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Was Ovid a Silver Latin Poet?

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One characteristic Ovid has come to share with the Silver Latin poets is the critics' tendency to fit their poetry and his into convenient schemes and label it with sweeping value judgments. It did not use to be that way; until the Renaissance, Ovid and the epic poets of the first century A.D. enjoyed a bountiful reputation—one needs to think only of Dante—which came to atrophy in the subsequent "Augustan" and Romantic periods.[1] Instead of offering a critical assessment, much of 19th and 20th century scholarship simply clothed the old value judgments in the garb of aesthetic and literary terminology. Gold turned into silver, ascent to the heights into decline, the classical into the counter-classical, epigonism, and mannerism. The endeavor was to document this change and decline by emphasis on the perceived flaws and excesses of these poets, "rhetoric" serving as the main whipping boy. Since Ovid is not Vergil or Horace, he is, even according to the *Cambridge History of Classical Literature*,[2] the harbinger of the Silver Age of Latin literature, and that is not always meant as a compliment.

A second influential trend has contributed to schematizing of this sort. That is the largely monolithic view of the Augustan age as propagated, e. g., by Syme, whose chapter on "The Organization of Opinion" clearly is simplistic and outdated.[3] One result has been to see Ovid's stature mostly in political terms; somehow he was out of step with "Augustanism" and paid for it. Yet this has done little to further appreciation of Ovid's unique role in the context of Augustan culture. Nor has he benefitted from the wildly idiosyncratic recent assessments of Vergil by Anglo-American interpreters—their approaches cannot be transferred to Ovid, and that is probably just as well. Alternatively and *faute de mieux*, the discussion of late has returned to

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[1] Cf. the contrasting views of M. B. Vida and B. Marino cited by H. Friedrich in H. Meier, ed., *Wort und Text. Festschrift für Fritz Schalk* (Frankfurt 1963) 34–35.

[2] D.W.T.C. Vessey in *CHCL* II (1982) 498. For a general critique of the prejudices encountered by the Silver Latin poets see F. M. Ahl, *ANRW* II, 32. 5 (1986) 2804–11.

[3] *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford 1939) 459–75; *inter alia*, there is no discussion of the visual evidence. Cf. E. Simon, *Augustus* (Munich 1986) 9–10, and for the general perspective, my article on "Recent Trends in the Interpretation of the Augustan Age," *Aug. Age* 5 (1986) 22–36.

the lines drawn by Richard Heinze, i. e. elegiac vs. epic style,[4] and there has been a general avoidance of studying afresh his relation to the Neronian and Flavian epic writers.

This is a good time, therefore, for a more differentiated assessment. A more balanced discussion of Augustan culture has been facilitated especially by the recent work of art historians such as Paul Zanker and Erika Simon.[5] A related perspective is that terms such as "mannerism," which are used to characterize Ovid and the Silver Latin poets, are borrowed from the arts, and we are now in a better position to assess their utility. To some extent, therefore, this is an essay in methodology. Its aim is to explain some of the salient features of the *Metamorphoses* which have been considered as ushering in the Silver Age, by reference to the Augustan cultural context and, when appropriate, the previous literary tradition. In its second part, I will analyze some of Silver epic poets' Ovidian adaptations. The aim is to provide at least some useful definitions for a complex of questions which could profitably occupy a monograph.

<p style="text-align:center">I</p>

An instructive point of departure is E. R. Curtius' oft-cited definition of mannerism which has had all but the force of *ipse dixit*. Curtius used the term as "the common denominator for all literary tendencies which are opposed to classicism, whether they be pre-classical, post-classical, or contemporary with classicism."[6] He deliberately chose this term in preference to "baroque," which he felt could be misused (as, in fact, it has been for the poets we are discussing), and his mannerist examples, interestingly enough, include several from Vergil; this alone should caution us not to draw lines too rigidly. But while Curtius purposely eschewed the art-historical connotations of the term to adapt it more broadly, its discussion in that context is directly relevant to one of the central issues concerning Ovid and his "influence" on the Silver Latin poets. I am

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[4] See, e. g., P. E. Knox, *Ovid's Metamorphoses and the Traditions of Augustan Poetry* (Cambridge 1986) and Stephen Hinds, *The Metamorphosis of Persephone: Ovid and the Self-Conscious Muse* (Cambridge 1987).

[5] Simon (note 3, above); Paul Zanker, *Augustus und die Macht der Bilder* (Munich 1987), hereafter referred to as "Zanker."

[6] *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, transl. by W. R. Trask (New York 1953) 273. For the application of the term to Silver Latin poetry see, e. g., Willi Schetter, *Untersuchungen zur epischen Kunst des Statius* (Wiesbaden 1960), esp. 122–25; D.W.T.C. Vessey, *Statius and the Thebaid* (Cambridge 1973), esp. 7–14 (hereafter referred to as "Vessey"); E. Burck, *Vom römischen Manierismus* (Darmstadt 1971). Michael von Albrecht's commendable resolve not to use "mannerism" in his forthcoming history of Roman literature is equalled only by Cato's decision to write the history of the Second Punic War without mentioning the human protagonists by name.

referring to the view that Ovid's "mannerisms" were predominantly stylistic and formal and that the Silver Latin poets filled them with "meaning."[7]

Art historians are divided on this phenomenon. Some view mannerism, in W. R. Johnson's words, "essentially as a matter of stylistic innovations which come about because of important but rather mysterious shifts in aesthetic tastes and artistic ambitions."[8] Others argue that the stylistic innovations can be explained, at least to some extent, by the social and cultural milieu or the *Zeitgeist*. This perspective is helpful because it will liberate Ovid from the limbo he often occupies: while living during Augustus' reign, he is not "Augustan" nor can he be translocated chronologically to the Silver Age proper; hence he is "a transitional figure."

I would argue that especially in the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid is, perhaps paradoxically, the truest product of the Augustan age. He embodies many of the most prominent aspects of the Augustan culture. It is not the culture of the early, post civil-war years, which is reflected in Vergil, Horace, and Livy—there is no such *Aufbruchsstimmung* in Ovid's poetry. He simply belonged to a different generation, one that knew only the *pax Augusta*,[9] which he celebrates and reflects in his own way. His poetry underscores the fact that the Augustan age evolved. Ovid is no less typical a representative of it than are Horace and Vergil.

Let us consider, from this vantage point, some of the characteristics which his poetry shares with Silver Latin poetry within the total context of his innovations of style, form, and content. Foremost among the latter is that the *Metamorphoses* represents what Wilhelm Kroll called many years ago *die Kreuzung der Gattungen*.[10] The poem combines the characteristics of various genres—drama both comic and tragic, mime,[11] hymn, the catalogue poem, epic, epigram, epyllion, and elegy, to name only the most important. Several perspectives open up from here. One, if we confine

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[7] So, e. g., Burck (note 6, above) 92–104; E. Lefèvre, "Die Bedeutung des Paradoxen in der römischen Literatur der frühen Kaiserzeit," *Poetica* 2 (1970) 59–82; M. Fuhrmann, "Die Funktion grausiger und ekelhafter Motive in der lateinischen Dichtung," in H. Jauss, ed., *Die nicht mehr schönen Künste. Grenzphänomene des Ästhetischen* (Munich 1967) 41 ff.

[8] "The Problem of the Counter-classical Sensibility and Its Critics," *CSCA* 3 (1970) 124 n. 4. For treatments of mannerism in art see W. Friedländer, *Mannerism and Anti-Mannerism in Italian Painting* (New York 1958); John Shearman, *Mannerism* (Baltimore 1967); A. Hauser, *Mannerism: The Crisis of the Renaissance and the Origin of Modern Art* (London 1965); G. Briganti, *Italian Mannerism* (Leipzig 1972); G. R. Hocke, *Die Welt als Labyrinth. Manier und Manie in der europäischen Kunst* (Hamburg 1957) and *Manierismus in der Literatur* (Hamburg 1959).

[9] Cf. my comments in *Ovid's Metamorphoses* (Berkeley 1975) 256; D. Little, *Mnemosyne* 25 (1972) 400; E. Lefèvre in G. Binder, *Saeculum Augustum* II (Darmstadt 1988) 189–96.

[10] *Studien zum Verständnis der römischen Literatur* (Stuttgart 1924) 202–24.

[11] N. Horsfall, *CJ* 74 (1979) 331–32. Fuller discussions of the various genres represented in the *Metamorphoses* are found in W. Kraus' revised *RE* article in M. v. Albrecht and E. Zinn, *Ovid* (Darmstadt 1968) 114–16 and J. B. Solodow, *The World of the Metamorphoses* (Chapel Hill 1988) 17–25.

ourselves to literary antecedents, this procedure of being aware of generic criteria and, at the same time, not abiding by them has its roots in Hellenistic poetry, especially the *Iambi* of Callimachus and Theocritus' *Idyls*. In a thoughtful analysis, which must be taken together with Kroll's, L. E. Rossi aptly characterized the Alexandrian period, in the context of surveying the written and unwritten laws of literary genres in antiquity, as one of *leggi scritte e non rispettate* and of *normatività a rovescio*.[12] Ovid, of course, practiced this on an unprecedented scale, but his link to Hellenistic literature is paralleled by the link between Hellenistic epic and the Silver Latin epics.[13] Secondly, and related to this: Kroll's emphasis on Horace as the foremost practitioner of *Kreuzung der Gattungen* should caution us all by itself not to consider Ovid's penchant as aberrant from Augustan poetic practice. The same emphasis could be placed on Vergil's *Eclogues* which continue and intensify this particular aspect of Theocritus' *Idyls*.[14] Third and most important, this mixture of styles was not merely a literary phenomenon but informed Augustan culture in general.

This is particularly evident in the arts. In Augustan art and architecture, there is a confluence of the archaic, the classical, the Hellenistic, and of Roman/Italian traditions. As Zanker remarks: "Besondere Möglichkeiten der Steigerung ästhetischer Vorzüge meinten die eklektischen Künstler— entsprechend der Lehre der attizistischen Rhetoriklehrer—durch die Kombination mehrerer vorbildlicher Stile zu erreichen."[15] *Ut pictura et architectura*—Augustan buildings, such as his own Forum, and temples like the Maison Carrée are a deliberate *mixtum compositum—poesis*.[16] The similarities are striking: besides the recognized mixture of genres, there is the principle of *Steigerung*, so obvious in the *Metamorphoses*, the emphasis on aesthetics and style, and, conversely, Zanker's appropriate reference to literary theory as exemplified by Dionysius' Περὶ τῶν ἀρχαίων ῥητόρων. With the similarities come the differences: whereas Augustan art introduces the archaic for its σεμνότης and the classical to temper the excesses of the Hellenistic, Ovid reverses the procedure. It thereby becomes similar to the amalgam of Greek art forms typical of the decoration of private villas of the late Republic. The prevailing spirit is aptly characterized by Zanker as follows (p. 37): "(Sie) evozierten eine eigene Welt, fern von politischen Pflichten . . . Das in unserem Zusammenhang Interessanteste . . . ist das völlige Fehlen römischer Thematik . . . Die eigene staatliche Tradition hat keinen Platz in der Welt des *otium* gefunden." It was an escapist phenomenon, created in reaction to

[12] *BICS* 18 (1971) 83–86; cf. also Hinds (note 4, above) 115 ff.

[13] O. Zwierlein, *RhM* 131 (1988) 67–84.

[14] Cf. Knox (note 4, above) 10–14 with reference to *Ecl.* 6.

[15] Zanker 251–52.

[16] Maison Carrée: Zanker 255–57; Forum: Zanker, *Forum Augustum* (Tübingen 1968) 11 with notes 37 and 38.

the turmoil and disintegration of the late Republic. By contrast, the *pax* of Augustus, who *cunctos dulcedine otii pellexit* (Tacitus, *Ann.* I. 2), created a carefree and lasting ambiance in which the poetry of *otium* and the fantastic could flourish all the better.[17] Contrary to the evolving style of Augustan art which overlaid the previously predominant Hellenistic forms with elements of the classical and the archaic because of their moral connotations, *pietas*, and σεμνότης, Ovid saw it the other way around. The civil wars and their memory, which were a formative influence on the first generation of Augustan poets, were gone. It remained to celebrate the *pax* and *otium* of the time for their own sake. The result is *homo Ovidianus* who is "unburdened of nationality, liberated from the past, unoppressed by the future, delivered from responsibility and morality."[18] What had been a wishful projection in the late Republic now became a fitting expression of the spirit of the times. It may, of course, not have been the kind of expression particularly liked by Augustus, who belonged to an earlier generation than Ovid.

Let us consider a related aspect of the *Metamorphoses* which has become a staple in the scholarly discussion of Ovid's legacy to Neronian and Flavian epic. That is his indisputable emphasis on the individual episode as opposed to an equilibrated narrative.[19] Again, more is involved than a strictly Ovidian idiosyncracy, and Augustan art once more provides a useful point of reference. In the art of the period, we do not find large narrative friezes such as still prevailed, e. g., on the Great Altar of Pergamum. Indeed, the prevailing scheme—evident, e. g., in the representations of Aeneas and Romulus—is the collocation of individual scenes; good examples are the Ara Pacis and the Boscoreale Cups. The scenes, of course, are not unconnected—the figures on the cuirass of the Primaporta Augustus are another obvious instance—but they are tied together by multiple associations many of which the observer is called upon to make. The reduction to individual scenes, which was at once repetitive and varied, was motivated by their didactic purpose: "Jetzt wurde das erzieherische Interesse

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[17] For another useful connection with the arts, compare the distinction made by B. Schweitzer between *mimesis* (classical style) and *phantasia* ("Asian" irregular style full of tension) in *Zur Kunst der Antike* (Tübingen 1967) 11 ff. ("Der bildende Künstler in der Antike. MIMESIS und PHANTASIA"). More specifically, the affinity of the *Metamorphoses* with the arts of painting and sculpture has often been noted; see, e. g., Kraus (note 11, above) 118–19; S. Viarre, *L'image et la pensée dans les Métamorphoses d'Ovide* (Paris 1964) 45–96, and now E. W. Leach, *The Rhetoric of Space. Literary and Artistic Representations of Landscape in Republican and Augustan Rome* (Princeton 1988) 440–67 who concludes quite rightly that Ovid "perpetuated at once both a verbal tradition and a visual tradition" (p. 467). Cf. J. P. Gros, *Collection Ecole Franc. Rome* 55 (1981) 353–66.

[18] Solodow (note 11, above) 156.

[19] Detailed comments, e. g., in Gordon Williams, *Change and Decline* (Berkeley 1978) 246–55 and G. Krumbholz, *Glotta* 34 (1955) 247–55.

so beherrschend, dass der Erzählzusammenhang völlig in den Hintergrund trat . . . Die Mythendeutung wird in wenigen Einzelszenen geleistet . . ."[20]

How well this Augustan tendency was understood is illustrated by the massive sculptural decoration of the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias.[21] The South Portico there had reliefs of gods and emperors in the upper storey, and of Greek myths in the lower storey. Instead of a continuous frieze, there are forty-five individual panels on each level. The relation, if any—and I fully expect that a plethora of ingenious connections will be attempted—between the divine/imperial subject of each upper panel and the corresponding mythological panel on the lower level need not occupy us here. Rather, the aspects pertinent to our inquiry are: (1) the arrangement is by individual episode; (2) the selection "is in the main current of Greek myth";[22] many of the subjects, in fact, are the same as in the *Metamorphoses*; (3) the panels represent a considerable mix of styles, ranging from the classical to the Hellenistic—*Kreuzung der Gattungen* all over again.

The parallelism between all this and Ovid's compositional technique is obvious. Zanker's characterization, which we quoted in that connection, of this aspect of Augustan art is applicable to Ovid, too, on the formal level. The concept behind it, however, again is different, just as we saw in our discussion of the formal similarity between the combination of period styles in Augustan art and Ovid's mixing of genres. The reason for the prominence of individual scenes in Augustan art was to increase their effectiveness—by limitation to a repetition of a few principal subjects—both of their value as representations and of the values they represented:[23]

Die Mythendeutung wird in wenigen Einzelszenen geleistet, wobei Auswahl und Darstellungsform ganz auf die Aufgabe des Staatsmythos zugeschnitten sind. Aeneas und Romulus werden in diesen Bildern nicht mehr als lebendige mythische Gestalten anschaulich. Das Begriffliche und Exemplarische steht im Vordergrund. Und da das moralische Erneuerungsprogramm sich auf wenige Leitmotive konzentrierte, heben auch die mythischen Bilder nur auf wenige Werte ab, vor allem auf *pietas* and *virtus*. Das exemplarische Handeln der Helden wird adhortativ vorgeführt und womöglich mit einem Hinweis auf das lebende *exemplum* des Princeps verbunden.

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[20] Zanker 209. By contrast, there is the affinity between the Great Altar at Pergamum and Vergil's *Aeneid*; see the stimulating discussion of Philip Hardie, *Virgil's Aeneid: Cosmos and Imperium* (Oxford 1986) 136–43. Does this make Vergil more "Hellenistic"? Solodow (note 11, above) 122–25 and 129–31 has some good comments on Ovid's "tendency towards static pictures." Cf. E. J. Bernbeck, *Beobachtungen zur Darstellungsart in Ovids Metamorphosen* (Munich 1967) 29: "Die Hauptsache ist ihm (i. e. Ovid) die bildhafte Anschaulichkeit der Einzelvorstellungen."

[21] Preliminary discussion by R.R.R. Smith, *JRS* 77 (1987) 96–98; K. Erim, *Aphrodisias* (London 1986) 106–23.

[22] Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

[23] Zanker 209.

How different this is in the *Metamorphoses*! There the individual scenes have no such purpose and come alive again with narrative and the play of the imagination.

For that aspect of the *Metamorphoses*, contemporary developments that take place, characteristically, in the private art of the evolving Augustan age provide a strong parallel. Whereas the copious floral stems and tendrils, which make up so much, e. g., of the decoration of the Ara Pacis, are arranged in a minutely ordered and symmetrical fashion, this immensely popular motif in Augustan art admitted of more playful and fantastic elaboration when transferred to the realm of private decoration. A splendid example is a late Augustan silver crater from Hildesheim (Fig. 1).[24] The symmetrical composition of the tendrils is still indebted to that found on the public monuments, but along with flowers, the stems sprout pudgy babies who animatedly move along on the thinnest of branches, catch fish and even hunt crayfish. "Erfindungsreichtum," concludes Zanker (pp. 187–88), "und spielerische Leichtigkeit konnten die augusteischen Künstler offenbar erst richtig entfalten, wenn sie nicht zu ernster Bedeutungsträchtigkeit verpflichtet waren."

This characterization is remarkably fitting for the *Metamorphoses* and its spirit. Like the silver artifact, the *Metamorphoses*, too, makes a bow to an official Augustan schema for its ostensible organization. *Prima ab origine mundi . . . ad mea tempora* (1. 3–4) mimics the cosmic visions of the time.[25] But the same transformation takes place which is exemplified by the Erotes on the crater: the chubby little boys are derived from the children in the programmatic art, such as those with Terra Mater on the cuirass of the Primaporta Augustus and with Venus on the Ara Pacis, who connote fruitfulness and bounty. Likewise, Ovid is indebted to the forms, motifs, and schemata of the Augustan cultural ambiance, but he uses and metamorphoses them for his own artistic and, essentially, private purposes.

This brings us back to the emphasis on the individual scene. It comes, as can be seen, from a much larger conceptual context than the declamation schools, even while the latter may have been conducive to the survival and accentuation of this phenomenon in the Silver Latin epics. But that is already a secondary result. The primary cause, as Gordon Williams has argued, for the prevalence of the individual episode even in epics such as Lucan's and Statius', which could have a linear continuity, is concern for the audience's attention span when these epics were recited.[26] *Mutatis mutandis,*

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[24] E. Pernice and F. Winter, *Der Hildesheimer Silberfund* (Berlin 1901); U. Gehrig, *Hildesheimer Silberfund* (Berlin 1967); Zanker 187–88, 271–72; Simon (note 3, above) 148–50.

[25] Hardie (note 20, above) 379–80 and W. Ludwig, *Struktur und Einheit der Metamorphosen Ovids* (Berlin 1965) take Ovid's procedure at face value.

[26] Williams (note 19, above) 252–53. For a sound perspective on the "influence of rhetoric" on Ovid (and, for that matter, the Silver Latin poets), H. Fränkel's comments are still unexcelled (*Ovid: A Poet Between Two Worlds*, Berkeley 1945, 167–69); cf. my *Ovid's Metamorphoses* 208 n. 60.

the same rationale contributed to the individuality of visual episodes in Augustan art.

The genesis, therefore, of the prominence of the individual episode—its centrifugal character is already evident in Homer and even in Vergil[27]—is anything but one-dimensional. The same is true of its functions in Neronian and Flavian epic. Valerius' *Argonautica* offered him a golden opportunity, especially in its first part, to present little more than a catalogue of the heroes' individual adventures. Yet that is not what happens.[28] They are integrated with one another by references to both preceding and subsequent parts of the epic—the episodes with Herakles are a good example—and by means of overarching themes, such as the function of the gods and the opening of the sea. Many episodes which Valerius adds by comparison with Apollonius serve precisely this purpose. Even though many of these connections do not extend over the entire epic *more Vergiliano*, they tend to unify major sections of it; the motif, for instance, of the parallelism of Jason's fate with that of Phrixus' and Helle's is sounded in Orpheus' song before the departure, in the apparition of Helle, and in the prayer at Phrixus' grave. By contrast, the individual adventures are far more isolated in Apollonius. Valerius, then, pursues a *via media* between Ovid, who also establishes thematic connections between individual episodes, and the *Aeneid* where the integration of individual episodes is total in terms of both the overall structure and the principal themes of the epic.

Similarly, as Erich Burck has demonstrated,[29] three discrete episodes involving Marcellus are used by Silius Italicus to convey a unified and, for that matter, idealizing characterization of the Roman commander. As for an example from the *Thebaid*, which has for so long been singled out for its supposed—and perhaps intentional—disjointedness, the episode with Coroebus and Linus (1. 557–672) was inserted by Statius not merely for its own sake, but in order to establish the theme of *pietas*.[30] By similarities and contrasts this scene becomes an integral part of the texture of the epic as did its pendant in the *Aeneid*, the Hercules/Cacus episode. Or, to return to Valerius, in his addition to the Argonaut epic of the story of Herakles' liberation of Hesione (2. 451–578) we can discern an attempt to integrate the episode into the total meaning of the work.[31] Since it deliberately evokes comparison with Ovid's story of Perseus and Andromeda (*Met.* 4.

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[27] Cf. R. D. Williams' comments on the Achaemenides episode in *Aeneid* III in his Oxford commentary (1962), p. 17 (against this view, however, see already F. Mehmel, *Valerius Flaccus*, Hamburg 1934, 105) and H. Juhnke, *Homerisches in römischer Epik flavischer Zeit* (Munich 1972) *passim*.

[28] Details in J. Adamietz, *Zur Komposition der Argonautika des Valerius Flaccus* (Munich 1976).

[29] *Historische und epische Tradition bei Silius Italicus* (Munich 1984) 6–73; Silius Italicus 11. 55–121, 12. 161–294, 15. 334–98.

[30] D.W.T.C. Vessey, *AJP* 91 (1970) 315–31; B. Kytzler, *ANRW* II, 32. 5 (1986) 2913–24.

[31] E. Burck, *WS* 89 (1976) 221–38.

663–764), Valerius could have treated it all the more easily as a discrete opportunity for *aemulatio*.

A detailed comparative study, which is a desideratum, of the function of individual episodes in the *Metamorphoses* and post-Ovidian epic would probably indicate that the traditional scholarly insistence on their purple-patch character has been even more excessive than these episodes are in their own right. I am, of course, not denying that this is one of the real differences between Vergil's epic and the post-Vergilians, and I have discussed several factors which explain this development. But, to return to an issue we raised initially, does this form also reflect a different meaning? Hebert Juhnke, for one, posits such a correlation for the *Thebaid*: "Der Wandel der Erzähltechnik spiegelt getreulich den Wandel des Menschenbildes."[32] The *Thebaid* is about a fragmented, disturbed world, which calls for narrative discontinuity. The same view, even while "pessimism" is quite the vogue in the interpretation of Augustan poetry, cannot be applied to Ovid. His series of pictures at an exhibition, which are not devoid of interconnections and overall arrangement, is un-Vergilian, but nonetheless rooted in the Augustan milieu, especially that of art. Statius' utilization of this technique and giving it new meaning illustrates the process of ongoing adaptation and, yes, creativity.

The larger cultural perspective which we have applied to the phenomena of the mixing of genres and the role of the individual episode is useful for a further aspect of the poetry of Ovid and the Silver Latin epics, especially those of Statius and Valerius. That is their preference for Greek mythological themes. According to one view, Ovid led the way by choosing myth as an escape because it enabled him to write non-political poetry. The subsequent poets, including Seneca, supposedly took their cue from him for kindred reasons. By that time, however, they were so overwhelmed by "the dominance of Greek culture" that they "responded increasingly by sheer imitation. This was a powerful factor in the decline of Roman literature."[33]

Nobody would accuse Ovid of imitation of this sort in the *Metamorphoses*. The poem is a brilliant reworking of Greek myth, and it is precisely its vitality and innovation, in addition to being an alternative to Vergil's poetry, that made it so appealing to the next generation. Ovid became a *Wegbereiter* for subsequent poets because he was the first to confront successfully, to use Harold Bloom's term, the anxiety of Vergil's influence.[34] He overcame it because he refused to succumb to it. Greek

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[32] Juhnke (note 27, above) 279.

[33] Williams (note 19, above) 102; cf. 100–01.

[34] H. Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford 1973). Goethe, with reference to Homer, put the whole issue very concisely: "Noch auf den heutigen Tag haben die Homerischen Gesänge die Kraft, uns wenigstens für Augenblicke von der furchtbaren Last zu befreien, welche die Überlieferung von mehrem tausend Jahren auf uns gewälzt hat." (*Maximen und Reflexionen* Nr. 662a).

myth, however, was anything but an escape as the Augustan cultural
ambiance was saturated with Greek art forms. The impetus again was
provided by the deliberate adoption of the Greek idiom to become, in
Zanker's words, the artistic language of the new myth of the state and the
emperor.[35] Original works from various periods of Greek art—archaic,
classical, and fourth-century—were imported and prominently exhibited in
Rome. Archaizing and classicizing became a normative tendency in
Augustan reliefs and sculpture. The same is true of architecture. At a time
proverbial for the restoration of temples, elements from the various Greek
period styles, including the Hellenistic, were lacking nowhere. The result
was the phenomenon to which we adverted earlier, *mixtum compositum*.

We are not dealing with the "dominance of Greek culture" here as much
as its conscious and creative adaptation *ut maiestas imperii publicorum
aedificiorum egregias haberet auctoritates* (Vitruvius, Pref. 2). If we look
for sheer imitation, we do find it in the arts, and in a most revealing
manner. The new style of Augustan Rome became so influential that it was
copied almost slavishly in the Greek east; Aphrodisias provides a good
example.[36] The attitude which Gordon Williams and others think is peculiar
to the Silver Latin poets vis-à-vis their "domineering" Greek models applies
far more demonstrably to Greek artists working with Roman models.

One final distinction emerges. While Ovid did not use Greek myth to
escape from Augustan culture of which the Greek artistic and mythological
idiom was an integral part, he used it without the meaning that idiom
expressed in the public realm. In other words, he did treat it non-politically.
In Silver Latin poetry, by contrast, Greek myth again becomes the vehicle
for a meditation on the politics and society of the time; Seneca's *Thyestes*
and Statius' *Thebaid* are good examples.[37] Ovid found Greek myth in the
public domain and privatized it, whereas the Silver Latin poets used it for
their private reflections on the public domain. Terms such as "mannerism"
and "decline" are too relative and imprecise to adequately characterize this
complex process of evolution, continuity, and adaptation.

<div align="center">II</div>

Similarly, the Silver Latin poets' adaptation of Ovid cannot be reduced to a
single denominator. Too often, the resulting schema posits a waning of
Vergil's influence and an ascendancy of Ovid's. The salient question for our
purposes is this: to what extent did Ovid's complete reworking of Vergilian

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[35] Zanker 240–63. For an additional perspective, see Leach (note 17, above) 467: "To assess
Ovid's importance more fully, we must think again of his place within his immediate cultural
climate, amid a society whose fascination with mythology is attested by a proliferation of
mythological epics, mythological dramas, and mythological pictures."

[36] Zanker 298–99; cf. Smith (note 21, above) 93–96.

[37] See, e. g. V. Pöschl, *Kunst und Wirklichkeitserfahrung in der Dichtung* (Heidelberg 1979)
311–19; F. M. Ahl *et al.*, *ANRW* II, 32. 4 (1986) 2555–56.

episodes serve as a model for the Neronian and Flavian epic writers which would merit Ovid's characterization as a trendsetter for Silver Latin poetry? The treatment, in their epics and the *Metamorphoses*, of two major epic themes, both of them traditional and blessed with a heavy dose of scholarly illumination, is ideally suited to provide some answers. They are the seastorm and the nekyia.

A. The Seastorm

In the *Metamorphoses*, the narrative of the seastorm engulfing Ceyx is a bravura piece of literary wit and allusiveness (11. 474–572). The literary tradition since Homer is well attested; what is important is that "Ovid is not just writing *within* the tradition of the convention, he is writing *about* it."[38] By his exuberant manipulation of allusions to Homer, Ennius, Plautus, Propertius, Vergil (whom he "corrects" on more than one occasion) and, probably, Naevius and others, the description exemplifies Ovid's tendency to call attention to himself, the narrator.

For purposes of comparison with the storms of Lucan, Valerius, Silius, and Statius, I will single out four points of reference among many other possible ones. (a) What does the storm contribute to the characterization of the protagonists? In the *Metamorphoses*, it comprises almost one third of the story of Ceyx and Alcyone but is anything but subservient to reinforcing the theme of their conjugal love. Whenever Ovid gets close to doing so, he deflects any such emphasis with paradox (544–46) or exaggeration (566–67). (b) For the same reason, i. e. attention to narrator and deemphasis of the characters, Ovid does not let Ceyx speak directly nor in *oratio obliqua*. Instead it is Ovid who sums up what Ceyx says, for a total of ten lines. (c) In contrast to Homer and Vergil, no divine agency causes the storm nor does Ceyx bring it upon himself. The storm simply happens. (d) There is, however, a large number of similes. They underscore the primary character of the passage, intellectual literary wit. A prime example, as Arnaud observes, is three similes (510–13, 525–33, 534–36) that are all based on similes involving Hector in Book 15 of the *Iliad*.[39]

Meaning and purpose are quite different in Lucan's famous description of the storm on the Adriatic sea during Caesar's attempted crossing (5. 560–677).[40] Lucan utilizes Ovid but maintains his independence. He follows Ovid in not attributing the storm to divine intervention but then proceeds to have Caesar do exactly that. Caesar claims that the storm arose because he,

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[38] D. L. Arnaud, *Aspects of Wit and Humor in Ovid's Metamorphoses* (Stanford Diss. 1970) 104. His analysis of the Ovidian episode (pp. 98–142) is the best available. For the topos in general, see Bömer's commentary on *Met.* X–XI, pp. 345–47; E. de St. Denis, *Le rôle de la mer dans la poésie latine* (Paris 1935); W. H. Friedrich in *Festschrift B. Snell* (Munich 1956) 77–87.
[39] Arnaud 129–32.
[40] Basic for many details is M.P.O. Morford, *The Poet Lucan* (Oxford 1967) 20–44.

Caesar, was at sea; the poet thus highlights Caesar's megalomania.[41] In contrast to Ovid, the whole episode serves the purpose of characterizing Caesar. Therefore he speaks again and again, for a total of 33 lines, more than a quarter of the storm episode. Both speeches (578–93, 655–71) reveal his utter arrogance. His *tutela* and *fortuna* are superior to that of the gods. Far from learning anything from adversity, he construes everything to his advantage. Without going back to Vergilian norms, Lucan breathes life into the convention, whereas Ovid only made fun of its conventionality and produced the Compleat Storm, a procedure which normally betokens the end of the convention. And so it is with the similes: Lucan employs only one during the entire storm description (a very appropriate one at that: 620–24), but uses the vocabulary of storm or related phenomena in twenty similes, that is one quarter of all his similes, throughout the *Pharsalia*.[42]

Similarly, Valerius Flaccus uses the seastorm motif creatively and integrates it purposefully into the meaning of his epic (*Arg.* 1. 574–692).[43] He eschews virtually all utilization of Ovid; there are, for instance, no similes although the usual *aemulatio* leads him to some fairly grandiose expansions (e. g. 585–93). Even here he refrains from mentioning one of the most notable Ovidian additions (*Met.* 11. 530), the tenth wave, which Lucan had still taken over (5. 672–76). In terms of the position of the storm in the epic, the model of course is the *Aeneid*, but Valerius combines this with the *hubris* motif found in Lucan. The deities of sea and storm, led by Boreas, consider the voyage of the Argo as an act of *hubris* towards nature, but this voyage is the first step in Jupiter's plan to open up the sea and transfer the center of power from Asia to Greece. Hence even Neptune resignedly helps the Argonauts (545–654) while gloomily forecasting the lot of future seafarers. The seastorm, then, is not so much a challenge to Jupiter's decree as the first opportunity for the Argonauts to display the heroic qualities needed for this epoch-making event, defined by Jupiter in the preceding speech as *durum iter et grave* (566). In contrast to the *Metamorphoses* and the *Pharsalia*, the storm once again is caused by deities, but quite unlike Ovid, Valerius emphasizes its internal rather than external dimension. It serves to characterize the protagonists who have to prove themselves.

The means Valerius employs for this characterization again illustrate that it was quite possible, even at this late stage in the tradition, to treat a seastorm episode with considerable originality. Valerius does not simply fall back on Vergil. He does not, for instance, include the gesture of the hero's stretching out his hands in the middle of the storm and praying to the

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[41] I have followed the interpretation of F. M. Ahl, *Lucan. An Introduction* (Ithaca 1976) 205–09.

[42] Details in Morford (note 40, above) 51 ff.

[43] I am much indebted to the discussions of E. Burck, *Unwetterszenen in den flavischen Epikern. Abh. Akademie Mainz* 9 (1978) 9–14 and Adamietz (note 28, above) 24–26.

gods (*Aen.* 1. 93). The reason may have been Ovid's amusement at it. It's a futile gesture (not in the least, perhaps, because one would surely drown if one indeed raised one's hands instead of holding on to a plank) and besides, one can't see *sidera* and *caelum* anyway: *bracchiaque ad caelum, quod non videt, inrita tollens/poscit opem* (*Met.* 11. 541–42; cf. 550: *omne latet caelum*). There is only one short direct speech of the stricken heroes (*Arg.* 1. 627–32), prefaced by *murmure maesto* (626). Valerius, however, does not pull back from pathos as Ovid did; witness, e. g., the aspect of Hercules (1. 634–35):

> magnanimus spectat pharetras et inutile robur
> Amphitryoniades.

Not a word is wasted and the tmesis contributes to the overall effect. At greater length, Jason's concluding speech (667–80) and sacrifice establish the themes of *pietas* and *virtus* which will be operative throughout the *Argonautica*.

The whole episode is anything but a mannered retreading of a wornout convention. Ovid's treatment of it—and that is the only case we can make for Ovidian influence—is that it challenges Valerius to a very different *remaniement*.

Silius reworks these themes in the final book of the *Punica* (17. 201–90). Because Hannibal is the anti-Aeneas, the motifs from the *Aeneid* are inverted: as he sails from Italy to Africa, he changes his mind to wreak his revenge yet on Rome (234–35). He thereby is assimilated to Lucan's Caesar (5. 579–80) and, in contrast to the latter, he actually does bring the storm upon himself. Following the inversion of the Vergilian matrix, it is Neptune who, in response to Hannibal's turnabout, stirs up the storm together with Boreas, the other winds, and Tethys (note the difference in this respect from Valerius, too, who has Nereus and Thetis set the Argo afloat). Continuing this *variatio*, Silius has Venus save Hannibal from drowning because she wants him to be vanquished by the Aeneades. Hannibal's direct speech (220–35) echoes the principal motive that led him to destroy Saguntum earlier: the wish to annihilate Rome and Jupiter.[44] Silius' seastorm, therefore, is not extraneous but an important element in both Hannibal's characterization and the overall plan of the epic, contrasting with the description Silius planned in book 18 for Scipio's voyage and with Hannibal's attack on Rome (12. 538–792).[45] Hannibal reveals himself further in his lament (250–67); we may note that Silius, too, omits the protagonist's gesture of prayer probably for the combined reason of Hannibal's lack of *pietas* and Ovid's "correction" of this Vergilian scene. And while there is occasional *aemulatio*, especially with Vergil, in terms of

[44] See M. von Albrecht, *Silius Italicus* (Amsterdam 1964) 24–27.

[45] Burck (note 43, above) 15.

greater quantity and detail (e. g. lines 278–80) Silius, quite unlike Ovid, uses no similes.

As has been noted many times, the integration of character and storm environment is closest in Statius' *Thebaid*.[46] It also is completely un-Ovidian. Statius' innovations include transferring the storm from sea to land (1. 346–82) and enhancing its effect by contrast with the preceding description of the calm of Somnus and the evening (336–41). Above all, the storm, used in the same theme-setting position at the beginning of the epic as in Vergil and Valerius, is the external manifestation of Polyneices' inner turmoil and illustrates the rush to his doom. That is also one function of the episode's only simile; the other is to allude to the topos in general as the simile is about a sailor caught in a seastorm (370–77):

> ac velut hiberno deprensus navita ponto,
> cui neque Temo piger neque amico sidere monstrat
> Luna vias, media caeli pelagive tumultu
> stat rationis inops, iamiamque aut saxa malignis
> exspectat submersa vadis aut vertice acuto
> spumantes scopulos erectae incurrere prorae;
> talis opaca legens nemorum Cadmeius heros
> adcelerat . . .

Statius draws on such nautical similes even more purposefully than Lucan throughout his epic. The sea and its perils become a symbol of the vicissitudes of human emotions and warfare, and the seastorm similes are raised to the level of an important element in the thematic structure of the *Thebaid*.[47] Again we are far removed from Ovid. At the same time, Statius deliberately uses Ovidian details to treat them all the more differently. Like Ceyx, Polyneices does not speak, but this is not done in order to draw more attention to the narrator. Instead, the mood created by the powerful narrative relates directly to the psychology of Polyneices. Divine instigation of the storm would only detract from this. Hence the storm simply arises, as it does in Ovid and Lucan, but its effect and treatment are among the most original in the tradition.

B. Tisiphone and the Underworld

As Bernbeck's insightful analysis has shown, Ovid's depiction of the underworld (*Met.* 4. 416 ff.) is a good paradigm of his artistic intentions in the *Metamorphoses*.[48] The same can be said of almost all the Silver Latin epic poets and, for that matter, Seneca. Each offers his own version. Their

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[46] Krumbholz (note 19, above) 232–35; Burck (note 43, above) 26–30; Vessey 92–93; Friedrich (note 38, above) 86.
[47] See B. Kytzler, *WS* 75 (1962) 154–58; a good example is 3. 22–32, illustrating Eteocles' state of mind.
[48] Bernbeck (note 20, above) 1–43, esp. 4–29.

relation to the Vergilian and Homeric models has been studied often enough.[49] Here we want to focus briefly on their indebtedness, if any, to Ovid.

Ovid incorporates his version into the Theban cycle, specifically the story of Athamas and Ino. Juno feels slighted because of Semele; she descends into the underworld, pleads with Tisiphone to strike Athamas and Ino mad, and the Fury complies. As for the description of the underworld proper, its hallmarks are a pervasive *jeu d'esprit*, a delightful sense of the incongruous and, as a result, an almost complete demythologizing, if not trivializing, of Hades and his horrors. The only problem, e. g., which the *novi manes* have is that they don't know their way around the subterranean *urbs* (437–38). Most pursue their old trades, and any moral dimension is relegated to less than one line, without any illustrative specifics: *aliam partem sua poena coercet* (446).

Tisiphone and her sisters are perfectly adapted to this bourgeois, terrorless underworld. They have problems with their snake hairs—*deque suis atros pectebant crinibus angues* (454)—and Tisiphone is trying to shake them out of her face while talking to other people (475). The Furies are well-mannered ladies who rise when Juno comes to visit (457). True enough, they inhabit the *Sedes Scelerata*, but its mythological penitents are reduced to a series of paradoxes, Sisyphus' characterization being the most blatant: *se sequiturque fugitque* (461). Still, as Tisiphone reminds Juno, a goddess like her—and the katabasis of a deity is an Ovidian invention—has no business in the *inamabile regnum* (477; the phrase has a nice Vergilian ring: *Geo.* 4. 479 and *Aen.* 6. 438), and she needs to betake herself *caeli melioris ad auras* (478). Juno does so *laeta* (479). The spirit of this underworld, of course, is totally un-Homeric and un-Vergilian; it is described with a typically light touch.

Ovid's successors confronted the same problem. With the exception of Silius, they wanted to be more than Vergilian imitators, but they chose to eschew almost completely the path that Ovid had taken. The most sensational counterblast to *Aeneid* 6 is the description of Erictho and the resuscitation of the corpse in Book 6 of the *Pharsalia* where Lucan "rejects both katabasis and traditional nekyomanteia in favour of a more hideous form of post-mortem communication."[50] While the episode, however, owes something to Ovid's *Medea* in *Met.* 7, it does not take its inspiration from the katabasis in *Met.* 4. A closer parallel is Tisiphone's rousing of Megaera from the underworld in Book 11 of Statius' *Thebaid* (57 ff.).

It constitutes the serious counterpart to Juno's journey to Tisiphone in Ovid. Instead of being a superfluous bother, Tisiphone's snakes become functional. They define the purpose of Tisiphone's undertaking: she wants to rouse the *consanguineos angues* of Megaera for the impending battle

[49] See especially Juhnke (note 27, above) 268–97 and Vessey 238–58.

[50] Vessey 243; cf. Morford (note 40, above) 70–73 and Ahl (note 40, above) 130–33.

between Eteocles and Polyneices (11. 61–62). She uses the *dux* of her
snake hairs to emit a world-terrifying hiss which pierces the netherworld and
alerts Megaera (65–69):

> crinalem attollit longo stridore cerasten:
> caeruleae dux ille comae, quo protinus omnis
> horruit audito tellus pontusque polusque,
> et pater Aetneos iterum respexit ad ignes.
> accipit illa sonum . . .

Whereas Ovid never let Juno speak and the only direct words were uttered by
her addressee, Statius forgoes such ironies and returns to convention.
Tisiphone addresses a long speech to Megaera (76–112) which states the
objective clearly and forcefully—no *longae ambages* (*Met.* 4. 476) here.
And whereas Ovid makes Tisiphone's onslaught on Athamas and Ino look
like a circus act (4. 481–511),[51] Statius raises the departure for her task to
cosmic dimensions (113–18), thus attracting the attention of Jupiter (119
ff.).

Statius "corrects" Ovid in similar ways in the katabasis of Amphiaraus
at the beginning of Book 8. Just as Ovid's invention of Juno's descent to
the underworld was unprecedented so are both Statius' addition of this
episode to the Theban myth and his invention of a warrior's being taken
alive to the underworld in full battle gear instead of actually dying. There
are baroque touches especially in the description of Dis who, *inter alia*, calls
upon Tisiphone to avenge this intrusion of the realm of the dead, but the
whole episode has been well characterized as an allegory that "proclaims the
rule of moral law which applies below as above."[52] The total effect is a
return to epic gravity. In the case of Tisiphone, it is further enhanced by
Statius' giving her a role throughout the *Thebaid*. As Vessey has observed,
"she has to some degree been demythologized by Statius' in the wake of
Lucan's epic"; "she has become a *figura* of violence and madness . . . she is
an objectified embodiment of Oedipus' spiritual state."[53] It is Oedipus, a
mortal, who summons her initially (1. 88 ff.), and not a deity, such as
Vergil's Juno calling forth Allecto. Ovid, of course, also had
demythologized Tisiphone, but in a very different manner which Statius
pointedly chose not to follow.

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[51] Involving the snakes of course (4. 491–96). Once the job is done, *regna redit Ditis
sumptumque recingitur anguem* (4. 511—"like a police official," as Bernbeck (note 20, above)
30 aptly puts it; see his excellent observations on the entire passage on pp. 26–30. B. also
stresses the composition of the underworld/Tisiphone episode in terms of individual vignettes
rather than overall, connected action and narrative (cf. our earlier discussion of the related issue of
the autonomy of individual episodes on pp. 5–9). This in another aspect in which the post-
Ovidian treatments of the topos do not uniformly follow Ovid.

[52] Vessey 243.

[53] Vessey 75; cf. Schetter (note 6, above) 5–20.

The katabasis, following a nekyomanteia, of the souls of Aeson and Alcimede at the end of the first book of Valerius' *Argonautica* is even more classicizing (1. 833–51). It is a deliberately brief riposte to the excesses of Lucan and Seneca[54] and its directness is totally un-Ovidian.

Silius' corresponding scene (13. 381–895) is as long as Valerius' was brief. It is a syncretistic compendium of imitations of almost all the scenes from the nekyiae of Homer and Vergil, along with additions such as Scipio's encountering the souls of Hasdrubal, Alexander the Great, and Homer himself.[55]   Even amidst this comprehensiveness there is no room for any *aemulatio* of Ovid. There are just enough indices to let the learned reader know that Silius had looked at Ovid's version. The yew-tree (*taxus*) occurs in Ovid first (*Met.* 4. 432) as the typical underworld tree (in contrast to Vergil's *ulmus*; *Aen.* 5. 283); Silius (11. 596) follows Ovid, as did Lucan (6. 645) and Seneca (*HF* 690). Among the Abstractions dwelling in the entrance hall to Hell is *Luctus* (13. 581), which is found in both Ovid (4. 484) and Vergil (6. 274). *Error* in Silius' catalogue (13. 586) is not part of Vergil's, but is one of the afflictions produced by Ovid's Tisiphone (4. 502). And whereas most underworld topographies know of only two gates, Silius increases their number to ten (531–61), perhaps with a view to Ovid's *mille aditus* (4. 439). At the same time, Ovid's insouciance (*apertasque undique portas/urbs habet;* 439–40) is implicitly corrected by a systematic classification of the ten gates. Silius adverts to Ovid just often enough to make the reader aware of the total difference between the spirit of his nekyia and Ovid's.

To sum up: a survey of two major motifs in the epic tradition, the seastorm and the nekyia, points up the limitations of the customary generalizations about Ovid's influence on the Neronian and Flavian epic poets. At the very least, we need to use some distinctions, such as that between form and spirit. Undeniably, formal and stylistic parallels—such as the use of paradox, exaggeration, visual over-explicitness, and excessive accumulation of detail—are shared by Ovid and the Silver Latin poets. Even from that perspective, the passages I have analyzed are by no means homogeneous. Far more important is the primacy of meaning or spirit over any such formal similarities. The purposes to which Lucan, Valerius, Statius, and Silius put topoi like the seastorm[56] and the nekyia are quite dissimilar to Ovid's. Instead of a simple shift from Vergil to Ovid, the oft-proclaimed harbinger of the Silver Age, the inspiration of these poets is more complex, reaching back to Homer and reacting, in one way or another,

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[54] Details in Vessey 245–47.

[55] The most recent treatment, with the earlier bibliography, is C. Reitz, *Die Nekyia in den Punica des Silius Italicus* (Frankfurt 1982).

[56] Since presentations of seastorms became a topos in the rhetorical schools it may, in fact, have been the latter's much maligned influence which contributed to keeping this conventional subject susceptible to ever new variations.

mostly to Vergil. The Ovidian reaction to Vergil is almost irrelevant as a model both in terms of form and, more significantly, of meaning. The distinctive spirit that shapes Ovid's treatment of these episodes and others is much more a reflection of his kind of Augustanism than an indication of any real affinity with the poetry we call, for lack of a better term, Silver Latin.

<p style="text-align:center">III</p>

Finally, a brief comment is appropriate on the extent to which the Silver Latin epic poets followed Ovid in their use of poetic vocabulary. This is another aspect of his coping and theirs with the burden of the Vergilian past.[57] E. J. Kenney has summed up Ovid's achievement in this respect very well: "His contribution to the subsequent development of Latin Poetry may be described as the perfection of a poetic *koine*, a stylistic instrument which was freely manageable by writers of lesser genius."[58]

As part of his argument, Kenney concentrates on certain "poetic" words (based mostly on A. Cordier's analysis of the Vergilian vocabulary) and on compound adjectives shared and not shared by Vergil and Ovid. I will extend this control group to the epics of the post-Ovidians. For the sake of brevity, I will not reproduce the entire catalogue especially of the compound adjectives but simply list the relevant results.

(1) Some Vergilian "archaisms" which, as Kenney puts it (p. 120), are "obviously useful and not obtrusively 'poetic' words avoided by Ovid for no clear reason": *celero* (5 times in the *Aeneid*; found in Statius, Silius, Valerius), *fluentum* (Silius), *loquella* (no occurrence in the Silver Latin poets), *pauperies* (Lucan).

(2) Some more obviously "poetic" words not used by Ovid: *cernuus* (Silius), *flictus* (Silius), *illuvies* (Silius), *intempestus* (Statius), *obnubo* (Silius, Valerius), *pernix* (Silius, Valerius).

(3) Some "poetic" words used once only in the *Aeneid* and the *Metamorphoses*: *dius* (no occurrence in the Silver Latin epics), *incanus* (Statius), *properus* (Silius, Valerius), *sentus* (no occurrence), *suboles* (Lucan, Statius, Valerius), *tremebundus* (Silius, Statius); cf. *virago* (once in *Aeneid*, twice in *Met.*, once in Lucan).

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[57] On the general literary perspective cf. W. J. Bate, *The Burden of the Past and the English Poet* (Cambridge Mass. 1970).

[58] "The Style of Ovid," in J. W. Binns, ed., *Ovid* (London 1973) 119.

Compound Adjectives:

(4) Of the 41 compounds used by both poets in the *Aeneid* and the *Metamorphoses* only one does not occur in the Silver Latin epics, i. e. *bicolor*.

(5) 52 compounds are listed by Kenney as being used by Vergil in the *Aeneid*, though not by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses*. 15, or 29%, are not found in the Silver Latin epics: *Appenninicola, bifrons, bilix, bipatens, centumgeminus, caprigenus, conifer, legifer, malifer, omnigenus, omniparens, Phoebigena, silvicola, velivolus, vitisator*.

(6) 89 compounds are listed by Kenney as being used by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses*, but not by Vergil in the *Aeneid*. 57 of these, or 64% are not found in the Silver Latin epics: *amnicola, anguigena, anguipes, Appenninigena, aurigena, bifurcus, bimater, bipennifer, bisulcus, caducifer, centimanus, Chimaerifer, falcifer, faticinus, flexipes, florilegus, frugilegus, fumificus, gemellipara, glandifer, granifer, herbifer, lanigena, ignigena, Iunonigena, lanificus, Latonigena, lentiscifer, luctisonus, mellifer, monticola, multicauus, multiforus, opifer, papyrifer, penatiger, portentificus, puerperus, racemifer, securifer, semicaper, semicremus, semideus, semilacer, semimas, septemfluus, serpentiger, sexangulus, spumiger, squamiger, triceps, tricuspis, tridentifer, tridentiger, uaticinus, uenefica, uenenifer*.

Two principal conclusions can be drawn from this limited evidence. Although we are dealing with a representative sample rather than an exhaustive study of diction, it indicates tendencies that accord with those suggested by the comparison of the poets' use of themes like seastorm and nekyia. First, no schematism can be observed as regards Ovidian "influence." In fact, Silius Italicus, the most Vergilian of the Flavian and Neronian poets, uses 17 of the 89 compounds used by Ovid and not by Vergil, thus confirming the "color Ovidianus" of many of his passages[59] (Lucan and Statius are next with 16). At the same time, Lucan and Silius follow Vergil rather than Ovid in the use of meter, whereas Valerius and Statius are metrically "Ovidian."[60] Secondly, the Silver Latin poets use a significantly higher percentage of compounds used by Vergil and not by Ovid rather than the other way around. That again is consistent with the thematic dialogue they carry on in their adaptations of scenes such as nekyia and seastorm with Vergil rather than Ovid. It should be added that, as Kenney observes (p. 122), Ovid's innovations in the use of compound

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[59] See the articles by R. T. Bruère in N. Herescu, ed., *Ovidiana* (Paris 1958) 475–99 and *CP* 54 (1959) 228–45.

[60] G. E. Duckworth, *TAPA* 98 (1967) 142.

adjectives are anything but radical; instead, "he innovates on his own account with moderate freedom." Even this limited amount of Ovidian innovation did not find much of a following among his successors, and this conservatism on their part should not be overlooked amid all the other emphases which have conventionally been placed on their imitations of Ovid.[61]

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[61] Cf. the result of M. von Albrecht's analysis of the syntax of the Io episodes in the *Metamorphoses* (1. 583–751) and Valerius' *Argonautica* (4. 344–422) in *WJA* N. F. 2 (1977) 139–47: Ovid is more "classical" and "Augustan." Similarly, Kenney 148 n. 67: "In this respect (i. e. the formation of compound adjectives) he (i. e. Ovid) does not follow the example set by his admired Lucretius . . . but shows himself as an Augustan of the Augustans."

Fig. 1. Augustan silver crater from Hildesheim. Formerly in Berlin, Staatliche Museen Inv. 3779, 62. Museum photograph.