TRISTIA 4.10: POET'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND POETIC AUTOBIOGRAPHY[1]

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"The autobiography of the last elegiac poet is quite simple and straight-forward.   Placed at the end of Book IV of the *Tristia*, it seals, as it were, the book and recalls the person of the author to a sympathetic audience . . . The main part of the poem is strictly biographical."   Georg Luck, *The Latin Love Elegy* (London 1969²) 149–50.

"Autobiography means therefore discrimination and selection in the face of the endless complexity of life, selection of facts, distribution of emphases, choice of expression.   Everything depends on the standpoint chosen . . ." Roy Pascal, *Design and Truth in Autobiography* (London 1960) 10.

Scholarly concern with *Tristia* 4.10 has been directed chiefly to the content, as a source for Ovid's life, and to the genre, whether this is called *sphragis* or autobiography.[2]   Interpretation of the poem as the

sphragis of the *Tristia*, or even of the whole Ovidian corpus, draws attention away from its function as the epilogue of *Tristia* 4.[3]　By concentrating solely on biographical details scholars have failed to recognize the creative use of them.　Among the critics who have misunderstood Ovid's intentions, Eugène Nageotte saw a lack of detail concerning Ovid's childhood, and Hermann Fränkel objected to "the author's attempt to blend into one person Ovid the bourgeois and Ovid the bohemian and poet."[4]　More recently, Ettore Paratore described the elegy as cold, conventional, and colorless, and A. G. Lee found Ovid "fettered by his medium."[5]　R. J. Dickinson recognizes what is wrong with this kind of criticism when he observes that Ovid was trying to write not an exhaustive account, but a poem, "an artistic construction."[6]　Jean-Marc Frécaut succeeds in his interpretation, because he has identified the principle behind Ovid's selection of details.　He sums up the elegy as "an important epilogue presenting the positive account-sheet of a life ... essentially consecrated to poetry."[7]　In a literary work, biographical detail is like any other detail, such as diction, meter, or theme; it is selected and arranged to produce a literary effect.　The following interpretation arrives at a conclusion about the literary meaning of *Tr.* 4.10 by accounting for the inclusion, omission, and arrangement of the individual details.

I, 173–203.　*Tr.* 4.10 is considered, within an account of other autobiographical statements by poets, by Georg Misch, *Geschichte der Autobiographie* (Bern 1949[3], rev.) I, 317–20.

[3] For *Tr.* 4.10 as the *sphragis* of the *Tristia*, see Georg Luck, *P. Ovidius Naso: Tristia* (Heidelberg, vol. II, pt. 1, 1968; vol. II, pt. 2, 1972) 1; as the *sphragis* of both the exilic elegies and the whole corpus, see Evans 108–09.　Evans, however, does relate *Tr.* 4.10 to the general theme of *Tristia* 4, "old age in exile" (85), and remarks in a note on the thematic correspondences between the prologue and epilogue of the book (112 note 40).

[4] Nageotte, *Ovide, sa vie, ses oeuvres* (Mâcon 1872) 13; Fränkel 235 note 26.　In striking contrast to Fränkel's reaction is that of Dickinson, who observes (181) that Ovid "moves easily to and fro between details of his personal life and of his life as a poet."　In fact, the only Ovid about whom we can generalize with any assurance and to any purpose, the Ovid, that is, of the poetic text, was never either "bourgeois" nor "bohemian;" if we must label him, we should say rather that he was "sophisticated" or "urbane;" see Edwin S. Ramage, *Urbanitas: Ancient Sophistication and Refinement* (Norman, Oklahoma 1973) 87–100.

[5] Paratore 359–60; Lee 199.

[6] Dickinson 181; Evans (106) finds Paratore's criticism "too harsh," and realizes that Ovid's use of conventional material in his extended *sphragis* was intentional.

[7] Frécaut 336; his account of *Tr.* 4.10 (332–36) is included in the part of the work devoted to "Aspects de la personnalité d'Ovide."

In this study I treat *Tr.* 4.10 as a poem which happens also to be an autobiography, rather than as an autobiography which happens to be a poem.   Many of the criticisms of the elegy come from scholars who seem to have adopted the latter position, but have in fact applied the standards of *biography* to the poem.   The two are by no means identical, since biography aims at objective truth, while autobiography aims at a more subjective truth.   This is the thesis of Roy Pascal's study of *Design and Truth in Autobiography*,[8] and while he does not himself treat *Tr.* 4.10, many of his observations are applicable to it.   He characterises autobiography in this fashion:

> ... autobiography is a shaping of the past.   It imposes a pattern on a life, constructs out of it a coherent story.   It establishes certain stages in an individual life, makes links between them, and defines ... a certain consistency of relationship between the self and the outside world ...[9]

Pascal emphasizes that good autobiography requires a personal motive, the need to give an account to oneself, as well as the public one of providing the curious with information.[10]   Ovid's organization of *Tr.* 4.10 into halves, as we shall see, dealing with the past and the present may arise from his particular predicament, but it also constitutes an element intrinsic to autobiography, the interaction and resolution of the past and the present.   Biography usually treats a life as a completed whole; autobiography, however, is written at a point within the life, so that the writer's representation of his past is in some way shaped and colored by his present situation and knowledge.[11]

[8] Pascal 83, 195, and *passim.*

[9] Pascal 9; see also the second epigraph above.

[10] Pascal 59 and 181.

[11] Pascal observes (11): "Autobiography is then an interplay, a collusion between past and present; its significance is indeed more the revelation of the present situation than the uncovering of the past."   On 59 he sees autobiography as "the means to review one's life, to organize it in the imagination, and thus to bring the past experience and the present self into balance."   What Pascal has to say (193) about H. G. Well's *Experiment in Autobiography* is also applicable to *Tr.* 4.10:

> The autobiography is not simply a statement of what a man was and is.   Like others, Wells's is in some sort a polemical statement, another contribution to his life's work, not a resumé of it.   It is an active contribution, not a closing of account,

and Well's own statement of his motivation suggests a congruity with Ovid's: "'I began this autobiography primarily to reassure myself during a phase of fatigue, restlessness, and vexation...'"   Certainly in A.D. 10–11 Ovid was in need of similar reassurance, and the confidence of *Tr.* 4.10 may be a response to that need.

Thus Ovid's autobiography is emphatically a review of his life from the perspective of his exile.

The progression of *Tr.* 4.10 is chronological, from Ovid's birth, through his present condition of exile, to a prediction of the poet's future immortality. Within this framework, the subject matter of the elegy is also organized by topic. Excluding the opening and closing couplets, which are addressed respectively to posterity and to the reader, the topical division is as follows: lines 3–14: birth (including place, date, and family background); 15–40: education and choice of career; 41–64: career until exile; 65–80: private life and character (including references to his wives, daughter, grandchildren, and to the deaths of his parents); and 81–130: exile (including an expression of thanks to the Muse and a prediction of immortality). This topical arrangement and the density of information in the first fourteen lines alert the reader that this elegy is, at least formally, an autobiography.[12] Ovid further creates the impression that he is offering a thorough and factual account of his life in several ways. Within the first three couplets he uses the parentheses *ut noris* and *ut tempora noris*, referring first to the contents of the whole elegy, and then specifically to the year of his birth (2, 5). Especially in the first section and to a lesser extent elsewhere in the poem, Ovid includes many numbers and dates, and renders these expressions unprosaic and appropriate to their context through circumlocution or poetic indirection.[13]

[12] Ovid's topical arrangement reminds one of Suetonius' organization of his *Lives of the Caesars* "*per species*" (*Augustus* 9). The origin of this biographical method has been a subject of debate since Friedrich Leo argued in *Die griechisch-römische Biographie nach ihrer litterarischen Form* (Leipzig 1901) 133–44 that Suetonius' schematic disposition of material was derived from Alexandrian biography. D. R. Stuart, however, affirmed the "Romanness" of Suetonius' procedure, in *Epochs of Greek and Roman Biography* (Berkeley 1928) 229–32, citing for comparison the *elogia* of the Scipios. Two more recent studies of Suetonius have followed Stuart: Wolf Steidle, *Sueton und die antike Biographie* (Munich 1963 [2], rev.); and G. A. Townend, "Suetonius and His Influence," *Latin Biography*, ed. T. A. Dorey (New York 1967) 79–111. Whatever the origin of this format, the original readers of *Tr.* 4.10 would have recognized it as biographical. It is, after all, the format Augustus himself adopted in the *Res Gestae;* see Stuart 226–27 on the theory that Suetonius derived his method directly from the *Res Gestae*.

[13] Evans 108 and note 33, following Paratore 368–72, refers somewhat inaccurately to these circumlocutions as "a studied obscurity." What may give the impression of obscurity to a modern reader is the assumption of certain knowledge which the original audience for *Tr.* 4.10 surely had: *milia qui noviens distat ab urbe decem* (4), referring to Sulmo (3), requires knowledge of Italian geography; *cum cecidit fato consul uterque pari*

The various stages of Ovid's life receive a rather different emphasis in this elegy from that given in modern biographical treatments, since Ovid's focus is on his career as a poet, not on his life as a man. Accordingly, he also divides the poem into halves, each dealing with the demarcations of that career: its beginning in the events leading up to his decision to become a poet, and its end in his exile (early in the *Tristia* Ovid indicates that exile caused his "death" as a poet).[14]

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(6), referring to the year of Ovid's birth (5), requires knowledge of recent Roman history; and lines 13–14

> haec est armiferae festis de quinque Minervae,
> quae fieri pugna prima cruenta solet.

referring to Ovid's birthdate (11–12), require knowledge of the Roman religious calendar. The allusive style of these references is no more obscure, and no less appropriate to the poetic context, than the reference to Homer as *Maeonides* (22), or the poeticism of *interea tacito passu labentibus annis* (27).

Two truly obscure dates are not mentioned by Evans. Ovid gives his age at the time of his first marriage with the phrase *paene mihi puero* (69); the vagueness of the reference parallels the insignificance of the event for Ovid's life as a poet, and even as a man, since the union was brief and unsatisfactory (69–70). An earlier obscurity is less easy to explain. Ovid dates his first recitation with the line *barba resecta mihi bisve semelve fuit* (58). While this may have been as clear to Ovid's contemporaries as the alleged "obscurities" discussed above, it has puzzled modern scholars. Wheeler (12–16), argued for an age of not much older than 18, against previous interpretations of 20, 21, or 22; although Wheeler's interpretation is accepted by Walther Kraus, *RE* 18 (1942), "Ovidius Naso," 1914.6–9, his argument is quite conjectural and hardly conclusive. The most we can say, and perhaps all Ovid intended us to know, is that he was a young man, barely post-adolescent, at the time of his important first public appearance.

The supposedly "obscure" numbers are periphrases pure and simple. "Twelve months" is expressed as "four times three months" (10), "my brother had become twenty years old" is signified by "my brother had doubled ten years of life" (31), and "my father had become ninety years old" is indicated by "my father had added another nine five-year periods (*lustra*) to nine five-year periods" (77–78). Finally, 75–76

> filia me mea bis prima fecunda iuventa,
> sed non ex uno coniuge, fecit avum.

is a verbally interesting, but not obscure, expression of the idea "While she was quite young, my daughter had two children, each by a different husband."

Thus, while the intuition of Paratore and of Evans is quite correct, i.e., that Ovid transmuted the prosaic facts of his life into poetic expressions, it is misleading to say that he "obscured" them.

14 Mariotti 631 recognizes that Ovid realized that exile ended his life as a major poet, and connects this with Ovid's refusal to finish the *Fasti* or to polish the *Metamorphoses*.

Throughout the exilic elegies, in fact, Ovid uses the metaphor of his exile as death, e.g., *Tr.* 1.2.72; *Tr.* 1.3.22, 23, 43–44, 46, 77–78, 89, 96; *Tr.* 1.8.13–14, 23–26; *Tr.* 3.3.52–54; *Tr.* 3.11.25–32; *Tr.* 3.13.21–22; *Tr.* 3.14.15, 20; *P.* 1.9.17–18; *P.* 4.16.1–4, 47–48, 51. One aspect of this is Ovid's specialized use of vocabulary: *ademptus* =

Since amatory poetry both made and ruined his reputation, he appropriately characterizes himself as *tenerorum lusor amorum* in the opening line. Most of the first half of the elegy (19–60) deals with Ovid's decision to become a poet, and with the achievement of his reputation as the poet of the *Amores*. The phrase *multa quidem scripsi* (61) suffices for all of Ovid's work between the *Amores* and the *Metamorphoses*. The masterwork itself is merely alluded to in 63–64:

> tunc quoque, cum fugerem, quaedam placitura cremavi,
> iratus studio carminibusque meis.[15]

This is a reference to the claim in *Tr.* 1.7 that he burned his copy of the *Metamorphoses* before going into exile. The obscurity and brevity of these references to the works after the *Amores* have disturbed scholars,[16] and should make it clear that the mere occurrence of an event is not the criterion Ovid used for the inclusion of biographical detail. He considered instead the contribution a detail would make to the pattern he was seeking to impose on the events of his life. Important as the *Metamorphoses* is, it does not fit into the chosen pattern of two epochs,

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relegatus (e.g., *Tr.* 1.1.27), *mors = relegatio* (e.g., *P.* 1.5.86), *funus* (or *funera) = relegatio* (e.g., *Tr.* 3.14.20, *P.* 1.9.17), and, most frequently, *perii = relegatus sum* (e.g., *P.* 3.5.33). The metaphor finds geographical expression in the notion that the place of exile is "Stygian" (*P.* 1.8.27, *P.* 3.5.56).

Ovid relates this notion of exile-as-death to his choice of elegiac meter for the poetry from exile, asserting at *Tr.* 5.1.48 *tibia funeribus convenit ista meis*, thus alluding to the Alexandrian theory of the origin of elegy (see Thomas Rosenmeyer, "Elegiac and *Elegos*," *CSCA* 1 [1968] 217–31). Georg Luck, *P. Ovidius Naso: Tristia* (Heidelberg 1968) II, pt. 1, 2, correctly sees the exilic elegies as dirges for Ovid "dead" in exile, and that Ovid thereby restored to elegy its original function.

In several passages, Ovid even defines his life in exile as a kind of death (*P.* 1.7.9, *P.* 2.3.42, and *P.* 3.4.75–76). For evidence that the conception of exile as death-like was a general Roman notion, not peculiar to Ovid, see S. G. Owen, *Ovid Tristia Book I* (Oxford 1902³) 99, in an appendix to his comment on *Tr.* 1.2.72.

For discussion in detail of this pervasive theme of the exilic elegies, see my study *The Poetics of Exile: Program and Polemic in the Tristia and Epistulae ex Ponto of Ovid* (Diss. Indiana University; Bloomington 1975).

[15] Another important allusion to the *Metamorphoses* occurs in *Tr.* 4.10.129, which is practically the same as *Met.* 15.879, the last line of that poem.

[16] Fränkel (235 note 26) confesses parenthetically, "I do not understand why he fails to refer to the *Metamorphoses*;" Lee 200 is surprised that the autobiography mentions none of the poetry between the *Amores* and the *Tristia*, and observes (201) that "For all we are told here . . . [it] might never have been written." Evans suggests (107 note 31) that the intention of this omission may be to heighten the contrast between the amatory and exilic phases.

and so it is mentioned only obliquely as a transition to the second half of the poem and to the second epoch of his career. Most of this second half (81–120) deals directly with Ovid's exile. Even the section on private life and character (65–80) is related to exile because a defense of Ovid's character is an oblique justification of his poetry. The passage on his parents' deaths (77–90) enables Ovid to represent himself as a properly devoted son, and to include in an apostrophe to their shades one more protestation of *errorem . . . non scelus* (90) as the cause of his exile. This passage, too, sets the mournful mood appropriate to the topic of the second half of the poem. Ovid's concluding thanks to his Muse for her assistance throughout his career and his prediction of immortality (121–30) are also related to the main theme of exile, since they arise from a passage on Ovid's use of poetry in exile and his thanks to the Muse for her help in his time of exile (111–20).

Because Ovid's focus in the first half is on his commitment to a poetic vocation, he omits the sort of information which the Elder Seneca provides (*Contr.* 2.2.8–12, 9.5.17).[17] All Ovid says about his education is that he and his brother were sent at an early age *ad insignes urbis ab arte viros* (15–16); instead of tribute to Porcius Latro and Arellius Fuscus, there is a catalogue of the poets who were his older contemporaries (43–53). Ovid describes his final decision about his choice of career as follows:

> et petere Aoniae suadebant tuta sorores
>   otia, iudicio semper amata meo. (39–40)

It is a humorous touch to make the goddesses of poetry behave like orators (with the verb *suadebant*); the phrase *iudicio . . . meo* is meant to contribute to this amusing image. Perhaps we are supposed to imagine the Muses presenting a *suasoria* on the topic "Should Ovid continue in the *cursus honorum*, or should he become a poet?" The influence of the rhetorical schools on Ovid's poetry is clearly more important

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[17] Mariotti 611 observes insightfully that in speaking of his youth in *Tr.* 4.10, Ovid scarcely mentions the schools of rhetoric, but goes into detail about his poetic friendships, that from the beginning to end he opposes his interest in poetry with his brother's interest in oratory, and that we would know nothing of his connections with Arellius Fuscus and Porcius Latro if the Elder Seneca did not provide that information.

to literary scholars than it was to the poet himself.[18]   Instead of a statement of preference for the *suasoria* over the *controversia*, such as we find in Seneca (*Contr.* 2.2.12), there is a statement of preference for poetry over oratory (17–20), presented as contrast between himself and his older brother.

The lines concerning this brother are an example of Ovid's imaginative use of biographical detail.   The facts about him are not included for their intrinsic interest, but for their function in elucidating Ovid's poetic career.   He represents his own conflict between a public and poetic career by developing a contrast between two characters—himself and his brother—and resolves the conflict at the death of this alter ego. The initial statement of this contrast (17–20) is emphasized by a later repetition; lines 27–30 indicate their early difference persisted into their maturity.   This difference between an interest in oratory and an interest in poetry is what distinguishes Ovid from his brother; in everything else the poet carefully indicates their close similarity. They were born on the same date, and so observed their birthdays together:

> *Lucifer* amborum natalibus affuit *idem:*
> *una* celebrata est per duo liba *dies.*   (11–12)[19]

The plural verbs Ovid uses for their upbringing at home (*excolimur* 15) and for their entering upon a rhetorical education at Rome (*imus* 16) emphasize their affinity, as do the singular verbs in 28–29,

> liberior fratri sumpta mihique toga est,
> induiturque umeris cum lato purpura clavo,

which condense two possibly separate events and suggest that the brothers assumed the *toga virilis* together.   Ovid's close identification of himself and his brother allows him to use their one difference

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[18] Besides Mariotti's, other good considerations of the influence of rhetoric on Ovid are Wilamowitz, *Hellenistische Dichtung* (Berlin 1924) I, 239 f.; Walther Kraus, *RE* 18 (1942), "Ovidius Naso," 1975.50–1976.6; Fränkel 167–69 note 3; and T. F. Higham, "Ovid and Rhetoric," *Ovidiana* (Paris 1958) 32–48.   Wilfried Stroh, *Die römischen Liebeselegie als werbende Dichtung* (Amsterdam 1971) 234, correctly perceives the sense in which the Roman elegists are "rhetorical," i.e., that they speak for a goal; he argues (2) that the description of Roman elegy as "subjective-erotic" is correct only if "subjective" is understood as "for oneself" rather than "about oneself."

[19] Ovid actually uses three lines to express this unusual coincidence; line 10 refers to the brother *qui tribus ante quater mensibus ortus erat.*

(oratory vs. poetry) to symbolize and externalize a conflict within himself. Ovid expresses his sense of loss at his brother's death with the phrase . . . *et coepi parte carere mei* (32). While *pars mei* is a commonplace, in this context it assumes a more literal sense, referring to that "part" of Ovid which was inclining toward a public career, the part of his internal conflict which he had objectified in the figure of his brother.[20]

In the two couplets following the one on his brother's death at the age of 20 in 24 B.C., Ovid sketches the brief extent of his incipient public career: he held the minor posts preliminary to the quaestorship, including membership on the *triumviratus capitalis* (33–34), but when the time came for the first serious commitment to the *cursus*, with his eligibility for the quaestorship in 20 B.C., he decided not to take that step (35–36).[21] Lines 33–36 cover the years between 24 and 20 B.C., but Ovid compresses this period by his brief treatment. This effect is compounded by the laconic and impersonal statement of the final decision against a public career (35),

> curia restabat: clavi mensura coacta est;

all of which creates the impression that Ovid's commitment to poetry occurred much sooner after his brother's death (in 24 B.C.) than it did, and hence was somehow causally related to it. The connection, as we have seen, is a symbolic one. We have no reason to doubt that Ovid did have a very close relationship with his brother, and was deeply affected by his loss, but we must realize that he includes these facts from his life to articulate the conflict he experienced in choosing a career, and not simply to commemorate his brother and their relationship.

If Ovid had not had a brother interested in oratory, who died while

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[20] Cf. Horace *Odes* 2.17.5 . . . *te meae . . . partem animae*, and *Odes* 1.3.8 *animae dimidium meae*. Esther Bréguet discusses this *topos* within the context of discussing three passages in which Roman elegiac lovers invoke a deity to spare their beloved's life and by so doing spare that of the lover as well, "*In una parce duobus:* Thèmes et clichés," *Hommages à Léon Herrmann* (Brussels 1960) 205–14. Frécaut 335 note 25 observes that Ovid used this expression with the intention of parody in *Am.* 1.7.24. In that elegy Ovid remonstrates with himself for having struck his mistress, and wishes his arms had dropped off (23),

> utiliter potui parte carere mei (24).

There too this *topos* was taken literally, as in *Tr.* 4.10.

[21] See Wheeler 13–14.

Ovid was in the process of reaching a decision about his career, and, coincidentally, who was exactly one year older than the poet, he would have had to devise some other way of presenting his choice of career.   As it was, biographical details lent themselves to an imaginative function.   Ovid's reference to his brother's death in the first half of *Tr.* 4.10 is no more gratuitous than his mention of his parents' deaths at the beginning of the second half.

The opposition of public and poetic careers is a commonplace of elegy; Propertius 4.1 provides a precedent for its use in an autobiographical poem.[22]   The narrator, the astrologer Horos, says that after Propertius assumed the *toga virilis*,

> tum tibi pauca suo de carmine dictat Apollo
> et vetat insano verba tonare Foro. (133–34)

Here, as in *Tr.* 4.10.17–20, poetry is constrasted specifically with oratory.[23]   By using the metaphor of *militia amoris* in 135 ff., Propertius also implicitly contrasts the poetic career with another kind of public career, military service.   Ovid does this elliptically, in referring to his brother's inclination to the *fortia arma* of the wordy forum (18). Lines 35–40 represent a public career as too demanding for Ovid's physical and mental abilities, and present his final decision as a renunciation of *labor* in favor of *otia*.   Since Ovid is the most "literary" of the elegists, it is proper for him to use the conventional opposition of public and poetic careers and the standard mock depreciation of poetry as *otia* to represent his decision as that of the typical elegiac poet.

There are a good many other conventional elements in *Tr.* 4.10. Frequently in Roman programmatic poems a deity intervenes to influence the poet (e.g., Apollo in the Propertius passage quoted above). In *Tr.* 4.10 *Musa* (20) arouses Ovid's initial attraction to poetry, and the *Aoniae sorores* (39) persuade him to make a final commitment. Commonplace also is the application of religious diction to poetry; in line 19 Ovid calls poetry *caelestia sacra*, and in 41–42 he relates that he worshipped his older contemporaries as if they were gods.[24]

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[22] See Wimmel 288 note 2 on parallels between Propertius 4.1 and *Tr.* 4.10.

[23] Also, *Tr.* 4.10.28, *liberior fratri sumpta mihique toga est*, resembles Propertius 4.1.132, *matris et ante deos libera sumpta toga*.

[24] Frécaut recognizes the significance of this by using religious diction himself, when he refers to Ovid's "vocation poétique," (333) and to his life "consacrée . . . à la poésie" (336).

Other *topoi* in *Tr.* 4.10 are a list of predecessors (41–54), thanks to the Muse (117 f.), a reference to the effects of envy on the living (121–24), and a prediction of immortality (129–30).[25]

In addition to these general programmatic conventions, Ovid includes specific reminiscences of the closing poems of *Amores* 1 and 3.[26] *Amores* 3.15, the *sphragis* of the *Amores* as well as the epilogue of the third book, contains the information on Ovid's family background with which *Tr.* 4.10 opens. There is more space devoted to Ovid's birthplace in *Am.* 3.15 than in *Tr.* 4.10, but the couplet on his equestrian rank:

> si quid id est, usque a proavis vetus ordinis heres,
> > non modo militiae turbine factus eques.   (5–6)

is almost the same as the one in *Tr.* 4.10:

> si quid id est, usque a proavis vetus ordinis heres
> > non modo fortunae munere factus eques.   (7–8)

The subject of *Am.* 1.15, the choice of a poetic career, is the same as that of the first half of *Tr.* 4.10, and this accounts for several similarities in detail. *Am.* 1.15 opens (1–8) with the contrast of poetic and public careers which is the topic of *Tr.* 4.10.17–30. Ovid depreciates an oratorical career in similar terms both in *Am.* 1.15:

> nec me verbosas leges ediscere (sc. quid mihi obicis) nec me
> > ingrato vocem prostituisse foro?   (5–6)

and in *Tr.* 4.10:

> frater ad eloquium viridi tendebat ab aevo,
> > fortia verbosi natus ad arma fori;   (17–18).[27]

Am. 1.15 is addressed to *Livor*, to which reference is made at the end of *Tr.* 4.10 (123–24).   At the beginning of *Am.* 1.15, Ovid's pursuit of a

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[25] Lists of erotic, lyric, and satiric predecessors appear respectively in Propertius 2.34.85–92, Horace *Odes* 4.9.5–12, and Horace *Satires* 1.4.1–8 (citation of predecessors is an item on Wimmel's list of apologetic elements, 323); Horace *Odes* 4.3.21 ff. (to Melpomene) is an instance of thanks to the Muse; there are references to envy and its effects in Propertius 3.1.21–24 and Horace *Odes* 4.3.16; the prototypical prediction of immortality by a Roman poet is Horace *Odes* 3.30.

[26] Evans 108 remarks on the allusions to *Am.* 3.15, observing (note 35) that Paratore 364–65 finds them excessive and tiresome.

[27] Cf. also *verbosi . . . fori* in *Tr.* 3.12.18 and *insano . . . Foro* in Propertius 4.1.134.

poetic career is opposed by *Livor*, on the grounds that it is idle and untraditional (1–3). In *Tr.* 4.10 the opposition comes from Ovid's father:

> saepe pater dixit "studium quid inutile temptas?
> Maeonides nullas ipse reliquit opes." (21–22)

The *exemplum* chosen to support the argument that poetry is unprofitable—Homer—is also the first *exemplum* Ovid himself cites in *Am.* 1.15 to defend his pursuit of immortality through poetry (9–10). The conclusion of *Am.* 1.15 contains some of the same themes as the end of *Tr.* 4.10, namely, the effect of *Livor* on the living and on the dead, and a prediction of immortality:

> pascitur in vivis Livor; post fata quiescit,
>   cum suus ex merito quemque tuetur honos:
> ergo etiam cum me supremus adederit ignis,
>   vivam, parsque mei multa superstes erit. (39–42)

Ovid alludes to other of his amatory poems besides *Am.* 1.15 and 3.15. In referring to the subject of his early work, he states:

> moverat ingenium totam cantata per urbem
>   nomine non vero dicta Corinna mihi. (59–60)

This echoes *Am.* 3.12.16, where Ovid claimed:

> ingenium movit sola Corinna meum.[28]

Ovid also includes reminiscences of his exilic elegies in *Tr.* 4.10. In fact, there is one such echo in the first line of the poem: the self-description *tenerorum lusor amorum* occurred earlier (*Tr.* 3.3.73), in the first line of an epitaph Ovid proposes for himself:

HIC · EGO · QUI · IACEO · TENERORUM · LUSOR · AMORUM.[29]

Some of the other allusions are from *Tristia* 2; in writing his auto-

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[28] *Am.* 3.12.16 imitates Propertius 2.1.4 *ingenium nobis ipsa puella facit.* The fact that "Corinna" is a pseudonym is also revealed in the amatory poetry. This is alluded to in *Am.* 2.17.29,

> novi aliquam, quae se circumferat esse Corinnam;

and in *Ars* 3.538,

> et multi, quae sit nostra Corinna, rogant.

[29] With this allusion Ovid kills two birds with one stone, since *Am.* 3.15.1 ends with the phrase *tenerorum mater Amorum.*

biography, Ovid takes an opportunity to recapitulate some of the points in that defense.[30]   Naturally there are more echoes from the exilic elegies in the second half of *Tr.* 4.10; lines 89–116 are almost a pastiche of exilic motifs.[31]

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[30] Even Ovid's reference to his equestrian status (*Tr.* 4.10.7–8) is somewhat tendentious, since in *Tr.* 2.89–92 he points out that his crime had apparently not been serious enough to warrant removal from the equestrian order.   In *Tr.* 4.10.33–34, as in *Tr.* 2.93–96, Ovid refers to public offices he held before retiring from politics.   The catalogue of his immediate predecessors (*Tr.* 4.10.43 ff.) concludes with the elegiac "succession:"

> successor fuit hic (sc. Tibullus) tibi, Galle, Propertius illi;
> quartus ab his serie temporis ipse fui.   (53–54)

In *Tristia* 2 Ovid concludes a long catalogue of poets who wrote with impunity on erotic subjects (359 ff.) with the elegists, leading up to the phrase *his ego successi . . .* (467). In *Tristia* 2 Ovid maintains there was a discrepancy between the things he wrote and the way he behaved:

> sic ego delicias et mollia carmina feci,
> strinxerit ut nomen *fabula nulla* meum.   (349–50)

This argument is reflected in *Tr.* 4.10.67–68:

> cum tamen hic essem minimoque accenderer igni,
> nomine sub nostro *fabula nulla* fuit.

After mentioning his *duo crimina, carmen et error* in *Tr.* 2.207, Ovid asserts

> alterius facti culpa silenda mihi: (208).

Similarly in *Tr.* 4.10.99–100 Ovid claims he may not identify the crime which caused his banishment:

> causa meae . . . ruinae
> indicio non est testificanda meo.

[31] Ovid thus gives an account of his life in exile by reminding us of the poetry he composed there.   For the contrast of *error* and *scelus* (90), cf. *Tr.* 1.3.37–38 and 3.5.51–52; for the notion that the *laesi principis ira* (98) is responsible for Ovid's punishment, cf. *Tr.* 1.5.83–84, 2.123–24, and 3.6.23.   The phrase *comitum nefas* (101) recalls the frequent claim that most of Ovid's friends deserted him (e.g., *Tr.* 1.5.33 and 3.5.10; 1.8 reproaches one such friend).   The phrase *longis erroribus* (109) makes a fleeting reference to Ovid's identification with Ulysses, especially in *Tristia* 1.   This phrase can be compared to the first item in Ovid's extended comparison of himself with Ulysses in *Tr.* 1.5; in line 59 of that poem he says of Ulysses . . . *multis erravit in annis*.   Before the comparison, which begins in 57, Ovid likens the number of his sufferings to the stars (47), just as he does in *Tr.* 4.10.107–08, the couplet just preceding the line in which the phrase *longis erroribus* occurs.   Ovid's representations of himself as beleaguered by hostile barbarians (111), with no one to whom he can recite his poetry (113), is familiar from *Tristia* 3, the volume in which he begins to write about his place of exile; for 111, *hic ego, finitimis quamvis circumsoner armis,* cf. *Tr.* 3.14.38 . . . *pro libris arcus et arma sonant* and 47 *Threicio Scythicoque fere circumsonor ore;* for 113 . . . *nemo est, cuius referatur* (sc. *carmen*) *ad aures,* cf. *Tr.* 3.14. 39–40 *nullus in hac terra, recitem si carmina, cuius | intellecturis auribus utar, adest.* As to Ovid's being surrounded, this is the idea which opens *Tr.* 3.10; if anyone in Rome remembers Ovid, *me sciat in media vivere barbaria. | Sauromatae cingunt, fera gens, Bessique Getaeque,* (4–5).

As the epilogue of a book of poems *Tr.* 4.10 contains numerous references outside itself, but these do not interfere with its internal coherence. Ovid's care in this matter is evident in the close inter-connections between the halves.[32] Particular attention is paid at the mid-point of the elegy to prevent the halves from becoming separate. On one side of the node is a catalogue of poets (43 ff.), and on the other, a catalogue of family members (69 ff.). In the former Ovid uses the phrase *successor fuit* (53) of Tibullus, and in the latter, the verb *successit* of his second wife (71). The characterization of his third wife as *ultima* (73) confirms that this list is meant to resemble a catalogue. In 55 Ovid describes his relationship with his immediate predecessors and successors:

> utque ego maiores, sic me coluere minores.

So too Ovid mentions both his descendants (75–76) and parents (77 ff.) in listing his immediate family. In his references to both his first recitation and his first marriage, Ovid gives an indication of his extreme youth, in the first by calling his works *iuvenalia* (57) and stating that his beard had been trimmed only once or twice (58), and in the second with the phrase *paene . . . puero* (69).

Ovid establishes another parallelism between the two halves; each epoch of his poetic career is preceded by the death of a family member. His commitment to poetry is preceded by his brother's death, mentioned in 31–32:

> iamque decem vitae frater geminaverat annos,
>   cum perit, et coepi parte carere mei.

Likewise, the end of his career in exile is preceded by his parents' deaths:

> et iam complerat genitor sua fata novemque
>   addiderat lustris altera lustra novem.
> non aliter flevi, quam me fleturus ademptum
>   ille fuit.   matris proxima busta tuli.   (77–80)

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[32] Evans 109 rightly observes that Ovid has set up contrasts in the halves, as part of the principal contrast of his earliest and his present phases; Evans mentions these pairs: family in Sulmo / wives; brother's death / parents' deaths; early circle of poet-friends / present solitude, with only the Muse for company; and earliest elegies / present ones.

In one last set of correspondences, Ovid gives an added significance to his account of his response to exile. In lines 35–40 he attributes his final decision about a poetic career to conventional elegiac fecklessness:

> curia restabat: clavi mensura coacta est;
>   maius erat nostris *viribus* illud onus.
> nec *patiens* corpus, nec mens fuit apta *labori*,
>   sollicitaeque *fugax* ambitionis eram,
> et petere Aoniae suadebant tuta sorores
>   *otia*, iudicio semper amata meo.

In the second half of the elegy, Ovid uses similar vocabulary to show that he resisted the effects of exile vigorously. He first describes his endurance this way:

> ipsa multa *tuli* non leviora *fuga*.
> indignata malis *mens* est succumbere seque
>   praestitit invictam *viribus* usa suis;
> oblitusque mei ductaeque per *otia* vitae
>   insolita cepi temporis arma manu.
> totque *tuli* . . . casus . . . .   (102–07)

Not only does he state explicitly that he forsook *otia* (105), but his diction recalls the earlier section on his choice of elegiac *otia*, and the total effect of all these correspondences of diction is to subvert the traditional notion of poetry as an enervating pursuit.

The conventional elements in *Tr.* 4.10 place it in a tradition; the allusions to other works by Ovid locate it within a corpus of poetry. Ovid's assessment of his poetic career and accomplishments in *Tr.* 4.10 indicates his place among Roman poets. Toward the end of the first half, he locates himself in relation to his contemporaries, especially as the fourth in what he calls the elegiac "succession." He emphasizes chronology by beginning the catalogue with the phrase *temporis illius* (41) and ending with the phrase *serie temporis* (54).[33] The comparative, *grandior aevo* (43), with which he characterizes the first poet in the list indicates that here Ovid is interested in his relative position among his fellow-poets; he sums this up in 55, using two more comparatives:

> utque ego *maiores*, sic me coluere *minores*.

[33] Each appearance of *temporis* is reinforced by the proximity of a perfect tense of *colere*: *colui* in 41, and *coluere* in 55.

At the end of the second half, and of the elegy as a whole, Ovid measures himself in relation to his contemporaries, in terms not of chronology, but of quality and reputation:

> nam tulerint magnos cum saecula nostra poetas,
>   non fuit ingenio fama maligna meo,
> cumque ego praeponam multos mihi, non minor illis
>   dicor et in toto plurimus orbe legor. (125–28)

The false modesty in the first three lines, conveyed by the concessives in the hexameters, and with the understatement by litotes (non ... maligna 126 and non minor 127), makes the hyperbolic statement of primacy in 128 all the more emphatic.   False modesty resumes in the last two couplets:

> si quid habent igitur vatum praesagia veri,
>   protinus ut moriar, non ero, terra, tuus.
> sive favore tuli, sive hanc ego carmine famam,
>   iure tibi grates, candide lector, ago. (129–32),

where conditions have the same effect as the concessives above.   The doubt feigned in them about the reliability of poets' predictions and the real source of his reputation (good will, or his poetry), the understatement by litotes (non ero ... tuus 130), and the generous expression of gratitude to the reader, combine to produce the least pretentious way for Ovid to predict his immortality.   This concluding prediction represents a shift from the contemporary audience to future readers, and from Ovid's relative and chronological position to an absolute and timeless one.

The principle which explains the inclusion, omission, and arrangement of the individual details in Tristia 4.10, therefore, is Ovid's representation of poetry as the "driving force," the "overriding purpose," of his life.[34]   Tristia 4.10 presents the essential, rather than the accidental events of that life.   It is both a poet's autobiography, in that details are selected, emphasized, or omitted as they relate to Ovid's poetic career, and a poetic autobiography, in that these details are organized into an aesthetically conceived and unified whole.   This is the definitive statement of the author who said of a portrait of himself ... sed carmina maior imago sunt mea ... (Tr. 1.7.11–12).

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[34] Both phrases are Pascal's (19 and 193).