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STRATEGIES OF TENSION (OVID, *HEROIDES* 4)

For Stefania

*The Amazon's son*

Two things distinguish Phaedra's from the other letters in Ovid's *Heroides*. In the first place, Phaedra's is not a letter without consequences. On the contrary, it will have a decisive effect on the addressee. But above all, Phaedra's letter is important just *as a letter*. The very fact of Phaedra's writing a letter touches a fundamental point in the story, and a *controversial* one. In the *Heroides* problems of communication are important in themselves, but, after the gratuitous letters by Penelope, Phyllis and Briseis, this is the first (and it will remain the only one) in which the complication always caused by an epistolary intrusion into the body of the story is superimposed on a pre-existent problem. Phaedra's declaration of her love to Hippolytus is a crucial point, a turning-point for the various tragic treatments of the history. Ovid adds problem to problem.

But there is a second source of tension. Phaedra is a character who (in literary history) has *already* written a famous letter – the letter by which, in Euripides' second *Hippolytus*, she falsely accuses her stepson, condemning him to death. Now Phaedra writes an elegiac letter, a letter of seduction. The elegy would give rise in any case to a lack of balance and to tension if inserted in a tragic history and in a tragic text (or succession of texts). But in this case we come to grips with a tragic text which contains a tragic *letter*. Phaedra writes and the reader knows that she will write again: an untrue letter, a fatal letter. A tragic future is ironically prefigured not only through the literal realization of elegiac metaphors,<sup>1</sup> or through the anticipation of words from future texts: the acting of writing the letter is itself already an anticipation. Phaedra's (elegiac) letter to Hippolytus is already a forewarning of Phaedra's (tragic) letter to Theseus.

Qua, nisi tu dederis, caritura est ipsa, salutem  
mittit Amazonio Cressa puella uiro.  
perlege, quodcumque est, quid epistula lecta nocebit?  
te quoque in hac aliquid quod iuuat esse potest. (*Her.* 4.1-4)

'What harm can there be in reading a letter?' So Phaedra begins her letter. *quid epistula lecta nocebit?* The reader knows that letters may be very harmful, knows that Phaedra

herself will write a letter doomed to provoke her stepson's death. Theseus will read that letter and Hippolytus will die.<sup>2</sup>

*Qua, nisi tu dederis, caritura est ipsa, salutem* | *mittit Amazonio Cressa puella uiro* (1–2). With this letter, Phaedra sends to Hippolytus her *salus*. The reader cannot help adding: with the other, she will deprive him of *salus*. (And there is something strange about this sending of a *salus*: a real Phaedra, a tragic Phaedra, would have had no *salus* to send, for the famous love-vóσσος precedes the declaration: cf. Eur. *Hipp.* 40, etc.) But Phaedra does not say 'Phaedra' and does not say 'Hippolytus': *mittit Amazonio Cressa puella uiro*. The Cretan maiden to the Amazon's son. It would seem a good way of being on the safe side: there is no incest, I am not really his mother.<sup>3</sup> These words are intended as the new elegiac Phaedra's first weapons of seduction. But in these same words is already inscribed the tragic future: below the discourse of seduction there is another discourse which deconstructs the first. In the word *Amazonio* is already written Hippolytus' refusal. Seneca will explain: *exosus omne feminae nomen fugit*, | *ininitis annos caelibis uitae dicat*, | *conubia uitat*: *genus Amazonum scias* (*Phaedr.* 230–2). Saying *Amazonio* ... *uiro* is paradoxical: the Amazons denied their own sexuality. Hippolytus' Amazon mother will be mentioned further on in the letter: *prima securigeras inter VIRtute puellas* | *te peperit, nati digna VIgoRe parens* (117–18). 'The first among *puellae* in *uirtus*', in 'virility': for the etymology, cf. Varro, *Ling.* 5.73 *uirtus ut uiritus a uirilitate*; Cic. *Tusc.* 2.43 *appellata est ... ex uiro uirtus*. The juxtaposition *uirtute puellas* is paradoxical (just as paradoxical was Phaedra's first lie for the purposes of seduction: *puella uiro*; for she is not a *puella*, Hippolytus is not a *uir*). The Amazon is 'a mother worthy of the vigour of her son'. This is right, but in another sense. It is precisely as a *woman* excelling in *VIgoR* (= *VIRgo*?), namely as one who denies her own sexuality, that she is a mother worthy of her son, who denies his own sexuality.<sup>4</sup> The Amazons deny men; Hippolytus, the Amazon's son, denies women.<sup>5</sup> And unfortunately Phaedra deceives herself when she tries to activate the erotic nuances of Hippolytus' *uigor*.<sup>6</sup>

In the programmatic use of the designation 'the Amazon's son', Ovid reveals himself to be an attentive reader of Euripides. Ovid's Phaedra calls Hippolytus 'the Amazon's son' the first time she addresses him in the first distich of the letter. In Euripides's *Hippolytus*, when Phaedra reveals her beloved's identity to the nurse, she also calls him 'the Amazon's son' (351): ὅστις ποθ' οὐτός ἐσθ', ὁ τῆς Ἀμαζόνος, 'That one there, whosoever he is – the Amazon's son', a line which says a great deal about Hippolytus's sexual ambiguity.<sup>7</sup> (The Amazon is not named, just as she was not named in the *Hippolytus*. In Ovid this is a puzzle for the reader: what was the name of Hippolytus' mother? Antiope? Hippolyte? Melanippe?)<sup>8</sup> And in the same way Hippolytus is also named Ἀμαζόνος τόκος the first time he is mentioned in the tragedy, by Aphrodite in line 10.

But *Cressa puella* is also ominous. And the sinister omen inhabits the space between elegy and tragedy. The incongruity of *puella* as applied to Phaedra has already been noted.<sup>9</sup> But *puella* is an index of the elegiac code (and appropriately found in the

pentameter). It is incongruous. The fact that the *puella* is called *Cressa* underlines the incongruity. *Cressa* recalls two things. As *Amazonius* foreshadowed the failure of Phaedra's attempt, so *Cressa* signifies Phaedra's tragic Cretan heritage, the curse, the terrible love-affairs. When everything has been revealed, and only then, will the Chorus call Phaedra ὁ τάλαινα παῖ Κρησία (*Hipp.* 372).<sup>10</sup> But if in line 3 there is a hint at the false letter which will provoke Hippolytus' death, it is difficult to resist the implication that the epithet *Cressa* has also another meaning: Cretans were liars: Κρητὲς ἀεὶ ψεύσται.<sup>11</sup> Phaedra's other letter, the false one, makes its presence felt: Eur. *Hipp.* 1311 ψευδεῖς γραφὰς ἔγραψε (cf. 1288 ψεύδοι μύθοις). The present letter is also false: Phaedra's elegiacity is a lie, *puella* is a lie, a misleading signal. Elegy in the *Heroides* can only mislead: it changes everything, but it does not actually change anything.

Not even the invitation to *perlegere* the letter is neutral: *perlege*, 'read it until the end' (3). Unlike those by Penelope, Phyllis, Briseis, Phaedra's letter is certain to reach its addressee and to influence him. However, her letter is no more likely than those others actually to be read, and certainly no more likely to be read *all the way through*. The first appeal to Hippolytus is already destined to remain unheeded. The reader knows that Hippolytus will *not* read the letter all the way through. For Hippolytus' throwing away Phaedra's letter, see Ausonius, *Cupido cruciatus* 32 *respicit abiectas desperans Phaedra tabellas*; and see Caenus' similar behaviour in *Met.* 9.574–5 *attonitus subita iuuenis Maeandrius ira* | *proicit acceptas lecta sibi parte tabellas* (Byblis' letter is modelled on Phaedra's). In the visual arts Hippolytus is seen throwing away the letter which the nurse had given him.<sup>12</sup> A large part of the letter is read exclusively by the Ovidian reader. (Thus, I think it is suitable to retain a form of *perlegere* in the last distich of the letter too: I read, with some *recentiores* and Bentley, *uerba precantis* | *perlege*, *sed* [perlegis et codd.] *lacrimas finge uidere meas* in 176: 'read until the end my suppliant's words, but my tears, you have to imagine them'.<sup>13</sup> Phaedra's trust is highly ironical: Hippolytus will never reach this point of the letter. As regards the invitation to 'imagine' the tears, I cannot resist the implication that, as a matter of fact, Hippolytus would have to *see* the tears, not to imagine them: at least, he would have to see the stains made by the tears: cf. *Her.* 3.3–4 *quascumque aspicias, lacrimae fecere lituras*; | *sed tamen et lacrimae pondera uocis habent*, modelled on Prop. 4.3.3–4 *siqua tamen tibi lecturo pars oblita derit* | *haec erit e lacrimis facta litura meis* (cf. the variation on the theme in Canace's epistle: 11.1–2). For the reader of the *Heroides*, line 176 must imply that Phaedra does *not* weep at all: as is appropriate for the most 'elegiac' and shallowest of Ovid's heroines.)

#### *Problems of communication*

ter tecum conata loqui, ter inutilis haesit  
lingua, ter in primo destitit ore sonus.  
qua licet et †sequitur†, pudor est miscendus amori;

dicere quae puduit scribere iussit Amor: 10  
 quidquid Amor iussit, non est contemnere tutum;  
 regnat et in dominos ius habet ille deos.  
 ille mihi primo dubitanti scribere dixit:  
 'scribe! dabit uictas ferreus ille manus.'  
 adsit et, ut nostras audivo fouet igne medullas, 15  
 figat sic animos in mea uota tuos. (7-16)

The Ovidian Phaedra's three attempts correspond to the three attempts of the Euripidean Phaedra, in *Hipp.* 391-402, namely: (a) an attempt to keep silent, 'for none may trust the tongue which knows how to correct the rebel thoughts of other men, yet harbours countless evils of its own' (395-7); (b) (τὸ δεύτερον) an attempt to master her passion by self-control; and (c) (τρίτον) an attempt to die. In Euripides, the three attempts are attempts not to communicate. In Ovid, on the other hand, they are three attempts to communicate (but see 151-2 *et pugnare diu nec me summittere culpa* | *certa fui - certi siquid haberet amor*). The first attempt recalled by the tragic Phaedra, that to keep silent, might arouse suspicions of metaliterarity. There was a 'biographical' history of Phaedra, but there was also a literary history. Phaedra's attempts, in her personal past, not to communicate her passion to Hippolytus might interfere with the attempts to *make Phaedra communicate* her passion in the past of the literary history. Not only Phaedra, but the second *Hippolytus* too has a past: the *Kaluptomenos* had been precisely an attempt *not to remain silent* about Phaedra's passion: and it failed.

Did Ovid read Euripides in this way? Phaedra at first tries to communicate by word of mouth. The attempt fails. Then comes the letter. *qua licet et sequitur, pudor est miscendus amor*; | *dicere quae puduit, scribere iussit Amor* (9-10). After the *Kaluptomenos*, the *Stephanias*. Euripides has to revise the story, just as Phaedra has to revise her strategy. The insistence on the theme of αἰδώς in the *Hippolytus Stephanias* might also arouse suspicions of metaliterarity: the first mode of communication was shameful. Thus Euripides gives it up, and Phaedra does too. Phaedra's repeated attempts translate Euripides' repeated attempts into personal drama: speaking was scandalous, *pudor est miscendus amor*.

What we are dealing with is a double history of procedures of communication. Perhaps we can also see things in a slightly different light. In her own personal history, the Ovidian Phaedra has behind her three attempts at communicating. But the Ovidian *Phaedra Hippolyto* also has three important precedents, in literary history: three tragedies, two by Euripides, one by Sophocles. To these is now added the elegy. Actually we have only the second *Hippolytus*. And the second *Hippolytus* followed an attempt to make Phaedra communicate by word of mouth, directly to Hippolytus. The elegiac letter comes as fourth attempt and fourth version, but at the same time it takes the place of the second *Hippolytus*. The means of communication in the second *Hippolytus*, the nurse, is absorbed by Phaedra herself as a function of her new elegiac competence.<sup>14</sup>

But the prologue is the elegiac version of the prologue of *Hippolytus*. In his elegiac rewritings of tragedies, Ovid usually places, at the beginning of his letters, the reworked prologues to the tragedies which form his model-text. Thus, in the ninth epistle, that by Deianira, lines 27-46 contain the rewritten prologue to the *Trachiniae*; in line 9 of the twelfth epistle the reader's expectations are satisfied by the appropriate allusion to the well-known incipit: *ei mihi! cur unquam iuuenalibus acta lacertis* | *Phrixeam petiit Pelias arbor ouem?* Phaedra's elegiac letter is an elegiac version of (at least) one tragedy. We said that line 3 (*quid epistula lecta nocebit?*) soon reminds the reader of the tragic denouement of the story: it is a letter by Phaedra which will provoke Hippolytus' death. At the same time the verse highlights the incompatibility between the two worlds: an elegiac letter has never provoked anybody's death, but *tragic* letters are dangerous. The point is that even when the expressive code is changed the story does not change: Phaedra will die, Hippolytus will die. The lightness of elegy in this as well as in the other *Heroides* is only apparent, illusory. The prologue in which *Amor* inspires Phaedra to write the letter is the elegiac transformation of the divine prologue of the *Hippolytus*, where Aphrodite announces that she will avenge herself on Hippolytus, and that Phaedra will be the instrument of her revenge. The important thing in the prologue of the *Hippolytus* is Aphrodite's decision to make Phaedra write the accusatory letter: 41-2 ἀλλ' οὐτι ταύτη τόνδ' ἔρωτα χρὴ πεσεῖν, | δείξω δὲ Θησεί πρᾶγμα, κάκφανήσεται. The *Amor* of the 'prologue' of the fourth *Heroides* is not only the elegiac transposition of the power of love. Behind the distorting filter of elegiac language the reader recognizes the prefiguration of the 'tragic' end of the story: there is indeed a god behind the story, who inspires Phaedra. The prologue of the epistle is not only written in elegiac style: it is an openly programmatic and metaliterary prologue. We seem to have travelled as far away as possible from the tragic world. The generic transformation is clearly exhibited. *scribere iussit Amor*: the reader cannot help thinking of Prop. 2.13A.1-4, or of the programmatic introductory poem to the second book of the *Amores*: *hoc quoque composui Paelignis natus aquis* | *ille ego nequitiae Naso poeta meae*; | *hoc quoque iussit Amor* (Am. 2.1.1-3), or of *Ars* 3.41-2 *me Cytherea docere* | *iussit*.

But Aphrodite will also inspire the writing of the fatal letter. Indeed, the whole story is directed by Aphrodite and set in motion by her desire to avenge herself on Hippolytus. Thus, the reader cannot help thinking that this letter is also part of the goddess's vindictive plan. *scribere iussit Amor*. But it is Aphrodite, not *Amor*, who does the ordering here. Phaedra writes: *quidquid Amor iussit non est contemnere tutum* (11). It is highly ironical that she should refer these words to herself: 'It is dangerous to scorn *Amor*'s orders'; and so, in order to avoid the danger, Phaedra writes. However, it is Hippolytus, and not Phaedra, who has scorned the orders of *Amor*/Aphrodite, and through the writing of this letter the danger is not avoided, but actually brought about. *regnat et in dominos ius habet ille* [sc. *Amor*] *deos* (12): the abused elegiac *topos* conceals the threat expressed in more precise words: πολλή μὲν ἐν βροτοῖσι κοῦκ ἀνώνυμος | θεὰ κέκλημαι Κύπρις, κτλ. (1-2).

*A catalogue: unhappy ends, incest and murderous mothers*

|                                                                                            |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| clarus erat siluis Cephalus multaeque per herbas<br>conconsiderant illo percutiente ferae; |     |
| nec tamen Aurorae male se praebebat amandum;                                               | 95  |
| ibat ad hunc sapiens a sene diua uiro.                                                     |     |
| saepe sub ilicibus Venerem Cinyraque creatum<br>sustinuit positos quaelibet herba duos.    |     |
| arsit et Oenides in Maenalia Atalanta;                                                     |     |
| illa ferae spoliū pignus amoris habet.                                                     | 100 |
| nos quoque quam primum turba numeremus in ista;                                            |     |
| si Venerem tollas, rustica silua tua est. (93–102)                                         |     |

This is an adaptation of Eur. *Hipp.* 451ff. ὅσοι μὲν οὖν γραφάς τε τῶν παλαιτέρων ἔχουσιν αὐτοὶ τ' εἰσὶν ἐν μουσαῖς ἀεὶ Ἰῶσαι μὲν Ζεὺς ὥς ποτ' ἐράσθη γάμων ἢ Σεμέλης, Ἰῶσαι δ' ὥς ἀνήρπασέν ποτε ἢ καλλιφεγγίης Κέφαλον ἐς θεοῦς Ἥως ἔρωτος οὐνεκ' ἀλλ' ὅμως ἐν οὐρανῶι ναίουσι καὶ φεύγουσιν ἐκποδῶν θεοῦς, ἵστέργουσι δ' οἶμαι, ξυμποροῦν νικώμενοι.<sup>15</sup> 'The gods too are subject to love', said the nurse. The examples she gives are those of Zeus and Semele, and of Aurora and Cephalus. Ovid's Phaedra takes up the function of Euripides' nurse, in the style of the elegiac *lena*.<sup>16</sup> Just as the nurse tries to convince Phaedra, Phaedra tries to convince Hippolytus. But the modalities of the adaptation are of considerable interest. We have here an instructive example of Ovid's reading of a text. The *exemplum* of Cephalus was particularly appropriate, because he is a hunter. I do not know if this was of interest to Euripides; I am inclined to think it was not. Ovid, on the other hand, was very much interested. Thus, in the elegiac epistle it is not the gods who fall in love, but the hunters. However, in Euripides the *exempla* are also particularly inappropriate, because the first story (that of Zeus and Semele) has an unhappy end: the lover provokes the death of the beloved, just as Phaedra will provoke the death of Hippolytus. Was this of interest to Euripides? Very likely: see 555ff., where the Chorus explains Aphrodite's power, telling how the goddess joined Semele in marriage 'with a flame-enfolded thunderbolt, and put her to sleep in a doom of death'. (But Ovid thinks the example of Zeus more appropriate in another context: the theme of the permission of incest: see 133–4 *Iuppiter esse pium statuit quodcumque iuuaret*,<sup>17</sup> *et fas omne facit fratre marita soror*, which is anticipated in 35 *si mihi concedat Iuno fratremque uirumque*.) And the story of Cephalus (not that of his affair with Aurora, but of his marriage with Procris) also ends unhappily. Here too a hunter provokes the death of his beloved. This was of no interest to Euripides; but Ovid, on the other hand, was sufficiently perverse a reader to recognize the element of inappropriateness in the *exemplum* of Cephalus. Euripides does not mention Procris. Nor does Ovid, seemingly. The distich 93–4 seems to signify only that Cephalus was a hunter. Actually it says something more: *clarus erat siluis*

*Cephalus multaeque per herbas* | *conconsiderant illo percutiente ferae*. First of all, a remark about *clarus*. In Euripides it is Aurora who is *clara*, though in another sense: *Hipp.* 455 ἡ καλλιφεγγίης ... 'Εως.<sup>18</sup> Ovid's rewriting of the story very appropriately begins with the *transference* of this epithet: the same thing, but in another sense. But why does Ovid specify that *many* wild beasts were killed by Cephalus? The reader knows that not only many, but *too* many 'beasts' were killed by Cephalus, as among his victims was his beloved, Procris. Even the words *per herbas* are not fortuitous: Procris had hidden *behind a bush*: owing to this shelter she was mistaken for a beast (see *Ars* 3.731ff.).<sup>19</sup> Thus, the reader will remember that in Hades Phaedra will be near Procris: Φαίδραν τε Πρόκριν τε ἴδον ... (Hom. *Od.* 11.321).

That of Venus and Adonis is another story without a happy ending. Here the hunter dies (killed by a boar: Phaedra's undervaluation of *obliquo dente timendus aper*, 104, a few lines farther on is rash indeed). But this is not all: *Hipp.* 1420–2 (Artemis is speaking) ἐγὼ γάρ αὐτῆς ἄλλον ἐξ ἐμῆς χερσὶς ἢ ὅς ἂν μάλιστα φίλτατος κυρῆι βροτῶν ἢ τόξοις ἀφύκτοις τοῖσδε τιμωρήσομαι. The reference to Adonis' death was already pointed out in the scholia; Adonis' killing by Artemis is attested in mythography.<sup>20</sup> The story of Venus and Adonis ends tragically, but the cause of the tragedy is Hippolytus' death itself (chronologically antecedent? – at all events 'subsequent' within the continuum of the model-text). Venus is the direct cause of Hippolytus' death, but for this very reason she will also be the cause of Adonis' death. But in actual fact Phaedra's intention is another. *Cinyra ... creatum*: 'Cinyra's son'. And the mother? The reference is more detailed in *Ibis* 563–4 *auo genitore creatus, | per facinus soror est cui sua facta parens*. Phaedra ironically selects not only a hunter, but one born of an incestuous relationship between father and daughter.<sup>21</sup>

Playing with patronymics is dangerous for a heroine of the *Heroides* (it is not advisable to try to compete with Ovid). *arsit et Oenides* ... 'Cinyra's son, but remember the mother', suggests Phaedra. But then we may now ask: "'Oeneus' son"? And the mother? We thus come to the third *exemplum*: *nos quoque quam primum turba numeremus in ista!* (101). They are indeed to be included soon in that list, for Meleager was the son of Oeneus – and of Althaea, and was killed by his mother. *arsit et Oenides in Maenalia Atalanta*, of course.<sup>22</sup> Phaedra wishes Hippolytus to burn in love for her, just as Meleager did for Atalanta. It is a pity that in his case the prefiguration works only as far as regards the second sense of *arsit*: he will be destroyed by his mother, just like Meleager. Moreover not only is the son killed by his mother, but the hunter is killed by his beloved: Atalanta *ferae spoliū pignus amoris habet* (102). The fact that Atalanta receives the *spoliū* of the boar is the proof of his metaphorical burning, but also the cause of his literal burning (see *Met.* 8.425ff.). And the series Cephalus–Adonis–Meleager should consist in 'devotees of Diana who do not refuse love'. But as far as regards Meleager, Diana herself was the cause of his death: the beast of line 100 is the Calydonian boar sent by Diana as a punishment for Oeneus' sin (*Met.* 8.273ff.).

*Mythological byways*

Why does Phaedra mention Hippolytus' Amazon mother in 117–18? Because Theseus has killed her: Theseus has offended Phaedra by killing her brother (the Minotaur) and deserting her sister, Ariadne (113–16). But Theseus has also offended his son Hippolytus by killing the Amazon: *si quaeras ubi sit, Theseus latus ense peregit*. Now, if Phaedra is so well-informed about the Amazons and about the story of Antiope/Hippolyte/Melanippe, she will also know what the informed reader knows, namely, when and why the Amazon was killed: the Amazon was killed when and because Theseus married Phaedra. Thus, the offence was Theseus', but Phaedra too played an important part in the affair.<sup>23</sup>

This, at least, according to some well-attested versions. But everybody knows of Ovid's interest in mythological byways. When, after having mentioned the Amazon in 117–18, Phaedra starts speaking about her killing, she begins with *si quaeras ubi sit*, 'If you ask where she is – Theseus has killed her'. This first hemistich arouses the impression that a mythological dissertation is about to begin: where are the Amazons? This is a complex matter: in Asia Minor? In the Caucasus? In Thracia? In Africa? But equally problematic are the current whereabouts of Hippolytus' later mother: a tomb of Antiope was shown both at Athens and at Megara.<sup>24</sup>

This is not the only place in the *Heroides* in which Ovid plays on the ambiguity of the form 'if you ask me ...', whose frequent recurrence in the *Fasti* is no accident. Two examples. In *Her.* 5.127–8 Oenone, in her rage against Helen, remembers that the adulteress had already been abducted by Theseus: *illam de patria Theseus, nisi nomine fallor, I nescioquis Theseus abstulit ante tua*. And she goes on: *a iuvene et cupido credatur reddita uirgo? I unde ego compererim tam bene quaeris?* (5.129–30). This is a good point: how can Oenone know that Theseus did not restore Helen a virgin? What is her source of information? Or better, where did she read this? For this was an extremely controversial question. Some maintained that of the intercourse between Theseus and Helen was born Iphigencia.<sup>25</sup> The question is twofold: one asked by Oenone of her addressee; and one by Ovid of his reader ('Reader, do you want to know where you can read how Helen was not restored a virgin?'). Only Paris gets an answer: *amo!* (5.130). Let the reader look in the library. (It is curious that it should be the uninformed Oenone who hints at the possibility of a more detailed exploration of the myth – and immediately after having said that she did not know who this Theseus was: *Theseus, nisi nomine fallor, I nescioquis Theseus ...*)<sup>26</sup>

In *Her.* 7.83–4 Dido says: *si quaeras ubi sit formosi mater Iuli – I occidit a duro sola relicta uiro*. Where is Creusa? She is dead, because the hard-hearted Aeneas has deserted her. *haec mihi narraras, at me mouere* (85). Aeneas told her about the story, in *Aeneid* 2.634–794 and, being in love, she believed him (Creusa's actual fate is in any case somewhat uncertain). Now Dido recollects Aeneas' account and sees things in a different light. But it is not only a matter of her changed feelings. Dido gives quite a different version of Creusa's disappearance, one unfavourable to Aeneas (at least

with regard to the aspect of the story which interests Dido). But such a version already existed, and indeed was older than Virgil. According to this version, Aeneas left burning Troy with his father and with the images of the Penates, *παρώσας καὶ δάμαρτα καὶ τέκνα I καὶ πτῆσιν ἄλλην*, 'abandoning his wife, his sons and all other precious thing' (Lycophron, *Alexandra* 1263–4).<sup>27</sup> This attitude towards Aeneas' credibility may raise some doubts, if we think that, after all, we know no more than Dido about Aeneas' actions during the last night of Troy. Perhaps Aeneas has deceived us as well as Dido.

A further example may be given from *Ars* 3.37–8: *quaere, Nouem cur una Viae dicatur, et audi I depositis siluas Phyllida flesse comis*. Ovid is writing a catalogue of heroines in love who came to a bad end: Medea, Ariadne, Phyllis, Dido. Now, this is not only a catalogue of heroines, it is also a catalogue of *Heroides* (42 *defuit ars uobis*, but also: *defuit 'Ars' uobis*). Hence the hypothesis that in *Ars* 3.37–8 someone might ask about the *aition* of the 'Nine Ways' becomes somewhat more interesting. The reader of *Heroides* 2, Phyllis to Demophoon, after having reached the end of the epistle, wonders above all why Ovid has made no allusion either to the *aition* of the 'Nine Ways', or to the *aition* of the name 'Phyllis'. (And I think that the topos about the different ways of committing suicide in *Her.* 2.139–44, towards the end of the epistle, aims at arousing the reader's impatience: the really interesting thing is what happens *after* the suicide, not the way it is performed.) The first question is left mischievously unanswered. Curiosity with regard to the second is further increased by means of the attractiveness of the oblique allusion (*depositis siluas ... comis*, φύλλα, etc.).

*Genealogies*

The fourth epistle ends with a long entreaty. From 149 Phaedra ceases to use persuasion and begins to implore (*non ego dedignor supplex humilisque precari ...*). In 157–67 she recalls the nobility of her descent: 161–2 *miserere priorum I et mihi si non uis parcere, parce meis!* – actually not a very strong argument. Phaedra mentions one after another Minos, Jupiter and the Sun (157–60). She recalls Crete (163–4). Finally, she draws a parallel between herself and her mother Pasiphae (165–7; in *Met.* 15.500 Hippolytus means to insult her when he says: *me Pasiphaeia quondam I temptatum frustra patrum temerare cubile*).

Phaedra recalls the nobility of her descent; but actually she had already made a genealogical digression, in order to explain the origin of her unhappy love:

forsitan hunc generis fato reddamus amorem  
et Venus ex tota gente tributa petat.  
Iuppiter Europen – prima est ea gentis origo –  
dilexit tauro dissimulante deum.  
Pasiphae mater decepto subdita tauro

enixa est utero crimen onusque suo.  
 perfidus Aegides ducentia fila secutus  
 curua meae fugit tecta sororis ope.  
 en ego nunc, ne forte parum Minoia credar,  
 in socias leges ultima gentis eo. (53–62)

This is a rewriting of Eur. *Hipp.* 337–9 Phaedra: ὦ τλήμιον, οἶον, μήτηρ, ἡράσθης ἔρον. | Nurse: ὃν ἔσχε τάυρου; τέκνον ἢ τί φῆς τόδε; | Ph.: σὺ τ', ὦ τάλαιν' ὅμαιμε. Διονύσου δάμιαρ. | N.: τέκνον, τί πάσχεις; συγγόνους κακορροθεῖς; | Ph.: τρίτη δ' ἐγὼ δύστηνος ὡς ἀπόλλυμαι. | N.: ἔκ τοι πέπληγμαι· ποῖ προβήσεται λόγος; | Ph.: ἐκεῖθεν ἡμεῖς, οὐ νεωστί, δυστυχεῖς. *forsitan* (53): the caution of Ovid's Phaedra is appropriate, because this was not the real cause of Phaedra's love; and it is not from Phaedra's *gens* that Venus/Aphrodite exacts the payment of a tribute. Besides, in Euripides Phaedra does not speak rationally: it is Ovid who interprets and reorders her words (perhaps contrasting the curse hypothesized by Phaedra with the curse that Theseus thinks hangs over his ancestry in *Hipp.* 817ff.; 830ff.: did Ovid see a tension already present in Euripides?). Euripides' Phaedra recalls her mother Pasiphae, and her sister Ariadne. But in Ovid we have: *Iuppiter Europen – prima est ea gentis origo*: the parenthetic clause is a correction of *Hippolytus*, 'cursed loves actually begin with Europe, not with Pasiphae' (and is set against *Hipp.* 341 τρίτη δ' ἐγὼ ...). This is another good example of Ovid's way of reading a text. The distichs 53–4 and 55–6 are carefully linked by means of the bull: Jupiter deceived Europa by disguising himself as a bull (*tauro dissimulante deum*); Pasiphae deceived the bull by disguising herself as a heifer (*decepto ... tauro* – and Hippolytus will of course be killed by a bull). And Ariadne, we might add, deceived her father and her country only in order to be deceived by Theseus. Deceit is the unifying element in these Cretan stories, which, very appropriately, are stories of lies. Phaedra's story fits very well into this series.

But let us return to the second genealogical catalogue, that in which Phaedra boasts of her nobility. *quod mihi sit genitor, qui possidet aequora, Minos ...* (157). However, her being the daughter of Minos has already been mentioned, as a negative factor of her ancestry: *ne forte parum Minoia credar* (61). I do not think this is a good way of beginning (does Ovid allude to tensions which were already in Euripides? How did Ovid read *Hipp.* 719 οὐ γάρ ποτ' αἰσχυνῶ γε Κρησίου δόμους, or 752ff. after 337ff.?). Moreover, it was surely not politic to remind an Athenian of Minos' thalassocracy. But above all, the reader knows that another master of the sea, Neptune, is to have a much more important role in the course of events. Thus, at the beginning of the *Hippolytus* Artemis says: 'and the father will kill the young enemy by means of the three curses that he was presented by Poseidon, ὁ πόντιος ἀνάξ' (43–5; compare e.g. Theseus' invocation in Sen. *Phaedr.* 945 *en perage donum triste, regnator freti!*). To begin a section with *qui possidet aequora* and to close it with *eris tauro saeuior ipse truci?* (166)<sup>28</sup> is perhaps not a matter of chance in a letter whose addressee is to die

killed by a bull sent by the master of the sea. Similarly, it seems significant that in *Hipp.* 415 Phaedra (cf. the nurse in 522) calls Aphrodite ὡ δέσποινα ποντία Κύπρι. See also 447–8 (the nurse) ἐστὶ δ' ἐν θαλασσίοις | κλύδωνι Κύπρις. But for the exploitation of the irony potentially present in the theme of the sea in *Hippolytus*, cf. 304–5 (the nurse to the Chorus): 'Women, we toil and spend our strength in vain, and are still as far as ever: she was unmoved by my words then, nor does she heed them now. ἀλλ' ἴσθι μέντοι, πρὸς τὰδ' αὐθαδεστέρα | γίγνου θαλάσσης ...'. Barrett comments: αὐθάδης, 'of one who does what he wants himself and ignores the advice or appeals of others ... The sea notoriously takes no notice of what you say to it; so E. *Pr.* 1001, E. *Med.* 28f., An. 538 (cf. *Il.* 16, 34).' There is tragic irony in this: Hippolytus finally dies precisely because the sea (Poseidon) *does* take notice of what Theseus says to it.

Phaedra's second ancestor: the Sun. But the Sun had been the very cause of Venus' hatred of Phaedra's family: he had seen and revealed the goddess' illicit affair with Mars (Hyg. *Fab.* 148 *Soli autem Venus ob indicium ad progeniem eius semper fuit inimica*; Serv. *Ecl.* 6.47). *radiis frontem uallatus acutis*, the sharp rays remind us of the (inopportune) sharp sight of the god. Hence the hypothesis made by Phaedra in 139 *uiderit amplexos aliquis: laudabimur ambo* acquires added meaning. For if it is natural for a descendant of the Sun to conceive of such a possibility, she should have known that actually things are not so simple. The whole section on Phaedra's optimistic unconcern about being seen together with Hippolytus (lines 139–46) is a reversal (written in elegiac terms) of the fear expressed by Euripides' Phaedra in *Hipp.* 413–30. Compare the theme of darkness and of the house (dangerous in Euripides, innocuous in Ovid) in 417 (unfaithful women) οὐδὲ σκότον φρίσσουσι τὸν ξυνεργάτην | τέραμνά τ' οἴκων μὴ ποτε φθογγὴν ἀφῆι; with *Her.* 4.141ff. *non tibi per tenebras duri reseranda mariti | ianua ... | ut tenuit domus una duos, domus una tenebit ...* (in favour). Or compare the theme of being seen in 430 παρ' οἷσι [the evils] μήποτ' ὀφθελὴν ἐγὼ with 139 *uiderit amplexos aliquis: laudabimur ambo*; 145–6 *tutus eris mecum laudemque merebere culpa, | tu licet in lecto conspiciare meo* (Phaedra's illusory optimism derives from elegy: cf. Tib. 1.2.57–8 *ille [Delia's husband] nihil poterit de nobis credere cuiquam, | non sibi, si in molli uiderit ipse toro*).

The catalogue of Phaedra's noble ancestors, intended to move Hippolytus (*miserere priorem!*), opens then with Minos, who closed the catalogue of the cursed ancestry. It closes with the Sun, who was the source of the curse. And it comprises Jupiter, who was the first instrument of the curse.

In summing up, Phaedra invokes her Cretan origin: *est mihi dotalis tellus, Iouis insula, Crete; | seruiat Hippolyto regia tota meo*. I think that the possibility that the whole Minoan palace should submit itself to Hippolytus (an Athenian and Theseus' son!) is rather remote: Cretan insincerity once again? Indeed, the question whether Crete was or was not *Iouis insula* was precisely the point at issue in Call. *Hymn.* 1 (a possibility excluded by Zeus by means of his Κρητες ἀεὶ ψεύσται).<sup>29</sup>

And so we come to the final entreaty. In the name of Venus! *per Venerem parcas, oro, quae plurima mecum est*, 'who is with me in all her power' (167). It is really Venus who is making Phaedra write this letter – precisely in order to obtain Hippolytus' refusal (the adverse voice which disrupts Phaedra's discourse may also be considered a divine voice ...), as well as to make Phaedra write the other letter, the really important one. *sic nunquam, quae te spernere possit, ames*: this wish is closely echoed in the fatal letter: 'Hippolytus has tried to seduce me and I have repelled him' (cf. Hippolytus/Virbius in *Met.* 15.502ff. *quod uoluit, uoluisse infelix crimine uerso* | ... | *dammavit*). Likewise, Phaedra's words in 28 were full of dramatic irony: *et pariter nostrum fiet uterque nocens*. Too true: Hippolytus will be charged with having attempted to seduce Phaedra, as well as vice versa.

The letter ends with a threefold wish for good hunting, followed by the final distich. One obvious irony is that, thanks to this letter, Hippolytus will hunt no more (and anyway it seems rather unlikely that Hippolytus should be interested in such hypersexual gods as the Satyrs and the Pans of line 171). *sic tibi dent nymphae, quamuis odisse puellas | diceris, arentem quae leuet unda sitim!* (173–4). *quamuis odisse puellas*: Phaedra still flatters herself; and in her delusion reuses a famous Propertian clausula (1.1.5). 'They say' of Hippolytus the same words Propertius had said of himself; a hope, perhaps. But the reader knows better: *CASTAS odisse puellas* is something irremediably different from Hippolytus' misogyny.

SCUOLA NORMALE SUPERIORE, PISA

SERGIO CASALI

## NOTES

1. For the ironic prefiguration realized through the use by the heroine of elegiac metaphorical expressions destined to find a literal (and tragic) fulfilment both in the future of the story and in the continuation of the model-text, see S. Casali, 'Enone, Apollo pastore e l'amore immedicabile', *MD* 28 (1992) 85ff.; 'Tragic irony in Ovid, *Heroides* 9 and 11', *CQ* n.s. 45 (1995), forthcoming, and P. Ovidii Nasonis *Heroidum Epistula IX: Deianira Herculi*, edited by S. Casali (Florence 1995) via the index s.v. *prefigurazione ironica*.

2. See H. Jacobson, *Ovid's Heroides* (Princeton 1974) 176. See also A. Barchiesi, 'Riflessivo e futuro. Due modi di allusione nella poesia ellenistica e augustea', *Aevum Antiquum* 5 (1992) 211–12.

3. Cf. Jacobson (n. 2) 147; G. Rosati, 'Forma elegiaca di un simbolo letterario: la Fedra di Ovidio', in *Atti delle giornate di studio su Fedra* (Torino 1985) 115.

4. For the grid of relationships between *VIGOR* and *VIRGO*, see R. Maltby, *A lexicon of ancient Latin etymologies* (Leeds 1991) s.v. 'vir', 'virago', 'virgo', 'virtus', 'vis'. For the paradoxical paronomastical combination *uir/uirgo*, cf. e.g. Verg. *Aen.* 1.493 *audetque VIRis concurrere VIRgo*; 11.676–7 *quotque emissa manu contorsit spicula VIRgo*; 11.678 *Phrygii cecidere VIRi*; Ov. *Am.* 3.12.28 *ambiguae captos VIRginis ore VIRos*; *Her.* 6.133 *Iupiter illa VIRum cognovit adultera VIRgo*; 21.116; *Met.* 4.681–2; 13.740; *Fast.* 5.621. Particularly paradoxical is *Ars* 3.23 *ipsa quoque et cultu et nomine femina Virtus*.

5. On the androgyny of the Amazons (ἀνδρῶν ἐκείνων ever since Hom. *Il.* 3.189, 6.186 and ἀνδρῶν ἐκείνων ever since Aesch. *Prom.* 724) there exists a vast literature. See especially W. Blake Tyrrell, *Amazons. A study in Athenian mythmaking* (Baltimore and London 1984) 76–85 ('liminality' of the Amazons, and esp. 84–5 on Hippolytus' 'liminality') and 88–112 (89: 'They are hybrids, androgynous monsters, neither male, nor female').

6. Thus I see an element of wishful sexual allusion e.g. in 73 *rigidum*; 77 *rigor*; 85 *duritiam*. Similar illusions, destined also to be frustrated, may be seen in 75–6 *sint procul a nobis imenes ut femina comiti*; 1 *fine coli modico forma uiriliter amat*. Cf. Jacobson (n. 2) 150 'The obviously erotic symbolism at 91f., *arcus* (et arma tuae tibi sunt imitanda Dianae) | *si nunquam cesses tendere, mollis erit*, is a humorously witty counterpoint to the character of Hippolytus.'

7. Cf. G. Devereux, *The character of the Euripidean Hippolytus: an ethno-psychanalytical study* (Chico, California 1985) esp. 28–32.

8. As to Hippolytus' mother, see W. S. Barrett, *Euripides: Hippolytus* (Oxford 1964) 8–9. Antiope: Hyg. *Fab.* 30; 241; 250; Sen. *Phaedr.* 227; 927–9; Plut. *Thes.* 26; 28; Diod. 4.28; Paus. 1.2.1; 1.41.7; Tz. ad Lycophr. 1329. Hippolyte: Stesich. *PMG* fr. 193.25–6 Page; *Argum.* Eur. *Hipp.*; Clidemus and Simonides (ap. Plut. *Thes.* 27; [Apollod.] *Epit.* 1.16); Isocr. *O.* 12.193. Melanippe: 'someone' ap. [Apollod.] *Epit.* 1.16.

9. E.-A. Kirlf is on the wrong track when he gives examples of *puella* referring to married women (*Untersuchungen zur Briefform der Heroides Ovids* (Bern/Stuttgart 1969) 93). Jacobson's is a better approach: see (n. 2) 147 n. 13. For *puella* as a signal of genre, see A. Barchiesi, *P. Ovidii Nasonis Epistulae Heroidum* 1–3 (Florence 1992) on *Her.* 1.3.

10. On the importance of the 'hereditary backgrounds' in the Euripidean *Hippolytus*, R. P. Winnington-Ingram, 'Hippolytus: a study in causation', in *Entretiens Hardt* 6: *Euripide* (Geneva 1960) 169–91, esp. 175–6, is clear and concise.

11. Call. *Hymn.* 1.8; cf. *Am.* 3.10.19 *Cretes erunt testes; nec fingunt omnia Cretes*; *Ars* 1.298 *non hoc [Pasiphae's love for the bull] ... quamuis sit mendax, Creta negare potest*; A. Otto, *Sprichwörter ...* (Leipzig 1890), repr. Hildesheim 1967) 98. Phaedra's Cretan origin is stressed again in line 163 *est mihi dotalis tellus Iouis insula, Crete*; *versuat Hippolyto regia tota meo*; see below.

12. See A. De Franciscis, *EAA* 3.612; P. Linant de Bellefonds, *LIMC* 5.1.460ff.; A. Kalkmann, *De Hippolytis Euripideis quaestiones novae* (Bonn 1882) 65ff.

13. See further arguments in defence of *perlege*, *sed* in J. M. Hunt, *CP* 70 (1975) 223–4. E. J. Kenney, *HSCP* 94 (1970) 176–7 has proposed *qui legis et*, and this is also the reading given by Dörrie (Berlin/New York 1971); see also Jacobson (n. 2) 152 n. 24. The most recent emendation is by W. S. Watt, *RFIC* 117 (1989) 62, who suggests only a slight change in punctuation: *perlegis? et*. Of course, the irony does not disappear even if we read *qui legis*: but the repetition of the verb *perlegere* seems to me to be much more effective. The fact that the following epistle (Oenone to Paris) begins with *perlegis* is not a strong argument against reading a form of *perlege* here.

14. Rosati (n. 3) 123–31.

15. See Jacobson (n. 2) 153.

16. Rosati (n. 3) 122–9.

17. Where the current etymology of *Iuppiter* from *iuuare* is paradoxically reworked: Enn. ap. Varro *Ling.* 5.65 (= *Trag.* 359–60 Jocelyn); Cic. *Nat. deor.* 2.64 *Iuppiter, id est iuuans pater, quem, conuersis casibus, appellamus a iuuando Iouem*; Gell. 5.12.4; see Maltby (n. 4) s.v. For another punning reference to this etymology in *Heroides*, cf. 11.17–18 *quid IUVat admotam per aurum nomina caelo | inter cognatos posse referre IOVem?* For other instances, see J. C. McKeown, *Ovid: Amores, I. Text and Prolegomena* (Liverpool 1987) 49.

18. For *clarus* applied to heavenly bodies in Ovid, cf. e.g. *Her.* 18.151; 19.34; *Met.* 4.664; 8.178; 15.190; *Trist.* 5.3.42; *Ib.* 109–10; *Pont.* 2.2.10; *TLL* 3.1271.72ff.; to Aurora: *Stat. Theb.* 6.25; cf. *Cic. Arat.* 66 *Aurora ... clari praeunntia Solis. clarus* also hints at the notoriety of the myth of Cephalus. Compare *Ars* 1.731–2 *pallidus in Side siluis errabat Orion; pallidus in lenta Naide Daphnis erat*. As Hollis remarks ad loc. (Oxford 1977), 'Orion the great hunter and Daphnis the shepherd might be expected to have a sunburned complexion.' Does *pallidus* hint at the lack of notoriety of the stories referred to (see again Hollis: 'the two legends referred to are exceedingly obscure')?

19. The narrative of the *Ars* does not mention Aurora, but Cephalus' affair with her is clearly presupposed (sometimes ironically) by means of the mentions of *aura*: cf. above all 3.701 *Procris, ut accepit nomen, quasi paelicis, Aurae*; the name *aura* was indeed 'almost the name' of a rival of hers. Also because *ab ... aura dicitur Aurora* (Prisc. *Gramm.* 3.509.28). Given the importance of Dawn in Procris' story, it seems difficult to resist the implication that Procris' last words have a double meaning: *ante diem morior* (739): Procris dies young, 'before her time', but dying *ante diem* she dies just *at dawn*.

20. Cf. [Apollod.] 3.14.4 'Αδωνις ... Ἀρτέμιδος χόλοι πληγείς ἐν θήραι ὑπὸ συὸς ἀπέθανεν.

21. In *Met.* 10.503ff. Orpheus narrates Myrrha's transformation into a tree and subsequently the difficult delivery of Adonis. When the child is born, his beauty is described in this way: *laudaret faciem Liur quoque; qualia namque corpora nudorum tabula pinguntur Amorum. talis erat, sed, ne faciat discrimina cultus, aut huic adde leues, aut illi deme pharetras* (515–18). Adonis looks like a small Eros: the son of the incest between Myrrha and her own father is compared with the son of Venus, whose lover he (Adonis) will be (cf. 525ff.). He who was born from the union of a daughter with her own father cannot be distinguished from the son of his own future mistress.

22. There is an analogous prefigurative pun in *Met.* 8.325–6 *hanc [sc. Atalanta] pariter uidit, pariter Caldonius heros optauit veniente deo flammisque latentes hausit*. The point is noted by Hollis (Oxford 1983<sup>2</sup>) ad loc.: Bömer's (Heidelberg 1977) scepticism is, as usual, inopportune. Compare also 7.554–5: in the context of the plague of Aegina a physical *flamma latens* is associated with *torreri viscera*, and both expressions are later used of Meleager (8.516–17 *urit et caecis torreri viscera sentit lignibus* – here too *pace Bömer*). In 8.516–17 there is a straining of metaphorical erotic language (cf. e.g. *Rem.* 105 *interea tacitae serpunt in viscera flammae*). For an explicit pun of this kind see *Fast.* 3.545–6 *arserrat Aeneae Dido miserabilis igne, larserrat extructis in sua fata rogis* (cf. R. O. A. M. Lyne, *Words and the poet* (Oxford 1989) 23 n. 11). But Ovidian examples may be multiplied. For a similar pun about Semele and Zeus, remember Prop. 2.30.29 *ut Semela est combustus [sc. Iuppiter!]*.

23. Cf. [Apollod.] *Epit.* 1.17 (the Amazon was killed by Theseus and his guests at the very moment when the marriage of Theseus and Phaedra was being celebrated; 'however, some say that she was slain in battle by Theseus'); Plut. *Thes.* 28.1 (according to the author of the *Theseis* Antiope fought against Theseus because he had married Phaedra); Pind. fr. 175; Pherec. fr. 151 in *FGrH* 1 A 98; Hellanicus fr. 166 in *FGrH* 1 A 145; Istrus fr. 10 in *FGrH* 3 B 171. According to Diod. 4.28, Antiope died fighting gallantly by Theseus' side against the Amazons who had invaded Attica.

24. Pausan. 1.2.1; 1.41.7; on the various Amazons' graves, of perennially controversial attribution, μαρτύρια of the battle against the Amazons, cf. Plut. *Thes.* 27.

25. On this issue, see G. Massimilla, 'L'Elena di Stesicoro quale premessa di una ritrattazione', *PP* 45 (1990) 370–81.

26. On Oenone's ignorance, see Casali (n. 1) 85ff.

27. According to Serv. *Aen.* 2.636, Varro in the *Antiquitates rerum humanarum* (fr. 10 Levi) narrated that the Greeks had offered some Trojans the chance of leaving Troy and of taking with them one thing of their choosing: Aeneas chose his father; on being given a second choice, he chose the Penates; after this, he was allowed to carry away all he wanted. This is more or less the story narrated in Aelian *Var. hist.* 3.22; cf.

[Xen.] *Cyn.* 1.15. But nowhere is there a reference to Aeneas' taking Creusa away with him. See S. Casali, 'Altre voci nell'Eneide di Ovidio', *MD* 35 (1995), forthcoming.

28. With regard to the irony in the references to bulls, see Jacobson (n. 2) 155; Barchiesi (n. 2) 212 n. 6.

29. See the discussion of the complicated and paradoxical consequences of Zeus's assertion in A. Barchiesi, *Il poeta e il principe. Ovidio e il discorso augusteo* (Bari 1994) 169–70.