



UCL Housman Lecture
**OVID'S CICERONIAN
LITERARY HISTORY:
END-CAREER
CHRONOLOGY AND
AUTOBIOGRAPHY**

by Denis Feeney (Princeton University)

A.E. Housman (1859–1936)

Born in Worcestershire in 1859, Alfred Edward Housman was a gifted classical scholar and poet. After studying in Oxford, Housman worked for ten years as a clerk, while publishing and writing scholarly articles on Horace, Propertius, Ovid, Aeschylus, Euripides and Sophocles. He gradually acquired such a high reputation that in 1892 he returned to the academic world as Professor of Classics at University College London (1892–1911) and then as Kennedy Professor of Latin at Trinity College, Cambridge (1911–1936).

Housman Lectures at UCL

The Department of Greek and Latin at University College London organizes regular Housman Lectures, named after its illustrious former colleague (with support from UCL Alumni). Housman Lectures, delivered by a scholar of international distinction, originally took place every second year and now happen every year, alternating between Greek and Roman topics (Greek lectures being funded by the A.G. Leventis Foundation).

This is the sixth Housman Lecture, and it took place on 20 March 2014. Denis Feeney is Giger Professor of Latin and Professor of Classics at Princeton University.

Cover image: Eugène Delacroix, *Ovid among the Scythians* (1862); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Wrightsman Fund, in honor of Philippe de Montebello, 2008

OID'S CICERONIAN LITERARY HISTORY: END-CAREER CHRONOLOGY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Denis Feeney (Princeton University)

Since my lecture was delivered on Ovid's birthday, it seemed inevitable that I should address some aspect of Ovid's work. I decided to investigate Ovid from the point of view of an ongoing interest of mine, namely, the impact that Cicero had on the Augustan poets. The working hypothesis is that Cicero's enormously wide-ranging body of writing was very important to the Augustan poets for the ways they conceived of philosophy, politics, and Roman tradition in general, together with literary theory and literary history. This lecture is a reconnaissance into that terrain: it is a test case for the proposition that Cicero mattered to Ovid, by arguing that Cicero's constructions of literary history had a major impact on Ovid's approach to writing about his place within Roman poetic tradition.

Ovid's interest in literary history is obviously long-standing and extremely varied, dating back to the literary canons in the epilogue to his first book, *Amores* 1.15, and embracing a range of literary and scholarly traditions, as finely demonstrated by Tarrant (2002). Yet it seems to me that, as Ovid's career went on, he became more and more interested in literary history, especially in autobiographical literary history, as he set his own poetic achievement within various histories of poetry. This is, I think, where Cicero in particular starts to become increasingly important, as a model for a certain kind of autobiographical literary history. Cicero's autobiographically inflected literary history will become more important towards the end, the end of my lecture and the end of Ovid's career—because the end phases of Ovid's writings on literary history are, I shall argue, deeply indebted to Cicero's *Brutus*, a pioneering work of literary history and literary theory, which was itself written emphatically under the sign of the end.

Interest in Cicero's impact on the Augustan poets is quickening, as scholars increasingly aim to recover Cicero as a literary and intellectual challenge for the poets, someone they actually work with; the poets are not just being 'influenced' by Cicero or 'learning' from him, they are finding him a challenging and rewarding predecessor and interlocutor in the hard art of creating a new Greco-Roman culture. Cicero's philosophical works, in particular, have been shrugging off long habits of condescension, freeing scholars up to explore the way that Horace, for example, works with Cicero in *Satires 1* (Gowers (2009) and (2012)), *Epistles 1* (Moles (2002)), or in the *Odes* (Gibson (2007)).

The importance of Cicero to the poets should not be any kind of surprise. The intellectual world that Virgil and Horace grew up in, after all, was one that Cicero was refashioning before their eyes. When Cicero published his masterpieces on rhetoric and political philosophy of the late 50s BCE—*De Oratore* and *De Republica*—Virgil was in his late teens. When Cicero was producing his unparalleled torrent of publications on philosophy, rhetoric, and literary history between February 45 and November 44 BCE, Horace was in *his* late teens and early twenties, and studying at Athens with Cicero's son, while Virgil was only five years older and studying at Naples. This is—as Michael Winterbottom once put it to me when we were discussing this question—an extremely impressionable age for bookish people, and these particular bookish people must have been well aware that no one had achieved anything remotely comparable to Cicero in showing what could be done in Latin in terms of expression and intellectual range. Ovid was of course born only nine months before Cicero was murdered, and Cicero's intellectual legacy was just part of Ovid's equipment from the time he began to be aware that there was such a thing as an intellectual world.

Cicero provided for the first time a systematic and large-scale model for the relationship between Greek and Roman intellectual culture. His charting of this relationship has major implications for how the Augustan poets conceive of their own epic and lyric projects of large-scale cultural transference, from Horace's *Odes* and Virgil's *Georgics* and *Aeneid* to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti*. Here I may refer to the argument of Gildenhard and Zissos (2004) concerning the 'Ciceronian' rather than 'Horatian' 'conceptual treatment of Greece' in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. According to Gildenhard and Zissos, Cicero models for Ovid a markedly competitive and confrontational relationship with Greece: they call attention to Cicero's aggressive

language at the opening of the second book of the *Tusculans*, for example, where he ‘calls upon his fellow Romans to follow the practice of their ancestors in “ripping out” the literary and intellectual spoils from a “weakening Hellas” and transferring them to Rome’ (referring to *Tusc.* 2.5, *ut huius quoque laudem iam languenti Graeciae eripiant*).

Such a Ciceronian, and Ovidian, perspective fits in exactly with the description in Hutchinson (2013) of how the Romans like to write their version of literary history in such a way that the vitality of Greece stops just when their own literature begins. As Hutchinson shows, Callimachus very conveniently dies right around the very time that Livius Andronicus stages the first translation of a Greek play into Latin, so it is easy to keep up the story that Roman literary culture is a successor to Greek, an inheritance of it, rather than a cadet branch of an ongoing development. This is not a point of view that means much nowadays, with the recent revolution in Imperial Greek; but a glance at curricula and reading lists up until very recently shows that the Roman view more or less carried the day for a surprisingly long time. As we shall see below, this is certainly a view that Ovid champions in his own sketch of Greek and Roman comparative literary history in *Amores* 1.15.

Until quite recently scholars were much less inclined to look for the presence of Cicero in the Augustan poets, partly because there are vanishingly few direct references to Cicero in any literature produced between his death and the reign of Tiberius, as shown by Gowing (2013). Eduard Fraenkel’s book on Horace mentions Cicero only once in the general index, because he knew Trebatius, the addressee of Horace, *Satires* 2.1—though Fraenkel’s index should also have included his discussion of how much Horace’s conceptions of ‘the ideal type of the *sermo* to be used in actual life’ in *Sat.* 1.10 owe to Cicero’s *De Officiis* 1.136 (Fraenkel (1957) 129—a reference I owe to Simon Hornblower). Brink’s great commentaries on Horace’s literary *Epistles* are consistently disparaging about the importance of Cicero, and, I believe, they consistently underplay how much Cicero meant to Horace’s understanding of what a Roman literary history could look like. More or less the same situation has tended to be the case with Virgil, despite the early and eloquent appeal of Setaioli (1975) for a more accommodating understanding of how much Cicero meant to Virgil. Niklas Holzberg’s superb new third edition bibliography on the *Aeneid* has only seven entries under ‘Intertextualität: Cicero’: this is two fewer than under ‘Humor’ on the preceding page. It seems that scholars think there is less Cicero in the *Aeneid* than there is humour.

If modern scholars have tended until recently to underplay this possibility of real dialogue with Cicero in the Augustan poets, the ancient tradition bears traces of a more open view. A fascinating story preserved in Servius' commentary on Virgil's *Sixth Eclogue* mentions an encounter between Cicero and the young Virgil (Serv. *ap. Virg. Ecl.* 6.11, with the interesting discussion of Höschle (2013)):

dicitur autem ingenti fauore a Vergilio esse recitata, adeo ut, cum eam postea Cytheris meretrix cantasset in theatro, quam in fine Lycoridem vocat, stupefactus Cicero, cuius esset, requireret. et cum eum tandem aliquando uidisset, dixisse dicitur et ad suam et ad illius laudem 'magnae spes altera Romae': quod iste postea ad Ascanium transtulit, sicut commentatores loquuntur.

It is, moreover, said that [*Eclogue 6*] was recited by Virgil to gigantic acclaim, so much so that, when Cytheris, the courtesan, whom he calls Lycoris in the last poem, had chanted/recited/acted (*cantasset*) it in the theater later on, Cicero asked in amazement whose it was. And when at length on one occasion he (Cicero) saw him (Virgil), he is said to have said, in praise of both himself and Virgil: 'the second hope of mighty Rome': later on Virgil transferred this expression to Ascanius [*Aen.* 12.168], as the commentators say.

Now, there is no chance whatsoever that this story is true, but Cicero and Virgil are the great culture heroes of the Roman classroom, so there is a strong urge to link them. The anecdote of the heir *just* coming over the horizon of his great predecessor is calqued on such famous stories as that of Terence reciting his first comedy to Caecilius (Suet. *Ter.* 2: although Caecilius had been dead for two years), or Virgil assuming the *toga virilis* on the day that Lucretius died (Suet. *Verg.* 6). We shall have occasion to bear this tradition in mind later, when we meet Ovid's claim that he only just saw Virgil and no more (*Vergilium uidi tantum*, *Trist.* 4.10.51): this looks very modest, but it is actually a proud claim to be Virgil's successor if we follow the patterns of these anecdotes.

As we pursue the relationship between Cicero and Ovid and the other Augustans, we encounter a considerable methodological problem in thinking about the kinds of models of allusion and intertextuality that we need in order to work on poetry alluding to prose, or poetry working with prose as a model: here the recent methodological overview of Baraz and van den Berg (2013) provides helpful orientation. Our tools for working with poetry alluding to poetry are very good. Maybe they are too good: you can select two passages of ancient poetry more or less at random and a paid-up Latinist will be able to tell you some kind of story about their relationship. But prose alluding to prose, and especially poetry alluding to prose, is comparatively less worked ground: for exemplary cases, one would begin with Woodman (1979) and (2012), esp. Chapters 11, 13, and 14; Marchesi (2008); Lovatt (2010); Jacobs (2010); Baraz (2012).

There are certainly cases where we may be confident that the Augustan poets are alluding specifically to Ciceronian language. Horace's first Epistle, for example, starts off in a very Ciceronian way (Moles (2002) 143). Horace's declaration that he is 'bound to swear an oath of allegiance to no one [philosophical] master' (*nullius addictus iurare in uerba magistri*, 14) echoes with similar declarations from Cicero's *philosophica*, where he defends a pose of Academic scepticism and independence:

Sed defendat quod quisque sentit; sunt enim iudicia libera: nos institutum tenebimus nulliusque unius disciplinae legibus adstricti, quibus in philosophia necessario pareamus, quid sit in quaque re maxime probabile semper requiremus.

But let each person defend his opinions; for judgements are free. I shall hold on to my principle and, bound to the laws of no one individual philosophical school which I am obliged to obey, I shall keep looking for what is most probable in each case. (*Tusc.* 4.7)

[me] aequum, libero iudicio, nulla eius modi adstrictum necessitate ut mihi uelim nolim sit certa quaedam tuenda sententia.

I am impartial, with free judgement, bound by no necessity of the sort that will make me defend any particular opinion whether I want to or not. (*N.D.* 1.17)

Immediately following in that same Epistle, Horace showcases his inconsistency, as he glides from one philosophical stance to its opposite:

nunc agilis fio et mersor ciuilibus undis,
uirtutis uerae custos rigidusque satelles;
nunc in Aristippi furtim praecepta relabor.

Now I become active and am submerged in the waves of public affairs, a guardian and upright attendant of true virtue; now I slip back imperceptibly into the precepts of Aristippus. (*Epist.* 1.1.16–18)

His language here closely echoes a similarly antithetical sentence of Cicero's:

labor eo ut adsentiar Epicuro aut Aristippo: reuocat uirtus uel potius
reprendit manu, pecudum illos motus esse dicit, hominem iungit deo.

I slip to the point where I agree with Epicurus or Aristippus: virtue calls me back, or rather grabs me back by the hand, and tells me that those are the feelings of animals: she joins man to god. (*Acad.* 2.139)

In this particular case Horace is alluding with pointed precision, in the way one expects of a poet alluding to a poet. He flips the Ciceronian model, ironising the ethical superiority of his model. Cicero slips towards hedonism, but then is called and grabbed *back* by virtue: the weaker Horace is a guardian of virtue, but then slips *back* into hedonism.

Cases like this, however, are not very common. Even when general debts are extremely clear there are often no verbal links of any prominence. It is, for example, as obvious as such a thing can be that Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* is very important to Book 6 of the *Aeneid*, but apart from a couple of items of diction, such as *carcer*, the 'prison of the soul', there are no items we would call 'allusion'. The debts, then, are regularly much more diffuse than is allowed for in the models we are used to from poetry on poetry allusion. As Ingleheart (2010) 13 puts it, in an interesting discussion of the debt of Ovid's *Tristia* 2 to Cicero's *Pro Ligario*: 'such correspondences have not received the attention they merit, probably because they lack obvious sign-posting and operate for

the most part on a broad level.’ It will be interesting to see how future scholarship may develop models which will enable us to do justice to the pervasive influence of Cicero on Roman intellectual and literary culture while allowing us not to get hung up on the lack of the allusive features we instinctively look for in verse traditions.

Such is the background to my assumption that it is worth investigating the possible Ciceronian dimensions to Ovid’s conceptions of literary history. The range of Ovidian texts we could consider is large, for Ovid is writing literary history from the beginning of his career. The closing poem of his very first book of poetry, *Amores* Book 1, is already a literary-historical survey, going from Homer to Callimachus and Menander on the Greek side (1.15.9–18), and from Ennius to Tibullus and Gallus on the Latin (19–30), embodying in exemplary fashion the view of Roman literary history as a continuation of Greek that we discussed above.

Already in this first literary-historical foray, we see Ovid exemplifying the force of the aphorism of Tarrant (2002) 15: ‘Ovid’s characteristic literary-historical gesture is the list.’ Ovid is very fond of these lists, and I provide a list of his lists in an Appendix. I do not have the space to go through all of these, and I shall consider only the two main literary-historical poems from exile in which Ovid talks about his own career. Here above all, at the end of Ovid’s career, the presence of Cicero makes itself felt, as it had already for Horace, whose late *Epistle to Augustus* constructs Cicero as a crucial pioneer in the writing of literary history, especially in the *Brutus*. Horace learnt a lot from Cicero about the pitfalls of comparative literary history between Rome and Greece, and about the difficult issues of periodisation and teleology in literary history, as variously argued by Hinds (1998) 63–9, Feeney (2002a & b), and Citroni (2005). As May (1990) has shown, Horace highlights important similarities between his career and Cicero’s, and I shall argue here that Ovid’s presentation of his place in Roman literary history in the exile poetry also owes a great deal both to Horace and to Horace’s Cicero.

Cicero’s *Brutus*, the key intertext for our discussion, is an extremely rich and original work of scholarship and theory. In this dialogue Cicero lays hold of a number of strands of Hellenistic scholarship and reworks them in powerful ways. The historical perspective on display is remarkable, as Douglas (1966) xxii argues: ‘Cicero’s attempt to construct a dialogue with an historical survey as its subject is ... without any certainly known precedent.’ In the lost works of Aristotle and the Peripatetics, or

even—as suggested to me by Tobias Reinhardt—Antiochus of Ascalon, the member of the Academy who taught Cicero, there may have been prototypes of dialogues surveying philosophical developments over time, but on the current evidence we cannot say for certain.

Another of the most important of Cicero's innovations in the *Brutus* is the way that he makes literary history autobiographical. Now, Cicero is not at all the first Roman politician to write autobiographically. There were memoirs by Scaurus, Catulus, Rutilius Rufus, not to mention Sulla; and in Cicero's presentation of his career there must be echoes of the numerous lost figures before him who had written justifications of their careers. Yet Cicero's history of rhetoric, which becomes a history of Roman rhetoric, is reshaped by the way that Cicero writes himself into the trajectory of his history, especially at the end of the work, so that he becomes the telos of the history of oratory (Schwindt (2000) 96–121). There are short prototypes in poetry for such a self-presentation before Cicero—in Timotheus' *Persians*, as Gregory Hutchinson points out to me, we see the poet defensively representing himself as the culmination of an innovative poetic tradition that goes back to Orpheus (PMG 791.221–36; see Hordern (2002) 230); and Aristophanes' chorus in the parabasis of the *Knights*, as Lucy Jackson points out to me, speak of their poet as the heir to a parade of comic forebears whom he surpasses in achievement (498–550; see Ruffell (2002) 142–8). Yet these interesting cases are far from being systematically autobiographical, and in any event, so far as I discover, no orator or historian or philosopher before Cicero had written a sustained piece of artistic or intellectual autobiography of the kind that we see in the *Brutus*.

The single exception would be Isocrates, whose discussion of his career in his *Antidosis* and *Panathenaicus* may well be some kind of prototype for Cicero, as Laura Viidebaum suggests to me. Especially when describing his physical weakness at the beginning of his career, which appeared likely to thwart his oratorical ambitions (*Brut.* 313–14), Cicero seems to be alluding to Isocrates' description of the unrobust constitution that was one of the main factors in turning him from a conventional career as an orator into that of a writer about questions of panhellenic concern (*Pan.* 9–11). If this is the case, then Cicero would be outdoing Isocrates, since he was able to triumph over his physical shortcomings through arduous exercise in Athens and Rhodes and then return to Rome to take up his oratorical career again (316–17). Cicero's wry comment

on why he is giving such minute detail about his youthful physique may even show an ironic awareness of how biography does things: when he says that he is talking at such length on this topic because of his dialogue partners' desire 'to know him as a whole' (*totum me ... uelle cognoscere*, 313), one may compare Plutarch's later claim that in biography, as opposed to history, it is the slight and apparently inconsequential details that give most insight into the true nature of a person (*Alex.* 1.2–3).

Cicero's autobiography in the *Brutus* is presented throughout as being intertwined with the biography of his older contemporary, Quintus Hortensius. This device gives us a particularly clear view of Cicero's conception of literary-historical periodisation. The sense of time and periodisation is crucial in the *Brutus*, which is organised around the clustering of orators into different periods, *aetates*, but it is particularly significant when Cicero is dealing with the relationship between himself and Hortensius. In any single period (*singulis aetatibus*), says Cicero, there are hardly two orators who really stand out: as examples he gives the Gracchi brothers, Antonius and Crassus, then Cotta and Sulpicius, and Hortensius—*nihil dico amplius*: that is, 'Hortensius and me' (333).

From the beginning of his acquaintance with Hortensius, Cicero is intent on bringing out the relationship in time between the two of them. Upon his return to Rome from the East, says Cicero, 'there were then two orators who stood out in such a way as to spur me on with a lust for emulation—Cotta and Hortensius' (*duo tum excellabant oratores qui me imitandi cupiditate incitarent, Cotta et Hortensius*, 317). From the start, Hortensius was the one who really mattered to him, because Cicero was more like Hortensius in the passion of his speaking style, and more connected to him in age (*quod et dicendi ardore eram propior et aetate coniunctior*, 317). As he develops his narrative of his early career development, Cicero very carefully charts out his time relationship with these two great speakers, using the intervals of the *cursus honorum* as his organising principle to capture the spacing intervals between the three of them. His first big cases after his return came in the 'one year' (*unum ... annum*) 'when I was standing for the quaestorship, Cotta for the consulship, and Hortensius for the aedileship' (*cum quaesturam nos, consulatum Cotta, aedilitatem peteret Hortensius*, 318). Cotta now fades out of the picture, and Cicero picks out the trial of Verres as the moment when he and Hortensius had their big showdown: 'in defence of Sicily I entered upon a contest of the highest stakes as aedile designate, with Hortensius as consul designate' (*in patricio Siciliensi maximum in certamen ueni designatus aedilis*

cum designato consule Hortensio, 319). This whole section is a wonderful illustration of the way that the *Lex Villia Annalis* gave Roman politicians an almost spatial sense of their relationship in time to their predecessors, their peers, and their successors—a mentality that is everywhere in the *Brutus*.

Cicero's pairing of himself with Hortensius carries down to the end of their careers as public orators. He sums up Hortensius' career as a process of 'flourishing from the consulship of Crassus and Scaevola (95 BCE) down to the consulship of Paullus and Marcellus (50 BCE)' (*ergo ille a Crasso consule et Scaeuola usque ad Paullum et Marcellum consules floruit*). He then introduces a favourite metaphor, that of chariot-racing, to show that he was on the same lap as Hortensius (*nos in eodem cursu fuimus*) from the dictatorship of Sulla down to the same consuls—at which point 'Hortensius' voice was snuffed out by his own doom, mine by that of the people as a whole' (*sic Q. Hortensi uox extincta fato suo est, nostra publico*, 328: other striking chariot-racing metaphors occur at 173, 307, and 331, the last of which is discussed at the end of the lecture).

Ultimately, this interest in charting the relative ages and periods of important orators in the *Brutus* goes back to Hellenistic scholarship's interest in the ἀκμή and the χρόνος of artistic and literary figures, and their correlation with the magistrates who were the backbone of the various chronological systems. Atticus' *Liber Annalis*, which Cicero generously acknowledges early in the *Brutus* (13–15), will have been an example of this genre, enabling him to provide the kind of detailed chronological periodisation for Roman orators that he had already been able to provide for Greek orators in the *De Oratore*, where he had given a snapshot of the distinctive styles of the various periods (*aetates*) of Greek oratory (2.92–5). But Cicero is certainly going well beyond such Hellenistic prototypes, first of all by reworking this kind of scholarship into an autobiographical framework, and also by giving chronological scholarship genuinely historical power, as he uses it as a backdrop for the major currents of Roman political history, especially the Social War and the first Civil War.

There are a number of connections between Cicero's practice in the *Brutus* and Horace's self-presentation in his literary epistles. In the *Epistle to Florus*, for example, we find an autobiographical passage about Horace's early life, with his philosophical training in university at Athens, the disastrous impact of the civil war, and his eventual discovery of his career as a poet (*Epist.* 2.2.41–52). As Tobias Reinhardt pointed out in

the presentation mentioned in my Acknowledgements, there is a Ciceronian color to the way that Horace's autobiography then modulates into more general literary-critical reflections, which are still at the outset tied in to Horace's own story—the various genres he has worked in, his relationship with his audience (55–64). As mentioned above, Cicero's construction of literary history is also important for Horace's literary history in the *Epistle to Augustus*; here too there are significant Ciceronian currents, especially in the self-presentation as a lonely and misunderstood figure, someone under attack for his aesthetic stances, someone who simply cannot understand the popularity of the models admired by the opposition—the *Attici* in Cicero's case, the *ueteres* in Horace's case. Of course Cicero is not the only model who is present in the *Epistle to Augustus*. Callimachus' *Aetia* prologue is clearly also important as a prototype for this kind of stance, and, as Graziosi (2009) has argued, Horace's self-presentation throughout his work is deeply involved with the traditions of Hellenistic biographies of the canonical Greek poets: as she shows, Horace is presenting himself through this filter, as someone whose future reception is going to be part of a scholarly biographical reading. Still, among all these various influences, Cicero is a figure that matters in this poem.

Cicero's *Brutus* is also important to Ovid, although Cicero is obviously mediated to Ovid through Horace's reception, so that we have the familiar intertextual problem of two-tier allusion: Ovid is working with Cicero, but simultaneously working with the way that Horace had already worked with Cicero. Cicero is in general important to Ovid's exile poetry as a model for how to conduct correspondence from exile, as Nagle (1980) 33–5 and Citroni Marchetti (2000) have shown us, but the *Brutus* is particularly important to Ovid in the two major poems from exile in which he situates his own work within a framework of autobiography and periodisation. Here Ovid capitalises upon the way that Cicero had presented the author's career as taking place against a crowded context of predecessors and peers, embedded in a firm historical context. Ovid's attention to precise chronology and periodisation is much more directly Ciceronian than anything we see in Horace.

Ovid's autobiography in *Tristia* 4.10 starts with his birth, and he carefully locates this event in time. First, *ut tempora noras* ('so that you may know the epoch (χρόνοι)', 5), he gives us the year (43 BCE), *cum cecidit fato consul uterque pari* ('when each consul fell by a like fate', 6); then he gives us the precise day of the month, the second day of the Quinquatria, corresponding to March 20 (13–14). He could have had a senatorial

career, he says (32–5); but his physique and temperament were not up to it (37)—unlike Cicero, who similarly was not fitted by nature for oratory but fixed the problem with years of hard training. Ovid is more of an Isocrates, it seems, backing out of the hurly-burly of public oratory into a more attractive alternative writing career.

At this point Ovid gives a catalogue of the poets he knew, introducing the group by putting himself in a position relative to the greats of his youth, rather as Cicero does in the *Brutus*: *temporis illius colui fouique poetas* ('the poets of that time I cultivated and courted', 41). Two of the poets in the list, Ponticus and Bassus (47), are controversial figures, especially following the bold arguments of Heslin (2011) concerning their fictitious status; but at least we can be confident that, with the possible exception of these two, Ovid is talking in this section about real players, important poets, who are all older than himself. He situates the first individual, Macer, as being from a different generation altogether, *grandior aeuo* (43): Macer is, as it were, the Cotta to Ovid's Cicero. Propertius is the great figure of Ovid's youth, a *sodalis* of his, so he claims (45), and Ovid says that he heard him recite, even though he would have been about fifteen at the time of the appearance of Propertius' first book. Next come Ponticus and Bassus (47), followed by Horace (49–50), then Virgil, whom he 'saw and no more' (*Vergilium uidi tantum*, 51), Tibullus (51–2), and Gallus (53). Ovid is doing what Cicero does in the *Brutus*, picking out the key figures in each period, and he is charting their relationship in time to each other. This is particularly clear when he represents the Latin elegists as a collegial chain of succession: Tibullus 'was successor to you, Gallus, and Propertius to him; I was fourth in the series of time after these' (*successor fuit hic tibi, Galle, Propertius illi; / quartus ab his serie temporis ipse fui*, 53–4). At the end of the poem he returns to the language of periodisation, using *saecula nostra*, 'our era', to denote a broader span of time than *aetas* in order to capture the whole epoch from Macer and Virgil down to his own time (125).

A very striking difference between Cicero and Ovid is that Ovid does not have a peer, as Hortensius had been for Cicero, or even as Virgil and Varius had been for Horace (*Sat.* 1.10.43–5; *Epist.* 2.1.245–7). Rather, Ovid presents himself as a solitary figure between two different cohorts, following up his description of himself as the successor to Propertius with the striking claim: 'As I cultivated older poets so was I cultivated by the younger' (*utque ego maiores, sic me coluere minores*, 55). Ovid represents himself, by implication, as the sole genuinely stand-out figure of his particular *aetas*. In fact, he

manages to give the impression that he was the sole stand-out figure of his *aetas* in two genres: he is the successor to Propertius in the tradition of love poetry, and he is also, much more obliquely, the successor to Virgil in the tradition of epic, as the poet of the *Metamorphoses*. This may seem to be a lot to read into *Vergilium vidi tantum* ('Virgil I saw, and no more', 51)—but these words are meant to conjure up the literary-historical topos discussed above, of the master who is only just glimpsed by his heir.

In *Tristia* 4.10, then, we have an autobiography where periodisation matters a lot, where important predecessors get their due measure, and where the author is slotted into the right kind of relationship in terms of time and influence with his predecessors. And this is, I think, a very Ciceronian view of how to conceive of literary history, a step beyond the informal listing of predecessors in the genre of love elegy that Ovid had earlier written, following on from Propertius' list of an elegiac 'canon' in 2.34.81–90 (Suerbaum (2012) 181–3).

Ovid's other exilic poetic catalogue poem, *Ex Ponto* 4.16, probably his very last composition, may look rather similar to *Tristia* 4.10 on the surface, but it is in fact very different, and deliberately so. First of all, every one of the poets named here is alive, apart from Sabinus, who is explicitly flagged as prematurely dead in lines 15–16 (if 'Varius' is the right reading in line 31, then we are presumably meant to think of the long-dead friend of Horace and Virgil, but I agree with Helzle (1989) that this cannot be the case, and that we should print with *obeli* the transmitted text, 'Varus'). Secondly, instead of canonical and revered figures as in *Tristia* 4.10, here we have, as Tarrant (2002) 31 puts it, a 'throng of nonentities': a small number of them 'qualify for footnotes in modern literary histories of Rome, but most are mere names, known only from their appearance in this poem'. As Helzle (1989) 180 well points out, it is very important that Ovid has 'transformed the standard catalogue of dead predecessors into a catalogue of living contemporaries. The poet, on the contrary, is not alive any more but presents himself as "dead"; —he is 'dead' because he is in exile, as opposed to his earlier life in Rome, *cum uiuis adnumerarer* ('when I was numbered among the living', 4). Ovid, then, is the great 'dead' classic, fulfilling the role of the 'dead predecessor', with all these nonentities still alive, even if not alive and kicking.

This presentation reinforces even more strongly than *Tristia* 4.10 the idea that Ovid is the only significant figure of his age. Ovid presents himself as an isolated figure at the end of his career in rather the same way that Horace does in the *Epistle to Augustus*,

with both poets looking back to Cicero's presentation of himself as an isolated figure at the end of the *Brutus*. Ovid perhaps reinforces this closural Ciceronian atmosphere through his address to Cotta Maximus, when he picks out the young man from the anonymous group of unpublished *iuuenes* as the only one 'whom I would not dare to leave unmentioned among the crowd' (*te tamen in turba non ausim, Cotta, silere*, 41). Among the crowd of unnamed younger people, there appears to be one who deserves mention as possibly having real potential, and this rather reminds me of the way that Cicero addresses Brutus at the end of the dialogue. Here, in the last chariot-racing metaphor of the dialogue, Cicero tells Brutus how saddened he is to see the wreckage of his promising career: Brutus had been driving along amid cheers, as if on a chariot, into the first phase of his career when he had been crashed into sideways by the wretched ill fortune of the republic (*sed in te intuens, Brute, doleo, cuius in adulescentiam per medias laudes quasi quadrigis uehementem transuersa incurrit misera fortuna rei publicae*, 331). Yet, says Cicero, Brutus must keep to his studies, and make sure that he 'rips himself away from that crowd of speakers whom I have crammed into this conversation' (*ut te eripias ex ea quam ego congressi in hunc sermonem turba patronorum*, 332).

Fundamentally, however, this final poem of Ovid is quite distinct from the historical visions of its forerunners. Here we see no chronological order, no pattern, no chain of succession, just a list, of people who do not really matter. There are no meaningful contours to the presentation here, and we may see a link to the general way in which the conventional markers of Roman time become redundant in the exile poetry: as Williams (2002) 356 has well put it, 'the Roman birthday as a marker of time and progress in life is ... redundant in exile, where [Ovid's] existence lacks all positive development and the years merge into each other without meaningful distinction.'

This final poem in Ovid's corpus is a bitter distortion and exaggeration of themes in the literary histories of Horace and Cicero, yet his presentation of his place in Roman literary history in the exile poetry overall owes a great deal both to Horace and to Horace's Cicero. Cicero, Horace and Ovid all end up positioning themselves as isolated and misunderstood figures, last survivors of a Great Generation, the last men standing, living on beyond their time, forced to defend their art against pygmies.

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APPENDIX

A List of Ovid's Literary-historical Lists: cf. Tarrant (2002) 15

Amores 1.15.9–18: great poets of the Greek canon; 19–42: great poets of the Latin canon, culminating in me

Amores 3.9.21–6: poets whose art could not save them from death (cf. Tibullus)

Ars Amatoria 3.321–48: the quasi-magical power of song exemplified by a range of Greek and then Latin poets

Remedia Amoris 361–96: *invidia* attacked all poets, including me, starting with Homer

Remedia Amoris 757–66: Greek and Latin love poets to avoid reading if you don't want to fall prey to love

Tristia 2.362–420: all Greek poetry is really about love; 421–70—and so is a lot of Roman

Tristia 4.10.41–54: the poets of my epoch

Ex Ponto 4.16.5–36: living contemporaries and their various works

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