

Anacreontea 33 and Ovid Ex Ponto 3.3; Cupid Calls

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Abstract: *On two occasions in Ancient Literature we find Cupid calling upon an author, who subsequently records the meeting in a poem. The relevant poems are Ovid's letter Ex Ponto 3.3 and Anacreontea 33. Whilst their basic narrative is the same the poems differ in their detail. We would argue this detail both supports and subverts the meaning of the superficial text and can be accessed, in the case of one, by the application of double meanings, and, in the case of the other, by the unearthing of fresh narratives through a redivision of the words of the received text. The subversion of the text by the infiltration of ,schemata' or ,alternative ways of reading the text' will be central to our appreciation of the wider meaning of the poems. Indeed we will be guided by a ,poetics of schemata'.*

Keywords: *Ovid; Greek; Latin; Cupid; astronomy; schemata; comets; stars; Aphrodite; Cancriids;*

Text:

Μεσονυκτίοις ποτ' ὥραις
στρέφεται ἡνίκ' Ἀρκτος ἤδη
κατὰ χεῖρα τὴν Βοώτου
μερόπων δὲ φύλα πάντα
κέαται κόπῳ δαμέντα,
τότ' Ἔρως ἐπισταθείς μευ
θυρέων ἔκοπτε ὀχῆας.
Τίς ἔφην ἴθυρας ἀράσσει
κατὰ μενὸν σχίσας ὀνειρούς;
ὁ δ' ἔφην ἄνοιγε φησὶν
ἄβροφος εἰμί: μὴ σοβήσης
βρέχομαι δὲ κάσέληνον
κατὰ νύκτα πεπλάνημαι
ἀνὰ δ' εὐθὺς λύχνον ἄψας
ἀνέφωξα, καὶ βρόφος μὲν
ἔσορῶ, φέρον δὲ τόξον
πτέρυγας τε καὶ φαρέτρην.
παρὰ δ' ἰστίην καθῖσα,
παλάμαις τε χεῖρας αὐτοῦ
ἀνέθαλπον, ἐκ δὲ χαιτήσ
ἀπέθλιβον ὑγρὸν ὕδωρ.
ὁ δ' ἔπει κρύος μεθῆκε,
ἄφερε φησὶ πειράσωμεν

it was then at the midnight hours
when Ursa Major was already turning
under the hand of the ox-driver,
and all the tribes of mortals
lay subdued by sleep
that Eros came nigh and began
banging the bars of my doors
'Who' I said 'is rattling the doors
and cleaving my dreams asunder?'
Eros replied 'Open up! I am
a child; do not chase me away;
I've been rained upon and have
lost my way in the moonless night
Directly I snatched up a lamp
and opened the door, and there
I beheld an infant, bearing a bow,
wings and a quiver. I seated him
by the hearth and chafed
his hands with my palms
and from his soft hair I squeezed
water. He, when he had
shaken off the cold, said 'Come',
let us make trial of this bow of mine²

τόδε τόξον, εἴ τί μοι νῦν
βλάβεται βραχεῖσα νευρή.
τανύει δέ, καί με τύπτει

and see whether it has suffered harm
from the string being rained upon
He stretches the bow and strikes me

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μέσον ἤπαρ, ὥσπερ οἴστρος
 ἀνὰ δ' ἄλλεται καχάζων-
 'ξένε' δ' εἶπε, 'συγγάρηθι:
 κέρασ ἀβλαβέσ μὲν «ἦν» μοι,
 σὺ δὲ καρδίην πονήσεις

in the middle of my liver; like a gadfly,
 laughing aloud, he leaps up and says
 'my host, congratulate me in that my bow is
 unharmed, but you will suffer
 pangs in the heart'

Anacreontea 33³

Introduction

It is rare to find two ancient poems with narratives as similar as Anacreontea 33 and Ovid Ex Ponto 3.3. Meanwhile to find that a common authorship for the two poems has never been mooted strikes one as curious. The fact that one is in Greek and the other in Latin should not necessarily deter academics from suggesting that Ovid wrote both. The ancients were thoroughly bilingual. Meanwhile the bilingualism of more recent authors, such as Samuel Beckett, adds a further register to the levels of meaning found in their works. There is no sense in which an author writing in a foreign tongue need be excused lapses of propriety. Any such observed oddities are instead to be considered deliberate. In the case of the two poems under consideration there is no *prima facie* reason why Ovid could not have penned both. Without rigidly assuming this to be the case we will nevertheless explore such a hypothesis 'pari passu' with the literary criticism of the poetry.

1.1. Similarities

It must have occurred to many readers that, given the similarities and differences in their plot-lines, a literary blood-line may exist between the poems Anacreontea 33 (reproduced above), and Ovid's Ex Ponto 3.3. Indeed, even the close similarity in their numerology (3.3 and 33)⁴ is not necessarily to be dismissed as mere coincidence. More substantively, their narrational thrust is roughly the same, as the following resums will make clear. In both poems the first-person narrator is asleep only to be disturbed by Cupid. In the Anacreontea poem, the boy-god demands, and is given, access to the narrator's house in order that he be preserved from further exposure to the inclement weather. In Ovid's poem, Cupid single-handedly gains entry through a door-length shutter which gives him direct access to the narrator's bedroom.

1.2. Differences (and echoes of Apollonius)

There are however substantial differences between the two narratives. Indeed, the Anacreontea poem seems to intertextualise more with Apollonius' Argonautica 3. In Anacreontea 33, Cupid fears his bow-string has been damaged by the heavy rain and decides to put it to the test. He callously repays the kindness of the poet by using him as target practice. The poem ends with the god bluntly pointing out the love-pangs that the wounded narrator will be doomed to experience. Not a little of the detail reminds us of Cupid's characterisation in the Argonautica where he befools Ganymede (the personage behind 'Aquarius') and ignites Medea's passion for Jason. Through both Apollonius and the Anacreontea there resonates the heartless cackling of the cheating and deceitful Cupid (A.R.3.129-130: '... ἦέ μιν αὐτως / ἤπαφες, οὐδὲ δίκη περιέπλεο νῆιν ἐόντα ... καγαλόωντι'; ... καγαλόων'; Anacreontea 13, 28: '... πεπλάνημαι⁵ ... καχάζων'). In both texts Cupid is compared to a remorseless gadfly (A.R. 3.276-277: 'ὥσπερ οἴστρος ... μωπα'; Anacreontea 27: 'ὥσπερ οἴστρος'). The palms of the hand are of paramount

³ Anacreon. Greek Lyric, Volume II: Anacreon, Anacreontea, Choral Lyric from Olympus to Alcman. Edited and translated by David A. Campbell. Loeb Classical Library 143. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.

⁴ In Theocritus there is a line number (22.22) which when written as an ancient numeral (XXIIXXII) seems to sketch the lay-out of an ancient manger. The two lozenges created contain the grass or straw which the animals tear at as they occupy one of three booths that surround the lozenges. The fourth booth will be used by the farm workers who access it from a corridor. Replenishing the lozenges will be their main duty. The line in question relates to 'Phatne' or 'The Manger'.

⁵ See below for an alternative meaning of 'πεπλάνημαι' ('I deceived').

importance to Cupid, not only in wielding the bow, (A.R.3.277), but also in casting dice with one hand behind his clothing, and in throwing a magical ball across the heavens (A.R.3.119-120; 140-141). These activities find an echo in the warming of the same palms in the Anacreontea ('παλάμαις' τε χεῖρας αὐτοῦ ἀνέβαλλον'). There, unwittingly, the poet both warms hands that will soon cause his downfall and, in adopting a supplicatory pose with his hands around Cupid's, allows the boy-god's clasped hands to pray for what he will. In the Ex Ponto poem, the *dramatis personae* have bones to pick with one another. Ovid takes Cupid to task for inducing him to write love elegy, a career path that had ultimately led to his banishment by the emperor Augustus to the distant Tomis, where Ex Ponto 3.3 is set. While Cupid dismisses Augustus' charge that Ovid's 'Art of Love; ('Ars Amatoria') had tended to corrupt the citizen 'matronae' of Roma, he nevertheless reminds the poet of the mysterious 'other reason' for Ovid's exile. This reason is known to Cupid, who is an intimate of the imperial household, being related to Augustus through his mother Aphrodite's liaison with Anchises, a union which produced the hero Aeneas, Augustus' mythological ancestor. The boy-god avoids detailing what Ovid already knows. Cupid, once versed by Ovid in the subtleties of sophisticated seduction, is now ashamed of even speaking about the sort of liaisons that give sex a bad name in contemporary Rome. It is Ovid's 'error' that had derailed their joint amatory train and created an unfortunate and un-speakable template for life and love under the principate⁶. Cupid, we suggest, exonerates Ovid from any blame attaching to the *Ars Amatoria*, partly to prepare the ground for another literary campaign which will restore Cupid's appearance and Ovid's reputation. It is time, feels Cupid, that literature reclaimed this ground lost to real life. Nevertheless, it is somewhat disconcerting to find that whilst Ovid's poetry is described as unimpeachable ('inque meo nullum carmine crimen erit': *Ars Amatoria* 1.34) there seems to exist within the rearranged letters of 'carmine' 'an accusation' ('A! crimen')⁷.

2. The Appearance of Cupid the Messenger, and the exilic 'libelli':

Cupid's reply to Ovid's speech is entirely self-serving. He is well versed in the text of the *Ars* and the exile poems and casts Ovid's words back in his teeth. Ovid had already admitted to having rendered his eyes guilty and to having deserved his punishment (*Tristia* 2.31, 103). Cupid reminds Ovid of this at Ex Ponto 3.3. 70. 74-76. At the same time the god quotes the word 'erroris' at Ex P.3.3 75 from Tr.2.207. The god's facility in trotting out the arguments for and against Ovid's exile conveys an apparent even-handedness, which yet conceals a programme of self-exculpation. Cupid's resemblance to a much-handled dove evokes the tawdriness of excessive casual sex and may be taken as redolent of late Augustan sexual mores. But the dove's plumage is as likely to have been ruffled by the hands of those who despatched carrier pigeons with letters tied to their legs⁸. The role of Cupid as a messenger god is well-established. Indeed, in some texts⁹, he is considered to be the son of Hermes, the messenger god *par excellence*. Cupid's descent from Olympus to visit his arrows on Medea (A.R. 3.158-166) is redolent of Hermes' journey in *Odyssey* 5 43-54. Meanwhile doves and pigeons were particularly sacred to Venus as the sculptures from Dafni housed in the new Acropolis Museum in Athens, will testify. Lastly, we learn that on a previous mission to Colchis Cupid's instructions from Venus ('matre rogante') had been to fill Medea with desire for Jason. His message in Ex Ponto 3.3 is however, ostensibly, non-sexual. He reports that a triumph is about to take place in Rome, as a result of which Ovid may hope for some amelioration of his sentence.

⁶ Rome must have been 'Gossip Central' following Ovid's exile.

⁷ See also Ex P. 3.3.70.

⁸ The arrival of a carrier pigeon evokes Cupid's pigeon-like arrival in Tomis. The words of a US pigeon fancier conjure up the required atmosphere: 'one bird was my Hall of Fame ... she flew 1000 miles in three days ... she'd come home like a bat at a quarter after nine in the dark. I'd be waiting, waiting, waiting, all I heard was the whisper of her wings, then boom she'd hit the coop'. Similarly in Ovid's poem, the arrival of Cupid creates a 'slight sound' ('parvo ... sono'). He has travelled 831.1 miles from Rome to Tomis and arrives after dark. The 'homing' instinct of the lovey-DOVEy Cupid will direct him back to his 'coop' in Rome.

⁹ Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*. 3.21-23.

In an allegorical vein, one might suggest that Cupid-the-carrier-pigeon represents an overworked go-between servicing the Roman elite's passion for sexual intrigue. Cupid's appearance however will also recall that of the exilic *libelli*. For Cupid presents as having lost the urbanity he enjoyed in Ovid's love poetry and to have acquired the 'squalidus' image of Ovid's *Tristia* as detailed at *Tristia* 1.1f. The physical appearance of both Cupid and the *libelli* will immediately conjure up the 'accused' or 'condemned' Roman who traditionally allowed their appearance to become ever more ragged. Thus, in the context of the *Ars Amatoria*, Cupid as 'squalidus', may be accused of being in the vanguard of Ovid's perceived undermining of Augustan sexual mores. Alternatively, the 'squalidus' image will also suggest that the *libelli* are in mourning¹⁰. And indeed, the *libelli*, as Ovid's 'offspring', will be mourning the poet's 'living-death' in exile¹¹.

3. The Astronomical Context

The *Anacreontea* are believed to have been written between the first century BCE and the sixth century CE. Their authorship is a mystery. Thus, if our two poems are interrelated, we have no simple way of knowing whether Ovid or the *Anacreontea* author was the inspirer of a later text. Indeed, the *Anacreontea* may be a closer cousin of the *Argonautica*. However, the astronomical detail in the narratives may constitute not merely Alexandrian adornment but rather a form of scientific route-plotting. That is, the reliable temporal motions of the stars may be being used in order to guide us to the conclusion that both poems are products of Ovid's hand. Moreover, the iconography and behaviour of, and the interactions between, the various celestial bodies encountered in these skies may be thought to be the means by which the poet broadens and enriches the meaning of his poetry. As we shall see, identifying the night on which the action of *Ex Ponto* 3.3 takes place, will be straightforward. This will give us a point of repair in attempting to date the *Anacreontea* 33.

4. Paranomasia in *Anacreontea* 33

The boy-god, in 'wandering off [the path]', has naturalistically adopted the etymological force of his planetary mother, Venus-the Strayer, whose rising in the *Ex Ponto* poem as the Morning Star will not be long delayed¹². Meanwhile our uneasiness with Cupid's practised way with words is accentuated by a double meaning in 'πεπλανημαι' ('I've lost my way: 14). If treated as a Middle, this verb means 'deceived' and points in the direction of Cupid's Machiavellian intentions ('I am wet and under cover of a moonless night I have deceived you [in what I have just said]; ... κάσεληνον / κατα νυκτα πεπλανημαι': 13-14). Certainly the deceptiveness of Cupid is also a prominent theme of *Ex Ponto* 3.3 ('magistro ... decepto': *Ex P.* 3.3.23). And, in general, the god's role is to lead mankind into the error of 'amour fou'. However, in the light of 'πεπλανημαι' this episode now takes on the mantle of a preplanned assault not an opportunist attack. Cupid is on a mission. He has to use all his cunning to worm his way into the house. We may note other double meanings in *Anacreontea* 33. The participle describing the approach of Cupid to the doors ('ἐπισταθείς') could also suggest 'a coming to a halt' (after a journey) and 'an appearance to someone in a dream'. Certainly, Ovid confesses his encounter may have been a trick of the unconscious mind ('seu fuit ille sopor': *Ex P.* 3.3.4). However, in the supratext of the *Anacreontean* poem, the clear indication is that the poet had been dreaming about other matters when he was rudely awakened by harsh reality in the person of Cupid. The *Anacreontean* narrative claims therefore to be a factual account of what took place.

¹⁰ See the Arles bust of an unshaven Augustus mourning Julius Caesar's death.

¹¹ The programmatic text of *Tristia* 1.1-8 has never been viewed from the perspective of the 'squalidi' *libelli* as bring guilty themselves of some crime. Nor should Cupid's 'squalidus' posture as one in mourning be ignored.

¹² The etymological meaning of 'πλανητης' ('planet') is 'wanderer'.

5. Astronomy and Dating in the Anacreontea

At the same time, Anacreontea 33 is undeniably mythological. Only the poet vouches for its historical authenticity. Yet there may be a way of squaring this mythological-historical circle. In our book *Disiecta Membra* (2019) we suggested that the mythological story of Myrrha and Cinyras (Ovid *Met* 10.298ff) is set in 862 BCE. That is, the events of myth will be, according to Archaic and Classical writers, contemporaneous with the Greek Dark Ages. We will bear this in mind as we now attempt to date the Anacreontea poem based on internal evidence. Anacreontea 33 provides a highly specific astronomical introduction such that the reader is left in no doubt as to the time of the events that transpire ('at the midnight hours [sic], when the Great Bear was already beginning to turn [or 'was turning'] under Bootes' hand'). Bootes is a name that literally means 'ox-driver' and is therefore potentially descriptive of both a wagoner and ploughman. In Homer meanwhile (*Iliad* 18.487), the neighbouring constellation of 'Ἄρκτος' ('Bear') is also known as 'Ἄμαξα' ('wagon'). 'Ἄμαξα' however also means 'the carriage of a plough'. Naturally therefore, 'Bootes' came to mean both 'wagoner' and 'ploughman'. This would suggest that, in turn and much like 'Ἄμαξα', the Latin 'plaustrum' ('wagon') could also take on the meaning of 'plough-carriage' (Ovid *Met.* 10. 446-447). After all, 'turning' is central to ploughing furrows ('boustrophedon'), not to trundling along straight roads. In the *Metamorphoses* passage, the bent 'plough-pole' or 'temo' is 'oblique' in being angled diagonally upwards towards the yoke into which it is fitted¹³. However, it is also **used** 'obliquely' in the horizontal plane in the sense that the ploughman turns the team of oxen by forcing the pole sideways with the 'stiva' ('handle'). Because the 'temo' and 'stiva' are linked to the 'culter' and to each other, the pole, in being pushed to the left at the ploughman's end, will exert pressure to the right at the oxen's end. The team will thereby be persuaded to turn right. Furthermore, oxen cannot cross their legs in turning, meaning that they need a wide turning-circle at the conclusion of each furrow¹⁴.

Now this astronomical drama is played out in the skies above the Anacreontean poet. On 10 March -862 BCE [-861 Stellarium], at 19.20 hours, only five weeks before Ovid's Myrrha episode, Bootes' hand (ι κ θ Bootes) along with the λ of the forearm presses directly 'downwards' ('κατα') onto the last of the three 'Temo' stars ('Alkaid'). In fact, the 'temo' we suggest is being pushed into the third dimension rather than downwards, as explained above¹⁵. In this context, 'κατα' takes on two meanings, namely (a) 'in accordance with' or 'under the pressure' [exerted by Bootes' hand], and (b) the literal meaning of 'down from' as at *Iliad* 18.97 and particularly *Odyssey* 6.136. Given the format of the night sky and the position of the four Bootes stars it may seem that the ploughman's hand is below Temo rather than the reverse. But Boreas, the North Wind, lived to the North in a cave high on the Haemus mountain range (Callimachus *Hymn to Delos* 63). Thus, the nearer one approaches to the North, the higher one will be in the sky. In order now to establish the exact time of the Anacreontean episode, the researcher must assume there is more than one 'hour of midnight'. It is too facile to take the phrase 'Μεσονυκτίους ... ὥραϊς' as an Alexandrian 'plural-for-singular' construction. Instead, we should focus on the three watches of the Greek night in question. The middle of these will give us the 'midnight hours (15.15 – 19.20 / **19.20 – 23.25** / 23.25 – 03.30). Each watch lasts 4 hours 5 minutes with 19.20 signalling the start of the 'midnight hours, which finish at 23.25. One particular observation should be made before we move on. The location from which we have made these calculations is Poti in Georgia, the presumed site of the ancient Phasis, the capital of Colchis. Our reasons are laid out below but suffice it to say for now that we suspect the poem to be written in the person of Medea, princess of Colchis, daughter of King Aetes, and lover of the Greek hero Jason¹⁶.

13 See T.E Page (1954 ed.) *Vergil Bucolics and Georgics* pp.202-204 for what follows.

14 As in the bends of the road that climbs the Alpe d'Huez in France or the ends of an old-fashioned hair-grip.

15 The sky is oriented with North-East at the centre, and with South-East aligned with North-West at the extremities.

16 To reflect the feminine sex of the poetess Medea, the participial phrase in line 14 would require being rearranged as 'ἀνὰ δ' ἄψασ' ἐθὺ λύχρον. The participle has become an elided main verb in tmesis: 'ἀνὰ δ' ἄψασ' ('I hung up the lamp' or 'I lit the lamp'). However, if 'ἀνὰ' is adverbial then there is the option of translating thus: 'thereupon without delay I grasped the lamp'.

Returning to the dating of the Anacreontea poem, it remains to demonstrate that this midnight period of time was moonless, as averred by the Anacreontean Cupid. The star site Stellarium reveals that the Moon was nearly New at that time (that is, invisible) but also that between the hours of 10.45 on March and 11.43 on March 11 the Moon was situated below the horizon, where it will have been invisible (New or not New). Cupid reaches the poet at 19.20 on the 10th. His visit could not have lasted more than an hour however long it took him to come round. Meanwhile, at no time between dusk on the 10th and 11.43 on the following day was the Moon visible. Lastly, it is incumbent to demonstrate that the Great Bear ‘was already turning under pressure from Bootes’ hand at the moment the midnight period began. The word ‘ἤδη’ (‘already’) is crucial in this context. If we consult Stellarium again, we find that the Great Bear’s back is already inclined upwards by an hour’s worth of movement from the horizontal. One could claim the same is true of the Great Bear’s paws.

6. The Ancients and Omens

We do not claim the above calculation is the only one possible. Our goal has been to establish a methodology for the use of astronomy in dating the narratives of ancient texts. Now the absence of the Moon in the Anacreontea poem stands in stark contrast to the conditions in the Ex Ponto passage, where there is a conventional mid-month full moon. This phase of the moon is the focus of the Homeric Hymn to Selene (32) where her ‘very bright beams’ (‘αὐγαί’) make her the source of signs and indications to mankind (‘ὃ δὲ πλῆθει μέγας ὄγκος / λαμπρόταταί τ’ αὐγαί τότ’ ἀεζομένης τελέθουσιν / οὐρανόθεν: τέκμων δὲ βροτοῖς καὶ σῆμα τέτυκται’: 11-13). We should therefore be very alert to omens in our two poems. This will involve double meanings. Such omens are particularly to be looked for in the first words uttered by a protagonist, just as Ovid’s Janus points out at *Fasti* 1.178-180. But omens are also to be found in ‘σχηματα’ which, as the Latin transliteration ‘schemata, means ‘any mode of expression involving anomalies of word order, usage etc. for literary or rhetorical effect esp[ecially] as characterised by indirectness’. It is no coincidence that ‘σχημα’ also means ‘phase of the moon’. As such it highlights the role of the Moon in both our passages and encourages us to seek other forms of ‘schemata’ within them.

The more alternative meanings of ‘schemata’ we find infiltrating the poems the more confident we will feel in positing a poetics of ‘σχημα’ (or ‘ominousness’). These meanings will create an undertow that focuses our attention on the principal meaning that concerns us here, that of ‘indirect literary constructions’. As a foretaste of what will soon follow, we note that Janus’ first words in the *Fasti* passage mentioned above are ‘DISCE METU’ (*Fasti* 1.101). By dividing the words in a maverick fashion, we can extract the sense ‘DI SCEME [TU]’ meaning ‘Ye Gods! Anomalous rhetorical usages!’. The anomalies lie in the word division but also in the provincialising spelling of the feminine plural variant ‘sceme’ [= ‘scemae’]. In sum, the meaning of ‘di sceme’ itself alerts the reader to the plausibility of treating the text in this aberrant way. Not surprisingly the Janus speech in Ovid’s *Fasti* will be found to be replete with such forms.

7. Schemata: Word Redivision

As we shall see, in Ex Ponto 3.3, the moon setting in the West-North-West will be directly opposite the sun’s position as it rises in the far East-South-East. Thus, if Ovid’s bedroom has two symmetrically-placed, full-length windows, the moonlight will go through one set of shutters before passing out through the other. As soon as the moonlight fades the sunlight will take over. In fact, this is confirmed by an ominous reinterpretation of Cupid’s first words. As we have noted, first words will be full of alternative meanings. Line 67 is usually divided such that we hear Cupid swearing by all that is most precious to him (‘per mea tela, faces, et per mea tela, sagittas’; ‘by my weapons, the torches, by my weapons, the arrows ...’). However, nothing prevents the bilingual reader from redividing the words as

follows: ‘permeat ἔλα faces, permeat ἔλα sagittas’. The Greek word ‘ἔλα’ is defined as ‘αὐγή’ (‘moonbeam’) by Hesychius¹⁷. This ‘moonbeam’ now ‘passes from one side to the other of’ [we suggest] ‘Ovid’s room’ (‘permeat’). Meanwhile, on one level, the words ‘faces’ and ‘sagittas’ become accusatives of exclamation ‘Ah! the torches, Ah! the arrows ...’¹⁸. Alternatively, these accusatives could be thought to follow the transitive version of the verb ‘permeat’. That is, the following meaning is produced: ‘a moonbeam shines through the torches, a moonbeam filters through the arrows’. This will prove to be one of the major findings of our enquiry. For Cupid’s torches and arrows will include some that he did not bring from Rome.

8. Cupid lands, Medea tells her Story

By contrast with Anacreontea 33, Ovid’s Cupid gains entry to the house alone. In landing, he will have been guided by the moonlight streaming out of the east-south-east side of the room. This is the same light that his own cryptic words suggest is passing through the room (‘permeat’). One assumes that Cupid has come not from Olympus, but from Rome, where he and his mother will have taken a leading role in the day’s preparations for Tiberius’ triumph. His words convey the atmosphere of eager anticipation throughout the city. On arriving however, Cupid will be approaching from the West-South-West. To enter the house, he has to recalibrate his approach by swinging from West-South-West to East-South-East. In doing so he readjusts his flight path and lands safely producing a muted flapping of wings (‘parvo ... sono’)¹⁹. Cupid’s approach and entry suggests that at least one shutter is already open. In any event, and as we have seen, Ovid’s Cupid lands in the manner of a carrier-pigeon. And as we have further seen, his only other message-bearing mission to the Black Sea had been in response to Venus’ request that he direct his arrows at Medea in Phasis, the capital of Colchis (Ex Ponto 3.3.81). This visit is detailed in Apollonius Rhodius’ *Argonautica* 3 where Cupid’s role in engineering Medea’s infatuation with Jason is narrated. Of interest however, is the fact that Phasis to the east lies at the same angle to Constanta as Rome lies to the west. Phasis, thought to lie beneath the modern Poti in Georgia, is situated on very similar latitude to that of Rome (41.40.20.99 and 41.53.36). It is also of some interest that Ovid has not been to what he calls ‘these places’ for ‘long centuries’ (‘haec loca ... saecula longa’: Ex P. 3.3.79 & 81). There are tantalising hints here. Firstly, a homing-pigeon such as Cupid, finds its way to a destination by familiarity brought about by previous physical contact. Thus ‘these places’ will mean *inter alia* ‘Tomis’. Meanwhile *Tristia* 3.9 indicates that Medea fled to Tomis with Jason. We suggest then that Cupid made a slight detour en route back to Rome, to see the fruits of his actions, namely the murder of Absyrtus at Tomis. This would also explain why Cupid refers to Phasis and Tomis deictically as ‘these places’ as though the Euxine constituted a single neighbourhood. Phasis, after all, is as far from Tomis as Tomis is from Rome. Secondly, we should take ‘long centuries’ literally. That is Cupid could be referring here to the Greek Dark Ages when Myrrha and Cinyras were alive. At the same time the conformation of the night skies of the 860s BCE is written, we suggest, into the text of Anacreontea 33 and these night skies are those to be observed from Phasis, the scene of the action. We suggest then that the Anacreontea poem is purporting to have been written by Medea in the Dark Ages from her home in Phasis. The verses would thereby constitute Medea’s contemporaneous recounting of the *Argonautica* episode in which Cupid’s arrow instils passion for Jason into Medea. We have already touched on the textual problems involved in emending the passage to reflect a female narrator. We now find that Cupid addresses his hostess as though she were of the male sex (‘ξενε’) but Medea will merely constitute a generic ‘host’ or even ‘stranger’ in the eyes of her unconcerned visitor. Ironically ‘ξενος’ also means (a) ‘wanderer’ a term more

17 See the Homeric Hymn 32 above.

18 See below. Cupid we will soon see swears by both what is to hand and what is in the sky. His torches and arrows modulate into celestial fireballs and shooting stars once he looks into the sky.

19 The low sound accompanying the movement of the shutters is paralleled at Propertius 4.1.8 when Cynthia enters the poet’s house (‘levia ad primos Lares ... murmura’). One wonders if this alludes to a series of brisk verbal greetings offered to the Lares as one entered a house. Even coming in a window may have demanded its formalities.

appropriate to Cupid (and his planetary mother) on this night, and (b) ‘foreigner’ a term also more strictly true of Cupid in Phasis viz-a-viz his Colchian hostess

9. Phasis

It behoves us to investigate the Phasis visit in more detail but first, some general thoughts on Cupid’s mission are in order. The Ovidian Cupid’s *amour-propre* will surely have been piqued by the thought of the one-day-to-be-immortal Tiberius celebrating a triumph. In imagining the parade, the god will have felt the competitive instinct to better Tiberius’ example by adding to the [amorous] military honours he had celebrated in the Amores. Certainly, in Tomis, military conquest preoccupies Cupid’s mind as he claims Ovid is ‘a soldier-friend to Cupid’s camp’. The two words ‘soldier and friend’ could be fused into the one word ‘comes’ thereby clarifying the issue. Cupid, it dawns on us, *wants* Ovid back in Rome this time as an equal partner in undertaking a new erotic campaign. At this point we may wonder to what the relative ‘quae’ refers in the lines ‘Phasias est telis fixa puella meis / quae nunc cur iterum post saeculis longa revisam / tu facis ...’(81-83). The received wisdom relates it to ‘haec loca’ in line 79 (‘you are the reason I now revisit **these regions** around the Euxine’). But nothing prevents us assuming the antecedent to ‘quae’ is ‘telis’. This now provides the following translation: ‘You [Ovid, you the comradely soldier of my cause], you [will] cause me to return to these weapons after a long absence’. Cupid has been made redundant by the lack of love poetry (and of ‘romance’) in Rome. He wants to reengage in the battle for hearts (and perhaps minds). To do so he requires the writer of the Amores to write him back into his old role. In support of this reading, we suggest that the rhetoric here reminds us very much of Ovid’s own fatal attraction for poetry. Cupid is drawn back to his old pursuits and in doing so is setting Ovid on the same dangerous road that led to his exile. However, this is precisely why Cupid now exonerates Ovid from any guilt attaching to his love poetry. Cupid has interested motives. His last words to Ovid are a scarcely disguised hint that if Ovid’s own ambitions are achieved (namely, in winning a return to Rome through recognition that his poetry is blameless), this will effectively answer Cupid’s own (‘nostras’) prayers (to reignite the pursuit of writing ‘exculpated’ erotic poetry).

10. The Meanings of Phasis

To return to Cupid’s earlier journey, whilst the geographical position of Rome viz-a-viz Tomis and Phasis, produces a pleasing symmetry, we should also explore a more generous interpretation of the role of Phasis in the narrative. Cupid’s trip to Tomis can be considered Phasian in a wide-ranging rhetorical, not to say ‘schematical’ sense. That is, the word ‘phasis’, like ‘σχημα’, as a substantive has a range of nuances which will be absorbed by Cupid as he lands with his back to Phasis and with the moon full in his face. Most strikingly ‘phasis’ means ‘heliacal rising’. This refers to the first occasion when the rising of a star at dawn renders that star visible in advance of sunrise. If we consult Stellarium for the morning of January 16 CE 13²⁰, we find Venus, the Morning Star and Cupid’s mother, rising 65 minutes ahead of the Sun. Meanwhile, while the word ‘phasis’ conjures up both the ‘rising’ of the Morning Star and its ‘appearance’ in the sky, it also expresses the *phases* of the moon. As we have seen, the fullness of the moon in this story plays a central role in generating the appropriate conditions for the development of the narrative²¹. Furthermore, the New Moon of 862 BCE has allowed us to propose a date for the Anacreontean poem. To continue, the word ‘phasis’ also means ‘tidings’ or ‘rumour’ and this provides the pretext for Cupid’s visit. The same homonym ‘phasis’, also refers to one’s ‘definitive statement’ including both aspects of affirmation and denial. This constitutes a precise epitome of the nature of Cupid’s speech which, by mere ‘assertion’ (= ‘phasis’), affirms the innocence of Ovid’s poetry against the charge of encouraging sexual laxity amongst the ‘matronae’ of Rome. In the same speech however, Cupid also questions Ovid’s propriety in hiding his ‘crime’ beneath the tag of a ‘mistake’. Thus, Cupid’s speech

²⁰ The date we think of the triumph as advertised by Cupid. See below.

²¹ See on ‘σχημα’ above.

both affirms the true reason for Ovid's exile whilst simply denying there was any ill-intent behind the *Ars Amatoria*. This definitive resume of Ovid's defence constitutes a shining example of a rhetorical 'phasis'. We should conclude by observing that the word 'phasis' could also mean 'denunciation'. Given that all the other nuances of the word are wholly engaged in this discourse, it is likely that Cupid's defence of Ovid's erotic verse constitutes, effectively, a denunciation of the way Augustus had sought to blacken its reputation.

11. A Window onto Tiberius

A further perspective on Ovid's poem can be accessed by considering the physical properties of his house. We may begin by looking briefly at the word for a large, two-leaved door-window in Greek. Ovid's interior has two windows, one opposite the other. One of these, on the 'moon side', is 'bifores' ('double-leaved'). 'Bifores' however also describes the two-tone sound produced from a double pipe. In a metapoetic vein this encourages us to examine both Latin and Greek terms (or 'sounds') for these 'shutters'. In short, we are invited to revisit the text in the search for Ovid's 'schemata'. The Greek terms we seek are 'φαστηρ' or 'φωστηρ' the latter of which is confirmed as 'door opening' by Hesychius. The word 'φαστηρ' however also means 'lamp' as well as door or window a circumstance which provides an apparently tenuous link to the Anacreontean lamp. From there we should direct our steps to 'lampas' (or 'lampe') which means 'lamp' but also 'torch' and 'fiery meteor'. Meanwhile, the Greek plural 'φαστηρες' defines the two-fold nature of Ovid's door. This could be transliterated into Latin as 'fausteres'. Now this seems to afford little advantage until we posit an elision having taken place within the word itself, allowing us to reconfigure the letters to read as follows: 'faust' [h]eres' that is, 'O fauste heres!' ('O fortunate heir!'). This now fits very well into one of the poem's major themes, namely the celebration of Tiberius' triumph in the context of Augustus' decline. In short, in being indirectly (or 'schematically') addressed as 'fortunate heir', Tiberius inherits Augustus' propensity for success. One could also translate the phrase as 'O well-starred heir'. In short, the exclamation that is to be endlessly repeated by the jubilant crowd during the triumph itself will consist of the words 'Oh fauste heres'. Moreover, the populace will be all too aware of the configuration of the night sky on 16th January 13 CE which, as we shall see, predicts a happy future for Augustus' successor. By contrast one is now to regard Augustus as a relic of the past existing in the present²².

12.1. Supplication in the Sky

In the Anacreontea poem, the child Cupid is unquestionably wet through and the author and boy-god soon behave as 'supplicandus/a' and suppliant. The poet seats the boy by the hearth, the conventional place for suppliants in Classical times. Meanwhile the poet's clasping of the boy's folded hands within his or her own hands not only transmits physical warmth to the child but also, through a shared and intertwined attitude of prayer, expresses the protector's acquiescence in assuming the 'votum'. That is, the subservience and meekness of the appellant's prayer gesture finds a response in the engagement of the 'supplicandus' in the same posture which echoes, embraces and fulfils the requirements of the appeal. In confirmation of the poet's intentionality in this respect, we note the word 'ἐπισταθεις' (3) which means both 'appeared [out of the blue]' 'stood near' 'appeared in a dream', but is also cognate with the word 'ἐπιστατης' ('suppliant'). Not surprisingly 'Aphrodite/Venus' was given the title 'ἐπιστασηι' for her

²² Note that the word 'φασσις' is a synonym of 'φασις' ('Phasis') and means 'heliacal rising' (as does 'phasis'). At the same time 'φωστηρ' alludes specifically to the 'lights of the sky' which we suggest means more than simply 'stars'. We reiterate that 'φωστηρ' and 'φαστηρ' both mean 'opening for a window or door' and indeed are practically the same word given the linguistic affinity between the diphthong 'au' and the letter omega which persists into modern Romanian. A Wallachian may say 'au spus' ('they said') whilst a Transylvanian may say 'o spus' ('they said'). Of all interconnections between words in this poem perhaps the most important is 'φαστηριος' describing Bacchus or rather his processions as 'torch-lit'. This must mean that 'φαστηρ' was used in the sense of 'torch'. Thus Ovid's 'door-window' comes to articulate the moon's torch-like appearance as it shines into the house like a giant projector casting 'umbræ' against the far door. And these 'umbræ' as we shall see are also 'uninvited guests'. And 'torches' will prove to be more than 'torches' once we examine the night sky round Cancer.

superintendence of suppliants. Meanwhile, in both poems, Cupid ‘stands’ in the pose of a suppliant (‘ἐπισταθείς ... stabat Amor’). In Ovid, Cupid’s unkempt hair visually presses the case for his prayers to be answered. No longer the impresario of Ovid’s urbane erotic verse, Cupid has become besmirched by the cheapness of sex in Rome. He looks like a woman who is ‘infamis’. At the same time his appearance serves to convey his unexpressed supplication of Ovid. Cupid wants them both to be the way they were. He wants their prayers answered.

Supplication is a major theme of Ex Ponto 3.3. The poem ends with the hope that Paullus, the addressee, will continue to preserve his house as a focus for suppliants in need of refuge. There is however a parallel celestial discourse which confirms the pervasiveness of this theme of supplication. In examining the night sky from this perspective, we will also consider its propitiousness towards Tiberius as mentioned above.

12.2: Supplication in the Sky (continued)

In the night sky over Tomis, Venus is positioned on the goat’s-beard of Capricorn. As she enters the narrative, she appears to be supplicating Capricorn by attaching herself to the area of the human body most commonly addressed by supplicants. This is most clearly illustrated in the Lydos Painter’s depiction of the fall of Troy in which Priam stretches out his hand to clasp Neoptolemus’ beard-cum-chin in a vain appeal for mercy. Venus’ appeal to the House of Caesar will involve forwarding Cupid’s prayers mentioned above on behalf of Augustan erotic verse. However, the identity of Capricorn is now the crucial issue. The star of this Capricorn is rising. As we shall see below, the movement of the constellation mirrors the triumphal procession of Tiberius, which as Cupid says ‘instat’ (‘is at hand’). However, the phrase ‘tempus, quod quaerimus, instat’ could also mean ‘that which we seek (as supplicants) presses its attention on his temples [or ‘on his time’]’. Here the text intersects again with the night sky. For, the word for ‘the temples of the forehead’ in Greek (‘κορσῶν’) is also applied to the ‘jaw’ and even to ‘hair’ (the goat’s beard). Thus, the night sky writes large Ovid’s subtext. The text and the sky conspire to convey the supplication of Tiberius by Venus and Cupid through the clasping of Tiberius’ chin by the Morning Star. Venus must be thought to be preoccupying Tiberius’ ‘thoughts’ and taking up his time (‘tempus’) as she verbalises her agenda. However, her objective (the re-establishment of love poetry in Rome) is also something that presses upon Tiberius’ attention in the sense that Tiberius himself will have been a writer of love poetry on which he will have expended no little time. Although Suetonius’ *Tiberius* may have suffered corruption in chapter 21, the most likely reading betrays Tiberius’ literary leanings. As Augustus takes leave of Tiberius, he wishes him success in both the military and the literary spheres (‘et feliciter rem gere, ἐμοὶ καὶ ταῖς μουσαῖς ... στρατηγῶν’). Thus, Venus’ and Cupid’s appeals to Tiberius relate to a matter that is congenial to the soon-to-be emperor’s intellectual leanings. The insinuation here is that Tiberius is the sort of patron who, even as he celebrates one of the most glittering military moments of his life, is conscious of the wishes of the leaders of his least military ‘battalion’.

On the other side of the sky, the Moon and Leo mirror-image the conjunction of Capricorn and Venus. The Moon, as it clutches the Lion’s beard, is in the position of suppliant. As Diana, this lunar suppliant will represent the other side of the libertarian coin. That is, Diana stands for the representatives of what one might call the Puritanical Party, who will endeavour to persuade *their* patron to oppose Venus & Cupid’s suit. However, the star of this Lunar Party is setting even as Capricorn rises. That is, the ‘decline’ of Leo takes with it the ‘Royal Star’ namely ‘Regulus’, the literal meaning of which is ‘petty monarch’. The diminutive is exploited for its potential to demean. If Leo represents the princeling Augustus, then this ageing Lion is losing his control of the pride. Furthermore, as the moon sets, so too do the hopes of the repressive faction in Rome that owed its power to an unquestioning obsequiousness towards their ‘king’. This party’s permanent supplicatory attitude towards Augustus is as moribund as the man himself. Augustus’ control of time slips away from him as the triumphal crowd celebrate and audibly ‘congratulate themselves upon’ (‘sibi gratulantur’) their new and ‘fortunate heir [to the imperial throne]’ (‘Oh fauste heres’).

12.3. Supplication and the Constellations

Now the etymological discourse is not slow to adjust to this development. January 16 falls in the zodiacal sign of Capricorn. Capricorn's equivalent in Greek, Aegoceras, has a prefix from 'αἶξ' meaning 'goat' but also 'wave'. This is complemented by the Latinisation of the prefix 'καπρα' ('goat') but not just as 'goat'. For both these words refer to 'fiery meteors' once 'καπρα' is transliterated into Latin. The main word for 'fiery meteor' is 'λαμπας' which is transliterated into Ovid's Latin as 'lampades' (Ex P.3.3.60). The ancients may have confused such phenomena with comets. These are the 'hairy ones' that move slowly from night to night. The suffix 'κερας' has two offshoots in 'κεραισμος' and 'κεραιστης' both meaning 'comets'. More likely the ancients saw Aegoceras as the embodiment of 'fast-moving comets' on the basis of the Cancrid meteor shower which reached its peak when Capricorn was about to give way to Aquarius ('αικη' + 'κερας'). Another celestial phenomenon involving Capricorn's Greek equivalent highlights 'the wave' ('αἶξ') of the 'hair arrangement' ('κερας'). This is the link we require to bring Aphrodite on stage. She uses the surf [or 'scum'] produced by the waves to fortify her hair. This may have the secondary effect of creating 'waviness' in the goddess's 'hair'.

The allusiveness of the words 'Aegoceras' and 'Capricorn' advances by a form of dog-legging logic. For the word 'καπρα' also means 'an act without constraint' or 'with impunity'. The 'bow tips' stand for Cupid's power, which is untrammelled.²³ This cryptic etymology ('ungoverned use of the bow') fits Cupid's general profile to perfection but it is particularly applicable to the god's behaviour in Anacreontea 33. Meanwhile the word 'Aegoceras' could also etymologise as 'untrammelled use of lyre tips' (where 'lyre tips' symbolises the medium of 'elegiac poetry'). Thus, the word 'Aegoceras' carries within it sufficient etymological and lexical valency as to be able to fulfil the programmes of Cupid (romantic 'amour fou'), Venus (Love and Elegy), and Ovid (the Elegist). In this regard it is worth considering the 'free tongue' ('libera lingua':22) with which Ovid addresses Cupid. Ovid is already loosening his own shackles, or constraints, in response to the etymology ('permissiveness of the lyre or writing reed') that governs the current phase of the zodiac ('Aegoceras'). In Ex Ponto 3.3 therefore there seems to be a concerted if concealed attempt to suborn Capricorn to the cause of greater social and literary freedom. With Augustus' star waning the old certainties are being challenged.

13.1. Aphrodite's Sea Foam

A digression on Aphrodite is merited at this point.. Firstly, there are several competing discourses jostling for prominence within the same words of the text and within the same view of the sky. With Venus rising from Ocean (as we suggest) before dawn on 16 January 13 CE we are reminded of the goddess's emergence from the sea in Apelles' painting. This painting was stored in the temple of Divus Iulius alongside another Apelles painting depicting the Dioskouroi and Nike. The accompanying cult statue was of Julius Caesar with a star attached to his head in memory of the comet that had appeared at the Victory games for the catasterised dictator in late July 44 BC. The comet was publicised as having represented the dictator's soul taking wing for heaven. Thus, the Roman context in which the Venus painting was displayed, laid the accent heavily upon its astronomical aspects, particularly in the context of comets. The painting itself showed the goddess wringing her hair as she emerged from the sea 'covered only' by her 'maternal waters'. As we shall see below, we assume (a) that the word 'maternis' means the waters that 'reared' Aphrodite 'like a mother', and (b) that these waters in being productive of 'foam' are not to be found far out to sea. The point is that the foam that fostered Aphrodite (= 'the waters that sustained her beauty') is only found close to shore, where the waves break and where the water is shallow. Apropos of the goddess's hair, Ovid himself explicitly confirms that Aphrodite's coiffure is on Apelles' mind when the poet describes the goddess as drying her hair with her fingers (Tr.2.525: 'siccat digitis'). In our view there is a particular reason for her behaviour here. Aphrodite will have been washing her hair in the salty surf along the shoreline and is now drying it manually by squeezing the hair, thereby

23 At the same time there may be a glance at the un-policed actions of the emperor.

impregnating it with salt and foam. Washing hair in surf, without rinsing it, thickens the hair's texture and tends to turn darker hair blond. Meanwhile, the thicker the strands of hair, the easier they are to arrange in a comely and secure fashion. Thus, when Hesiod speaks of Aphrodite being 'fostered' by the foam, we should understand this as meaning 'having been nourished [as to her hair] by constant applications of surf'. Nevertheless, the Hesiodic adjective 'ἀφρογενεα' (Theogony 196) is generally translated as 'born from the surf'. Yet this fails to take account of the fact that, in spite of the adjective 'Κυπρογενέα', Aphrodite was not 'born in Cyprus'. She had moved to Cyprus from Kythera (Theogony 192-193: 'πρῶτον δὲ Κυθήροισιν ζαθέοισιν / ἔπλητ', ἔνθεν ἔπειτα περίρρυτον ἴκετο Κύπρον'). In fact Hesiod makes it clear that the suffix of the word 'Κυπρογενέα' derives from the verb 'γέντο' at Theogony 199. That is, Aphrodite 'lived in' or 'grew up' in wave-washed 'Cyprus'. Moreover, so clearly does Hesiod gloss the suffix '-γενέα' here that we are bound to apply this gloss to the case of 'ἀφρογενεα'. Aphrodite, it now appears, 'lived' or 'grew' in foam'. This suggestion is given weight by the verb that is twice used by Hesiod of Aphrodite, namely 'θρέφθη' followed by 'ἐν'. This collocation may be treated as though it were *in tmesi* with the result that Aphrodite we discover 'was raised in the foam'²⁴. The foam was her home, whither she retired each evening to return in the morning as Lucifer. When she leaves the sea of a morning it is arguable that she has not been far out to sea (Tr.526). These domestic arrangements provide us with an aition for her stellar manifestation as the Morning Star. Day by day, ahead of the dawn, the goddess would rise (and still rises) from the surf in order to dry her hair. It is also significant that the fundamental meaning of 'θρέφθη' suggests that Aphrodite 'was thickened' in the foam. Here the author should be understood to mean that Aphrodite's hair was thickened by daily exposure to the surf. Indeed, it is the thickness of her locks that allows her to be termed 'well-garlanded' by Hesiod. Certainly, the only extraneous material for creating wreaths is the appropriately pliant but plain grass that grows around Aphrodite's feet (Theogony 194-195: 'ἀμφὶ δὲ ποίη / ποσσὶν ὕπο ῥαδινοῖσιν ἀέξετο'). The beauty of Aphrodite's crown must therefore reside rather in the rope-like quality of her hair which can be formed into the shape of a bagel to create the impression of a crown or garland²⁵. Finally, before we discuss a Homeric passage which bears heavily on this topic, we note with some interest that a likely etymology for the word 'Aphrodite' would see it deriving from 'ἀφρος' and 'διαίτις', namely 'foam' and 'way of living' or 'regimen'. These words perfectly epitomise the thrust of our argument which has been to view Aphrodite as one who subjects her hair to a daily dose of sea-surf in the interests of maintaining its glory. Our argument is furthered by the application of another 'schema', this time deriving from the Anacreontea. When the author attends to Cupid's wet hair, he or she does not so much dry it as squeeze the water from it ('ἐκ δὲ χαίτης / ἀπέθλιβον ὑγρὸν ὕδωρ'). This is an aspect of Aphrodite's toilet that we have remarked upon above. No doubt deliberately, the Anacreontean author infiltrates Aphrodite's technique of impregnating hair with salty surf into the detail of a dexterous and tender application of care by the author towards her son. This makes Cupid's subsequent heartlessness even harder to condone. Lastly the tautologous combination 'ὑγρὸν ὕδωρ' ('wet water') may conceal a more interesting literary grace note. We think 'ὑγρὸν' should be considered a transferred epithet and attached to 'χαίτης' to produce the vignette 'pliant, luxurious, soft hair'. This is the sort of hair that would benefit from Aphrodite's regime. It is also the sort of hair that Cupid possesses in Ovid's poem, though here it lacks the ornamentation and careful styling that was once its glory ('nec habens crinale / ... nec bene dispositas ...comas / ... molles ... capilli': Ex P.3.3.15-17).

The emphasis on hair in this passage is remarkable to the extent that last feet of the three lines discussed produce the virtual rhyming effect of 'capillo ... comas ... capilli'. Ovid is in fact foregrounding hair partly because the word 'schema' like 'κερας' carries the further nuance of 'a characteristic form of hairstyle'. In the meantime, it is worth mentioning two further 'schematic' connections. Firstly 'schema' means 'appearance' [as opposed to 'reality']. This fundamental meaning is

24 This relates to the 'maternal (or motherly) waters' mentioned by Ovid. The Hesiod lines discussed here are the following: 'τὴν δ' Ἀφροδίτην / ἀφρογενέα τε θεῶν καὶ εὐστέφανον Κυθήρειαν / κυκλήσκουσι θεοὶ τε καὶ ἄνδρες, οὐνεκ' ἐν ἀφρῶ / θρέφθη: ἀτὰρ / Κυθήρειαν, ὅτι προσέκυρσε Κυθήροις: / Κυπρογενέα δ', ὅτι γέντο πολυκλύστῳ ἐνὶ Κύπρῳ' (Theogony 195-199).

25 See below on the subject of Livia.

in Ovid's mind at the very start of Ex Ponto 3.3 where he wrestles with the nature of the revelation he has just received ('quae vidi ... / seu veri species ...'; 'what I saw ... whether it was the appearance of reality ...'). Meanwhile the verb 'vacat' occurs three times in the poem (1, 36, 60) though not in meanings directly related to 'schema'. Yet its omnipresence effectively creates an allusive gloss on this meaning of 'schema'. For the cognate adjective 'vacuus' means 'having semblance instead of reality, illusory, empty'.

13.2: Telemachos' Men and the Sea Foam in Odyssey 2

It is incumbent here to discuss another Classical context where the use of surf as a beautifying and strengthening agent informs the narrative. In the Odyssey, Telemachus comes upon his comrades at the edge of a bay as he prepares to leave Ithaca. He finds them 'κάρη κομώωντας' ('with their long hair down': Od.2.248). The Homeric phrase is far from otiose and significantly the men are on the surf-line. They, we suggest, have been bathing their long hair in the salt water²⁶. Telemachus speaks 'among' the group. That is, he goes into their midst ('τοῖσι δὲ καὶ μετέειπ'). His first word sounds peremptory and is intended to be so taken ('δεῦτε, φίλοι, ἦια φερώμεθα'). That is, there will be an expectation that the imperative 'ἄγετε' will follow 'δεῦτε'. Effectively this will convert 'δεῦτε' into a quasi-imperative meaning '[come] hither'. But Telemachus immediately adds the words 'friends'. This is standard practice between intimates or when a challenge is being offered to a third party (Od 9.133, 9.292). More importantly, the phrase 'ἦια φερώμεθα' now wholly destabilises the expectation set up by 'δεῦτε'. Taken as a whole with 'δεῦτε', the phrase must now mean 'friends, let us carry the supplies **to here**'. Telemachos' way with words is akin to pulling rabbits out of a hat. He is business-like but not overbearing. He allows the comrades to absorb in an unqualified way the peremptoriness of his first word. Such a word will always be ominous and indeed will resonate with the young men as they leave the beach. Telemachos however is quick to allay any unease caused by 'δεῦτε'. His next words are conciliatory and they recontextualise the first word. Of course in approaching and addressing the comrades from within their midst, Telemachus has pre-empted the threat of 'δεῦτε [ἄγετε]' materialising. The comrades can hardly understand Telemachos to mean 'come hither' if they are already 'there'. Nevertheless, there is a consummately subtle barb being directed the way of the comrades. They have been lounging around beautifying themselves for the festival of Athene while Telemachus has been busy organising the provision of supplies. Moreover, and as we shall see further, the comrades' hair is now ready to be fashioned into a bagel-shaped bun, the sort of bun on which an amphora could be carried.

14. Lights in the Sky

In her attachment to the goat's beard of Capricorn, Venus-of-the-thick-hair is engaging with the thick hair of a goat. Now goats' beards enjoyed a close etymological involvement in the descriptions of comets or the tails of comets. This should reinvigorate our interest in the astronomical aspects of the Apelles painting. Goats' beards relate on a physical level to the 'hairy' etymology of the Greek word for comet namely 'cometes'. Yet whilst the word 'κομη' itself ('long hair') also means 'tail of a comet', so too does a synonym for 'goat's beard' namely 'τραγοπωγων'. At this point we note the 'wave-washed long hair' of another etymology of Aegoceras, namely 'αἰγες' ('waves') and 'κορσαι/κορραι' ('hair'). This restates very concisely the salient aspect of Venus' relationship with her own hair which we have discussed above. In sum, whilst the polysemy of the constellation Capricorn has been noted by such as

²⁶ 'Salt water also acts as a natural shampoo ... your hair is extremely dry after coming out of the water ... because the salt in the ocean cleanses all the oils from your hair. If you have a particularly greasy scalp ... salt water is an excellent way to strip unnecessary oils from your hair. Bathing in sea water also adds volume to your hair.. The salt gets rid of the built-up chemicals, whether it be conditioners, hair spray, gels ... and thus your hair isn't nearly as weighed down. The water even gets rid of dandruff because, especially when the salt particles are larger rather than smaller, it acts as an exfoliant to your scalp' <http://discover.hubpages.com>.

Tamsyn Barton²⁷, we suggest that this polysemy is as much verbal as visual. Nevertheless, we end this paragraph on a visual note. The coins minted by Augustus to mark the passing of Caesar's comet regularly show a goat's beard enveloping one of the star's radii. Thus, through the connections of Capricorn to the flowing hair of the Venus of the 'Morning Star' and from there back to the goat's beard of Capricorn, we are led by the hair to the image of a comet, an image that must have been in Augustus' mind when he juxtaposed Caesar's star-studded statue with Apelles' painting in the temple of Divus Julius.

The connection is made secure by a singular fact. The word 'λαμπη' (also spelt 'λαπη') describes any scum or residue floating on water. It is the sort of word that could do duty for Aphrodite's inshore foam which derives from her prefix of 'ἄφρος'. But the homonym 'λαμπη' is much better known as the word for 'torch' in Greek. Meanwhile the cognate word 'λαμπας' (which could be the Accusative Plural of 'λαμπη') is used of 'torches' but also 'meteorites' and 'comets'. The term 'λαμπας' also returns us to the 'light of a star' and to the Morning Star in particular. It also appears in Ovid's poem in the sense of 'torches' though not in relation to 'comets. There is even a connection between 'lampas' and our 'door-windows' or 'φαστηρες'. For the cognate epithet 'φαστηριος' defines Bacchus of the *torch-lit* orgies. This is hardly surprising given that these doors have effectively been transformed into torches by the light of the sinking Moon. Meanwhile the word 'δαιτις' or 'δειτις'²⁸ also means 'torch' and it is confirmed as an etymology of Aphrodite at Ephesus. In sum through verbal allusion and visual representation in the sky, the goddess Aphrodite leaves the Ocean and her daily toilet to join her son (with his traditional accoutrements) in alluding to torches, that are appearing not only in the interstices of the text but also, as we shall see, in the night sky over Tomis.

15. Aphrodite and Livia

Ultimately there are two ways to treat such hair as that owned by Aphrodite. Firstly, one can let it cascade freely. Such will be the style adopted by the debonnaire youths of Ithaca. They will have more than a hint of the Bohemian about them. Alternatively, one may create a bagel²⁹. This will form the basis for the Hesiodic 'well-garlanded' effect. The use of this 'bagel' to support the weight of a hydria full of water appears on the Athenian Black Figure vase MNA10924. The vase painting expresses the demureness of a Greek 'mater' who has prepared herself, like an attentive peasant wife, to carry hydrias that rest against the cushion ('nodus') she has devised for her upper forehead (Ex Ponto 3.8.12). Meanwhile, looking from left to right, the figures 1,3,5 on the Metropolitan Museum Fountain House scene clearly show the 'nodus' against which the horizontal hydria leans. The lower part of this vase stretches along the braid that leads from the 'nodus' to the rear bun. In this context Livia's 'nodus' portraits must have an ideological meaning. That is, the 'nodus' is sculptural shorthand for the workmanlike domesticity of the 'matrona' who fills her vases dutifully and regularly. We suggest that the 'nodus' has been borrowed by Livia from Ancient Greek vases and Late Republican portraits in order to situate herself in the vanguard of female 'piety' ('pietas') viz-a-viz the household 'dominus'. Significantly Livia's 'floruit' in Rome is still to come. It is the imminent arrival of the Sun in Aquarius ('the Water Carrier') which heralds the virtual accession of Livia the 'dutiful' water-fetching mother of

²⁷ Tamsyn Barton.

²⁸ The etymology of 'δαιτις' or 'δειτις' is thought to be 'that which is bound'. This is thought-provoking as we will have much to say about the binding or non-binding of hair as a token of (a) Roman respectability or lack of respectability (b) beauty and urbanity - or its absence - in the self-presentation of Roman *matronae* (c) the appearance of comets with their dishevelled 'hair'. Cupid's hair meanwhile is unbound and dishevelled in token of the fact that his patronage of (unbridled) erotic verse has made him disreputable under the current regime. At the same time his unprepossessing appearance also represents the griminess of what passes for love amongst the Roman elite.

²⁹ It is possible the youths had washed their hair and were about to create a bagel on which to carry supplies for the voyage. It seems more likely that they were dressing up for the 'Pannychian' ('All-Night') festival of Athene and Poseidon (Od.2.230-234; 3.4-10).

Tiberius, the new emperor. The masculine gender of the substantive 'Aquarius' serves to underscore the empress's wearing of the trousers in the governance of the empire.

16. Ovid and the Anacreontea

We now turn back the clock in order to trace the possible motivation that might have convinced Ovid to pen Anacreontea 33. In what follows the role of Medea as the ostensible author will be laid aside in favour of the role of Ovid as the 'true' author. As an actor in his own drama, the writer of the poem effectively devises his own perdition. His lighting of the lamp and his warming of the god's hands reignite and restore Cupid's manual and visual faculties. Once shot by Cupid in the middle of the liver, the poet can expect nothing but heartache in love. Indeed, the tenderness he shows towards Cupid demonstrates the particular sensitivity he is likely to suffer in his amours. However, it is the nature of that suffering that now interests us. If we suppose for the sake of argument that Ovid *is* the author of Anacreontea 33 then we might be inclined to adopt an allegorical or metapoetic interpretation of the poem's meaning. That is, the poem might be regarded as a belated aition explaining the poet's initial (and even perhaps lifelong) adherence to the path of love poetry. That path will inevitably begin with the Amores, his first foray into poetry. Meanwhile, we should be in mind that 'Amor' is the name Ovid uses to describe Cupid in Ex Ponto 3.3. We should also note the re-reading of the word 'Amores' as 'Amor es' ('you Cupid are a reality'; 'you, Cupid, are present'; 'you are not the appearance of reality, O Cupid³⁰'). These meanings resonate within the context of Ex Ponto 3.3 and the Anacreontea poem, and connect them to the Amores.

Anacreontea 33 ends with the poet being wounded by an arrow. We know that Ovid had himself been wounded multiple times by Cupid in the Amores. Yet, in a metapoetic sense, these wounds are no more or less than the literary devices which motivate his erotic output (Amores 1.2.7-8: 'Sic erit; haeserunt tennes in corde sagittae, / et possessa ferus pectora versat Amor'). These literary wounds are revisited in the Fasti in the proem to Book 4 where the 6-book elegiac epic, as it were, 'turns for home', rather as the celestial Great Bear turns for home at the start of the Anacreontea poem. Ovid addresses Venus who affects concern that Ovid may still harbour 'an old [still bleeding] wound' in his soft heart. The wound seems to exist but its nature is coyly passed over ('de vulnere ... scis'). In sum, given the poet's life-long involvement in Rome with Cupid *qua* inspirer of his elegiacs, a retrospective account of their initial meeting would seem to constitute a fitting acknowledgment of the source of Ovid's prolonged span of elegiac creativity. In the Fasti passage, in still being Venus' property, Ovid is still a camp-follower of Love. Yet, rather than being a youth enslaved to Love, he may now rather be in the ownership of (and at the disposal of) the imperial household which claimed descent, as we have seen, from Venus herself ('et vatem et mensem, Venus, scis esse tuos': Fasti 4.14). Ovid's 'wound', that is, has moved on from the Amores. Indeed, as we have seen, his most recent wound derives from a sexual (?) scandal emanating from within the imperial court ('te laeserit'). At Tristia 1.3.72, as Ovid leaves Rome to go into exile, Venus reappears as the Morning Star. She is described now as 'stella gravis' ('a baleful star', 'a star that is not to be trifled with' 'an oppressive star') which reminds the reader of the erotic literary (and actual) travails which have brought Ovid to this pass and which continue to exert pressure. Significantly it is Venus' appearance in the night sky which finally persuades ('imposes itself upon') Ovid to embark on his literary exile. This closes the circle on Ovid's erotic career as promoted by Venus and Cupid. Such wounds as Ovid now bears (inflicted by the Jovian thunderbolt) are revealed as being the result of the original wounds inflicted by Cupid. They are the natural literary successors (and literary consequences) of the wounds which inspired the poet's first work. Ovid leaves for Tomis because he is 'convicted' of having been Venus' convinced adherent. His personal conviction to become a love poet, inspired by Venus the Love Goddess, has led him to an erotic-elegiac departure which however is not so much inspired by as overseen by Venus the figurehead of the regime. In sum, in Ovid's case, the expression 'wounded by Eros' works on many levels, not least on the level of real life.

³⁰ See above for 'the semblance of reality' meaning attaching to 'σχημα'.

On the one hand, our consideration of Anacreontea 33 as an Ovidian composition relates specifically however to the Amores and the original Cupidian ‘wound’ of love. On the other hand, however, writing a retrospective aition is a process that will be complicated by the subsequent evolution of the ‘event’. *Nolens volens* what led up to the event will be seen through the prism of what happened next. As a person this retrospect may of course be undertaken rather *nolens* than *volens*. As a poet however the creation of the aition will be entirely *volens*. In short, in both a real and metapoetic sense, Ovid-the-poet’s ‘career wound’ has been reopened several times in response to ‘actual’ events. These reopenings (one of which is inflicted by the imperial regime) are transmuted by the poet into verse. Any poetic retrospect upon the original wound must be coloured by that wound’s literary and actual history.

17. Roman Triumphs

We will soon turn to the skies and to an examination of Ovid’s use of astronomy to flesh out his literary message. Firstly, however, the stars can assist with resolving a chronological problem. In Ex Ponto 3.3, Cupid announces the immediate prospect (‘neve moram timeas tempus ... instat’) of a triumph. That the occasion brooks of no delay serves, we suggest, as an ironic comment on what was, as Suetonius confirms, Tiberius’ long-delayed’ triumph over the rebellious Illyrians which Ovid had also described at in Ex Ponto 1 passim and at Ex Ponto 2.2.75f³¹. However, it is generally thought that this Illyrian triumph took place on October 23rd 12 CE (*Fasti Praenestini* s.v. X Kalends November: Ti(berius) Caesar curru triumphavit / ex Il(l)<y=V>rico’). Velleius only ascribes three triumphs in total to Tiberius, the second of which had been held in 7 BC (Velleius 2.98). If October 23 12 CE was the date of Tiberius’ third triumph, then there should be no question of a fourth triumph supervening in January 13 CE.

The case *for* a triumph on 16 January 13 CE has been made by Frederick Shipley. His arguments do not wholly convince. Velleius tells us that Velleius himself served for nine years under Tiberius from the date of the latter’s adoption by Augustus (26 June 4 CE). There is enough of the campaigning season left after June 26th to assume that 4 CE constitutes the first of Velleius’ nine years. His last year will therefore be 12 CE after which he will have attended the triumphal procession celebrating victory over the Illyrians on October 23rd (Velleius himself confirms his own attendance). Now in support of non-event status of the January triumph, the fragmentary *Fasti Praenestini* may refer to something quite other than a triumph over Pannonia on the 16th (‘T. CAESAR EX PA [] AVIT’ = ‘... EX PA[NNONIA ET DALMATIA TRIUMPH]AVIT’ or ‘EX PA[NNONIA REVERSUS DEDIC]AVIT’). The missing text, that is, could have mentioned the three temples ‘restored’ (‘NOVAS’) from funds provided by the Imperial Treasury and dedicated by Tiberius (‘EX PA[TRIMONIO NOVAS AEDES DEDIC]AVIT’; ‘he dedicated temples restored using funds from the Imperial Treasury’). We note that this restoration occupies the same stretch of Latin letters as the first (26). Discussion of these (three) temples merits an entire paragraph in Tacitus’ *Annals* (2.49).

18. Celestial Symbolism

On the other hand, the coins of late 13 with Tiberius in triumphal garb and action, may hint at there having being two triumphs in quick succession (*pace* Velleius’ maximum three triumphs for Tiberius). Indeed, very good evidence for a triumphal (or planned triumphal) procession in January 13 CE comes from the Ex Ponto itself. A glance at the night skies of 16 January 13 CE reveals a tableau that reflects, illuminates, and develops the significance of the triumphal rituals that Cupid tells Ovid are to be performed, not just ‘soon’ but over the following few minutes. Firstly, the area below the horizon we suggest represents the pre-narrational stage of the day’s events. Here we find the Sun perched on the fin or tail of the constellation Capricorn. The function of a piscine tail is to steer and direct through water,

³¹ The date of 16 January 13 CE has been assigned to this triumph by F.W. Shipley in *Chronology of the Building Operations in Rome from the Death of Caesar to the Death of Augustus in Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome Vol. 9 (1931)*, pp. 7-60.

much like the rudder which appears on Augustan coins bearing Capricorn's image. The Imperial House represented by Augustus' natal sign Capricorn may be read as having appropriated the triumphal 'day' ('Sun') to its own ideological 'bearing'. Meanwhile that the day is in hock to a specifically Augustan programme emerges from the rising of Venus ahead of the Sun (= 'day'). She leads the procession, yet, like an early-morning client calling on their patron, she shows herself to be a suppliant of Capricorn's. Meanwhile Capricorn's position in the sky at this time (straddling the horizon), along with his dual physical conformation, mediates between one world ('fish' = 'water') and another ('goat' = 'land'). The constellation here allegorises and mediates the soon-to-be-emperor's control of the processes by which the heralded day rises from Oceanus to illuminate the land. Like an impresario, the imperial signifier, Capricorn, directs and guarantees the world's temporal progress, particularly on this day of triumph.

Of much interest is the position of Mercury next to the sun beside the tail of Capricorn. He represents the story's executive processes, symbolising in particular the 'message-bearing' element which, through Venus' rising and Cupid's news, takes the narrative onwards. The Sun meanwhile, in representing the coming day as a horse-drawn chariot, also symbolises the figure of Tiberius who, as the 'triumphator', rode in a quadriga. Certainly, in Ovid's day the general's chariot would have been drawn by four white horses. Thus, in *Ex Ponto* 2.8 the poet trusts that Tiberius, standing over his white steeds, will avenge Drusus' death. A triumph is clearly envisaged here and it is one that evokes, or is allegorised by, Sol rising from Oceanus with his own white steeds³². Indeed, Capricorn is about to thrust itself into the morning sky by using the force and guidance of its Sun-powered fin, thereby paralleling this strand of the allegory.

The triumph was 'of a day'. It was also therefore 'of a single sun', a single 'lampas' the rising and setting of which topped and tailed the ceremonial round. Jupiter meanwhile was the other figure to whom the triumphator was most closely assimilated and it can be no coincidence that the stars on 16 January 13 CE were in linear conjunction with each other with a direct line running from Sol in Capricorn through Saturn, Venus, Mars, to Jupiter in Libra. This is to circumscribe the story with a vengeance, but the circumscription is not temporal. Rather the Jupiter-Sol axis dominates proceedings ideologically. Across the skies from Capricorn lies Libra, Augustus' birth sign. Meanwhile Capricorn, his lunar birth sign, is related to the moon on the other side of the sky in Leo. The connection is made good through using the planets and celestial bodies as indicative 'cursors'. That is, Venus on Capricorn's chin looks across to the Moon on Leo's chin creating a form of visual allusiveness or echoing. Moreover, references in the literature establish the connection between Leo, the Sun and Jupiter. Manilius in addressing the planet Jupiter, advises him as follows: 'you yourself rule Leo with the Mother of the Gods' (*Astronomica* 2.441). Meanwhile Helios is conflated with 'immortal' Zeus in the Orphic Hymn 8 to Helios.

The Sun we should remember was due to move into Aquarius on the day following the triumph³³. The figure of Aquarius just to the rear of Capricorn's fin will bring to mind Ganymede, the Olympian water-bearer, and his apotheosis at the hands of Jupiter. In terms of the celestial zodiac and terrestrial Rome, Tiberius will be tantalisingly close to the threshold of his own catasterism and immortality as he makes his way through the triumphal day. Yet Ganymede is not the ideal role model for Tiberius. In the *Argonautica* he is bullied by Cupid and ignores Aphrodite. And here with the zodiac in equipoise, Aquarius and Capricorn determinedly look away from one another. Perhaps we are to see here the lack of familial 'concordia' which was a feature of the late Augustan principate. The growth in the cult of Concordia only underscored the presence of 'discordia'.

When Ovid addresses Paulus Fabius Maximus as 'sidus Fabiae gentis' ('O star of the Fabian gens') we catch a flavour of this other-worldly, triumphal, catasterising atmosphere. Yet although the word 'star' had become a staple of imperial laudatory diction³⁴, it was also used of the star of Divus

³² The Heliaia (festival of Helios, the Sun) was celebrated with chariot races, musical competitions, and the sacrifice of a chariot and white horses which were thrown into the sea (Rice 383, Arnold 435-436). Pausanias speaks of the sacrifice of white horses to Helios on the mountain of Taleton above the town of Bryseae (3.20.4). The cinnabar paint that was smeared over the triumphator's face may have *inter alia* suggested the sun-burnt face of the sun.

³³ Columella RR 11.2.4-5 (on January 16): 'Cancer finishes setting'; January 17: 'the Sun moves into Aquarius'.

³⁴ e.g. Manilius *Astronomica* 1.385.

Iulius. That is, it evoked comets, a point to which we will return. Meanwhile, as if to counterbalance the martial backdrop provided by Jupiter and Mars, both gods are housed in Libra, the sign of equilibrium. A compromise was always required between the quasi-divine status of the triumphator and his innate mortality. His sense of 'gloria' was tempered by the incessantly-repeated words of a slave who was posted on his chariot ('Remember you are mortal' the slave would say). Inside the pomerium of Rome the martial ardour that had been essential to victory had to be reined in. Wars were not ends in themselves but pathways to peace symbolised by the laurel presented before the Capitoline temple at the close of the day's events. This is where Jupiter sets the seal on the day, just as he does in the night sky.

It is worth recapitulating the imminence and importance of Aquarius. We have observed that the Roman 'matrona' thickened her hair by the action of surf to enable her to carry 'heavy' amphorae of water. Thus, Aquarius brings to mind portraits of the devoted 'peasant' mother of imperial ideology, the 'matrona', that is, whom Augustus fondly imagined carrying water from the spring to the house sometimes several times a day (Ex Ponto 3.8.12). This matrona *par excellence* was Livia as her portraits testify.

19. The Arrangement of Ovid's Room

However, we have chosen 03.40 on January 16 as the temporal moment on which to concentrate our attention. This choice will seem purely arbitrary unless it is supported by omens in the night sky. We will argue that the configuration of the sky at 03.40 dovetails with the description given by Ovid of his surroundings at the moment he is awoken. Firstly, on a general level, the symbiotic relationship of Venus and Cupid in ancient art will suggest that the rising of Venus (03.40) should allegorise the arrival of Cupid within the narrative. However, the circumstance which does most to delimit the time-frame of the story, is a particular feature particular of Cancer in January which reaches a climax on January 16 and which in the year 13 CE is enhanced by the background presence of the full harvest moon.

Firstly, we learn that the moonlight floods into Ovid's bedroom with a mid-month brilliance. However, this light will not have penetrated the room unless the moon were low in the sky. Meanwhile that a bedroom might have two windows facing one another (and even a third to the side) is apparent from Pliny the Younger's description of the secondary tablinum in his Laurentine Villa (Epistles 2.17: '*one window to the rising and another to the setting sun ... then comes a dining-room ... there are folding doors on all sides of it, or windows that are quite as large as such doors, and so from the two sides and the front it commands a prospect as it were of three seas ... then another room which would serve either as a large bed-chamber or a moderate sized dining-room*'). This single passage suggests that the windows in Ovid's room may have stretched to the floor. This is important in the sense that it confirms that Cupid will arrive 'on his feet' and simply walk forward into the room (the shutters being open). Not surprisingly then Ovid's first impression is that Cupid is standing ('*stabat Amor*').

Meanwhile, on a general level, the tablinum in Republican times constituted the master's bedroom at the rear of the atrium, and, even in Augustus' day, it was common to refer to the couch in the tablinum as the 'lectus adversus' ('the bed opposite') or 'lectus genialis' ('marriage bed'). This brings us to the point that a cubiculum was regularly used as a reception area (effectively a 'tablinum'). Pliny (15.38) talks of 'bedrooms for the reception of clients' ('*saluatoriis cubiculis*') and indeed in a sense Cupid is an early morning 'client' calling upon his 'professional master' ('*decepto ... magistro*'; '*te ... magistro*'). In Seneca's dialogue *De Clementia* we hear of Augustus' convening a panel of advisors in his bedroom in Gaul only to summarily dismiss them from his bedroom (9.6 '*dimissisque omnibus e cubiculo*') in order to talk to the treacherous Lucius Cinna alone.

Bedrooms could also double up as dining rooms however, just as Pliny's passage quoted above suggests. In Seneca's *De Consolatione* (6.22.6) the behaviour of a certain Cordus gives us much information about these 'cubiculis': '*in cubiculum se quasi gustaturus contulit et dimissis pueris quaedam per fenestram, ut uideretur edisse, proiecit; a cena deinde, quasi iam satis in cubiculo edisset, abstinuit ... Atque ita iussit lumen omne praecludi et se in tenebras condidit*'. Clearly it was thought perfectly natural for the master to dine in his bedroom alone. Moreover, the window must have been at a low level if this Codrus was able to throw his food through it. Thirdly there must have been at least two different sources

of light if Codrus' demand that all sources of light should be extinguished. Meanwhile in Seneca's *De Ira* (8.6 'Cum quo, ut aiunt, cenabat in cubiculo lectae patientiae cliens') we hear of a certain Caelius dining in his bedroom with a 'long-suffering client'.

The date of Ovid's encounter with Cupid is said to be 'around' the Ides which adequately indicates January 16th. Once again a balance is evident. Half the month has gone, half remains, just as the etymology of the word 'Ides' confirms (> 'iduo' = 'I divide'). Moreover, the moon was conventionally considered to be full on the day of the Ides, a fact confirmed by Stellarium for the night in question. All this will mean that anyone entering Ovid's room through a window in the south-eastern side will be picked out by a corridor of moonlight thrown against that window. We are to understand that this corridor of light is perfectly regular, the oblong of light to the South-East being of the same dimensions as the window itself³⁵. Effectively Cupid is illuminated from the other side of the room as though by an ancient slide-projector.

20. The word 'ἄκουσιος'

At this point we wish to address another curious aspect of the text. Ovid is terrified by the beating of wings outside his window. Outside, the disturbed air 'shudders'. However, then, rather bathetically the door-window is pushed open causing it to creak with a faint sound. Whilst this may increase the suspense, there is another more philological reason for Ovid's 'low sound'. The word 'ἄκουσις' being the technical equivalent of 'ἄκουσματιον' (Plotinus 4.1.12) means 'a small sound' in Greek. Its diminutive status would allow us to posit 'parvo ... sono' as an Ovidian etymology were there some neighbouring lexical term that expressed the same notion. Now were 'ἄκουσις' to be declined in the Epic dialect one would arrive, not at the Attic genitive form 'ἄκουσεως' but at ἄκουσιος' (meaning 'of a faint sound')³⁶. The effective homonym of this word is provided by the adjective 'ἄκουσιος', which is a contracted form of 'ἄεκουσιος'. In Thucydides the adverb of this word ('ἄκουσιως') is used to refer to an unwanted and uninvited guest at a dinner party'. One could argue then that 'ἄκουσιος' is the composite definition of the notion of an unwelcome guest that makes little sound³⁷. Here we reengage with the most characteristic feature of Ex Ponto 3.3, namely its adherence to a poetics of 'schemata'. With Ovid propped on his left elbow the scene is in any case set as though for a '(schematic) cena'³⁸. And Cupid is certainly treated as an unwelcome guest. As the god who set Ovid on the course to disaster, he is pilloried by his host for having the temerity to come to his house. If then we identify Cupid with the 'uninvited of little sound' it behoves the text to define him more precisely as an 'umbra'. And with Cupid standing in the doorway bathed in moonlight it is impossible not to see the actual 'shadow' ('umbra') imprinted on the one door-leaf that remains closed.

Thus, we suggest that the phrase 'parvo ... sono' in being a synonym of 'ἄκουσιος' is both metapoetically and literally 'a faint aural warning' of the multiple arrival of both the word 'ἄκουσιος' and the agenda of 'an unwelcome guest' ('ἄκουσιος') who brings with him various nuances of 'ἄκουσις', namely 'a rumour' or 'report' (of triumph) and 'a set of oral instructions' (on how to profit from the general atmosphere of good-will). These last two items in Cupid's luggage derive from secondary meanings of ἄκουσματιον' which is considered a synonym of 'ἄκουσις'. From a different perspective, the 'umbra' (who is 'ἄκουσιος') can be interpreted as the producer 'of a [literally] faint noise'. This also allegorically articulates the reader's reception of a scarcely perceptible background discourse involving Greek homonyms. However, even here there are further subtextual channels to explore. As we have seen in the case of Cupid's first words, the words of Ovid's text are susceptible to dislocation and reformation. The word 'ἄκουσιος' could be redivided and elided to produce in the Epic dialect 'ἄκουσ[ε][α] ιος'. In this form we glimpse Ovid continuing to wrestle with the justice of his fate. There seem to be others who

³⁵ Such shutters may have been almost the length of doors, as we find at the villa of Oplontis.

³⁶ Compare 'πολιος' - 'of a city'.

³⁷ For 'umbra' see Horace Satires 2.8.2, Epistles 1.5.22.

³⁸ Σχημα = 'posture when in bed'.

were just as worthy of punishment (ἀκουσ[ε][α] ἰος = 'I alone received the order'). Meanwhile Ovid's case was heard by Augustus sitting alone ('he alone gave the judicial order'). This creates an allusion to the 'acts without constraint' which we suggested earlier was a meaning of 'καπρα' which doubles up as the prefix of 'Capricorn'. Ovid suggests Augustus and the Principate are accountable to no one and nothing. Meanwhile, there is another way of construing the same words ἀκουσ[ε][α] ἰος, namely 'I understood IOS'. Here the author has heard the faint noise and thinks its cause is 'rustiness' on the door-shutter ('IOS'). Certainly, the door creaks audibly when Cupid enters ('gemuut'). Alternatively, IOS also means 'arrow'. Perhaps the scraping of one of Cupid's arrows on the closed shutter was what Ovid thought he heard as the unbidden guest prised his way in ('I heard 'an arrow'). Lastly the verb ἀκουσ[ε] may be rendered 'he was called ...'. It seems hard to contest the likelihood that Cupid was regularly known as 'the son' ('IOS' = 'UIOS'), a sobriquet that foregrounds the status of his mother Aphrodite herself.

An analysis of the word ἀκουσιος sees it derive from ἀεκουσιος meaning 'an action done involuntarily'. As we have seen this renders it the exact opposite of 'καπρα' ('act of licentiousness'). Certainly, Cupid assumes the licence to enter Ovid's house. In that sense he is the equivalent of an 'umbra' at a 'cena'. Meanwhile, the surroundings - and Ovid's posture - are highly redolent of a 'cena', whilst at the same time our 'umbra' casts an actual shadow onto the door-shutter behind. There is an ebb and flow between the literal and metaphorical which is the result of injecting 'schemata' into the text. This brings us to 'corporis umbra' (3) which constitutes an advance warning of the arrival of 'the shadow of [Cupid's] body'. But it also means principally 'the semblance of someone or something real'. Here we have the literal meaning providing the 'schema' whilst the metaphor carries the superficial meaning. One of our main interests lies in establishing the timings of the narrative and the 'on-stage' positions adopted by the protagonists. One particular issue emerges which demands our attention. Having read Ovid's opening speech aloud, we estimate that it would have taken three minutes to deliver. Following this speech Cupid makes a solemn declaration exculpating Ovid's erotic works of any blame. He swears by 4 things sacred to him (a) 'his arrows' (b) 'his torches' (c) 'mother' (d) 'the head of Caesar'. Now during the time that Ovid effectively recapitulates the arguments of *Tristia* 2, Cupid will have been gazing through the window through which the setting moon was still visible. He will have noticed - indeed his attention will have been inevitably drawn to - any unusual light shooting across the far horizon. We know of a meteorite shower - the Cancriids - which still culminates in intensity at exactly the time of year in which our poem is set³⁹. Its presence in the sky is thought to have escaped attention until 1872 after which sporadic sightings continued until its status of 'shower' was confirmed in 1971. The phrase 'meteor drizzle' might be more appropriate for there are rarely more than 2-3 shooting stars sighted per hour. The general quality of the shower is described as 'Gemenid-like, fairly slow and bright'⁴⁰ However individual occurrences are more arresting. For instance, 'on 1879 January 12, a fireball was observed'. Meanwhile one recent shooting star 'was extremely slow (taking 3.8 seconds to move 30+°) and bright'. Another source adds that 'meteors of this source are slow, sometimes fireball brightness'.

These details accord well with the notion of Cupid being distracted by streaking fireballs in the sky as Ovid finishes his plaint. Cupid may have taken the fireballs for moving comets especially as fireballs often leave the impression of two long locks of hair trailing behind the head. These fireball meteors will have emanated from the area of Delta Cancri and will have set around 4.5 minutes after the rising of Venus on the eastern horizon. That is, throughout Ovid's speech, Cupid has had a face-on view of one or more very bright meteorites. Almost as soon as Ovid finishes speaking the light show will be at an end. Cupid barely has time to address the lights before they set. It is Cupid's first words - and 'first words' were always ominous - that suggest unusual lights are before his eyes. Anxious to convince Ovid of his 'gravitas', Cupid swears by what he can actually see as he stands in Ovid's room. Whilst he seems

39 <http://www.universetoday.com/1210/whats-up-this-week-january-15-january-21-2007/>: Tuesday, January 16 – Early this morning will be the peak of Delta Cancri meteor shower'.

40 Information from Gary W. Kronk Meteor Showers: An Annotated Catalog, pp.20-21.

to begin with an appeal to his conventional ‘torches’ (‘per mea tela, faces ...’), we should remember that the word ‘fax’ in the plural meant ‘meteorites’.

Cupid has been forewarned of the meteorite storm by Ovid’s incidental (and therefore ominous) reference to ‘torches’. Ovid had prayed that Cupid’s ‘torches’ (‘lampades’) may never be lacking their ‘scorching’ but also ‘fast-moving’ flame. Whilst the word ‘lampada’ means both ‘meteorite’ and ‘comet’, the nuance of ‘fast-moving’ contained in ‘rapido’, as well as its plural number, should relate to meteorites. Merely seeing a fast-moving meteorite-cum-fireball is highly ominous of the gods’ intervention, an intervention evidenced elsewhere in the case of, for instance, Virgil’s Anchises. Cupid is therefore persuaded to swear by the ‘torch-like’ flashes of light he sees in the sky.

Cupid then mentions his arrows. They will be housed in his quiver. In Greek the word ‘ἔλυτρον’ means both ‘bow case’ and ‘crab shell’. Thus a celestial ‘schema’ operates between the quiver to which Cupid points as he stands in the room and the crab shell of Cancer, the constellation from which the ‘arrows’ that are ‘the shooting stars’ of the Cancrid shower emanate. The worlds of celestial phenomena and terrestrial terminologies are operating in tandem. Another word for crab shell is ‘κυμβη’ which translates and transliterates into the Latin as ‘cumba’ meaning ‘small boat’. As well as being a favourite metapoetic vehicle by which Ovid charts his progress through his poetic seascape, the word ‘cumba’ also means ‘lectica’. Now, whilst this usually means a litter, in Suetonius the diminutive ‘lecticula’ is used of a couch to which the emperor Augustus retires to work by night (78.1). One must assume then that ‘lectica’ itself could be used to express the notion of ‘couch’. Thus, as Cupid points towards the celestial crab shell (the backdrop against which the meteorites make their mark) his hand inevitably also points towards Ovid’s ‘couch’. That is, the guarantor of Cupid’s solemn oath is both an object seen by Cupid through the window (‘κυμβη’ = Cancer’s shell) and an object seen along the same bearings within the room (‘κυμβη’ = ‘lectus’).

In the meantime, arrows were thought to be visible in the constellation of Sagittarius according to Manilius. This constellation will be visible to Ovid through the window behind Cupid, which is counterpointed by the view of Cancer and its meteorites. With Sagittarius turning away to shoot towards the East, the quiver, with the arrow-feathers exposed, will be clearly visible to Ovid. At this point we return to the redivision of ‘per mea tela ...’. We noted that the ‘moonlight’ may outshine Cupid’s own torches and arrows as it passes through the room, but now we know its brilliance is even a match for the meteors and shooting stars (‘sagittae’) outside

In Cupid’s oath, the third point of reference seems to be ‘[his] mother’. Venus has recently risen in the sky and is again visible through Ovid’s South-Eastern window. In rising from the Ocean she is recalling Apelles’ famous painting. Ovid himself summarises her pose at *Tristia* 2.527-528 (‘madidos siccata digitis Venus uda capillos / modo maternis tecta videtur aquis’). However, there is no counterpoint to Aphrodite in Ovid’s room. There is no domestic object or person by which Cupid might swear (as he has done so far). Furthermore, we have become accustomed to Cupid gesturing deictically. In fact ‘the mother’ could instead be Livia for the reason that quite recently at *Ex Ponto* 2.8.1ff Ovid had thanked Cotta Maximus for the despatch of busts (‘heads’) representing the three members of the imperial family, namely Augustus, Livia and Tiberius. Significantly Livia is termed ‘mother’ later in the poem when she is again associated with Augustus and Tiberius (87-88).

In the search for ‘σχηματα’ we would redivide ‘Caesareum caput’ (‘[I swear] by Caesar’s head’)⁴¹ to read ‘Caesar [reum] caput’. This now gives us the two personages behind Cupid’s oath (‘Oh Caesar, [I swear] by the guilty ring-leader’). The ‘guilty head of the regime’ will be Augustus though a different translation may be directed at Ovid (‘on the life of the defendant’). Not only does Ovid find the three leaders of the Principate to swear by, he also has representatives for his three statuettes. But what of the equivalent ‘appellandi’ in the sky? If Livia is the Water-Carrier and Tiberius Capricorn, where is Augustus? We suggest he is present in the guise of the star ‘Regulus’, As Venus and Tiberius ascend ‘Regulus’ ‘the Petty King’ sets. The power of Augustus is evaporating. His beard or mane is tugged at vainly by Aphrodite. The title he now bears was once an anathema to the Romans (‘king’). In Ovid’s

⁴¹ Swearing oaths by a multiplicity of ‘heads’ is common in Ancient Literature. See *Argonautica* 3.151.

hands it is virtually a term of contempt. This reference to Augustus is reinforced by a singular coincidence. The word for 'lion' in Greek is 'λις'. This can be transliterated into Latin to produce the word 'lis' which means 'legal dispute between two people'. By dint of bilingual paronomasia, the presence of Leo acts as an omen which colours our reception of Cupid's words. The dispute between Ovid and Augustus is sinking into oblivion.

Meanwhile the Greek word for Capricorn is 'Aegoceras' which translates as 'goat horn'. However, the prefix 'Aex, Aegis' also means 'a fiery meteorite' no doubt in the sense that it derives from 'αἰσσω, αἰξω' ('I dart, flash'). This is precisely the type of meteorite (also known as 'capra') that is known to emanate from the Delta Cancrids. At the same time the suffix of Aegoceras ('-ceras') evokes words that are etymologically related to 'κερας' such as 'κερατιας' ('comet') and 'κερατισμος' ('baleful comet')⁴².

21. Conclusion

Ovid's dexterity in linking homonyms, synonyms and etymologies to create a cryptic, literary message is revealed at its most flamboyant in Ex Ponto 3.3. Whether or not Anacreontea 33 is by his hand, the story of Cupid's second visit to the Euxine has much to offer the student not only of ancient literature but of ancient astronomy. Indeed, it is the connection to Argonautica 3 that particularly captures the interest. For if Cupid had successfully completed his mission to fire Medea with passion for Jason, then logically he will have received the magical blue ball offered him by his mother. This is said to 'like a star, send a flaming track through the air' (Argonautica 3.141). We wonder whether Cupid has returned to Tomis not just to warn Ovid of the impending triumph, but to see the long-lasting effects of his ball-throwing 'long centuries' ago. In Ovid there are hidden discourses that inject a multilayered element into his poetry. Meanwhile to access these discourses requires the application of literary-critical techniques the reception of which remains problematical. Yet Ovid route-marks his new methodologies for the reader. When he mentions the Roman people 'congratulating themselves' ('sibi gratulantur') we should take this as an omen that those words will, at some stage of the text, be overheard. In fact, a deep-lying source tells us that the people cried 'Oh Fortunate Heir'

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⁴² On a metapoetic level the etymology of 'Caesar' sees it derive from 'caedo' 'I cut'. This must be an underlying injunction to the reader that these lines require cutting and reassembling.

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