the first on the shore of Troy, and there will be nothing to tell of Laodamia. And your virtue, as you would rather, would remain unknown, if favourable winds filled my sails.)

It would seem that compared to the two exile poems discussed so far *Trist.* 5,5 is quite different in tone, drawing on birthday poems in Horace and Tibullus[72] rather than engaging with Ovid's own amatory poetry. However, here too the careful reader may find that Ovid implicitly discusses the objectives and limitations of the elegiac genre. I will argue that like in *Trist.* 1,6, a mythological catalogue listing four women renowned in diverse literary genres for their faithfulness and loyalty to their husbands not only allows Ovid to depict the narrator's wife in a flattering manner but also to touch on wider metapoetical issues.

After the initial lines have established the occasion of the poem – a birthday – the narrator invokes the by-now familiar analogy between himself and the long-suffering Odysseus.[73] Recalling the *Odyssey* as well as Ovid's own descriptions of Odysseus' travels and the time he is parted from Penelope, the line suggests that both Odysseus' appearance in Ov. *Ars* 2 and Penelope's letter in *Epist.* 1 may be central intertexts. In combination with the elegiac catch-phrase *domina*, ('mistress', translated with 'lady' above) used in *Trist.* 5,5,1 of the woman we later realize must be the narrator's wife, the line creates an elegiac situation of lovers involuntarily parted. This will be taken up further on in the poem.

The first half of the poem describes the narrator's celebratory rites and his wishes for his wife, while musing on the uncertainty of human life and his own banishment. The final half praises the faithfulness and loyalty of the wife, drawing on the vulgate image of Penelope and Andromache to illustrate her virtues. As we have seen on several instances in 'canonical' elegy, the pairing of Andromache and Penelope, one for each of the sides in the Trojan war, allows the narrator to make his point with the utmost efficiency.[74]

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[72] Luck, 1977, 298.

[73] This analogy is established in *Trist.* 1 and Ovid draws on it throughout the collection, cf. Rahn, 1958, 115–120; Luck, 1977, 298. Slightly differently, H. B. Evans, 1983, 104.

[74] Above, on Penelope and Briseis in Prop. 2,9 (I.ii), and Andromache and Tecmessa in Ov. *Ars* 2,517–524 (III.ii.).

The use of references to female paradigms of wifely virtues becomes more complex in the mythological catalogue in *Trist.* 5,5,51–58. There, the shape of the references to Penelope (5,5,51f), Euadne (5,5,53f), Alcestis (5,5,55f) and Laodamia (5,5,57f) is crucial for Ovid's discussion of the aims and limitations of elegy and his own elegiac writings. One of Ovid's vehicles for raising these issues is the meter. In the first example of Odysseus and Penelope, the hexameter in 5,5,51 pronounces Odysseus to be *durus* ('hardy'), recalling the hardships he suffered at Troy and in his travels, but possibly also the Ovidian Odysseus from Ov. *Epist.* 1, who shares some characteristic traits with the *dura puella* ('hard-hearted girl') of 'canonical' elegy. Turning to Penelope in 5,5,52, the narrator claims that she would have been happy, though not famous, if she had never been parted from her husband. However, as *laus* ('fame') may signify both the cause and the expression of praise,[75] the line also implies that had Odysseus remained with her, Penelope would never have come to possess the qualities that earned her a reputation as a loyal wife. I shall return presently to this point. That aside, the line of reasoning ascribed to Penelope recalls the stance of male narrators in 'canonical' elegy, declining the pursuit of civic and military honours to devote themselves to love and its poetry.[76] By using the pentameter line to let the narrator ascribe this elegiac motivation to Penelope, it would appear that Ovid makes a bow to convention of the place and status of the genres of epic and elegy.

In the scenario sketched in the next distich, Capaneus is carefully described as *uictor*, *uir* and someone who might have conquered a castle (*si* […] *penetrasset in arces*) in the hexameter line, whereas the allusion to Euadne's famous sacrifice of her own life for her husband is contained entirely within the pentameter. Again, the worlds of war and honour (note the description of Capaneus as *uictor* ('conqueror') and *uir*, ('man') and love are clearly separated. This pattern recurs in the catalogue's final example, the reference to Protesilaus and Laodamia's story: the narrator describes Protesilaus' eager jump onto the shore in the hexameter (5,5,57) and only invokes Laodamia's loyalty in the pentameter thereafter. Compared to Ovid's description of Protesilaus in the beginning of Laodamia's *Heroides* letter (*Epist.* 13), it is noticeable that Ovid has chosen to downplay Protesilaus' hesitancy to leave his wife to go to war. In Laodamia's letter, this contributed to establishing Protesilaus as an elegiac character. In *Trist.* 5,5,57 on the other hand, the narrator draws our attention to the one motive of the myth which continually undermined Laodamia's description of Protesilaus as an ideal elegiac lover,

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[75] *OLD* s.v. *laus* 1 and 3; *ThLL* s.v. *laus* I and II.
[76] Cf. Prop. 1,6,29f; 7,11f; 2,14,23f; 3,4,21f; 5,1–6 and 47f; 9; Tib. 1,1,1–5 and 75–78; 10,29–32; Ov. *Am.* 1,15,1–7.

namely his determination to prove himself in battle.

This neat division of 'epic' and 'elegiac' qualities and achievements is turned upside-down halfway through the catalogue as the narrator refers to Alcestis' willingness to die in Admetus' stead (*Trist.* 5,5,55f). A variation in phrasing signals the shift implied by the line: this distich takes the form of a rhetorical question. The first part of the distich does not deal with any deeds of Admetus' but with the nobility of Alcestis. Admetus himself is pronounced a *uir miser* in the following pentameter. Admittedly, the most obvious way to understand *miser* is simply 'unfortunate'; Admetus was known not only for winning Alcestis but for his sense of justice and piety, yet he had to go through the trial of seeing his wife die for his sake.[77] However, the word also connotes contempt, so that we might translate the line *nempe fuit misero nupta quod una uiro* 'because she alone was married to such a pitiful man', (*Trist.* 5,5,56). In point of fact, although the pattern of alternation between male and female in the hexameter and pentameter has been formally inverted, the description of Admetus as un-manly in that particular line restates the message of the surrounding pattern. It allows Ovid to trace the limitations of the elegiac genre – elegy belongs to the men worthy of contempt (or laughter), epic to men of prowess in battle, like Odysseus, Capaneus and Protesilaus. Such men cannot, as the discussion of Ovid's previous works has shown, be turned into elegiac characters without at the same time being surrounded by a sense of dramatic irony that continually undermines their ability to function according to the patterns of the new literary genre.

If this holds true, what then is the significance of the concluding distich about the narrator's wife, *Trist.* 5,5,61f: *et tua, quod malles, pietas ignota maneret,/ implerent uenti si mea uela sui*, ('and your virtue, as you would rather, would remain unknown, if favourable winds filled my sails') and its inversion of the catalogue's pattern? The hexameter praises wifely virtue rather than the endurance of a male hero, whereas the pentameter refers to the narrator as someone not in control of his own fate. In part, I believe that this line uses metric and literary convention to underline the impression of a chasm opening between the narrator and his addressee. It is akin to the way in which *Trist.* 1,6 enscribes each of them in a separate literary genre.[78]

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[77] Wentzel, 1894, 377–380.

[78] Similarly, in the mythological examples in *Trist.* 5,5,51–58 the character of the pentameter is – with the possible exception of Alcestis and Admetus – described as a mere function of the male character referred to in the hexameter. By analogy, the reader is encouraged to view the narrator in the same way, and compare this description to other instances where the narrator describes himself as a living dead but for the help he receives from family and friends in Rome. For the narrator's life as depending on his wife's, cf. Ov. *Trist.* 1,3,101f; 6,5–8.

We should also bear in mind that ship metaphor is a well-established way of speaking about one's poetry.[79] Particularly if reading the *Tristia* linearly, the reader will already be familiar with the linking of the cause of the narrator's exile to his poetry, and perhaps especially the *Ars amatoria*. The final lines of Trist. 5,5 make mention of the narrator's relegation in a manner that may allude to the *Ars*.[80] In addition, similiarities between the two texts invite us to make this connection: the catalogue of virtuous wives in Ov. *Ars* 3,15–24 is not only near-identical to the one in *Trist.* 5,5,51–58 but it furthemore ends with the claim that no such fortitude of mind will be needed by the readers (and apprentices) of the *Ars*, because *conueniunt cumbae uela minora meae* ('smaller sails become my ship', Ov. *Ars* 3,26). Thus, we have reason to suspect that *Trist.* 5,5,60 may likewise contain a metapoetical statement. In order to uncover what that statement may be, we need to consider two points, which will allow us to make two connected but slightly different readings. Together, these two points will throw some light on the overarching metapoetic issues of the objectives and limitations of elegy.

First, the analogy between Penelope and the narrator's own wife, established at the very beginning of the poem, should make us mindful of similiarities and differences between these two characters invoked throughout the poem. The comparison is particularly relevant for the understanding of the metapoetical implications of *Trist.* 5,5,59f. We noted above that the Penelope distich (*Trist.* 5,5,51f) implies that Penelope did not always possess the virtues for which she is famous (*sed sine laude foret*, *Trist.* 5,5,52). The narrator's wife, on the other hand, would, the narrator claims, have been unknown, but no less virtuous, if his own fate, or more specifically the fate of his poetry, had been different. O'Gorman observes that in the *Tristia* (and later on in the *Ex Ponto*) the narrator's wife becomes a *scripta puella*, just like the *puellae* of 'canonical' elegy.[81] While Ovid certainly manipulates or indeed creates the appearance of her as much as he would any other literary character, we also need to bear in mind that in this catalogue, the text purports that she is the only real-life woman appearing at the close of a series of women who are – even moreso than the *puellae* of elegy – literary characters, written and, maybe more interestingly, *re*-written thoroughout literary history. It is in this context that the unchangeableness of her *pietas* provides a starting point for a metapoetic interpretation of the distich. In the mythological catalogue

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[79] In Ovid, cf. for instance *Ars* 3,25f.

[80] Ov. *Trist.* 5,5,63f: *non mihi, qui poenam fateor meruisse, sed illi / parcite, quae nullo digna dolore dolet*, ('spare not me, who confesses that I have deserved punishment, but her, who suffers, although she does not deserve to').

[81] O'Gorman, 1997, 115–117.

proper, we have noted that the pentameter continually suggests novel scenarios of 'what could have happened' to these literary characters, implying that if they had had never been parted from their lovers, they would have been more suited to an elegiac world than to the epic or a tragic ones with which a well-read member of Ovid's audience would primarily associate them. In the case of the narrator's wife, a character whom we are encouraged to view rather as a real-life woman than a literary character, it is only the *fame* of her virtue that can be affected by the fortunes of her husband, not its existence in and by itself.

I have argued that in the second part of the distich, literary parallels invite us to think of the narrator's professional choices, so that we may also take the line *implerent uenti si mea uela sui* ('if favourable winds filled my sails') to state that if the narrator had not chosen to write elegy (or specifically, the *Ars amatoria*), his wife's virtue would be less well-known; that is, he would not have cause to celebrate her in poetic letters from his exile. His fortunes, professional or otherwise, would not, however, have any influence on her *pietas*. At this point, it is necessary to remember that throughout the poem, the narrator has established himself as an elegiac character. First and foremost, this is due to his choice of meter and the first-person narration dominating in elegy, and in *Trist.* 5,5,60 to the fact that he has chosen the pentameter for the reference to himself. The analogy he establishes at the beginning of the poem between himself and the elegized Odysseus of the *Ars amatoria* (2,123–144), waiting on the sea shore and longing to be reunited with Penelope (*Trist.* 5,5,3f), and the fact that he in *Trist.* 5,5,60 speaks of himself in a way resembling the manner in which Ovid on other instances has let his narrators speak of their (or his) poetry, further emphasize this. I would argue that to some extent, the narrator does not only become an elegiac character, but – as the phrase *mea uela* ('my sails') in 5,5,60 may indicate – turns into the very ship, becoming an embodiment of the genre itself.

Pulling these strands of interpretation together, we arrive at a comment on the objectives and limitations of elegy as a genre, even a defence of the *Ars amatoria* and its third book. Ovid may toy with the notion of an elegiac Penelope, but does not influence the morality of his contemporaries. It would seem that while elegy rejoices in creating alternative (though as we have seen, amusingly unsuccessful) scenarios for literary and mythological characters, it does neither set out to nor succeed in overturning the traditional morality of its readers.

IV.iv. Bridging Gaps to Fake a Roman Ovid?:
Ov. Trist. 5,14,35–40

aspicis ut longo teneat laudabilis aeuo   Ov. *Trist.* 5,14,35
    nomen inextinctum Penelopea fides?
cernis ut Admeti cantetur et Hectoris uxor
    ausaque in accensos Iphias ire rogos?
ut uiuat fama coniunx Phylaceïa, cuius
    Iliacam celeri uir pede pressit humum?
morte nihil opus est pro me, sed amore fideque:
    non ex difficili fama petenda tibi est.
nec te credideris, quia non facis, ista moneri:
    uela damus, quamuis remige puppis eat.
qui monet ut facias, quod iam facis, ille monendo
    laudat et hortatu comprobat acta suo.

(Do you see how Penelope's faith, worthy of praise, keeps her name immortal
for long ages? Do you see how they sing of the wives of Admetus and Hector,
and Euadne, who dared to mount the lighted pyre? How the fame of the wife
in Phylace flourishes, whose husband stepped onto the Trojan shore with lively
foot? There is no need to die for me, but to love and be faithful – not through
hardships should you seek your fame. Do not think that I encourage you thus,
because you are not doing so; I raise the sails, though the ship is already under
way by oars. He who reminds you to do that which you are already doing, he
gives you praise by reminding you, and by means of his encouragement he ap-
proves of your deeds.)

   Although it too contains a mythological catalogue resembling that of Ov. *Ars*
3,19–26, the final poem of the *Tristia* differs from the ones discussed earlier in
this chapter. Like the previously mentioned poems, it is addressed to the nar-
rator's wife in Rome and combines elements of hortatory character with praise
for her faithfulness.[82] It is the hortatory element that motivates the mythological
catalogue in *Trist.* 5,14,35–40, which encourages the narrator's wife to seek the
fame that their virtue has imparted on Penelope, Alcestis, Andromache, Euadne
and Laodamia. With the addition of Andromache and the exception of the
uirtus example omitted in the later poem, these are the same heroines as those
mentioned in Ov. *Ars* 3,19–26. Particularly mention of the pyre in the example
of Euadne recalls the earlier catalogue. However, the most compelling reason to

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[82] Nagle, 1980, 52f.

examine the intertextual relationship between the proem catalogue of *Ars* 3 and *Trist.* 5,14,35–40 is provided by the disclaimer placed at the close of either catalogue. The *morte nihil opus est pro me, sed amore fideque / non ex difficili fama petenda tibi est* ('there is no need to die for me, but to love and be faithful – not through hardships should you seek your fame'), of *Trist.* 5,14,41f echoes *Ars* 3,25–28 in a conspicuous way, especially the opening words *nec tamen hae mentes nostra poscuntur ab arte* ('still, my art does not ask for such hearts: smaller sails become my ship', Ov. *Ars* 3,25); *hae mentes* ('such hearts') refers to the hardships of Penelope and the willingness of Laodamia, Alcestis and Euadne to die with their husbands. I will return to this point after considering the implications of the mythological examples themselves.

On one level the similarities with the *Ars* catalogue contribute to the depiction of the narrator as someone who, once he is no longer constricted by the role of *praeceptor amoris*, shares the normative values of contemporary Roman society. The characterization of the mythological paradigms befits a more traditional and sober interpretation of the heroines' stories – here, Ovid has chosen to describe Euadne's decision to burn with Capaneus by the phrase *ausaque in accensos Iphias ire rogos* ('and Euadne, who dared to mount the lighted pyre'). I would argue that the choice of *ausa* implies awareness on Euadne's part of the pain she is facing, and the simple *ire* suggests a dignified way of approaching one's death. It is a far cry from the impetuosity represented by Euadne's direct speech and the corresponding, light-hearted *in medios desiluitque rogos* ('and she sprang into the midst of the pyre') of *Ars* 3,21f.[83] The distich on Laodamia and Protesilaus shows a similar change of emphasis. To Laodamia narrating *Heroides* 13, Protesilaus' reluctance to leave her was of utmost importance whereas she strove to downplay his eagerness for battle – which, however, nevertheless constantly undermined her efforts to describe her husband in elegiac terms.[84] In *Trist.* 5,14,39f, Ovid's narrator focuses on the most well-established motives of the Protesilaus myth, that is, Protesilaus' swift jump ashore at Troy and Laodamia's grief over him, both highlighted as early as in the Homeric account in *Il.* 2,698–702. Indeed, even as *fertur* ('they say') in *Ars* 3,18 alerts us to the presence of literary precedents, so *fama* ('fame', but also 'rumour' or 'reputation') in *Trist.* 5,14,39 may hint at the fact that this take on Laodamia's fame eschews earlier Ovidian versions of the myth in favour of the traditional Homeric one.[85] The use of *cantetur* ('they sing of') of

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[83] See above, III.i.

[84] See above, II.ii.ii.–iii.

[85] Nagle, 1980, 53 argues that *cantetur* ('they sing of') in *Trist.* 5,15,37 is the only reference to other written works.

Alcestis, Andromache and Euadne (*Trist.* 5,14,37) may fulfil a similar function, proving the narrator's allegiance with well established rather than inventive (and possibly subversive) renderings of these myths.

It is in this light, I believe, that we must see the exhortation of the final lines of the poem, where the narrator encourages his wife to be virtuous, while at the same time claiming that she already does behave in a most commendable way. As this poem and of course the entire collection remains public poetry regardless of its individual dedications, the implications of the final verses extend well beyond the limited scope of the portrayal of the relationship between husband and wife. The choice of the more general third person for the final line echoes this claim of general validity and provides a reading guide to the poem: *qui monet ut facias, quod iam facis, ille monendo / laudat et hortatu comprobat acta suo* ('he who reminds you to do that which you are already doing, he gives you praise by reminding you, and by means of his encouragement he approves of your deeds', *Trist.* 5,14,45f). Throughout the five volumes of the *Tristia* the narrator's wife has been depicted as firmly rooted within the frames of normative society; now, by urging her to remain virtuous, and by mirroring her actions (*uela damus, quamuis remige puppis eat*, 'I raise the sails, though the ship is already under way by oars', *Trist.* 5,14,44), the narrator implies that he too shares the traditional Roman values she has come to represent. The 'doubling' of life choices in these final lines of the book causes the abyss between the narrator, justly exiled, and his faithful wife, penalized though innocent, which widened in earlier poems finally to close.

Therefore, it might seem that the catalogue of virtuous wives in *Trist.* 5,14,35–40 attempts to nullify the success of the re-interpretation of myth in the *Ars amatoria* and other works, rather than inscribing it once more within the new collection. Unlike the poems hitherto discussed, *Trist.* 5,14 contains few hints of discussion of specific poetic works or any of the narrator's previous writings. Although there is considerable emphasis on the power of poetry in the first half of the poem,[86] these do not have a specific but a general slant, and little corresponds to the list of Ovidian works in *Trist.* 1,1,105–118 or the references to above all the *Metamorphoses* scattered throughout the book.[87] Subsequently, a metapoetic reading does not immediately suggest itself. However, like the use of mythological paradigms in *Trist.* 1,6; 4,3 and 5,5 only the background of Ovid's and (indeed other elegists') less traditional versions of the same myths throw the restraint and adherence to tradition in these mythological references into relief.

Moreover, the suspicious reader will discover that the elegiac genre does not

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[86] Cf. Bernhardt, 1986, 181f.

[87] For further mentions of *Met.*, cf. Ov. *Trist.* 1,7; 2,63f; 555f; 3,14,19–24.

lend itself to the straightforward discussion of ideal wifely behaviour as easily as the narrator would have us believe. Irony undermines the seemingly uncomplicated message of the narrator on several places in the poem. In the first line of *Trist.* 5,14 the narrator urges his wife to see for herself how often he has praised her in his verse. Naturally, we should take this to refer, in the first instance, to the seven poems dedicated to the wife within the collection of the *Tristia* itself. On the other hand, one may recall that the narrator's wife does not appear centre-stage in any of Ovid's other writings – on the contrary. The occasion for *Am.* 3,13 is a wife's birthday, but we cannot determine whether the wife in question is entirely fictional, or cast as Ovid's first or second wife.[88] Hence, *Trist.* 5,14,1f also acquires a sharp ironical undertone entirely at odds with the reading that first springs to mind. It reminds us that Ovid and the fictional narrator to whom he ascribes his works has written very little about wives, but all the more about mistresses.

In addition, the first half of the poem ostensibly celebrates the narrator's wife, but it also ties her fame very closely to that of the narrator's poetry.[89] From *dumque legar, mecum pariter tua fama legetur* ('as long as I am read, your name will be read along with mine', *Trist.* 5,14,5) it seems that the wife's fame is dependent on her husband's success rather than on her virtue; a statement standing in sharp contrast with the later pronouncements that fame through virtue is won only if virtue is pursued only for its own sake: *siqua tamen pretium sibi uirtus ipsa petitum,* […] *per saecula nulla tacetur* ('Yet when virtue is sought for her own sake, it is celebrated through the ages', *Trist.* 5,14,31–33). Similarly, as the narrator praises his wife for taking care of his estate during his exile (*adde quod, ut rerum sola es tutela mearum, / ad te non parui uenit honoris onus,* 'add to that, that you are the sole guardian of my fortune, and no small burden of honour shall belong to you' in *Trist.* 5,14,15f), he does so in a manner that can easily be taken to imply that virtue is more burdensome than rewarding. The assonances of *honoris onus* ('burden of honour', *Trist.* 5,14,16) render the phrase particularly noticeable,[90] so that we are more likely to pause and consider its oddity. *Onus* usually carries negative connotations,[91] but here it is used in a supposedly positive context. The statement can but leave one with a slight sense of jarring.

The most striking example of irony undermining the praise the narrator offers his wife is the line following the close of the mythological catalogue, *morte*

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[88] Brandt, 1911, 186.

[89] Bernhardt, 1986, 181f.

[90] *Trist.* 5,14,15f contains several assonances: cf. the u-sounds in *ut, rerum, tutela* and *mearum* as well as the i-sounds of *parui, uenit* and *honoris.*

[91] Cf. *OLD* S.v. *onus*, particularly 4 and 5. *ThLL* s.v. *onus* II and esp. II 2.

nihil opus est pro me […] / *non ex difficili fama petenda tibi est*, 'there is no need to die for me – not through hardships should you seek your fame', in *Trist.* 5,14,41f. As noted above, I think it is reasonable to see an allusion to the disclaimer in *Ars* 3,25–28 here. In the *Ars*, the *praeceptor amoris* established that even if it does not lead to your death, being a virtuous wife is hard and very dull work, assuring his apprentices that they would not have to make such sacrifices to follow his teachings.[92] The disclaimer in *Trist.* 5,14 is equally full of contrasts. Certainly, the narrator does not ask his wife to die for him: if in fact, if we draw on a linear reading of the collection, we know that he has urged her not to follow him in the exile he also describes as death, that is, she must not die for his sake.[93] He does, however, promise her fame as a reward for virtue (cf. *Trist.* 5,14,15f; 23f), only to point out that virtue earns fame only if sought for its own sake and through difficulties (*Trist.* 5,14,31f). Reaching the disclaimer in *Trist.* 5,14,41f the narrator states that his wife does not face any difficulties (note *non ex difficili*, 'not through hardship' in 5,14,42). All she need offer him is love and faith (*amore fideque*, *Trist.* 5,14,41). One may very well wonder whether there is indeed any chance left for the narrator's wife to prove her value, or if the narrator is really concerned with pleading the case for virtue, or if a suggestion of more pleasant alternatives has somehow found its way into his letter.

Again, a reader familiar with Ovid's previous works is more likely to pick up on these inconsistencies, and more likely to be amused by them. Thus, in a fashion discernible only to former readers with the inclination to read very closely, the third book of the *Ars amatoria* is inscribed even in the final poem of the *Tristia*. Nevertheless, the *Ars* is celebrated in *Trist.* 5,14 in a less obvious manner than in the poems previously discussed in this chapter. This is the final poem of a collection ostensibly much occupied with gaining its narrator a return passage from Tomi, and the fiction of the now deserving narrator, restored to sanity after elegiac escapades, as a firm believer in the traditional *mores* of Roman society, has been given pride of place.

Regardless of the characteristics making the narrator so deceptively alike to the real-life Ovid, he remains a fictitious character placed in a particular role by the external author of the poem. Moreover, the narrator (and Ovid) writes elegiac verse. In earlier chapters of this study, I have shown that elegiac narrators frequently have trouble using mythological paradigms of wifely virtue for their own ends because 'canonical' elegy is, to such a high degree, built on there being *in*fidelity. I argued that the sense of jarring so often surrounding issues of fidelity

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[92] Cf. above, Chapter III.i.

[93] Most notably, Ov. *Trist.* 1,3,99f.

and female virtue in 'canonical' and erotodidactic elegy help display the absurdity of the stance the elegiac narrators are taking – thus in effect consolidating the traditional Roman way of life. The incongruities in the narrator's praise of his wife in *Trist.* 5,14 reflect this in order to indicate the narrator's affinity with earlier Ovidian elegiac narrators. It may serve as a reminder that the elegiac genre (to which the *Tristia* still adheres) presents the traditional Roman *mores* in a topsy-turvy way and that a text like the *Ars amatoria* requires sensitive interpretation from a reader wishing to uncover its moral standpoint.

IV.v. Artfully manipulating a faithful wife:
Ov. *Pont.* 3,1,105–114

The first poem of the third book of the *Epistulae ex Ponto*, and also the final poem addressed to the narrator's wife, provides important inroads into the exilic corpus as a whole. Several critics have remarked on how the narrator more than anywhere else in his exile poetry re-appropriates the role of the *praeceptor amoris*, advising his wife how best to seduce the empress Livia to a more lenient stance towards the exiled narrator.[94] Including a catalogue of virtuous wives similar to that of *Ars* 3,15–24 and closing it with the now familiar disclaimer *nihil morte opus* ('there is no need to die for me', *Pont.* 3,1,113, cf. also *Trist.* 5,14,41) underscores the affinity of the *praeceptor* of the *Ars* and the narrator of the exile poems: an observation valid both in this poem and elsewhere due to the programmatic position of *Pont.* 3,1. In terms of interpreting the whole corpus, this confirms that the *Ars* remains highly relevant for a nuanced understanding of Ovid's exile poetry.

Likewise important for the interpretation of the exilic poetry as a whole is that *Pont.* 3,1 comments in an unusually explicit way on the issue of Ovidian self-representation, which I have touched upon in the earlier parts of this chapter. By highlighting the number of phrases associated with the dramatic stage within the poem Davisson makes evident the programmatic quality of *Pont.* 3,1. She concludes that the many associations to the stage serve to illuminate "the poet's authority over his characters", including, of course, the characters of both the narrator and his wife. One of the most telling passages concerns the role in which the narrator casts his wife: the distich *magna tibi imposita est nostris persona libellis: coniugis exemplum diceris esse bonae.* ('in my books a great role has been imposed on you: you are said to be an example of a good wife', *Pont.* 3,1,43f) shows clearly that we must approach Ovid's quasi-autobiographical account of 'his' wife's life

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[94] H. B. Evans, 1983, 126f; Colakis, 1987; Nagle, 1980, 45f.

during 'his' exile with as much care as we do the characterization of more obviously literary characters.[95]

As we have seen, Ovid often draws on mythological catalogues of virtuous wives to assign to her, or to further delineate, the part of the narrator's wife as an ideal wife not entirely at home in the elegiac world inhabited by her husband. These catalogues have ostensibly been inserted for their elements of praise, or of encouragement, and even complaints, concerning the wife's actions towards her husband. They have proven to be essential for the characterization of both the wife and the narrator. The mythological catalogue in *Pont.* 3,1,105–114, which once more mentions Alcestis, Penelope, Laodamia, and Euadne as possible sources of inspiration for the wife, plays an equally important part in setting the boundaries for the role she plays in that particular poem. As a close reading of the catalogue will show, however, this is not quite the role of an elegiac lover, nor exclusively that of a wife.

The catalogue falls well into the second half of the poem, where the narrator gives his wife detailed instructions on how to approach Livia with a plea for a less inhospitable location for his exile. This follows the more impatient-sounding exhortations in the first half of the poem (cf. *Pont.* 3,1,31–78), claiming that the wife may contribute to releasing him from or alleviating his exile through sufficient displays of devotion while implying that she has not done so.[96] From *Pont.* 3,1,79 and onwards, the emphasis lies on what the narrator wishes his wife to achieve, and he confidently advises her on how to make her case; she is asking for something relatively reasonable (cf. 97f; 103f; later 147f) and timely tears will help her the way they have helped other lovers (99f; 149f; 157f).[97] The mythological catalogue, however, consists of a list of heroines that the wife would only have needed to emulate if her circumstances (or rather, those of her husband) had been different. She does not (*quod abominor*, 'which heaven forbid', in *Pont.* 3,1,105) need to die for him, like Alcestis, Laodamia or Euadne for their spouses, nor does she have to hold off a number of rapacious suitors like Penelope:

si mea mors redimenda tua, quod abominor, esset,   Ov. *Pont.* 3,1,105
    Admeti coniunx, quam sequereris, erat.
aemula Penelopes fieres, si fraude pudica
    instantes uelles fallere nupta procos.

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[95] Davisson, 1984, 325.
[96] Nagle, 1980, 53f; H. B. Evans, 1983, 28; Bernhardt, 1986, 184f.
[97] Cf. Ov. *Am.* 1,8,83f; 2,2,35f; *Ars* 1,659f; 3,291f and 677f; *Rem.* 689f; also Prop. 3,24,25f. Cf. R. K. Gibson, 2003, 215; McKeown, 1989, 244.

si comes extincti Manes sequerere mariti,
    esset dux facti Laodamia tui.
Iphias ante oculos tibi erat ponenda uolenti
    corpus in accensos mittere forte rogos.
morte nihil opus est, nihil Icariotide tela.
    Caesaris est coniunx ore precanda tuo,

(If my death were to be redeemed by yours – which heaven forbid – Admetus' wife would be the one you should follow. You would be a rival of Penelope if by a chaste falsehood you would want to fool the threatening suitors. If you would follow your dead husband to the shadows, Laodamia would be your guide. Euadne should be set before your mind's eye if perchance you would cast your body on the lightened pyre. There is no need for death, nor for Penelope's craft. You must plead to Caesar's wife with your lips.)

Unlike the catalogues discussed earlier in this chapter, the narrator does *not* wish for his wife to be like the heroines he mentions; she must speak rather than act. The coda *morte nihil opus est, nihil Icariotide tela / Caesaris est coniunx ore precanda tuo* in *Pont.* 3,1,113f allows us to identify this as a key point of the catalogue and the narrator's statement. In hindsight, the phrasing of the catalogue reflects this. If assessing lines 105–112 in the light of the closing distich, it is noticeable that neither of the four exemplary women are described as speaking. In the case of Laodamia and Alcestis, the choice of action over speech comes across by means of the way the heroines act as examples for the addressee, whereas description of Penelope establishes it as a characteristic of the deed that made her illustrious. The narrator describes Euadne, finally, as earning her fame through her actions and furthermore refers to her fulfilling the role of an example in a way not unlike how one might talk about a painting or a statue, caught in a particular moment.

The emphasis on conveying one's message without the use of words is most obvious in the case of Laodamia, whom the narrator describes as *dux* ('guide', *Pont.* 3,1,110). This epithet stands in sharp contrast with earlier descriptions of Laodamia as a *comes* ('companion'), and indeed this near-topical characterization of Laodamia must already have occurred to the reader, as the narrator assigns this role to his wife in the line before (*Pont.* 3,1,109). From this alteration in the description of Laodamia we may infer the question of what it means when a character usually assigned the passive role of follower suddenly becomes the *dux* ('guide'). I think the passivity of the earlier characterizations of Laodamia is likely to influence the interpretation of the word *dux* here; one would be more inclined to read it as 'guide' rather than 'leader', especially if we draw on the military associations of the word. As a result, one might even envision Laodamia mutely guiding the narrator's wife towards her chosen fate.

Read in this light, we may also find that the distich referring to Alcestis (which in fact precedes Laodamia's line) implies the same type of passivity on the part of the exemplary woman. If the narrator's wife had to redeem her husband's life with hers, she would follow Alcestis (*sequeris* in *Pont.* 3,1,106). It is quite possible to infer from Ovid's choice of words that Alcestis, unlike Laodamia the guide, must not be actively involved in the actions of the narrator's wife, let alone speak to her.

Invoking the notion of wordless communication in yet another way, the reference to Euadne the suttee is suggestive of an instructive tableau, fixed and ready to be held in front of one's disciples (*ante oculos* [...] *ponenda*, 'should be set before your mind's eye' in *Pont.* 3,1,111). With regard to the shift in emphasis from speech to action within Euadne's own story, we should bear in mind that not only does Euadne make several speeches in Euripides' *The Suppliant Women*, but Ovid himself makes a (comical) point of her apostrophizing Capaneus directly in *Ars* 3,21. The aspect Ovid has chosen to highlight in the *Pont.*, however, is her actions, and how she demonstrated her love for Capaneus by throwing herself on the pyre (*corpus in accensos mittere forte rogos* 'you would cast your body on the lightened pyre', *Pont.* 3,1,112), not by speaking.

Along the same lines, when the narrator refers to Penelope's trick of the shroud (*fraude pudica*), he chooses to emphasize not a particularly convincing speech of Penelope's to let her remain waiting for Odysseus, although it would not be hard to imagine such a speech. Instead, he reminds us that Penelope resorted to a strategy to reach her aims, a strategy which was either wordless, or used lies (note *fallere*, 'fool', in *Pont.* 3,1,108). By contrast, the kind of strategy that the narrator envisions his wife employing towards Livia is a (supposedly) straightforward, honest one.

In lines 115–118 the narrator strives to allay his wife's apprehensions about approaching the empress, and in 119–124 he introduces a second mythological catalogue to support his argument. This latter catalogue mentions a number of monstrous and terrifying mythological characters to whom the empress is not alike. Naturally, the sheer amount of space devoted to these negative examples and their immediate association with the empress may be contrary to the aims of the catalogue as professed by the narrator; it might even imply a criticism of Livia.[98] My discussion takes a slightly different tack, highlighting the continuation of the speech vs. action motif from the preceding catalogue of virtuous wives. The starting point for my reading is that with *non* [...] *uoce mouenda est*

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[98] This is the aspect emphasized by Bernhardt, 1986, 114–120. Cf. also Davisson, 1993, 231; Johnson, 1996–1997, 415–420; Barchiesi, 2006, 115 n. 37; Claassen, 1988, 167.

('you need not move with your voice') at the head of the catalogue, the narrator ascribes to the characters mentioned in the catalogue the inability to be moved by spoken pleas:

quid trepidas et adire times? non impia Procne   Ov. Pont. 3,1,119
   filiaue Aeetae uoce mouenda tua est,
nec nurus Aegypti, nec saeua Agamemnonis uxor,
   Scyllaque, quae Siculas inguine terret aquas,
Telegoniue parens uertendis nata figuris,
   nexaque nodosas angue Medusa comas,

(Why are you trembling and fearful to go to her? You need not move with your voice the impious Procne or Aeteon's daughter, nor the Egyptian wife, nor the cruel wife of Agamemnon, or Scylla, whose loins drive terror onto the Sicilian sea, nor Telegonus' mother, the shape-shifter, nor Medusa with her hair bound and braided with snakes.)

Apart from the implication of *non* […] *uoce mouenda* ('you need not move with your voice') in *Pont.* 3,1,119f that it would be dangerous to approach these women because they are not moved by pleading, the catalogue contains other indications of their inability to communicate by spoken word, or otherwise suggests that they are unlikely to do so. In Ovid's own version of the story, Procne is, in fact, moved to the slaughter of her own child by means of an image: the woven picture of her sister Philomela (Ov. *Met.* 6.581–586),[99] whereas the tears and words of the son Itys do not suffice for her to spare him (Ov. *Met.* 6,620–642). Medea, next to be mentioned, famously ignores her children's plea for mercy (Eur. *Med.* 1237–1292). It is not quite as easy to fit the unnamed Danaid and Clytemnestra, both mentioned in *Pont.* 3,1,121, into this pattern, although one could perhaps argue that they are described as barbarians; this is one possible inference of the term *Aegypti* used of the Danaid. Clytemnestra would fall into this category due to her barbarian actions, earning her the description *saeva* ('cruel') here. The closing half of the catalogue (*Pont.* 3,1,122–124) refers to non-human mythological characters: Scylla, Circe, and Medusa. Whereas their destructive nature makes it impossible to direct a pleading speech to either Scylla or Medusa, the reference to the sorceress Circe is more elaborate. The narrator stresses that Circe had the power to transform the shape of men, recalling the Homeric account of Odysseus' men being transformed into pigs (and so also losing their human speech) while

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[99] Incidentally, the Ovidian account of the story of Procne and Philomela emphasizes the inadequacy of mere words (cf. Ov. *Met.* 6,584f) as well as of tears (cf. Ov. *Met.* 6,611).

retaining their human mind (*Od.* 10,239f). Following the Medusa distich, the focus shifts to the addressee of the wife's speech, Livia, with the words *femina sed princeps* ('but the first among women', *Pont.* 3,1,125), echoing the *non* (*Pont.* 3,1,119) at the beginning of the catalogue. As he claims she is not like these mythological characters, the narrator ascribes to Livia both reason and compassion.

Reviewing where these two mythological catalogues leave us, we find that they continually underline the importance of the wife successfully conveying her message to the empress, as well as the ability of the latter to (re)act accordingly. This is in keeping with the scene Ovid sets in the surrounding second half of the poem (*Pont.* 3,1,97f; 113f; from 129 and onwards). As I have attempted to demonstrate, the references to the mythological wives of the first catalogue, employed with minor variations for that reason in four separate poems in the exilic corpus alone, have less to do with praising or encouraging the virtuous behaviour of the narrator's wife than with the rhetorical efficacy of her speech. The wife becomes a means for the narrator to reach his aim, that is, the successful seduction of Livia to his cause. Subsequently, the list of Alcestis, Penelope, Laodamia, and Euadne contributes to placing the narrator's wife not so much in the role of the loyal wife as in that of the elegiac messenger.[100]

That the narrator's wife should appear in this secondary role rather than (or at least, as well as) play the main part of an elegiac *puella* is highly ironic given that earlier on in the poem, the narrator explicitly tells us that he has imposed on her the 'grand part of representing the good wife' (*Pont.* 3,1,43f). However, another effect of the warnings and advice of the narrator, and of the second mythological catalogue, is that it assigns the role of elegiac *domina* to Livia: she is unpredictable and can only sometimes be won over by words.[101] In fact, one may also recall *Pont.* 3,1,114 and the phrase *Caesaris est coniunx* […] ('Caesar's wife') which concluded the first mythological catalogue. The wife, or the *domina*, starring in this poem is not the narrator's wife but Livia. Certainly that is not the sense of the sentence in its entirety – in full, line 114 reads *Caesaris est coniunx ore precanda tuo*, 'you must plead to Caesar's wife with your lips […]' – but it is nevertheless suggestive that following a list of heroines whom the narrator's wife does not need to emulate, the coda offers an explanation of sorts. The narrator's wife does not need to worry about filling Penelope's shoes, because Livia is already standing in them.

Davisson argues, I believe rightly, that *Pont.* 3,1 has a programmatic function in

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[100] But cf. Colakis, 1987, 212–214 for the narrator's wife in the "sympathetic male role of prospective lover" or as a *miser amator*; H. B. Evans, 1983, 126 places her in the role of the elegiac mistress in the first half of the poem.

[101] Davisson, 1984, 332f; Colakis, 1987, 213.v

drawing our attention to the sovereignty of the author over the portrayal even of pseudo-biographical characters. It also makes clear that Ovid expects his readers to handle these literary roles as deftly as he does, accept and appreciate inconsistencies and shifts in them by means of subtle hints rather than overt pointers.

IV.vi. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has examined references to Penelope, Laodamia, Andromache, Alcestis and Euadne in Ovid' exile poetry. We have noted that unlike many references to the same five heroines in 'canonical', epistolary and erotodidactic elegy discussed in the first three chapters of this study, the narrator rarely attempts to adapt these mythological and literary characters to their new, elegiac setting by providing them with elegiac motivations – rather, they are portrayed in a manner consistent with what we might call the vulgate tradition of these women as paradigms of wifely virtue. Particularly in the case of *Trist.* 5,14, I have argued that this allows the narrator to present himself as a previously misguided but now finally reformed believer in the traditional *mores* of Roman society; an image one might assume would be helpful to the narrator's aim of entreating the emperor to allow him to return to Rome eventually.

However, I have also highlighted the negative impact repeated allusions to the purportedly disreputable *Ars amatoria* must have on the narrator's attempts to secure the clemency of the emperor. Four out of six of the references to mythological paradigms of wifely virtues take the form of mythological catalogues ostensibly intended to praise or further encourage the virtuous behaviour of the exiled narrator's wife, but these catalogues are fashioned in a manner which brings to mind (at least, if the reader is well versed in Ovid's earlier poetry and sufficiently suspicious) the mythological catalogues of the *Ars amatoria* – and particularly the mischievous catalogue of virtuous women in *Ars* 3,15–28. On several instances, we have seen that the new, serious stance of the exiled narrator is offset by the frivolous one of the *praeceptor amoris* of the *Ars*, so that the narrator's newfound seriousness may only be appreciated fully by an reader well acquainted with Ovid's other amatory poetry. Such reoccurring similarities between the exile poetry and Ovid's earlier amatory works invite comparison of the two texts, posing the question of which work provided the best reading experience. By extension, as the successful and not least *continued* dissemination of the *Ars*, banned from the imperial library,[102] is inscribed in the new, supposedly apologetic, work, it also

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[102] Cf. Ov. *Trist.* 3,1,67f; 73f; 79f; Ov. *Pont.* 1,1,5f.

makes for a poignant and defiant statement of poetic autonomy.

Another trait present across the whole corpus of the exile poetry and recognizable in Ovid's treatment of the five mythological paradigms under scrutiny here is a nuanced play on boundaries of literary genres and the generic affiliations of the protagonists. I have indicated that by associating the narrator with male narrators of 'canonical' elegy while describing the wife of the exiled narrator in a manner more resemblant of the traditional discourse of tragedy and epic, Ovid effectively dramatizes the isolation of the exiled narrator.

Though the pleas the narrator so ostensibly makes for his case in the exile poetry are often muddled and ineffective (cf. the discussion of the suggested alternative readings of epic myth in *Trist.* 2, included here in the chapter introduction), Ovid's indirect metapoetic comments on the workings and aims of 'canonical' and erotodidactic elegy provides a considerably more effective defence. In an important catalogue passage in *Trist.* 5,5,43–60, the four heroines Penelope, Euadne, Alcestis and Laodamia (who have all had their motivations subtly adapted to the elegiac setting) are used throw light on the objectives and limitations of elegy. The narrator states that if their spouses had not suffered or been lost, these mythological and literary heroines would have had no cause to develop the virtues for which they are famous. The narrator's wife, on the other hand, would have been unknown but no less faithful or dutiful. In my interpretation of the passage, I drew on this contrast between the literary heroines and the 'real-life' character of the narrator's wife to suggest that although elegy in all its inflections does rejoice in creating alternative scenarios for famous mythological characters, it does not set out to nor succeed in overturning the preference of its readers for a more traditional morality. The similarities in structure between this passage and the catalogue in Ov. *Ars* 3,15–28 enabled me to apply this statement to the *Ars amatoria* in particular. Similarly to the use of the character of Penelope in the *Heroides*, there employed to illustrate an awareness inherent in the elegiac genre that it does not cause lasting change in our perception of the myths with which it sometimes toys (see Chapter Two, esp. II.i.iii), the references to Penelope, Euadne, Alcestis and Laodamia in Ov. *Trist.* 5,5 intimate to us that the chief aim of elegy cannot be to overturn the traditional ideals of Roman society.

Could Ovid's shaping of references to these mythological paradigms in the exile poetry aid us in formulating those aims more succinctly, especially given that they are such a small part of the corpus? I began these concluding remarks by stating that – in contrast with the characterization in Ov. *Trist.* 5,5 – there is rarely an attempt to alter the motivation of these five heroines to suit their 'new' elegiac setting in the exile poetry. This is to be compared with the repeated efforts of especially the *praeceptor amoris* of the *Ars*, but also of the male narrators of 'ca-

nonical' elegy and the female letter writers of the *Heroides*, to endow mythological characters with intertextual origins in other genres with elegiac motivations and perspectives. There, I have argued, the incongruous and ironic effects of these changes, offset by the earlier, dominating literary tradition, implied similar 'mis-interpretations' on the part of the narrators of the entire Roman world reflected in the texts. Thus, such alterations to traditional mythological and literary ma-terial may confirm or contribute to a shift in our perception of the genre. From predominately perceiving elegy as aiming for social or political change we may move towards an understanding of the genre as being more concerned with the artistic construction of characters acting against a stage background of literary tradition and generic convention. The construction of the character of the nar-rator appears, so to speak, front-stage. I would tentatively like to propose that even as one might view the reduction of the character of the narrator of Prop. 4,8 to being solely an elegiac lover (above, I.iii.) as an retrospective comment on and an expression of elegy's self-referential nature, the lack of alterations to the motivations of Penelope, Laodamia, Andromache, Alcestis and Euadne, juxta-posed with the continual description of the exiled narrator as an elegiac character, may offer a similar interpretation, informed by hindsight, of the elegiac genre as being, ultimately, uninterested in its surroundings and concerned with the ironic manipulation of one character only – that of the narrator.

Concluding Remarks Once More

THIS STUDY HAS CONSIDERED references to the five mythological characters Penelope, Laodamia, Andromache, Alcestis and Euadne in elegiac texts from the Augustan period, that is, in Propertius, Tibullus and Ovid. It had two chief aims, first to provide close readings of the passages in which these five characters appear, and secondly to evaluate whether these readings may be used as a cross-corpus sample to further our understanding of the elegiac genre as a whole. Two aspects with bearing on the second aim of the study became particularly significant: on the one hand the narratological function of the selected mythological references, and the way they influence the reader's appreciation of the narrator, and his or her credibility, and on the other, the use of these mythological characters to convey metapoetic statements or discussions.

While they form an important part of the results of the study and are (or so it is to be hoped) valuable as such, the close readings of the various passages in and by themselves cannot be easily surveyed here. Instead, this chapter will highlight results related to the second aim of the study – the question of whether we may draw on the elegists' use of references to certain mythological paradigms to discuss elegy as a genre. In order to better illustrate the overarching results of this study, these concluding remarks are structured thematically rather than, as the four main chapters, linearly or chronologically.

Arguing that the selected mythological references are but a small part of the elegiac corpus, one might conceivably contest the notion that we may draw on the elegists' use of mythological paradigms of wifely virtues to discuss issues of genre. With the exception of Penelope and Laodamia in Ovid's *Heroides*, the characters I have focussed on in this study are not main protagonists in the elegiac relationship but merely used as foils for characters like the *puella* or the *amator*. However, the perhaps most significant point of departure for this study is Conte's assertion that elegy thrives on an awareness of tension and contradiction arising from the elegiac narrators' attempts to include within their own discourse values and words from a contemporary conservative discourse seemingly foreign to elegy. In other

words, if we were to take the ostensive proclamations of the elegiac narrators about their world view at face value, these ideas – fidelity and simplicity, to mention but two – and the catchphrases with which they are expressed, should have little or no place within the elegiac universe.[1] Nevertheless, references to the values of normative society occur frequently especially in 'canonical' elegy, where they form the background against which the genre defines itself. By means of literary and vulgate tradition, the five selected characters are closely associated with such values, above all with marital fidelity. Penelope, Laodamia, Andromache, Alcestis and Euadne are all known as faithful *wives* rather than lovers. Furthermore, these female characters are predominately rooted in genres programmatically rejected by narrators in 'canonical' elegy in favour of love poetry; Penelope, Laodamia and Andromache being known above all as epic characters, Alcestis and Euadne as characters from tragedy. Therefore, their appearance as points of comparison for elegiac *puellae* (or indeed as elegiac narrators in their own right, as is the case in Ovid's *Heroides*) must be precisely one such instance of inclusion of seemingly contradictory material into elegy to which Conte refers.

It is, furthermore, on these two points that the characters of this study differ from other mythological and literary characters who could potentially have been included here – characters like the loyally loving Briseis or Phyllis (neither of whom is bound to their lovers in a union recognized by normative society) or the Roman Lucretia (who lacks the antecedents afforded to Penelope, Laodamia, Andromache, Alcestis and Euadne by their appearances in Greek literature). This study argues that a crucial element of the references to mythological paragons of wifely virtues in elegy is that the reader may, on a first reading, allow him- or herself to be convinced by the elegiac re-reading of their stories suggested by the elegiac narrators. On a second reading, however, the careful reader will realize that the elegization of Penelope *et cetera* does not tally with his or her foreknowledge of the myth or the vulgate treatement thereof, which leads to a gradually more suspicious attitude towards the narrator. It is tempting to speculate that this is one reason why the elegists make little use of traditional Roman examples, featuring elsewhere in contemporary discourse; the reader may have been less inclined to accept even a temporary elegization of characters such as Lucretia – the illusion that the elegiac narrator is right in his reinterpretation of myth would be broken up too soon.[2] Conversely, an example such as Briseis, not married to her lover,

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[1] Conte, 1989, 226.

[2] What I am concerned with here is the necessary counterbalance between narrators proposing the elegiac lifestyle as an alternative to traditional Roman ideals, as the narrators of 'canonical' and erotodidactic elegy do to a great extent, and the undermining effects of

offers too little friction between the vulgate and elegiac versions of the myth, so that while she is a widely popular character in elegy, she does not pose the same challenge to the elegiac system as the virtuous wives of mythology.

In Chapters Two and Four I emphasize the impact of this difference in generic origins on the use of the selected mythological characters in Ovidian elegy. The fact that Penelope, Laodamia, Andromache, Alcestis and Euadne are all rooted in literary genres other than elegy is brought to the fore as one reason why these heroines become vehicles of a discussion of the aims and limitations of the elegiac genre. Looking at two letters from Ovid's *Heroides* in Chapter Two, we may note that the (attempted) transformation of Penelope and Laodamia into characters with elegiac motivations prompts implicit reflections on the relationship between elegy and other literary genres, particularly epic. In Penelope's letter, it is the failed *ekphrasis* of the wine drawing in *Epist.* 1,31–36 that hints at elegy's inability to provide a real means of communication between its protagonists, and the genre's reluctance to give a complete and understandable interpretation of the world. The theme of non-communication emerges more clearly still as a characteristic of elegy in Laodamia's letter to Protesilaus (*Epist.* 13). Despite Laodamia's attempts to cast herself and Protesilaus as ideal elegiac characters, and in spite of her claims to a mutual near-psychic connection to her husband, the efforts at communication in her letter remain curiously one-sided. The significance of the ghostly apparition of Protesilaus in *Epist.* 13,107f remains unintelligible to Laodamia, and the wax image she fashions in Protesilaus' likeness does not respond to her endearments. Most importantly, Laodamia's connection with Protesilaus does not have the power to convey to him her thoughts and feelings, so that she has to resort to sending him a letter. I furthermore note that if we view the *Heroides* as a trial-run of the elegiac system in life-like circumstances, it follows that 'canonical' elegy, too, is not primarily interested in depicting a sincere, communicative union of lovers. In the passages surveyed in Chapter One, this one-sidedness manifests itself in the skewed perception of the male narrators of the relationship they are involved in and of their beloved (see further below). It is present even in Ovid's exile poetry – even though this is the part of Ovid's oeuvre which makes the most prominent claim at constituting communication between its (internal) author and addressee – in the widening gap between the narrator and his wife, which Ovid creates by means of genre conventions.

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mythological references in their poems. The *Fasti*, where Ovid of course treats the Lucretia myth extensively (*Fast.* 2,761–852), does not quite share this premise. One might suspect, however, that Ovid's Lucretia resists elegization in the same way as does the character of the narrator's wife in Ovid's exile poetry.

In my reading of *Heroides* 13 I also suggest a metapoetic interpretation of the wax image episode towards the end of Laodamia's letter. Laodamia adds the crucial phrase […] *plus est, quam uidetur, imago* (Ov. *Epist.* 13,153) which, understood as a remark to the external reader, signposts the reading of the wax image as a representation of the elegiac *puella*. To further support this reading, it is useful to draw on Sharrock's seminal interpretation of the Pygmalion episode in the *Metamorphoses*.[3] Like Pygmalion, Laodamia fashions an image of her lover that on a metaphorical level corresponds to the elegiac beloved – the *female* lover, into whose role Protesilaus continually slips throughout the letter. I argue that against this background, Laodamia's statement that only its lack of a voice (*adde sonum cerae, Protesilaus erit*, 'add a voice to the wax, and Protesilaus it will be' in *Epist.* 13,154) detracts from the verisimilitude of the statue should be related to Laodamia's position as an elegiac writer, as well as to the relative lack of female voices in 'canonical' elegy. Laodamia's use of the phrase *adde sonum* ('add a voice') about her '*puella*' indicates a curious awareness of the artificiality of the elegiac love-object. The text of Laodamia's letter represents, by and large, a failure at communication, despite claiming to afford its internal, female author a long-suppressed voice. When the female narrator Laodamia then comments on the lack of means for the elegiac *puella* to express her own voice with *adde sonum*, the one-sidedness of the *Heroides* as well as of 'canonical' elegy is effectively and ironically brought to the fore.[4]

Ovid's exile poetry, discussed in Chapter Four, once more employs references to virtuous, mythological wives in order to comment on metapoetical issues. We may read the catalogue of virtuous, mythological wives in Ov. *Trist.* 5,5,43–60 as a retrospective commentary on the aims and objectives of the elegiac genre. There, the four literary heroines Penelope, Euadne, Alcestis and Laodamia stand in contrast with the 'real-life' character of the narrator's wife, and differ from her in that they developed their virtue only due to difficult circumstances. The narrator's wife, on the other hand, possess these qualities independently of her husband's fortunes. According to the interpretation outlined in IV.iv., the passage implies that elegy may rejoice in suggesting alternative versions of the myths on virtuous women, but it does not set out to nor succeed in changing the preference among its readers for the morality endorsed by normative society.

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[3] Sharrock, 1991.

[4] The connection of poetics and genre with examples of intermediality in Penelope's and Laodamia's letters, as well as references to plastic arts, epigraphic epitaphs and the materiality of writing in other letters of the *Heroides* might prove a fruitful area for further investigation.

In addition, the comprehensive approach of this thesis, different from previous studies with a smaller scope or interpretations briefly suggested in larger commentaries, also enables me to highlight the impact of the intertextual relationship between seemingly disparate texts like the *Heroides*, the *Ars amatoria* and the exile poetry of Ovid. In the exile poetry, several passages feature catalogues of mythological, virtuous wives in a way that is consistent with the vulgate tradition. Unlike many passages in 'canonical' and erotodidactic elegy, there is no attempt to endow them with elegiac motivations. However, we find that knowledge of the *Ars* is required to fully appreciate the now conservative treatment of the heroines and the supposedly serious stance of the exiled narrator. The *Ars* (where very similar catalogues occur in prominent positions, as Chapter Three shows) is thus continually inscribed as a successfully disseminated work in the later writings of Ovid. This results in a high degree of ironic tension present across the exilic corpus between the narrator's ostensive disavowals of his earlier, unfortunate erotodidactic poetry and the continued reliance on them as recognizable intertexts. In a supposedly apologetic work, it can be nothing less than a defiant statement of poetic autonomy to presuppose, on the part of the reader, extensive familiarity with the very work for which one is allegedly apologising.

In connection with the use of mythological paradigms as vehicles for a meta-poetic statement, Chapter Four also emphasizes Ovid's use of genre for the illustration of the distance parting the narrator of the exile poetry from his addressee in Rome. In this study, I focus only on Ovid's dramatization of distance between the narrator, associated with elegy, and his wife, connected rather to epic characters and values, but pervasiveness of this poetic technique suggests that it would be rewarding to investigate whether it is not also used in other poems in the exilic corpus.

More pervasive still is the shaping of references to the selected mythological characters in such a way as to reflect on the credibility of the elegiac narrator. In 'canonical' elegy, in the *Heroides*, and in erotodidactic elegies such as Ov. *Am.* 1,8 and most notably the *Ars amatoria*, the description and mode of reference to mythological paradigms of wifely virtues proved to influence the credibility of the narrator negatively as well as positively, while implicitly affecting the reader's appreciation of the validity of the world view ostensibly put forward by these elegiac narrators.

In Chapter One, focussing on the appearance of Penelope, Laodamia, Andromache, Alcestis and Euadne in 'canonical' elegy, I establish that most mentions of these characters are surrounded by a sense of jarring. On some instances, this note of jarring indicates the contrast between the ideals ostensibly professed by the male narrators and the 'actual' workings of the elegiac universe on a general

level: we find that Penelope, for instance, cannot be unequivocally praised for her faithfulness in a genre of which infidelity is such an important part. Mostly, however, the immediate source of this jarring note may be found on a 'personal' level and is connected to the narrator's relating of the love story in which he is involved. There, the narrator's likening of his *puella* to one of these paradigms may often be found less than suitable, so that the reader is invited to envision differences rather than similarities, and the narrator's idealizing understanding of his relationship with the *puella* becomes clear. At other instances, the narrators draw on mythological examples of female virtue to indicate similarities (or more often, *dis*-similarities) with the *puella*. On these instances, however, the suspicious reader will also note that the comparison between the *puella* and a female literary or mythological characters establishes an analogy between their male counterparts, that is, between a male mythological character and the narrator. Although flattering at first glance, a closer scrutiny of these analogies reveal that they reflect negatively on the narrator's claims about his own morality and conduct, thus opening a potentially disconcerting gap between the self-image the narrator appears to project on the one hand, and what we may learn about him from the text on the other. Again, this is likely to have increasing influence on the reader's appreciation of the validity of the world view seemingly proclaimed in 'canonical' elegy. These outcomes should be allowed to influence our evaluation of the literary, social and political commentary in elegy. The ostensible rejection of the traditional *cursus honorum*, military or familial duties, and the devaluation of literary genres traditionally considered to be of higher standing in favour of elegy, *et cetera*, must appear in a different light if the individuals who voice such opposition against traditional, Roman values are frequently revealed as being unreliable, potentially ridiculous and perhaps a source of amusement. By detracting from the credibility of the opposing alternative as represented by the elegiac narrators, elegy as a genre comes ultimately to confirm the values of traditional Roman society.

Mythology, and the ideal reader's presupposed knowledge of mythology, is put to similar use in the *Heroides*, as discussed in Chapter Two. In Laodamia's letter the narrator's attempts to establish herself and Protesilaus as ideal elegiac characters were continually undermined by the effects of dramatic irony and the reader's familiarity with literary and vulgate traditions of the myth; in Penelope's letter, her narrow, elegiac perspective, focussing ever on her beloved, cause motives and events central in the dominating intertext of Homer's *Odyssey* to be blended away. The blinkered outlook perceptible in these female narrators emphasizes their affinity with male narrators of 'canonical' elegy, and suggests a certain distortion of perspective as a characteristic of the elegiac genre.

The 'misuse' of mythological material in erotodidactic elegy also draws the reader's attention to the limitations of the narrator's or the *praeceptor*'s world view, although here it is related to the validity of his or her teachings rather than an account of a love affair, and only implicitly to whether the elegiac *Gegenwelt* constitutes a feasible life style alternative. The latter part of Chapter Three illustrate that the trustworthiness of the *praeceptor* is rendered relative when he is forced to tweak and exaggerate elements of well-known myths, sometimes to the point of the ridiculous, in order to fit them to his precepts. These traits have a cumulative effect on the reader, so that in a linear reading, the *praeceptor* and his aims will appear increasingly comical. Nevertheless, we should also note that the selected examples of wifely virtues are also employed to establish the credibility of the *praeceptor*, when he refers to Penelope, Laodamia, Andromache, Alcestis and Euadne in a manner consistent with the earlier literary and vulgate tradition. This is most notable in the proem of *Ars* 3, where the narrator acknowledges the virtue and faithfulness of these heroines, while – entirely in keeping with his stated objective of teaching nothing but light-hearted love – pronouncing them irrelevant to himself and his disciples. Only under the influence of the earlier readings in elegy (or a retrospective reading of the book in hand) does the perspective on myth here strike the reader as obviously blinkered.

There remains the question of whether elegy's use of these mythological examples changes the reader's appreciation of the myths and of literary tradition. Will a reader of Penelope's letter in the *Heroides* lastingly question Homer's version, or the post-Ovidian Andromache come to belong more to the bed chamber than the battlements above Troy? Does the irreverent use of these myths in elegy hint at a re-evaluation of alternative strands of tradition? We may assume that the by-strands and alternative traditions were known to the elegists – pleading the case for or against Helen or questioning Penelope's virtue were standard exercises in the rhetorical training of the time, and such traditions also received considerable attention in above all Hellenistic treatments of the myths.[5] There are possible allusions to such alternative and mostly sensationally erotic versions of the heroines' stories – a case could perhaps be made for alternative traditions informning Dipsas' reference to Penelope in Ov. *Am.* 1,8 – but, as I stress in my discussion of that passage, these possible allusions are vague and cannot be traced back to any particular literary or pictorial source, whereas we may discern and enjoy the literary play with mainstream intertexts such as Homer.

Moreover, this study suggests that the answer to these questions may be found

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[5] For an extensive discussion of the literary tradition, see Jacobson, 1974, 246–248. Cf. Sen. *Epist.* 88,8.

in elegy itself. In Chapter Two I indicate the programmatic nature of the first of the *Heroides*, based both on the placement of the letter and on the paradigmatic position of Odysseus and Penelope among mortal heroes in Greek and Roman mythology. The final distich in Penelope's letter to Odysseus with its curious description of the elegiac Penelope as *anus*, may be read metapoetically as a reference to the fact that the elegized Penelope might be a creative and amusing feature of Ovid's text, but even that text will acknowledge that this mythological and literary character will remain firmly rooted in another literary genre and tradition.

Indeed, it would seem that the elegists adopt an almost static approach to these myths, so that their irreverent interpretation of them does not lastingly influence the reader's appreciation of the mythological characters involved. The neutral use of the same mythological characters by the same authors in later texts – I am thinking here of Ovid's quite traditionally shaped references to famous virtuous wives in the exile poetry (Chapter Four), and to poems such as Prop. 2,9 and 3,13 (I.ii.) – is one indication that this might be the case. Furthermore, there is the unmasking of certain elegiac narrators as unreliable, like the *praeceptor amoris* or the bawd Dipsas, both discussed in Chapter Three. The interpretations in Chapter Three show that wherever the more sensational version are invoked, no matter how vaguely, these allusions appear in the mouth of speakers or narrators whose credibility the careful reader is likely to have called into question. Using a flippant expression, we might say that the elegists flirt with these strands of tradition, but show no inclination to take the relationship further.

Finally, throughout this study I have emphasized that the alterations to mythological and literary tradition concerning the selected paragons of wifely virtues in elegy aim at contrast, ironic or comical, or both, which in turn influences our appreciation of the main protagonists of the elegiac text. To change fundamentally the reader's perception of the myths, then, would be to remove the intertextual background against which elegy is thrown into relief, and to undo the foundations of the genre.

Appendix One

Tʜɪs ʙʀɪᴇꜰ sᴜᴍᴍᴀʀʏ of literary treatments of the five mythological characters selected for this study does not provide complete references to mythographical and literary tradition, but is intended merely as an aid to the reader. It assists in placing the appearance of Penelope, Andromache, Alcestis, Laodamia and Euadne in Roman elegy in a wider context, as well as in resolving mythological allusions such as patronyms, metonomies, *et cetera* used by Propertius and Ovid.

The appearance of Penelope, Laodamia, Andromache, Alcestis and Euadne respectively in each of the texts mentioned below, as well as in other sources, constitutes an area of research in its own right, and extends far beyond the limitations of this study. Where the usage of these characters in Roman elegy demands that specific details of alternate traditions be taken into account, references have been included in the footnotes of the relevant passage above.

Aʟᴄᴇsᴛɪs   daughter of Pelias and wife of Admetus. Admetus wins Alcestis as his bride with the help of Apollo. When Admetus is doomed to die after having neglected sacrifices to Artemis, Apollo prevails in convincing the moirae to release Admetus, if one person may be found who is willing to die in Admetus' stead. Alcestis does so, but is restored to life when Persephone is moved by her devotion to her husband (Apollod. 1,9,15,2), or by the assistance of Hercules (Eur. *Alc.*). The chief extant literary treatment of the myth prior to the Roman elegists is Euripides' *Alcestis*.

Aɴᴅʀᴏᴍᴀᴄʜᴇ   daughter of Aetion of Thebes in Asia Minor, wife of Hector. Andromache's family, including her father and seven brothers, were killed by Achilles at the beginning of the Trojan war. Sappho *Frg.* 44 describes the wedding of Hector and Andromache in harmonious terms, and the *Iliad* implies a loving relationship between husband and wife. Following

the fall of Troy, Andromache becomes the bounty captive of Neoptolemus of Phtia, where Euripides' *Andromache* describes the conflict with Neoptolemus' wife Hermione. At the death of Neoptolemus, Andromache is wed to Helenus and follows him to Epirus, where they found a new Troy. There are multiple traditions concerning the events of Andromache's later life, but these are less important for the usage of her character in Roman elegy. Main literary treatments still available to us include Homer's Iliad (esp. *Il.* 6, 22, and 24), Euripides' *Troades* and *Andromache*, as well as Vergil's *Aeneis* 3,301–356; 482–491, whereas less is known about the fragmentarily transmitted *Andromache* of Ennius.

EUADNE   daughter of Iphis, wife of Capaneus. Capaneus was one of the seven against Thebes, and died in the attempt to take the city. When Euadne learns of his death, she throws himself on his pyre. The only extant, longer literary treatment of this myth is found in Euripides' *Hiketides*, esp. 990–1071.

LAODAMIA   daughter of Acastus, wife of Protesilaus of Phylace. As fragments of Euripides and Laevius suggest, the wedding of Laodamia and Protesilaus was part of literary treatments of the myth, as well as the couple's later fate. Laodamia and Protesilaus are parted by the departure of the latter to participate in the war against Troy, where he is subsequently the first to be killed. On his death, Protesilaus returns to Laodamia either as a ghost or fully restored to his body, for a limited time, after which she either follows him into death, or commits suicide in despair. A statue of Protesilaus made by Laodamia also features in this myth, but sources diverge on the time of its appearance and its usage. Extant literary treatments prior to Propertius include a brief mention in Homer's *Iliad* (2,698–702), fragments of Euripides' *Protesilaos*, and Catullus 68b.

PENELOPE   daughter of Icarius, wife of Odysseus, mother of Telemachus. Perhaps the best known of the mythological heroines considered in this study, and unsurprisingly subject of extensive and often contradictory literary and mythological tradition, as the surveys of Jacobson (1974, 246–248) and

Wüst, 1937, 460–493) show. According to the dominant tradition founded on Homer's *Odyssey*, Penelope waited faithfully for the return of her husband from the war at Troy, attempting to delay a remarriage after Odysseys was held to be dead by means of trickery. She agreed to chose one of her many suitors once she had finished weaving a shroud for her father in law, Laertes, on which she worked during the day only to unravel the woven during the night. At the point of time when the events in the *Odyssey* take place, the suitors have discovered this, and Penelope is under considerable pressure. When she arranges the contest of the bow, she has agreed to take as her husband whoever is able to accomplish the same feat of archery as Odysseus once did. On the revelation of the true identity of the disguised Odysseus and the revenge on the suitors, Penelope tests him further before accepting him as her returned husband. The depiction of Penelope in the *Odyssey* has, of course, been subject to lively debate, for which Katz, 1991, may provide a starting point.

Index Locorum

Ov. *Am.*
1,1,17–28 · *138*
1,2,3f · *166*
1,4 · 106
1,4,66 · *93*
1,5 · *167*
1,5,25 · 137, *167*
1,7,15f · *147*
1,8 · *61, 95, 106, 107, 127,
   130, 194, 196*
1,8,2 · *76*
1,8,42 · 128
1,8,45–48 · 128
1,8,47f · 14, *126*, 128, *150, 155*
1,8,55f · *159*
1,8,57f · *129*
1,8,83f · *182*
1,8,95f · *74*
1,9 · 139
1,9,1 · *80*
1,9,1–30 · *91*
1,9,9–14 · *80*
1,9,32 · 139
1,9,32–40 · 138, 139
1,9,33–36 · *122*
1,9,33–40 · *35, 150, 168*
1,9,34–40 · *160*
1,9,35f · *80, 139*
1,9,45f · *86*
1,10,59f · *75*
1,10,61f · *95*
1,14,31 · *147*
1,14,40 · *76*
1,15,1–7 · *172*
2,2,35f · *182*
2,4 · *133*
2,4,33f · *133, 134*
2,5,61f · *161*
2,10 · *74*
2,11 · *92*
2,13,15 · *88*
2,18 · *11, 23*
2,18,11f · *24*
2,18,15–18 · *24*
2,18,19f · *24*
2,18,21 · *23*

2,18,21–26 · *24, 25*
2,18,27–34 · *25*
2,18,29 · *23*
2,18,35–40 · *24*
2,18,37f · *26*
2,18,38 · *23, 162*
2,19 · *61, 106, 159*
2,19,4 · *88*
3,1,49f · *75*
3,2,5 · *98*
3,2,16 · *98*
3,2,28 · *98*
3,3,1 · *162*
3,4 · *23, 61, 63, 106, 111,
   159, 162*
3,4,1–24 · 61
3,4,2 · 61
3,4,3 · 62
3,4,13–18 · 62
3,4,19f · 62
3,4,21f · 62
3,4,21–24 · *160*
3,4,23f · 61, 62
3,4,25 · 62
3,4,25–40 · 61
3,4,29 · *161*
3,4,41 · 61
3,4,41f · 63
3,4,43–48 · 61
3,5,40 · *76*
3,7,15 · *92*
3,7,16 · *93*
3,7,80 · *137*
3,9,29f · *132*
3,11,13 · *137*
3,13 · *179*
3,14,3 · *162*
3,14,13 · *162*
3,14,14 · *161*
3,14,18 · *162*
Ov. *Ars*
1,25–30 · 108, *132*
1,29f · *161*
1,53 · *134*
1,99 · *98*
1,345 · *130*

1,437–487 · *129*
1,455–464 · *109*
1,469f · 130, 131
1,477f · *129, 131*
1,573 · *98*
1,659f · *182*
2,123–140 · *72*
2,123–144 · *72, 175*
2,169–172 · *120*
2,169–174 · *106*
2,185–192 · *91, 132*
2,339–350 · *142*
2,345–348 · *143*
2,349 · *142*
2,349f · *142*
2,349–372 · *143*
2,351–358 · *124, 142*
2,351f · *142, 143*
2,353–356 · *141, 142*
2,353–358 · *142*
2,357 · *143, 144*
2,359–372 · *142, 144*
2,493–510 · *108*
2,503 · *98*
2,517–524 · *171*
2,547–554 · *106, 120*
2,641–646 · *134*
2,643–646 · *120*
2,645f · *124, 125, 133, 134,
   135*
2,692 · *86*
2,705–712 · *136*
2,705–724 · *168*
2,709f · 14, *124, 136*
2,709–714 · *140*
2,709–716 · *140*
2,713–716 · *136, 140*
2,716 · *136*
2,717–724 · *137*
2,719f · *140*
2,723f · *98*
3,1–6 · *113, 116*
3,1–28 · *111*
3,1–100 · *111*
3,7f · *113*
3,10 · *118*

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