

## MALE HOMOSOCIAL READERSHIP AND THE DEDICATION OF OVID'S *FASTI*

RICHARD J. KING

Ovid's rededication of his elegiac "calendar poem," the *Fasti*, to Germanicus Caesar has led critics to observe, on the one hand, how it positions Ovid's poem in the historical-political context of late Augustan and early Tiberian Rome (viewing Germanicus as an imperial prince liable to inherit rule), and, on the other, how it appeals to Germanicus as a man of eloquence (poetry and oratory) who shares Ovid's interests in poetry, in the rituals of Rome (and of the *domus Augusta*), and in poetry about the stars.<sup>1</sup> This interplay of similitude and difference between these two Roman males concerns the processes of identification. In other words, the dedication of the *Fasti* is part of the ambivalent process of identification between Roman men, specifically between poet and reader.<sup>2</sup> The *Fasti* can also be viewed as positioned psycho-socially between two particular men: one located at the center of elite male power, the other disempowered by distant exile. This paper

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For historical perspective on the *Fasti*, see Herbert-Brown 1994, esp. pp. 173–212 on Germanicus in the *Fasti*. Fantham 1985 remains insightful on the literary-historical context of the author-reader relation. Useful insights into intertextual references appear in Newlands 1995 and Barchiesi 1997. These scholars agree that Ovid initially dedicated the *Fasti* to Augustus, but, in revision, shifted that dedication to the start of *Fasti* 2 and composed a new dedication to Germanicus. The text of the *Fasti* followed is that of Alton, Wormell, and Courtney 1988. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

2 This definition of "identification," the interplay of similitude and difference, is that of Diana Fuss 1995.2.

examines some of the ways in which a male same-sex dynamic influenced Ovid's dedication of his *Fasti* to Germanicus Caesar. Ellen Oliensis, Marilyn Skinner, and others have shown how male homosociality motivated Tibullus, Propertius, Catullus, and other male poets to produce semi-romantic and erotic expressions of *amicitia* addressed to male patrons.<sup>3</sup> I will describe a similar dynamic in the relations between the male author and reader in Ovid's *Fasti*.<sup>4</sup>

To describe this dynamic between Ovid and Germanicus, the poem's addressee and ideal reader, I adapt Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's notion of male homosocial desire in English literature, which combines René Girard's theory of "mimetic desire" (or "mimetic rivalry") with Gayle Rubin's observation that males in various cultures "traffic" in women to define their manhood relative to each other.<sup>5</sup> Sedgwick's male homosociality ranges in expression from competition for to intimate cooperation over the same objects of desire, while acting like a veil that disguises male desire for esteem from other men. How might we apply Sedgwick's model to Ovid's *Fasti*? Ovid's dedicatee, Germanicus, cut a figure of successful manhood (*virtus*), providing a model for Ovid's post-exilic male readership in contrast to Ovid's own persona as undisciplined love elegist.<sup>6</sup> Ovid attempts to

3 Oliensis 1997, Skinner 1997, Fitzgerald 1992 and 1995, Fear 2000, Greene 2000. Ancient forms of "friendship" (*amicitia*, *philia*) are fundamental to male homosocialization. See Halperin 1990.75–87, esp. 85–86.

4 Elaine Fantham 1985 implies this homosocial dynamic when describing Germanicus, the dedicatee of the *Fasti*, as Ovid's "surrogate Muse." Newlands 1995.54 also uses the metaphor: "Germanicus is a substitute for the Muse or Apollo." Developed from the conventional invocations to a god of inspiration (Muse, Apollo), the metaphor is useful so long as we also realize that, in Roman elegy, eroticism infuses depictions of inspiration by the Muses. Cf. Propertius 3.3, where Calliope "touches" Propertius. Propertius 2.20b defends naughty erotic content by asserting that the Muses also have erotic experience (13–26). In the context of erotic elegy, calling Germanicus a Muse suggests the construction of an inspired, "sub-erotic," intimacy (cf. Numa and Egeria). A Muse is a female deity, so Fantham's metaphor glosses Ovid's relation to Germanicus as a heterosexual dynamic that eclipses the problematic gender sameness of Germanicus and Ovid as Roman men negotiating a bond in the act of poetic composition (cf. Catullus 50).

5 Sedgwick 1985, Girard 1965, Rubin 1975.

6 Historical sources pinpoint Germanicus as a model of manhood and an object of popular devotion. Suetonius reports (*Aug.* 34) that when the *equites* were protesting the marriage and childbirth laws that constrained elite males to marry and bear children, Augustus "showed off the children of Germanicus, who had been summoned, some to him and some to the lap of their father [Germanicus], signaling by his gesture and gaze that they [the equestrians] should not treat it as a heavy burden to imitate the model of young manhood"

engage Germanicus by offering him the text of the *Fasti* as an alluring, shareable object of libidinal investment.<sup>7</sup> This elegiac text operates in place of a feminine object of desire situated between male poet and male reader.<sup>8</sup>

However, Sedgwick interprets the panic felt by males at the revelation of same-sex eroticism as a crucial mechanism of social control over male identity as it is shaped by a given culture's sex-gender system.<sup>9</sup> I propose that, for Ovid's elite male readership, a certain cognitive anxiety issued from his display of authorial passivity. Ovid surrenders mastery of his text and, by implication, of "himself" (the persona in the text), to a model of Roman manhood and military prowess (Germanicus). Through passivity, Ovid invites the reader to become master of his poem and of himself—sharing a vacillating authorship. Passivity, suggestive of penetrability, was a

(my translation). Again, Suetonius (*Caligula* 4) says that Germanicus reached such heights of popular devotion that he risked being mobbed to death upon his arrivals in Rome and that, as "the most spectacular proof of the devotion in which Germanicus had been held," on the day of his death, "the populace stoned temples and upset altars; the people threw their Household-gods into the street, and refused to acknowledge their newly-born children" (*Caligula* 5, trans. Robert Graves). Germanicus's death prompted expressions of devotion, such as those at Tac. *Ann.* 2.73 (funeral praises in Egypt), 76 (love of soldiers), 2.82 (the hysteria in Rome), and 2.83 (honors; cf. *Tabula Siarensis* or *Senatus Consultum de Honoribus Germanici Decernendis* and the *Tabula Hebana*, dated to the end of 19 C.E.).

7 Roman males erected inscribed calendars in visible civic locations. By displaying the names of their presenters, these calendars advertised their local civic-minded sponsors as participants in the order of Augustan governance and as men seeking upward social mobility. Calendars helped to signal this mobility and were consequently an object of libidinal investment for elite and socially mobile Roman males. Cf. Trimalchio's devotion to representing "himself"—his name, activities, and image—in connection with sundials and calendars in Petronius's *Satyricon*. For this topic of desire and time in the Trimalchio narrative of the *Satyricon*, see Toohey 1997.

8 As Alison Keith 2000 has recently argued, epic poetry provided a medium for teaching young men elite male heroic values. Elegy provided the opposite, a culturally feminine representation of pleasure, a lure away from true manhood. For me, the combination of epic and elegiac elements in the *Fasti* negotiates not merely a relationship between genres, but also the gender construction of the elegist's persona. The *Fasti* stands between the heroic Germanicus and the infamous love elegist Ovid as a shareable object of desire and a manipulable means of negotiating identity.

9 On "homosocial/-sexual panic" in modern literature, see Sedgwick 1985.83–96 (Chapter 5: "Toward the Gothic: Terrorism and Homosexual Panic") and Sedgwick 1990.19–21, 138–39, and 182–212, which also discuss the relevance of male homosocial terror(ism) to the contemporary (1980s and 1990s) legal defense of "gay bashing" in American courts of law. No one has examined the potential for such panic in ancient literature and culture; yet avenues for it exist in the near male-rape scene of *Fasti* 2.269–358, involving transvestism between Hercules and Omphale and the leering Faunus/Pan, who attempts to rape Hercules. It is notable that Pan, the god of panic is the agent.

stereotypical trait of women and effeminate men that triggered elite male panic about masculine status and self-control.<sup>10</sup>

The all-male context of Roman literary composition shaped the male reader–author bond. At dinner parties and recitation halls, Ovid and his largely male audience engaged in an interactive compositional process that alternated between recitation and audience response, followed by possible correction. When Ovid refers to his dining circles, his poetic “brothers” (*sodales*), and their communal *sacra* or “rites” of literary composition, he constructs a context in which male homosociality nurtured literary composition.<sup>11</sup>

Exile had separated Ovid from this male homosocial milieu. So when he dedicates the *Fasti* to Germanicus (1.1–26), he longs from exile for this socialization of self and text with other men through the sharing of a compositional endeavor.<sup>12</sup> That Ovid hopes his text will be a sustained

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10 For gender hostility, see *Juv. Sat.* 2 and 6, and *Pers. Sat.* 1 preface. This panic about femininity is evident in ancient male discourses about verbal style, both in oratory and in poetry. See Richlin 1997 for gender pedagogy in Roman oratorical training, as well as Gleason 1990 and Gunderson 2000. See Keith 2000 for gender pedagogy through epic poetry. Epic was suited to training young men in the stride, grand attitude, and majestic bearing of manhood. By implication, Roman erotic elegy seduced males into effeminate weakness; cf. Quintilian’s wariness about elegy in his “syllabus” for rhetorical training, *Inst. Or.* 1.8.6: “In fact, let elegy, in which especially he [the speaker] expresses love, and hendecasyllabic verse, which are units of sotadean verses (for, of course, there must be no teaching in sotadean verse), be moved at a distance, if it is possible, if not, certainly let them be reserved for the firmer oaken strength of age” (“Elegia vero, utique qua amat, et hendecasyllabi, qui sunt commata sotadeorum [nam de sotadeis ne praecipendum quidem est], amoveantur si fieri potest, si minus, certe ad firmitus aetatis robor reserventur”). The “firmer oaken strength of age” is a hardened mind and body reflective of manhood, thought less flexible and impressionable than youth.

11 On poetic composition as sympotic, interactive, and participatory gamesmanship, see Johnson 2000. See below note 12 and *Tristia* 4.10 for Ovid’s account of entering his *sodalitium* or brotherhood. For the formation of reading as a ritual in the “cult(ivation)” of Ovid’s authorial *persona*, see King 1998.

12 Nagle 1980 discusses how Ovid adapted motifs of subjective erotic suffering (from erotic elegy) as metaphors for his exilic suffering (esp. pp. 43–68). From exile, Ovid specifically longs for recitation in convivial settings as a corrective event in the compositional process. See, for example, *Tr.* 3.14.37–40 (I have no supply of books to consult in exile, and “There is no one here, if I should recite, of whose intelligent ears I might have the benefit”) and 4.10.111–14 (although there is no one in Tomis to listen to him recite, he still recites). The social dynamics of recitation in Rome are significant for Ovid’s quest to be remembered at Rome: see, for example, *ex P.* 3.5.33–44. Cf. *ex P.* 1.2.131–35 (“ille ego [sum] . . . cui tua nonnumquam miranti scripta legebas,” “I am that man to whom you used to recite your compositions, while I sometimes marveled”).

medium of homosocial bonding with Germanicus is shown in the last couplet (25–26) where the poet asks:

si licet et fas est, vates rege vatis habenas,  
auspice te felix totus ut annus eat.

If it is permitted and divinely sanctioned, as a priestly poet, guide the reins of a priestly poet, so that the whole year may proceed felicitously with you as augur.

The repetition of *vates* and *vatis* in 25 constructs Germanicus and Ovid as doubles of each other. The shared label reinforces their sameness in celebrating the calendar themes that Ovid identifies in 1–2 and again in 25–26. Between these two couplets is a solicitation of the successful general and prince that hinges upon Ovid's fear of his own deviance from a proper path. Germanicus has the strength to guide the errant poet. The request at 25 reiterates the plea at 3–4:

excipe pacato, Caesar Germanice, voltu  
hoc opus et timidae derige navis iter,

Take up this work with peaceful countenance, Germanicus  
Caesar, and direct the course of my fearful ship.

The fearful ship (*timidae navis*) is a surrogate for Ovid and his poetry. Ovid fears that his path (*iter*) may stray or deviate. Ovid again refers to his fears at 15–16, asking Germanicus to “Nod your assent to one attempting to go through praises of your concerns, and strike from my heart trembling fears.”<sup>13</sup> These concerns are the *sacra* in the old annual records and the festivals of the Julio-Claudian family that Ovid says he wants to celebrate in his calendar poem (lines 7–12).<sup>14</sup>

Thus Ovid seems wary of his potential divergence from social-generic propriety in handling the *sacra* of Rome and of the Julio-Claudian

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13 F. 1.15–16: “adnue conanti per laudes ire tuorum / deque meo pavidos excute corde metus.”

14 F. 1.7–12: “sacra recognoscens annalibus eruta priscis / et quo sit merito quaeque notata dies. / invenies illic et festa domestica vobis; / saepe tibi pater est, saepe legendus avus, / quaeque ferunt illi, pictos signantia fastos, / tu quoque cum Druso praemia fratre feres.”

family. “Carrying” is an important metaphor in Ovid’s description of how Germanicus, his father (adoptive, Tiberius), and grandfather (adoptive, Augustus) “receive” the rewards inscribed in the calendars (*ferunt*, 1.11; *praemia . . . feres*, 12). These rewards would include the titles *Augustus* (*F.* 1.587–616) and *Pater Patriae* (*F.* 2.119–44), votive games, and other honorific rites belonging among the “domestic festivals” (*festas domestica*, 9) of the Julio-Claudian dynasty. In passages celebrating these titles, Ovid exploits metaphors of weight and burden. There is the burden that the male heir to the Julio-Claudian patrimony “supports” when taking up the “father’s” (Augustus’s) position and title (1.615–16).<sup>15</sup> Then there is the poet’s feared inability to support with elegy the weight of the sacred title *Pater Patriae* (2.119–26). In other words, Ovid claims he will celebrate for Germanicus the sacred objects of his inheritance, his sacred patrimony, but he fears faltering in the delivery or “carriage” of the sacred honors in speech.

The words *praemia feres* and *ferunt* (1.11–12) recall the sacred rites of inheritance, the annual obligation to “carry honors” (offerings) to the tomb of the ancestors. Ovid uses similar language, *dona ferebat* (2.545) and *iusta ferunt* (2.569), to describe the origin of the festival name Feralia, the festival at which Aeneas founded the Julian family’s ancestor worship in Latium. Thus the expressions *praemia* (*dona*, *iusta*, *morem*, etc.) *ferre* at 1.11–12 and 2.543–44, 545, and 569 etymologize Feralia, an important festival during the nine days of Parentatio, from February 13 to either February 21 or 22 (*dies Parentales*, 2.548).<sup>16</sup> But carrying the ritual burden had become a metaphor for obligation, even burdensome annoyance, in the

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15 *F.* 1.615–16 (“auspiciisque deis tanti cognominis heres / omine suscipiat, quo pater, orbis onus”) borrows a metaphor of “burden” embedded in the contemporary discourse on “inheritance.” According to Tacitus (*Ann.* 1.11), Tiberius used “burden” to describe the inheritance of imperial power (*magnitudine imperii*), even asserting that only the mind of Augustus was *tantae molis capax* and that he knew from experience “how lofty, how subject to fortune is the *burden* of ruling all things” (“quam arduum, quam subiectum fortunae regendi cuncta onus”). In exile, Ovid knew of Tiberius’s equivocation on inheriting his position: cf. the revision at *F.* 1.531–34 and *ex P.* 4.13.17–28.

16 The different day of termination for the Parentalia depends on whether or not the Cara Cognatio (Karistia) is included. The Karistia ritual involved carrying food for a banquet of the dead: *Ov. F.* 2.565–70, *Cic. ad Att.* viii.14, Varro *DLL* 6.13, Paul. exc. Fest., “Feralia” 75L (“a ferendis epulis, vel a feriendis pecudibus”). On the Parentalia transmission of elite family property and name from father to son, see Sabatucci 1988.47–52. Scullard follows other scholarship that sees the Lemuria as older than the Parentalia (Scullard 1981.74–76 [*Parentalia*], 118–19 [*Lemuria*]). Cf. de Coulanges 1956.34–39, 72–74.

inheritance of a patrimony—both the father's property and his public standing or name (which was maintained by public deeds by the heir).<sup>17</sup>

As the Virgilian image of Aeneas supporting his father Anchises and the *sacra* of Rome would suggest, carrying the burden of the *sacra* was important to the continuity of male patrimonial identity.<sup>18</sup> From exile (*ex P.* 1.1, to Brutus), Ovid compares his poetry “carrying” the name of the *Patriae Pater* (36) to both the *Aeneid*, which conveys Aeneas's reputation (35), and to ritual celebrants carrying ritual objects. By conveying such sacred emblems and hymns, celebrants clear a path for themselves (*iter, viam*).<sup>19</sup> Similarly, Ovid asks Germanicus to guide the path of his ship of poetry (*F.* 1.4), which conveys the *sacra*<sup>20</sup> and so takes up the burden of the Roman cultural patrimony.

But in “carrying” the *sacra* in elegiac poetry, the elegist's earlier persona and poetic style were probably cause for concern: as an exile, Ovid was not known for proper carriage of the *sacra* or, for that matter, of his own language.<sup>21</sup> Might Ovid's *ingenium*, innate cleverness, produce unruly lasciviousness, at least in the judgment of his critics? That was the view of

17 The phrase *heres sine sacris* had become proverbial for profit without annoyance: Plaut. *Capt.* 775 (4.1.8), *Trin.* 484 (2.4.83). Ambivalence abounds concerning heirs' conduct of ancestral rites: while there was family feeling over sharing these rites of rooted identity (Cic. *de Off.* 1.17.55) and obligation (Liv. 5.52, Cic. *Mur.* 12, Cic. *Leg.* 2.22, 2.45–54), there was also a sense that these *sacra* were a burden avoidable by legal strategies (Cic. *Leg.* 2.43).

18 Virg. *Aen.* 2.707–08, with 2.717 and 2.722–23: “veste super fulvique insternor pelle leonis, / succedoque oneri.” Cf. Cic. *Leg.* 2.48ff. (on pontifical law conjoining family *sacra* with patrimonial inheritance).

19 Ovid compares Anchises, carried by Aeneas (*ex P.* 1.1.33), to the epic *Aeneid*, which “carries,” i.e., tells of, Aeneas (*fert liber Aeneaden*, 35). In turn, Ovid compares his book carrying the name of the *Patriae Pater* (36) to the “carriage” of sacred objects and personages (such as statues of deities), olive branches of peace (*pacatae ramus oliuae*, 1.1.31), the *sistra* of Isis worshippers (33–34), and the pipe and symbols of the *galli* of Magna Mater (39–40). Since the last two are musical instruments, one might think of the sacred hymns of the gods. Ovid compares these various means of conveying the gods with the superiority of his sacred objects at 45–46: “En, ego pro sistro Phrygii que foramine buxi / gentis Iuleae nomina sancta fero.”

20 Ships had conveyed gods or their divine images to Rome before: e.g., Magna Mater, *F.* 4.245–348, and Asclepius, *Met.* 15.622–744; cf. the story of Leucothea-Mater Matuta and Palaemon-Portunus (*F.* 6.473–550) and the Carmentis-Evander tale (*F.* 1.465–542).

21 In fact, in *Remedia Amoris* 359–80, Ovid refers to jealous critics examining with censorious scrutiny his and Virgil's texts for sexual innuendo.

both Seneca the Elder<sup>22</sup> and Quintilian.<sup>23</sup> Ovid lacked the will to restrain himself.

So, I suggest, Ovid fears deviation from the orthodox or proper path for his ship and needs Germanicus to rectify it (cf. *derige*, 4; *rege*, 25). After all, Augustus himself had presented Germanicus as a model grandson and heir to members of the equestrian order rallying in the theater against Augustus's marriage legislation.<sup>24</sup> So Germanicus would be qualified to know propriety of expression when he heard it.

Ovid ascribes to Germanicus the literary strength to master his ship, a strength matching the prince's martial prowess. Consider how Ovid specifies the kind of help he needs in lines 15–24:

adnue conanti per laudes ire tuorum  
 deque meo pavidos excute corde metus.  
 da mihi te placidum, dederis in carmina vires:  
 ingenium voltu statque caditque tuo.  
 Pagina iudicium docti subitura movetur  
 principis, ut Clario missa legenda deo.  
 quae sit enim culti facundia sensimus oris,  
 civica pro trepidis cum tulit arma reis.  
 scimus et, ad nostras cum se tulit impetus artes,  
 ingenii currant flumina quanta tui.

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22 Seneca the Elder concluded (*Contr.* 2.2.12): "Hence it is apparent that for a man of highest cleverness it wasn't critical taste that was deficient, but the spirit [or intent] to check the license of his poetry" ("Ex quo adparet summi ingenii viro [Ovidio] non iudicium defuisse ad compescendam licentiam carminum suorum sed animum"). The scenario: once friends (*amici*) of Ovid wanted to name three verses to be excised from his poetry. Ovid listed three exempted from excision. When revealed, the verses were the same. Seneca adds that Ovid would say, "A face is often more seemly because of a mole" (a flaw), demonstrating that Ovid was willfully committed to his *vitia*. Seneca's conclusion reflects Ovid's discussion of his poetic flaws and his inability to correct his exilic poetry (*ex P.* 3.9, to Brutus).

23 Quint. *Inst. Or.* 10.1.88: "Although wanton even in his epic verse and an excessive lover of his own talent, Ovid should nevertheless be praised in sections" ("Lascivus quidem in herois quoque Ovidius et nimium amator ingenii sui, laudandus tamen partibus"). 10.1.98: "The *Medea* of Ovid seems to me to demonstrate to what extent that man could have excelled, if he had preferred to master his talent than to indulge it" ("Ovidi *Medea* videtur mihi ostendere, quantum ille vir praestare potuerit, si ingenio suo imperare quam indulgere maluisset").

24 Germanicus's marital fertility is a demonstration of exemplary manhood within a reproductive (hetero-normative) family, Suet. *Aug.* 34.



Nod your support for one attempting to go through praises of your family, and strike from my heart trembling fears. Give yourself to me peacefully, and you'll have put your powers into poetry: my inborn talent rises and falls in response to your gaze. My Page is moved to submit to the judgment of a learned prince, as if sent to be read by the god at Claros. For, in truth, we realized what the eloquence of a cultivated mouth is when your eloquence bore civic arms to help trembling defendants. We also know, when your impulse moved toward our arts, what great rivers of talent flow.

Here Germanicus is a hero in terms of vigor (*vires*, 17), civic arms (*civica arma*, 22), and drive (*impetus*, 23)—in sum, his *virtus*—transferred to the realms of oratory (21–22) and poetry (23–24). These powers convince Ovid's Page, a feminine personification, to submit to Germanicus's judgment (19–20). One gets a sense that Ovid is in distress and Germanicus is to come to the rescue, supporting with his strength Ovid's vacillating carriage of the *sacra*.<sup>25</sup> In line 17, he invites Germanicus to give *himself* to Ovid and to put his vigor into Ovid's poetry: "da mihi te placidum, dederis in carmina vires."<sup>26</sup> Providing guidance means that Germanicus would be diverting some of his vigor or *vires* into Ovid's poetry. Ovid's passivity and potentially deviant treatment of the *sacra* lure the male reader (like Barthes' "writerly reader") into an active engagement with "Ovid" and his text<sup>27</sup> by offering something with which to engage: flaws, errancy, or difference that the elite male reader, like Germanicus, can seek to correct or master through the exercise of his own manliness or *virtus*.

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25 This image of weak or faltering carriage had already appeared in Propertius's programmatic elegy 3.9, a *recusatio* addressed to his patron Maecenas (3.9.5–6): "It is shameful to put on your head a weight you can't manage and, when pressed, soon to surrender on bent knee" ("turpe est, quod nequeas, capiti committere pondus / et pressum inflexo mox dare terga genu"). Near the end of this poem (3.9.57–58: "mollia tu coeptae fautor cape lora iuventae, / dexteraeque immissis da mihi signa rotis"), Propertius deploys equestrian imagery similar to that at the end of Ovid's *Fasti* dedication (1.25: *vates rege vatis habenas*); in both, the patron controls the reins of the poet.

26 Here the word *placidum* recalls how, at 1.4 and 17, Ovid offers to share with the prince peaceful rites and praise of Julio-Claudians. The words *pacato voltu* and *placidum* imply that the text is a diversion of the warrior prince from war into peace, as does Ovid's suggestion in line 13: "Let others sing of Caesar's weapons, let us sing of Caesar's altars."

27 Writerly texts and writerly readership are prominent concerns of Barthes 1975. The writerly reader assumes an active relation to the text.

Ovid highlights the prince's poetic virility in language positioned ambiguously between erotic desire—the thematic core of Ovid's previous elegies—and public manhood or *virtus*. The content of the *Fasti* includes ritual, a more serious, manly, theme for elegy than his previous "girlish" erotic indulgence.<sup>28</sup> In this triangulation between Ovid and Germanicus, mediated by the text, the manifestation of the erotic is subtle because of elite male anxiety over the loss of self-control and submission to the will of the other.<sup>29</sup> Innuendo and tense diction characterize the stylistic result, a quavering between epic manhood and its elegiac dissolution.

Innuendoes distributed in subsequent programmatic passages provide "retroactive confirmation" of the erotic implications of the reader-author bond. For instance, the preface to June (Book 6) describes Ovid's inspirational process in relation to divine power or *numen* (6.1–8). First, Ovid declares that he will present various explanations for the name June and that the *reader* will select (or read) the one he likes (1–2: "Hic quoque mensis habet dubias in nomine causas: / quae placeat, positus omnibus ipse leges"). Ovid submits control to the reader. Later, he says that each of three goddesses—Juno, Juventas (youth), and Concordia (harmony)—appeared to him and gave him an explanation. Ovid says that some people will doubt that he saw these *numina* (3–4: "facta canam; sed erunt qui me finxisse loquantur, / nullaque mortali numina visa putent"), but he explains (5–8):

est deus in nobis, agitante calescimus illo;  
 impetus hic sacrae semina mentis habet:  
 fas mihi praecipue voltus vidisse deorum,  
 vel quia sum vates, vel quia sacra cano.

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28 While many texts could be cited, the programmatic *Am.* 3.1 is essential. There, opening his third book of elegies, Ovid reports searching for his next poetic theme. He says he was in a sacred grove and was approached by two female personifications of literary genres: comely, seductive, yet limping Elegy and tall, heroic Tragedy. Speaking first, Tragedy urges Ovid to give up themes fit for girls (*puellae*) and take up *maiora*, greater things (*Am.* 3.1.23–30).

29 On Roman freeborn male anxiety over appearing the passive, receptive sexual partner, see, e.g., Williams 2000 *passim* and, succinctly, pp. 17–19, Walters 1997, Parker 1997. This anxiety of appearance extends metaphorically to behaviors other than sex; for instance, acting (which can imply vulnerability to the gaze, even passivity of the body). The prospect of freeborn males acting on stage provoked gender anxiety: see Edwards 1997 and 1993.63–97 (on *mollitia* and concepts of the gendered body), followed by pp. 98–136 (on acting and the elite male Roman subject).

There is a god inside me. I get hot when he prods me; this impulse holds the “semen” of divine thought: it is permissible especially for me to have seen the faces of gods, either because I am a seer or because I am singing of sacred matters.<sup>30</sup>

Here Ovid says that a visionary *impetus* is the force of a god *in nobis*, “inside me.” When it prods, Ovid “becomes inflamed,” *calescimus*. *Calesco* elsewhere in Ovid’s poetry describes sexual heat;<sup>31</sup> moreover, Ovid gets “hot” when the god “in him,” “agitates,” *agitante . . . illo*.<sup>32</sup> This notion of the “god inside the poet” recalls how, in the dedication of the *Fasti* (1.17), Ovid asks Germanicus (a *numen*, 1.6), to “give himself” to him and “put his *vires* into poetry.” The quaking god inside the poet leads to the production of *semen*, “seeds of divine thought” or vision—a cognitive fertility. The imagery is one of divine penetration of the mortal mind/body and release of divine *semen* inside the poet, which then emerges as vatic, visionary discourse. The language sexualizes divine inspiration, on a reproductive model, as a kind of literary pregnancy of vision, recalling Platonic notions of the origins of discourse like those of Diotima in the *Symposium*.<sup>33</sup>

Ovid has already suggested the sexualization of visionary-ritual poetry in the preface of March (Book 3). Ovid’s interaction with Mars, the

30 *F.* 6.5–8 contains words that also appear in the dedication to Germanicus and in other scenes of visionary encounters. Here I am thinking of *impetus* and the description of the “god” (*deus*, 5) inside Ovid. This use of *impetus* recalls Germanicus’s *impetus* in the dedication of the poem (1.23–24). The context of divine permission surrounding these two uses of *impetus* supports their linkage: *fas mihi*, 6.7; cf. 1.25: “si licet et fas est.” Here the prince holds the status of a *numen* (1.6).

31 *Calescere*: Ovid *Heroides* 18.175–78 (Leander to Hero) uses *calescere* with *flamma* to refer to the heat of passion or desire (177: “quo propius nunc es, flamma propiore calesco”). Terence (*Eunuchus* 1.2.5 Don.) uses *calescere* to describe being inflamed with love.

32 *Agitare* can mean “to masturbate”: Adams 1982.144–45, citing “the obscene interpretation of the Virgilian ‘incipiunt agitata tumescere’” (“When shaken, they begin to swell,” *Georg.* 1.357) attributed to Celsus at Quint. *Inst. Or.* 8.3.47.”

33 On the threatened masculinity (feminization of the poet) in the Latin poetics of inspiration, see Fowler 2002 (I thank a referee for this reference). duBois 1988, esp. 169–83, includes Plato’s notion of male pregnancy for the creation of discourse (as an appropriation of female reproduction) among the fundamental metaphors in the Hellenic representation of gender (cf. the Greek use of *pinax* and *deltos*, tablet, described by duBois 1988.130–66). Halperin 1990 suggests that, with “Diotima” (woman) as metaphor in the *Symposium*, Plato constructed a figure of the proper (pro)creative philosopher fostering discursive offspring in dialogue (reciprocity) with partners.

god of war and manly prowess, recalls the martial character of Roman manhood and Ovid's heroic ideal reader, Germanicus, the warrior prince (3.1–12):

Bellice, depositis clipeo paulisper et hasta,  
 Mars, ades et nitidas casside solve comas.  
 forsitan ipse roges quid sit cum Marte poetae:  
 a te qui canitur, nomina mensis habet.  
 ipse vides manibus peragi fera bella Minervae:  
 num minus ingenuis artibus illa vacat?  
 Palladis exemplo ponendae tempora sume  
 cuspidis: invenies et quod inermis agas.  
 tum quoque inermis eras, cum te Romana sacerdos  
 cepit, ut huic urbi semina magna dares.  
 Silvia Vestalis (quid enim vetat inde moveri?)  
 sacra lavaturas mane petebat aquas.

Warrior, with shield and spear placed aside for a while, come and loosen your luxuriant hair from your helmet. Perhaps you'll ask what a poet has to do with Mars: the month being hymned got its name from you. You yourself see that fierce wars were conducted to completion by the hands of Minerva: does she have less time for noble arts? On the example of Pallas [Athena], take time to plant the head of your spear: you'll find something to do while unarmed. You were unarmed, too, that time when a Roman priestess ensnared you so that you might give your great *semen* [seed] to this city. Silvia the Vestal (what forbids my starting with her?) was going for water to wash the *sacra* [sacred implements] in the morning.

In a seductive, quasi-feminine role, Ovid solicits the war god by lavishing attention upon his radiant hair (*nitidas comas*), thereby drawing the eye to a feature of the god's beauty—in contrast to his violent attributes, his helmet and spear.<sup>34</sup> As Stephen Hinds, Alessandro Barchiesi, and others observe,

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34 Hinds 1992.87–105. Barchiesi 1997 notes that, in this passage, Ovid is the first to devote such attention to Mars's "attributes," although he fails to note Ovid's focus on the god's hair.

Ovid aims to disarm the war god. But these interpretations situate the disarming as a technical feature of the genre of elegy, something detached from the sociology of Roman sexual knowledge as Ovid uses it to sexualize inspiration and visionary discourse. Ovid's disarming of Mars becomes not unlike the many visual representations of Venus disarming Mars for sex, maneuvering his vigor, *vires*, from violence to erotic play.<sup>35</sup>

Ovid channels the god's martial prowess into a peaceful relationship with himself by trafficking in a sexual story shared between males used to draw the male god into closer contact with the male poet. Through this story of erotically diverted violence (the rape of Rhea Silvia, a Vestal Virgin), Ovid flatters Mars's reproductive manhood and sexual prowess (à la Plautus's *Miles Gloriosus* 1077–79), thereby transforming the war god's violent impulses into an erotic-poetic expression.

But there is more. Ovid's Silvia, like Ennius's, utters a visionary monologue that grows and develops under the influence of the divine *semen* in her womb (*Fasti* 3.27–38).<sup>36</sup> Mars's *semen* produces twins in Silvia's body, visions in her mind, and speech from her mouth—a kind of visionary *facundia* or eloquence derived from Mars's divine, but sexual, impetus.<sup>37</sup> The divinely (re)productive trajectory (subtext) of Silvia's speech travels beyond the bounds of its frame to become a model for the poet's own visionary relationships, first with Mars, and then, retroactively, with Germanicus and other elite male readers. Ovid as a visionary poet (*vates*) produces a visionary narrative in which he meets the war god Mars. Ovid then tells Mars a story in which Silvia herself produces a visionary dream-narrative. There are analogies between Ovid and Silvia. Both are priestly.

35 Barchiesi 1997.62, Hinds 1992. The imagery of Venus (and Amor) disarming Mars varies, from Lucretius's opening dedication of his *de Rerum Natura* to Memmius, to the famous statuary group in the temple of Mars built by Brutus Callaicus (nude, colossal, seated Mars, standing nude Venus, cupids playing with weapons; see Richardson 1992.245: "Mars, Aedes in Circo Flaminio"), to many Roman wall paintings. Pliny *NH* 36.26 is our primary source for a description of the statuary group in the Mars temple in the Circus Flaminius—a Roman grouping of two separate statues, both by Scopas.

36 Silvia's metaphorical dream language—especially the imagery of the two growing saplings—recalls Ovid's allusion to Minerva, the virginal warrior goddess, as a model for Mars in the prelude. Minerva models how to "plant the point of his spear" (*F.* 3.7–8: "Palladis exemplo ponendae tempora sume / cuspidis, invenies et quod inermis agas").

37 Ennius's treatment of Mars's rape of Rhea Silvia probably influenced Ovid's: cf. Ilia's (Rhea Silvia's speech) at Ennius *Annales* fr. 32–48 (Warmington) = 35–51 (Vahlen<sup>3</sup>). Also Ovid *Tr.* 2.259–60: "If a woman should take up the *Annales* (there is nothing hairier than that poem), she will, of course, read how Ilia [Rhea Silvia] became pregnant" ("sumpserit Annales (nihil est hirsutius illis) / facta sit unde parens Ilia nempe leget"). Ennius had treated Rhea Silvia (Ilia) as a daughter of Aeneas, therefore a granddaughter of Venus.

Both receive the *semina* of gods or of divine mind to produce visionary discourses inspired by that seed. The parallels would suggest that Silvia is Ovid's model for divine contact. By implication, Ovid wants Mars to make a "seminal contribution" to him in the form of poetic *semina*: thematic inspiration.

Indeed, after a long speech of persuasion, Ovid asks Mars, who is "outfitted for virile service" (*officiis . . . virilibus aptus*, 3.169), to explain why Roman matrons honor him on March 1 (170). Likewise, in the dedication, Ovid solicits the *vires* of Germanicus. The coming together of Mars's virile duties (a possible innuendo for sexual services) and his worship by mothers thematizes pregnancy both literally, in the bodies of women, and perhaps metaphorically, in the minds of elite male poets and certain sensitive readers. Consider Mars's concluding comment at 3.249–52:

quid moror et variis onero tua pectora causis?  
 eminent ante oculos quod petis ecce tuos.  
 mater amat nuptas: matris me turba frequentat.  
 haec nos praecipue tam pia causa decet.

Why do I delay and burden [*onero*] your heart with varied causes? What you seek—here [*ecce*!—is sticking out before your eyes. Mother [Juno] likes married women: my mother's crowd frequents me. So pious a cause as *this* especially suits me.

Mars burdens [*onero*] Ovid's heart. In the *Fasti*, Ovid uses the noun *onus*, "burden," to refer to fetuses in the womb or infants at birth. Mars jests that he has "burdened" or "impregnated" Ovid with multiple explanations, *causae*.<sup>38</sup>

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38 The most prominent example of *onus* as fetus is *F.* 1.617–30 (January 15, second Carmentalia). *F.* 1.623–64: "so as not to produce offspring, rashly with concealed blow, the matron [singular for plural] was striking out of her *viscera* the growing 'burden'" (referring to abortion), "neve daret partus, ictu temeraria caeco / visceribus crescens excutiebat onus." But the term appears elsewhere with similar meanings: *F.* 2.451–52 ("parce, precor, gravidis, facilis Lucina, puellis, / maturumque utero molliter aufer onus"). This passage echoes the Matronalia prayer at *F.* 3.257–58, but it substitutes *onus* for *partus* ("siqua tamen gravida est, resoluta crine precetur / ut solvat partus molliter illa suos"). For *onus* as fetus, see *TLL*, "onus," 9.2.645.85–646.20 (cf. *Ov. Am.* 2.13.1, 20; *Met.* 10.506; *Her.* 4.58, 11.64, 6.120). At *Ov. F.* 4.241 it refers to Attis's amputated testes. *Onero* can

Mars is known for multiple seeds (his twins), and *semen* is a synonym for *causa*, “origin.”<sup>39</sup> Mars has provided multiple germs of explanation.

Mars then simplifies his answer, saying it is sticking out before Ovid’s eyes why matrons worship him (250: “*eminent ante oculos quod petis ecce tuos*”). *Ecce* (250) marks Mars’s act of presentation, although the god leaves unstated what he shows. He does indicate with *haec* that the matrons, his mother’s crowd, frequent him also, saying “so pious a cause as this especially suits me” (“*haec nos praecipue tuam pia causa decet*,” 252).<sup>40</sup> *Haec . . . pia causa* refers back to the matrons at 251 (*matris . . . turba*). But simply pointing to matrons does not explain the reason (*causa*) why matrons worship Mars. Perhaps it is because of Mars’s piety or devotion to his mother (*haec . . . pia causa*): Mars’s mother, Juno, wants women to worship Mars and Mars accepts it (“My mother likes married women: my mother’s crowd frequents me [my shrine], 251).

That is one implication. Another is that *haec . . . pia causa* refers to Mars’s spear (*hasta*) as an instrument embodying his virile potency in war and fertility. Varro reported that there was in Rome an archaic image of Mars as a spear. Perhaps this was the *hasta* erected in the Regia. According to Plutarch (*Rom.* 19.1), this spear was called “Mars.” Servius (*ad Aen.* 8.3) reports that a general about to go to war entered this shrine in the Regia and shook the sacred shields (*ancilia*) and the sacred spear of Mars saying, “Mars, awake.” The spear was almost a fetish-embodiment of the god or his power. The ancients sometimes derived the name Quirinus, a war deity closely linked with Mars (if not Mars’s son Romulus), from *curis*, the

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mean “to make (something) heavy by increasing its bulk, charge, impregnate” (*OLD*, “onero,” 3). But “impregnate” in the examples cited (Sen. *NH* 5.14.3, Quint. *Decl.* 321 [p. 265, l. 13], and Front. *Aq.* 35) refers to liquids “made heavy.” *TLL*, “onero,” 9.2.631.60–76 lists an agricultural meaning of *onerare*, “to load heavily with fruit” (Ov. *Met.* 10.101: *pomo . . . onerata rubenti arbutus*; Colum. 4.14.3: “*tenera eius vitis aetas non sustinet et fetu et materia onerari*”; cf. Pallad. 3.12.6: “*illa uitem nimietate fetus onerant*” [grapes], 3.25.16 [pears]). In animal husbandry, *onerare* means to impregnate through breeding: Pallad. 8.4.1, 3.26.1 (sows: *feturae onus*). Cf. Ov. *Met.* 8.781: *gravidis oneratos messibus agros*.

39 *OLD*, “semen,” 7: “A germ, seed, spark (of a quality, condition, feeling, etc.).” Cf. Ovid *Tr.* 2.279: “*ludi quoque semina praebent nequitiae*” (“Games also offer seeds [reasons, causes] of naughtiness”). Livy 39.6.9: *semina . . . futurae luxuriae* (“seeds” or “causes of future luxury”). Cf. Germanicus *Arat.* 134: “*nec iam semina virtutis vitii demersa resistant*.”

40 I am thinking of contemporary marital injunctions, such as in Augustan moral legislation: e.g., Treggiari 1996.888–89, and, specifically, of the rewards for childbearing.

Sabine word for “spear.”<sup>41</sup> There is some evidence that fertility may be part of the symbolism of the spear. For example, at *F.* 2.559–60, Ovid urges maturing girls to delay marriage during the Feralia, a funerary festival, by advising against letting the *hasta recurva* comb, part, or touch their virginal hair. In marriage ritual, the *hasta recurva* or bent spear, also called the *hasta caelibaris*, had various meanings for the ancients, but some concerned fertility and marriage relations: the spear foretells the bride’s birthing of brave men or symbolized her submission to her dominant husband. According to one tradition, the spear had once been stuck in the body of a slain gladiator: it symbolized that the bride would be joined to her husband like the spear to the body of the gladiator.<sup>42</sup>

Moreover, in his opening address to Mars at *F.* 3.5–8, Ovid attempts to guide the god toward cooperation with him by offering Minerva as a model of how to handle his spear: “On the example of Pallas [Athena], take time to plant the head of your spear: you’ll find something to do while unarmed.” Ovid probably alludes to the episode in which Minerva (Athena) once competed with Neptune (Poseidon) for the patronage of Athens by staking claims upon the land, offering gifts. Poseidon had stabbed the ground with his trident to produce the “Erechtheid Sea” (the well later housed inside the Erechtheion on the Acropolis), but Minerva stabbed the ground with her spearhead and “planted” the famous first olive tree of Attica, kept in a precinct near the Erechtheion. The sculptures of the west pediment of Athena’s temple, the Parthenon, depicted this competition.<sup>43</sup> The growth of the olive tree recalls how the two palm trees sprout in Silvia’s dream narrative, representing the twins growing in her womb. Ovid provides an example of Mars’s “planting the spear” by citing the god’s rape of Rhea

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41 Mars as spear-fetish: see Frazer 1929.2.399–401 on *F.* 2.475, citing Clem. Alex. *Protrept.* 4.46.41, Arnob. *Adv. Nat.* 6.11, also Plut. *Rom.* 29.1. Quirinus derived from *curis*: Ov. *F.* 2.477–78, Festus, “cures,” 43L, Plut. *Rom.* 29.1 and *Quaest. Rom.* 87, Macr. *Sat.* 1.9.16, Isid. *Or.* 9.2.84, and Serv. *ad Aen.* 1.292.

42 Ov. *F.* 2.559–60 (*hasta recurva* and virgin brides). Festus, “caelibari hasta” 55L: “ut, quemadmodum illa [hasta] coniuncta fuerit cum corpore gladiatoris, sic ipsa cum viro sit”; Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 87, Arnob. *Adv. Nat.* 2.67.

43 Apollodorus *Bibl.* 3.14.1. On the Pandroseion and the “Erechtheid Sea” inside the Erechtheion: Pausan. 1.27.2, 6; Herodotus 8.55. For the west pediment of the Parthenon (438–32 B.C.E.): *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, “Athena,” 2.1.978–79 fig. 234 (illust. 2.2.731); cf. the Attic hydria (fourth cent. B.C.E.) at 2.1.996 (Athena strikes the soil with a lance, Poseidon with a trident).



Silvia, the Vestal Virgin, saying that the purpose was “to give great seed to this city” (3.10). Minerva gave olive trees to Athens; Mars gave semen as his gift to Rome: he impregnated Silvia who bore Romulus, the founder of Rome, and Remus, his brother.<sup>44</sup>

But the original question was, “What does a *poet* have to do with Mars?” (3.3). It would seem that a poet wants a contribution from the war god as well. Consequently, Mars implicitly explains why his mother’s crowd worships him via his “spear.” Ovid introduces the whole episode with a double-entendre about Mars’s weaponry at 169 (“cum sis officiis . . . virilibus aptus”), just as he is asking the question of why women worship Mars (170). Moreover, Ovid tracks Mars’s disarmament in the course of the dialogue with particular attention to his spear. At *F.* 3.1–2, Ovid urges the god to put aside his shield and spear and remove his helmet from his shiny hair. After the initial speech (3.1–170), Mars has removed his helmet (3.171–72) but, parenthetically, the poet notes that the god still holds his *hasta*. Moreover, Mars’s major tale is that of Romulus’s rape of the Sabine women. Mars “advised” his son (3.197–98):

indolui patriamque dedi tibi, Romule, mentem.

“Tolle preces,” dixi, “quod petis arma dabunt.”

I felt sorry [for the Romans’ lack of brides and children],  
and, Romulus, I gave you paternal advice: “Do away with  
pleading,” I told him, “arms will give what you seek.”

Mars includes *arma*, weapons, as a way to pursue sex and fertility, i.e., offspring, through the capture and rape of the Sabine women (like father, like son). *Quod petis* reappears when Mars turns to Ovid in line 250, “Look! What you seek [*quod petis*] is sticking out before your eyes.” I suggest that Mars exposes “himself,” his divinity, his seminal instrument, i.e., his phallus-weapon, with which he makes sure women become pregnant. Ovid may be luring Mars to prick him with his spear and thereby stand in for Cupid,

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44 At Plut. *Rom.* 20.5, Romulus, son of Mars, follows the example of Minerva; he cast a spear from the Aventine to the Palatine. The fertile earth nurtured the cornel wood shaft so that, although many tried to extract the spear, it rooted and sent out shoots. The cornel tree was kept as sacred.

whose arrow had once shot Ovid and given him poetic inspiration (*Am.* 1.1.21–26).<sup>45</sup>

Ovid's generic prayer to Juno for delivery of pregnancy (3.253–58) also suits the poet's own circumstance<sup>46</sup> as a poet wishing to bring to term and deliver a fully formed poetic burden: the *Fasti* itself, despite its near abortion or long gestation during exile. The spear may help in "delivery" too. Pliny reports a remedy for a woman having a difficult childbirth (*NH* 28.33–34): if a light spear extracted from the body of a man should be thrown over the house in which she is in labor, she will deliver the child immediately.<sup>47</sup> The flight of the spear unbinds the labor process. This belief may have been associated with Juno's combined image as warrior goddess (e.g., she was represented with a spear as Juno Curitis) and goddess of motherhood and childbirth.<sup>48</sup>

However, what obstructs Ovid's poetic delivery lies in relations between men. Exile disrupted the male same-sex bonds sustaining Ovid's very production of poetry: the social process among elite males involving recitation, audience response, and correction. Removal from Roman elite male culture problematizes the integrity of Ovid's poetic *corpus*, if not his physical body. The unusual language used in lines 3–6 of the dedication

45 By "phallus," I here refer to a semiotics of "manhood" in metaphors or euphemisms, such as the "spear," another metaphor for masculine dominance and a common euphemistic term for the penis found in the discourse of *militia Amoris*.

46 Ovid has been referring to the Matronalia on March 1 for Juno Lucina (on the Esquiline Hill), mentioned in the *Fasti Praenestini* for March 1 as a cult for matrons and pregnant women (text at Degraffi 1963.418). Ovid *F.* 3.245–58 refers to this cult (cf. Serv. *ad Aen.* 4.518, Plin. *NH* 16.235, Festus 131L). The term *matronalia*, probably a popular term, is not on any incised calendar, but is in Plutarch (*Rom.* 21.1; cf. Acro and Pseudo-Acron *schol. ad Hor. carm.* 3.8.1 and *schol. ad Iuv.* 9.53, "Festae femineae"). See Sabatucci 1988.91–93 and 118 n. 5, Scullard 1981.86–87. At *F.* 3.171–72, Mars has taken off his helmet, but still has his spear ready for use. In his response, Ovid provides ritual directions for worshipping Juno that confirm fertility or pregnancy as the result of Mars's virile service (169). Here Ovid hints not only that, on the first of March, married women worship Mars's mother Juno, but also that they worship her as a goddess aiding childbirth, complementing Mars as a god of fertility who caused the pregnancy (253–58): "Bring flowers to the goddess: such a goddess gets joy from flowering grasses; surround your head with tender flowers. Say, 'You, Lucina, gave the light of life to us,' and say, 'Support the wish of one giving birth.' Yet if any woman is pregnant, let her pray, with her hair released, that the goddess may gently release her offspring."

47 See Frazer 1929.2.442–43 (on *F.* 2.559).

48 The idea that the *Fasti* is a poetic burden, a pregnancy of sorts, is part of a larger argument I am pursuing elsewhere. On the spear's association with Juno Curitis, see Festus, "caelibari hasta," 55L.6–8.

underlines this anxiety: “Caesar Germanice . . . officio [. . .], levem non aversatus honorem, en tibi devoto numine dexter ades,” “Germanicus Caesar, . . . not averse to a light honor, be present in your divine will for a service, you see, devoted to you.” *Officio . . . en tibi devoto* (5–6) is, as Franz Bömer notes,<sup>49</sup> the first time in Latin literature that *devotus* means “devoted to” (*deditus*) and not “cursed.” The exclamation *en* calls attention to the usage.

The phrase *officio . . . tibi devoto* has another, unnoticed, significance. Dio reports that, in the year 27 B.C.E., when Octavian received the title Augustus (53.20.2–4):

And when people were flattering him to excess in various ways, one Sextus Pacuvius, or as others call him, Apudius, outdid them all. For, in the Senate House, he dedicated himself (ἑαυτὸν καθωσίωσε) according to the model of the Iberians, and he advised the others there to do the same.

Augustus blocked him from doing so, but he ran into the streets, making others do likewise. Thus began the tradition of addressing the ruler, saying, “To you, we devote ourselves.”<sup>50</sup> Augustus’s rejection of the Iberian-style *devotio* marks as suspect its abject submission of one Roman male citizen to another.<sup>51</sup>

49 Bömer 1958.2.8 on *Fasti* 1.6.

50 Dio 53.20.2–4: *χαριζομένων δ' αὐτῷ καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ἄλλων ἄλλα, Σέξτος τις Πακούουιος, ὡς δ' ἕτεροι λέγουσιν Ἀπούδιος, πάντας ἐξενίκησεν· ἐν γὰρ τῷ συνεδρίῳ ἑαυτὸν τέ οἱ τὸν τῶν Ἰβήρων τρόπον καθωσίωσε καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις συνεβούλευε τοῦτο ποιῆσαι. ἐπειδὴ τε ὁ Αὐγούστος ἐμποδῶν οἱ ἐγένετο, πρὸς τε τὸ πλῆθος τὸ προσεστὸς ἐξεπήδησεν (ἐδημάρχει γάρ) καὶ ἐκείνους τε καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα καὶ τοὺς λοιποὺς, κατὰ τε τὰς ὁδοὺς καὶ κατὰ τοὺς στενωποὺς περινοστήσας, καθιερώσαι σφας τῷ Αὐγούστῳ κατηνάγκασεν· ἄφ' οὐπερ καὶ νῦν προστρεπόμενοι τὸν κρατοῦντα λέγειν εἰώθαμεν ὅτι “σοι καθωσιώμεθα.”*

51 The act of *devotio* to the emperor continued. Compare the ancient view that Antinous “devoted” his life—died—in exchange for the life of the emperor Hadrian: *Historia Augusta (de vita Hadriani)* 14.5–7: “He was devoted to the gods in exchange for the life of Hadrian” (*eum devotum pro Hadriano*). A similar mode of “devotion” for the emperor had appeared earlier. Suetonius describes the abject subjection of elite males who, while the emperor Caligula was gravely ill, swore to the gods to fight as gladiators if the emperor were to live (Suet. *Gaius* 12.2). Cf. Suet. *Gaius* 27.2 (Caligula compelled them to fulfill the oath). See also Dio Cassius 59.8.3 (year 37 C.E.), who names the two “devotees”: Publius Afranius Potitus, a plebeian, and Atanius Secundus, a knight. For the connection between

What did Celtic *devotio* signify for the Romans? Valerius Maximus and Julius Caesar refer to *devotio* among Celtic warriors in Iberia and in Gaul.<sup>52</sup> Bound to their leader by a strict oath of loyalty until death, Celtic warriors shared all aspects of daily life. They thought it wrong to survive battle when the leader, for whose safety they had vowed their lives, had fallen. They committed suicide if they were not killed. Other ancient scholars (Aristotle to Athenaeus) attest to some sexual component to this warrior bond, sometimes interpreted as the sexual subjection of young nobles to the chief:<sup>53</sup> their bodies serve the leader. That sexual component may have influenced Augustus's rejection of the *devotio*, but male submission to another male was enough to evoke a deep-seated anxiety in Roman male subjectivity about bodily vulnerability.<sup>54</sup>

In this context, I turn to *Epistulae ex Ponto* 2.5, an exilic letter to Salanus (Germanicus's companion in oratorical training) that expresses Ovid's longing from exile for the bonds of literary companionship. The most important part of this poem for the present discussion is its second

the *devotio* of gladiators and its idealized elite male model, the self-sacrifice of Decimus Mus for the Roman state, see, e.g., Barton 1993.15 and 40–45.

52 Both Valerius Maximus and Julius Caesar wrote in admiration of the *amicitia* that bound Celtic warriors. Val. Max. 2.6.11: "Celtiberi etiam nefas esse ducebant proelio superesse, cum is occidisset, pro cuius salute spiritum devoverant." Caes. *BG* 3.22.1 refers to the same *devotio* among Celtic warriors in Gaul, who in their own language were called *soldurii* and "enjoy every convenience together with those to whose bond [*amicitiae*] they dedicated [*dediderint*] themselves" ("omnibus in vita commodis una cum iis fruantur quorum se amicitiae dederint"). Caesar also uses the verb *devoveo* instead of *dedo*: "Nor yet within human memory was anyone [of the *soldurii*] found who refused death if he to whose friendship he had dedicated himself (*cuius se amicitiae devovisset*) had been killed." See also Plut. *Sert.* 14 and Serv. *ad Georg.* 4.218.

53 See Aristotle (*Politics* 2.9.7 and 2.6.6 [1269b]), Posidonius (quoted by Diodorus Siculus 5.32.7 as characterizing Celtic homosexual relations as "predatory" and consonant with Celtic human sacrifice and other "savageries"), Strabo (*Geogr.* 4.4.6 [C119]), and Athenaeus (13.603a). Aristotle and Athenaeus mention male homoerotic and emotional bonds between Celtic chiefs and their companions while discussing famous Greek models of such love among the Spartans and the Theban Band. See Greenberg 1988.111–12. The willingness of a man to lay down his life for that of another was an ideal of male same-sex bonds in Hellenic culture as well: Xen. *Anab.* 7.4.7, Plut. *Dial.* 761c, etc. cited at Dover 1989.50–52.

54 Among discussions of elite male competitive anxiety over activity versus passivity are Gleason 1990, Barton 1993 and 2001, esp. 34–87, Richlin 1997. For anxiety about vulnerability to feminization (castration) in male subjectivity and its contemporary use in modern film, see Silverman 1992, e.g., 52–121 ("Historical Trauma and Male Subjectivity"), and Farmer 2000.

half,<sup>55</sup> where Ovid triangulates an implied bond with Germanicus through his relation to Salanus and Salanus's relation with the prince, which Ovid describes in the language of intimacy (41–54). Salanus is a *particeps* or “sharer” in Germanicus's studies (42), a long-time companion of the prince (*comes*, 43), and the one whose speech elicits from Germanicus an *impetus* or desire to speak (45). Most important is the reciprocal eloquence Salanus elicits from Germanicus that Ovid characterizes as a divine *facundia* (55).<sup>56</sup>

In lines 55–76, Ovid describes how men of literary culture share a bond. In 59–60, the joining of innate talents (*ingeniis iunctis*) expresses a *concordia*, or bond, between men, preserving the compact (*foedera*) of their desired pursuits.<sup>57</sup> *Concordia* in the *Fasti* is most often a goddess of marriage and family feeling, but she also embodies this joining of minds and hearts in other social relationships.<sup>58</sup> Salanus and Ovid are desirous of the Muses (63: “Tu quoque Pieridum studio, studiose, teneris”), and, like Ovid, Salanus has inborn talent (64: “ingenioque faues, ingeniose, meo”). The repeated words and structures within and between these lines articulates in reciprocity of expression an implied bond between Ovid and Salanus, and

55 *Ex P.* 2.5.1–24: Ovid thanks Salanus for the favorable reception of his poetry and exalts Salanus's talent over his own. In 25–40, Ovid admits that his own meager talent cannot bear the weight of celebrating Germanicus's triumph. Weight of themes overburdens Ovid's talent causing him/it to “break,” quake in weakness. For this, compare Propertius's poem to his patron Maecenas, elegy 3.9 (esp. lines 1–6 on the same loss of face or negative *existimatio* in failing or cracking under the excess pressure of too “serious,” “heavy,” “heroic,” or “manly” a theme).

56 Such reciprocity of eloquence is, as Halperin notes (1990), fundamental to Plato's explication of erotic and dialogic (re)productivity in philosophy.

57 *Ex P.* 2.5.59–60: “Scilicet ingeniis aliqua est concordia iunctis, / et seruat studii foedera quisque sui.” I refer to a *foedus* (“bond, covenant, agreement”) applied to relations outside a marriage contract or bond, e.g., Catullus's application of *foedus amicitiae* (109.6: “aeternum hoc sanctae foedus amicitiae”) to how he feels about relations with someone, often presumed to be Lesbia (Clodia), a woman married to another man. Recalling Catullus 109, Ovid uses such language to describe his relations with men at *Tr.* 3.6.1–10, esp. 1–2 (“Foedus amicitiae nec uis, carissime, nostrae, / nec, si forte uelis, dissimulare potes”). The rest of the poem develops the theme of intimacy between Ovid and this anonymous male. But Ovid also uses *foedus* of his “compact” with his wife (*ex P.* 3.1.73).

58 *Concordia* in the *Fasti*: between Livia and Augustus (symbolized by the Altar of Concord in the Porticus Liviae, *F.* 1.649–50, 6.637–40); set within a history of conflict and concord between social classes of men (1.637–48 and 6.637–48); as a bond between men brokered through marriage, 6.89–96 (a specific reference to the joining of Roman and Sabine men via the Sabine women—cf. “traffic-in-women” model used in this essay); and 2.631–34 (family feast of the Karistia). On Hellenic *homonoia*, political unity, promoted through intimate-erotic bonds between warriors (the Theban Band and Spartans), see Leitaο 2002.159–60.

perhaps Germanicus, fellow devotees of the Muses and of the verbal arts.<sup>59</sup> While their respective literary products differ, Ovid and Salanus share “worship of a noble art” (65–66: “distat opus nostrum, sed fontibus exit ab isdem: / artis et ingenuae cultor uterque sumus”). Ovid’s words negotiate a sameness and difference in identity between himself and Salanus. Heat or passion, *calor* (68), is in both men, which recalls Ovid’s statement at *Fasti* 6.5: “There is a god inside me, I get hot [*calescimus*] when he moves.”<sup>60</sup> In this context of male bonds, Ovid concludes at *ex P.* 2.5.71–76:

iure igitur studio confinia carmina uestro  
 et commilitii sacra tuenda putas.  
 pro quibus ut maneat de quo censeris amicus  
 comprecor ad uitae tempora summa tuae  
 succedatque suis orbis moderator habenis:  
 quod mecum populi uota precantur idem.

You [Salanus] justly think that poetry is connected to your pursuit and that the rituals of our warrior companionship [*commilitii sacra*] must be kept. For the sake of these rites, I pray that he, by whom you are counted a friend, may remain your friend to the last moment of your life, and that he may succeed to guidance of the world using his own reins: this is the same thing that the people pray along with me.

Salanus’s intimate reciprocity with Germanicus provides Ovid a model in the rites of warrior companions (*commilitii sacra*, 72) that can be applied to men of literature.<sup>61</sup> These “rituals of warrior companionship,” i.e., recitation,

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59 I thank an anonymous *Arethusa* referee for highlighting this reciprocity.

60 Plus, there is a complementarity between Salanus’s oratorical *facundia*, which gives poetry *nervos*, a term suggesting vigor or even phallic or masculine stiffness, and the glistening or *nitor* that Ovid’s pursuit, poetry, transfers to prose oratory (*ex P.* 2.5.69–70).

61 The words *commilitii sacra*, 2.5.72, are part of a thematic strand in Ovid’s exilic works, that of *communia sacra*, in which *sacra* rituals often refer to the practices of poetic composition, e.g., *ex P.* 2.10.13–14 and 39–42, 3.4.67, 4.8.21–90 (esp. 81), 4.13.43–50. Sharing ritual creates a bond between worshipers, as between Ovid and Cotys, king at Tomis: *ex P.* 2.9.63–66 (this passage merges ritual worship of the emperor with shared “poetic” ritual, cf. 48–54 on Cotys’s poetic studies and 65, where Ovid uses *vates* of himself and Cotys, much as he had for himself and Germanicus at *F.* 1.25).

response, and other practices, organize literary production around elite male “homosocialization” and one of its aims, the disciplined cultivation of male identities between men.

In conclusion, I suggest that Ovid’s appeal to Germanicus as guide is suited to a wider male homosocial practice in Rome once described by Michel Foucault: the practice of having an intimate moral adviser. In this cultural ritual, two mature men in an intimate bond might cultivate and guide each other morally (cf. Cicero *de Amicitia*). Because this practice created a relationship between mature men, it did not feature the difference in ages found between Plato’s Socrates and his young lovers of wisdom, yet its pedagogic aim was similar to the Greek in its “reproduction” of values and its cultivation of circumspection about the masculine self and of cultural meanings among elite males.<sup>62</sup> However, Ovid participates in this imagined male bond from the abject position of exile, through a surrogate text, whose very flaws and discontinuities prompt elite male attempts at rewriting and mastery over Ovid’s deviant text and persona.<sup>63</sup> I am suggesting that the reader-author bond in the *Fasti* is predicated upon a collapse between text and moral identity and that Ovid seeks to engage elite male moral reflection upon their own identities as men. The text is like the *sacra* that it conveys. How one interacts with it reflects one’s elite male identity.

This, I conjecture, is a gambit, a lure, to Ovid’s likely elite male readers that will engage their reactions toward the orthodox male life. Ovid’s exile made circumspection about *carmina* and deviance (*error*) an

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62 Here I am thinking of Foucault’s notion of the “cult of the self” or “care of the self” in early imperial Roman culture: Foucault 1988. Foucault’s discussion of “care of the self” is immediately relevant to Ovid’s *Fasti* and its embedding of sex-gender dynamics into the wider *religio*-cultural discourse of the Roman calendar. At *F.* 4.107–08 (in a prefatory “hymn” to Venus), Ovid actually uses the phrase “cultivation,” “care of the self”—it is what Venus/Aphrodite inspires in humans: “She [Venus] was the first to have drawn away from mankind wild ways: from Venus came *the cultivation and orderly care of oneself*” (“*prima feros habitus homini detraxit: ab illa / venerunt cultus mundaque cura sui*”). The metaphor of *cultus sui*, or cultivation of oneself, as cultivation of both the cult of Venus and one’s *venus* or charm, extends to the first ritual of April, which begins (*F.* 4.133): “*Rite deam colitis . . .*” (note the adverb *rite* and the verb *colitis*). The women of Rome are urged to undress and bathe both the statue of Venus and themselves. However, we should observe that Ovid does not root his erotic *cura sui* in *philosophia* as Foucault did; rather, in this hymn, he would root all things, including philosophy (and its self-reflexivity), in Venus.

63 Cf. Habinek 1998, esp. chapter 5, on Ovid’s exilic poetry as emphasizing his absence from Rome and, consequently, stressing the importance of his physicality in exile, and chapter 8, on Ovid’s exilic poetry as continuing to see Rome as the source of his esteem as a Roman male.

urgent theme—at least for Ovid. His receptive, passive posture “problem-  
atizes” not just the voice of didactic authority but also the process of  
meaning formation between men; this authorial pose expresses an anxiety  
that elite males experienced in the Julio-Claudian dynastic transition. I refer  
to the “crisis of values” that Vasily Rudich describes as occurring when elite  
males realized that their esteem or *dignitas* no longer derived from self-  
sacrificing devotion to the whole community through the display of *virtus*,  
but through service to one man, the emperor, who could distribute all  
favors.<sup>64</sup>

Purdue University

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64 Rudich 1993, esp. xvii–xxxiv. Cf. the theory of a new emphasis on the reciprocal obligations of marriage at Veyne 1987, esp. 36–49, who influenced Foucault 1988.



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