

STRUCTURE, CHRONOLOGY, TONE AND UNDERTONE:

AN EXAMINATION OF TONAL VARIATION IN OVID'S

EXILIC POETRY

Jo-Marie Claassen, University of Stellenbosch

As with other aspects of Ovidian self-deprecation and *recusatio* in the *Tristia* and *Epistolae ex Ponto*, the poet's ostensibly candid admissions that his poetry is "not only sad but monotonous"¹ have been granted more credence than they deserve. The word "monotony" refers to "singleness of tone", not of content. By "tone" is meant the effect upon the sensibilities of the reader of the prevailing attitude of mind of the speaker. Discrepancy of tone and content is often an indication of ironic intent, colouring with new insights the reader's perception of what has gone before.² Reversal and inversions of tone are aspects of the general poetic principle of *variatio*.³ This paper will attempt to demonstrate that the principle of *variatio* applies to tone and shifts of tone in Ovid's exilic oeuvre, both within individual poems, and within the various collections that comprise Ovid's exilic works.

The paper will first discuss the various critical concepts involved, relating these to a descriptive "micro-analysis" of shifts of tone in some poems, touching very briefly on the stylistics by which these shifts are achieved. Readers will then be offered an opportunity to discover for themselves contrasts in tone in prose translations of three consecutive poems. The paper will end with a consideration of *Epistolae ex Ponto* 4.16 as the emotional culmination of the poets' oeuvre.

STRUCTURE

The term "structure" means many different things to many different critics. As practised by the critics to be discussed below, the "structural analysis" of a poem may involve attention to metre, vocabulary, content, or use of poetic devices. Ancient rhetorical theory offered a whole battery of technical terms for the description or denotation of the various parts of an oration. These "parts" involve formulaic aspects of *thought* rather than of *tone*. A critic of the older school such as Owen would apply this type of structural analysis also to poetry.⁴ A

- ¹ See for instance T5.1, T5.12, P1.5 and P4.2. Abbreviations "T" and "P" will hereafter be used for the *Tristia* and *Epistolae ex Ponto*; *Am.* for *Amores*.
- ² At the same time irony can create a variety of tone. The relationship between parody, irony and tone is interactive. See for instance Stirrup (1973) on irony in the structural context of *Am.* 1.7.
- ³ In all Ovidian studies one must remain aware not only of Ovid's sense of the ridiculous but of his ingenuity in exploiting, by inversion or change, essential contrasts such as up-down, near-far, war-love, man-god, right-wrong. Fitton Brown (1985) suggests as an explanation for a mooted "fiction of exile", the poet's appreciation of the possibilities of contrast that it offered.
- ⁴ Owen's analysis of T2 in his edition of the poem (Oxford 1924) is a case in point. As this long poem is in effect a "speech for the defense", these rhetorical categories apply closely. Janet Fairweather analyses T4.10 into *prooemium* (vv.1-2), *narratio* (3-80), *makarismos* of the poet's parents (81-84), *testificatio* (85-90), transition (91-92) to a second *narratio* (93-114), *praeteritio* of the causes of exile (99-100), *indignatio* (101-102), and "thanksgiving to his Muse" as *epilogus* (102-132). Her dismissal of his final *laus Musae* as epilogue is less satisfactory, for its tone sets the seal on the effect of the whole poem upon the reader. It is much more a declaration of independence than what she terms a "secret appeal to Augustus". See Claassen (1986), Sections 9.4.12 and 13.

slightly different approach is that of Cairns (1972),⁵ who applies generic rhetorical terminology to formulaic units of thought. Discussing "genre" and "topos", Cairns shows that a "subgenre" (or a certain *kind* of poem) can become a "topos" within a different subgenre.

Mere taxonomy of units of thought or units of diction is less useful than assessment of tone by means of this taxonomy. Two distinctly different kinds of "modern" taxonomic approaches are adopted in the analyses of individual poems by Kröner (1970) and Bouynot (1964). Kröner compares the two halves of T1.2 and discusses the principles of "pendulum-effect" and parallelism leading to "ring-composition". Bouynot starts his analysis of T3.2 with a taxonomically-based listing of various elements of the poem and goes on to show how synthesis of these elements can be used to pinpoint tonal shifts. Tone appears to be closely bound to style. So, taxonomic stylistic analysis, when followed by synthesis, successfully leads to an appreciation of tone.

TONE

Other critics, while trying to break away from the taxonomic (or "labelling") approach to structure, have addressed the problem of the appreciation of tone in different ways. The most lucid exposition of his method comes from Warden (1980) whose method of close analysis of Propertius appears as a type of "stream of consciousness". Warden's call for close attention to words in context, to sound and rhythm in order to "catch the shifting tones" of a poem, is a salutary antidote to the critical fallacy that considers mere formal analysis, taxonomy and *Quellenforschung* as sufficient for the final appreciation of nuances of meaning and tone. Various studies of the first four poems of *Tristia* 1 by Posch (1972 and 1983) offer carefully descriptive and orderly structural analyses of a similar kind. He pays particular attention to *Gliederung* (articulation and shift) and *Gedankenaufbau* (progression of thought).

The problem with this kind of "micro-analysis" is that it can, with its progressive attention to detail, obfuscate final poetic interpretation by sheer weight of words, within which the poetry is simply lost. Furthermore, progressive analysis of this kind is sometimes so carefully descriptive of the "flesh" of the poem, that it loses the spirit. It fails to give (or purposely avoids) any indication of the critic's personal reaction to the poet's outreach towards him as reader. If it does not stop to assess emotional impact, then it has substituted a new form of petrification, the verbiage of "structure", for the old, taxonomic destruction of a poem that it sought to supplant.

In the end the reader reluctantly concludes that a critic's appreciation of the tone of a work is so elusive as to be virtually impossible to convey. This is not so. Any critic's subjective reaction to the poet's appeal can be aided by recourse to all the various means of analysis touched upon above, but finally the critic can do no more than voice an impression of tone as conveyed by the poet through his style. With Ovid, in all his works, the critic needs to become aware of both tone and undertone.

VARIATIO AND ARRANGEMENT

Some commentators on the exilic poems, for instance Della Corte (1973:321-322) and (1974:13-14) and Evans (1984:107), confine "structural analysis" to conjectures about the

⁵ Cairns' book has been largely proclaimed the standard work on the subject. Griffin (1984) criticizes Cairns for retroactively applying later rhetorical terminology to earlier poetry or inventing a non-existent terminology. Ancient literary convention and practice, however, both frequently outstripped theory.

underlying principles of arrangement within individual books.⁶ Depending upon their conclusions about the relative importance of content, tone or addressee (known in the case of the *Epistolae ex Ponto*, conjectured about the *Tristia*) they draw up symmetrical schemes. In all cases they are conscious of the principle of *variatio*, but if the placement of a particular poem does not conform to their conception of the overriding ordering principle, they propose to move it into a better position.⁷ The adherents of numerological conjuring are perhaps the most guilty on this count.⁸ Further, they try, by judging from "internal evidence" to ascertain what the "original order" was in which the poems were written.

All these tend to forget two basic principles: first, the fact that we have the body of poetry traditionally received in the order in which it presumably was arranged by the poet himself (except perhaps in the case of P4, which may have been collected posthumously).⁹ Second, in an exuberance of enthusiasm for "symmetry" and "overall arrangement" they tend to forget the exigencies of the ancient book roll: the unrolling of a volume dictated the poem-by-poem reception of the poet's scheme of arrangement.¹⁰ The reader therefore needs to bear in mind that any body of poems, edited by an ancient author in his lifetime, offers these poems *in the order that the poet wanted them to be read*. This does not mean that over-all structure should be ignored, or that the order of composition of individual poems should not be ascertained. The author's intentional arrangement of individual poems is more important than the order in which he composed them. Juxtaposition, novelty and echoes within reasonable physical distance from one another (e.g. ring-composition within a poem) would have been the most important factors in an ancient reader's appreciation of a text.

So too, in considering *variatio* in a collection of poems, the effect of juxtaposition, contrast and logical flow of thought, or illogical jumps in arrangement, is more important than "overall symmetry". Elaborate overall patterns that can be discerned only by means of elaborate diagrams are of secondary importance. Further, with a complex poet like Ovid, one single principle of *variatio* should never be upheld without consideration of the possibility of a multiple approach. Such consideration will inevitably bring the reader to a new appreciation of typically Ovidian subtleties of tone.

-
- ⁶ Also see Dickenson in Binns ed.: (1973:183-184). See Froesch (1968, Introd.:xxxv) for the principles of ordering in Hellenistic and Roman literature, where symmetry definitely is a consideration, but numerical grouping, "framing" and chronology can also play a part. *Variatio* is, however, the most important principle.
- ⁷ An extreme example is offered by Herrmann (1974). He proposes to place T2 before T1 and builds up a complete picture of what the "original edition" of the *Tristia* must have looked like, with salient verses at the heads of columns and the "central" couplet, which is T3.8.14-15 ("numbers 1765-1766" of 3528 verses), heading the 99th of 196 pages.
- ⁸ See Irigoin (1980) and Schwartz (1981) on numerological reasons for moving P2.11 to a position between P3.4 and P3.5. This would confirm a proposal Ehwald made in 1898, touched on later by Froesch (1968). However, Ovid was probably less concerned with perfect symmetry than his critics are.
- ⁹ A case has not so far been conclusively argued for an editorial arrangement of P4 by the poet himself, but it is probable. Evans (1984:168-170) sees only slight evidence of an ordering principle. A different set of friends is involved: four poems are addressed to Sextus Pompeius, and three more to other members of Germanicus' circle, nothing to the sons of Messalla Corvinus, prominent in the previous collection. This contrasts with the almost symmetrical ordering of earlier books, by both addressee and main topic.
- ¹⁰ Lörcher (1975) discussing the structure of *Am.* 1-3, stresses the importance of the physical appearance of the ancient book roll in affecting principles of *variatio*: she emphasises the importance of novelty arising from the juxtaposition of columns as well as the order of poems. See above on Herrman's acrostics.

CHRONOLOGY

Chronological examination of the exilic works may also indicate changes in style and in attitude and tonality. The overriding tone of one of the earlier books from exile may be vastly different from a work published a few years later, after exile has become a way of life for the erstwhile *lusor amorum*.¹¹

The chronology of a poet's output is also important: in the case of Ovid's *Amores*, where apparently about 25 years separated the first and second editions, the problem of time is very complex. In the case of the exilic poems we have a body of work that can be dated fairly certainly by means of internal evidence (the poet's allusions to his own age, to Augustus' death and to historically verifiable events) and by the limit imposed by the poet's death.¹² Furthermore it was physically impossible to produce more than a given number of verses within any one year. Ovid was always a prodigious worker, and his output increased at about the turn of our era, but declined after about AD 14. All these considerations point to the need for examining the exilic oeuvre consecutively, that is, by and large chronologically, for shifts in tone. The formerly widely-held idea of the whole exilic corpus as a monotonous entity, a monolith of snivelling lachrymation, has in the last twenty years been fairly well repudiated, but the fact of our author's extreme versatility, also in exile, needs greater emphasis.

ORDER OF COMPOSITION

It is generally accepted that T1 was composed soon after the decree of relegation was passed, completed by the time of the exile's arrival at Tomis, was provided with suitable prologue and epilogue, and published at Rome by a friend. T2 was probably composed concurrently with T1.¹³ T3 has been termed "the first year in Tomis"¹⁴ and can be dated within the first full year of exile. Dickenson places T4 at about 11 AD. T4.10 seems to offer the sort of *sphragis* which frequently ends a collection,¹⁵ and T5.1 has indications that here the poet is immediately following with another book, added to a collection which he had meant to treat as concluded (vv.1,2: "Add this little book, kind reader, to those four of mine that I sent ahead from the Getic shore"). T3 to T5 could possibly have been published simultaneously by the end of AD 12 or beginning of AD 13. The *Ibis* was probably composed in this time. Even more certain is the conjecture that P1 to P3 were written from the autumn of AD 12 through AD 13 and published in Rome at the end of AD 13.¹⁶

The last years, from AD 14 onwards, saw the composition of the poems of P4, which may or may not have been arranged by the poet, or possibly by an editor after Ovid's death, supposedly in AD 17. A case has not so far been conclusively argued for an editorial arrangement of P4 by the poet himself, but the possibility is not to be totally excluded. Evans (1983:168-170) sees only slight evidence of an ordering principle. A different set of friends seems largely to be involved: four poems are addressed to Sextus Pompeius, and three more

11 Vulikh (1968) points to differences in attitude to Augustus between the *Tristia* and *Epistolae ex Ponto*.

12 Pippidi (1972) bases his dating of some of the Pontic poems on a fragment from the *Fasti Praenestini* which indicates some of the movements of Tiberius between the years 9 and 13.

13 Graeber (1881), is as good as any later critic to use as guide on the dating of the exilic works.

14 See von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1968). The chronological arrangement of some of the poems in T3 is clearer than in some of the other books: winter, spring, summer follow one another. Dickenson in Binns (1973) indicates the importance of "place" as well as "time" in T3.

15 See Veremans (1981) on T4.10 as epilogue both of the book and the collection.

16 Froesch (1976) conclusively argues for the unity of P1 to P3.

to other members of Germanicus' circle, but nothing to the sons of Messalla Corvinus, who are prominent in the previous collection. This contrasts with the almost symmetrical ordering, according to principles of *variatio*, of the previous books, by both addressee and main topic. Evans (1983) *ad loc*, would place the composition of some of these poems earlier. One would then have to surmise that the poet had reasons for rejecting these poems (P1.6, P1.7, P2.2) for the purposes of his first collection of addressed epistles.¹⁷

ANALYSES OF TONAL SHIFTS IN INDIVIDUAL POEMS

An examination of the content of two poems will give an indication of the kind of tonal shifts that we are looking for, and the means by which our poet achieves these shifts.

Tristia 4.3, addressed to the exile's wife, is a long poem with subtle shifts of tone and mood (cf. Nisbet 1982). Verses 1-10 introduce a dramatic monologue with an elaborate address to the two Bear constellations. These stars, which can look on Rome, must look to see whether the exile's wife is faithful. The tone is pathetic, but not completely so, as the elaborate circumlocutory style, redolent of the lamp, undercuts pathos. At verse 11 the tone changes. The exile reprimands himself for doubting his wife's fidelity (*quae sunt manifesta, requiro*, "I'm looking for thing that are evident"), leading to ten verses, "stating the obvious". Verse 21 shifts naturally to an explanation of the reason for the exile's doubt, now addressed to his wife. The tone is candid: at night the exile's fears increase. He does not doubt her, but he is tortured by nocturnal suffering. The tone of agony is undercut by the uncomfortable intrusion of the reader's suspicion of sexual innuendo in verse 25 *et veniunt aestus* ("and heated passions come", or even "lust rises"). The exile's nocturnal longing is more physical than mental. The joke, if joke it is, is furthered by the exile's likening himself to Andromache's agony at having to watch the mutilation of Hector's body (vv.29, 30). Incongruity of physical and mental suffering is supported by the incongruity of the inversion of male and female points of view. The tone continues increasingly querulous. The exile's complaints sound very much like the selfish grumbling of a peevish husband, who is concerned with his wife's feelings only in relation to himself, and is not truly concerned with her happiness. Whether she is sad or happy, he is hurt by what she feels:

*tristis es? indignor quod sim tibi causa doloris:
non es? at amisso coniuge digna fores*
(T4.3.33-40).

"Are you sad? I deplore being the cause of your sorrow. Are you not sad? But sadness would really have been suitable for someone who had lost her husband!"

From verse 31 onwards the tone is extremely pathetic, culminating at verses 39-40 in a death wish (*utinam lugenda tibi non vita, sed ... mors ...* "If only you did not have to mourn my life, but rather my death!"). This immediately leads to a fantasy in which the exile imagines a death-bed scene, and even his own funeral. For no apparent reason, at verse 49, there is a

¹⁷ A poem like P4.12 may be taken as an argument for the theory that *Ex Ponto* 4 is not so much a "collection", as a set of "rejects" from other collections. It works with the unpromising material offered by the exigencies of elegiac versification: the exile ingeniously explains to a friend what the difficulties are of accommodating his name, Tuticanus, within the elegiac metre, dismissing the various "wrong" versions in playful *praeteritio*. (*Tuticanus* cannot be accommodated in either a dactylic or a spondaic foot).

violent change of tone, when the exile suddenly imagines that his wife is turning away from him:

*me miserum, si tu, cum diceris exulis uxor,
avertis vultius et subit ora rubor!
me miserum, si turpe putas mihi nupta videri!
me miserum, si te iam pudet esse meam!*

(T4.3.49-52).

"Poor me, if you, when you are called the wife of an exile, avert your face, and a blush suffuses your cheeks! Poor me, if you think it a disgrace to appear to be married to me! Poor me, if you are now ashamed to be mine!"

In these verses the modern reader may feel that elaborate literary devices such as anaphora and the deliberate echoing of *tu* (v.49) in *turpe* (v.51) are totally inconsistent with intensely felt, sincere emotion. Within the elegiac tradition elaboration is not necessarily a sign of shallowness.

The exile speaks nostalgically of the time when his wife was proud to be known as his. This leads at verse 61 to a new shift, to a tone of reassurance. His wife has new opportunities for pride. After all, her fidelity will become more famous than that of a whole series of faithful wives or friends, traditional epitomes of conjugal and amicable fidelity. The tone is matter-of-fact. The final appeal sounds reasonable, logical and sober, rather like the summing up of an advocate's plea (*quae latet inque bonis cessat non cognita rebus, apparet virtus arguiturque malis*, etc., - "Virtue, which lies hidden, unrecognized, and even fails in good times, appears and is vindicated during bad times" - vv.79-84). The scene has shifted from the cosmic sphere to the Roman forum, the mode from the metaphysical to the legal. The dramatic monologue has become a soberly persuasive speech. The last argument is that the exile's situation can be exploited by his wife to achieve fame.

Tristia 4.9 is a short poem that begins with a cryptic and anonymous accusation and a mild offer of mercy to be extended to the addressee, after repentance. Verses 1-8 appear to be portraying Augustus Caesar as speaker, offering the exile forgiveness in lofty tones. Only at the 9th verse the reader realises that it is the exile who is addressing an enemy who has harmed him (*Sim licet extremeum, sicut sum, missus in orbem...* "I may well have been sent to the ends of the earth..."). Verses 10 to 14 exhibit a tone of assurance in the strength of the exile's civil position and certainty of pardon by Caesar, (*omnia, si nescis, Caesar mihi iura reliquit ...* "If you don't know it, Caesar left all me all the resources of the law ..."), shifting at verse 15 to reliance on a stronger power, his Muse (*denique ... Pierides vires at sua tela dabunt*, "finally, the Muses will give me power and their own weapons..."). At verse 21 the tone is that of lofty assurance of a transcendental power which will enable the exile to expose his enemy to the world (*ibit ad occasum quicquid dicemus ab ortu ...* "whatever we say will go from from East to West ..."), shifting once more at verse 27 to whimsy, *iam feror in pugnas et nondum cornua sumpsi*, "I'm now being borne into the fight, but I have not yet taken up the bugle!". The poet borrows vocabulary from the sphere of the Circus. Logical exploitation of the circus metaphor involves depiction of the exile as "gladiator" (vv.27, 28), his temporary patience as the Roman "winter recess" (December to April) (v.29) and finally himself as an "angry bull" (v.30). Playful imagery has deflated the severity of the threat. From sounding a lofty tone of cosmic power the poem has moved to a rather incongruous minor key. Finally the threat is deflected by means of a pun involving *canere* into a rather

feeble "or else ..." The shift in tone displays in retrospect that the first part of the poem was playful bombast:

*hoc quoque quam volui plus est: cane, Musa, receptus,
dum licet huic nomen dissimulare suum.*
(T4.9.31,32).

"This, too, is more than I wanted: sound the retreat, O Muse, while this man may still hide his own name!"¹⁸

CONTRAST IN TONE BETWEEN CONSECUTIVE POEMS

From these observations one may conclude, then, that the general impression left by a poem is not only the note upon which it ends, but the result of the sum of its shifts. It depends largely on the poetic force with which a particular stance is portrayed. The final impression is important in a poem as it often overrides what has gone before. This impression may, in its turn, be overridden by the tone of the next poem, if the poems be read in order, as the poet normally intended that they should. Poem T4.4 begins in an adulatory tone, addressing an anonymous friend (probably Messallinus) in elegant terms of praise. The contrast with the largely sober tone of the conclusion of T4.3 is great, but there is an even greater contrast between its "manly stance" and the peevish attitude which the exile has evidenced towards his wife in most of the monologue that comprizes the previous poem. The contrast in tone between the two poems adds to the psychological portrait of the all-too-human exile, which the poet is slowly building up.

Contrast between consecutive poems can be on more levels than mere tone. *Ex Ponto* 2.9 addresses Cotys, king of Thrace, a "barbarian prince" who has been civilised by the humanities: common interests make poetic colleagues of the exile and the king and bind them by ties of obligation. Complimentary praise of the king's achievements in the liberal arts, "surprising in a barbarian", arrests the reader by its tactlessness. The next poem, P2.10, is addressed to the poet's friend, his fellow-poet Macer. Its nostalgic remembrance of things past contrasts with the exile's outreach to a new addressee in the previous poem. Macer, a friend of Ovid's youth, is reminded of their common interests, travels and pursuits.

The tone of P2.10 is generally, almost consistently, cheerful, although it opens with a series of rather pathetic questions implying that the exile's friend may have forgotten him. At verse 7 the tone becomes brisk and the exile reminds Macer of their various ties:

*sis licet oblitus pariter gemmaeque manusque
exciderit tantum ne tibi cura mei*
(P2.10.7-8).

"It's quite in order for you to have forgotten both my seal and my handwriting, as long as your concern for me won't disappear!"

Verse 10, *vel mea quod coniunx non aliena tibi...*, "or perhaps because my wife is not a stranger to you", may be offering a hint that Macer has taken over the exile's conjugal role, but there is no other indication of such a suspicion, and the tone is candid rather than bland, indicating relationship rather than intrigue. In verses 15-16 the poet is self-deprecatory about

¹⁸ T5.8 also addresses an anonymous enemy, perhaps the Emperor himself, reviling him for unspecified harshness. Andre, as reported by Verdière (1971), conjectures that the endings of the first four lines are an acrostic *Atei*, referring to M Ateius Capito, who would also be *Ibis*. Janssens (1981) carries this exercise much further. See Luck (1977:350).

his own harmful exercise of poetry (*Naso parum prudens*, "Naso, the not-so-wise"), after praising Macer's own more successful exercise of his talents (*studiis ... sapientius usus*, "someone who used his studies more wisely", v.11). From verse 17 Ovid asserts the power of the bond between fellow-poets: *sunt tamen inter se communia sacra poetis*, "for poets have certain things in common that they hold sacred". At verse 21 the exile turns nostalgically to an enumeration of the travels he and Macer shared in their youth (a conventional "grand tour" which included the Near East and Sicily), contrasting it rather sadly at verse 30 with the place to which he has had to travel alone (*eheu, quam dispar est locus ille Getis!* "Oh dear, how different is that place from the Getae!"). Verses 31 to 42 recall with further nostalgia the spiritual communication between the two, with echoes of conventional *topoi* contrasting shortness of day and length of road:

*saepe dies sermone minor fuit, inque loquendum
tarda per aestivos defuit hora dies*

(P2.10.37-8).

"Often the day was too short for the conversation and the slow
summer hour was not long enough for our chat."

At verse 43 the tone changes to that of quiet certainty about the poet's mental power to transcend space, shifting at verse 49 to an assertion that he has the ability to evoke his friend at will. Macer is as much present among the Getae as Ovid is mentally present in Rome. It is a vindication of the almost magical power of the mind over the limitations of the material world. A final shift at verse 51, to a request that his friend should employ a similar imaginative power to evoke the exile, is the logical conclusion of a graceful exposition of the various facets of their friendship. He requests present aid, ending with a graceful conceit, "hold me in your heart, for there it is warmer".

VARIATIO BY RETROSPECT

An examination of three consecutive poems will show how the tone of a poem is influenced by what has gone before, and colours what follows. Contrast and shifts in tone parallel the considerable contrast in content of the second, third and fourth poems of P3. In order to give readers the chance to draw their own conclusions about Ovidian shift and cross-referencing, here follow schematic summaries of the content of three poems to be considered together. Readers need to survey for themselves the rapid succession of motifs offered by the poet before proceeding to read the author's brief assessment of these poems.

Ex Ponto 3.2: To Cotta

- 1-6 Introduction.
- 7-24 Desertion by many friends.
- 25-42 Gratitude towards those friends who did not desert the exile. Even Saurōmatians and Getae appreciate loyalty.
- 44-96 Narrative: An old Getic man tells the myth of Iphigeneia at Taurus and her meeting with her brother Orestes and his friend Pylades as illustration of loyalty between friends. The rites of Artemis are described as sanguinary and barbaric. The narrator is depicted as apologetically explaining these non-Roman horrors to his Roman listener. In the old Geta's version vv.83-89 are devoted to the altruistic rivalry between the two young men, each wanting to be the one to be sacrificed. The narrative ends with the recognition scene and the three Greeks' escape:

83 *"Let only one of you two fall as a victim to the sacred rite, and let the other go as messenger to our beloved homeland.' Pylades was determined to die, and so ordered his dear friend Orestes to go, but he refused, and so the two fought among one another to see who should die. (This was the only thing about which the two could not agree; for the rest they were always one of heart and never argued).*

89 *While the young men were waging this altruistic battle of love, she wrote a note to her brother. She entrusted it as a message to her brother: and the person to whom it was given - just consider the lot of humankind - was her brother!. And immediately they grabbed the statue of Diana, and departed secretly by ship, travelling over the vast ocean. Although so many years have passed, the wonderful love of the young men now still has a great name in Scythia."*

97-100 Even barbaric Getae are touched by thoughts of friendship.

101-110 Appeal to Cotta (based on his high birth and proven nobility) to support the exile.

Ex Ponto 3.3: To Maximus:

1-4 Appeal to Maximus to stop his daily activities and pay attention to the exile's dream or vision: he is unsure which.

5-22 Narrative: The exile was asleep when an apparition of Amor occurred:

5 *It was night and the moon entered the double-opening windows, shining as she usually shines about the middle of the month. Sleep, mankind's rest from care, held me fast, and my limbs were sprawled all over the bed, when suddenly the air, shaken by winds, shuddered, and the window moved with a small creaking sound.*

11 *Terrified, as I lay stretched out on my left side, I moved my limbs, and sleep was driven from my trembling heart. Love stood there with an expression which he had never worn before, sadly holding the maplewood foot of the bed with his left hand. He didn't have a collar on his neck, nor a hairpin in his hair, and his hair wasn't neatly arranged, as formerly.*

15 *Soft hairs hung down over his bristling face and his bristling feathers appeared before my own eyes, looking like the back of a pigeon in flight, which many hands have handled and touched over and over. As soon as I recognised him (and no-one else was better-known to me) my tongue grew loose and I spoke the following words:*

23-40 Conversation: The exile reproaches the god for having followed him, but also for his former sins: for having distracted him from serious poetry, and for having, as "pupil", harmed the poet as "teacher".

41-48 Catalogue of successful teachers and docile pupils.

49-58 Appeal to Amor to testify to the poet's innocence.

59-64 Appeal to Amor to intervene with Caesar.

65-70 Amor solemnly swears that his teacher was innocent.

71-76 Oblique allusion to "the other reason" for his exile.

77-84 Promise of better days.

85-94 Prophecy: Promise of future happiness in the event of a triumph, when access to the emperor will be easy. The apparition vanishes.

95-110 Flattery and appeal: Maximus is the greatest of a great family, the poet knows he will believe him and will protect him.

Ex Ponto 3.4: To Rufinus:

1-4 Appeal to Rufinus to read the exile's "Triumph" poem with favour, whatever its quality.

5-14 Poetics: The power of great poetry: the indulgence needed by an exiled poet.

15-36 The advantages of autopsy above imaginative writing: other poets see the events they describe: the exile must depend on his "mind's eye".

37-44 Appeal for indulgence for the poem in question.

45-64 Reasons why the exile's triumph poem is "bad".

65-76 Poetics: The exile's membership of the sacred band of poets remains, even if he is among the living dead:

65 I pray that no poet should think that this was said against his own songs: My Muse spoke on her own behalf. I have sacred community with you, o poets, if unhappy people are allowed to be part of your choir. And, as a great part of my mind, you have lived with me, my friends, now in this part too, although far away, I still cherish you. May my songs therefore be commended by your favour, as I cannot myself speak on their behalf. An author's work usually pleases after his death, because envy is used to harming the living and to carping at them with unjustified backbiting. If living unhappily is a kind of death, the earth waits, and only my funeral is still lacking to my end.

77-90 Appeal based on the exile's good intentions: *recusatio* based on his slender talent.

91-94 Poetics: the voice of the poet is the voice of a god.

95-114 Prophecy: Appeal to Livia (wife of Augustus and mother of Tiberius) to get ready for her son's triumph:

95 Why do you stop preparing the chariot and formal procession for the triumphal processions, o Livia? No wars are holding you up. Perfidious Germany has thrown away its spears and lost them: you should say that my omen has weight. Believe me, and in a short while the truth of my words will appear: your son will double his honour, and, as before, go forth behind a pair of horses.

101 Bring forth the purple, which you will place on the victor's shoulders: the wreath itself can recognise a head that is used to it. But shields and helmets will gleam with gems and gold, and the trophy tree still loom over chained soldiers. Ivory villages will be encircled with turreted walls, and people will think that this battle, as it is portrayed, is being waged in real earnest. The Rhine, all dirty, will carry its hair hanging down under broken reeds, and its water all tainted with blood. Even captive kings demand their barbarous insignia and tapestries too rich for their lot: and so too all the other things which it often prepared for you the unconquered courage of your people will again need to prepare.

113 O gods, under whose tutelege I spoke of things to come, I pray that you will prove my words by fulfilling them quickly.

DISCUSSION

The style of P3.3 calls for a less serious assessment of the poem than has sometimes been accorded it.¹⁹ It is important to view the poem in the context of the poems preceding and following it. Its mock-solemn, but evidently whimsical, tone contrasts with the kind and conciliatory tone of P3.2, where the exile tells Cotta Maximus about friends who deserted him through fear. He forgives them, rather grandly, with the "poetic plural":

ignoscimus illis,/qui cum Fortuna terga dedere fugae
(P3.2.7-8).

"We forgive them, who, with Fortune, turned their backs on the fugitive."

His true friends receive his thanks. Friendship is such a precious thing that even the local barbarians can appreciate it. As illustration he repeats the tale of the friendship of Orestes and Pylades in the land of the Taurians, as it was told by an "old Getic man" (vv.43-98). The barbaric Artemis celebrated in this cruel countryside is a far cry from a gentle Roman "Diana the Huntress", and her reeking altar is sprinkled with the blood of human sacrifice (vv.53-54). That the locality is removed from Tomis by several hundred kilometres as the crow would fly over the sea, is an irrelevance that would not have troubled a Roman readership, with its less than perfect grasp of geography, but does help us to put the fictional nature of the situation into perspective (Claassen 1990a:84). The discursive and chatty style of the "old Getic man" is in apparently deliberate contrast with the exile's formal address of his loyal friends.

Framed as it is between two very different poems, P3.3 next strikes the reader forcibly by its mock-solemn tone, which moves into comedy and back to spurious solemnity. It again presents a tale within a tale: the exile tells his patron and friend, Fabius Maximus, about a dream he had or an apparition that approached him: a bedraggled and sorry-looking "Amor", as squalid as charon, had come from Rome to visit him, had exonerated him from all blame in the matter of morality and had prophesied future happiness, especially after Tiberius' projected triumph. This triumph is cast within the mould of a ridiculous dream sequence, and should therefore not be taken very seriously (cf. Claassen 1991). In a subtle play on the fact that the Latin word *docere* takes two accusatives, of animate pupil and inanimate topic, "Amor" (the topic of the didactic *Ars Amatoria* which had supposedly caused his ruin) is personalized and berated by the poet as an ungrateful pupil, a non-Achilles to his non-Chiron, or a non-Numa to his non-Pythagoras (vv.43-44). This is a typically playful Ovidian conceit, which has wrested every possible nuance from the situation.

While purporting to serve as a further elaboration of the triumph prophesied in P3.3, the apologetic tone of the fourth poem in the book contrasts with the "dream sequence" of its predecessor. P3.4 is addressed to Rufinus, as a *recusatio*, begging pardon for the "poor quality" of a poem written on Tiberius' triumph.²⁰ If such a poem ever existed, it is now wholly lost, but it is possible that the second half of the poem (vv.87-105) is the promised "triumph poem". P3.4 wavers between humility, lachrymation and pathos, and attempts to

¹⁹ Claassen (1991) discusses the poem as an example of playfulness in the exilic poems.

²⁰ Wimmel (1960), offers an important clue to the interpretation of Ovid's often ostensibly negative judgment of the exilic works. In the Callimachean tradition *recusatio* has as its more salient elements: the request of a dignitary for patriotic poetry, the refusal by the poet on the grounds of the smallness of his talent and the greatness of the task, a warning god that calls him away, vindicating his choice of the humbler mode, and a defiant challenge to personified Envy to do its worst. Imagery is consistently related to water, sailing, or travel on land, as here.

sound ingratiating and conciliatory. A final apostrophe addresses the empress Livia, enjoining her to rejoice in her son's triumph and giving a small cameo-like evocation of a typical Roman triumph (vv.95-110).

The poet's mock-recusatory stance is not wholly convincing, and his description of the triumph is undercut by the reader's memory of the bathos, in the previous poem, of the "prophetic" figure of "Amor" with its bedraggled feathers, that had incongruously proclaimed that this triumph would take place. Allusions to the familial relationships of the various actors in the triumphal procession (Livia as mother of Tiberius, P3.3.87, P3.4.95-100, Tiberius as father of Germanicus and Drusus, and - by means of a rather clumsy zeugma - of the "Fatherland", P3.3.87-8) gain a strange tone when read immediately after Ovid's *reductio ad absurdum* of the Caesars' claim to divine ancestry: "Amor" is Tiberius' great-uncle (P3.3.62). The various imperial adoptions are apparently ignored, and therefore accentuated in readers' consciousness. Tiberius is uncomfortably aligned with his "great-uncle's" vindication of the errant poet.

The body of P3.4 is more concerned with poetics, and the power of poetry against mordacious Envy, than with Tiberian glory. Furthermore, the exile claims to be drawing from memory, relying on his "mind's eye", whereas other poets could give first hand reports. In a central passage the power of poetry to transcend space and time is asserted (vv.65-84), even when the inadequacy of elegy to bear the triumphal burden is deplored. The tone of dull fatalism is relieved by a conceit which playfully likens the elegiac metre to the limping of a chariot with wheels of disparate size, a joke the poet has made before:

*ferre etiam molles elegi tam vasta triumphi
pondera disparibus non potuere rotis*
(P3.4.85-86).

"My gentle elegiacs could not carry the vast weight of the triumph
on their lop-sided wheels."

The flattery evident in the personal addresses to two of the three recipients (Cotta, P3.2.3-7 and 103-10, Fabius Maximus, P3.3.95-108) may strike the reader as overdone, and redolent of that unpleasant side to Roman *obligatio* which prompted not only daily attendance of the great by suppliant clients, but sycophancy at remove in a poet at the mercy of the powerful. Yet playful punning on the two meanings of *salutem* ("greetings" and "health") in P3.2.1,2, and the ridiculous circumstances of the "dream" solemnly recounted to Fabius, complete with echoes of the apparition of Corinna in Ovid's "*Love in the Afternoon*" poem (*Am.* 1.5), contrasts with, and consequently tempers, the poet's apparently over-obsequious attempts to draw both addressees' families into his constellation of worthies. The poems succeed because of the variety and intrinsic interest of their contents, not because of the conventional flattery in their concluding lines.

When the exilic poetry is critically read in order in the above manner, the tone of consecutive poems may often leave a general impression which is subtly different from the impression left by a single poem. The sum of impressions gives, in the end, a flavour to the interpretation of each individual poem. A rapid survey of consecutive "general impressions" within a collection is necessarily selective as well as subjective, but the exercise would be worth pursuing.

THE LAST POEM BEFORE OVID'S DEATH

Having seen Ovidian *variatio* at work between consecutive poems, the reader comes to the very last of the exilic poems with expectant curiosity, tempered with the awareness that critics are unsure whether P4.16 is perhaps only fortuitously the last poem from exile. The reader's

initial impression of the last collection of poems, *Epistulae ex Ponto* 4 (the last of the five chronological phases, published perhaps posthumously, covering the years AD 14 to 17, that is, the years following the death of Augustus) is that attitude and tone are positive. This impression is soon undercut by awareness of increasing pathos. The poems are almost equally divided between address of public figures and of the exile's friends, most of them fellow-poets.²¹ Most of the addressees have not been approached before. The collection seems marked by a new approach, aimed largely at the coterie of Germanicus, in whom, it seems, the poet hoped to find a new champion. It would, however, not be impossible that some of the poems had been written earlier, and simply excluded from previous collections.

A careful reading may indicate that P4.16 was intended as the climax of the poet's exilic oeuvre, perhaps, also, of his total *corpus*. The poem does not, at first reading, seem to offer a great emotional culmination to a collection that has wavered in address between public figures and private friends. It is an address to an unnamed enemy, and its body (vv.5-44) purports to be a mere versified catalogue of contemporary poets. The present claim to fame of several of these poets lies only in their inclusion in this catalogue. The exiled poet is the last of this list, following his friend Cotta Maximus, the addressee of P3.2, "a great poet and a great man".

The poem is striking for its curious play of tone. A statement of defiance (vv.1, 2) gives way, after the catalogue of poets (vv.3-42) to pride in his poetry and the exiled poet's position as leader among a host of his contemporaries (vv.43f.). The last part of the poem exhibits rapid shifts from modest but obviously justified pride in his Muse (vv.45f.), to violent challenge of *Livor* (Envy) to stop its inhuman persecution (vv.47f.), to dull despair and utter abnegation (vv.49-52). The tone is finally negative, bespeaking an apparently resigned hopelessness.²²

So, from first to last, variations of tone in P4 have dwindled into a fixed focus upon a feeling of utter doom. The end of the poem, of the book, and presumably of the exile's life, is a dull, animal cry of despair, to personified "Envy",²³ to stop torturing a body that has no more place for new pain:

*ergo summotum patria proscindere, Livor,
desine neu cineres sparge, cruenta, meos.
omnia perdidimus: tantummodo vita relicta est
praebeat ut sensum materiamque mali.
quid iuvat extinctos ferrum demittere in artus?
non habet in nobis iam nova plaga locum.*

(P4.16.47-52)

"Therefore, remote from the fatherland, bloody Envy, stop, and do not scatter my ashes. I have lost all: life alone is left, just to be able to offer feeling and an object for your evil doing. What does it help to keep stabbing my lifeless limbs? A new blow finds no room to fall on in me."

²¹ P4.3 is to a friend who harmed him. Lechi (1978) conjectures that this may be Messallinus, who did not react to the exile's supplications. Hyginus, keeper of the Palatine library, has also been suggested. See the introduction by Bunte of the Teubner *Hygini Fabulae* (1856).

²² The contrast with the cry at the end of the *Metamorphoses*, to *Livor* *edax* to do its worst, is pointed, and presumably deliberate. A case can be made out for the deliberate placement of the poem at the end of this book, which seems to fall into two halves, by addressee: politicians and poets. Variation of tone (even if the shifts seem often to remain in essentially the same mode, moving merely from despondency to outright despair) may have been the principle applied for the ordering of individual poems. If that is so, it can be taken as evidence of intentional arrangement, either by a posthumous editor, or by the poet himself.

²³ For discussion of Ovidian personification and reciprocal depersonalisation, see Claassen (1990b).

Yet in the silence that follows on the cessation of the poet's voice, the reader begins to remember and pick up echoes of previous tones. Behind this cry a second, more forceful, impression obtrudes: of the poet's certainty that he has gained immortality. And so the last impression is not wholly one of despair. Stronger than than this cry to *Livor*, the memory of the poet's earlier hymn to his Muse remains in the reader's mind:

*tu mihi, quod rarum est, vivo sublime dedisti
nomen, ab exequiis quod dare fama solet*
(T4.10.121,122).

"You gave me while I was still alive something very rare: the kind of name which fame is used to bestowing after death!"

The poet, speaking as it were from beyond the grave, is in a unique position to view his poetic career as an entity. Ovid formerly held pride of place on the slopes of Helicon, and, for all his shifts of tone and mood, he has told his readers that he knows it (Cf. Claassen 1989).

In conclusion, then, this paper has tried to show that consistent attention should be paid not only to fluctuations of tone and mood within single poems, but to the order in which the poet presented the poems of exile to his readership during the course of ten years. The poet's own ordering of individual books of the exilic works, and the discernible tonal shifts between poems, are indications of the poet's conscious use of the principles of *variatio* to create a composite mood. This nuanced mood is part of the psychologically convincing picture of the fluctuations of hope and despair experienced by a sensitive soul relegated to the uttermost ends of the Roman earth. A last, negative, picture of the exile is tempered by the reader's awareness of a gradually built up, and tonally nuanced, cumulative re-creation by the poet of himself as an heroic, mythical and therefore immortal figure, which Envy has not been able to vanquish. Readers of almost twenty centuries later can do no other than acknowledge this immortality, as evidenced by the continued survival of Ovid's poetry from exile.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Binns, J.W. ed. 1973. *Ovid*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Bouynot, Y. 1958-1959. "Misère et grandeur de l'exil." *Atti del Conv.* I, 249-268.
- Cairns, Francis 1972. *Generic composition in Greek and Roman poetry*. Edinburgh: EUP.
- Claassen, Jo-Marie 1986. *Poeta, exsul, vates: a stylistic and literary analysis of Ovid's Tristia and Epistulae ex Ponto*. Diss. Stellenbosch.
- Claassen, Jo-Marie 1989. "Carmen and Poetics." *Coll. Latomus, Studies in Roman history and Latin literature* 5, 252-266.
- Claassen, Jo-Marie 1990a. "Ovid's poetic Pontus." *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar* 6, 65-94.
- Claassen, Jo-Marie 1990b. "Ovid's wavering identity: personification and depersonalisation in the exilic poems." *Latomus* 49, 102-116.
- Claassen, Jo-Marie 1991. "Une analyse stylistique et littéraire d'Ovide (*Epistulae ex Ponto*, 3,3)." *Etudes Classiques* 59, 27-41.
- Della Corte, F. 1973. *I Tristia* (transl. & comm.). Tilgher, Genova. 2 vols.

- Della Corte, F. 1974. *I Pontica* (transl. & comm.). Tilgher, Genova. 2 vols.
- Drucker, M. 1975-1977. *Der verbannte Dichter und der Kaisar-Gott: Studien zu Ovids späten Elegien*. Diss. Heidelberg.
- Evans, Harry B. 1983. *Publica carmina: Ovid's books from exile*. U Nebraska P, Lincoln & London.
- Fairweather Janet 1987. "Ovid's autobiographical poem." *Tristia* 4, 10; *CQ* 37, 181-196.
- Fitton Brown, A.D. 1985. "The unreality of Ovid's Tomitan exile." *LCM* 10(2), 19-22.
- Froesch, H. 1968. *Ovids Epistolae ex Ponto 1-3 als Gedichtsammlung*. Diss. Bonn.
- Froesch, H. 1976. *Ovid als Dichter des Exils. Abh zur Kunst, Musik und Literaturwiss.* 218. Bouvier, Bonn.
- Graeber, Gustav 1881. *Quaestionum Ovidianum pars prior*. Sam. Lucas, Eberfeld.
- Griffin, Jasper 1981. Genre and real life in Latin poetry. *JRS* 71, 39-49.
- Herrmann, L. 1974. La pagination de l'édition originale des Tristes. *Latomus* 33, 654-662.
- Irigoien, J. 1980. "Les Pontiques d'Ovide: la composition des trois premiers livres." *RPh* 54, 19-26.
- Janssens, Lucien 1981. "Deux complexes d'acrostiches délateurs d' "Ibis", alias C Ateius Capito. Le mysticisme du culte d'Abrasax." *RPh* 55, 57-71.
- Kenney, E.J. 1965. "The poetry of Ovid's exile." *PCPhS* 191, 37-49.
- Kröner, H.O. 1970a. "Aufbau und Ziel der Elegie Ovids." *Tristia* 1(2). *Emerita* 38, 163-197.
- Lechi, F. 1978. "La palinodia del poeta elegiaco. I carmi Ovidiani dell'esilio." *A&R* 22, 1-22.
- Lörcher, Gesine 1975. *Der Aufbau der drei Bücher von Ovids Amores. Heuremata* 3, Verlag Grüner, Amsterdam.
- Luck, G. 1977. *P Ovidius Naso: Tristia Band II: Kommentar*. Winter, Heidelberg.
- Nisbet, R.G.M. 1982. "Great and lesser bear" (Ovid *Tristia* 4.3). *JRS* 72, 49-56.
- Owen, S.G. ed. 1924. *P Ovidii Nasonis Tristium Liber Secundus*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pippidi, D.M. 1972. "In jurul cronologiei scrisorilor lui Ovidiu din Pont (Roumanian with German summary)." *Pontica* 5, 419-428.
- Posch, Sebastian 1972. "Zu Ovid Trist 1.2 und 1.4: zu zwei Beispielen neoterischer Poesie." *Serta philol Aenipontana* 2, 83-105.
- Posch, Sebastian 1983. *P Ovidius Naso: Tristia I Interpretationen I: Die Elegien 1-4*. Innsbruck: Wagner.
- Schwartz, J. 1981. "Note brève sur les Pontiques d'Ovide." *RPh* 55, 144.
- Stirrup, B.E. 1981. "Ovid: poet of imagined reality." *Latomus* 40, 88-104.
- Veremans, J. 1981. "The autobiography of Ovid." *Mosaic* 12, 26-58.
- Verdiere, R. 1971. "Un amour secret d'Ovide." *AC* 40, 623-648.

- Von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, Von Ulrich 1968. "Lesefrüchte". In von Albrecht & Zinn ed.: *Wege der Forschung: Ovid*, 471-475.
- Vulikh, N.V. 1968. La révolte d'Ovide contre Augustus. *LEC* 36, 370-382.
- Warden, John 1980. *Fallax opus: poet and reader in the elegies of Propertius*. *Phoenix Suppl.* 14.
- Wimmel, Walter 1960. *Kallimachos in Rom: Die Nachfolge seines apologetischen Dichtens in der Augusteerzeit*. *Hermes Einzelschr* 16.