

## ACHILLES, THE WISE LOVER AND HIS SEDUCTIVE STRATEGIES (STATIUS, *ACHILLEID* 1.560–92)

A close observation of the human weaknesses, the affections, and the least heroic aspects of the epic characters of the Flavian age illustrates, above all, the importance of the erotic dimension, which concentrates the poet's interest in the emotional dynamics of the *omnis hero's* intimate life.<sup>1</sup>

In Statius' *Achilleid* the feeling of love becomes the central experience, especially in relation to the development and the growth of the young hero Achilles. Beyond the *topoi* of love at first sight<sup>2</sup> and of the *furtum amoris*,<sup>3</sup> I will concentrate on the fundamental moment of the seduction and *stuprum* of Deidamia, a princess from the island of Scyros and the companion of the young hero while he is disguised as *magna uirgo*. It is precisely the girl's rape which symbolizes the determining link of the 'ephebic transition',<sup>4</sup> that is, of the evolution of the young hero's personality.

The scene of Achilles' furtive seduction of Deidamia (*Achil.* 1.560–92) represents in a most exemplary way the degradation of the traditional heroic character, and at the same time the contamination of the epic tradition through the patterns, the language, and the *topoi* of elegy. This tradition has been often assimilated not only as a language, but also as an ethical and ideological implication: it even modifies the topical canons and rules of epic and martial heroism. In fact, in picturing the seduction strategies of the *puer* Achilles, Statius seems to leave aside the topical forms of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Achil.* 1.3–5, *Quamquam acta uiri multum inclita cantu / Maeonio (sed plura uacant), nos ire per omnem—/ sic amor est—heroa ...*

<sup>2</sup> *Achil.* 1.301–3, *Hanc ubi ducentem longe socia agmina uidit, / trux puer et nullo temeratus pectora motu / derigu it totisque nouum bibit ossibus ignem.*

<sup>3</sup> The relationship between Achilles and Deidamia is explicitly rendered in the topical terms of the 'secret' love affair, the *furtum amoris* (*Achil.* 1.560–2, *At procul occultum falsi sub imagine sexus / Aeaciden furto iam noverat una latenti / Deidamia uirum ...*; 903–4 ... *tacito iam cognita furto / Deidamia mihi ...*). The first encounter between the two of them, the *stuprum* (1.641 *furtis*) takes place in a traditional elegy context for furtive love meetings: a secluded place, in the dark and silent of night (*Achil.* 1.640–1, *et densa noctis gauisus in umbra / tempestiua suis torpere silentia furtis*). The thematic word *furtum* recurs for Deidamia's pregnancy (*Achil.* 1.669 *furtis*) as well as in the melancholic memories of sweet secrets, deceptions and trepidations (*Achil.* 1.938–9 ... *O dulcia furta dolique, / o timor!*). Only with marriage does the relationship between the hero and the princess stop being a *furtum* to become *foedus*, an official wedding pact (*Achil.* 1.925–6 ... *tandem reiectum / foedus et intrepidus nox conscia iungit amantes*). The motive for secrecy in their relationship already had an important role in Euripides' *Skyrioi*, and it appears again in the so-called *Epithalamium of Achilles and Deidamia* supposedly by Bion, but it derives especially from the elegiac tradition. It particularly derives from the subject of Ovid's *Ars* (1.33, *nos Venerem tutam concessaque furta canemus*), where the terms *furtiui* and *furtum* are applied to a vast range of erotic gestures and made to express secrecy, deception, deceit and betrayal. Cf. G. Rosati, 'L'Achilleide di Stazio, un'epica en travesti', in *Stazio, Achilleide* (Milan, 1994), 19–33.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. M. Skinner, 'Ego mulier: the construction of male sexuality in Catullus', in M. Skinner and J. Hallett, *Roman Sexualities* (Princeton, 1994), 134–7; M. Malamud and D. McGuire, 'Flavian variant myth: Valerius' *Argonautica*', in A. J. Boyle, *Roman Epic* (London, 1993), 192–217; both these essays investigate the 'transition from sexually passive young boy to sexually aggressive man' (Malamud–McGuire, 200). Cf. also D. Mendelsohn, 'Empty nest, abandoned cave: maternal anxiety in *Achilleid* I', *ClAnt* 9 (1990), 295–308.

traditional epos, in order to approach, instead, with explicit and constant references, the playful and merry themes of the erotic skirmishes described in Ovid's *Ars*.<sup>5</sup> The *furtivus iocus* of the *puer* and the princess seems almost an illustrative fragment of the 'heroic' application of the rules and techniques concerning seduction and conquest in Ovid's *Ars amatoria*.

In such a literary *lusus*, given the importance of the erotic goal, Achilles not only acquires the traits and features of the elegiac lover, but even becomes the epitome of the conqueror *sapiens*, the one who embodies and carries out the teachings of Ovid, *praeceptor amoris*.<sup>6</sup> In the seduction scene, epos and epic hero disappear;<sup>7</sup> there emerges, instead, a kind of lover we know from the *Ars*, a 'fashionable' love strategist, a proponent, together with Deidamia, of a playful stance with regard to love. In a situation which appears already bizarre owing to the fact that he is in female disguise, the hero adopts the grotesque attire of the Ovidian seducer, self-conscious, wise, and amusing. The hero's seduction strategies, Deidamia's reactions, the kisses, sighs, amorous glances, their interplay with his attempts to approach her and her flights reveal the resemblances and the characteristics of the amorous games and temptations of the courtly lovers as described by Ovid. The poet outlines with irony and amused detachment the pressing approaches of the *magna uirgo* Achilles, and the girl's coquetties,<sup>8</sup> while interweaving in the episode the lexical catalogue, the images and the techniques of the *Ars amatoria* which, on the other hand, is the source of the rules which are at the basis of the hero's seducing tactics, namely, an engaging persistence that the courted woman finds impossible to resist (*Ars am.* 2.334, *blanda sedulitate*).<sup>9</sup>

The *exemplum* Statius points out to us at the end of the seduction episode between the hero and Deidamia calls to mind the erotic games, the first mischievous approaches (*Achil.* 1.589, *oscula ... insidiosa*) of the *iuuenis* Jupiter to his naive and scared sister Juno (*Achil.* 1.588–91, *Sic sub matre Rhea iuuenis regnator Olympi / oscula securae dabat insidiosa sorori / frater adhuc, medii donec reuerentia cessit / sanguinis et uersos germana expauit amores*). The discovery of love and physical attraction between the two gods, as already described in *Theb.* 10.61–4,<sup>10</sup> links the gods and heroes in a more

<sup>5</sup> The critics have paid scant attention to this episode in the poem and to the Ovidian character of Achilles' erotic approaches; cf. A.-M. Taisne, *L'esthétique de Stace* (Paris, 1994), 62; G. Aricò, 'Rileggendo l'*Achilleide*', in *Epicedion. Hommage à P. Papinius Statius 96–1996* (Poitiers, 1996), 194, who mentions briefly 'ambigui approcci amorosi' of 'altro Achille, più incline alle lusinghe sentimentali e affettive'. A. Perutelli, *La poesia epica latina* (Rome, 2000), 206, though, refers to Ovid's *Ars* stating that 'Achille che corteggia Deidamia è l'amante perfetto descritto nell'*Ars*, il tenace corteggiatore, che non concede tregua all'amata e dispiega con lei tutte le insidie possibili per conquistarla. Questo stratega dell'amore assomiglia molto a qualche amante della buona società, poco a un eroe dell'epos.' Cf. also W. Schetter, *Untersuchungen zur epischen Kunst des Statius* (Wiesbaden, 1960), 135.

<sup>6</sup> *Ars am.* 1.17, *ego sum praeceptor Amoris*.

<sup>7</sup> T. Benediktson, 'Propertius' elegiacization of Homer', *Maia* 37 (1985), 17–27, tells us about a 'process of elegiacization' concerning Achilles in Prop. 2.8.29–40, referring to a 'destruction of epic values', and a 'substitution' of the values, the style and the characters of the epos with those of Latin elegy.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. F. G. Sirna, 'Alcmane εὔρετης τῶν ἐρωτικῶν μελῶν', *Aegyptus* 53 (1973), 41–6, which defines Deidamia as a 'donna sfrontata ed esperta di ogni lusinga d'amore', at 47.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. also *Ars am.* 1.153–4, *Pallia si terra nimium demissa iacebunt, / collige et immunda sedulus efffer humo*.

<sup>10</sup> *Ipsa illic magni thalamo desponsa Tonantis, / expers conubii et timide positura sororem, / lumine demisso pueri Iovis oscula libat / simplex et nondum furtis offensa mariti*. The tender picture offered by the *Thebaid* stresses the sweet innocence of the surge of passion (*Theb.* 10.63–4, *lumine demisso ... oscula libat / simplex ...*) and Juno's naivety (*Theb.* 10.62 *expers conubii et timide ...*).

recognizable and humanized perception of the world of epos, while presenting the mythological pattern of Achilles' erotic strategies: on the other hand, Jupiter is *puer* (*Theb.* 10.63) and *insidiosus* (*Achil.* 1.589), like the hero of the *Achilleid*; Statius had already cited Jupiter as an erotic *exemplum*, both for his amorous adventures and for the deceitful female disguise (*Achil.* 1.260–5).

I continue now analysing the strategies employed by Achilles, elegiac hero and *sapiens* lover, to seduce his 'playing companion', in search of specific comparisons in the erotic guidebook of Ovid's *Ars*. Once he has overcome the shame caused by the presence of his mother (*Achil.* 1.565, *exsoluitque rudem genetrix digressa pudorem*), Achilles disguised as a woman chooses Deidamia as his companion (*Achil.* 1.566, *protinus elegit comitem*), following her everywhere and trying constantly to catch her glance (*Achil.* 1.568–9, *admouet insidias: illam sequiturque premitque / inprobus, illam oculis iterumque iterumque resumit*). Before the princess's innocent naivety (*Achil.* 1.567, *nil tale timenti*) the tactics of Achilles consist of mischievous tricks<sup>11</sup> in order to conquer his beloved. The expression *blandeque nouas ... / admouet insidias* (*Achil.* 1.567–8) betrays the poet's irony in depicting the hero, always ready for not exactly epic<sup>12</sup> strategic moves, let alone 'new' ones: in fact, the adjective *nouus* does not only express the development of such strategies, but it also hints ironically at Achilles' scrupulous observation of the instructions in Ovid's guidebook.

Assisted by his disguise, the hero's behaviour immediately exemplifies one of the fundamental teachings of Ovid's *Ars*: love's success is born of friendship. Ovid reminds us also of the *blanda sedulitas* (*Ars am.* 2.334) which is easily reached in the loving company of the *grex uirgineus* (*Achil.* 1.564). According to the personal experience of the elegiac poet, feigning to be a good friend of the woman and caring devoutly for her (*Ars am.* 1.722, *cultor*) is a very good indirect approach (*Ars am.* 1.721, *aditu*) to conquer her confidence and her love<sup>13</sup> (*Ars am.* 1.719–22, *Nec semper Veneris spes est profitenda roganti; / intret amicitiae nomine tectus amor. / Hoc aditu uidi tetricae data uerba puellae; / qui fuerat cultor, factus amator erat*). The hero's *aditus* first consists in the insistent quest for Deidamia's company as well as her friendship. The description of the relationship between them reveals an affectionate familiarity with games, jokes, provocations (*Achil.* 1.571–2) and common experience: Achilles teaches her to play the lyre (*Achil.* 1.572–4), while the princess sings with him and instructs him in spinning wool (*Achil.* 1.580–3). In describing the erotic ruses of an elegiac Achilles, Statius draws from the topical language of erotic–elegiac poetry, as is shown by the presence of the words *inprobus* and *rudis*.

Achilles *premit*<sup>14</sup> *inprobus*: he 'presses Deidamia without compunction', he smothers her with shameless attention; the adjective *inprobus* properly indicates the boy's pranks. Statius often lingers on them, intent on looking benevolently and with a smile on every small daily emotion, as in the case of the foolish craving for war of the child-hero Parthenopaeus (*Theb.* 4.319, ... *teneroque unde improba pectore uirtus?*; 9.744, *puer improbe*), or the roguish tricks, the naughty games of the child Apollo

<sup>11</sup> The term *blande* significantly accompanies *insidias*, signifying the deceitful seductiveness of Achilles' approaches.

<sup>12</sup> The verb *admoueo* traditionally refers to the military field, and it usually indicates war tactics and movement of troops; cf. Liv. 26.30; 27.25; 34.6; 42.57.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. J. Méheust, *Stace, Achilleïde* (Paris, 1971), 31: 'c'est Déidamie dont il gagne malicieusement la confiance pour mieux violer la jeune fille'.

<sup>14</sup> *Premere* can be considered equivalent to the verb *instare*, which can be found, for example, in *Ars am.* 1.718 *taedia tolle lenius instando tui*, indicating the lover's 'pressing'.

(*Theb.* 4.802–3, ... *per litora reptans / improbus Ortygiae latus inclinabat Apollo*) and the *puer* Achilles (*Achil.* 1.40–1, ... *Lapitharum proelia ludit / improbus et patria iam se metitur in hasta*). Most of all, this adjective signifies the licentiousness of some 'naughty' erotic attitudes, such as Achilles' approaches, or the betrayals and infidelities of Jupiter *improbus* (*Theb.* 1.253), the precocious longings of the nymph Dercetes (*Theb.* 7.300, *improba conubii*) or the 'available' Deidamia (*Achil.* 1.535, *improba uirgo*). This meaning of *improbus*<sup>15</sup> occurs in erotic and elegiac poetry, where it can indicate the behaviour of *Amor* himself, more often the licentious attitudes of the lovers;<sup>16</sup> *Ov. Ars am.* 1.664 (*Pugnabit primo fortassis, et 'improbe' dicet*) should be particularly quoted, where, in a passage Statius certainly knew well, a *puella* trying to resist an erotic assault rebukes the seducer who is attempting to force her, calling him *improbe*.

Achilles' persistent attentions towards his companion Deidamia, on the other hand, enact Ovid's rules. Indeed, he repeatedly<sup>17</sup> advises the seducer to follow the woman without respite, to while the time away at her whim (*Ars am.* 1.504, *arbitrio dominae tempora perde tuae*), to make always and everywhere the most of familiarity and habit in the relationship, as instruments of pressure in view of the courtship (*Ars am.* 2.345–8, *Fac tibi consuescat: nihil assuetudine maius, / quam tu dum capias, taedia nulla fuge. / Te semper uideat, tibi semper praebeat aures, / exhibeat uultus noxque diesque tuos*). This same indication is given to women: they must unremittingly keep their young and inexperienced lovers near (*Ars am.* 3.559, *praeda nouella*), as if they were enclosed within high hedges (*Ars am.* 3.558–62, *Hic rudis et castris nunc primum notus Amoris, / qui tetigit thalamos praeda nouella tuos, / te solam norit, tibi semper inhaereat uni;*<sup>18</sup> */ cingenda est altis saepibus ista seges. / Effuge riualem: uinces, dum sola tenebis*).

The Ovidian rule acquires a special value if we consider that both Statius' lovers are young and without experience, getting acquainted for the first time with erotic feeling (*Ars am.* 3.558, *Hic rudis et castris nunc primum notus Amoris*). The word *rudis* particularly shows again the occurrence of the lexical heritage of elegy in the erotic events of the *Achilleid*; the adjective stresses the lack of erotic experience of the future readers of the elegy (*Am.* 2.1.5–6, *Me legat in sponsi facie non frigida uirgo / et rudis ignoto tactus amore puer*), and of Statius' naive *puer*, never before touched by amorous feeling (*Achil.* 1.30, *nullo temeratus pectora motu*) until the arrival of Deidamia. Statius himself alludes to the elegiac value of the word<sup>19</sup> when he signifies *rudis* Achilles' shame, and points out his awkwardness in the presence of his mother<sup>20</sup> and of a feeling still unknown to him (*Achil.* 1.564–5, *Namque ut uirgineo stetit in grege durus Achilles / exsolvitque rudem genetrix digressa pudorem*). The *rudis pudor* of

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *TLL* 7.1, 691–2. R. Pichon, *Index uerborum amatoriorum* (Paris, 1902 = Hildesheim, 1966), 172, where the word almost takes on the meaning of *audax*, *temerarius*.

<sup>16</sup> Starting from *Cat.* 57.1, 10, *improbis cinaedis*; *Ov. Am.* 2.5.23, *improba tum uero iungentes oscula uidi*; *Ars am.* 3.796, *nec taceant mediis improba uerba iocis*.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. especially *Ars am.* 1.487–504, where the author lists the three best situations to 'press' a woman: while she goes by in her litter (1.487–90), when she goes for a walk (1.491–6) and at the theatre (1.497–504).

<sup>18</sup> In *Ars am.* 2.347 (*te semper ... tibi semper*) and 3.560 (*te ... tibi semper*) the polyptoton of the personal pronoun, the parallelism and the anaphorae underline the concept of the persevering presence of the seducer beside his prey.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. among many instances *Prop.* 4.3.12, *cum rudis urgenti brachcia uicta dedi*; *Ov. Ars am.* 3.559, *Hic rudis et castris nunc primum notus Amoris*.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *Achil.* 1.312, *ni pudor et iunctae teneat reverentia matris*; 323–4, *Mulcetur laetumque rubet uisusque proteruos / obliquat...*

Achilles, again an elegiac reminiscence,<sup>21</sup> implies at the same time shame, awkwardness and 'clumsy' behaviour, quite unsuited to the polite rules of courtship. Achilles does not limit his courtship to psychological pressure and to an assiduous presence at the side of the girl, but he gives substance to it with his obsessive fixed glances, avidly focused on Deidamia (*Achil.* 1.569, ... *illam oculis iterumque iterumque resumit*; 584–5, ... *nimio quod lumine sese / figat* ...). Staring relentlessly at the *puella* belongs to the *topoi* of the heritage of elegiac poetry, and is to be understood as a revealing token of interest and amorous passion, as included in the advice given in the *Ars* (1.573, *atque oculos oculis spectare fatentibus ignem*),<sup>22</sup> or in the *Heroides*, when Acontius discloses his *furor* of love to Cydippe looking insistently and ardently straight into her eyes (*Her.* 20.207, *Et, te dum nimium miror, nota certa furoris*). However, the hero does not hesitate to dare even more, and to try repeatedly to enter into physical contact with Deidamia,<sup>23</sup> getting near, hitting her playfully with baskets and light knocks with his *thyrsus*, brushing her hand and taking it to lead her, while teaching her to play the lyre (*Achil.* 1.570–5, *Nunc nimius lateri non euitantis inhaeret, / nunc leuibis sertis, lapsis nunc sponte canistris, / nunc thyrsos parcente ferit, modo dulcia notae / fila lyrae tenuisque modos et carmina monstrat / Chironis ducitque manum digitosque sonantis / infringit citharae* ...).

Such behaviour on the part of Achilles derives from a natural urge to possess, but also from the specific teachings imparted by Ovid to the seducer: indeed he, cleverly exploiting the surroundings and any possible suitable circumstances (*Ars* 1.604, ... *tibi accessus ... locumque dabit*), does not hesitate to approach the woman, now brushing her hip, now her foot or her hands. For instance, after the banquet, in the confusion created by the leaving crowd, the *sapiens* lover is able to gently caress the woman's body and set his foot near hers<sup>24</sup> (*Ars am.* 1.603–8, *At cum discedet mensa conuiuia remota, / ipsa tibi accessus turba locumque dabit. / Insere te turbae leuiterque admotus eunti / uelle latus digitis et pede tange pedem. / Colloquii iam tempus adest; fuge rustice longe / hinc Pudor: audentem Forsque Venusque iuuat*). At the circus,<sup>25</sup> where men and women can sit side by side (*Ars am.* 1.142, *quod tibi tangenda est lege puella loci*),<sup>26</sup> the seducer is able without difficulty to try to touch the hip of his beloved (*Ars am.* 1.139–42, *proximus a domina nullo prohibente sedeto, / iunge tuum lateri qua potes usque latus. / Et bene, quod cogit, si nolis, linea iungi, / quod tibi tangenda est lege puella*

<sup>21</sup> The adjectives *rudis* and *rusticus* are topical to the repressive value of *pudor*; cf. Prop. 3.15.3–5, *ut mihi praetexti pudor est sublatus amictus / et data libertas noscere amoris iter, / illa rudis animos per notes conscia ...*; Ov. *Am.* 3.1.45–6 *Rustica sit sine me lasciui mater Amoris: / huic ego proueni lena comesque deae*; *Ars* 1.607–8 *Colloquii iam tempus adest; fuge rustice longe / hinc Pudor: audentem Forsque Venusque iuuat*; 767 *Si doctus uideare rudi petulansue pudenti*; *Ars* 2.565–6 *Nec Venus oranti (neque enim dea mollior ulla est) / rustica Graduo difficilisque fuit*.

<sup>22</sup> A certain formal similarity can be noticed between Ovid's rules in *Ars am.* 1.573 and *Achil.* 1.569: the term *oculis*, the anaphora of *iterumque* and the polyptoton *oculos oculis* stress the insistence of the passionate looks.

<sup>23</sup> We also find some elements in the *Epithalamium of Achilles and Deidamia*, where Achilles remains the whole day at Deidamia's side (22, ἐξ αὐτῆς δ' ἐπὶ νύκτα παρίζετο Δηδάμεια; 25–6), kisses her hand (23), and finally shows her the beautiful woven handiwork (23–4).

<sup>24</sup> Cf. also *Am.* 1.4.55–8 *Cum surges abitura domum, surgemus et omnes, / in medium turbae fac memor agmen eas: / agmine me inuenies aut inuenieris in illo; / quidquid ibi poteris tangere, tange mei*. The polyptoton of *Am.* 1.4.58 states precisely the obsession of physical contact (*tangere, tange*), satisfied at last in the confusion of the banquet guests.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. *Am.* 3.2.18–22, where Ovid reproaches his rivals for profiting of *loca commoda* to touch his beloved: *Quid frustra refugis? Cogit nos linea iungi; / haec in lege loci commoda circus habet. / Tu tamen, a dextra quicumque es, parce puellae; / contactu lateris laeditur ista tui*.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Ov. *Tr.* 2.283–4, *Tollatur circus: non tuta licentia circi est. / Hic sedet ignoto iuncta puella uiro*.



*loci*). Some textual connections are evident: the vulnerability of the female hip to the schemes of the suitor can be read both in the passages of Ovid already quoted (*Am.* 3.2.22; *Ars am.* 1.140; 606) and in the *Achilleid* (1.570); Ovid's rule *iunge tuum lateri qua potes usque latus* (*Ars am.* 1.140) recurs with identical strength in *Achil.* 1.570 *lateri inhaeret*; Statius' phrase, on the other hand, could also derive from Ov. *Am.* 3.11a.17–18<sup>27</sup> (*Quando ego non fixus lateri patienter adhaesi, / ipse tuus custos, ipse uir, ipse comes?*), where, however, 'to stick to the hip' (*Am.* 3.11a.17 ... *lateri ... adhaesi*) of the woman specifies a metaphorical moral support rather than some kind of erotic contact.

The seductive strategy displayed by Achilles shows no 'elements of originality', not even when the hero, with the excuse of teaching the princess the rhythms of the lyre, profits by the opportunity to get near the woman and to guide her hands and her fingers (*Achil.* 1.574–5, ... *ducitque manum digitosque sonantis / infingit citharae* ...). Besides the many references to the opportunities for touching the beloved's hand,<sup>28</sup> in the *Ars* we can actually find a specific citation of the games of love (*Ars am.* 3.328, *dulcibus ... iocis*) that can be an accompaniment to the music, and in particular the sound of the twelve-stringed harp (*Ars am.* 3.327–8, *Disce etiam duplici genalia nablia palma / uerrere: conueniunt dulcibus illa iocis*).

Again, the coquettish behaviour shown by Deidamia derives from the gallantries and tactics illustrated by Ovid. In fact, far from feeling embarrassed by the *avances* of her companion, whom she believes to be a woman, she appears to welcome, certainly not to avoid (*Achil.* 1.570, *non euitantis*), the interest of the *magna uirgo* Achilles. Maybe the poet is ironically alluding to Deidamia's non-refusal in his use of the litotes of the phrase quoted and also with the insistent alliteration of the sound *n* in *Achil.* 1.570 (*nunc nimius ... non euitantis inhaeret*). Achilles the seducer goes on with his plot and, in the excitement of songs and music, does not hesitate to hug Deidamia, overcoming her with kisses and compliments (*Achil.* 1.575–6, ... *nunc occupat ora canentis / et ligat amplexus et mille per oscula laudat*). Together with the hero's strategy to achieve conquest, the consonance of Statius' images with the repertoire of elegy also goes on, and Achilles, *amans sapiens*, sticks to the expressive gestures prescribed by Ovid's rules as well. More to the point, the kisses 'stolen' from Deidamia while she sings (*Achil.* 1.575–6, ... *occupat ora canentis / ... mille per oscula*) remind us of *Am.* 2.4.25–6, where already Ovid longs to steal kisses (*Am.* 2.4.26, *oscula ... rapta*) from a singer, while she modulates her charming voice (*Haec quia dulce canit flectitque facillima uocem, / oscula cantanti rapta dedisse uelim*), and of the erotic approaches of Phaon, and the kisses stolen from the poetess Sappho while she sings (*Her.* 15.43–4, *cantabam, meminim—meminerunt omnia amantes—/ oscula cantanti tu mihi rapta dabas*).

Ovid, moreover, had already expressly suggested to the seducer to join sweet compliments to *oscula* (*Ars* 1.662, *Quis sapiens blandis non misceat oscula uerbis*), and to kiss the woman even against her will (*Ars am.* 1.663, ... *non data sume tamen*). According to the poet, the woman's resistance actually hides her wish to be won (*Ars am.* 1.665, *pugnando uinci se tamen illa uolet*);<sup>29</sup> the seducer should only avoid hurting

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Cat. 21.6, *haerens ad latus omnia experiris*. As for *haereo* and its compounds meaning 'stick to, squeeze together', cf. Verg. *Aen.* 3.608; Ov. *Met.* 1.485; *Her.* 5.70, *Haerebat gremio turpis amica tuo*; TLL 6. 2494–8.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. e.g. *Ars am.* 1.578 *tu pete, dumque petis, sit tibi tacta manus*.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. also the erotic games between the poet and Corinna described in *Am.* 1.5.14–16, *pugnabat tunica sed tamen illa tegi; / quae cum ita pugnaret tamquam quae uincere nollet, / uicta est non aegre proditiōe sua*.

the tender lips. The analysis of Ovid's rules and the evolution of Achilles' techniques of approach start to illustrate the notion of the seducer's *vis*, a mixture of bravery and violence, a kind of assault supposedly welcome by the female prey (*Ars am.* 1.662–7, *Quis sapiens blandis non misceat oscula uerbis / Illa licet non det, non data sume tamen. / Pugnabit primo fortassis, et 'improbe' dicet; / pugnando uinci se tamen illa uolet. / Tantum, ne noceant teneris male rapta labellis, / neue queri possit dura fuisse, cave*).

Nevertheless, Achilles will resort to violent conquest only after the failure of his strategies and the flights of the girl, when the hero's identity seems revealed. There follows an ambiguous and amusing literary *lusus* on the affectionate exchange of experiences and information between the 'two fellow virgins' (*Achil.* 1.577–83): the princess learns with amazement and sings happily (*Achil.* 1.577, ... *libens discit; 579 adsidue stupet* ...) the heroic feats of the *puer* Achilles, while the *Aeacides* learns to refine his manners and to spin rough wool.<sup>30</sup> At a certain point, the seducing hero is replaced by the hero's weak female image, reduced to the ridiculous role of an elegiac *seruus amoris*.<sup>31</sup> The true identity of the *magna uirgo* by now seems to escape the simulation of the disguise; in addition to the sound of his voice and the strength of his embrace (*Achil.* 1.583, ... *uocisque sonum pondusque tenentis*), Deidamia is also surprised by the revealing signs of the hero's passion, the fact that he persistently looks at her and sighs when talking to her (*Achil.* 1.584–6, ... *nimio quod lumine sese / figat et in uerbis intempestius anhelet, / miratur* ...). We have here again the theme of the fixed stare of the seducer looking at the woman (*Achil.* 1.569), but the adherence of Statius' text to the rules of the *Ars amatoria* is clearly exposed by the pairing of the sigh to the *topos* of the ardent look of love. Indeed, in the book he dedicated to the teachings to women, Ovid had stressed the importance of revealing their love by sighs and staring at the man; these were supposed to be the revealing signs of passion (*Ars am.* 3.672–6, *Efficite (et facile est) ut nos credamus amari: / prona uenit cupidis in sua uota fides. / Spectet amabilius iuuenem et suspiret ab imo / femina* ...). The intention and feelings of the hero are by now clear enough to Deidamia, but she keeps deciding to flee, 'light as a virgin', preventing him from revealing himself (*Achil.* 1.586–7, ... *iam iamque dolos aperire parantem / uirginea leuitate fugit prohibetque fateri*). Such behaviour may be motivated by fear, as we can infer from the comparison of the first love games between Jupiter and Juno (*Achil.* 1.591, ... *expauit amores*), or by feminine coquetry; in fact, it inserts the princess's movements into the strategies of the Ovidian amorous skirmishes, anticipating the following steps of the seducing hero. The whole scene seems to have been shaped by the tactics of the *Ars*. Ovid himself urges the lovers to learn to recognize female strategies—women flee, they want to be entreated—and so to be indifferent to their rebuffs (*Ars am.* 1.345–6, *Quae dant, quaeque negant, gaudent tamen esse rogatae: / ut iam fallaris, tuta repulsa tua est; 485–6, Quod rogat illa, timet; quod non rogat, optat, ut instes: / insequare, et uoti postmodo compos eris*). And indeed Achilles decides to take Deidamia by force, and the seduction becomes a *stuprum*.

<sup>30</sup> *Achil.* 1.580–3, *Ipsa quoque et ualidos proferre modestius artus / et tenuare rudes attrito pollice lanas / demonstrat reficitque colos et perdit dura / pensa manu...*

<sup>31</sup> There is an obvious allusion to the elegiac *topos* of *seruitium amoris*, relating to Hercules dressed as a woman and devoted to female occupations for Omphale, queen of Lydia, also mentioned by Statius (*Theb.* 10.646–9; *Achil.* 1.260–1, ... *si Lydia dura / pensa manu mollesque tulit Tiryntius hastas*); *Ov. Ars am.* 2.215–22; *Her.* 9.47–118; *Prop.* 3.11.17–20; 4.9.47–50.

The motive for the hero's violence against the princess of Scyros could already be found in Euripides' *Skyrioi*,<sup>32</sup> but Statius has mainly in mind Ovid's *Ars*, where the episode (*Ars am.* 1.680–706) is pointed out precisely as an *exemplum* of sexual violence accepted by the woman with pleasure (*Ars am.* 1.680–1, *Fabula nota quidem, sed non indigna referri, I Scyrias Haemonio iuncta puella uiro*). Ovid presents Achilles' stuprum (*Ars am.* 1.704) of Deidamia as a *fabula nota*, exemplifying the usefulness of 'audacious' tactics in love and the effectiveness of the use of *vis* in seducing a *puella*: indeed, as the case of Deidamia demonstrates, women yield gladly to the lover's 'violent embraces', only to fall afterwards so much in love as to hold on to the author of the rape<sup>33</sup> at any cost (*Ars am.* 1.703–4, *Vis ubi nunc illa est? Quid blanda uoce moraris I auctorem stupri, Deidamia, tui?*). As the *Achilleid*, the Ovidian antecedent starts also with a hint at Paris' abduction of Helen and the preparations for the Trojan War,<sup>34</sup> to go on later to dwell on the feminine occupations of the hero as *seruus amoris*, the wool, the baskets, the flax on the distaff,<sup>35</sup> and lastly on the *stuprum* of Deidamia (*Ars am.* 1.697–704, *Forte erat in thalamo uirgo regalis eodem; I haec illum stupro comperit esse uirum. I Viribus illa quidem uicta est (ita credere oportet), I sed uoluit uinci uiribus illa tamen. I Saepe 'mane' dixit, cum iam properaret Achilles: I fortia nam posito sumpserat arma colo. I Vis ubi nunc illa est? quid blanda uoce moraris I auctorem stupri, Deidamia, tui?*). Ovid insists on the concept of the violence accepted and welcomed by Deidamia: anaphorae and polyptoton stress the thematic term *uis* (*Ars am.* 1.699, *uiribus; 700, uiribus; 703, uis*), while the triple alliteration (*Ars am.* 1.700, *uoluit uinci uiribus*) and again the polyptoton of the verb *uinco* (*Ars am.* 1.699–700, *uicta est I uinci*) underscore the wish of the *puella* to be raped. The contrast between the outward show of the female strategy of refusal and the actual, glad acceptance of the rape is rendered by the poet by means of the adverb *tamen* (*Ars am.* 1.700, *sed uoluit ... illa tamen*), as is customary in such precepts that expose the false chastity of women (*Ars am.* 1.345, *Quae dant, quaeque negant, gaudent tamen ...; 663, illa licet non det, non data sume tamen; 665, pugnando uinci se tamen illa uolet*).

Statius too describes the violence in terms of the unmasking of the pretences and seduction strategies, in terms of the definitive assertion of Achilles' real identity and of his true (*Achil.* 1.642–3, *ueros I ... amplexus*) passion (*Achil.* 1.640–3, *... densa noctis gaudis in umbra I tempestiua suis torpere silentia furtis I ui potitur uotis et toto pectore ueros I admouet amplexus ...*). Moreover, Statius also employs the term *uis*, stressed by the alliteration (*Achil.* 1.642, *ui potitur uotis*), in order to indicate the

<sup>32</sup> 'Ο δ[ὲ] γεγώς τέλει / ος [ὑπο]κλέψας τὴν Δηιδά[μειαν ἐν] / κυ[ον ἐπ]οίησεν. I am quoting A. Koerte, 'Euripides' Skyrier', *Hermes* 69 (1934), 2. For Euripides' play, of which only the *hypothesis* and some fragments survive, cf. also C. Gallavotti, 'Nuove ipotesi di drammi euripidei', *RFIC* 61 (1933), 177–88; G. Aricò, 'L'*Achilleide* di Stazio: tradizione letteraria e invenzione narrativa', *ANRW* 2.32.5 (1986), 2944–62.

<sup>33</sup> The phrase in *Ars am.* 1.703, *... blanda uoce moraris*, besides stating Deidamia's request to Achilles to stop in Scyros and not to leave for Troy could also allude to the erotic games between them; such interpretation can be supported by a comparison with *Ars am.* 2.690–1 (*Me uoces audire iuuat sua gaudia fassas, I utque morer meme sustineamque roget*), where Ovid evokes the sweet and passionate (*uoces ... sua gaudia fassas*) requests of *puella* to delay the pleasure of love and wait for her (*utque morer meme sustineam ...*), and mainly with *Ars am.* 2.717–18 (*Crede mihi, non est Veneris properanda uoluptas I sed sensim tarda prolicienda mora*), where *propere* and *mora* are in combination, as at 1.701–4 (701 *properaret; 703 moraris*).

<sup>34</sup> *Ars am.* 1.683–8; *Achil.* 1.20–9, 397–559.

<sup>35</sup> *Ars am.* 1.691–6, *Quid facis, Aeacide? Non sunt tua munera lanae; I tu titulos alia Palladis arte petes. I Quid tibi cum calathis? Clipeo manus apta ferendo est; I pensa quid in dextra, qua cadet Hector, habes? I Reice succinctos operoso stamine fusos: I quassanda est ista Pelias hasta manu.*



violence of the *stuprum*; besides, *uis* and a verb like *potior*<sup>36</sup> (*Achil.* 1.905, *possessa*) can also be read in *Achil.* 1.905, in the story Achilles tells to Lycomedes (*Achil.* 1.903–5, ... *Tacito iam cognita furto / Deidamia mihi; quid enim his obstare lacertis, / qua potuit nostras possessa repellere uires?*). More than the expression of the aggressive and violent nature of the hero Achilles,<sup>37</sup> the *uis* he in the end uses to 'possess' Deidamia is none other than the umpteenth allusion to Ovid's *Ars*, the last tactics of the alluring *puer*, the exemplary perpetrator of the violence welcomed by women (*Ars am.* 1.672, ... *grata est uis ista puellis*), as often theorized by the elegiac poet (*Ars am.* 1.672–5, *Vim licet appelles: grata est uis ista puellis; / quod iuuat, inuitae saepe dedisse uolunt. / Quaecumque est ueneris subita uiolata rapina, / gaudet, et improbitas muneris instar habet*; 678–9, *Vim passa est Phoebe, uis est allata sorori, / et gratus raptae raptor uterque fuit*; *Her.* 17.186–8,<sup>38</sup> *Vi mea rusticitas excutienda fuit. / Utilis interdum est ipsis iniuria passis; / sic certe felix esse coacta forem*).

The first amorous encounter between Achilles and Deidamia and the violence of the *stuprum* itself represent the result of the seduction tactics and techniques recommended by Ovid, but at the same time mark the departure from such strategies. Indeed, Statius' hint at the *ueri amplexus* (*Achil.* 1.642–3) underlines the release from pretence, the *lusus* of the approaches to seduction, on which the influence of Ovidian elegy has proved so evident.

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<sup>36</sup> For *potior* cf. for instance *Ars am.* 1.385, *Fac domina potiare prius* ... Both words can also, significantly, be found in Ovid's tale of the conception of Achilles and the rape of Thetis by Peleus; cf. *Met.* 11.240, *uim parat*; 265, *et potitur uotis ingentique implet Achille*.

<sup>37</sup> For O. A. W. Dilke, 'Magnus Achilles and Statian baroque', *Latomus* 22 (1963), 502, the rape of Deidamia expresses the heroic nature of Achilles, 'violent hero'. Cf. also Méheust (n. 13), 31: 'ainsi se trouve assurée l'unité du caractère d'Achille, surtout son côté destructeur, fougueux, conquérant'.

<sup>38</sup> Helen herself incites Paris to the 'forced happiness' of violence; cf. G. Rosati, 'Epistola elegiaca e lamento femminile', in *Ovidio, Lettere di eroine* (Milano, 1989), 325–7.