

 Copyright © 1996 The Johns Hopkins University Press. All rights reserved.

Arethusa 29.1 (1996) 125-149



Constructions of Venus in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* V

Patricia J. Johnson

The fifth book, and with it the first third, of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* ends with a friendly visit of the goddess Minerva to Mt. Helicon, in the course of which one of the Muses recounts the events of a poetic contest which had recently taken place between her learned sisters and a group of nine mortal challengers called the Emathides. The Muse narrator briefly summarizes the song of these women, an idiosyncratic and highly irreverent version of the revolt of the monster Typhoeus against the Olympians, ¹ then repeats verbatim the responding entry of Calliope (*Meta.* V 341-661), which documents the famous rape of Proserpina by Pluto and the wanderings of her mother Ceres in search of her. Most interpretations of this episode have quite understandably focused upon Calliope's song as art, asking what kind of poetry, or more particularly what genre of poetry, it might represent, and why. ² Despite their close comparison of the episode with its two most famous predecessors, the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* and Ovid's own account in *Fasti* IV, critics fail to consider the possible social and narrative purposes of a highly significant digression from not only the *Hymn* and *Fasti* versions, but all versions of the rape: Calliope's attribution of the rape to the sole agency of Venus and Cupid (V 359-84). Further, the representation of Venus and Cupid in *Metamorphoses* V, not so much as the inspirers **[End Page 125]** of love but as the Empress and Commander in Chief of an empire, diverges in significant ways from their more traditional depiction in Ovid's and other elegiac poetry. Why they should attain such prominence in Calliope's version of the rape of Proserpina, and why their characterizations depart so radically from Ovid's elegiac divinities, will be the focus of this discussion. I will argue that Ovid's elegiac and epic treatments of Venus and Cupid are two sides of the same Ovidian strategy, in the first case making a mockery of Augustan moral legislation, in the second launching a broader assault upon Roman imperial ideology. Two further digressions from the traditional accounts of the rape, Cyane's attempt to stop it and her consequent transformation early in the song (V 409-37), and the lengthy account of the rape of Arethusa toward the end of the episode (V 572-641), are linked thematically to this unusual appearance of Venus and Cupid in order to reinforce a correlation between imperial, divine, and sexual power that Ovid has developed in the first third of the *Metamorphoses*.

Venus and Cupid, who do not appear to have been available motivators of the rape before this episode, ³ are here made entirely responsible for Proserpina's demise. Jupiter, the motivator in the *Hymn*, ⁴ is invisible until Ceres' traditional appeal on behalf of her daughter (V 512ff.). Pluto, blamed in the *Fasti*, ⁵ is merely an unfortunate victim of **[End Page 126]** Venus' ambition. Pluto has emerged from Tartarus to check for damages caused by the struggling of Typhoeus, with whose burial under Aetna (the traditional end of his battle with Jupiter, omitted by the Emathides), Calliope has opened her narrative. As Venus spots the unwitting Pluto she addresses Cupid (V 365-79):

"arma manusque meae, mea, nate, potentia," dixit,
 "illa, quibus superas omnes, cape tela, Cupido,
 inque dei pectus celeres molire sagittas,
 cui triplicis cessit fortuna novissima regni.
 tu superos ipsumque lovem, tu numina ponti
 victa domas ipsumque, regit qui numina ponti.
 Tartara quid cessant? cur non matrisque tuumque
 imperium proferes? agitur pars tertia mundi . . .
 at tu pro socio, si qua est ea gratia, regno

iunge deam patruo."

"My arms, my hands, my power, my son!" she said,
 "Take up the missiles that overwhelm everyone, Cupid,
 and sink your swift arrows into the heart of the god
 to whom the last lot for the division of the three-fold universe fell.
 You domesticate the gods, and Jupiter himself,
 and the divinities of the sea and their ruler;
 why does Tartarus hold back? Why aren't you extending
 our empire? A third of the world is at stake! . . .
 On behalf of our joint realm, if it means anything to you,
 join the goddess to her uncle."

In Calliope's song Venus has graduated from her traditional role as the inspirer of love in Latin elegiac poetry to become a rapacious empire-builder, with Cupid as her agent. Political terminology abounds (*matrisque tuumque imperium, pars tertia mundi, pro socio regno*) in concert with a portrait of a fully martial Cupid (*arma, potentia, tela, domas*).⁶ Her plans to [End Page 127] inflame Pluto with passion for Proserpina represent a premeditated attempt to gain control of the last of the realms denied her, the underworld.⁷ Venus reminds Cupid, in expressly imperial language, that he already controls Jupiter, the Olympian gods, the sea deities and their king (V 369-70), and urges her son to extend their empire to its furthest limit (V 371-72). Her delegation of authority to Cupid, unlike his more typical independence of action in Ovid's elegiac poetry, emphasizes the imperial tone of her commands. In a twist on Cupid's playful assault on Mt. Helicon and Ovid's epic project in *Amores* I 1, where poetic *regna* are at issue,⁸ here Cupid's *arma, tela*, and *sagittas* have become Venus' literal weapons in a struggle to extend her empire over the "third realm." The use of these weapons will inspire a rape, a fitting form of assault in the war for the empire of Love, just as they did against Apollo and Daphne in *Metamorphoses* I.

This unusually aggressive and politicized portrait of Venus as empire-builder invites closer consideration of its implications, within both its Roman and its narrative settings. The vividness of the description links Venus with what Cahoon (1988) has aptly called the Roman *libido dominandi*, the drive to conquer, and follows the pattern of satirical Romanization of the gods that is found throughout the *Metamorphoses*.⁹ Venus is both a natural and an uncommon choice for the satire of this *libido*, for she is charged with powerful imperial significance during the Augustan period. Most important for her appearances in Augustan poetry, Rome itself was regularly identified with her¹⁰ as its patron goddess through the person of her famous son, Aeneas of Troy, from whom the Julian family, including [End Page 128] Augustus, had claimed direct descent since the late second century B.C.E.¹¹ Julius Caesar led the way in his generation, most notably by undertaking the construction of the Temple of Venus Genetrix in the Julian Forum,¹² where on at least one occasion he (rudely) received the entire Senate, according to Suetonius' life (*Divus Iulius* 78). Julius' coins also attest to the family's divine connections with Venus.¹³ Ovid's conclusion of the *Metamorphoses* (XV 746ff.) provides testimony about, if not satire of, the public belief in Venus' dedication to Julius Caesar.¹⁴

The importance of Venus to Octavian, Julius Caesar's adopted son and champion, can therefore hardly be overestimated.¹⁵ The connection is clearly and frequently acknowledged by the Augustan poets: Propertius III 4 (19-20) explicitly links Venus and Augustus, while IV 1.46-47 connects Venus, Aeneas, and Rome; Horace *Odes* IV 15 (31-32) links Venus, Aeneas, and Augustus; the *Carm. Saec.* 50 connects Venus and Augustus again; and Anchises in *Aeneid* VI (756-807) carefully details for the Venus-born Aeneas the line of his descendants through Julius Caesar and Augustus: *hic vir, hic est . . . Augustus Caesar, divi genus* (VI 791-92). *Divi genus*, of course, echoes Augustus' self-stylization on coinage as *Caesar divi filius*.¹⁶ Ovid's own work makes the connection often. In *Fasti* IV, on the month of April, the strongest emphasis is placed upon Venus' relationship to the Julians. Augustus is directly addressed (IV 19-20) in the preface to the family's genealogy (IV 21-78). Venus' special connection with Troy and Rome is referred to again toward the end of the preface (IV 118-24). The end of the *Metamorphoses* is dedicated in its entirety to the simultaneous restatement and explosion of this genealogical relationship.¹⁷ [End Page 129]

Augustus' architectural and sculptural investments also testify to his efforts to recall his divine and Trojan ancestry. Pollini (forthcoming) demonstrates that as the *magna mater* of the Julians Venus plays a

crucial role in the Augustan ideology expressed in all of the works of art from this period. He argues persuasively, for example, that the south processional frieze of the Ara Pacis, dedicated for Augustus by the Senate in 13 B.C.E., casts Augustus as another Romulus, and therefore as the *alter conditor* of Rome; the similar rendering of Augustus and Aeneas (heads veiled and crowned with laurel) likewise associates him with Venus' son. ¹⁸ If the views of several other scholars are correct, ¹⁹ Venus is the "composite mother goddess" on the Ara Pacis' back left panel. Even those who would rather not take a definite stand on this identification must admit that enough elements of Venus' traditional representations in Roman art are incorporated in this figure (e.g., the off-shoulder garment) to evoke her presence. The relationship of Augustus and the Julians to Aeneas is also the central image of the Forum Augustum, dedicated in 2 B.C.E., which, with the Temple of Mars Ultor as its centerpiece, also recalls Mars' participation in the dynasty as the father of Romulus. ²⁰ The Temple of Divine Julius, dedicated in 29 B.C.E., housed the famous painting of Venus emerging from the sea (Pliny *NH* XXXV 91), and Augustus hosted the *Iudi Veneris Genetricis*, during which it was believed that Caesar's soul ascended to heaven to reside with the gods (Pliny *NH* II 93-94).

As a result of her prominence as the *genetrix* of the Julian clan, therefore, with whom Augustus sought at every turn publicly to identify himself and justify his position, every mention of Venus in Augustan literature must reflect, whether positively or negatively, upon her descendants in Rome, the Julians, and particularly Augustus. Both Ovid's elegiac [End Page 130] poems and the *Metamorphoses* are enthusiastic contributors to this commentary, as we shall see.

Venus Amatoris

The association of the Augustan regime with Venus was not without its problems. Reminders of Venus' traditional immorality were hardly welcomed by the *curator legum et morum*, as Augustus styles himself in the *Res Gestae*; the Julian laws of 19 B.C.E. sought to punish, by means of tax and inheritance disincentives, just that vice over which Venus usually presided in mythology: extramarital sexuality. Mythology confronts religion and politics, as often in the ancient world. Such confrontations and reminders of contradiction are posed nowhere more often in Latin literature than in the collected works of Ovid. As Zanker observes (1988.209):

What makes many modern, overly learned interpretations of Augustan iconography so tedious reflects an important characteristic of the works of art themselves: their unrelentingly didactic intent, manifested in constant repetition, similes and equivalences . . . Ovid's ambiguous and sometimes malicious verses apparently found a responsive audience, and there were occasionally even caricatures of the sacrosanct mythological images.

The "maliciousness" of Ovid's treatment of Venus in the *Amores* and the *Ars Amatoria* is largely achieved by a juxtaposition of inherent contradictions between Augustus' moral order and Venus' mythological history. Ovid often emphasizes Venus' family connection to Aeneas and Augustus alongside her role as an erotic goddess. For example, in his bitter poem against abortion, *Am.* II 14, ²¹ Venus is the last in a list of mythological mothers whose unborn sons were to have great historical significance. With appropriate gravity the poet credits Aeneas and the Caesars to Venus' willingness to carry the baby to term: *si Venus Aenean gravida temerasset in alvo / Caesaribus tellus orba futura fuit* (II 14.17-18), "if Venus had [End Page 131] violated Aeneas in her heavy womb, the world would have been bereft of Caesars." The gravity is undermined, however, by the fact that the illegitimate pregnancy of Ovid's mistress is being likened to that of Venus; Ovid reminds us that Aeneas, and ultimately all the Caesars, are the offspring of an extramarital affair between Venus and Anchises. ²² In *Am.* I 8, the sexually liberated empire of Venus in Rome ironically recalls the reign of Augustus. The old woman Dipsas urges Corinna to pursue her advantage with a rich young man, for *nunc Mars externis animos exercet in armis / at Venus Aeneae regnat in urbe sui*, "now Mars expends his energy against foreign armies, but Venus rules in the city of her Aeneas" (I 8.41-42). Here Ovid has accomplished a graceful union of Venus' roles as the mother of Aeneas, the antithesis (yet the companion) of war, the emblem of the reign (*regnat*) of the Julii in Rome, and the patron of girls on the make. This empire of Venus is, of course, in complete contradiction with the goals, if not the letter, of Augustus' moral program; ²³ although the affair being urged upon Corinna would not constitute adultery, to her poet-lover who hopes to retain exclusive rights over her it certainly does. Dipsas argues that only the hopelessly rustic Sabines would settle for one lover (*forsitan inmundae Tatius regnante Sabinae / noluerint habiles pluribus esse*

viris, I 8.39-40), and that in Rome *casta est quam nemo rogavit*, "the only women who are chaste are the ones who haven't been asked" (I 8.43). By juxtaposing the erotic nature of Venus with her role as the ancestor of the Julians, Ovid unveils the contradiction inherent in Augustus' self-portrait as both her descendant and as moral reformer.

Ovid also fully exploits the contradiction between Venus' roles as erotic goddess and Augustan ancestor in the *Ars Amatoria*. In this poem she is Ovid's employer and patron of his poem, for Amor has been put in his charge for tutoring (*praeceptor Amoris*, I 17); the poet writes Bk. III for women at Venus' request. Two of her temples, one the all-important Augustan Temple of Venus Genetrix in the Forum, are stripped of their [End Page 132] sanctity when they become stages set for love's play (I 75ff.). ²⁴ According to Ovid's brief cosmogony (AA II 480), Venus was responsible for the introduction of all sexual reproduction, in a passage strikingly similar to Lucretius' invocation to Venus at the opening of *De Rerum Natura* (I 1-29), where she is called *Aeneadum genetrix*. In a subversion of the piety of the Lucretian text, however, Ovid uses Venus' primacy in nature to justify the use of sex to soothe a jealous lover. ²⁵ The goddess' adulteries also provide an ironic standard for appropriate conduct of love affairs (e.g., II 563-600). Such a juxtaposition of Venus' mythological past and Augustus' ideological present would ultimately prove disastrous. The long arm of political correctness, within the puritanical atmosphere of Augustan moral reaction, reached out to exile Ovid and his *Ars* several years later.

Venus Imperatoris

In *Metamorphoses* V Ovid and Calliope take a different tack, on a course away from Venus of the *amator* toward a new Venus of the *imperator*. Her amatory role has been abandoned (as we might expect in the transition from elegiac to epic poetry); Venus ²⁶ is absent from the numerous episodes dealing with the *amores deorum* at the opening of the poem. Ovid's imperial Venus does not stand alone in the literary tradition; a number of quotations emphatically direct us to Vergil's Venus in the *Aeneid*. Venus and Cupid are there responsible for the all-important and equally callous snaring of Dido's heart (*Aeneid* I 657ff.) and the reader is not permitted to miss this structural parallel to Pluto's case (*Aeneid* I 663-66):

ergo his aligerum dictis adfatur Amorem:
 "nate, meae vires, mea magna potentia, solus,
 nate, patris summi qui tela Typhoea temnis,
 ad te confugio et supplex tua numina posco."

Therefore she addressed these words to winged Love:
 "My child, my strength, my great power; only you, [End Page 133]
 my child, scoff at those weapons the foremost father used to defeat Typhoeus;
 to you I flee, it is your divinity I invoke."

This is to be compared with *Meta.* V 365-70 (cited above p. 127). The emphatic vocative *nate*, appearing twice in the *Aeneid* passage, is repeated in Ovid's syntactically fractured dactylic verse at V 365; *mea potentia* from *Aeneid* I 664 appears in *Meta.* V 365, with *potentia* in the same metrical position; Jupiter's *tela* (*Aeneid* I 665) are echoed by Cupid's in the *Metamorphoses* (V 366). In both accounts Venus reminds Cupid of his power over Jupiter and, in the *Metamorphoses*, over the second member of the triumvirate, Neptune (*Meta.* V 369, *Aeneid* I 665).

Ovid's quotation of the *Aeneid* is noted by most commentators, but its significance is left undiscussed. ²⁷ In light of the political and social significance of Venus in Augustan Rome, we should at the very least be encouraged to compare the two poets' handling of these Augustan Venuses. Commentators do not mention, perhaps because it is so obvious, the additional reference to the *Aeneid*'s opening *arma virumque* in Ovid's metrically equivalent *arma manusque*. Apart from underscoring his allusion to the *Aeneid*'s Venus by recalling this most epic of introductions to Latin literature's most famous epic, Ovid sets a decisively military and imperial tone upon the speech of his Venus which is absent from Vergil's in *Aeneid* I. There Venus takes more of a cajoling tone with her son (*ad te confugio et supplex tua numina posco*, I 666), ²⁸ rather than chastising him for his lack of ambition (*cur non . . . imperium proferes?* V 371-72). In both cases *imperium* is at issue, but of distinctly different types. In the *Aeneid*, it is the *imperium* of Aeneas and of the Rome of the Caesars, as Bk. VI so carefully documents. Vergil's Venus is undoubtedly ambitious, ²⁹ but allegedly on behalf of the Rome of the future, and particularly

her grandson Ascanius. **[End Page 134]** Ovid's Venus, by contrast, is ambitious for her own empire of love; her only concern is the extent, and extension, of her own territory. Calliope's version of the rape's motivation becomes a commentary on the *Aeneid*'s patriotic and maternal Venus by replacing her with a sexual imperialist who lacks even the excuse of the glory of Rome to fall back upon for her behavior. Nowhere is the ideological gulf between early and late Augustan poetry more apparent. ³⁰

Ovid further tints his Venus with the colors of Roman politics through extensive allusion to Cicero's speeches *Against Verres* and the rapacious behavior of the Sicilian governor early in the first century B.C.E. documented there. The location of the *Metamorphoses*' rape of Proserpina and the wanderings of Ceres, in contrast particularly to the *Hymn*, ³¹ is stubbornly Sicilian. In the episode Venus herself is Sicilian as well, identified only as *Erycina*, Venus of Eryx. ³² Hinds points convincingly to several Ovidian footnotes that allude to the setting of the rape as it is found in the *Verrines* (II 4.106-07). These are best seen in Ovid's puns on Cicero's *lacus lucique sunt* (*Verr.* II 4.107) with *lacus est* (*Meta.* V 385), and possibly *quo dum Proserpina luco / ludit* (*Meta.* V 391-92), in which **[End Page 135]** the heroine herself may be seen "playing" with the vocabulary. ³³ Kenney rightly argues that "setting and subject would be apprehended in a moment by a public who needed to read no further than 'haud procul Ennaeis' before recalling one of the most famous ekphraseis in Roman literature (Cic. *Verr.* 2,4,106)." ³⁴

Again, it is necessary to step beyond the mere fact of intertextual allusion to consider what the point of Ovid's reference to the *Verrines* might be. As mentioned above, Venus is identified only as *Erycina* in Bk. V, and it is precisely in Cicero's *Verrines* that this Sicilian Venus receives more attention than in any other ancient literary source--or rather her temple slaves do. Cicero reports, among a host of other sins, that Verres was in the habit of falsely charging wealthy Sicilians with non-compliance with the terms of wills, in which case the estate was to be forfeited to Venus Eryx. To avoid this outcome, Verres would levy a fine upon the unfortunate Sicilians, which he would pocket himself, and in addition would receive an extravagant portion of their other property to secure their rights (as in the case of Dio, *Verr.* II 1.27-28 and II 2.21-22). Verres is also on record as having levied fines for trumped-up charges, also to be paid to Venus Eryx (as in the case of Sthenius, *Verr.* II 2.89-93). Finally, Cicero claims that Verres exacted outrageous tithes from Sicilian farms through the agency of his *publicani* (e.g., Aetna, *Verr.* II 3.105ff.). These tax farmers are first referred to at II 3.50 as *Veneriosque servos, quod isto praetore fuit novum genus publicanorum* ("the slaves of Venus, who were in [Verres'] praetorship a new class of tax collectors"). Throughout the rest of the *Verrines* it is these *Venerii* who are the henchmen of Verres, intimidating the Sicilians and plundering the island during his governorship. At II 3.86 Cicero expresses his horror that slaves have been promoted to *publicani*, and wonders if the Roman *servi publici* are going to get ideas into their heads from the Sicilian example. Verres' use of both the temple of Venus and her slaves to conduct his sordid business provides Cicero with ample opportunity to pun upon his defendant's debauchery as well (e.g., II 2.93, II 2.116). ³⁵

Cicero's well-known speeches against Verres established an actual and rhetorical relationship between the corrupt governor and the temple of **[End Page 136]** Venus Eryx in Sicily, one which Ovid recalls with *Erycina*. Ovid further substantiates the equivalence by relying upon Cicero's Sicilian locale for the rape of Proserpina in the *Verrines*, in which Verres' violation of the temple of Ceres at Henna is characterized as little different from the rape of Proserpina by Pluto. ³⁶ At II 4.105ff. Cicero turns to the defendant's plunder of the cult image of Ceres from her temple at Henna. After digressing to recount the story of the rape of Proserpina and the wanderings of Ceres (II 4.106-07), he attests to the international significance of the cult, even calling to mind the occasion on which the Roman *decemviri* traveled to Henna to placate the goddess at the command of the Sibylline books (II 4.108). The statue carried off by Verres, he informs us, was the most ancient and most sacred of all: *hanc ipsam Cererem antiquissimam, religiosissimam, principem omnium sacrorum quae apud omnes gentes nationesque fiunt*, "this was Ceres herself, the most ancient, the most holy, and the most eminent among all the cults worshipped by all peoples and nations" (II 4.109). When Cicero meets with the townsfolk during his investigation for the case, he describes their reaction thus (*Verr.* II 4.111): *Hic dolor erat tantus, ut Verres alter Orcus venisse Hennam et non Proserpinam asportasse sed ipsam abripuisse Cererem videretur* ("Their grief was so great that it seemed Verres had come to Henna as a second Orcus, and had not carried off Proserpina but abducted Ceres herself").

Thus the seizure of the ancient statue of Ceres is identified with Pluto's seizure of Proserpina. This particular theft, as recalled in Cicero's summary immediately following, epitomizes the entirety of Verres' rapacious governorship (*Verr.* II 4.111):

Non illi decumarum imperia, non bonorum direptiones, non iniqua iudicia, non importunas istius libidines, non vim, non contumelias, quibus vexati oppressique erant conquerebantur; Cereris numen, sacrorum vetustatem, fani religionem istius sceleratissimi atque audacissimi supplicio expiari volebant.

They [the Sicilians] were not overcome by the imposition of taxes or the theft of their goods, nor by unjust **[End Page 137]** judgments or the savage wantonness of that man, nor his violence or insults, by which they had been tormented and oppressed; they wished by the punishment of that most wicked and outrageous man to make amends to the divinity of Ceres, the antiquity of her rites, and the holiness of her sanctuary.

According to Cicero, the seizure of the image was the worst offense committed by Verres against the Sicilians. Verres, and his patron Venus of Eryx, stand, in Cicero's eyes, in exactly the same relation to Ceres and Proserpina in Sicily as does Venus Erycina in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In the *Verrines* the goddesses are the victims of Verres' unending appetite for power and wealth; in the *Metamorphoses* they are similarly the victims of Venus' imperial appetite for the *pars tertia mundi*. With this recollection of the character of Verres' governorship, Ovid's Venus becomes more concrete, and conducts an imperialism of a particularly Roman Republican nature.

Filia Virgo

Calliope's portrait of the goddess of love is not yet complete, however. Like the paranoid tyrant of Greek tragedy, Venus' fear of insurgents shapes the second reason for the rape she is poised to incite. In this case the rebels are any goddesses who choose to remain virgins (*Meta.* V 373-77):

et tamen in caelo, quae iam patientia nostra est,
spernimur, ac mecum vires minuuntur Amoris.
Pallada nonne vides iaculatricemque Dianam
abscessisse mihi? Cereris quoque filia virgo,
si patiemur, erit: nam spes adfectat easdem.

Nevertheless we are scorned in heaven (such is our endurance),
and your power with mine is shrinking.
Can't you see that Pallas and spear-hurling Diana
have withdrawn from my camp? Proserpina will join their ranks too
if she is not stopped, for she has the same hopes.

[End Page 138]

While in the first half of Venus' speech Pluto and Proserpina are the unwitting victims of the "empire of Eros," placing them on a par with the narrators of Roman elegy, in this second half the true nature of Venus' *imperium* is revealed: compulsory sexuality. The virgin goddesses Minerva and Diana are perceived as dissidents, rebels from her authority. Venus disregards any right to sexual self-determination Proserpina might have [37](#) in a single-minded pursuit of two goals: the extension of her empire and the suppression of dissidents against it, those who renounce Love. Proserpina apparently has similar aspirations, which Venus is eager to crush. The two halves of her speech recast an old elegiac metaphor regarding the *castra* of Cupid within the framework of imperial ambitions and thus draw a remarkable parallel between victims of rape and of expansionist imperial power.

This portrait of Venus takes on special significance when considered within the complex structure of the episode. There are three audiences for the song of Calliope: the Muses themselves, the nymphs, who judge the two songs within the original contest, and Minerva, in the present time of the narrative. Venus' *imperium* is sexuality and, as she herself states, the enemies of her empire are females who choose to remain chaste. Her weapon in this case, through Cupid and the agency of Pluto, is rape. It is therefore significant that all of the several audiences for the original song and its reprise are extra-social or virginal female goddesses or nymphs, who share a particular interest, together with the Muses themselves, in the success or failure of Venus' designs. [38](#)

Regarding the Muses themselves, we are led back to the opening of the episode and the peculiar story,

known only from Ovid, which begins it. The Muses claim they would be happy living on Helicon if only they were safe (*tutae modo simus*, V 272). Now, as the victims of an attempted [End Page 139] rape, *omnia terrent / virgineas mentes*, "everything terrifies our virginal minds" (V 273-74). Ovid's Muses, for the purposes of this episode, ³⁹ count themselves among the self-professed virgin goddesses and complain bitterly about the violence threatened against them. Political/tyrannical imagery emerges again around the figure of the persecutor Pyreneus, a *ferox* Thracian king who rules an undeserved kingdom (V 277). Pyreneus offers the Muses refuge from a rainstorm as they travel to Parnassus. Once inside, he refuses to release them and "prepares violence" (*vimque parat*, V 288, a standard euphemism for attempted rape). ⁴⁰ When the Muses take flight on conveniently assumed wings, Pyreneus attempts to follow them (V 290-94) and tumbles to his death.

Ovid's inclusion of this odd tale (a mortal man aspiring to rape nine goddesses and committing suicide when he fails) only makes sense ⁴¹ in the larger context of the episode, in which virginity and its violation are prominent themes. It establishes the virginity of the Muses and links them closely with Minerva, the Muse narrator's audience, in her role as a sympathetic fellow virgin. They are arrayed in the episode against Venus, who singles out Minerva with Proserpina as rebels against her domain. Diodorus V 3.4 indicates that Athena and Artemis were raised together with Persephone and that all three had chosen the same virginity, echoing the same tradition that Venus complains of in her speech. Of course the animosity between Minerva and Venus was proverbial, extending well beyond their sexuality. ⁴² But appropriately enough, in Calliope's account [End Page 140] of the rape of Proserpina, it is Minerva's staunch virginity to which Venus objects. Thus the Muse's portrait of Venus as a grasping sexual empire-builder would be one with which Minerva, the presiding Olympian judge in the outer frame of the episode, would be inclined to agree.

On the level of the contest itself, the judges are a group of Heliconian nymphs. Although their background is unspecified in the *Metamorphoses*, and Greek and Roman mythology generally, most targets of Olympian rape or seduction were nymphs. ⁴³ Their anxiety regarding an expansion of the "empire of Eros" could certainly be reflected in Calliope's negative portrait of Venus. But even more suggestive that the concerns of the Heliconian nymphs are directly addressed here is a further and most dramatic innovation upon the traditional account of the rape of Proserpina: the lengthy inclusion in Calliope's song of the actual and metaphoric threats to the chastity of two famous nymphs, Cyane and Arethusa, who align themselves with Proserpina and Ceres during the events of the rape.

Although Diodorus Siculus names Cyane as the fountain created by the descent of Pluto with Proserpina into the underworld, no nymph named Cyane gives her name to the fountain in his account (V 4.1ff.). Cicero also reports in the *Verrines* that a lake was said to have been created by the descent of Pluto (II 4.107), but again no nymph is mentioned. In *Metamorphoses* V alone the nymph Cyane boldly steps forward to challenge the rape of the maiden Proserpina, insisting *roganda non rapienda fuit*, "she should have been courted, not carted off" (V 415-16). Her opposition, not surprisingly, provokes the wrath of Pluto, who strikes the pool Cyane stands in to its depths and proceeds through it to the underworld (V 420-24). Cyane's grief for the *raptamque deam contemptaque fontis / iura sui*, "the raped goddess and the scorned laws of her spring" (V 425-26), transforms her into the waters of her own pool. Otis (1970.56-57) describes the nymph as a "shocked matron," and can therefore provide only the barest explanation of her consequent transformation into a fountain. In [End Page 141] contrast, Segal (1969.54) rightly observes that Pluto's blow to the pool in which Cyane stands is characterized by the setting and language of the passage as sexual in nature (*inconsolabile vulnus*, V 426). He argues that the violation of her pool parallels the rape of Proserpina herself. ⁴⁴ Otis is correct, however, to observe that "[Cyane's] disappearance removes one more witness of the rape. Her over-active tongue is quenched . . ." (1970.57). The silencing, deliberate or otherwise, of rape victims is a common *topos* in the *Metamorphoses*, where voices of complaint or protest are cut off as part of their resulting metamorphosis. The list is long, even when it does not include those who are punished for crimes of the tongue, like Echo (Bk. III) and the Emathides (Bk. V, whose poetic voices are lost). In Bk. I 452ff. Daphne can only nod her apparent approval of Apollo's appropriation of her foliage (*quoniam coniunx mea non potes esse / arbor eris certe*, says Apollo, I 557-58; *adnuit utque caput visa est agitasse cacumen*, says the poet, I 567). Ovid's treatment of Io's transformation deliberately underscores her inability to speak. ⁴⁵ Her fate is almost identical to those of both Cyane and Philomela, whose treatment by her persecutor Tereus is the most shocking in the *Metamorphoses*, if not the whole of ancient mythology (VI 424ff.). Philomela and Io are transformed by their rapists to avoid detection; ⁴⁶ the females must find other ways to communicate their fate, in a manner reflecting the necessity of disguise

for "safe speaking" (Ahl 1984). *Grande doloris / ingenium est* (VI 574-75); Philomela weaves a tapestry detailing her rape and sends it to her sister (VI 574-80), with whom she will carry out a Thyestean vengeance. Similarly, Cyane can only float Proserpina's girdle on the surface of her waters, and her inability to speak despite her desire to do so is described by Ovid (*Meta.* V 465-69): **[End Page 142]**

ea ni mutata fuisset,
omnia narrasset; sed et os et lingua volenti
dicere non aderant, nec, quo loqueretur, habebat;
signa tamen manifesta dedit notamque parenti . . .

If she had not been transformed,
she would have told everything; but she had no mouth or tongue
despite her will to speak, nor anything with which she might speak.
Nevertheless she displayed clear signs, a token, to the mother . . .

The prominence given to the protest, transformation, and testimony of Cyane is one of the most notable digressions of Ovid from the versions of the rape in either his own *Fasti* or the *Hymn*. Its emphatic placement links Cyane and Proserpina to other rape victims of the *Metamorphoses* and keeps the cruelty of the empire of Venus and the theme of violated sexual self-determination in the foreground.

The pronounced role of the nymph Arethusa in Calliope's song would also seem to address the concerns of the judges of her song, and the attempted rape by Alpheus deepens the significance of Venus as motivator of the rape of Proserpina. Arethusa is only mentioned in Diodorus as a spring created by the nymphs of Ortygia to please Artemis (V 3.5-6); in the *Fasti* Ceres is attending her party when Proserpina vanishes (IV 423-24). As Segal observes, Ovid's mention of Cyane and Arethusa in the same line (V 409) links them as "victims of violence which is either implicitly or explicitly sexual" (1969.55). Arethusa is the victim of an attempted, and I think actual, rape herself and bears many resemblances both to Cyane and other victims of divine/male passion in the poem. Recollection of Arethusa's story is postponed to an emphatic position near the end of Calliope's song after the narrative of the rape is complete, and in this location balances the opening story of the Muses' encounter with Pyreneus. Although Arethusa never pledges herself to virginity like Minerva, she claims she was unlike other girls in her aversion to beauty and its effects: *crimenque placere putavi*, "I thought it was a crime to please" (V 584). Her will is therefore threatened by the attentions of Alpheus, just as the Muses were threatened by Pyreneus' intentions. Alpheus' pursuit of Arethusa, as Curran has discussed, echoes the terror-in-flight imagery of the rape of Daphne in Bk. **[End Page 143]** I (1978.234-35). The image of the dove torn apart by the hawk, so strikingly employed in the description of Philomela's feelings during her rape by Tereus in Bk. VI 529-30, is also introduced at V 605-06: *ut fugere accipitrem penna trepidante columbae, / ut solet accipiter trepidas urguere columbas*. Arethusa is protected to no avail by Diana, who surrounds her with a dense cloud which renders the nymph invisible (V 621-25); in her terror Arethusa is transformed into water, *in latices* (V 634-36), as was Cyane. Alpheus changes back into water, *ut se mihi misceat* (V 636-38). Hinds (1987.90-92, 157 n. 46) ingeniously observes that Arethusa's tale corresponds not only thematically but structurally to Persephone's account of the rape to her mother in the *Hymn* 406-33, as an inset of the epyllion variety well-known in Hellenistic and Roman poetry, particularly the *Metamorphoses*. Such a correspondence would indicate an even deeper relationship between the experiences of Arethusa and the central victim of the episode, Proserpina.

By devoting so much of the narrative to these related sub-tales, Calliope keeps before her nymph audience (and the Muse keeps before Minerva, and Ovid keeps before us), a negative interpretation of sexual aggression which relies in turn upon an imagery of empire, specifically Roman empire, surrounding Venus and Cupid in the opening of the episode. The rape of Proserpina is cast as both a sexual and a political act, in which the innocent victim, and even the perpetrator in this case, are pawns in a much larger game which Venus is playing. The irony of portraying the divine ancestor of the strait-laced emperor at the head of her own empire of sexuality is sharp indeed. Calliope's song expresses the viewpoint of the female to whom Venus' empire represents repressive authority; this viewpoint is in turn characterized by Venus as revolutionary. Ovid's, and Calliope's, conflation of sexual and imperial aggression in the Proserpina tale suits both our narrators, and both of the narrative contexts, of the song. First, with the song of the virginal Calliope to her nymph audience, the Muse arouses her audience's sympathy on behalf of the victims of and protesters against sexual aggression. Second, with the reprise of the unnamed but equally virginal Muse for the virgin goddess Minerva, the song confirms what Minerva already knows full well about the nature of Venus' empire. In Ovid's own context, his

presentation of Venus as an unwelcome imperialist aggressor in the realm of sexuality comments negatively both upon sexuality and empire. In addition, it is difficult to disregard, in the atmosphere of the last decade B.C.E., the real possibility **[End Page 144]** that Ovid was taking a swipe at the Augustan moral legislation of 19 B.C.E., which rewarded, in a host of ways, men and women who married and bore children and punished the unmarried and the childless. If so, Ovid portrays it as little more than a compulsory sexuality, imposed by a man who claimed descent from the goddess of love herself.

One final level of interpretation remains. Ironically, Venus' imperialism also reflects upon the Muses themselves and the conditions of their poetic contest with the Emathides, extending the parallel beyond Rome and its imperial victims, and violent sexuality and rape victims, to the Muses' own treatment of the mortal Emathides. In what seems another Ovidian invention, the participants in the poetic contest, the Muses and the Emathides, clearly state their pledges at V 311-14: territory. Mt. Helicon itself will fall to the Emathides if the Muses lose, while the plains of Emathia will be ceded to the Muses if the Emathides should lose. Therefore both the Muses, in their contest with the Emathides, and Venus, in her attack upon Pluto, have *regna* as their goal. For Venus, *agitur pars tertia mundi*, which she will gain at the expense of Proserpina; for the Muses, their entire "empire" is at stake (one of the Emathides is the speaker) (*Meta.* V 311-14):

vel cedite victae
fonte Medusaeo et Hyantea Aganippe,
vel nos Emathiis ad Paeonas usque nivosos
cedemus campis.

Either defeated you surrender
the spring of Pegasus, child of Medusa [the Hippocrene] and Boeotian Aganippe,
or we will yield the Emathian fields as far as snowy Paeonia.

Far more than a spring, the Hippocrene (here atypically distinguished from the Aganippe), metaphorically represents the *fons* of poetry itself. This point is explored by Hinds, in his appreciation of the play of poetic words like *fons*, *pes*, and *ictus* in Ovid's description of the creation of the Hippocrene (1987.3-24). That we are to take note of this territorial emphasis is guaranteed by the importance of the spring in the Nicandrian version, to which Ovid clearly alludes and from which he then departs at **[End Page 145]** the opening of the Bk. V episode. ⁴⁷ In addition, the spring plays a pivotal role in the narrative; Minerva is visiting Helicon as a tourist to see it. In this episode both Venus and the Muses attempt to either expand or maintain their traditional spheres, here characterized as empires, through Ovid's added emphasis upon territory. Venus' weapon, as mentioned above, is rape, induced by Cupid's arrows; the Muses' corresponding weapon is song. In both cases the goddesses deprive their challengers of the possession which epitomizes their rebellion: the virginity of Proserpina and the rebellious song of the Emathides, which is only briefly summarized by our Muse narrator. It will be their final composition. In the end the Muses will collect far more than they were pledged, for even the Muses can be moved to vengeance: *ibimus in poenas et, qua vocat ira, sequemur*, "We will proceed with punishment and will follow where anger leads us" (*Meta.* V 664-68). In the *Metamorphoses* all the gods can be moved to vengeance, not only Jupiter, whose *ira* opens Bk. I; still, it is surprising coming from the Muses. Ovid's Calliope, despite her critique of Venus' aggressive empire-building, does not reject the divine/mortal hierarchy which produces in the Muses similar behavior regarding the Emathides and their own empire. The implications of this hierarchy are further developed in Bk. VI, where the Muses' tale will in turn inspire Minerva to wreak vengeance against a mortal artistic challenger of her own, the weaver Arachne.

Through a number of verbal allusions to his own works, the *Aeneid*, the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, and Cicero's *Verrines*, Ovid has characterized the rape of Proserpina in *Metamorphoses* V as an act of imperial aggression on the part of Venus, here the selfish head of an empire of sexuality. The contrast drawn in the episode between the virginal characters of Minerva, the Muses, the nymph judges, Arethusa, Cyane, and, of course, Proserpina on the one hand, and Venus, Cupid, sexuality, and imperialism on the other, link the drive for conquest of territory with sexual conquest. In service to this view, the figures of Cyane and Arethusa gain prominence in comparison with other accounts of the rape, the one a voice of protest against sexual aggression (Cyane), the other a victim of sexual aggression (Arethusa). The descriptions of their demises and transformations link them, and the episode, to many other victims of the gods in the **[End Page 146]** *Metamorphoses*, including Proserpina

and, interestingly, the Emathides who challenge the Muses in the poetic contest itself. The "crimes" of the Emathides and Proserpina and, by extension, rape victims and challengers of the gods throughout the poem, are depicted as structurally equivalent; in each case they are challengers to the absolute authority of divinity, whether that authority is exercised in the realm of sexuality, politics, or poetry, and are consequently punished for their unwillingness to acquiesce to their empire. In this complex and many-layered narrative, Ovid has accomplished a remarkable union of the most important themes of the first third of the *Metamorphoses*: the suffering of victims of rape and transformation; the silencing of critics, competitors, and witnesses to divine crimes; and the total hegemony exercised by the Olympians over the bodies and speech of mortals since the beginning of mythological time. The unusual prominence of Venus in the episode, evocative of the *Aeneid*'s Venus and the *Verrines*' Verres, brings to the mind of Ovid's audience the Julians, Augustus, and the history of Roman *imperium*, and compels us to contemplate the use, and abuse, of human power. ⁴⁸

College of the Holy Cross

Notes

1. From what is usually a tale of ultimate Olympian triumph over the forces of evil, they leave off the triumph and describe only the shameful flight of the gods from Typhoeus to Egypt. We are familiar with the complete story from Apollodorus' account (1.6.3). On the impiety of the Emathides' song, see Johnson and Malamud 1988.30-33.
2. Heinze 1960, Hinds 1987.
3. Kannicht 1969.342-43 concludes that Aphrodite's appearance in the Euripides ode (*Helen* 1346ff.) as an independent comforter of Demeter at the time of the rape (she was not sent by Zeus, but is introduced by a separate verb, ἥλαβε, 1347) indicates her involvement in the rape of Persephone together with Zeus, for which she here makes amends. He cites Pausanias' description of the throne of Apollo at Amyclae as possible evidence for a very early representation of Aphrodite in this role. It seems clear from Pausanias, however, that grouped as she is with Artemis and Athena leading Hyakinthos to heaven, Aphrodite represents one of Persephone's companions. Kannicht mentions an Italian hydria of the fourth century with the goddess in this role, and Eros alone is involved in the rape on a fifth-century skyphos from Eleusis.
4. In the *Hymn*, the responsibility lies entirely with Zeus, who (presumably as her father) is actively involved in her seduction by Pluto. He is said to have given Persephone to Hades (3, 79-80), to have willed Gaia's creation of the narcissus to seduce Persephone (8-9), and in general to have approved the proceedings (30, 414-15). Helios confirms it, telling Demeter that no other immortal is to blame but Zeus (77-78).
5. Pluto here carries off Proserpina with a speed matched only by Jupiter's rape of Io in *Fasti* IV (*hanc videt et visam patruus velociter aufert*, "her uncle swiftly sees and swipes her," IV 445). When Sol is consulted by Ceres in the *Fasti* he claims that Proserpina has been married to the brother of Jove (*nupta Iovis fratri*, IV 584). Although Jupiter seems to style it a legal marriage (*vincla tori*, IV 602) he takes no responsibility for its planning and execution; Jupiter maintains the same pretense in the *Metamorphoses*, where he calls Pluto a worthy *gener*, and styles the seizure romance, not rape (V 525-26). This claim is disputed by the nymph Cyane (*Meta.* V 415-16).
6. See Cahoon 1988 for an extensive discussion of the use of such metaphors by the *amator* persona in the *Amores*. Additional examples are numerous: in *Amores* I alone, 2 (for advisability of "surrender" to Cupid), 6 (for eluding the doorkeeper as a military foray), 7 (for the violent lover, ironically, as a general in triumph over a "worthy" opponent), 11 (for all lovers marching beneath the same standards), and 15 (for poetic vs. military vocation). It is, in fact, difficult to escape such imagery in Ovid's and most Roman love poetry. The *Metamorphoses* example is distinguished by its shift from metaphoric to literal imperial authority. As reflected in my translation, *domas* is an animal tamer's word often transposed in regular Latin literary usage to military contexts.
7. The irony of Venus' world empire is strengthened by her own reference to the tripartite division of the world, in which Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto each had to settle for only a third. For the tradition see *Iliad* XV 187-93 and Apollodorus 1.2.1.

8. I 1.13-15: *sunt tibi magna, puer, nimiumque potentia regna: / cur opus adfectas ambitiose nouum? / an, quod ubique, tuum est? tua sunt Heliconia tempe?* ("Your kingdom is great, boy, and far too powerful: why are you so ambitious for a new venture? Or does everything everywhere belong to you, even the valley of Helicon?").

9. Prominent examples include Bk. I, where the Olympians are imagined to inhabit a celestial Palatine, and the end of Bk. XV, where Jupiter and Augustus are cast as equal rulers, each in his own realm.

10. As we will see, this relationship is by no means separate from her prominent cult at Eryx (Schilling 1982.233-66); see in particular Schilling's discussion of the Trojan associations of the Sicilian Venus (1982.242-64 and notes). The popularity of legendary genealogies in this period, particularly Trojan genealogies, is discussed by Wiseman 1974. Julius Caesar lays claim to the relationship as early as 69 B.C.E. in a funeral oration for his aunt Julia (Suetonius *Divus Iulius* 6).

11. Sex. Julius Caesar minted a coin portraying Venus and Roma in c. 130-25 B.C.E. (Weinstock 1971.pl. 3.1; also of interest regarding Venus and Rome are pls. 3.2-3, 15.5).

12. The original temple vowed by Julius Caesar at Pharsalus was probably to Venus Victrix, Pompey's patron goddess. The change to Genetrix may have been an attempt to avoid recollection of the civil wars (see Ulrich 1993).

13. For a sampling see Zanker 1988.fig. 27 (a, b); Crawford 1974.735 and pls. LIV 458, LV 468, LVII 480-82; Weinstock 1971.pls. 6.10-12; 9.10-13, 15-16; 19.13; 25.16, 20.

14. See below note 17.

15. See Syme 1939.112-13, 113 n. 2, and Cicero *Phil.* 13.24-25, where he quotes Antony: "*et te, o puer . . . qui omnia nomini debes.*"

16. See numerous exx. in Zanker 1988.

17. The "explosion" is most evident in Ovid's absurd subordination of Caesar's accomplishments (XV 752-57) to his "production" of Augustus (*quam tantum genuisse virum*, XV 758), when Caesar was in fact not his real father. *Gigno*, as Bömer admits, carries a "Betonung der (körperlichen) Vaterschaft" (1986.458). Bömer lists other references to the imaginary father/son relationship on p. 455, though in the end he finds the possibility of irony too Orwellian for his taste. For a review of Ovid's pro- or anti-Augustanism see Nugent 1990.

18. Zanker 1988.217-18 also argues that the two small children depicted in the procession on the Ara Pacis with Trojan torques are indeed Gaius and Lucius, and he notes that the princes are also portrayed with Venus upon an Augustan altar of the Lares which documents the apotheosis of Julius (1988.220-22).

19. Booth 1966, Galinsky 1969, and Thornton 1983.

20. See Pollini 1990.72ff. for a narrative reading of the Forum Augustum; also Ulrich 1993 *passim*, which compares the programs of the Julian and Augustan forums.

21. See Gamel 1989 for a discussion of the *amator's* constitution of the female in this poem. Its perspective, she argues, subjects even the body of Venus to the priorities of the Roman state.

22. Ovid exposes this contradiction to Augustus explicitly at *Tristia* II 261-62 with reference to the opening of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*: the chaste reader, he argues, will immediately wonder *Aeneadam genetrix unde sit alma Venus*, "by whom bountiful Venus became the ancestor of the descendants of Aeneas" (*Tr.* II 262); therefore even *De Rerum Natura* must be considered a scandalous text alongside his *Ars*. On *Tr.* II see the excellent discussion in Nugent 1990.

23. Ovid himself interprets Augustus' moral concerns more broadly than simple opposition to adultery; see *Tr.* II 533-36, for example, on the offensiveness of the love of Aeneas and Dido, *non legitimo*

foedere iunctus amor.

[24.](#) As Rudd 1976 observes.

[25.](#) See Lucretius *De Rerum Natura* V 925-1027, where he argues for the civilizing effect of sex on savage men.

[26.](#) Though not Cupid. Although in elegiac poetry love itself is sufficient punishment, in Bk. I 466-73 he avenges his injured pride by not only making Apollo love Daphne, but making Daphne hate Apollo.

[27.](#) Hinds (1987.133-34) concludes: "The evocation of Virgilian epic in *Meta.* V 365ff. evidently raises as many questions as it answers: the subject of genre continues to tease."

[28.](#) A tone observable elsewhere in the *Aeneid*: e.g., I 228ff., in her approach to Jupiter (*lacrimis oculos suffusa nitentes / adloquitur Venus*).

[29.](#) Boyle 1986 considers Venus' treatment of Dido in Bk. IV and her actions in Bk. XII 554-56, where she puts into the mind of Aeneas the idea of a rear guard action to force the Latins' hand, extremely callous. He comments that she exhibits "a perverse blindness to considerations other than those which affect Aeneas' personal safety and advancement." This is, however, a significant factor for the Romans, whose values regarding family and nation would in my view have largely sanctioned her behavior.

[30.](#) The sentiments of Ovid's Venus reflect those of the *Aeneid*'s Juno in a few notable respects. In her opening lines in *Aeneid* I, Juno is ashamed to think that other gods wield powers she cannot, and thus fears a loss of mortal respect. While Ovid's Venus expresses no concerns about a loss of mortal worship, her fears about a loss of power and influence mirror Juno's: *in caelo . . . spernimur, ac mecum vires minuuntur Amoris* (*Meta.* V 373-74); *et quisquam numen Iunonis adorat / praeterea aut supplex aris imponet honorem?* (*Aeneid* I 48-49). Both goddesses place Minerva at the top of their list of offenders against their reputations, Juno because Minerva can punish Ajax (both poets use the same form of her name, *Pallada nonne* vs. *Pallasne*). In *Aeneid* VII, the underworld is the focus of Juno's desire to extend her power. Here Juno similarly complains that Mars and Diana are capable of carrying out their threats. In this instance, since she can get no help from the *superbos*, she turns to the underworld: *Acheronta movebo*, where she will enlist the help of Allecto to inflame the Latins against Aeneas.

[31.](#) While the *Fasti* version includes Ceres' wanderings in Greece, the rape itself is set in Sicily, like the *Metamorphoses* and *Verrines* accounts. The extra-Sicilian events are elided at *Meta.* V 462-63.

[32.](#) Our two best extant sources for a Sicilian locale of the rape are Diodorus Siculus V 2-5 and Cicero's *Verrines*, both of which are thought to derive from an account by Timaeus. See Hinds 1987.43-57, with bibliography on the proposed Alexandrian intermediary (Callimachus, Nikander, or a combination thereof) between Timaeus and Ovid. See also Richardson 1974.76-77, Kenney 1970. The important question in my view is not so much where it came from, but why. O'Hara 1990 sees wordplay operating here as well, between *Erycina* (only in *Meta.* V 363 and Catullus 64.72) and *ericius*; he argues that Ovid is acknowledging the pun in Vergil's *mater Aedalia* (*Aen.* I 720), as Servius comments, on Greek ἐκμή.

[33.](#) Hinds 1987.40-42.

[34.](#) See Kenney 1970 and Hinds 1987.147 n. 46 on the evidence for its broad recognition.

[35.](#) As noted by Vasaly 1993.122-24, "the theme of Verres' sexual depravity . . . is a crucial element in the *Verrines*," as part and parcel of the stereotypical characterization of one's opponent as a tyrant.

[36.](#) Again, see Vasaly 1993.120-22 on this section of the *Verrines*, where she argues persuasively for Cicero's exploitation of the strong emotions connected with the temple of Ceres at Henna to make his case.

[37.](#) Not as anachronistic as it might sound; Cyane protests *non potes invitae Cereris gener esse; roganda / non rapienda fuit*, "you can't be Ceres' son-in-law without her permission; she should have

been courted, not carted off" (*Meta.* V 415-16), and Ceres insists, against the argument of Jupiter (*sed si modo nomina rebus / addere vera placet, non hoc iniuria factum*, V 524-25), *neque enim praedone marito / filia digna tua est*, "your daughter deserves better than a thief for a husband" (V 521-22).

38. Leach 1974 observes the community of sentiment among the audience (nymphs) and the inclusion of Cyane's and Arethusa's stories in the song, but does not elaborate. Segal 1969 sees irony (in virgins talking about rape) where I see deliberate manipulation of a traditional story around the figure of Venus to reflect the concerns of the virginal audiences (on both the frame and inset narrative levels, the contest and the recitation) and Ovid's Augustan audience (in the real-world production of the poem in the city of Rome).

39. See, e.g., *Meta.* X 148, where Orpheus invokes *Musa parens*, presumably Calliope; Apollodorus 1.3.2-4 reports that at least Calliope, Clio, Euterpe, Thalia, and Melpomene bore children.

40. Cf. *Meta.* II 576, of the daughter of Coroneus and Neptune; XI 240, of Thetis and Peleus; XIV 770, of Pomona and Vertumnus.

41. *Pace* Leach 1974.113, for whom Pyreneus seeks not violence but "poetic inspiration" and "longs for the society of the Muses." As a crude mortal, however, he must fail, and perishes: "such a man must fall on his face." This, of course, from the viewpoint of the Muses. I agree with her note (n. 23) that the passage is vital to the portrait of the Muses here, but as virgins, I think, not distant custodians of poetry. Viarre (1964.385) records Pyreneus' response among "plusieurs rêves de vol correspondent aux désirs volveux."

42. Ovid recalls the shame of both Pallas and Juno at Paris' preference for Venus in the famous judgment that began the Trojan War (AA I 625-26). During the war itself Athena and the other gods have a good chuckle over Diomedes' wounding of Aphrodite, permitted by Athena (*Iliad* V 416-30), and Venus will remember this wound twice in the *Metamorphoses*, by punishing the companions of Diomedes when she gets the chance (XIV 494ff.) and during a recollection of her pain and humiliation when she learns of the plot against Julius Caesar (XV 769). The duties of Venus and Minerva are, of course, diametrically opposed throughout antiquity, as described in *Am.* I 1, where their realms are provided as *exempla* of incompatibility (*arma* vs. *fascies*, I 1.7-8). As Stephens points out (1958.286-300), Arachne's tapestry in Bk. VI, depicting as it does the power of Venus and Cupid over the Olympians, seems designed to particularly anger Minerva.

43. Those in the *Metamorphoses* who are specifically referred to as *nymphae* of one sort or another are Daphne, Syrinx, and Io in Bk. I; Callisto and Ocyroë in Bk. II; Liriope and various (willing) nymphs with Jupiter in Bk. III; Leucothoë in Bk. IV; Lotis in Bk. IX; Hesperia in Bk. XI; Galatea and Scylla in Bk. XIII; and Pomona (willingly) in Bk. XIV. Callisto appears in *Fasti* II as well, where Juturna and her sister Lara/Lala join the list.

44. Curran 1978.222 argues that Arethusa is characterizing Cyane's "violation" at V 492. I think that *terra . . . patuitque invita rapinae* must literally refer to the rape of Proserpina, not Cyane. Arethusa is begging Ceres not to punish Sicily, as it unwillingly endured the rape. Nonetheless Curran's interpretation at least suggests that the language is ambiguous here.

45. E.g., *conatoque queri mugitus edidit ore / pertimuitque sonos propriaque exterrita voce est*, I 637-38; *littera pro verbis*, I 649; *ad mea verba remugis!* I 657; *metuitque loqui, ne more iuvencae / mugiat, et timide verba intermissa retemptat*, I 745-46.

46. Io: *coniugis adventum praesenserat inque nitentem / Inachidos vultus mutaverat ille iuvencae*, I 610-11; Philomela: *ille indignantem et nomen patris usque vocantem / luctantemque loqui comprehensam forcipe linguam / abstulit ense ferro*, VI 555-57.

47. See Johnson and Malamud 1988.31. In Antoninus Liberalis' synopsis of Nikander (*Meta.* IX.8-10), the Hippocrene is created as a *result* of the contest; Mt. Helicon swells with such pleasure at the sound of the Muses' song that Pegasus must arrest its growth with a kick that opens the spring.

48. I express sincere thanks to all who have offered their suggestions and ideas during the evolution of this study. In particular, thanks are due to the classics departments and colloquia audiences at Boston

University, Boston College, the Classical Association of New England, and Wesleyan University; to A. J. Boyle, J. Henderson, and M. Malamud for suggestions at the inception of the work; and to the anonymous reader at *Arethusa* for thorough, clear, and delightfully tactful suggestions at its end.

Bibliography

- Ahl, F. M. 1984. "The Art of Safe Criticism in Greece and Rome," *AJP* 105.174-208.
- Bömer, F. 1986. *P. Ovidius Naso Metamorphosen: Kommentar (Buch XIV-XV)*. Heidelberg.
- Booth, A. 1966. "Venus on the Ara Pacis," *Latomus* 25.873-79.
- Boyle, A. J. 1986. *The Chaonian Dove: Studies in the Eclogues, Georgics and Aeneid of Virgil*. Leiden.
- Cahoon, L. 1988. "The Bed as Battlefield: Erotic Conquest and Military Metaphor in Ovid's *Amores*," *TAPA* 118.293-307.
- Crawford, M. H. 1974. *Roman Republican Coinage* (vol. II). Cambridge.
- Curran, L.C. 1978. "Rape and Rape Victims in the *Metamorphoses*," *Arethusa* 11.213-41.
- Galinsky, K. 1969. *Aeneas, Sicily and Rome*. Princeton.
- Gamel, M. K. 1989. "Non Sine Caede: Abortion Politics and Poetics in Ovid's *Amores*," *Helios* 16.183-206.
- Grueber, H. A. 1910. *Coins of the Roman Republic in the British Museum* (vol. I). London.
- Heinze, R. 1960. "Ovids Elegische Erzählung" in *Vom Geist des Römertums* (ed. E. Burck, 3rd ed.) 308-403. Darmstadt.
- Hinds, S. 1987. *The Metamorphosis of Persephone: Ovid and the Self-Conscious Muse*. Cambridge.
- Hollemann, A. W. J. 1969. "Ovidii Metamorphoseon liber XV 622-870 (Carmen et error?)," *Latomus* 28.42-60.
- , 1971. "Ovid and Politics," *Historia* 20.458-66.
- Johnson, P. J. and M. Malamud. 1988. "Ovid's *Musomachia*," *PCP* 23.30-38.
- Kannicht, R. 1969. *Euripides, Helena*. Heidelberg.
- Kenney, E. J. 1970. Review of *Landscape in Ovid's Metamorphoses*, by Charles P. Segal. *Gnomon* 42.418-19.
- Leach, E. W. 1974. "Ekphrasis and the Theme of Artistic Failure in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*," *Ramus* 3.102-42.
- Little, D. 1976. "Ovid's Eulogy of Augustus: *Metamorphoses* XV 851-70," *Prudentia* 8.19-35.
- Nugent, S. G. 1990. "Tristia II: Ovid and Augustus" in *Between Republic and Empire: Interpretations of Augustus and his Principate* (eds. K. Raaflaub and M. Toher). Berkeley.
- O'Hara, J. J. 1990. "The Significance of Vergil's *Acidalia Mater* and *Venus Erycina* in Catullus and Ovid," *HSCP* 93.335-42.
- Otis, B. 1966. *Ovid as an Epic Poet*. Cambridge.
- Pollini, J. 1990. "Man or God: Divine Assimilation and Imitation in the Late Republic and Early

Principate" in *Between Republic and Empire: Interpretations of Augustus and His Principate* (eds. K. Raaflaub and M. Toher). Berkeley.

-----, forthcoming. *The Image of Augustus: Art and Ideology*.

Richardson, N. J. (ed.) 1974. *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. Oxford.

Rudd, N. 1976. *Lines of Enquiry: Studies in Latin Poetry*. Cambridge.

Schilling, R. 1982. *La Religion Romaine de Vénus*. Paris.

Segal, C. 1969. *Landscape in Ovid's Metamorphoses* (Heft 23, *Hermes Einzelschriften*). Wiesbaden.

Stephens, W. C. 1958. "Cupid and Venus in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*," *TAPA* 89.286-300.

Syme, R. 1939. *The Roman Revolution*. Oxford.

Thornton, M. K. 1983. "Augustan Genealogy and the *Ara Pacis*," *Latomus* 42.619-28.

Ulrich, R. B. 1993. "Julius Caesar and the Creation of the Forum Iulium," *AJA* 97.49-80.

Vasaly, A. 1993. *Representations: Images of the World in Ciceronian Oratory*. Berkeley and Los Angeles.

Viarre, S. 1964. *L'image et la pensée dans les Métamorphoses d'Ovide*. Paris.

Weinstock, S. 1971. *Divus Julius*. Oxford.

Wilkinson, L. P. 1955. *Ovid Recalled*. Cambridge.

Wiseman, T. P. 1974. "Legendary Genealogies in Late-Republican Rome," *G & R* 21.153-64.

Zanker, P. 1988. *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (tr. A. Shapiro). Ann Arbor.

