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## Ovid, *ex Ponto* 4: An Intratextually Cohesive Book

The poems of the fourth book of Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto* are not infrequently held to have been arranged and published posthumously, firstly because of the absence of the structure of the *libellus* one might have expected in the light of that found in the first three books of the *Epistulae*;<sup>1</sup> secondly because of the (relatively) wide chronological range of the poems when compared with Ovid's other books of exilic poetry (AD 13–16);<sup>2</sup> and, thirdly because of the number of lines, which exceeds that of each of the other books of the *Tristia* and *ex Ponto* by a not insignificant degree.<sup>3</sup> The second and the third of these objections have been dealt with succinctly elsewhere.<sup>4</sup> In this paper, I will consider further the rôle played by the order of the poems—what Wulfram has referred to as 'des Pudels Kern',<sup>5</sup> the crux of the matter—in considering whether Ovid had a hand in arranging the *libellus*, and will demonstrate that an intratextual reading of the poems points to a cohesively arranged collection. To my mind, there is very little about Book 4 that suggests that the epistles were gathered together *sine ordine*, as Ovid fallaciously claims that those of Books 1–3 were (*Pont.* 3.9.53).

The final book of the *Epistulae ex Ponto* contains four poems addressed to one of the consuls of AD 14, Sextus Pompeius (4.1, 4.4, 4.5, and 4.15). The architectonic placement of 4.1 and 4.15 as first and penultimate poems of the *libellus*,<sup>6</sup>

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1 On the structure of *Pont.* 1–3, see, for example, Gaertner 2005, 2–5.

2 On the dating of *Pont.* 4, see Syme 1978, 42–4.

3 On the number of verses in Ovidian books, see Wulfram 2008, 260–1. For a more detailed overview of the arguments for posthumous publication, see Helzlsouer 1989, 31–6.

4 Holzberg 1997, 197–200; Wulfram 2008, 259–62.

5 Wulfram 2008, 262.

6 Cf. the addresses to Maecenas in first and penultimate position of Horace's first book of *Epistles* (1.1 and 1.19), and of *Carm.* 1–3 (1.1 and 3.29). In both cases the penultimate poem addressed to Maecenas precedes a poem that is concerned with the afterlife of Horace's literary output; the same is true of *Pont.* 4.15 and 16 and the latter's treatment of Ovid's poetic renown. (Whether one believes that Horace's first three books of odes are to be treated as a unified corpus or not (cf. Hutchinson 2002), it is at least plausible to suggest that Ovid may thus have encountered them.)

and the diptych on Pompeius' consulship in 4.4 and 4.5,<sup>7</sup> have led to the suggestion— even by those who believe the book to have been posthumously arranged— that *Pont.* 4 is not entirely disordered. Such a view is supported by the central placement of 4.8, addressed to Suillius (Ovid's wife's son-in-law) and containing an appeal to Germanicus, which is followed by a poem —4.9— on the consulships of Graecinus and his brother, the former of whom is similarly encouraged to attempt to assuage the *principis ira* (4.9.51–2). This poem draws heavily on, and seems to answer to, the language and themes of the diptych on Pompeius' accession to the consulship.<sup>8</sup> The 'aba' cluster of poems (4.12, 13 and 14) addressed to two fellow-poets (Tuticanus, Carus, and Tuticanus again) is also suggestive of more than a little organisation, as is the placement of the final poem of the book. Addressed to an *Invidus* and concerned with Ovid's poetic afterlife, poem 4.16 brings to a head one of the major themes of the *ex Ponto* in general—the preservation of one's *nomen*;<sup>9</sup> recalls Ovid's earlier reflections on his literary renown in closing sequences;<sup>10</sup> and, through its address to the Roman poets' equivalent of the baneful race of envy evoked in the *Aetia*,<sup>11</sup> underlines his continued adherence to the Callimachean aesthetic that he advertised with the description of his first poem to Pompeius as a *deductum carmen* (4.1.1).

In what follows I shall principally consider the opening run of poems, and how their intratextual relations point to a more careful construction of the *libellus* than even the architectonic aspects of arrangement that I have outlined already suggest.

7 Comparison is not infrequently made with *Amores* 2.7 and 8 on Cypassis (e.g. Helzle 2003, 45).

8 e.g.: *Pont.* 4.4.27–8~4.9.21–2; 4.5.17–22~4.9.43–8.

9 Ovid explains that there is no difference in the content of the *Epistulae ex Ponto* from that of the *Tristia*, but that *nomina* will be included (*Pont.* 1.1.17–18). He is *prima facie* referring to the names of his correspondents, but is also thus pointing to the renown that he will secure for them (and for himself) by their inclusion in his poetry (cf. Nagle (1980) 74–80). On Ovid's use of the term *nomen* to refer to his literary afterlife, see below; on the place of *nomina* in the Pontic epistles, see Gaertner 2005, 6–8, Tissol 2014, 18–23; and cf. Oliensis 1997 on (the absence of) *nomina* in the *Tristia*. Ovid's own *cognomen*—*Naso*—opens his *Epistulae* (1.1.1), and features conspicuously throughout; for the poet's use of *Naso* as his signature from the outset of his corpus, see Thorsen 2014, 39.

10 cf. *Am.* 1.15; *Am.* 3.15; *Met.* 15.871–9; *Tr.* 4.10.121–4.

11 Callimachus' Βασκανίης ὀλοὸν γένος (*Aet.* fr. 1.17 Harder); cf. *Ep.* 21.4 Pf and *Ap.* 105–12. On *Liur* in Ovid, see Barchiesi 1997, 40–2.

## 1 *Leuis fortuna*

The opening of 4.4 consists of an *amplificatio* on what Helzle calls ‘the positive aspect of fickle fortune’;<sup>12</sup> it then goes on to explain how this applies to Ovid’s particular situation. Though separated from his *domus*, his *patria*, and the *oculi* of his own, the poet is able to forget his lot and to think happy thoughts when prompted by some fitting *causa*, here the news of Pompeius’ consulship, and the hope, as we discover in 4.5, that he will continue to have a care for Ovid.

Nulla dies adeo est australibus umida nimbis,  
 non intermissis ut fluat imber aquis;  
 nec sterilis locus ullus ita est, ut non sit in illo  
 mixta fere duris utilis herba rubis:  
 nil adeo **fortuna** grauis miserabile fecit,  
 ut minuant nulla gaudia parte malum.  
 ecce domo patriaque carens oculisque meorum,  
 naufragus in Getici litoris actus aquas,  
 qua tamen inueni uultum diffundere causa  
 possim, **fortunae** nec meminisse meae.

*Pont. 4.4.1–10*

No day is so wet with southern rains that a shower pours with uninterrupted precipitation; no place is so infertile that no useful plant grows there among the rough brambles: weighty fortune has made naught so wretched that joys do not lessen its sadness in some part. See, lacking home, fatherland, and the sight of my kin, and driven as a wreck into the waters of the Getic shores, I have nevertheless found the cause by which I am able to gladden my face and not to be mindful of my lot.

This positive outlook is somewhat uncharacteristic of the poet in his exilic verse, and we may wonder why he adopts this rhetorical strategy. The idea that changeable *fortuna*, grievous —*grauis*— though she is, renders nothing so wretched (*miserabile*) that one is not capable of experiencing a little joy seems to me to respond to the suggestion, at the close of the preceding poem, that the anonymous *amicus ingratus* take care, as those things that seem *laeta* may become *tristia*.

tu quoque fac timeas, et, quae tibi laeta uidentur,  
 dum loqueris, fieri tristia posse puta.

*Pont. 4.3.57–8*

You too should be afraid, and remember that what seems happy to you is able, as you speak, to become sad.

<sup>12</sup> Helzle 1989, 108.

The contrasting relationship between 4.3 and 4.4, indeed, is marked. At the close of 4.4, Ovid asserts that his relegation would be made less tiresome were he to learn that Pompeius had recalled the poet's *nomen* in his wretched state (47–50). In 4.3, however, the man who was once Ovid's bosom friend no longer wishes even to seem to know Ovid (*nosse uideri*),<sup>13</sup> and asks of whom another speaks when the poet's *nomen* is mentioned (9–10).

dum mea puppis erat ualida fundata carina,  
 qui mecum uelles currere, primus eras.  
 nunc quia contraxit uultum Fortuna, recedis,  
 auxilio postquam scis opus esse tuo.  
 dissimulas etiam, nec me uis nosse uideri,  
 quisque sit audito nomine Naso rogas.  
 Pont. 4.3.5–10

Whilst my ship had the foundation of a sure keel, you were the first to want to sail with me. Now, because Fortune has wrinkled her brow, you withdraw, after you realised that your help was needed. You dissemble too, nor do you wish to seem to know me, and you ask who Naso is when that name is heard.

Whilst Ovid hopes, in 4.4, that Pompeius may be willing to help him when his *fortuna* has taken a turn for the worse, the poet's *amicus ingratus* withdraws himself (*recedis*) when his *auxilium* is most needed (4.3.7–8). Ovid is bewildered by this (*quid facis, a demens?* (4.3.29)). He wonders why his erstwhile friend fails to grasp that by not helping him, he has denied himself even Ovid's sympathy, were his own *fortuna* to withdraw (*si...recedat* (4.3.29)).

quid facis, a demens? cur, si Fortuna recedat,  
 naufragio lacrimas eripis ipse tuo?  
 Pont. 4.3.29–30

What are you doing, madman? Why, in case Fortune should abandon you, do you snatch tears from your own wreck?

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**13** This prolativ use of *nosse* is recalled by Ovid a few lines later at 4.3.13 (*ille ego, qui primus tua seria nosse solebam*), where he speaks of his own erstwhile knowledge of the hardships of his now ungrateful friend; in both cases the infinitive opens the fifth foot of its hexameter. The contrast is emphasised further by the poet's use of *primus* of himself in 13 and 14, as opposed to of his *amicus* in 6.

Once a sure steersman (cf. 4.3.5),<sup>14</sup> Ovid characterises himself as a *naufragus* from the start of his exilic verse.<sup>15</sup> The use of this familiar trope of the *ingratus amicus* at 4.3.30 is recalled by Ovid at 4.4.8 (*naufragus in Getici litoris actus aquas*), where he speaks of himself, and again couples the imagery of shipwreck with the rôle played by *fortuna* in one's state of affairs. The poet is able to bring a smile to his face (*uultum diffundere* (4.4.9)) and to forget how grievous his *fortuna* is because of the favourable news that he receives regarding Pompeius' consulship. In so doing, he seems almost to have wiped the frown of which we hear at 4.3.7 (*contraxit uultum*) from *fortuna*'s brow. The smile that he gains apparently has a wry aspect to it too, as the poet seems to enjoy characterising fickle *fortuna* as *gravis* (4.4.5)—she who was so explicitly described as *levis* in 4.3, and to whom his *amicus ingratus* is compared.

siue fui numquam carus, simulasse fateris,  
seu non fingebas, inueniere *leuis*.

...  
haec dea non stabili, quam sit *leuis*, orbe fatetur,  
quem summum dubio sub pede semper habet.  
quolibet est folio, quauis incertior aura:  
par illi *leuitas*, improbe, sola tua est.

*Pont.* 4.3.19–20 & 31–4

If I was never dear to you, you confess that you lied; if you were not mendacious, your fickleness is found out...This goddess confesses how fickle she is by her own unstable wheel, the top of which she has ever under her unsure foot. Than any leaf, than any breeze she is more uncertain: equal to her fickleness is yours alone, faithless one.

The weight of her *dubius pes*, moreover, returns after the two poems on Pompeius' consulship, as *tenax fortuna* continues to obstruct Ovid's *uota* with her *malignus pes*, and he suffers a lot that is *miserabile* (cf. 4.4.5).

Quam legis, ex illis tibi uenit epistula, Brute,  
Nasonem nolles in quibus esse locis.  
sed tu quod nolles, uoluit miserabile fatum.

...  
perstat enim Fortuna tenax uotisque malignum  
opponit nostris insidiosa pedem.

*Pont.* 4.6.1–3 & 7–8

The letter which you read, Brutus, reached you from those places in which you do not wish Naso to be. But what you do not want, wretched fate does...For tenacious fortune persists and treacherously opposes her wicked foot to my wishes.

<sup>14</sup> cf. *Ars* 1.772; 2.9–10; 3.99–100, 747–8; *Rem.* 811–12; *Fast.* 2.3, 863–4; 4.18.

<sup>15</sup> e.g.: *Tr.* 1.2.52; 1.5.36; 1.6.7–8; 2.18; 5.9.17; *Pont.* 1.2.60; 2.2.126; 2.9.9.

Brutus, the addressee of 4.6, is not like the *ingratus* of 4.3: the former acknowledged Ovid when he had been harmed by *Fortuna iniqua*, unlike the greater part of his acquaintance.

at, si quem laedi Fortuna cernis iniqua,  
 mollior est animo femina nulla tuo.  
 hoc ego praecipue sensi, cum magna meorum  
 notitiam pars est infitiata mei.  
 inmemor illorum, uestri non inmemor umquam,  
 qui mala solliciti nostra leuatis, ero.

*Pont.* 4.6.39–44

But, in the event that you see anyone harmed by iniquitous Fortune, gentler than your heart is no woman. I felt this keenly when a great part of my acquaintance denied any knowledge of me. Unmindful of them I shall be, but never unmindful of you who anxiously relieve my sorrows.

In the light of this kindness, Ovid will not be unmindful of him, and will secure Brutus a place of renown in his literary monument, unlike the *ingratus amicus* of 4.3 who remains unnamed lest he achieve some *fama* through mention of his *nomen*.

nomine non utar, ne commendere querela  
 quaeraturque tibi carmine fama meo.

*Pont.* 4.3.3–4

Your name I shall not use, lest by my complaint you are advantaged and you obtain renown from my song.

The denial of any recognition to Ovid's *ingratus amicus* in *Pont.* 4.3, of any possibility of his being given a *nomen*, draws attention to the *nomina* given to more loyal friends in surrounding poems —Pompeius, Severus, Brutus, and the like. Later on in 4.3, indeed, *fama* is transformed, no longer referring to the renown that may be secured through verse, but to the messenger who informs Ovid of his friend's betrayal.

uix equidem credo: sed et insultare iacenti  
 te mihi nec uerbis parcere fama refert.

*Pont.* 4.3.27–8

Scarcely do I believe it, but rumour tells me that you insult me down-trodden as I am, and are not sparing with words.

## 2 *Laeta Fama*

In *Pont.* 4.4, *Fama* is once again deployed as the bringer of news to the poet. In stark contrast to the preceding poem, however, Ovid has the winged deity explain that she is the *nuntia laetarum rerum*; there are some *gaudia* to be found even in exile, not just reports of further betrayals.

nam mihi, cum fulua solus spatiarer harena,  
uisa est a tergo pinna dedisse sonum.  
respicio, neque erat corpus, quod cernere possem,  
uerba tamen sunt haec aure recepta mea:  
'en ego laetarum uenio tibi nuntia rerum,  
Fama, per immensas aere lapsa uias:  
consule Pompeio, quo non tibi carior alter,  
candidus et felix proximus annus erit.'  
dixit, et, ut laeto Pontum rumore repleuit,  
ad gentes alias hinc dea uertit iter.  
at mihi dilapsis inter noua gaudia curis  
excidit asperitas huius iniqua loci.

*Pont.* 4.4.11–22

When I was strolling alone on the tawny sand, a wing seemed to make a sound behind me. I looked back: I could not see a body, but these words were heard by my ears: 'Lo, I, Renown, come to you as a messenger of happy events, having glided through the immeasurable paths of the air: since Pompeius will be consul, than whom none is dearer to you, the coming year will be bright and favourable.' She spoke thus and, when she had filled Pontus with glad tidings, she bent her course hence toward other peoples. For me cares fell away amongst new joys, and the iniquitous harshness of the place seemed to disappear.

Pompeius is to become consul at the start of the new year (23–4), and it is hoped that he will at some point turn his thoughts to his relegated friend, wondering how the poet fares. Word of such a situation would make Ovid's lot easier to bear (*mollius* (50)), as he hopes that the consul will intercede on his behalf so that he—a mere possession of his friend—may find a home nearer to Rome.<sup>16</sup>

et detur amicius aruum,  
remque tuam ponas in meliore loco.

*Pont.* 4.15.21–2

May a friendlier region be given to me, and may you place your possession in a better locale.

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16 See below for Ovid's characterisation of himself as one of Pompeius' possessions.

Glad tidings have been conveyed to Ovid by *Fama* before in the exilic poetry, notably in *Pont.* 2.1 and 2.5, where news of Tiberius' triumph reaches Pontus, and, as in 4.4, he imagines the celebrations in Rome.<sup>17</sup> The particular characterisation of Ovid's visitor in *Pont.* 4.4, however, casts an especially auspicious light on the news that she brings. Playing with his readers' expectations, Ovid describes himself as walking alone on a beach in terms closely reminiscent of those used by the crow in the second book of the *Metamorphoses*.

forma mihi nocuit. nam cum per litora lentis  
passibus, ut soleo, summa **spatiarer harena**,  
**uidit** et incaluit pelagi deus.

*Met.* 2.572–4<sup>18</sup>

My beauty harmed me. For when I was strolling, as was my custom, along the beach over the top of the sand, a god of the sea saw me and grew warm.

The crow (in her previous human form) is about to be raped by a god of the sea, and an attentive reader may wonder if the poet was about to receive an unwelcome visitation. There is, however, a change, as where it was the god that looked upon the daughter of Coroneus (*uidit*) in the *Metamorphoses*, it is Ovid's visitor who seems to appear to him (*uisa est*). This change points to another visitor that the poet has received whilst in exile, who also brought him good news.

In *Pont.* 3.3, Amor appears to the exile in a dream, promising that Caesar's anger will diminish, and that a more favourable hearing will be given to the poet's *uota* (83–4), just as Ovid is optimistic about an amelioration of his circumstances in *Pont.* 4.4.

<sup>17</sup> The collocation *huc ... peruenit fama triumphi* is recalled from *Pont.* 2.1.1 at 2.5.27, referring in both instances to Ovid's receipt of news of Tiberius' triumph; also comparable is 2.9.3 (*Fama ... peruenit*).

<sup>18</sup> This passage from the *Met.* itself alludes to Vergil's description of the crow walking along on the beach as a sign of rain (*tum cornix plena pluuiam uocat improba uoce / et sola in sicca secum spatiatur harena* (G. 1.388–9)). Keith 1992, 29–31 explicates Ovid's close linguistic reworking of the passage from the *Georgics*, but does not attempt any explanation as to why Ovid might have chosen this textual moment for his narrative in the *Metamorphoses*. One may wonder if he, tongue-in-cheek, is providing some sort of *aetion* for why Vergil's crow, walking on an empty seashore, might presage an outpouring of water: before her transformation, Coroneus, likewise on a desolate *litus*, was subjected to the onslaught of a watery *pelagi deus*. For the bird, as for the princess, the beach is somewhere it is likely to get wet. Such fanciful thoughts aside, it is worth noting that, where the adjective *sola* is concealed in the Alexandrian footnote *ut soleo* at *Met.* 2.573, it is restored as *solus* in *Pont.* 4.4.11, suggesting that Ovid had both passages in mind.



haec ego **uisus** eram puero dixisse uolucris,  
 hos **uisus** nobis ille dedisse sonos:  
 ‘per mea tela, faces, et per mea tela, sagittas,  
 per matrem iuro Caesareumque caput:  
 nil nisi concessum nos te didicisse magistro,  
 Artibus et nullum crimen inesse tuis.  
 ...  
 ut tamen aspicerem consolarerque iacentem,  
**lapsa per immensas** est mea pinna uias...’  
 ...  
 dixit, et aut ille est tenuis dilapsus in auras,  
 coeperunt sensus aut uigilare mei.

*Pont.* 3.3.65–70, 77–8 & 93–4

These things I fancied that I said to the winged boy, and these utterances he seemed to make to me: ‘By my weapons —torches— and by my weapons—shafts, by my mother I swear, and by Caesar’s head: I learnt naught under your tutelage except what was permitted, and there is no crime in your *Artes*...nevertheless that I might look upon you and console you, down-cast as you are, my wings have glided by immeasurable paths...’ ...He said this, and either he disappeared into thin air, or my senses began to awaken.

Recalling the dream-state in which he found himself in 3.3 through the use of *uisa* (4.4.12),<sup>19</sup> the poet claims that the flutter of a wing appears to make a sound behind him (cf. *pinna* at 3.3.78 and 4.4.12). The words used of the sound at 4.4.12 (*dedisse sonum*) are used of Amor’s auspicious speech in 3.3, suggesting that the appearance of winged Fama to the elegist in 4.4 may in fact be a positive thing. Like the god of love before her, Ovid’s visitor in 4.4 claims to have covered a significant distance (*per immensas...uias* occurring in the same metrical *sedes* in both poems), and to have glided down to address him (cf. *lapsa* at 3.3.78 and 4.4.16); she too comes to look upon him, and to comfort him as Amor had done (*aspicerem consolarerque* (3.3.77)), such that the *asperitas loci* disappears (4.4.22).<sup>20</sup> Ovid finds himself amongst *noua gaudia* in 4.4, since his *curae* have slipped away

<sup>19</sup> On the middle and passive of *uideo* used to mark dream sequences, especially in the elegists, see Scioli 2015, 24–54 with the review of Franklinos 2017.

<sup>20</sup> The collocation *asperitas...loci* is used by Ovid in *Pont.* 4.14, the second poem addressed to Tuticanus, in which the poet explains that he holds no grudge against the land to which he has been relegated, only the people, yet wishes that the place could have been further from the frozen pole (61–2). In a list of those who have complained about their homeland as Ovid now complains of Tomi, he compares himself, *inter alios*, to Odysseus —that familiar *comparandus* for Ovid’s exiled persona— and states that Ithaca’s hero has himself provided evidence for her *asperitas* (*quis patriam sollerte magis dilexit Vlix? | hoc tamen asperitas indice docta loci est* (35–6).

(*dilapsis* 4.4.21), recalling not only the arrival of Fama (*lapsa* (4.4.16)), but the departure of Amor from the mind's-eye of the poet at 3.3.93: *dilapsus in auras*.

### 3 Consuls and Caesars

In what follows in 4.4, Ovid imagines the scenes in Rome as Pompeius assumes his consulship,<sup>21</sup> fancying himself amongst the throng—*cernere iam uideor* (4.4.27), though he later admits (*non ego cernar* (43)) that, in his absence, he must rely on his mind's evocation of events.

me miserum, turba quod non ego cernar in illa,  
nec poterunt istis lumina nostra frui.  
quod licet, absentem, qua possum, mente uidebo:  
aspiciet uultus consulis illa sui.

*Pont.* 4.4.43–6

Wretched me, that I shall not be seen in that crowd, nor will my eyes be able to enjoy those [sights]. It is allowed, however, that I shall see you in my mind's eye: this will see the features of its consul.

It is the case, however, that Ovid appears not only to rely on a mental image of what happens at Rome, but on his own account of the start of the consuls' term of office in *Fasti* 1.<sup>22</sup> The poet's inability to be present in Rome for such an event necessitates that he describe the event as imagined (e.g. *Pont.* 2.1), or that he suppose himself to be in the eternal city, as here or in *Pont.* 4.9—the poem on Graecinus' consulship that revisits lexical and thematic details of *Fasti* 1 and *Pont.* 4.4. The language with which he describes this supposition in 4.4 (*cernere iam uideor* (27)) recalls Ovid's response, in *Pont.* 2.8, to receiving images of Augustus, Tiberius, and Livia from Cotta Maximus.

hunc [Augustum] ego cum spectem, *uideor* mihi *cernere* Romam,  
nam patriae faciem sustinet ille suae.

*Pont.* 2.8.19–20

As I look on Augustus, I seem to see Rome, for he encapsulates the likeness of our fatherland.

<sup>21</sup> cf. the description of Tiberius' triumph in *Pont.* 2.1.

<sup>22</sup> For an overview of points of contact, see Helzlsouer 1989, 105–6, which is derived in large part from Du Quesnay 1976, 45–7.

The poet addresses his plaint to the images of the imperial family that he has been sent, as he is able to imagine himself supplicating them in person.

parte leua minima nostras et contrahe poenas,  
daque, procul Scythico qui sit ab hoste, locum.

*Pont.* 2.8.35–6

Alleviate and decrease in some small part my punishment, and give me a situation far from the Scythian enemy.

Access to the emperor may not be granted to the exiled poet, but through a surrogate of Augustus (as in *Pont.* 2.8), or through an intermediary (as in *Pont.* 4.4 and 4.5), Ovid supposes that there is hope.

In *Pont.* 4.5, indeed, in a conceit familiar from his earlier exilic poetry,<sup>23</sup> the poet has his *leues elegi* go to Rome on his behalf with greetings for Pompeius whom he portrays as close to the imperial family and to the senatorial élite.

aut, ubi erunt patres in Iulia templa uocati,  
de tanto dignis consule rebus aget,  
aut feret Augusto solitam natoque salutem,  
deque parum noto consulat officio,  
tempus et his uacuum Caesar Germanicus omne  
auferet: a magnis hunc colit ille deis.

*Pont.* 4.5.21–6

He will either, when the senators have been summoned to the Julian temple, debate affairs worthy of so great a consul, or he will bear accustomed greetings to Augustus and his son and will take counsel about a less familiar duty; Caesar Germanicus will claim all his time free from these concerns: the latter he reverences after the great gods.

Emphasis is given to the centrality of Pompeius' position in the upper echelons of Roman society as the collocation *patres...uocati* (4.5.21) recalls the speech that Ovid imagines is made by the consul as he assumed office in the course of a passage of 4.4 in which his favour amongst the Caesars is also implied.

curia te excipiet, patresque e more uocati  
intendent aures ad tua uerba suas.  
hos ubi facundo tua uox hilarauerit ore,  
utque solet tulerit prospera uerba dies,  
egeris et meritas superis cum Caesare grates,  
qui causam, facias cur ita, saepe dabit.

*Pont.* 4.4.35–40

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<sup>23</sup> e.g. *Tr.* 1.1; 3.7.

The senate will receive you, and the senators, summoned according to custom, will strain their ears to hear your words. When from eloquent mouth your voice has delighted them, and the day, as is customary, has brought auspicious words, you will give deserved thanks to the gods and to Caesar, who will often give you cause to do so.

It is this favour on which the poet's entreaties to the consul rely, as is made clear in *Pont.* 4.15, which opens with the assertion that anyone who remembers Ovid should know that he owes his life to the Caesars, and his *salus* to Pompeius.

Si quis adhuc usquam nostri non inmemor extat,  
quidue relegatus Naso requirit agam,  
Caesaribus uitam, Sexto debere salutem  
me sciat: a superis hic mihi primus erit.  
*Pont.* 4.15.1–4

If there is anyone anywhere who has not forgotten me, or asks how the relegated Ovid fares, may he know that I owe my life to the Caesars and my well-being to Sextus: after the gods he will be first as far as I am concerned.

This final poem addressed to the consul recalls *Pont.* 4.5 through the mention of Pompeius' *domus* as neighbouring the Forum Augustum itself.

protinus inde domus uobis Pompeia petatur:  
non est Augusto iunctior ulla Foro.  
*Pont.* 4.5.9–10

Straightway seek the home of Pompeius: none is nearer the Forum Augustum.

... quam domus Augusto continuata Foro...  
*Pont.* 4.15.16

... as the home next to the Forum Augustum ...

The implicit physical proximity of Pompeius to the emperor adds force to the notion that the consul is likely to have a particular influence over the Caesars, and thus, since it is in their power to alter the poet's lot, Ovid asks his friend that he continue to pay homage to the rulers of Rome so that they might lessen his punishment.

et detur amicus aruum,  
remque tuam ponas in meliore loco.  
quod quoniam in dis est, tempta lenire precando  
numina, perpetua quae pietate colis.  
*Pont.* 4.15.21–4

May a friendlier region be given to me, and may you place your possession in a better locale. Since this is in the power of the gods, try to soften with prayer the deities whom you worship with unflinching piety.

That being the case, one might be inclined to wonder what it is that Pompeius supposes that he is to get out of his efforts on Ovid's behalf. The answer seems to lie in an oddity of *Pont.* 4: in this passage of 4.15, as previously in the book, the poet characterises himself as Pompeius' possession —his *res* (22). In the final couplet of the first poem of the book, indeed, Ovid explains to his friend that he, the poet, is not the last of his friend's possessions (*pars rerum non ultima*).

unde, rogas forsan, fiducia tanta futuri  
 sit mihi: quod fecit, quisque **tuetur opus**.  
 ut Venus artificis labor est et gloria Coi,  
 aequoreo madidas quae premit imbre comas,  
 arcis ut Actaeae uel eburna uel aerea custos  
 bellica Phidiaca stat dea facta manu,  
 uindicat ut Calamis laudem, quos fecit, equorum,  
 ut similis uerae uacca Myronis **opus**,  
 sic ego pars rerum non ultima, Sexte, tuarum,  
**tutela**que feror munus **opus**que tuae.

*Pont.* 4.1.27–36

Whence, you might ask, do I have so great a faith in the future: because each man looks out for his creation. As Venus who presses her hair wet with the sea's spray is the toil and glory of the Coan artist, as the warring deity, guardian of the Acropolis, stands wrought in ivory and bronze by Phidias' hand, as Calamis claims the praise of the horses that he made, as the cow like unto truth is Myron's work, so I am not the last of your belongings, Sextus, and I am held to be the gift and work of your guardianship.

Ovid claims, rather, that he is the *munus* and *opus* of Pompeius' *tutela*. This final mention of *opus* is preceded by the assertion that Ovid has faith in his future (27), as each artist keeps watch over his own *opus* (28). Since, he claims, he is Pompeius' *opus*, he will be protected by his friend's watch (cf. *tuetur* (28) and *tutela* (36)). He provides a list of four artists, familiar to the elegiac reader,<sup>24</sup> who have gained *gloria* and *laus* from their *opera*; with them he compares Pompeius. Since he has afforded Ovid *tutela*, and (the poet hopes) he will continue to do so, he too will gain *gloria* and *laus* from his undertaking, as his friend will secure his *nomen*

<sup>24</sup> Apelles, Phidias, and Calamis appear together, *inter alios*, at Prop. 3.9.9–16; Myron is found at Prop. 2.31.7–8, and at Ars 3.219 along with Apelles' Venus, mentioned at 3.223–4 (*cum fieret, lapis asper erat; nunc, nobile signum, / nuda Venus madidas exprimit imbre comas*) in words which Ovid recalls at *Pont.* 4.4.30 (*madidas...premit imbre comas*).

by inscribing it into his verse. Such a reading of these lines is reinforced by the evident reworking, in the final couplet of *Pont.* 4.1, of a distich which Ovid had addressed to his wife in the final poem of the *Tristia*, in which he speaks of the monument that he has erected for her in his poetry. He explains that her *fama* is bound to his (*Tr.* 5.14.5), and that the *honor* she receives will not be insignificant, as she alone is the *tutela* of his affairs (*Tr.* 5.14.15–16).

Quanta tibi dederint nostri monimenta libelli,  
o mihi me coniunx carior, ipsa uides.  
detrahat auctori multum fortuna licebit,  
tu tamen ingenio clara ferere meo;  
dumque legar, pariter mecum tua fama legetur.

...  
adde quod, ut rerum sola es tutela meorum,  
ad te non parui uenit honoris onus,  
quod numquam uox est de te mihi muta, tuique  
indiciis debes esse superba uiri.  
quae ne quis possit temeraria dicere, persta,  
et pariter serua meque piamque fidem.

*Tr.* 5.14.1–5 & 15–20

You yourself see how great a monument my books have given to you, wife dearer to me than myself. It is true that fortune has stolen much from their author, but you, famous, will be borne on by my genius; as long as I am read, your renown will be read with mine...Add that, since you are the only guardian of my affairs, a not insignificant burden of honour has come to you, because my voice is never silent about you, and you ought to be proud of your husband's witness. Lest anyone think this to be able to be said rashly, hold fast, and protect me and my reverent faith in equal part.

The poet asks his wife that she remain loyal and faithful to him, continuing to work in his interest, so that no one may suggest that the honour she is afforded by him was rashly given (*Tr.* 5.14.19–20). This same idea of reciprocity is prevalent in *Pont.* 4.

## 4 Grace and favour

In *Pont.* 4.1, indeed, Ovid asks Pompeius that he receive the well-spun poem, in which he is first given a *nomen* by his friend, as recompense for the poet's life (2). The grateful offering is to be added as the coping stone to Pompeius' deserts (*meritis* (4)), and Ovid hopes that his friend will not be angry with him for the gratitude shown him, for the *officium* discharged by the poet in this way.

Accipe, Pompei, deductum carmen ab illo,  
 debitor est uitae qui tibi, Sexte, suae.  
 seu tu<sup>25</sup> non prohibes a me tua nomina poni,  
 accedet **meritis** haec quoque summa tuis.

...  
 non potuit mea mens, quin esset grata, teneri:  
 sit, precor, officio non grauis ira pio.

*Pont.* 4.1.1–4 & 7–8

Receive, Sextus Pompeius, a well-spun song from the one who owes you his life. If you do not forbid me to write your names, these will be the very coping stone of your deserts...My mind was not able to be restrained from being grateful: let not grievous anger, I beseech you, be your response to bounden duty.

He goes on to note that he will never be able to forget Pompeius (18),<sup>26</sup> hoping that his friend finds no *crimen* in his *officium*, and that he will receive *gratia*, albeit *leuis*, for his considerable undertakings (*meritis ... tantis*). Ovid insists on his gratitude (*gratus ero*) even if Pompeius is unwilling to receive it (22), since the latter was never slow to offer favours (*gratia*) to the poet.

da mihi (si quid ea est) hebetantem pectora Lethen,  
 oblitus potero non tamen esse tui;  
 idque sinas oro, nec fastidita repellas  
 uerba, nec officio crimen inesse putes,  
 et leuis haec **meritis** referatur gratia tantis;  
 si minus, inuito te quoque gratus ero,  
 numquam pigra fuit nostris tua gratia rebus.

*Pont.* 4.1.17–23

Give me the waters of Lethe that dull the mind (if such a thing exists), and I shall not be able to forget you all the same. I beseech you to allow this, nor contemptuously to reject my words, nor to think there be any crime in my duty: may my slight gratitude be the due return for such great services. If you do not permit it, I shall be grateful even though you do not wish it: never was your grace slow in our affairs.

This lexical nexus of words such as *gratia*, *officium*, *merita*, and their cognates, recurs throughout *Pont.* 4, conspicuously in 4.5, another poem addressed to Pompeius, and in 4.8, addressed to Suillius, where Ovid is emboldened to call upon Germanicus himself.

<sup>25</sup> Stephen Heyworth suggests reading *seu tu* for *qui seu*, as the transmitted relative pronoun is misleading after the *qui* of the preceding verse which has a different antecedent.

<sup>26</sup> cf. 4.6.43–4 and the brief discussion above.

pro quibus ut **meritis** referatur gratia, iurat  
se fore mancipii tempus in omne tui.

*Pont. 4.5.39–40*

That thanks be given for these services, he swears that he will be your slave for all time.

Littera sera quidem, studiis exculte Suilli,  
huc tua peruenit, sed mihi grata tamen,  
qua, pia si possit superos lenire rogando  
gratia, laturum te mihi dicis opem.  
ut iam nil praestes, animi sum factus amici  
debitor, et **meritum** uelle iuuare uoco.

...  
templa domus facient uobis urbesque beatae;  
Naso suis opibus, carmine, gratus erit.  
parua quidem fateor pro magnis munera reddi,  
cum pro concessa uerba salute damus.  
sed qui quam potuit dat maxima gratus abunde est,  
et finem pietas contigit illa suum.

...  
nec tamen officio uatum per carmina facto  
principibus res est aptior ulla uiris.

*Pont. 4.8.1–6, 33–8 & 43–4*

Your letter, most urbane Suillius, though somewhat tardy in its arrival, is nevertheless pleasing to me, the one in which, if dutiful grace is able to mellow the gods by beseeching them, you said that you intended to bring me aid. Although you proffer nothing else, I have become indebted to your friendly nature, and I call the desire to help deserving...wealthy houses and cities will build temples for you and yours, Germanicus; Ovid will give thanks from his own store—with song. I confess, indeed, that small gifts are rendered for big, when I give words in exchange for the grant of well-being, but the man who gives as much as he is able is more than sufficiently thankful, and that service has achieved its end...nor indeed is anything more fitting for leading men than the duty fulfilled by the songs of poets.

Ovid promises servitude to Pompeius in thanksgiving for the latter's continued support in 4.5, and, in 4.8, explains to Germanicus that he will give thanks through song, as it is with this that he is endowed (34), and this that is most fitting to offer as one's bounden duty and service (*officio*) to the *principes uiri* (43–4).<sup>27</sup> Meanwhile, a sense of unity is given to the book by the occasional occurrence of these terms elsewhere: consider, for example, the *officiosae epistulae* that are sent between Ovid and Severus in 4.2. These epistolary prose exchanges

<sup>27</sup> Note also that the use of *debitor* at 4.8.6 recalls Ovid's opening gambit at 4.1.2 (*debitor est uitae qui tibi, Sexte, suae*).



notwithstanding, Ovid is ashamed of the fact that he has not addressed a poetic epistle to Severus, since, as we have seen, gratitude for continued friendship is demonstrated by the author of the *Epistulae ex Ponto* through the inscription of a *nomen* in his verse.

Quod legis, o uates magnorum maxime regum,  
uenit ab intonsis usque, Seuere, Getis;  
cuius adhuc nomen nostros **tacuisse** libellos,  
si modo permittis dicere uera, pudet.  
orba tamen numeris cessauit epistula numquam  
ire per alternas officiosa uices.

*Pont.* 4.2.1–6

What you read, Severus, greatest poet of great kings, has come even from the unshorn Getae. It embarrasses me that hitherto my books have not mentioned your name (if you allow me to speak the truth), albeit that letters void of metre have never ceased dutifully to pass back and forth between us.

It is in the light of this that the use of the verb *tacuisse* at 4.2.3 is recalled by the poet in the opening of his next poem, addressed to the *amicus ingratus*, in which Ovid concludes that he will not mention his former acquaintance's *nomen* in case he gain any *fama* as a result.

Conquerar, an **taceam**? ponam sine nomine crimen,  
an notum, qui sis, omnibus esse uelim?  
nomine non utar, ne commendere querela  
quaeraturque tibi carmine fama meo.

*Pont.* 4.3.1–4

Should I complain, or be silent? Should I make a charge without your name, or should I want everyone to know who you are? Your name I shall not use, lest by my complaint you are advantaged and you obtain renown from my song.

The poet had asserted at the close of *Pont.* 3.9 that the pursuit of *gloria* was not the cause of his writing, but rather the hope of an amelioration of his circumstances through the continued *utilitas* of his correspondents, and the fulfilment of the *officium* owed to those who have helped him.

da ueniam scriptis, quorum non gloria nobis  
causa sed utilitas officiumque fuit.

*Pont.* 3.9.55–6

Pardon my writing, the purpose of which was not to achieve glory for myself, but was one of functionality and duty.

From an intratextual reading of the early poems in *Pont.* 4 that treats them as a carefully constructed unity, however, it seems clear that the *officium* that his readers merit on account of their support of his cause (their *utilitas* to him) necessarily results from the *gloria* that each of them may be granted by having their respective *nomina* inscribed in Ovid's text, and that such *gloria* is predicated on the success of the poet's verses themselves. One ought to pursue one's *studium*—one's adherence to the Muses—when it proves useful (*utiliter*), Severus is told by the poet at 4.2.47–8, since such *studium*, Ovid implies, results in *gloria*.

excitat auditor studium, laudataque uirtus  
crescit, et inmensum gloria calcar habet.

*Pont.* 4.2.35–6

An audience arouses one's devotion to work, and virtue that has been praised grows: renowned has a mighty spur.

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