

PERFER ET OBDURA: MULTO GRAVIORA TULISTI  
(TR. 5.11.7): OVID'S REJECTION OF ULYSSES'  
ENDURANCE

Time and again in his poetry of exile, Ovid claims that Ulysses, the stock-exemplar of suffering, has suffered much less than he.<sup>1</sup> Ulysses, for his part, was helped by Athena and Leucothea,<sup>2</sup> had loyal companions,<sup>3</sup> travelled only a short distance (*Tr.* 1.5.59–60) and even had pleasant encounters in his wanderings (*Pont.* 4. 10. 12–18). The fatherland he longed for was of no consequence (*Tr.* 1.5.67–8) and, to top it all off, the tale of his adventures was largely made up (*Tr.* 1.5.79). By contrast Ovid's sufferings are all real. He has no divine helper to counter the wrath of Augustus/Jove, a god much more powerful than Neptune; exiled from the global capital, *imperii...deumque locus*, he was forced to travel to the edge of the earth (*Tr.* 1.5.70), was abandoned by most of his friends and had no pleasant or helpful encounter.

Ovid's feeling of misfortune which yields a competition with Ulysses' misfortune can be detected in his subtle manipulation of easily recognisable Homeric phrases describing Ulysses' predicament, beginning with the very beginning of the *Odyssey*: ὅς μάλα πολλά πλάγχθη (*Od.* 1.1–2: 'who very much wandered') is echoed in *Neritio nam mala plura tuli* (*Tr.* 1.5.58: 'for I suffered more ills than the Neritian'), with the comparative *plura* multiplying πολλά and the plural noun *mala* picking up and multiplying the homophonous adverb μάλα in Homer.<sup>4</sup> Homer's πολλά δ' ὁ γ' ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα (*Od.* 1. 4: 'he suffered many woes on the sea') undergoes a similar amplification in *plurima sed pelago terraque pericula passum* (*Tr.* 3.2.7), with *plurima* echoing πολλά and the land added to the sea (Ovid repeatedly complains that he has suffered not only at sea, but also on land. See, for instance, *Tr.* 4.10.107: *totque tuli terra casus pelagoque quot inter...*; *Tr.* 3.11.59–62, in the context of a comparison with Ulysses: *tot mala sum fugiens tellure, tot aequore passus*).<sup>5</sup>

Undermining Ulysses' sufferings obviously entails a dismissal of the hero's famed endurance: if Ulysses does not suffer much, he does not deserve special credit for his forbearance. Indeed, Ovid expounds on Ulysses' fortitude only once in his poetry of exile, at *Tr.* 1.5.71–2: *illi corpus erat durum patiensque laborum: l invalidae vires ingenuaeque mihi*.<sup>6</sup> Even this isolated reference, however, is hardly appreciative,

<sup>1</sup> Useful observations on the treatment of Ulysses in Ovid's exilic poetry are in H. Rahn, 'Ovids elegische Epistel', *A&A* 7 (1963), 105–20, at 115–20; W.B. Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme*<sup>2</sup> (Ann Arbor, 1968), 142; J.M. Frécaut, *L'esprit et l'humour chez Ovide* (Grenoble, 1972), 320–3; G.D. Williams, *Banished Voices* (Cambridge, 1994), 104–15; N. Holzberg, *Ovid. Dichter und Werk* (Munich, 1997), 186–8. I am much indebted to the work of these scholars.

<sup>2</sup> *Tr.* 1.2.10; 1.5.76; *Pont.* 3.4.19–20; 3.6.20.

<sup>3</sup> *Tr.* 1.5.63; *Pont.* 2.7.60–1.

<sup>4</sup> As S. Hinds (*Commentary on Tristia* 1, forthcoming) has seen, Ovid also makes a 'bilingual pun' on Ulysses' epithet πολύτλας: he has endured more than the much-enduring hero (*plura-poly*; *tuli-tlas*).

<sup>5</sup> The allusion to *Od.* 1.4 in *Tr.* 3.2.7 is recognised by Holzberg (n. 1), 186. As J.C. McKeown has pointed out to me, Ovid picks up even the Homeric alliteration πολλά, πόντῳ, πάθεν.

<sup>6</sup> The stereotypical image of Ulysses as *exemplum...animi nimium patientis* at *Pont.* 4.10.9 is immediately invalidated by the undermining of his sufferings.

because it is aimed at downplaying Ulysses' misfortune (he was strong enough to cope). In addition Ulysses' toughness is physical, not mental. Although not entirely untrue to the Homeric picture of the hero (he was endowed with a large chest, a thick neck, strong legs and arms [*Il.* 3.211; *Od.* 8.135–6]), this exclusive emphasis on physical strength is unfair not only to Ulysses' intelligence and spiritual resilience, but also to his belief (as expressed for instance at *Od.* 8.166–77) in the charm of a beautiful mind, a belief that Ovid's own Ulysses emphatically upholds in *Metamorphoses* 13, and with Ovid's endorsement.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the opposition between Ulysses' brutish hardness and Ovid's *vires ingenuae* is detrimental to Ulysses, because Ovid is sensitive to the core meaning of *ingenuus*, 'free-born', 'befitting a free-born person'.<sup>8</sup> While it conjures up Ovid's description of the post-deluvian race, issued from stones (*Tr.* 1.5.71 echoes *Met.* 1.414 very closely: *inde genus durum sumus experiensque laborum*), Ulysses' durability would better apply to a savage than to Homer's sophisticated hero.<sup>9</sup> Rather than to Ulysses' tough body, Ovid's compliment goes to his own gentlemanly delicacy.<sup>10</sup>

By undermining Ulysses' endurance, Ovid rejects the Homeric hero as a positive model of behaviour. Ulysses gives the exile no fortitude. As W.B. Stanford succinctly puts it,<sup>11</sup> the exiled Ovid identifies with Ulysses in the manner of the early Greek lyric poets, but with a difference: 'They found comfort and strength in Ulysses' courage and endurance. Ovid's tone is more querulous'.<sup>12</sup>

This difference can be illustrated by comparing Ovid's and Archilochus' exploitation of the famous line from *Odyssey* 20 with which Ulysses, outraged by the maidservants' depraved behaviour, restrains his barking heart: τέτλαθι δῆ, κραδίη· καὶ κύντερον ἄλλο ποτ' ἔτλης ('bear up, my heart, you endured a worse thing than this') (18).

Archilochus alludes to the line in a poem in which he rouses his heart to fight:

Θυμέ, θυμ' ἀμηχάνοισι κήδεσιν κυκώμενε  
 †ἀναδευ δυσμενών† δ' ἀλέξο προσβαλὼν ἐναντίον  
 στέρνον †ἐνδόκοισιν† ἐχθρῶν πλησίον καταστασθεῖς  
 ἀσφαλέως· καὶ μήτε νικέων ἀμφάδην ἀγάλλο,   
 μηδὲ νικηθεὶς ἐν οἴκῳ καταπεσὼν ὀδύρεο  
 ἀλλὰ χαρτοῖσιν τε χαίρε, καὶ κακοῖσιν ἀσχάλα  
 μὴ λήν· γίγνωσκε δ' οἶος ῥυθμὸς ἀνθρώπους ἔχει. (128 West)

My heart, my heart disquieted by impossible sufferings,  
 [...] defend yourself, throwing a contrary chest at the enemy  
 and firmly placing yourself near their liars.  
 If you win, do not rejoice too much,

<sup>7</sup> See below.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Hinds (n. 4), ad loc.; J.C. McKeown, *Ovid: Amores. Text, Prolegomena and Commentary*, vol II. *A Commentary on Book One* (Leeds, 1989), on *Am.* 1.7.50 and 1.14.52.

<sup>9</sup> The Getae are *duri* at *Pont.* 3.2.102.

<sup>10</sup> Ulysses is again called *durus* at *Tr.* 5.5.51 (where it is Penelope, not Ulysses, that is praised). When Ovid shows admiration for him in *Met.* 13, the features he singles out make him almost a gentleman like himself, considering the circumstances. See below.

<sup>11</sup> (n. 1), 142.

<sup>12</sup> Of the lyric poets, cf. Alcman, fr. 29 Page ('Ὀδυσσῆος ταλασίφρονος); Theognis 1123–5 (μή με κακῶν μύμνησκε· πέπονθά τοι οἶα τ' Ὀδυσσεύς... ὃς δὲ καὶ μνηστῆρας ἀνέλειτο νηλεὶ θυμῷ); Tyrtaeus, fr. 5.5 West (of brave ancestors who fought in Messenia: νωλεμέως αἰεὶ ταλασίφρονα θυμὸν ἔχοντες). Possibly an allusion to Odysseus is also in Archil., fr. 14 West (ἄν μάλα πόλλ' ἡμερόντα πάθοι). These fragments also suggest that the lyric poets, contrary to Ovid, did not dismiss Odysseus' suffering.

if you are vanquished, do not weep, falling prostrate in your house,  
but without excess be glad in prosperity and grieved in misfortune.  
Understand what sort of rhythm controls mankind.

This poem combines several features characteristic of Ulysses: the capability to stand *ἀσφαλέως*, steadfastly, facing the enemy (see, for instance, *Od.* 17.235: *ἀλλα ἔμην' ἀσφαλέως*),<sup>13</sup> to keep some equanimity in success as in failure,<sup>14</sup> and always to consider the alternatives in human fortunes (see, for instance, *Od.* 18.130–7).

Archilochus' exhortation to his heart similarly echoes Ulysses':<sup>15</sup> in both cases the exhortation is meant to help the speaker (and in Archilochus' case perhaps his fellow-soldiers) face the enemy. Archilochus, however, will be more openly combative than Ulysses, for Ulysses urges his heart to be quiet, to stay put (*μένειν*), to swallow in silence the shameful events around him. The keynote in the *Odyssey* passage is *τλάομαι*, 'endure', which recurs three times in six lines (cf. also *ἐτόλμας* at line 20). By contrast Archilochus urges his heart to take an aggressive posture, to withstand the enemy by actively opposing them a 'contrary chest', and by standing firmly at their lairs. Archilochus transfers Ulysses' *ἀσφάλεια* on to the battlefield: his heart will be firmly stationed next to his foes' ambushes. He will confront them, not just endure their blows.

Ovid's identification with Ulysses rebuking his heart has a quite different tone and purpose. At *Tr.* 5.11. 7–8, he refers to the Homeric line to console his wife, who is upset for having been called the wife of an exile: *perfer et obdura, multo graviora tulisti, / eripuit cum me principis ira tibi*.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *ἀσφάλεια* remains a characteristic of Ulysses in later literature. In addition to a rhetorical meaning (Ulysses is a 'convincing' speaker: cf. Hom. *Od.* 8.171; Hes. *Theog.* 81–7, where the reference to *ἔπεα μείλιχα* harks back to Ulysses at *Od.* 8.172, just as the image of the charismatic speaker appeasing disputes calls to mind Ulysses' performance in *Iliad* 2; Xen. *Mem.* 4.6.14–15, where *ἀσφάλεια* describes a clear way of arguing, shared by Ulysses and Socrates), *ἀσφαλής* has a moral meaning. Dio Chrysostom (*Or.* 2.43) says that Ulysses' house is solidly built to reflect his owner, an *ἀσφαλοῦς ἀνδρὸς* (the reference is to *Od.* 17.266–8, where Ulysses is telling Eumaeus that the well-built and well-protected house they are approaching must be Ulysses'). Dio connects the solidity of Ulysses' house with Ulysses' mental solidity. Ulysses' house externalises, so to speak, his internal *ἀσφάλεια*.

<sup>14</sup> Ulysses' joy is most often internal, like his smile. He 'rejoices in his heart' (cf., e.g. *Od.* 24.545) and urges the members of his household to do so (for instance Eurycleia at *Od.* 22.411).

<sup>15</sup> That Archilochus is alluding to *Od.* 20.18 is noted by J. De Romilly, '*Patience, mon coeur!*' *L'essor de la psychologie dans la littérature grecque classique* (Paris, 1991). Stanford (n. 1), 91 also says that Archilochus 'speaks in Odyssean language'.

<sup>16</sup> The reference to *Od.* 20.18 is not recognised by B.R. Nagle, *The Poetics of Exile. Program and Polemic in the Tristia and Epistulae ex Ponto of Ovid* (Brussels, Collection Latomus 170, 1980), 44 or by M. Bonvicini, *Le forme del pianto. Catullo nei Tristia di Ovidio* (Bologna, 2000), 65, who instead adduce Catull. 8.11 (*perfer, obdura*). But cf. Rahn (n. 1), 118 and P. Green (ed.), *Ovid. The Poems of Exile* (London and New York, 1994), ad loc. Green adduces also *Am.* 3.11.7 and *Ars am.* 2.178. In these instances, however, the phrase (*perfer et obdura*) lacks the second part of the line from the *Odyssey* ('you endured even worse') and seems therefore too general to be taken as an elaboration on the Homeric episode. It is likely that Catull. 8.11 made the formula *perfer, obdura* popular enough for Ovid to use it without necessarily having Homer in mind. Apart from the linguistic echo of Catull. 8.11 in *Am.* 3.11, there is the generic affinity, both poems being *renuntiatioes amoris*. *Am.* 3.11.7 and *Tr.* 5.11.7 in turn contain allusions to two close Virgilian passages in the second parts of the line: *Aen.* 1.203 (*forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit*) and 199 (*o passi graviores*) respectively. Cf. J.C. McKeown (*Commentary on Amores* 3, forthcoming), ad loc.

By Ovid's time *Od.* 20.18 could boast a long history of rewritings.<sup>17</sup> To my knowledge Ovid's reference is the first in which the speaker does not address a part of himself in an internal dialogue.<sup>18</sup> By separating speaker and addressee, Ovid contrasts his own and his wife's behaviour. We are asked to identify the wife with Ulysses' barking heart, unable to endure, while Ovid casts himself as Ulysses' controlling mind. Are we then to believe that Ovid is even stronger than Ulysses (let alone than his wife) because he does not even need to rebuke himself?

The immediate sequel of the poem disproves any possible claim on Ovid's part to Ulysses-like endurance, for it makes it clear that Ovid, in spite of his protestations to his wife, does care about the label 'exile' that has been given him. Instead of encouraging his wife by his own example, he tells her, 'It is not true that I am an exile', and takes pains to prove this by resorting to petty legal distinctions: Augustus has not deprived him of property or civil rights; he has called him *relegatus*, not *exul* (21–2). The pettiness of the details carries a certain pathos, which in turn highlights Ovid's lack of endurance. In the course of the poem we are led to dissociate Ovid's self-presentation from the Ulysses-persona he wears at the beginning.

In another poem, however, Ovid echoes *Od.* 20. 18 to direct his own behaviour. Like Ulysses he exhorts himself: *hoc quoque, Naso, feres: etenim peiora tulisti. I iam tibi sentire sarcina nulla potest* (*Pont.* 3.7.13–14).<sup>19</sup> Long familiar with misfortune (17–18), Ovid will accept his predicament. He will stop begging his wife and friends for help.

But is Ovid's endurance really Ulysses-like? Ulysses' rebuke to his heart occurs the night before the slaughter of the suitors, when he is lying awake, planning evils (*Od.* 20.5–6). Ulysses restrains himself in order not to endanger his plan by acting impulsively. His self-control, here as elsewhere, is the basis of his strategic action. His endurance is a weapon to stay alive and win. When his companions open the bag of the winds, he overcomes the impulse to kill himself and instead endures and remains still (*Od.* 10.53: *ἔτλην καὶ ἔμεινα*). Enduring means resisting the temptation to die. In contrast, Ovid's spiritual heroism consists in renunciation and ultimately in eagerness for death: *fortiter Euxinis immoriemur aquis* is the last line of the poem.<sup>20</sup> The exhortation to himself by means of the line from *Odyssey* 20 marks the end of any fight.

Thus, whereas Archilochus in fr. 128 refashions Ulysses' endurance as aggressive action,<sup>21</sup> Ovid reinterprets it as the resigned acceptance of a *status quo* and urges himself to cease fighting. Even when he appeals to the hero of endurance, either he does not behave accordingly (in *Tr.* 5.11) or he distorts the meaning of Ulysses'

<sup>17</sup> On the *Nachleben* of the Homeric episode, cf. F. Létoublon, 'Patience, mon coeur! *Geduld, mein Herze*', *GAIA* 7 (2003), 321–46 (though she does not discuss Ovid's contribution).

<sup>18</sup> Another example is in Athenaeus (6. 270 e–f), where the exhortation, 'bear up!' is addressed to the speaker's poverty. In truth, however, the speaker is addressing himself, for he is the one who has to bear up because of his poverty.

<sup>19</sup> L. Galasso, 'Modelli tragici e ricodificazione elegiaca: appunti sulla poesia ovidiana dell'esilio', *MD* 18 (1987), 83–99, at 95, n. 58, while tentatively suggesting that Ovid has the Homeric line in mind, identifies Virg. *Aen.* 1.198–203 (*O socii [neque enim ignari sumus ante malorum]* etc.) as the main allusion. The two allusions might coexist, but *Od.* 20.18 is more literally behind *Pont.* 3.7.13. At any rate *Aen.* 1.198–203 allude to another episode from the *Odyssey* (12.208–12) in which Ulysses encourages his comrades to face hardship.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. also 19 (*moriemur*). On the *crescendo* from the subjunctive to the future indicative, cf. Galasso (n. 19). Galasso shows how this poem draws on the *topos* of the *renuntiatio amoris*. On Ovid's poetry of renunciation in the *Epistles*, cf. also Nagle (n. 16), 162.

<sup>21</sup> This is not the case in fr. 13, where Archilochus calls on *κρατερὴν τλημοσύνην* (strong endurance) to cope with irremediable disaster.

fortitude by despoiling it of any active purpose (in *Pont.* 3.7). Why then does Ovid reject Ulysses as a model of endurance?

A leitmotif in Ovid's self-presentation is that he has not learnt to bear his sufferings. Time has not healed his wounds: *...mens tamen aegra iacet, nec tempore robora sumpsit, / affectusque animi, qui fuit ante, manet. / quaeque mora spatiumque suo coitura putavi / vulnera non aliter quam modo facta dolent* (*Tr.* 5.2.7–10). And again: *...nec quaesita tamen spatio patientia longo est, / mensque mali sensum nostra recentis habet* (*Tr.* 4.6.21–2). Far from teaching him to endure, time has increased his grief: *tristior est etiam praesens aerumna priore: / ut sit enim sibi par, crevit et aucta mora est* (*ibid.* 25–6).

Nevertheless, Ovid's self-presentation is inconsistent in this respect, for on several occasions (as in *Pont.* 3.7), he does boast of his endurance. For instance in *Tr.* 5.4.15–17, the poem dispatched to Rome praises its author's fortitude: *fert tamen, ut debet, casus patienter amarus, / more nec indomiti frena recusat equi. / nec fore perpetuam sperat sibi numinis iram*. Moreover Ovid's endurance is not just passive resignation, as in *Pont.* 3.7. It is a spiritual victory over material deficiencies: *omnia deficient. animus tamen omnia vincit: / ille etiam vires corpus habere facit* (*Pont.* 2.7.75–6). Ovid's forbearance, grandly couched in Virgilian language (*animus tamen omnia vincit* harks back to *labor omnia vincit improbus* at *G.* 1.145–6) and brought out by the undermining of Ulysses' sufferings (60–2), is a struggle not to fall: *sustineas ut onus, nitendum vertice pleno est, / aut, flecti nervos si patiere, cades* (77–8).

But what exactly is the nature of Ovid's fortitude, which saves him from falling? In a perceptive article on *Pont.* 4.10, Mary H. Davisson<sup>22</sup> has interpreted Ovid's *duritia*, which the poet claims for himself in this poem (lines 4 and 8), as 'not rigidity but a resilience which enables him to write flowing and lively verse'. Ovid's fortitude is built on writing poetry, on his undying creative *ingenium* which allows him not only to endure his exile, but also to transcend it (see *Tr.* 3.7.45–8). In this particular poem Ovid's poetic resilience shows itself, among other details, also in his irreverent manipulation of the Ulysses myth: to bear out his customary claim that Ulysses has suffered less than is believed, he argues that several of his encounters were pleasant indeed, among them the Sirens, Calypso and the Lotus-Eaters. But all these were in reality mixed blessings, and Ulysses was far more ambivalent towards them than Ovid pictures him to be. Davisson notes that the most outrageous manipulation of the tradition concerns the lotus, which Ulysses, as every reader of Ovid knew, avoided altogether.

This interpretation of Ovid's fortitude as residing in the writing of poetry can be extended beyond *Pont.* 4.10. If we believe Ovid, it holds true for the entire exilic corpus, for he explicitly says that the writing of poetry allows him to withstand the hardness of his sufferings and ultimately to stay alive: *ergo quod vivo durisque laboribus obsto, / nec me sollicitae taedia lucis habent, / gratia, Musa, tibi: nam tu solacia praebes, / tu curae requies, tu medicina venis* (*Tr.* 4.10.115–18).<sup>23</sup> Even in a poem

<sup>22</sup> 'Duritia and creativity in exile. *Epistulae ex Ponto* 4. 10', *CLAnt* 1 (1982), 28–42, at 29.

<sup>23</sup> I disagree with Rahm's suggestion (n. 1), 117 that Ovid's self-presentation in this poem (namely at 101–10) echoes Ulysses' disclosure at *Od.* 9.19–20. Ulysses boasts of his tricks and fame, then waxes nostalgic for Ithaca, whereas Ovid dwells on the disloyalty of his friends and on the ordeal of the journey to Tomis. In light of lines 115–18, Ovid's proud statement at 103–4 (*indignata malis mens est succumbere seque / praestitit invictam viribus usa suis*), which describes his fortitude during the journey, could refer to his poetic resilience (if we believe him [*Tr.* 1.2], he wrote poetry in the midst of storms).

in which he poses as poetically barren (*Tr.* 5.12), he intimates that he possesses 'poetic endurance' by claiming that Socrates, that paragon of *sapientia* and perhaps *patientia* (*Tr.* 5.12.13 and 15),<sup>24</sup> in Ovid's circumstances would not have found the strength to write.<sup>25</sup> Ovid seems to be suggesting that his own poetic resilience outdoes Socrates' famed indifference to hardships.

At the same time, Ovid presents his poetic resilience as a source of relief, the only 'medicine' (see also *Tr.* 5.1.33–4) that can help his mind by providing forgetfulness of sorrows – though, as Williams has shown commenting on *Tr.* 4.1, the effort is ultimately futile.<sup>26</sup> This alleviating power of poetry can be exemplified by *Pont.* 4.10.37–70, where the scientific explanation of why the Black Sea freezes in winter, which includes a long and 'flowing' list of rivers (45–58),<sup>27</sup> is said to serve only the purpose of beguiling Ovid's suffering, of numbing his physical awareness of where he is (70: *in mediis nec nos sensimus esse Getis*).

Ovid, then, can endure his predicament only by delivering verse freely and relentlessly: his poetic resilience is the opposite of Ulysses' endurance, a main feature of which is self-restraint in speech and action.<sup>28</sup> Ovid indeed casts his poetic resilience as the very negation of Ulysses-like endurance. In *Tr.* 5.1, an apology for his poetry, he protests that he will not bear his torture in silence: *–at poteras–, inquis– melius mala ferre silendo, / et tacitus casus dissimulare tuos.– / exis ut nulli gemitus tormenta sequantur, / acceptoque gravi vulnere flere vetas?* (49–52).

Ulysses was becoming a model for heroic behaviour under torture precisely because of his ability to keep his emotions and impulses inside. An important *locus* for this idealisation of Ulysses is the scene from *Odyssey* 20 in which he rebukes his heart. Plato provides the first philosophical reading of it. At *Resp.* 390D, he praises the episode: contrary to other verses of Homer, *Od.* 20.17–18 ought to be listened to because they express *karteria*. At *Phd.* 94D and at *Resp.* 441B–C, where the lines are quoted in the context of discussions about the nature of the soul, Ulysses stands for the soul/reason rebuking the heart/emotions.<sup>29</sup>

Plutarch draws on Plato's interpretation of Ulysses at *De garr.* 506A–B, where he combines *Od.* 19.210–12 with a reference to *Od.* 20.13, 16 and 23 to signify Ulysses' ability to control every irrational movement: 'And Ulysses himself, as he sat beside Penelope, "Had pity in his heart for his weeping wife, but his eyes stood firm-fixed in his lids, like horn or iron". So full of self-control (*ἐγκρατείας*) was his body in every part and his reason, keeping everything in obedience and submission, ordered his eyes not to cry, his tongue not to utter a sound, his heart not to tremble or bark. "In utter obedience his heart remained enduring", for his reasoning faculty reached to his

<sup>24</sup> *Patientia* is Hall's proposed emendation for the manuscript variant *sapientia* at line 13. At line 15 Socrates is *sapiens*.

<sup>25</sup> Since Socrates notoriously did not write philosophy, Williams (n. 1), 59 proposes that Ovid is alluding to the *Hymn to Apollo* allegedly composed by the philosopher in prison. That Ovid's claims to poetic impotence are a 'pose' is Williams' thesis throughout chap. 2.

<sup>26</sup> n. 1, 69: 'The draughts of forgetfulness...are blended with the certainty of painful recollection'. On Ovid's poetry of exile as the expression of painful emotions, cf. also Nagle (n. 16), 102.

<sup>27</sup> For detailed analysis, cf. Davisson (n. 22).

<sup>28</sup> It may be significant that the last of the poems of exile contains a long and skillfully written catalogue of contemporary poets (*Pont.* 4.10.5–46), as if Ovid feared that without writing, his life truly will have no other purpose than to give him 'the perception and the substance of sorrow' (50).

<sup>29</sup> On these passages, cf. Létoublon (n. 17).

irrational movements and made his breath and blood obedient and subservient to itself'.

This passage magnifies Ulysses' capability for self-control. In Homer Ulysses succeeds in silencing his heart, but not his body and thoughts, which turn round and round until Athena puts him to sleep (*Od.* 20.24 and 28). Though Plato implies that Ulysses, the soul/*logos*, succeeds in controlling his passions and bodily movements, he does not show the hero in this pacified state but while he gives orders to his heart. Plutarch, by contrast, emphatically describes Ulysses' quieted state, which includes silence (absent from Homer) and even the mastery over vital bodily functions. The tension in the Homeric scene between Ulysses' successful effort to quiet his heart and his failure to quiet his movements and thoughts is totally glossed over. Ulysses' *logos* is pervasive, it reaches down to every vein and breath.

As the immediate sequence of the passage suggests, the model Plutarch seems to have in mind for this inflated exaltation of Ulysses' self-control is the person who does not yield to torture. The exemplar of Ulysses is followed by that of his companions in the Cyclops' cave, who 'would not denounce Ulysses nor show that instrument sharpened with fire and prepared against the Cyclops' eye, but preferred to be eaten raw rather than to reveal anything of the secret (τῶν ἀπορρήτων), an unsurpassed example of self-control (ἐγκρατείας) and loyalty'.

This is a curious interpretation! The reason Ulysses' companions do not 'denounce' him is not, at least not primarily, that they are loyal to him (they certainly are not when they open the bag of the winds), but that they hope to survive. Had they revealed the secret, all of them, not just a few, would have died. As further episodes in the *De garrulitate* suggest, Plutarch has in mind the heroism of those who keep secrets under torture.<sup>30</sup> Both Ulysses' companions and Ulysses possess *enkrateia*, according to Aristotle a virtue stronger than *karteria*, which describes Ulysses in Plato, and preferable to it, just as winning is preferable to not being vanquished (*Eth. Nic.* 1150a32–b1). The addition of silence to the expression of Ulysses' self-control, besides matching the general topic of the essay, confirms that Plutarch drew his portrait of Ulysses thinking of heroic behaviour under torture.

To bear his torture in silence is what Ovid expressly will not do. In this he is the anti-Ulysses. Ovid presents his inability silently to endure ills as the very condition for his writing of poetry. His 'poetic fortitude' is, paradoxically, like screaming under torture. Should Ovid be Ulysses, he would be poetically dead.

Ovid's rejection of Ulysses as a paradigm of behaviour bears out his scepticism about the moral usefulness of myth. This scepticism comes to the fore in his adoption of double standards: while he himself refuses to look to mythic exemplars for guidance, he forces them upon his addressees.<sup>31</sup> They are asked to behave as loyally as a Theseus or a Pylades, whereas Ovid relies on mythic precedents only to point up his misfortune. A telling example is *Tr.* 1.5, where Ovid's claim to greater-than-Ulysses sufferings is preceded by his praise of his addressee's loyalty by means of mythic exemplars.<sup>32</sup> Another illustration of this pattern is his treatment

<sup>30</sup> See, for instance, the story of the courtesan Leaina at 505E–F.

<sup>31</sup> Davison (n. 22) recognises this practice for *Pont.* 4.10, but the practice extends beyond that poem. Cf., e. g., *Pont.* 17–22 and below.

<sup>32</sup> In his subtle analysis of this poem, Williams (n. 1), 104–15 also notes that Ovid's request for his friend's *fides* based on mythic exemplars clashes with his own lack of poetic *fides* in claiming that his plight is worse than Ulysses' 'fictional sufferings'. In the first instance, Ovid grants myth truth-value; in the second, he dismisses it as false, which is ultimately tantamount to fictionalising his own sufferings.

of his wife as a 'potential Penelope', which contrasts with his refusal to follow the model of Ulysses.

The identification of Ovid's wife with Penelope is a natural consequence of his own association with much-suffering Ulysses. But there is a difference: while the mythic association puts no burden on Ovid, it calls his wife to duty. Ovid has achieved heroic status because of his misfortune *alone*, which made him as famous as Ulysses (and other unfortunate heroes, such as Philoctetes): *si minus errasset, notus minus esset Ulixes. / magna Philoctetae vulnere fama suo est. / si locus est aliquis tanta inter nomina parvis, / nos quoque conspicuos nostra ruina facit* (*Pont.* 3.1.53–6). By means of a pun on *errare*, Ovid suggests that his *error* has made him famous. He has achieved heroic status because of his fault and its aftermath. By contrast his wife, whose celebrity is due to Ovid's praise of her, has to prove that she deserves that praise (57–62). Her task, Ovid claims, is not even difficult: if she had to deceive suitors, she would find in Penelope a guide, but she has no need 'of the Icarian woman's web' (113; 107–8). Whereas Ovid protests that he is suffering more than Ulysses, he denies his wife heroic suffering by emphasising that she is much better off than Penelope (and other mythic heroines who had to toil for their husbands).

It is true that Ovid oscillates between identifying his wife with Penelope for her qualities and proposing Penelope as a model to her. The mythic paradigm is both descriptive and prescriptive. The descriptions, however, function also as prescriptions: a flattering statement such as *tu si Maeonium vatem sortita fuisses / Penelopes esset fama secunda tuae* (*Tr.* 1.6.21–2), gives his wife no other choice than to emulate Penelope in virtue. By approving his wife for behaving in a certain way, he forces that behaviour on her, even when he does not explicitly ask her to 'imitate herself' (as he does in *Pont.* 3.1.90: *quod facis, ut facias, teque imitere, rogo*).

The double standards are most apparent at *Tr.* 5.5.49–52, where Ovid exploits the moralistic *topos* 'virtue is schooled in misfortune' to lecture his wife, whereas he himself, who is at the origin of their common misfortune, learns no lesson from it: *scilicet adversis probitas exercita rebus / tristi materiam tempore laudis habet. / si nihil infesti durus vidisset Ulixes, / Penelope felix sed sine laude foret*. While his wife is exhorted to earn praise worthy of Penelope from *his* predicament by developing strength of character, he identifies with Ulysses only because of his plight.

Far from teaching Ovid a lesson in restraint and forbearance, Ulysses serves to justify his un-stoical nostalgia: *sive pium vis hoc sive hoc muliebre vocari, / confiteor misero molle cor esse mihi. / non dubia est Ithaci prudentia, sed tamen optat / fumum de patriis posse videre focis* (*Pont.* 1.3.31–4).

These lines conclude a forceful denial of the healing power of consolations: just as when a doctor cannot cure, a friend's consolatory words have alleviated Ovid's sorrow but not taken it away; true, these 'prescriptions' (*praecepta*) can fortify the heart, but they are ineffective against Ovid's *amor patriae*, which is 'stronger than any reasoning (*ratione*)' (23–5).

The context suggests that Ovid's rejection of Ulysses-like endurance is part of his rejection of the consolatory genre, for Ulysses, because of his forbearance during his wanderings, was offered as a model to the exile. Stoic philosophers in particular put Ulysses to this use.<sup>33</sup> Ovid dismisses the lesson of endurance that Ulysses was supposed to teach to the philosophically minded exile and instead upholds the Homeric hero as the paragon of nostalgia. He goes so far as to allow Ulysses'

<sup>33</sup> Cf., e.g., Arr. *Epict. diss.* 3. 4.12–14; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 13.9–11.



nostalgia to coexist with 'good sense' or even 'wisdom' (*prudencia*). In spite of the *tamen*, the coexistence challenges the Stoic evaluation of Ulysses, which extols his *prudencia* but condemns his nostalgia. Another exile, Epictetus, will refuse to give credence to Homer when he shows Ulysses longing for his wife (Arr. *Epict. diss.* 3.24.18).<sup>34</sup> Ovid identifies with Ulysses only because of his longing.

Ovid's sympathy goes to a non-philosophical Ulysses also in *Met.* 13, his most extensive and appreciative picture of the hero.<sup>35</sup> In sharp contrast with the Roman tradition Ovid endorses Ulysses' victory against Ajax in the contest for Achilles' armour.<sup>36</sup> But why did Ulysses deserve to win? Because he spoke well (382–3): *mota manus procerum est, et quid facundia posset, l re patuit, fortisque viri tulit arma disertus*. Ovid attributes Ulysses' success purely to his moving speech, regardless of its foundation in reality. He reverses Pindar's stigmatisation of Ulysses' eloquence (at *Nem.* 8.22–7) by sanctioning its powers. Ulysses proves a master of pathetic effects: he stands in silence before beginning his speech (125–6), as he does at *Iliad* 3.216–20; he affects to wipe away tears (132–3), and even bears his breast to display his wounds (262–5), a gesture which was likely to command admiration because wounds were a tally of valour.<sup>37</sup>

Ovid's Ulysses can be contrasted with the hero of Antisthenes, who treated the contest for Achilles' armour in a proto-Cynic spirit.<sup>38</sup> Ulysses' main boast in Antisthenes' presentation is his readiness to take up every mission, even the most degrading ones, such as stealing into Troy dressed in rags, for the sake of the communal good. A Cynic *ante litteram*, he is indifferent to humiliations. This feature does not interest Ovid. Though his Ulysses accomplishes dangerous missions, such as the nocturnal killing of Rhesus, he is not the hard hero he is in Antisthenes. Far from degrading himself, he is a gentleman, versed in the arts: contrary to uncouth Ajax, he can appreciate the engravings on Achilles' shield (291). He is tactful and even gives an impression of modesty (considering the circumstances). Whereas Antisthenes' hard hero begins his plea by the tactless claim that he has done more good to the army than anyone else, and that he would say this even in front of Achilles, Ovid's Ulysses begins by regretting that Achilles is dead. Instead of boasting of his eloquence, he timidly attributes it to himself in the conditional: *meaque haec facundia, si qua est* (137). Nor does he deny Ajax's valour as a fighter – subtly to highlight his own superiority as a thinker in a series of antitheses effectively placed towards the end of his speech (361–6). Antisthenes' Ulysses is a proto-Cynic also in his cold, insulting boldness. In contrast Ovid's is a sympathetic figure, ready to admit his weaknesses. Rather than disregarding Ajax's charge of avoiding the draft, as he does in Antisthenes, he justifies

<sup>34</sup> Cf. also Dio Chrys. *Or.* 13.4. Dio, however, is not systematic in criticising Ulysses' nostalgia: cf. *Or.* 47.6–7.

<sup>35</sup> P. Cesareo, 'L'evoluzione storica del carattere di Ulisse', *Rivista di storia antica* 4.4 (1899), 383–412, at 388 thinks that Ovid represents Odysseus in a negative light. But see the objections by M. Martorana, *Ulisse nella letteratura latina* (Palermo, 1926), 53, who argues that Ovid is not 'troppo severo' with Odysseus. In my view Ovid is rather favourable to the eloquent and sensitive hero.

<sup>36</sup> Both Pacuvius and (probably) Accius had given preference to Ajax in their treatments of the ὄπλων κρίσις. Cf. also Cic. *Inv. rhet.* 1.49.92: *Indignum esse ab homine ignavissimo virum fortissimum, Aiaceum, necatum*. On these texts, cf. Cesareo (n. 35); Martorana (n. 35), 43–53.

<sup>37</sup> Cf., most recently, C.H. Hallett, *The Roman Nude. Heroic Portrait Statuary 200BC–AD 300* (Oxford, 2005). It might be noted that Ulysses, as a good Roman pleader, calls his audience *cives* right before throwing open his clothes (262).

<sup>38</sup> The text is in G. Giannantoni (ed.), *Socratis et Socraticorum Reliquiae* (Naples, 1983–5), vol. 2, V A 54.

his own and Achilles' attempt to hide by a very humane argument: Achilles was held back by a loving mother, he by a loving wife (301). This Ulysses, like the longing hero of *Pont.* 1.3, is not greater than life.<sup>39</sup>

In addition to philosophy, Ovid's target in *Pont.* 1.3.31–4 is likely to be epic poetry. In *Tr.* 1.5, where he takes pains to distinguish himself from the Homeric character, Ovid opposes the latter's *durum corpus* and training to his own *studiis mollibus* (74). Williams<sup>40</sup> has shown that while *durus* (and *arma* at 73) 'locate Ulysses in the world of epic, the words *adsuetus studiis mollibus* locate Ovid in the antithetical world of elegy'. In *Pont.* 1.3, by contrast, where he identifies with Ulysses, Ovid takes the epic hero out of the world of epic by asking him to support with his example his own right to a *molle cor*. By associating Ulysses with his 'elegiac feebleness', Ovid plays against epic *gravitas* as well as against centuries of tradition that had celebrated the Homeric hero for his *karteria*.<sup>41</sup>

University of Wisconsin, Madison

SILVIA MONTIGLIO  
smontigl@wisc.edu

<sup>39</sup> The interpretation proposed here radically differs from that of W.C. Stephens, 'Two Stoic heroes in the *Metamorphoses*: Hercules and Ulysses', in N.I. Herescu (ed.), *Ovidiana. Recherches sur Ovide* (Paris, 1958), 273–82, who argues that Ulysses in *Met.* 13 is a Stoic hero. Though Ulysses is *sapiens* (354), one who acts *sapienter* (376), the terms have no philosophical meaning: they refer to Ulysses' strategic planning, to his military *ingenium* (362) and *consiliis* (31). There is no doubt that Ulysses' winning virtue – and one Ovid admires – is his *facundia*: the term frames the speech at both ends (127 and 376). In addition a Stoic Ulysses would emphasise his endurance and willingness to fight instead of justifying his avoidance of the draft by a sentimental argument.

<sup>40</sup> (n. 1), 113.

<sup>41</sup> I wish to thank Jim McKeown and Gareth Williams for their perceptive comments, as well as Stephen Hinds for sharing his unpublished work on the *Tristia*.