

book four is structured like a tragedy and that the Dido and Aeneas love-story suggests a 'lower' genre of poetry, as the famous comments of Servius ('nam paene comicus stilus est: nec mirum, ubi de amore tractatur') rightly suggest. In short, there is already a generic indeterminacy in *Aeneid* 4 itself: because the book contains a significant mixture of elements drawn from a variety of poetic genres, one cannot say with security to what genre it properly belongs.

The dual allusions to epic and elegy and the inversion of their traditional hierarchy at the beginning of *Amores* 2.1 foreground precisely this type of generic interplay, making the specific cluster of Vergilian resonances even more apposite. Indeed, when taken together with the anagram of *saucius arcu* (7), the lines may even go so far as to ironize the entire question of genre: Ovid writes against epic even while borrowing from epic at one of its least epic moments, and the poet's own richly intertextual discourse maintains and augments Vergil's poetic miscegenations by simultaneously signalling at least two generic registers through the subtle use of an anagram. Yet Ovid also shows that those 'two generic registers' were never quite as distinct as they may have first appeared. The weapons of war are the weapons of love, and the cares of love are a subject for epic and elegy alike.<sup>4</sup> In sum, one aspect of Ovid's *programme* in *Amores* 2.1 is to make sport of the conventions of genre, and this principle is demonstrated, in part, by alluding to a passage in Vergil that is itself generically ambiguous, thereby enriching the poem's programmatic significance through an anagrammatic allusion.

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<sup>4</sup> In *Tristia* 2, Ovid defends his earlier elegies against charges of immorality and claims not to have written anything that cannot be found in 'respectable' Homeric epic (371–80) or in tragedy (381–408), the genre that the poet juxtaposes with elegy in *Amores* 3.1. In addition, the  *militia amoris* conceit developed in 1.9 recurs throughout the *Amores* and is arguably of a piece with the phenomenon described here.

#### OID, *HEROIDES* 6.1–2\*

It is a characteristic of Ovid's *Heroides* for each epistle implicitly to establish the dramatic time, context and motive for its composition by the particular heroine to whom it is attributed. In this way the poet is able to exploit the tension between the heroine's inevitably circumscribed awareness of the development of her story and the superior information which can be deployed by a reader acquainted with the mythical tradition or master-text which dictates what is actually going to follow: Penelope hands over a letter to a man whom the reader familiar with Homer can identify as Ulysses even if she cannot, Ariadne wonders whether Naxos is infested with tigers at a moment shortly before Dionysus and his tiger-driven chariot will arrive.<sup>1</sup> In other cases, the ignorance exploited is that of the addressee: Medea and

\*I wish to thank Peter Knox and my undergraduate Ovid class for their help with this note.

<sup>1</sup> For Penelope, see Ov. *Her.* 1.59–62 and D. C. Kennedy, 'The Epistolary Mode and the First of the *Heroides*', *CQ* 34 (1984), 413–22, esp. pp. 417–18. For Ariadne and the tigers, see Ov. *Her.* 10.85–6 and cf. *Ars Am.* 1.549–52. A number of examples of this phenomenon are discussed in A. Barchiesi, 'Future Reflexive: Two Modes of Allusion and Ovid's *Heroides*', *HSCP* 95 (1993), 333–65.

Hypsipyle make dark allusion to or pray for the coming act of revenge into which Jason will fall.<sup>2</sup>

It is in this context that Ovid, *Heroides* 6.1–3 is so mordantly effective:

litora Thessaliae reduci tetigisse carina  
diceris auratae vellere dives ovis.  
gratulor incolumi . . .

On one level, *Heroides* 6.1–2 sounds like a neutral setting of the exact timing of the letter at a point just after Jason's return to Greece. More obviously troubling is 6.3, where the congratulations of Hypsipyle to Jason on his safe landing can only grate on a reader mindful of what perils he faces now that he is back on land. What those perils are the close of the letter will establish with eerie (because unwitting) precision. The point to be established in this note, therefore, is that the same pattern of unconscious anticipation of disaster is apparent from even the very first lines of the poem.

In particular, the language of Ovid, *Heroides* 6.1–2 recalls two passages of Latin in which a heroine laments the fact that a hero ever came to her land. The first is Catullus 64.171–2 and the wish of Ariadne that Theseus had never landed in Crete:

. . . utinam ne tempore primo  
Cnosia Cecropiae tetigissent litora puppes.

The second is Vergil, *Aeneid* 4.657–8, where Dido wishes that the Trojan ships of Aeneas had never arrived in Carthage:

felix, heu nimium felix, si litora tantum  
numquam Dardaniae tetigissent nostra carinae.

All three of these passages combine the terms *litora* and *tetigisse* and an adjective or proper noun of place. Vergil and Ovid also use the term *carina* while Catullus reads *puppes*. This represents a considerable linguistic congruence but the context in which the terms are deployed reveals a substantial divergence, for the superficially congratulatory tone of Hypsipyle's opening is markedly at odds with the situations and the attitudes of the speakers in Catullus and Vergil. The chain of associations set off by Hypsipyle's words is therefore inescapably disconcerting. Most worrying still, however, are the shared associations and literary filiation of the laments of Dido and Ariadne. For, if Ovid's Hypsipyle sounds like Vergil's Dido and Catullus' Ariadne, it is well known that they in turn recall the nurse at Euripides, *Medea* 1–8 and Ennius, *Medea* fr. 103 (Jocelyn),<sup>3</sup> and are also strikingly similar to the words of Medea herself in the *Argonautica* of Apollonius.<sup>4</sup> In each of these cases, Medea or her confidante offers a variant on the wish that Jason and his men had never come to Colchis.<sup>5</sup> In the plays of Euripides and Ennius, the nurse introduces from the first a tone of foreboding which is more than borne out by the catastrophic close of the drama; in Apollonius, the wish corresponds to a number of passages in Books 3 and 4 where more or less

<sup>2</sup> See esp. Ov. *Her.* 6.125–30, 6.151–64, 12.175–82, 12.187–8, 12.207–12.

<sup>3</sup> The filiation is identified by Ellis and Fordyce at Catull. 64.171–2 and Pease at Verg. *Aen.* 4.657–8.

<sup>4</sup> Ellis at Catull. 64.171–2 cites Ap. Rhod. *Arg.* 3.774–9 and 4.32–3. Note how the process comes full circle with the words of Medea at Val. Flacc. *Arg.* 8.432–3: 'vellem equidem nostri tetigissent litora patris | te sine duxque illis alius quicumque fuisset'.

<sup>5</sup> As Bessone at *CQ* 45. 2 (1995), 575 notes, Medea's own lament at Ov. *Her.* 12.7–20 is also strongly reminiscent of Euripides and Ennius.

explicit allusion is made to the fate which awaits Jason and Medea after their return to Greece and outside the parameters of the epic itself.<sup>6</sup> In short, therefore, if the close of *Heroides* 6 very obviously anticipates the final fate of Jason and Medea, it is only doing what the first lines have accomplished with somewhat greater subtlety.

The identification of disturbing overtones to *Heroides* 6.1–2 has an important bearing on the relationship of the letter to previous literary accounts of Jason and Medea. In particular, it is pertinent here to point to *Heroides* 6.2 *diceris* and to reflect further on the source of Hypsipyle's information. Throughout the letter, great emphasis is placed on what Hypsipyle has been *told* of the adventures of Jason.<sup>7</sup> At 6.23–4 it is explained that the teller is a stranger recently arrived from Jason's native Thessaly. In this context, two points must be emphasized. First, the repeated reference to *fama* and to narration implicitly reflects the experience of Ovid's reader, who cannot cross-examine Hypsipyle's informant but who will instinctively check off the details of his account against the matrix provided by the literary tradition.<sup>8</sup> Second, the timing of the informant's own departure from Thessaly is very clearly fixed as coming after the return of the Argonauts but before Jason's decision to abandon Medea. To take the point of view of the reader reconstructing Hypsipyle's situation with reference to the literary tradition, the journey of the Thessalian informant may be said to have taken place in that brief period between the close of the *Argonautica* of Apollonius and the opening of the *Medea* of Euripides.

The approach suggested is open to objection. In particular, it may be said to privilege two accounts which survive intact at the expense of the multiplicity of ancient versions of this legend which do not. The lost *Argonautica* of Varro of Atax must be a vital element in any discourse of this sort. However, closer examination suggests that these are indeed the crucial texts. The nurse's lament at the opening of the *Medea* has already been noted. Apollonius, meanwhile, closes with an eight line envoi to his heroes at the moment that they land in Thessaly, the very last line of which states that ἀσπασίως ἀκτὰς Παγασίδας εἰσαπέβητε. This ending is, of course, extremely paradoxical and depends entirely on the contrast with the various prolepses for the further fate of the characters introduced by the poet at earlier points in the poem.<sup>9</sup> Yet it is actually this most unconvincing gesture at resolution which makes the last lines of the *Argonautica* so important a point of reference for *Heroides* 6. Apollonius finishes 'you [pl.] happily stepped ashore at Pagasae'; the first line of Hypsipyle's letter takes up the story from the point immediately after she closes the book of Apollonius: 'you [sing.] are said to have touched the shore of Thessaly'. The heroine goes on to offer Jason her congratulations, but the terms of her opening couplet highlight what Apollonius has been at pains here to suppress.

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<sup>6</sup> For the anticipation in Apollonius of events subsequent to the close of the epic, see G. E. Duckworth, *Foreshadowing and Suspense in the Epics of Homer, Apollonius, and Vergil* (New York, 1966), pp. 33–4. To the passages discussed by Duckworth, add the speech of Medea at Ap. Rhod. *Arg.* 4.355–90. While the threats and closing curse of Medea are not immediately fulfilled, the anxiety of Jason at 4.394 (ὕποδδείσας) is only too justified.

<sup>7</sup> See Ov. *Her.* 6.9, 'fama... venit', 6.19 'narratur', 6.32 'narrat', 6.39 'narrat', 6.132 'diceris'. On this point, see also H. Jacobson, *Ovid's Heroides* (Princeton, 1974), pp. 97–9.

<sup>8</sup> For 'fama' as a vehicle for the poet's contemplation of his own place in the literary tradition, see esp. D. Feeney, *The Gods in Epic* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 186–7 and 247–9.

<sup>9</sup> The criticism of the close of the *Argonautica* in A. Körte, *Die hellenistische Dichtung* (Leipzig, 1925), p. 199 ignores the role of the prolepses elsewhere in Books 3 and 4.