WRITING DOWN THE MYTHS

Edited by

Joseph Falaky Nagy

BREPOLS

STARVING THE SLENDER MUSE: IDENTITY, MYTHOGRAPHY, AND INTERTEXTUALITY IN OVID'S *IBIS*

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Although the Roman poet Publius Ovidius Naso, or Ovid, is well known, some of his poems have fared better than others in the annals of scholarship. One poem in particular, the *Ibis*, has suffered serious neglect over the years and, as a result, is little-known (or at least little-valued), even among Ovidian scholars. Consisting primarily of a long catalogue of mythological figures, the *Ibis* is (as I shall argue) akin to a mythographic text; since ancient mythography was a prose genre, this is an interesting feature in its own right. Additionally, this mythographic veneer proves to be a useful starting ground for further investigation of the poem. Given the interdisciplinary nature of this volume and its intended audience, I shall begin by devoting some space to Ovid's background and the context of his poetry, material which will prove directly relevant to my discussion of the *Ibis*.

Born in 43 BC, Ovid composed his poetry under the first Roman emperor, Augustus. His best-known work today is a fifteen-book epic, the *Metamorphoses*, which narrates numerous stories of metamorphosis from Greek and Roman mythology. In ancient times, however, he was viewed primarily as an elegiac poet, the difference being one of both genre and metre. In the field of classics, 'elegy' does not imply mournful poetry of lamentation, although the etymology of the term was indeed seen to lie in expressions of lament.[1] Instead it serves as a

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[1] 'Elegy' was thought to be derived from ἒ ἒ λέγειν (*e e légein*), 'to say "alas"'.

metrical term, referring to any poetry written in elegiac couplets.[2] These are, as the name implies, constructed in pairs; odd lines are identical to dactylic hexameter, the metre used for epic, while even lines are shorter by one foot (*pes*), the term used by Roman poets and grammarians for a line's metrical divisions. Although the Greeks were flexible in their generic applications of the elegiac metre, the Romans used it primarily (although not exclusively) for love poetry.

The majority of Ovid's early work fits into this broadly-construed category, and he was viewed as a love-poet by his contemporaries.[3] His later elegiac work, however, written after his exile by Augustus in AD 8 to the shores of the Black Sea, professes a return to elegy's roots in lamentation and deals almost exclusively with the travails of his life in that barbarous region. His two major exilic works, the *Tristia* (Sad Things) and the *Epistulae ex Ponto* (Letters from the Black Sea), are both collections of verse epistles written to friends and associates back at Rome.

The main difference between the *Tristia* and *Ex Ponto* lies in their mode of address. Nearly all of the *Tristia*'s epistles anonymize their addressees, ostentatiously suppressing their names, while the *Ex Ponto* poems are addressed in a more typical epistolary fashion, such that the recipients are specified by name. This shift from anonymous to named addressees is an explicit part of Ovid's programme; in the proem to the *Ex Ponto*, he asserts that the only real difference between the collections is that in the latter, *epistula cui sit | non occultato nomine missa docet* (the letter professes to whom it is sent without hiding the name (Ovid, *Ex Ponto*, I. 1. 17–18)).[4] Ovid's professed reason for eschewing names in the earlier *Tristia* is that names can be dangerous, to both addresser and addressee. Stephen Hinds has commented that Ovid is 'programmatically obsessed [...] with the dangers that come from naming people's names'.[5] This danger lies not just in identifying those who should remain nameless, but also in confusing individuals who share names.[6]

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[2] The metrical pattern is:

$$-\smile\smile|-\smile\smile|-\smile\smile|-\smile\smile|-\smile\smile|--$$ (*dactylic hexameter*)
$$-\smile\smile|-\smile\smile|-||-\smile\smile|-\smile\smile|-$$ (*pentameter*)

[3] See Harrison, 'Ovid and Genre', on Ovid's generic experimentation.

[4] All translations are my own.

[5] Hinds, 'Ovid among the Conspiracy Theorists', p. 207.

[6] As Hinds has also noted (Hinds, 'Review of *Publica Carmina*'), the first two poems of the *Ex Ponto* (along with several others) make explicit or implicit comparisons between their addressees and famous (or infamous) homonymous historical individuals, often with little apparent regard for the effect this will have on public (or Augustan) perception of the addressee. Similar blurring of identity has been discussed by Ahl, *Lucan*, pp. 140–45, and Feeney, 'History

The *Ibis* also comes from the period of Ovid's exile. Its neglect derives primarily from the highly periphrastic and allusive mode in which it is written. Even a casual attempt at reading the poem turns, of necessity, into a prolonged exercise of scholarly research and investigative cross-referencing.[7] Moreover, nothing is known of the poem's true context. If we are to take Ovid's assertions within the *Ibis* at face value, the poem was written as an attack against an ex-friend at Rome who had been blackening Ovid's name in his absence and making hay with his misfortunes (Ovid, *Ibis*, ll. 7–22). Ovid conceals the name of this enemy under the pseudonym 'Ibis', following in the footsteps of the Alexandrian poet Callimachus, who had also written a curse poem entitled Ἶβις (*Ibis*) against an anonymous enemy (Ovid, *Ibis*, ll. 55–62);[8] nothing of Callimachus's poem survives.

The *Ibis* consists of two major parts. There are 250 lines of introductory ritual cursing of Ibis, followed by a further nearly four hundred lines of catalogue in which Ovid wishes on Ibis the fates suffered by mythological and historical figures, citing one or more per couplet. The majority of these figures are named only through extreme periphrasis. Reactions to this catalogue of *exempla*, or mythological examples, have been generally unfavourable — A. E. Housman, while praising the poem's first 250 lines as a 'masterpiece',[9] dismissed the remainder as 'merely a display of erudition'.[10] Gareth Williams, although defending the catalogue as a piece that 'cannot be dismissed [...] simply as a self-indulgent show of learning',[11] sees it primarily as the mark of an 'obsessive mentality' as demonstrated by Ovid's 'selection and disjointed ordering of *exempla*'.[12] To his mind, the catalogue is 'intended [...] to fascinate Ibis with the mysteriously ill-defined but

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and Revelation in Vergil's Underworld', in the context of the parade of heroes in Virgil, *Aeneid*, vi; I thank John McDonald for suggesting to me this correspondence.

[7] Requiring a reader to supply extra information that is necessary for understanding the narrative is a technique familiar from Hellenistic epigram; see Bing, 'Ergänzungsspiel in the Epigrams of Callimachus', who labels the practice 'Ergänzungsspiel', essentially 'a game of supplementation'.

[8] Following the convention established by Watson, *Arae*, and Williams, *The Curse of Exile*, I retain Greek characters for Callimachus's title so as to distinguish it easily from Ovid's. In both cases, 'Ibis' refers to the bird.

[9] Housman, 'The *Ibis* of Ovid', p. 317.

[10] Housman, 'The *Ibis* of Ovid', pp. 317–18.

[11] Williams, *The Curse of Exile*, p. 81.

[12] Williams, *The Curse of Exile*, p. 91. Most of Williams's work on the poem confronts it as a study in obsession.

endlessly generated circumstances of his own death, which always lies [*sic*] outside the easy grasp of his understanding'.[13]

So we have a riddling and wide-ranging mythological catalogue in which some scholars have seen more worth than others. I would suggest that Ovid's arrangement of *exempla* in this catalogue is meant to resemble, on the surface, a series of mythographic catalogues, particularly in his clustering of mythological figures who share a single fate or another pertinent feature.[14] Within the *Ibis*, however, it is possible to detect further catalogues that run counter to the apparent organization of *exempla*. Moreover, despite structuring his work along mythographic lines, Ovid ultimately goes far beyond the mythographic urge to summarize. Rather than simply stripping away any narrative padding from the bare bones of the myths, leaving a compressed but still intelligible account, he creates a catalogue of *exempla* which are so desiccated that it is difficult to identify their subjects, much less any coordinating links between them, without doing one's own investigative research.

This mythic over-compression, which is tantamount to an obfuscation of identity, can be likened both to the suppression of Ibis's own identity and to the anonymous addressees of the *Tristia*. Here we see one small part of a pervasive parallelism and intertextuality which is detectable between Ovid's *Ibis* and his other exilic work, an issue to which I shall return later. Given such correspondences, it is not unreasonable to speculate that the *Ibis* is less a direct derivative from its professed model, Callimachus's Ἶβις, and more a functional part of Ovid's exile poetry.[15]

Most scholars perceive a basic lack of structural coherence in the *Ibis*. Williams (one of the few to comment at all on the catalogue's organizational principles) calls it 'a dream-like fantasy in which all temporal distinctions cease to apply'[16] as 'Ovid's need to feed his malice with more and more *exempla* takes precedence over any respect for literary chronology or narrative consistency'.[17] He tantaliz-

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[13] Williams, *The Curse of Exile*, p. 90.

[14] The catalogue, a staple of ancient prose mythography, survives in works such as Hyginus's *Fabulae* and a number of papyrus fragments. For a comprehensive collection of these, see Van Rossum-Steenbeek, *Greek Readers' Digests?*; also see Cameron, *Greek Mythography in the Roman World*, pp. 268–303, for suggestions on Ovid's use of mythographic catalogues as research tools.

[15] A small amount of work has been done in this direction, primarily by Gareth Williams — see Williams, 'On Ovid's *Ibis*'; Williams, *The Curse of Exile*; Williams, 'Ovid's Exile Poetry'; Williams, 'Ovid's Exilic Poetry'. In a recent article (Battistella, 'Momenti intertestuali nell'*Ibis*'), Chiara Battistella discusses the intertextuality of the 250-line prologue.

[16] Williams, *The Curse of Exile*, p. 101.

[17] Williams, *The Curse of Exile*, p. 92.

ingly refers to its '*seemingly* random sequence'[18] but does not expound upon what possibly less random sequence might be lurking in the catalogue's 'only loose coherence'.[19] This is exactly where perceptions of the *Metamorphoses* stood barely fifty years ago, when it was still seen by many as 'a disjointed succession of disparate, unrelated, and irrational incidents'.[20] In the face of this, some work has been done on the internal cohesion of the *Ibis*, particularly by Ursula Bernhardt,[21] who has shown how the catalogue is thematically grouped, breaking the text into fifty-one mini-catalogues[22] and thirty-five 'Einzelexempla'. María García Fuentes has examined how themes recur throughout the catalogue, suggesting twenty-nine categories (some broader and some more specific) into which many or most of the *exempla* fall.[23] Neither approach functions perfectly in isolation. García Fuentes makes no explicit mention of the various *exempla* which she includes in more than one category, nor of Ovid's frequent localized groupings of *exempla* from a single category. At the same time, Bernhardt's paring down of *exempla* to only their apparent overriding aspect (manner of death, name, etc.) serves to suppress the bridges between mini-catalogues and ultimately results in her need for *Einzelexempla*.[24] Even so, both approaches serve as useful tools, and considering the component mini-catalogues is the best way to begin an investigation of the catalogue. These mini-catalogues range, in fairly unbroken succession, from clusters of just two or three couplets to, arguably, a full twenty-four couplets in one location (Ovid, *Ibis*, ll. 365–412).

I shall start with a sample stretch of catalogue (Ovid, *Ibis*, ll. 469–500).[25] Most visibly, this passage comprises four mini-catalogues, each of which Ovid

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[18] Williams, *The Curse of Exile*, p. 92, italics mine.

[19] Williams, *The Curse of Exile*, p. 92.

[20] Steiner, 'Ovid's *Carmen Perpetuum*', p. 218.

[21] Bernhardt, *Die Funktion der Kataloge*, pp. 328–99. The catalogue is analysed similarly in Ovid, *Ibis*, ed. by La Penna, pp. xlvi–xlix, although La Penna simply passes over in silence the *exempla* that do not 'fit'.

[22] My term, rather than a technical one, but Gordon, 'Poetry of Maledictions', which makes some useful remarks on the structure of the *Ibis*, uses the same term.

[23] García Fuentes, 'Mitología y maldición, I'; García Fuentes, 'Mitología y maldición, II'.

[24] She does give a more in-depth discussion of eight mini-catalogues (Bernhardt, *Die Funktion der Kataloge*, pp. 352–75), but her observation of actual overlaps between mini-catalogues is limited. In a list of mini-catalogue themes (pp. 336–38) she notes only the *exemplum* of Phoenix in two consecutive categories ('Von d. Stiefmutter Verleumdete' and 'Geblendete').

[25] In an effort to conserve space and avoid repetition, I do not quote the text in its entirety, but fig. 6 gives a schematized form of the whole passage.

Those struck by lightning (469–76)
    Capaneus: struck by lightning
    Demonax: struck by lightning
    Semele: struck by lightning
        Iasion: struck by lightning + destroyed by his team of horses
        Phaëthon: struck by lightning + destroyed by his team of horses
        Salmoneus struck by lightning + destroyed by his team of horses
    Lycaon's son: struck by lightning
    Macelo & husband: struck by lightning
Those killed by dogs (477–80)
    Thasus: torn apart by dogs
    Actaeon: torn apart by dogs
    Linus: torn apart by dogs
Those killed by snakes (481–84)
    Eurydice: killed by a snake
    Opheltes-Archemorus: killed by a snake
    Laocoön: killed by a snake
Those who fell to their deaths (485–500)
    Elpenor: fell to his death
        [the Dryopians: killed by Hercules + 'fell' to their death (verb *cadere*, 'to die/fall')]
        [Cacus: killed by Hercules + 'fell' to his death (verb *cadere*, 'to die/fall')]
    Lichas: killed by Hercules + fell to his death
  Those who fell to their deaths, take 2 (493–500)
    Cleombrotus: fell to his death
    Aegeus: fell to his death
    Astyanax: fell to his death
    Ino: fell to her death
    Perdix: fell to his death
    the †Lindian girl: fell to her death [+ possibly killed by Hercules]*

* The text of l. 499 is corrupt. If we read Lindia, however, there is certainly some connection with Hercules.

Figure 6. Lines 469–500 of Ovid's *Ibis* in schematized form.

begins by actually stating its linking element. Although such explicitness is not unique to this part of the poem, it is still the exception rather than the rule. The order of mini-catalogues here goes: 'Those struck by lightning', 'Those killed by dogs', 'Those killed by snakes', and 'Those who fell to their deaths'. These sound very much like the titles of catalogues in some mythographic texts, and indeed we have a mythographic catalogue preserved in Hyginus that corresponds nicely to 'those killed by dogs'.[26] We also have record in Hyginus of a mythographic 'those struck by lightning',[27] although the catalogue itself unfortunately does not survive. While neither Hyginus nor any of our papyrus fragments preserves a catalogue matching 'those killed by snakes' or 'those who fell to their deaths', it is easy to imagine such catalogues existing in a mythographic text.

[26] *Qui a canibus consumpti sunt* (Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 247).

[27] *Qui fulmine icti sunt* (Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 264).

Ovid's first mini-catalogue here, occupying eight lines, is more fully set off
than those that follow:

> aut Iovis infesti telo feriare trisulco,
> 470 ut satus Hipponoo Dexitheaeque pater,
> ut soror Autonoes, ut cui matertera Maia,
> ut temere optatos qui male rexit equos,
> ut ferus Aeolides, ut sanguine natus eodem,
> quo genita est liquidis quae caret Arctos aquis.
> 475 ut Macelo rapidis icta est cum coniuge flammis,
> sic precor aetherii vindicis igne cadas.
>
> (Ovid, *Ibis*, ll. 469–76)

(Or may you be struck by the three-grooved weapon of hostile Jupiter, as was
Hipponoüs's son [= *Capaneus*] and the father of Dexithea [= *Demonax*], as was
the sister of Autonoë [= *Semele*], as was the one whose aunt was Maia [= *Iasion*],
as was the one who poorly guided the longed-for horses [= *Phaëthon*], as was
the wild son of Aeolus [= *Salmoneus*], as was the one born from the same blood
from which Arctos, who is deprived of the liquid waters, was born [= *any son of
Lycaon*]; as Macelo was struck, along with her spouse, by the swift flames — thus,
I pray, may you fall by the fire of a heavenly avenger.)

Both the opening *and* closing lines of the four couplets make it very clear what
fate Ovid is wishing on his enemy, namely death by lightning. On the surface
this is, I think, the most clearly identified and 'coherent' mini-catalogue of the
entire text. Contained within it, however, there is yet another catalogue. Ovid
consecutively mentions Iasion, Phaëthon, and Salmoneus, who were all struck by
lightning (thus their inclusion in this section); but thanks to Hyginus we know
that these three have another commonality, as they all appear in his catalogue of
'Teams of horses which destroyed their drivers':

> QVAE QVADRIGAE RECTORES SVOS PERDIDERVNT
> Phaethonta Solis filium ex Clymene. [...] Iasionem Iouis filium ex Electra
> Atlantis filia. Salmoneus, qui fulmina in quadrigas sedens imitabatur, cum
> quadriga fulmine ictus.
>
> (Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 250)

> (TEAMS OF HORSES WHICH DESTROYED THEIR DRIVERS
> Phaëthon, son of the Sun by Clymene. [...] Iasion, son of Jupiter by Electra
> the daughter of Atlas. Salmoneus, who was sitting in his chariot making
> fake claps of thunder, was struck by a thunderbolt along with his chariot.)

Thus here in the *Ibis* we have, in essence, an overlapping Venn diagram of mytho-
graphic catalogues (see fig. 7), one labelled and one not, although Ovid may
signpost the unlabelled catalogue by identifying the central figure, Phaëthon,
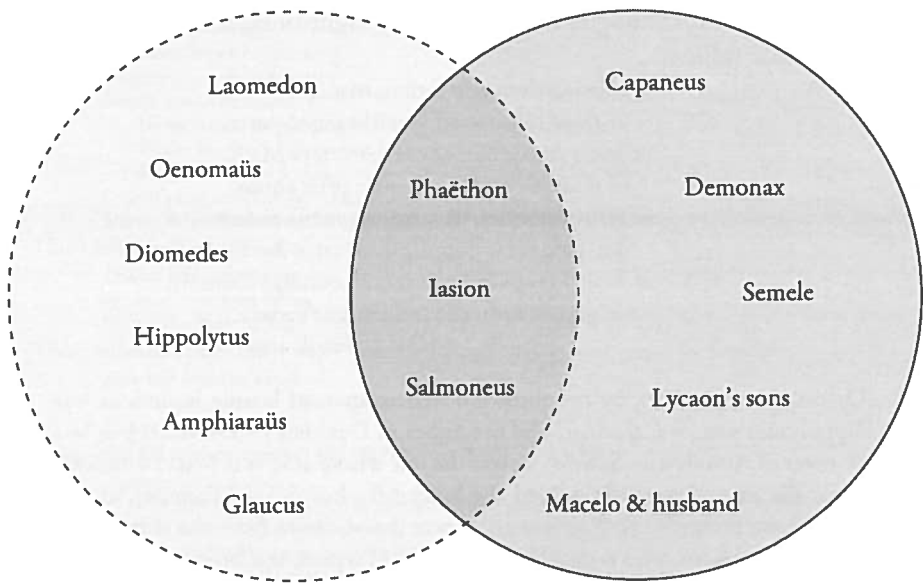
Figure 7. 'Those destroyed by their teams of horses' (Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 250)
and 'Those struck by lightning' (Ovid, *Ibis*, ll. 468–76).

through his fatal inability to control the horses which pull the chariot of the Sun
(Ovid, *Ibis*, l. 472).

The second mini-catalogue of the section, those eaten by dogs, closely paral-
lels a catalogue in Hyginus:

> praedaque sis illis, quibus est Latonia Delos
>   ante diem rapto non adeunda Thaso,
> quique verecundae speculantem labra Dianae,
> 480   quique Crotopiaden diripuere Linum.
>   (Ovid, *Ibis*, ll. 477–80)

(And may you be prey for those who must not go to Latonian Delos because of
Thasus being snatched away before his time, and for those who tore apart the
one watching the bath of chaste Diana [= *Actaeon*], and for those who tore apart
Crotopus's descendant Linus.)

QVI A CANIBVS CONSVMPTI SVNT
Actaeon Aristaei filius. Thasius Delo, Anii sacerdotis Apollinis filius; ex
eo Delo nullus canis est. Euripides tragoediarum scriptor in templo con-
sumptus est.   (Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 247)

(THOSE WHO WERE EATEN BY DOGS
Actaeon the son of Aristaeus. Thasius, on Delos, the son of Apollo's priest
Anius; this is why there is no dog on Delos. Euripides the writer of tragedies
was eaten in a temple.)

The consonance between the two catalogues is impressive (we may note particu-
larly their shared emphasis on the aetiological aspect of Thasus's death), but the
last figure in each differs. Where Hyginus names the tragedian Euripides, Ovid
gives pride of place to the child Linus. This is an important divergence, and the
exemplum of Linus — who proves to be at the centre of a web of associations
— is particularly intriguing for what it says about the interconnections between
mini-catalogues in the *Ibis*. Linus, as represented here, is the son of Apollo and
Psamathe; this is made indisputable by the patronymic *Crotopiades*. As with
Thasus, Linus's death has an aetiological element — he was exposed by his grand-
father Crotopus, the king of Argos, and subsequently torn apart by dogs. In anger
at his death, Apollo sent a plague to punish Crotopus and the Argives, the rit-
ual expiation for which included singing the eponymous linus-song (a kind of
dirge). Callimachus dealt with the story in Book 1 of the *Aetia* (Callimachus,
Aetia, frr. 26–31), and Ovid includes two other relevant couplets elsewhere in the
Ibis (Ovid, *Ibis*, ll. 573–76). Linus obviously fits into the immediate context of
the *Ibis* because of his manner of death (torn apart by dogs), but there are much
broader-reaching connections.

Greek mythology does not always present Linus as a baby, although whether
this is due to the existence of more than one Linus was debated even by the
Greeks (see Table 1). The only constant is his association with music and poetry,
sometimes as a musician himself and sometimes simply in providing an *aition* for
the linus-song. He is typically either the son of or killed by Apollo. This sort of
variability of narrative is an inherent part of Greek mythology, together with the
resultant nominal confusion or conflation. Linus is also often connected with
Orpheus and a number of other famous mythical figures (generally the sons of the
Muses) to whom are attributed the inventions of various musical, poetic, and rhe-

Table 1. Variations on the parentage and death of Linus.

Mother	Father	Killed by	Musician	Connected Figure	Source (e.g.)
Psamathe	Apollo	Dogs	No		Pausanias 1.43.7, 2.19.8
Calliope	Oiagros/Apollo	Hercules	Yes	Orpheus (brother)	Apollodorus 1.3.2§14
Calliope	Apollo	?	Yes	Other sons of Muses	Asclepiades *FGrH* 12 F 6b
Ourania	Amphimarus	Apollo	Yes		Pausanias 9.29.6
Ourania	Hermes	Apollo	Yes	Other genre-inventors	Diogenes Laertius 1.4

torical skills. Besides these strong ties to Orpheus and Apollo, Linus is frequently associated with Hercules — he was the hero's music teacher until Hercules killed him in a fit of pique by braining him with a lyre.

The version of Linus who appears in the *Ibis* is clearly Psamathe's son Linus, who was torn apart by dogs as a baby — at least on the surface. But the following mini-catalogue, a set of those killed by snake-bites, begins to activate associations with other versions of Linus.

> neve venenato levius feriaris ab angue,
>   quam senis Oeagri Calliopesque nurus,
> quam puer Hypsipyles, quam qui cava primus acuta
>   cuspide suspecti robora fixit equi.
>   (Ovid, *Ibis*, ll. 481–4)

(Or may you be struck by a snake no more lightly than was the daughter-in-law of old Oeagrus and Calliope [= *Eurydice*], than was Hypsipyle's boy [= *Opheltes-Archemorus*], than was he who first fixed the hollow oak of the suspected horse with a sharp spear-point [= *Laocoön*].)

The first victim in this catalogue is Eurydice, the wife of Orpheus. As can be seen in Table 1, Orpheus is the brother of 'another' Linus. As Eurydice's identity is revealed here through the names of her parents-in-law, Oeagrus and Calliope, she is therefore identified specifically with reference to the parents of that other Linus. Opheltes-Archemorus, the catalogue's second *exemplum*, is another figure who, like the first version of Linus, was killed as an infant.

Ovid then appears to begin a list of those who fell to their deaths (Ovid, *Ibis*, ll. 485–500), starting with Elpenor (Ovid, *Ibis*, ll. 485–86), but again he employs misdirection. Although he follows the opening couplet of the list with *tamque cadas* (and so may you fall) in an apparent continuation of the list of those who fell, he segues, with the next *exemplum*, into a list that employs the figurative meaning of *cadas* (may you die), specifically naming a trio of those killed by Hercules (Ovid, *Ibis*, ll. 487–92).[28] With the exception of Laocoön (Ovid, *Ibis*, ll. 483–84) and Elpenor, we can see Ovid spinning out the catalogue along the alternate threads provided by the name of Linus. One strand points to the tradition of Linus as Orpheus's brother, another follows the tradition of Linus dying as a baby, and a third strand reminds the reader that Hercules could also have been Linus's killer.

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[28] Hercules' third victim here is Lichas, whom Hercules killed by throwing him off a cliff; this provides a transition back into 'those who fell'. The intersection of 'those who fell' and 'those killed by Hercules' has also been noted by Bernhardt, *Die Funktion der Kataloge*, pp. 366–70.

Within mythology, shared names sometimes create an actual shared iden-
tity.[29] In the section we just looked at, it is clear that whether Ovid is thinking
of one Linus or several, the *name* of Linus is what really matters, prompting
that particular collocation of mini-catalogues to occur.[30] Elsewhere in the *Ibis*
(ll. 555–58), however, three Glaucuses are explicitly named in conjunction, each
suffering a distinctly different fate and never confused with each other in poetry
or myth. Linus's name and identity are polyvalent; the three Glauci (despite shar-
ing a name) retain their integrity. Still elsewhere (Ovid, *Ibis*, ll. 539–40), the poet
Cinna is mistaken for another Cinna and, on no more grounds than this coinci-
dence of their name, is torn apart by an angry mob.[31] Three modes of sharing a
name, three possible results.[32]

Does Ovid's emphasis on the suppression and coincidence of names in the
Ibis underscore the poetics of his anonymous mode of address as featured in the
Tristia?[33] There, names (and the ability to avoid them or not) possess an obvious
power. In the *Ibis*, Ovid makes clear the control he can retain over names if he so
desires. Who is *conditor* [...] *tardae, laesus cognomine, Myrrhae* (the creator of slow
Myrrha, harmed by his surname (Ovid, *Ibis*, l. 539))? It is Cinna-the-poet and
not Cinna-the-conspirator. Ovid both identifies *and* specifies without saying the
name at all, perhaps because history had already proven the danger of naming that
particular name. Alternatively, he explicitly names more than one Glaucus while
still managing to keep confusion at bay. But although he appears to specify a sin-
gle version of Linus through his patronymic, context and the flexibility of myth
serve to make available all of Linus's possible identities. Three modes of naming,
and three resultant readings. Perhaps it is this demonstration of the control that

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[29] Scylla (either the dog-waisted monster or the hair-cutting daughter of Nisus who became
a halcyon) and Atalanta (daughter of Schoeneus or Iasius, wife of Melanion or Hippomenes) are
standard examples of this.

[30] This nominal connection can be followed even further; according to Hyginus, *Fabulae*,
273. 6, and Apollodorus, *Library*, I. 9. 14, III. 6. 4, Opheltes-Archemorus was the son of
Lycurgus and *Eurydice*. In the *Ibis*, the mother's name is misleadingly suppressed in favour of
the nurse's — Hypsipyle replaces Eurydice, all but severing a link between contiguous *exempla*.
And Actaeon, who immediately precedes Linus in the catalogue, was the son of Aristaeus, who
in Augustan poetry (following Virgil, *Georgics*) was connected with the death of Orpheus's wife
Eurydice. The threads here are thickly interconnected.

[31] An event familiar to non-Classicists from Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, III. 3.

[32] See Hinds, 'Ovid among the Conspiracy Theorists', p. 208, on nominal transference
(and its dangers) in the exile poetry.

[33] See above, 68, 70.

Table 2. Catalogue opening by theme.

Lines	Mythic Figure	Lamed	Blinded	Adultery with Father's Wife* [False] [True]		Vates†	Slays Guest
253–54	Philoctetes						
255–56	Telephus						
257–58	Bellerophon						
259–60	Phoenix						
261–62	Oedipus						
263–64	Tiresias						
265–66	Phineus						
267–68	Polymestor						
269–70	Polyphemus						
271–72	Sons of Phineus						
	Thamyras						
	Demodocus						

* Really, an *accusation* of adultery (true or false) with a father's *or* a host's wife *or* mistress. For Thamyras's inclusion in this category, a connection of which Ovid may or may not have been aware, see Devereux, 'The Self-Blinding of Oidipous in Sophokles', p. 41.

† In the case of Polyphemus, a prophet is involved in his story rather than his being a *vates* himself. In the case of Phineus's sons, they themselves are not *vates*, but of course their aforementioned father is. This column can be further broken down into prophet-*vates* (Tiresias and Phineus), *vates* associates (Polyphemus and Phineus's sons), and poet-*vates* (Thamyras and Demodocus) as indicated by the varying shades of grey.

Ovid possesses over naming and not naming which allows him to move from the *Tristia*'s anonymous addressees to a nominal mode of address in the *Ex Ponto*.

To return to the catalogue, we have seen how the text of the *Ibis* both seemingly reflects and ultimately confounds the cataloguing principles of ancient mythography. While this duality functions throughout much of the *Ibis* catalogue, sometimes it goes beyond the simple concealment of additional catalogues and alternate identities. The opening of the catalogue is a good demonstration of this. Here again we can make use of ancient mythographies as a parallel and even as an aid to identification. After beginning with *Troianis malis* (the sufferings of the Trojans (Ovid, *Ibis*, l. 252)), Ovid wishes on his enemy the fates of Philoctetes and Telephus, both of whom became lame:

> quantaque clavigeri Poeantius Herculis heres,
> 　　tanta venenato vulnera crure geras.
> 255　nec levius doleas quam qui bibit ubera cervae
> 　　armatique tulit vulnus, inermis opem.　　(Ovid, *Ibis*, ll. 253–56)

> (And may you endure just as many wounds in your envenomed leg as Poeas's son [= *Philoctetes*], the heir of club-bearing Hercules, endured. Nor may you be more lightly pained than he who drank at the hind's udder [= *Telephus*] and endured the armed man's wound, the unarmed man's aid.)

These references are periphrastically constructed and are somewhat abstruse at best, but a confused Roman reader (whether Ibis or anyone else) would have recourse to mythographic texts for clarification.

Although the closest that Ovid comes to identifying Telephus is in calling him *qui bibit ubera cervae* (the one who drank at the hind's udder (Ovid, *Ibis*, l. 255)), which might seem incomprehensibly obscure,[34] in Hyginus we find a catalogue entitled *Qui lacte ferino nutriti sunt* (Those who were nourished by the milk of wild animals (Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 252)), which gives Telephus, nursed *ab cerua* (by a deer), as the first entry. Additionally, the periphrasis is in fact a bilingual pun, being a Latin translation of the perceived etymology of Telephus's name:

> Τήλεφος· [...] ἐκλήθη δὲ διὰ τὸ θηλάσαι αὐτὸν ἔλαφον.
> [*Télephos: [...] eklḗthē dè dià tò thēlásai autòn élaphon.*][35]

> (Telephus: [...] and he was called that on account of <u>a deer nursing</u> him.)

Such wordplay is not infrequent among Ovid's contemporaries.[36]

Following Philoctetes and Telephus, the next nine *exempla* serve as an unbroken catalogue that is tantamount to 'those who became blind' (Ovid, *Ibis*, ll. 257–72). Although there are no surviving parallels for a list of blind men, it is easy to imagine based on extant catalogues that such might well have existed. Williams refers to 'the generic diversity of Ovid's *exempla* of blindness, their seemingly random sequence within this tableau',[37] but in fact there is a great deal of coherence and associative logic to their ordering (see Table 2, which gives a limited set of the connections between the *exempla* in lines 253–72). The later couplets all feature *vates*, or poet-prophets, a particularly loaded concept in Augustan poetry;[38] there

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[34] And indeed, the reference thoroughly stumped medieval scholiasts. Most branches of the scholiastic tradition confusedly report this to be a tyrant named Dareus, but the P-scholia fabricate a figure called Caridion who bears some resemblance to Telephus in the details of his life (see *Scholia in [...] Ibin*, ed. by La Penna, pp. 23–24). See Cameron, *Greek Mythography in the Roman World*, pp. 180–83, for some recent discussion of the *Ibis* scholia's possible origins.

[35] *Etymologicon Magnum*, ed. by Gaisford, 756K. 54–55.

[36] See, for example, O'Hara, *True Names*, pp. 79–88; Hendry, 'Three Propertian Puns'.

[37] Williams, *The Curse of Exile*, p. 92.

[38] See, particularly, Newman, *The Concept of Vates in Augustan Poetry*. Polymestor's couplet

is juxtaposition of those who slew their guests, juxtaposition of parricides, and so on. It is possible to see how the fates suffered by the exemplary figures form one catalogue, while their crimes form an entirely separate string of catalogues. Although some of these are not quite contiguous, this is generally due to the constraint of yet another salient connective detail forcing the couplets into their seemingly disjoint ordering.

Overlapping catalogues of those who became lame and those who became blind are perhaps mythographically pertinent, but why should these figure as Ovid's first *exempla*? Augustan poets usually put forward certain elements of their programme in the first poem of a book or in the opening few lines of a stand-alone poem,[39] and as the start of the *Ibis* catalogue essentially functions as a restarting of the poem,[40] the same may be true here.

Early on in the *Ibis* prologue, Ovid threatened to wrap his poem in *caecae historiae*, or 'obscure stories' — literally, '*blind* stories':

> 55   nunc, quo Battiades inimicum devovet Ibin,
>   hoc ego devoveo teque tuosque modo,
>   utque ille, historiis involvam carmina caecis,
>   non soleam quamvis hoc genus ipse sequi.
>   (Ovid, *Ibis*, ll. 55–58)

(Now, in the same mode as Battiades [= *Callimachus*] cursed his enemy Ibis, I curse you and yours, and as he did, I shall wrap my songs in 'blind' stories, although I myself am not used to writing in this genre.)

Most scholars apply the label to all of Ovid's riddling *exempla*, but Williams points out that the nine blind men to whom Ovid alludes at the start of the catalogue literally exemplify those promised blind stories, creating a link (one of many) between the two halves of the poem.[41] The emphasis on blindness also

intrudes in the vatic chain, but this is presumably so as to set him with Polyphemus; both violate *xenia*, and both have names beginning with *Poly-*.

[39] For a bibliography, see Keith, 'Amores 1.1', pp. 327–28.

[40] The catalogue begins following the parodic invocation of a Muse (in this case, the 'invocation' of a Fate); in proclaiming himself her *vates* (Ovid, *Ibis*, l. 247), Ovid makes clear the prooemial nature of the invocation. For discussion of this transitional passage between prologue and catalogue (Ovid, *Ibis*, l. 247), see Hinds, 'After Exile'.

[41] 'At an early stage in the catalogue (ll. 259–72) Ovid wishes on his enemy the blindness which afflicted such figures as Tiresias, Phineus, and Polyphemus, thereby adducing mythological *exempla* which literally bring about the *historiae caecae* promised earlier' (Williams, 'On Ovid's *Ibis*', p. 181). See also Ingleheart, 'What the Poet Saw', p. 68, n. 6. The catalogue actually begins

activates what Jennifer Ingleheart terms 'the vocabulary of sight which perme-ates the exilic *corpus*',[42] with the result that further traces of Ovid's greater exilic programme can be seen.

There are three or four couplets (Ovid, *Ibis*, ll. 251–56 or 251–58) before the mini-catalogue of blind men begins, however, and these lines engage no less with the prologue of the *Ibis* and the overarching themes of Ovid's poetry. Williams notes that 'as the catalogue begins, Ovid sets out to intimidate the enemy by ostentatiously displaying its epic credentials. [...] The stage is set for an epic per-formance in the catalogue, and Ovid duly obliges by taking his starting-point from Troy',[43] by which Williams means Ovid's first curse: *neve sine exemplis aevi cruciere prioris,* | *sint tua Troianis non leviora malis* (Or that you may not be tor-tured without the examples of an earlier age, may your misfortunes be no lighter than the Trojans (Ovid, *Ibis*, ll. 251–52)). Ovid has had epic openings to his vari-ous works before now. In the *Amores*, he began with the epic *arma* (weapons) and metre of Virgil's *Aeneid* — only to find that Cupid was crippling his poetry by stealing a foot and thus turning epic metre into elegiac:[44]

> arma graui numero uiolentaque bella parabam
>   edere, materia conueniente modis.
> par erat inferior uersus: risisse Cupido
>   dicitur atque unum surripuisse pedem.
>   (Ovid, *Amores*, I. 1. 1–4)

(Of arms and violent wars I was preparing to write in weighty verse, with subject matter suiting metre. The lower line was equal — Cupid is said to have laughed and filched one foot.)

A short-footed and limping elegiac Muse subsequently reared her head in Book III of the *Amores*: *uenit odoratos Elegia nexa capillos,* | *et, puto, pes illi longior alter erat* (Elegy came, her scented hair bound up, and, I think, one of her feet was longer than the other (Ovid, *Amores*, III. 1. 7–8)). Similar metrical jests appear elsewhere in the Ovidian corpus.

one couplet earlier, however; Bellerophon serves as a lynchpin between the lamed Philoctetes and Telephus and the blind men who follow, depending on which version of Bellerophon's story is followed.

 [42] Ingleheart, 'What the Poet Saw', p. 67.

 [43] Williams, *The Curse of Exile*, p. 91.

 [44] For *arma* in the same metrical position and the assonance of the first words, see Kenney, 'Ovid'. The metrical pattern of elegiac couplets is given above, in n. 2.

Early in the *Ibis*, Ovid drew attention to his metre's inappropriateness for the poem's content (again using the loaded word *pes*, both an anatomical and a metrical foot):[45] *prima quidem coepto committam proelia versu,* | *non soleant quamvis hoc pede bella geri* (Indeed, having commenced my verse, I shall undertake the first battles, although wars are not typically waged in this foot [= metre] (Ovid, *Ibis*, ll. 45–46)). Elegiac metre, he has said both here and elsewhere, is unsuitable for bellicose poetics of any sort. So the catalogue's seemingly epic opening, in a work by Ovid, especially reduced to a single non-epic pentameter, should ring alarm bells.

Philoctetes and Telephus, who follow hot on the heels of the Trojans at the 'epic' beginning of the catalogue, occur as a pair elsewhere in Ovid's poetry, given as *exempla* of incurable wounds. They also appear together in Hyginus, as consecutive entries in the section summarizing stories from the epic Trojan War cycle. But they have something else in common — they were both wounded in the foot or leg.[46] I submit that this is in fact another metrical foot joke. Ovid, who loves to mention the 'foot' of his metre, can scarcely have ignored the location of the wounds given to his first two *exempla*.[47]

This opening, therefore, repeats the opening of the *Amores*, but in obscure terms and with an incurable wound replacing Cupid's playful theft. Elsewhere in the exile poetry, Ovid likens the same incurable wound, borne by Telephus or Philoctetes, to his own exilic wound.[48] Just as we saw earlier that the confu-

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[45] '[In the exile poetry] Ovid calls attention to his choice of meter in various ways, to make sure the reader realizes its role as a constant. He uses puns on the word *pes* as he did in the *Amores*, thereby emphasizing the metrical similarity. [...] All Ovid's *pes*-puns contain a statement of poetics' (Nagle, *The Poetics of Exile*, p. 22).

[46] These two, plus Bellerophon, form an archetypal trio of tragic lame men. The scholia to Aristophanes' *Frogs* claim that Aristophanes called Euripides a 'cripple-maker' because he portrayed Bellerophon, Philoctetes, and Telephus as lame (*Scholia in Ranas*, l. 846), no doubt strongly influencing future portrayals of those three.

[47] Although Telephus was technically wounded in the thigh, it was the result of catching his foot in a vine-shoot. Furthermore, Ovid refers obliquely to the location of Philoctetes' wound as his *crus*, or leg in general, and the basic limping gait is of equal importance. The very absence of the word *pes* from these couplets underscores its programmatic presence.

[48] Ovid, *Tristia*, v. 2. 9–20 (Telephus and Philoctetes); Ovid, *Tristia*, i. 1. 97–100 (Telephus); Ovid, *Tristia*, ii. 19–22 (Telephus, possibly following a *pes* pun at ii. 15–16); Ovid, *Ex Ponto*, i. 3. 3–10 (Philoctetes). Previously, their wounds had been likened to the wounds of love (Ovid, *Remedia amoris*, 111–16 (Philoctetes), Ovid, *Amores*, ii. 9. 7–8 (Telephus), Ovid, *Remedia amoris*, 47–48 (Telephus)); here their programmatic replacement of Cupid echoes the replacement of love's pain with exile's pain that allows Ovid his justification for maintaining the elegiac metre in his exilic lamentations.

sion of names in the *Ibis* finds a parallel in Ovid's greater exilic corpus, and just as the pervasive 'vocabulary of sight' is reflected in the next stretch of catalogue, here too we have an echo of Ovid's other poetry. However, without knowledge of Ovid's standard literary jests, or without knowledge of the traditional affiliation of Telephus and Philoctetes, the reference and poetic gesture are lost, and the *exempla* revert to mere *tela* (missiles) of Ovid's (or Ibis's) outrageous fortune.

In this way, as in so many others, the *Ibis* ultimately contradicts its deceptively mythographic appearance. Mythography's reductive prose stands alone and serves to make sense of other works. The *Ibis*, however, with its lines of poetry that are reduced far beyond any prose text and far beyond simple comprehension, relies on other works to make sense of it.

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