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CENTERING FROM THE PERIPHERY IN THE AUGUSTAN ROMAN WORLD: OVID'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN *TRISTIA* 4.10 AND CORNELIUS NEPOS'S BIOGRAPHY OF ATTICUS

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I have taken the title of the 2001 Pacific Rim conference that engendered this volume literally. My topic is the literary self-centering of the physically peripheral Ovid in his most memorable poetic effort to situate his life and work in the Augustan Roman world. Both this literal approach to our theme and my—highly historicist—literary perspective on this one text were facilitated by some striking observations in Andrew Walker's 1997 essay "Oedipal Narratives and the Exilic Ovid." The first is Walker's claim that a passage in *Epistulae ex Ponto* 2.8 builds on a contrast frequently employed in Ovid's elegies from exile. Walker describes a contrast between Ovid's "marginal existence at the end of the earth (*ultima tellus*) and the sense of grounded centrality that citizens enjoy in Rome as the city that rules the world" (1997.195).

Walker later observes: "Unique to the exile elegies may be the multiple meanings of *corpus*, used to denote the physical body of the poet Ovid, but also the body of Ovid's literary works, the Ovidian *corpus* as a collection of poems that the poet has written or is writing at a distance from Rome." Walker then proceeds to offer a nuanced reading of *Tristia* 3.14, a poem that repeats Ovid's Romano-centric prediction of his poetic immortality from *Tristia* 3.7. Through such descriptions, according to Walker, Ovid projects that his *corpus* will "remain in the city," "the centre at the centre," but solely as a text that is read (1997.200). Walker goes on to emphasize that Ovid's exilic narrative stresses his own physical decline, and notes that Ovid

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even forecasts his own physical absence from life itself in the final couplet of *Tristia* 3.3 (1997.203).

Ovid's autobiographical elegy *Tristia* 4.10 also merits close scrutiny in the context of these observations. It is addressed to the open-minded, learned reader of the future: *posteritas* ("posterity" in line 2; *candide lector,* "well-disposed reader" in the final line, 132; *studiosa pectora,* "enthusiastic hearts" in 91–92). At first glance, *Tristia* 4.10 does not seem particularly relevant to Walker's analysis. For one thing, it does not foreground Ovid's physical absence from Rome. Ovid merely asserts in lines 97 through 98 that the anger of an injured *princeps* ordered him to Tomis ("cum maris Euxini positos ad laeva Tomitas / quaerere me laesi principis ira iubet," "when the anger of an injured chief of state ordered me to seek the residents of Tomis, located on the left side of the Euxine sea"). Then, five couplets later, Ovid alludes to the numerous hardships that he himself endured in his wanderings to distant shores (107–08: "totque tuli terra casus pelagoque quot inter / occultum stellae conspicuumque polum," "I endured as many misfortunes on land and sea as there are stars between the hidden and visible pole").

So, too, in *Tristia* 4.10, Ovid barely mentions his physical deterioration, save at lines 93–94. There he refers to the whitening of his hair at the time of his exile ("iam mihi canities pulsis melioribus annis / venerat, antiquas miscueratque comas," "now—after my better years had been driven away—white hair had come, and interspersed itself among my ancient tresses"). Furthermore, in the poem's final lines, Ovid depicts the remoteness of his exile in positive terms. He imagines his current locale as also away from the Hister River, where he is physically situated, and "virtually" in the center of Mount Helicon, owing to the comfort and rest provided by his Muse (117–20):

> Gratia, Musa, tibi: nam tu solacia praebes,
> Tu curae requies, tu medicina venis.
> Tu dux et comes es, tu nos abducis ab Histro
> In medioque mihi das Helicone locum.
>
> Thanks to you, Muse: for you provide consolations, you are a rest for my care, you are medicine to my veins. You are a leader and companion, you lead us away from the Hister and give me a place in the midst of Mount Helicon.

Ovid then prophesies that he will physically transcend earthly bonds by achieving poetic immortality (129–30: "si quid habent igitur vatum praesagia veri / protinus ut moriar, non ero, terra, tuus," "if the predictions of seers contain anything of the truth, as soon as I shall die, I will not be yours, earth").[1] As Jo-Marie Claassen has noted about this poem, and about these lines in particular, "Emphatic vindication of poetic immortality and the poet's awareness of its rarity run counter to an image of exile-as-death elsewhere almost consistently employed" (1999.123).[2]

Nevertheless, I would like to argue that *Tristia* 4.10 reflects upon Ovid's present, past, *and* future role in *Roman* urban cultural and intellectual life: upon his influence in the center of empire not only as a created object but also as a creative agent. After all, in this poem, the marginalized Ovid has apparently chosen to highlight several facts about himself that recall details attributed in an earlier literary work to an earlier historical figure central to the cultural and intellectual ambience of urban Rome in the mid-first century B.C.E. This earlier literary work to which I refer is the biography of Titus Pomponius Atticus by his near contemporary Cornelius Nepos. It celebrates Atticus as a man who had opted for political exile, flourished during his time away from Rome, and, after returning to the capital city, was widely cherished—by the man who would become Augustus among others.[3]

What is more, with its reminiscences of Nepos's biography of Atticus, *Tristia* 4.10 further develops and complicates the contrast noted by

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1 All translations from the Latin are my own.

2 Claassen, moreover, here characterizes *Tristia* 4.10.117–30 as a "hymn in miniature," whose "use of Callimachean terminology (*Helicon*, v. 120 and *livor*, v. 123) signals its relation to elegiac aesthetics. His Muse removes the poet from his surroundings to a higher plane, where Envy cannot touch him."

3 Claassen 1999.53 states that: "[Cicero's correspondent] T. Pomponius Atticus was a voluntary exile, but for intellectual rather than political reasons." In support of her claim (1999.268 n. 67), she cites Miriam Griffin's attribution of "Atticus' aversion from politics to adherence to the Epicurean doctrine" (1989.16).

Nepos *Atticus* 2.1–2, however, makes it quite clear that Atticus's decision to leave Rome when he did was largely motivated by political developments. These included the political danger he faced ("non expers fuit illius periculi") as first cousin of Anicia, whose brother-in-law was the assassinated tribune of the plebs Publius Sulpicius; the disturbed condition of Rome owing to Cinna's rebellion ("Cinnano tumultu civitatem esse perturbatam"); and the risk he ran of offending one or the other political faction ("neque sibi dari facultatem pro dignitate vivendi quin alterutram partem offenderet").

By way of contrast, at 12.3, Nepos describes Atticus's contemporary L. Saufeius as having lived in Athens solely because of his enthusiasm for philosophy (*studio doctus philosophiae*).

Walker. These intertextual elements allow the elegy to oppose, and yet mediate between, the grounded centrality in the imperial capital that Ovid has lost and the placelessness that he now occupies, a physical reality from which he distances himself emotionally.

I. CORNELIUS NEPOS ON TITUS POMPONIUS ATTICUS

To begin with some background on both Nepos's biography of Atticus and Atticus himself. The lifetimes of Titus Pomponius Atticus and Publius Ovidius Naso only overlapped slightly. Atticus was born in 110 B.C.E. and took his own life when he became incurably ill in 32 B.C.E.; Ovid's birth (as he obliquely tells us at *Tristia* 4.10.5–6: "editus hic ego sum . . . / cum cecidit fato consul uterque pari," "here I was born, in the year when each consul fell to the same fate") did not take place until 43 B.C.E. Evidently, moreover, Nepos wrote his biography of Atticus in two spurts, or at least two parts. As Nicholas Horsfall observes (1989.8–9), Nepos clearly completed the first eighteen chapters during Atticus's own lifetime and the final four chapters after Atticus's death, although before Octavian assumed the name of Augustus in 27.

In Nepos's biography, Atticus's voluntary exile in Athens, which lasted from approximately 86 through 65 B.C.E., gets immediate attention, occupying as it does chapters 2 through 4. These decades are proclaimed a fortunate interlude noteworthy for several reasons: Atticus's financial generosity to and popularity with the Athenian people, Atticus's refusal to accept Athenian (and thereby forfeit Roman) citizenship, and Atticus's devotion to literary, linguistic, and philosophical studies. In these three chapters about Atticus's stay in Athens, however, Nepos also stresses the central importance of Rome to Atticus, and indeed to the rest of the world (3.3):

> Igitur primum illud munus fortunae, quod in ea urbe potissimum natus est in qua domicilium orbis terrarum esset imperii, ut eandem et patriam haberet et domum; hoc specimen prudentiae, quod, cum in eam se civitatem contulisset quae antiquitate, humanitate doctrinaque praestaret omnes unus ei fuit carissimus.
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> Thus it was first of all a gift of good fortune (*munus fortunae)* that [Atticus] was born in that city in which was the domicile of rule over the world, so that he had the

> same place as native land and home. And it was a sign of his wisdom that, when he had taken himself into the city that surpassed all others in its antiquity, culture, and learning, he was uniquely dear to it.

Significantly, too, at 4.1–2 Nepos relates that Atticus's graceful and charming use of the Latin language and his recitation of poems in both Greek and Latin so impressed the dictator Sulla when he visited Athens in 84 B.C.E. that Sulla wished to take Atticus back to Rome in his company. But Atticus demurred on the grounds that he had left Italy to avoid bearing arms against Sulla in the company of the men against whom Sulla would lead him (4.2: "'Noli, oro te,' inquit Pomponius, 'adversum eos me velle ducere cum quibus ne contra te arma ferrem, Italiam reliqui,'" "'Don't, I beg you,' said Atticus, 'want to lead me to take up arms against those men opposed to you I left Italy to avoid'").

In its characterization of Atticus as heavily involved in literary activity during his years away from Rome, Nepos's account of Atticus's sojourn in Athens resembles Ovid's own description of his stay at Tomis in *Tristia* 4.10, lines 112–14. There Ovid claims to "use up and deceive the day" "lightening his sad fates with whatever song he can," even though no one may hear him: "tristia, quo possum, carmine fata levo / quod quamvis nemo est, cuius referatur ad aures / sic tamen absumo decipioque diem." The adjective that Ovid uses to describe the fates lightened by his song, *tristia*, is, of course, the title given the entire collection of songs in which 4.10 appears.

And Ovid had good reason to recall, albeit subtly, to his readers (Augustus among them) Nepos's portrayal of Atticus in Athens: valued by the most powerful Roman political figure of his day because of his literary talents and consequently needed in the capital city. After all, as chapter 35 of the Suetonian-Donatan life of Vergil relates, in 19 B.C.E., Augustus himself had insisted that Vergil accompany him back to Rome from Athens. Vergil, of course, complied and died ("destinaretque non absistere atque etiam una redire . . . languorem nactus est et eumque non intermissa navigatione auxit ita ut gravior Brundisium appellaret, ubi diebus paucis obiit," "he was firmly resolved not to refuse him and even to travel back together with him . . . he met with a fever and, since the sea voyage was not interrupted, aggravated his condition to such a degree that, more seriously ill, he reached Brundisium, where he died in a few days"). Not only did Sulla's request to Atticus furnish a precedent that Augustus had already emulated with Ovid's most esteemed

poetic predecessor. This time Augustus could, by issuing a similar request to Ovid, show his appreciation for a poet who would actually return to Rome.

Nicholas Horsfall has remarked that the writings of Cornelius Nepos were once popular as school texts because of "the plainness of his style and the intensity of his moral tone." Yet Nepos's writings do not attract much of a readership nowadays, and for good reason. On what grounds can those of us who teach Latin at any level justify spending precious classroom moments on an author who is assailed for both historical inaccuracy and stylistic ineptitude even by Horsfall, his most recent scholarly translator, commentator, and champion? Especially an author whose wholly uncritical attitude toward his subject in his life of Atticus—a work regarded by Horsfall and many others as "the best thing he did to survive"—far exceeds the tolerable bounds of sycophancy (1989.xix).[4]

But Nepos's well-earned present-day obscurity does not mean that he went unread during his own lifetime. Nor does it signify that his numerous and varied writings were forgotten during the decades immediately following his death in the mid-twenties B.C.E. A man of immense erudition, Nepos enjoyed impressive political and literary connections (Horsfall 1989.xv–xvii).[5] Perhaps the most renowned were with a fellow Transpadane much esteemed by Ovid himself.[6] In his very first poem, Catullus dedicated his learned little volume, his *libellus*, to *Corneli, tibi*, in gratitude for Nepos's long-time support; in return, Catullus received posthumous, if indirect, accolades from Nepos at chapter 12.4 of the life of Atticus. There

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4 Horsfall 1989.7–8, moreover, lambastes both the style and content of Nepos's life of Atticus even as he acknowledges the impression it affords of historical reliability: "The flat, awkward prose of a man with no taste, or time, or capacity for elegance . . . is in its way also telling: N. is uninventive, and his graceless language augments our sense of his essential honesty. The omissions, distortions, and overstatements are severally understandable and do limited damage."

5 Horsfall may compare Nepos unfavorably with the political and literary luminaries in his circles, but he does not deny Nepos's connections with these individuals. To wit, "The 'circle of the Villa Tamphiliana' (Atticus' town house . . .) can be made to sound like a research seminar in history and antiquities for gentlemen amateurs, where N[epos], Atticus, Cicero and Varro thrashed out the facts about the Roman past . . . My description of N. as an 'intellectual pygmy' attracted a good deal of amused opprobrium: without doubt, though, he was the social and intellectual inferior of Varro, Atticus and Cicero" (Horsfall 1989.xvi).

6 See, for example, Ovid's claim at *Amores* 3.15.7–8 that he would like to furnish his native Pelignians with the same kind of joyous pride Vergil imparted to his native Mantua and Catullus to his native Verona.

Nepos calls one Calidus "the most elegant poet that our age has produced" ("elegantissimum poetam nostram tulisse aetatem") since the deaths of Lucretius and Catullus.

Now it is possible that line 125 of *Tristia* 4.10 stating that "our age has produced great poets" ("tulerint magnos . . . saecula nostra poetas) deliberately recalls these very words by Nepos on the poets produced by his own era. A study by R. Stark posits a parallel between the style of chapters 13 through 18 of Nepos's *Atticus* and *Tristia* 3.3: both texts employ past tenses, in the manner of a funeral poem, to describe individuals still living (1964.175ff.).[7] In citing counterparts and parallels to various assertions made by Nepos in his life of Atticus, Horsfall's commentary lists a number of passages by Vergil, Horace, and Livy (1989.59, 64, 65, 69, 74, 87, 91, 106, and 107). They include Horace *Odes* 1.14, whose depiction of "the ship of state" may recall *Atticus* 6.1. Addressing the ship, Horace voices alarm that waves will carry the ship into the open sea ("O navis, referent in mare te novi fluctus!"); Nepos reports that Atticus did not entrust himself to the waves of civil strife ("neque tamen se civilibus fluctibus commiteret"), because men in their power had no more control than those tossed on the waves of the sea (*maritimis iactarentur*). Even if Horsfall does not explicitly say so, such evidence would imply that these authors were acquainted with Nepos's assertions, especially since the life of Atticus makes much of the close ties between Atticus and Augustus.

All the same, we can at best conjecture, and never conclusively prove, that Ovid is indebted to, even familiar with, Nepos's life of Atticus. While Ovid may address a man he calls Atticus in such poems as *Amores* 1.9 and *Epistulae ex Ponto* 2.4 and 2.7, Ovid never mentions Nepos nor Nepos's

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7 More recently, Habinek 1998.154–55 has observed: "Rather than accepting the new conditions under which he lives and writes and seeking new sources of authorization or inspiration, Ovid prefers to legitimize his compositions from exile by reference to the social structures that have traditionally authorized and rewarded literary production. The *existimatio*, or analysis of worth, is reproduced by Ovid in the highly charged context of the funeral *eulogium*. In *Tristia* 4.10, he explicitly recreates the traditional context for the defense of the dead, in this case delivering the *elogium* on his own behalf before his ancestors." He proceeds to note that 4.10 "opens with a near-citation of an earlier passage in the *Tristia* which Ovid has explicitly described as fit to be his epitaph (ille ego fuerim tenerorum lusor amorum [*Tr*. 4.10.1]; hic ego qui iacuit tenerorum lusor amorum [3.3.73]." But Habinek does not cite Stark's observations about *Tristia* 3.3. Nor does he link either *Tristia* 3.3 or 4.10 with Nepos's life of Atticus.

Atticus in his poetry.[8] It bears repeating that Nepos's Atticus died when Ovid was eleven. Furthermore, he left no sons, only a daughter by that time married—as Nepos reports at *Atticus* 19.4, 21.4, and 22.2—to Augustus's close friend Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa.

II. OVID ON OVID

Nevertheless, so many details in *Tristia* 4.10 specifically call Nepos's *Atticus* to mind that we must seriously entertain the possibility not only of Ovid's close acquaintance with this biography, but also his assumption that his target audience knew both the text and the man it honors. One of these details is Ovid's initial emphasis, at lines 7–8, on the long-standing nature of his family's equestrian rank, "si quid id est, usque a proavis vetus ordinis heres / non modo fortunae munere factus eques," "if it counts as anything, [I was] the long-standing heir to my rank from my ancestors, not recently made a knight by a gift of fortune." The very first sentence of Nepos's *Atticus* notes that his subject, although of the oldest Roman stock, never abandoned the equestrian rank inherited from his ancestors: "T. Pomponius Atticus, ab origine ultima stirpis Romanae generatus, perpetuo a maioribus acceptam equestrem obtinuit dignitatem," "Titus Pomponius Atticus, descended from a most long-standing background of Roman stock, for his entire lifetime held on to the equestrian rank received from his ancestors." At the beginning of chapter 19, the section of the life added after Atticus's death, Nepos again observes that Atticus was content with the equestrian rank to which he was born, "contentus ordine equestri quo erat ortus." This time, though, Nepos makes this observation while reporting that Atticus attained a relationship by marriage (*adfinitas*) with Augustus when his year-old granddaughter, whom his daughter had born to Agrippa, was betrothed to Augustus's stepson, the future emperor Tiberius.

Strikingly, lines 7 and 8 of *Tristia* 4.10 are repeated from a couplet in an earlier, strategically positioned, also autobiographical Ovidian poem: the last of the *Amores*, 3.15, lines 5 through 6, "si quid id est, usque a proavis

8 The index entry for "Atticus (Pomponius T.)" in Claassen 1999.343 includes references to both Nepos's Atticus and the Atticus addressed by Ovid (e.g., 1999.120 and 176), but offers no explanation for this decision. It is, of course, possible that Atticus adopted, and gave his entire name (including the *agnomen* commemorating his lengthy stay in Athens) to a son from another family. Atticus himself, after all, had been adopted by his mother's brother (so *Atticus* 5.1–2).

vetus ordinis heres, / non modo militiae turbine factus eques." But Ovid substitutes two words in the pentameter, *munere fortunae*, "gift of fortune," for the earlier *militiae turbine*, "upheaval of fighting." When returning to complete his life of Atticus after Atticus's death, Nepos also immediately returned to the theme of Atticus's pride in his equestrian origins, a theme that was spotlighted in the first chapter of the biography. In much the same way, when writing *Tristia* 4.10, Ovid returned to his words on the very same theme from an earlier autobiographical elegy.

Ovid's alteration to those words through the mention of *munus* and *fortuna* merit particular notice. Nepos, as we have seen, calls Atticus's Roman birth a *munus fortunae* in chapter 3. The noun *fortuna* appears with some frequency later on in Nepos's biography, four times alone in chapter 19 (where Nepos resumes his account of Atticus's life after Atticus's death). Furthermore, at 11.6, Nepos notes that Atticus illustrated the truth of a line about *fortuna* from an unknown source, "sui cuique mores fingunt fortunam hominibus," "Where people are concerned, each one's own habits fashion their fortune." Nepos then adds: "nevertheless, [Atticus] did not fashion his fortune before he fashioned himself, a man who took heed to prevent himself from being injured rightly in any circumstance," "neque tamen ille prius fortunam quam se ipse finxit, qui cavit ne qua in re iure plecteretur."[9]

In lines 9 through 32 of *Tristia* 4.10, Ovid describes his close emotional ties to his elder brother. He emphasizes that the two of them were born on the same date, March 20, a year apart, and celebrated their birthdays together: 9–12: "nec stirps prima fui: genito sum fratre creatus / qui tribus ante quarter mensibus ortus erat. / Lucifer amborum natalibus affuit idem: / una celebrata est per duo liba dies," "Nor was I the first offspring: I was created after my brother had been born, who had arisen four times three months earlier. The same rising star was present at the births of us both, and one day was celebrated with two cakes." He relates at 15–16 that they went to receive the same education from "men of the city distinguished by their talent," "imus ad insignes Urbis ab arte viros." He reports at lines 27–30 that when they both assumed the *toga virilis* he, unlike his oratorically gifted brother, had by this point long harbored literary rather than political aspirations. And he claims at 31–32 that "I began to lose a part of myself" when his

9 The line, in iambic senarii, presumably comes from a Roman comic poet; Cicero cites it as well at *Paradoxa Stoicorum* 5.34. On earlier and later Latin parallels to this proverb, see Horsfall 1989.83.

brother died at age twenty ("cum perit, et coepi parte carere mei*").* So powerful is his identification with his brother that he admits to taking a stab at a political career at this time himself. In fact, when describing his desultory political efforts in line 33, Ovid does so in the first person plural—with *cepimus*—employing a verb form he previously used (*excolimur* in 15 and *imus* in 16) to describe the pursuits that he and his brother had undertaken together.

Ovid's testimony in *Tristia* 4.10 to his closeness with his brother deserves attention not only because it takes up a substantial portion of the poem, but also because he does not mention his brother elsewhere. It may thus be significant that Nepos earlier, and twice, portrayed Atticus as even more beloved to his dear friend Cicero than Cicero's own brother Quintus. In chapter 5.3, he does so while noting that Atticus lived with Cicero "coniunctissime, multo etiam familiarius quam cum Quinto," "most intimately, even much more closely than with Quintus," from the time of their schooling together. At 16.2, he states: "quamquam eum praecipue dilexit Cicero, ut ne frater quidem ei Quintus carior fuerit aut familiarior," "All the same, Cicero cherished him especially, so much so that not even his brother Quintus was dearer to or more intimate with him." Nepos makes this statement while praising the historical value of Cicero's letters to Atticus and hailing Cicero for "singing like a seer" (*cecinit ut vates*) as he predicted the political future.

In *Tristia* 4.10.35–40, Ovid recounts how he abandoned the burdens of public life and ambition, refusing to become a senator and to assume the responsibilities that such a role would entail. Nepos devotes the entirety of chapter 6 to Atticus's refusal to pursue the political opportunities available to those of his social station. Both descriptions feature similar words and ideas. At *Tristia* 4.10 line 40, for example, Ovid claims to have preferred the moments of peace, *otia,* that the Muses encouraged him to seek over a political career. Nepos relates that Atticus turned down the chance to accompany Cicero's brother to his post as proconsul in Asia out of his concern not only for *dignitas*, "worthy behavior," but also *tranquillitas*, "peace and quiet." In chapter 15, moreover, Atticus is said to have fled political responsibility not out of laziness, but judgment, "non inertia sed iudicio fugisse rei publicae procurationem." Ovid characterizes himself in line 38 as *fugax*, fleeing from worrisome ambition, and, in 40, speaks of the *otia* he was encouraged to seek as always beloved in his judgment, *iudicio meo*.

When hailing the group of poets he cherished as gods at *Tristia* 4.10.43, Ovid refers to them with the literarily-loaded label *vates*. Nepos, as

we have seen, applies the same word to Cicero in his role as valued correspondent to Atticus in chapter 16—and endows Cicero with further prophetic and poetic dimensions through the verb *cecinit*. What is more, when enumerating the poets that he himself esteemed, and those that he himself was esteemed by, Ovid equates his own affection for those of the previous generation with the affection felt for him by those younger than himself. At line 55, he asserts that "just as I cherished those older, so those younger cherished me," "utque ego maiores, sic me coluere minores." In chapter 16, Nepos, admittedly (and characteristically) in less elegant language, makes the same point about Atticus's relationship to those older and younger than himself. For he adduces as the "most important testimony to Atticus's humane character" ("humanitatis vero nullum . . . maius testimonium") the fact that the aged Sulla cherished the young Atticus in the same way that the young Brutus cherished the aged Atticus ("adulescens idem seni Sullae fuit iucundissimus, senex adulescenti M. Bruto").

III. THE APPEAL OF NEPOS'S ATTICUS FOR OVID'S OVID

Why, though, would the exiled, aging Ovid have regarded the long-dead Atticus as a role model: an urban and urbane presence with personal qualities worthy of evocation and emulation, one to whom he likens his former, Rome-situated self? I suggested earlier that Ovid may have hoped Augustus would remember, and imitate, the self-exiled Atticus's generous treatment by Sulla, especially as Augustus had previously followed Sulla's example in this instance by insisting that Vergil accompany him back from Athens to Rome. Calling to mind this conduct toward a literarily-linked figure of the recent past may have seemed to Ovid a viable strategy for obtaining a future in Rome.

But there are other possibilities worthy of consideration, possibilities having to do with Ovid's Roman past and present. None of them precludes the others. Most obviously, Ovid was appealing to Augustus's mercy by representing himself much as Nepos had portrayed the unconventional Atticus several decades earlier. And Atticus was someone that Augustus himself apparently held in high esteem. At 19.2, after reporting that Atticus attained a tie by marriage, *adfinitas*, with the man who would become Augustus through the betrothal of Livia's young son to Atticus's year-old granddaughter, Nepos observes the intimacy (*familiaritas*), frequent exchange of correspondence, and mutual goodwill (*benevolentia*) between the two men. Furthermore, Nepos relates at 10.4 that Mark Antony—who (as

Nepos observes) detested and proscribed Atticus's dear friend Cicero—and Atticus simultaneously enjoyed a warm friendship as well. Nepos characterizes the friendship between Atticus and Antony at 10.6 as proof of Atticus's *prudentia* ("far-seeing nature"). He later, at 20.5, cites Atticus's close ties with both Antony and Octavian, after not only rivalry (*aemulatio*) but even hatred (*obtrectatio*) arose, as proof of Atticus's *sapientia* ("wisdom") at 20.5. Ovid, however, might have regarded these close ties between Atticus and Antony, especially after Antony fell out with Octavian, as a model for the future Augustus's generosity and tolerance.

It warrants note that Propertius, for whom Ovid himself voices high personal and literary esteem at *Tristia* 4.10, lines 45 and following, evidently associates himself with Atticus in his poetry as well. First and foremost, several of Propertius's elegies deal with topics of antiquarian interest and people from Rome's leading families mentioned by Nepos as valued by Atticus himself. At *Atticus* 20.3, Nepos relates that Atticus was instrumental in convincing the then Octavian to repair the temple of Jupiter Feretrius; Propertius devotes the tenth poem of his fourth book to this cult. Nepos asserts at 18.3ff. that Atticus researched and wrote up the histories of such families as the Junii Bruti, Claudii Marcelli, Cornelii Scipiones, Fabii, and Aemilii. Propertius 4.10 describes the exploits of the Claudius Marcellus who won the *spolia opima* in the third century B.C.E. Propertius 4.11 enumerates the achievements of several bygone Cornelii Scipiones, ancestors of the subject, the noble matron—and Augustus's stepdaughter—Cornelia, and Aemilii, forebears of this Cornelia's husband (Hallett 2002.281).

In addition, Propertius depicts himself in the first poem of Book 4 as a learned, literarily-inspirational Roman antiquarian, who is compelled to labor, unconventionally, outside of the forum, and who submits to the whims and will of a demanding woman. These details call to mind the qualities that Nepos emphasizes in portraying Atticus as an admirable man. Not only does he stress Atticus's unwillingness to take part in Roman political life, at *Atticus* 17.1–2, after praising Atticus's *pietas*, devotion to his family (and anticipating both Augustus and Vergil in representing this trait as highly desirable in mature, familially responsible males), Nepos cites Atticus's accommodating and submissive conduct to his demanding mother and sister.[10] In line 64 of 4.1, Propertius voices his aspirations to be a Roman

10 For *pietas* as a trait not previously applied to highly achieving Roman males, see McManus 1997.108–12. As Horsfall 1989.67 points out, Nepos also uses the noun *pietas*

Callimachus. We might argue that, in Book 4, Propertius also proved himself an elegiac, and erotic, Atticus. Propertius's apparent efforts to evoke Atticus as he is portrayed by Nepos would both help to explain, and render more likely, Ovid's doing the same (Hallett 2002.281).

Finally, there is what we might call the Tiberius connection. Born in 42 B.C.E. (so Suetonius *Tiberius* 5), Tiberius was only one year Ovid's junior. In such elegies from exile as *Epistulae ex Ponto* 1.7, 2.2, and 2.3, Ovid represents himself in his younger days as closely connected with the statesman, orator, and literary patron Marcus Valerius Messalla Corvinus. At *Tiberius* 70.1, Suetonius represents Tiberius as attached to Messalla in his youth as well: "in oratione Latina secutus est Corvinum Messalam, quem senem adulescens observaret," "in Latin oratory, he followed Messalla Corvinus, whom he as a youth observed as an old man." To be sure, Suetonius merely mentions Tiberius's emulation of Messalla's oratorical practices. Yet he also reports in the same chapter that Tiberius not only wrote Latin lyric verse (*composuit carmen lyricum*), but also imitated and promoted various learned Hellenistic poets: "fecit et Graeca poemata imitatus Euphorionem et Rhianum et Parthenium, quibus poetis admodum delectatus scripta omnium et imagines publicis bibliothecis inter veteres et praecipuos auctores dedicavit," "he also wrote Greek poems imitating Euphorion and Rhianus and Parthenius, and having taken great pleasure in these poets, he deposited the writings and statues of all of them in public libraries among the ancient and leading authors." In other words, Tiberius would have shared literary interests with Ovid and Messalla's other literary protégés at the time, the late twenties and early teens B.C.E. Chief among these protégés were the elegist Tibullus (who also merits mention at *Tristia* 4.10.51–53) and Messalla's own niece and ward Sulpicia.

Atticus, of course, was technically Tiberius's grandfather-in-law. After all, Atticus's daughter Caecilia—whom Agrippa later divorced in order to marry Augustus's niece, the elder Marcella in 28 B.C.E.—was mother of Tiberius's wife Vipsania Agrippina and grandmother of his sons (Horsfall 1989.104). Might Ovid have tried to ingratiate himself in *Tristia* 4.10 with Augustus's stepson as well, a man with whom he had both learning experiences and intellectual pursuits in common?

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at 5.2 for Atticus's accommodating behavior to his mother's extremely wealthy and ill-tempered brother Quintus Caecilius, who adopted Atticus in his will and left him three-quarters of his estate.

And, for that matter, how much in common were these learning experiences and intellectual pursuits? I think it quite possible that Atticus's freedman Caecilius Epirota, whose intimacy with the poet Cornelius Gallus Suetonius relates at *de Grammaticis* 16, numbered Ovid and even Tiberius among his pupils soon after Octavian became Augustus in 27 B.C.E. Suetonius states that Epirota began his own school after Gallus's conviction and death in 27 B.C.E. There Epirota limited enrollment to young men in their mid and late teens who no longer wore the *toga praetexta*; he also launched the practice of reading Vergil and other new poets ("primusque Vergilium et alios poetas novos praelegere coepisse"). According to Suetonius, Domitius Marsus spoke of Epirota as *tenellorum nutricula vatum*, "dear womanly nurturer of tender little bards." Ovid may well identify himself in this number when he begins *Amores* 3.15 by ordering *tenerorum mater Amorum* to *quaere novum vatem*, and when he refers to himself as a *tenerorum lusor amorum*, educated by *insignes Urbis ab arte viros* in that poem that echoes *Amores* 3.15, *Tristia* 4.10.

To be sure, some other information also furnished by Suetonius at *de Grammaticis* 16 complicates this supposition. Namely, that Epirota, originally Atticus's freedman, was suspected of improper sexual conduct toward Atticus's daughter (and Tiberius's future mother-in-law) when he was teaching her and subsequently dismissed by Atticus. Furthermore, Suetonius reports that Epirota's subsequent intimacy with Cornelius Gallus was regarded by Augustus as one of the most serious charges against Gallus himself.

Still, Tiberius's marriage to Atticus's granddaughter did not actually take place until at least 20 or 19 B.C.E., several years after he and Ovid would have studied under Epirota (Horsfall 1989.104).[11] And even if neither Tiberius nor Ovid studied with Epirota, Suetonius's description of Epirota's dismissal by Atticus—like Suetonius's account of Tiberius's own self-imposed departure for Rhodes from Rome at *Tiberius* 10ff.—has a certain relevance to Ovid's situation. These reports remind us that other literarily-minded individuals living under Augustus also underwent exile from the center of Rome's political and intellectual establishments, albeit not Ovid's physical relegation to the edges of empire. And they remind us that these

11 The son of Tiberius and Vipsania, Drusus the younger, was born in 13 B.C.E.; Tiberius was forced to divorce Vipsania, although she was pregnant at the time, and marry Augustus's daughter Julia in 11 B.C.E. (Horsfall 1989.104).

men drew on literary connections and resources to sustain and assist them in their altered circumstances. Relegated to Rome's periphery, Ovid had good reason to identify with them as well as with Atticus in pressing claims on Augustus's sympathy.

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