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Frayed Around the Edges: Ovid's Book and Ovid's Identity in Tristia 1.1  
and 3.1

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### Abstract

*In Tristia 1.1 and 3.1, Ovid grapples with his sadness at being exiled from Rome to the empire's periphery. Scholars typically interpret these poems, in which Ovid imagines his book journeying to Rome on his behalf, as exhibiting either Ovid's total longing for Rome, or his total withdrawal in exile. Ovid's identity, however, is more nuanced. Applying the theoretical lens of center/periphery to Tristia 1.1 and 3.1, I conclude that when Ovid wrote Tristia, his identity was actually in flux. Reading Ovid's poems through the lens of center/periphery, we see how he engages with themes of exclusion and alterity. Thus, we can better appreciate Ovid's shifting self-conception: no longer of the Roman elite, but a marginalized figure. Reflecting this change, Ovid draws on the contemporary poetic tradition of aestheticizing books, but he turns it on its head. Instead of emphasizing the color and refinement of ideal Roman books, Ovid emphasizes the "other" nature of his book, which is color-less and un-refined. Ovid also uses such othering descriptions for the Getae, residents of Tomis, and for Briseis, the Trojan concubine. As Ovid shifts focus towards these peripheral figures, his identity shifts as he becomes a more peripheral figure. Therefore, in Tristia 1.1 and 3.1, Ovid grapples with his identity, more than with his sorrow; as his attitude adjusts, he begins to come to terms with his own status as a peripheral other.*

## Introduction

In the opening lines of not one, but two books of *Tristia*, Ovid envisages scenarios in which he sends his little book to Rome on his behalf. Many scholars read in *Tristia* 1.1 Ovid's pining for Rome, a longing which intensifies to become a vivid fantasy of the cityscape in *Tristia* 3.1. But in *Tristia* 1.1, Ovid also seems to take some interest in Tomis and its inhabitants, flirting with descriptions of the Getae and other non-Roman figures, and his curiosity seems even more pronounced in *Tristia* 3.1. Caught between Rome and Tomis, where does Ovid associate himself within his poetry?

Without the lens of center/periphery, we cannot answer this question, nor fully appreciate the many intertextual nuances in Ovid's exile poetry. Classicists only recently have started to apply this lens—which scholars from other disciplines have embraced<sup>1</sup>—to their study of the ancient world. This felicitous approach illuminates “the issues of inclusion and exclusion, subjectivity and alterity, centrality and marginality”<sup>2</sup> pertinent to the Roman world. Scholars who discern Ovid's desire to be in Rome consider only his desire for “inclusion,” his “subjectivity” towards Rome, and Rome's “centrality.” They are not as attuned to the dynamics of “exclusion,” “alterity,” and “marginality” which the poet experiences and explores in his works.

Ovid's exile poems, written in the context of a burgeoning empire, from the empire's edge at Tomis, compel scrutiny under the broader lens of center/periphery. By applying this lens to Ovid's *Tristia* 1.1 and 3.1 we appreciate previously unremarked words, moments, and dynamics. We then notice the frequency and extent of these words, moments, and dynamics across Ovid's exile poetry, and can better grasp Ovid's ruminations on the issues of center and periphery.

If we think like Ovid, then we can better understand what he thought of his identity. Scholars place him in one of two camps. Either Ovid is totally pro-Roman,<sup>3</sup> entirely loyal to his previously urbane identity, or he is totally *relegatus*, “removed,” betraying this previous identity.<sup>4</sup> But I hope to qualify these views and reevaluate his position as liminal.<sup>5</sup> Ovid, caught between center and periphery, explores the tension between his formerly central and newly peripheral identities, not totally renouncing the center, but moving towards the periphery.

Why focus on *Tristia* 1.1 and 3.1? The poems open two books of the *Tristia*; they also extensively describe Ovid's book. Ovid's detailed descriptions of his own book, which stands as a proxy for himself, enable him to explore the psychic limbo between center and periphery.<sup>6</sup> On

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<sup>1</sup> Cindy Benton and Trevor Fear, "From Rome to Buffalo," *Arethusa* 36, no. 3 (2003): 268.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Fergus Millar, "Ovid and the 'Domus Augusta': Rome Seen from Tomoi," *Journal of Roman Studies* 83, (1993): 1; Judith P. Hallett, "Centering from the Periphery in the Augustan Roman World: Ovid's Autobiography in *Tristia* 4.10 and Cornelius Nepos' Biography of Atticus," *Arethusa* 36, no. 3 (2003): 345.

<sup>4</sup> John Geysen, "Ovid's Addresses to the Book in *Tristia* 1.1," *Latomus* 66, no. 2 (2007): 374.

<sup>5</sup> Other scholars have also noted how Ovid is torn between Rome and Tomis. For example, Andrew Walker, who applies a Freudian lens, notes that Ovid “oscillates between these two extremes,” one moment in the city, “a place of imaginary maternal plenitude” and the next “regrettably confined to Tomis” (197). But these scholars do not apply the lens of center/periphery to better understand his liminal status. The other scholars who do apply the lens of center/periphery to Ovid's exile poetry, Cristina Popescu (67), and Hallett (345), do not focus on his exilic poems featuring books.

<sup>6</sup> Carole Newlands describes Ovid's experience of exile as being “as much a psychological state as a physical displacement...he portrays himself through his personified book as caught in cultural limbo, unappreciated, misunderstood” (59).

one hand, his book is introduced as something noticeably peripheral, but still oriented towards the city of Rome. On the other hand, Ovid, a former fixture of the Roman cultural center, finds his own orientation starting to shift towards the periphery.<sup>7</sup> In his detailed descriptions, Ovid draws on an intertextual tradition of Roman poets who aestheticize and conceptualize books. This tradition explores center/periphery tensions in descriptions of books being sent to Rome or to the provinces, and often details books' color and surface texture. Ovid employs these common motifs, but he also innovates. He combines and reverses them<sup>8</sup> to emphasize tensions he experiences between center and periphery. By reversing the colorful, polished characteristics of ideal books, Ovid characterizes his book as an un-ideal other,<sup>9</sup> analogous to the periphery as something un-Roman.

The literary device of Ovid's personification of his book helps us understand the limbo he experiences between center and periphery, and it adds depth to *Tristia's* pathos.<sup>10</sup> In *Tristia* 1.1 and 3.1, Ovid not only grapples with his sadness and loneliness, but also with his own identity; he negotiates his suddenly less-central position and starts to come to terms with his position as one of the peripheral others.

### *Tristia* 1.1

The claims I make about Ovid's *Tristia* 1.1 and 3.1 proceed from a close reading of the first lines of his exilic canon, the first 14 lines of *Tristia* 1.1. There, Ovid introduces various key relationships: between himself and his book, between his book and Rome, between himself and Rome, and between himself and other inhabitants of the Pontic periphery. The tension of center/periphery underlies all of these relationships, and it informs how Ovid positions his book's identity—and, by extension, his own. But how does Ovid establish this tension, and these relationships?

His book's relationship to the city of Rome emerges from a detailed description of the book's salient physical characteristics. It is small and peripheral, oriented towards the Roman center, but clearly distinct from it. Simultaneously, Ovid establishes his own relationship to his book. It is an extension of himself, as revealed in lines 1-2 of *Tristia* 1.1, and confirmed later in the poem: 1.1.36 *ingeniique minor laude ferere mei*, "brought with praise below my genius"; 1.1.57 *tu tamen i pro me, tu, cui licet, aspice Romam*, "still you go in place of me, you, who can look at Rome"; 1.1.62 *te liquet esse meum* "it is clear that you are mine."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The notion, that these orientations diverge, and can split one's identity, endures beyond Ovid, and has been experienced by other people inhabiting the Eastern European "periphery." According to Delia-Maria Radu, "'Europeanised' Easterners describe their home cities by comparing them to Western ones. This aspiration to move towards the 'centre' in all ways leads to a kind of split self" (94).

<sup>8</sup> As G.D. Williams notes, Ovid reverses "the positive correlation which Catullus, Cinna and Horace effect between the physical and stylistic attributes of their respective books" (181).

<sup>9</sup> Michael Rowlands defines "otherness" as "an excluded category of the incomprehensible or undesirable against which the certainty and familiarity of habitual and traditional action can constantly be reaffirmed" (2).

<sup>10</sup> Jo-Marie Claassen supports this effect: "All personification of the non-human...can be used to convey either playful humor or pathos. The humorous aspect of personification is not very obvious in the exilic works" (102-103).

<sup>11</sup> Note also the presence of *ego/tu* pronouns throughout *Tristia* 1.1; these reinforce the close relationship between Ovid ("me") and his book ("you").

Even though Ovid's book is bound for Rome, Ovid finds himself increasingly reoriented away from Rome, towards the Pontic periphery. Thus, he aesthetically constructs his book with the physical characteristics that fit exile on the periphery, such as the roughness of the Getae, the inhabitants of Tomis. Similarly, Ovid compares himself to another legendary inhabitant of the periphery, Briseis.

Intriguingly, Ovid depicts neither his book nor the Getae positively, through distinct characteristics that they possess. Instead, Ovid describes them in terms of what they do not possess. By describing them through their lack of the ideal, Ovid defines the peripheral "other" in opposition to the central "self," following a paramount concept of the center/periphery framework. As Michael Rowlands explains, this othering phenomenon means that "self-identity can only be constituted through a prior existence of a sense of boundedness."<sup>12</sup> In the case of Ovid's *Tristia* 1.1, the "self-identity" of the book is constituted through its "boundedness"—that is, in ways in which his book does not fit the bounds of the ideal Roman book. This "boundedness requires a definition of 'otherness,' an excluded category...against which the familiarity of traditional action can be constantly reaffirmed."<sup>13</sup> Indeed, we see that Ovid's book is notably excluded from the traditional descriptions of books, especially those in Catullus 1 and 22. This othering phenomenon appears in Ovid's description of both the book in *Tristia* 1.1, and the Getae elsewhere in his exilic poetry: they are thoroughly un-ideal. Furthermore, because their other characteristics are peripheral, they are disparaged as un-Roman.

#### Lines 1-4: Little Book in the Big City

*I Parve—nec invideo—sine me, liber, ibis in urbem:  
ei mihi, quod domino non licet ire tuo!  
vade, sed incultus, qualem decet exulis esse;  
4 infelix habitum temporis huius habe.*

Little book—I do not envy you—without me, you will go into the City,  
Alas, because your master is not allowed to go!  
Go, but un-refined, as fits an exile;  
Wear the un-happy demeanor of this condition.<sup>14</sup>

In the first few lines of *Tristia* 1.1, Ovid imagines sending his book to Rome, where Ovid is not allowed to go, having been exiled to Tomis, where he is un-happy. Ovid emphasizes his book's orientation towards Rome, not just its physical displacement from Rome. Simultaneously, he underscores his own proximity to his book. The book's orientation towards Rome, and physical displacement from the imperial center,<sup>15</sup> appear from the literal and semantic distance between the

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<sup>12</sup> Rowlands, 2.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> All translations are mine.

<sup>15</sup> This is the first appearance of this opposition, but elsewhere in *Tristia* 1.1 the physical displacement between Ovid/Ovid's book, and lofty Rome, is apparent. See: 1.1.15 *loca grata*; 1.1.69 *alta Palatia*; 1.1.71 *augusta loca*; 1.1.126-127 (the last couplet of the poem), especially *longa via est...orbis ultimus, a terra terra remota mea*. Ovid uses similar language to describe the physical distance between himself and Rome elsewhere in his exile poetry, especially in *Ex.* 5.75 *per tantum terrae, tot aquas* (chosen for comparison because the line before this describes the *hirsutos...Getas*).

words *Parve* and *urbem* in the first line (*Tr.* 1.1.1). *Parve*, the first word that the reader would see as they unroll the *Tristia*, might seem strange, out of place, because it is mundane.<sup>16</sup> But the word's placement is meaningful. *Parve* and *urbem* stand at two poles of the sentence, just as the *liber* and Ovid stand opposite to the city of Rome—estranged, out of place, and mundane in comparison. Because *urbem* stands opposite to *Parve*, “little,” it seems semantically “big,” underscoring Rome's centrality.

Word order is also important to Ovid's demonstration of his close relationship to his book, and their respective relationships to Rome. *Me liber urbem* (1) sums up the key players in these relationships. *Me* and *liber* are next to each other, showing that Ovid's little book is close to Ovid himself. I interpret the *sine* that precedes *me* to signify that the book will go into the city without Ovid, and thus Rome will be without Ovid. But Ovid's book, a product of Ovid himself, remains identified with him, even if Ovid is only in its memory (10). This close connection is why Ovid tells his book to act as his proxy,<sup>17</sup> as he, the book's master, cannot go to Rome (2).

Furthermore, *Parve* has a double meaning in the context of Ovid's relationship to his book. Ovid identifies his book as small in comparison to himself, a sort of “mini-me.” Nevertheless, because the book is sufficient to substitute for Ovid, the adjective *Parve* can also apply to Ovid himself: he is little in comparison to the urban grandeur of Rome. Thus, to recapitulate, in *Tristia* 1.1, Ovid cannot go to Rome, and so he conjures up the idea that his book will go there in his stead. His book is oriented towards Rome, although physically far from it. Ovid, however, has no hope of going to Rome; his exile orients him towards the periphery.

Ovid's book's orientation towards Rome is described in othering language.<sup>18</sup> The first two adjectives Ovid uses to describe his peripheral book after *Parve* are *incultus* (3) and *infelix* (4), “un-refined” and “un-happy.” Through such repeated uses of the *in-* prefix, at the outset of the poem, Ovid clearly distinguishes how his book is unlike, and indeed the antithesis of, the ideal. If one accepts Rowland's concept, Ovid others his book, tallying the ways in which it goes against the ideal self. I believe this othering renders the book's characteristics as peripheral in comparison to central Rome, intensifying the center/periphery tension.

Other scholars, however, see these same words as signaling the exiled Ovid's un-happy decline in poetic *ingenium*. Michael Mordine posits that Ovid uses *infelix* to equate his emotions with his book, and thus to highlight “the problems inherent with such an equation.”<sup>19</sup> The second part of Mordine's interpretation attempts to distance Ovid from his book. Instead, I see Ovid simply identifying his written work with himself, something that he does throughout *Tristia* 1.1.

I am more convinced of G.D. Williams' interpretation, but wish to add some nuance to his analysis by applying the center/periphery lens. Williams interprets *incultus* to mean “infertile,” a

<sup>16</sup> A search on [latin.packhum.org](http://latin.packhum.org) shows that Ovid uses *parv-* and its cognates a couple hundred times; it is not a rare word.

<sup>17</sup> Equally, Ovid's vocative address creates a direct connection between him and his little book.

<sup>18</sup> Not only does this orientation emerge through Ovid's use of othering language to describe his book in lines 1-14; it also can be seen through Ovid's increasingly specific language to describe Rome itself. As Geyssen notes (380), from *urbem* (1) to *loca grata* (15) to *Romam* (57), “the city comes into greater focus.”

<sup>19</sup> Mordine references *Tristia* 2.1.1-2, in which Ovid calls his *libelli* an *infelix cura*. He says that Ovid “conflat[es] his literary output with his emotional state, thus identifying his writing with himself”<sup>19</sup> (524), and purposefully highlights the issue with this conflation.

characteristic Ovid attributes to his *ingenium* elsewhere in his exile poetry<sup>20</sup> and interprets *infelix* to be a reference to Ovid's days in Tomis, which are devoid of happiness.<sup>21</sup> I agree with Williams that Ovid's *infelix* mood directly correlates to his *infelix* poetry book, but the words *incultus* and *infelix* signify more than creative frustration. The *in-* prefixes of these epithets signify frustration with something that is not the ideal. Thus, Ovid is not simply frustrated because of exile;<sup>22</sup> he is frustrated because his exile is at the "extreme edge of the empire"<sup>23</sup> where he lacks the urbane surroundings of Rome.

Ovid reinforces the idea that his book is the other to an ideal in the next ten lines of the poem, through emphasis on its lack of color, and, later on its rough, shaggy hair which resembles that of the Getae.

### Lines 5-9: The Black Sea Scroll, Absent of Color

5 *nec te purpureo velent vaccinia fuco—*  
*non est conveniens luctibus ille color—*  
*nec titulus minio, nec cedro charta notetur,*  
*candida nec nigra cornua fronte geras.*  
 9 *felices ornet haec instrumenta libellos:*

Nor should blueberries veil you with their purple dyes—  
 Not that color—it does not fit sorrow—  
 Nor should you wear a title in vermillion, nor paper tinged with cedar oil,  
 Nor gleaming white horns on your black brow.  
 These are the features which should adorn happy books:

In these lines, Ovid recites the ways in which his book lacks color: it should not don purple on its cover, nor red on its title, nor yellow cedar tinge on its paper, nor white on its bosses. Here Ovid reiterates that his book is the antithesis of a model Roman book, which is typically colorful, through his concentrated use of negation words and color words.

Negation words dominate the first 14 lines of *Tristia* 1.1. Combined, repetitions of *nec*, *sine*, *non*, and *neve* make up more than ten percent of all the words used in these 14 lines. Five negation words are concentrated within lines 5-9 alone. These words are mostly placed at the beginning of new lines and clauses to give them more emphasis. They immediately signal to the reader that his book does not possess the characteristics that follow the negation word.

Ovid's *non* and *nec*'s negate characteristics illustrated by color words. Color references are abundant in *Tristia* 1.1 and 3.1. Florica Bechet catalogued all the color terms in Ovid's exile poetry,

<sup>20</sup> Williams notes that Ovid "regularly uses the language of infertility to portray the alleged decline of his poetic *ingenium*" (183).

<sup>21</sup> Williams notes that Ovid "describes the void of time which he has to fill in Tomis as *infelica*" (183).

<sup>22</sup> Not all scholars have discerned this nuance between exile in a peripheral non-Roman place and exile in more desirable places. Hallett fails to make this distinction in her comparison of the image of Atticus in exile at Athens, in Cornelius Nepos' biography of him, to Ovid's constructed image of himself in *Tristia* 4.10. In contrast to the cultural wasteland of Tomis, voluntary exile in Athens is "a fortunate interlude" (248). Athens was also place of exile, but hardly a peripheral backwater. In many respects, Athens rivaled Rome. It is hardly surprising that Ovid in Tomis was *infelix*, while Atticus in Athens was "fortunate."

<sup>23</sup> Steven Hinds, "Ovid, Poet, 43 BCE-17 CE," *Oxford Classical Dictionary*.



and this catalogue confirms that color terms are decidedly frequent in *Tristia* 1.1 and 3.1. Color references from *Tristia* 1.1 and 3.1 alone comprise about one third of all the color references found in Ovid's exilic canon. This frequency of color references is unusual for Ovid's exile poetry, but not unusual for poetic descriptions of books. In fact, book descriptions are a ready canvas for the motif of color. Indeed, Catullus, who precedes Ovid, notes the *lora rubra*, "red ties" (22.7) of Varus' ideal book. Later, Martial emulates Ovid's rich use of color terminology.<sup>24</sup>

In Ovid's book description, he combines the negation of color words with the center/periphery motif, which is also common in roughly contemporaneous poetic descriptions of books. For example, Horace's *Epistles* 1.20.10-13, 17-18 imagine his book heading in the opposite direction from Ovid's in *Tristia* 1.1 and 3.1. Instead of journeying from the periphery to Rome, Horace imagines his book traveling from Rome to the periphery: either fleeing to Utica in modern-day Tunisia, or being sent in chains to Ilerda on the modern-day Spanish coast. Following Ovid, Martial also emulates the theme of center/periphery.<sup>25</sup>

In sum, other authors before Ovid had used book descriptions as an opportunity, either for exploring the motif of color, or for exploring the center/periphery theme. But Ovid is an innovator, for he combines both motifs together in his book description. The impact is to underscore his book's peripheral nature: it is devoid of color because it is absent from the Roman center, the colorful ideal. In fact, the only color which Ovid affirmatively attributes to his book is *nigra*, "black" (8), which conveys the absence of color.<sup>26</sup>

The *fronte*, "brow" (8), which *nigra* describes, takes on more texture in the following lines, which further detail the rough, shaggy nature of the book's edges.

#### Lines 10-14: Shaggy Like the Getae

10 *fortunae memorem te decet esse meae.*  
*nec fragili geminae poliantur pumice frontes,*  
*hirsutus sparsis ut videare comis.*  
*neve liturarum pudeat; qui viderit illas,*  
 14 *de lacrimis factas sentiat esse meis.*

But it is my fate that you should be mindful of.<sup>27</sup>  
 Nor should your twin brows be refined by brittle pumice,  
 So that you appear shaggy with messy hair.  
 Do not be ashamed of your blots; he who will see them,

<sup>24</sup> In 2.93.2, Martial tells of his book blushing (red), *pudoris habet*; in 3.2.7, *perunctus cedar* recalls Ovid's book, which lacks paper tinged with cedar oil; in 3.2.10, *purpura delicata velet* recalls Ovid's book, which should not be veiled in purple dye; in 3.2.11 *cocco rubeat superbus index* recalls Ovid's book, which boasts no title in vermillion.

<sup>25</sup> Martial 3.1.5-6 praises a book born in Rome over a Gallic book. Martial 3.4.1 orders his book to Rome, and 3.5.1 tells of a *parve liber* running into Rome *sine me*, without its author. These direct quotes from Ovid's *Tristia* 1.1 demonstrate purposeful intertextuality.

<sup>26</sup> In my analysis of *Tristia* 3.1 I further explore the opposition of *nigra* and *candida*.

<sup>27</sup> Ovid's identification with his book is reinforced here. The last four words of this line, *te decet esse meae*, convey Ovid's implicit message to his book, "you ought to be of me." Like the other lines in *Tristia* 1.1 which demonstrate Ovid's direct association with his book (1.1.36, 1.1.57, 1.1.62), this line contains the pronouns *te* and *meae*.

Let him know they were made by my tears.

Throughout *Tristia* 1.1, Ovid's book's peripheral demeanor is conveyed mostly as the negative of a model book. In these lines, exactly what the model book should be is made explicit by the reference to pumice, which is also found in descriptions of Catullus' *lepidum novum libellum* (Catullus 1.1) and Varus' *novi libri* (Catullus 22.6). Ovid underscores his book's peripheral origin<sup>28</sup> by personifying its rough, shaggy *frontes*,<sup>29</sup> papyrus edges, not "refined by brittle pumice" (11). This stands in contrast to the *lepidum novum libellum* modeled in Catullus 1, which is *arido modo pumice exploitum*, "refined with dry pumice" (2), and the *novi libri* modeled in Catullus 22, which are *pumice omnia aequata*, "all smoothed with pumice" (8).<sup>30</sup>

This explicit connection to Catullus' books triggers other implicit connections to these model books found earlier in the poem. Ovid's *infelix*, "un-happy," book is clearly juxtaposed against the *felices libellos* (6) of Catullus 1 and 22. Mordine notes how through a checklist of his book's negative and absent characteristics, Ovid "superficially mirrors Catullus' rhetoric" in an "anti-catalogue."<sup>31</sup> He observes this anti-catalogue in the tension between the *infelix liber* of line 4, and the *felices libellos* of line 6, stating, "the two opposed physical book types mirror the antithesis between the physical spaces of Rome and Tomis (as Ovid constructs them)."<sup>32</sup> But Mordine's conclusion about this specific antithesis between the two book types can also be applied in lines 5-11: just as Ovid's book lacks happiness, it lacks color, which "does not fit sorrow" (6), and it lacks refinement by pumice (11). In sum, Ovid's book, as the un-ideal other, is analogous to the periphery as something un-Roman.

The rough nature of the *frontes*, not refined by brittle pumice, comes into more focus when we turn to line 12. Aside from *parve*, this is the only line where Ovid attributes an affirmative characteristic to his book: *hirsutus*, "shaggy." Why does Ovid use such a peculiar word? Looking at the few uses of *hirsutus* in Ovid's exilic poetry<sup>33</sup> helps us answer this question. *Hirsutus* appears

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<sup>28</sup> Not only does Ovid's book stand in contrast to the ideal Roman book, but even to the ideal Roman man. Newlands notes that Ovid's book "is the antithesis of the cultured Roman male, who Ovid tells us in the *Ars Amatoria*, should be smooth shaven, sleek, and spotlessly clean (*A.A.* 1.513-20)" (62).

<sup>29</sup> The quality of hairiness becomes especially pronounced when modified by words like *rasa*, which Martial employs in 3.10.1-2: *nec adhuc rasa mihi fronte libellus*, "my little book's edges not yet shaved." In 3.2.8, Martial also imitates Ovid's use of *fronte* to describe ideal bookroll bosses: *frontis gemino decens honore*, "twin bosses decorated honorably."

<sup>30</sup> Also note the double-meaning of *nec...poliantur*. The *nec* used has the same impact of negation as those used in lines 5 and 7. Ovid's book is both literally and figuratively rough and un-refined, and should remain so. These qualities evoke the *incultus* epithet. I agree with Mordine's assertion that *incultus* purposefully marks the book as antithetical to Rome, "the locus of refinement and luxury, all that is *cultus*" (528). The book is unlike a *cultus* Roman.

<sup>31</sup> Mordine, 527-528.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Besides the four instances in Ovid's exile poetry, a search on [latin.packhum.org](http://latin.packhum.org) shows that *hirsutus* appears 12 other times in Ovid's non-exilic poetry. Almost all these instances are references to non-Roman people or non-human creatures and animals: *Amores* 3.10.7 *hirsuti...coloni*, describing shaggy farmers; *Heroides* 9.63 *hirsutos...capillos*, describing Deianara's shaggy hair; *Heroides* 9.111 *hirsuti...vellera*, describing the shaggy fur of a lion; *Ars Amatoria* 1.108 *hirsutas...comas*, describing the shaggy hair of a theater audience; *Metamorphoses* 2.30 *hirsuta capillos*, describing Winter's shaggy hair; *Metamorphoses* 3.222 *hirsutaque corpore*, describing Lachne's shaggy body; *Metamorphoses* 10.103 *hirsutaque...pinus*, describing a shaggy pine; *Metamorphoses* 12.280 *hirsutis...crinibus*, describing

in only three other instances, two of which describe the Getae. The other, non-Getae instance is in *Tristia* 2.1.259, where Ovid uses the epithet in a figurative meaning: coarse in the sense of crude. In this passage he defends his *Ars Amatoria*, arguing that he did not intend to incite wives to adultery, and that, instead, a salacious wife will pervert even the most prudish texts. In 2.1.259-260, Ovid jokes that: *Sumpserit Annales (nihil est hirsutius illis) / facta sit unde parens Ilia, nempe leget*, “She’ll pick up the *Annals* (nothing is coarser than them!) / she’ll of course read who made Ilia pregnant.” Here, *hirsutius* advances the figurative connotation of roughness, similar to the figurative meanings of *nec...poliantur* and *incultus*.<sup>34</sup>

The two *hirsutus* references to the Getae appear in Ovid’s *Epistulae Ex Ponto*.<sup>35</sup> *Ex Ponto* 1.5 merits more in-depth analysis here for its reference to the Getae. In *Ex Ponto* 1.5 Ovid explores his own association with the Getae, and his positioning towards the Pontic periphery, just as he does before, in *Tristia* 1.1.

65 *Hoc ubi vivendum est, satis est, si consequor arvo,  
inter inhumanos esse poeta Getas.*

Here, where I live, it is enough, if in this land I aim  
to be a poet among the un-cultured Getae.

Here Ovid others the Getae, marking them as *inhumanos*, “un-cultured” (66), with the same negation prefix *in-* seen in *infelix* and *incultus*. He presents himself as an anomaly among the un-cultured Getae, by whom he is literally surrounded in the word order: *inhumanos esse poeta Getas* (66). True, this positioning might seem at odds with Ovid’s movement towards a peripheral status in *Tristia* 1.1, but the discrepancy highlights the liminal status that Ovid is negotiating between center and periphery. Ovid does not fully assume either identity. He does not yet count himself as a Getic person, but he is becoming reconciled to his place “among the Getae.” He recognizes his physical distance from Rome,<sup>36</sup> but he sees his “land” as Tomis, and he struggles to understand how “to be a poet” there. He retains some parts of his formerly central identity, but he begins to accept some aspects of a newfound peripheral identity, a move that becomes more pronounced a few lines down in *Ex Ponto* 1.5.

73 *Dividimur caelo quaeque est procul urbe Quirini  
aspicit hirsutos comminus ursa Getas.*

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Charaxus’ shaggy hair; *Metamorphoses* 13.766 *hirsutam barbam*, describing Polyphemus’ shaggy beard; *Metamorphoses* 14.165 *non hirsutus amictu*, describing Achaemenides no longer in shaggy clothes; *Metamorphoses* 14.207 *hirsuti...leonis*, describing a shaggy lion; *Fasti* 2.339 *hirsuta...vellera*, describing the shaggy fur of a lion; *Fasti* 3.332 *hirsutae...comae*, describing Numa Pompilius’ shaggy hair; *Fasti* 5.176 *hirsutas leas*, describing shaggy lionesses.

<sup>34</sup> As discussed in footnote 29.

<sup>35</sup> Why are the Getae called *hirsutus*? Ovid explains in *Tristia* 5.7.18 that they have *non coma, non ulla barba resecta*, “neither hair, nor any beard trimmed.” Roger Batty cites this line in his description of the Getae (322).

<sup>36</sup> We see this theme in *Tristia* 1.1 and also in *Ex Ponto* 1.5, in which Ovid expresses doubts about his books’ journey to Rome: *nec reor hinc istuc nostris iter esse libellis*, “nor do I believe there is a path for our books from here to there” (71). In the same poem, Ovid reiterates his disbelief that his work can jump *per tantum terrae, tot aquas*, “across so many lands and seas” (75).

We are divided from the heavens, and far from the City of Quirinus  
the bear sees the shaggy Getae close by.<sup>37</sup>

Comparing this excerpt of *Ex Ponto* 1.5.73-74 with lines 65-66 we again see Ovid struggle with his identity in relation to the Getae: is he merely among them, or is he of them? In lines 65-66, he portrays himself more as a Roman “self” among Getae others. But in lines 73-74 he implies that he is of the same shaggy stock of the Getae, via intertextual reference. In lines 73-74, through the connection that *hirsutos* makes to *hirsutus* in *Tristia* 1.1, Ovid ends up portraying his book (and by extension, himself) as one of the Getae.

This association appears again in an examination of the final instance of *hirsutus* in Ovid’s exile poetry. In *Ex Ponto* 3.5.5-6, Ovid offers *salutem / mittit ab hirsutis, Maxime Cotta, Getis*, “a greeting to Maximus Cotta, sent from the shaggy Getae” (6), instead of *praesens*, “in person” (5). In this passage, a written work again provides an apt template for exploring the theme of center/periphery. Here the shaggy Getae literally stand at the end of the line, just as Tomis is found at the end of the empire. Although Ovid is of course the author of this “greeting,” he offers it to Maximus Cotta “from the shaggy Getae;” thus, the reader understands “from the shaggy Getae” to signify “from Tomis” and “from Ovid.” Put together, the catalogue of *hirsutus* instances describing the Getae in *Ex Ponto* further illuminates Ovid’s word choice of *hirsutus* in *Tristia* 1.1.

On top of his association with the Getae through his shaggy book, in *Tristia* 1.1 Ovid identifies himself with Briseis, another figure from a peripheral region nearby, in Anatolia. In lines 13-14, Ovid makes intertextual reference to the beginning of *Heroides* 3.3, reciting the letter that the *barbarica* Briseis writes to her Greek *dominoque viroque*, “lover and master” (5), Achilles. Ovid’s book has “blots made by his tears” *litararum...lacrimis factas* (13-14), just as Briseis’ *littera* has *lacrimae fecere lituras*, “blots made by her tears” (3). Ovid’s use of the same three words in *Tristia* 1.1 echoes the language of *Heroides* 3.3, and also its thematic material: a tension between center and periphery. Briseis’ *littera* is introduced as *vix bene barbarica Graeca notata manu*, “Greek, but hardly written well by a foreign hand” (2). It is worth noting here that the othering language of *barbarica*<sup>38</sup> is in tension with the model “self” against which it is defined, *Graeca*. These words are separated by a distinct caesura in the meter, which reinforces the separation between *barbarica* and *Graeca*. Thus, from *Heroides* 3.3, we can trace Ovid’s development of the center/periphery tension from before his exile poetry, advanced in terms of *littera/libri*.<sup>39</sup> The association with Briseis in *Tristia* 1.1 enables Ovid again to use the physicality of his book to highlight his own marginality.

For this reason, I question the claims of Cristina Popescu, who sees Ovid clashing with Pontic lands and peoples in the *Tristia*, but not in the *Ex Ponto*, where she discerns a positive attitude towards the Getae suddenly appearing.<sup>40</sup> Instead of taking sides in the tension between

<sup>37</sup> Note the physical proximity of the shaggy Getae, who surround the bear, in the words *hirsutos comminus ursa Getas*, in contrast to the distance between the far-off *urbe Quirini* and the *ursa*. Also, *Quirini* and *Getas* as the two final words in these lines seem to oppose one another.

<sup>38</sup> Later on in the poem, Briseis also describes herself as *infelix*, un-happy (16), and notes her absence of color, *abiit...colorque* (141).

<sup>39</sup> Newlands has observed that Ovid was always “on the margins,” but that this status is “given drastic physical expression in exile” (59).

<sup>40</sup> Popescu contrasts the two positions of Ovid’s exile works. In the earlier *Tristia*, Rome is “a land of lost happiness and Tomis a country of present sadness” (76); in the latter *Epistulae ex Ponto*, Rome is an

center and periphery, first being pro-Roman in the *Tristia*, then anti-Roman in the *Ex Ponto*, Ovid is still trying to resolve where he belongs. *Tristia* 1.1's description of a book with peripheral characteristics, and its author's association with peripheral peoples, demonstrate that Ovid begins to identify with the Pontic periphery in *Tristia*'s first few lines. His orientation towards peripheral peoples did not undergo a "sudden transformation" in the *Ex Ponto*, but rather is present from the beginning of his exile poetry.

### *Tristia* 3.1

My arguments above concerning *Tristia* 1.1—about the relationship between Ovid and his book, between his book and Rome, between himself and Rome, and between himself and other inhabitants of the Pontic periphery—apply to *Tristia* 3.1 as well, perhaps even more explicitly. Ovid uses many of the same motifs and poetic devices in *Tristia* 3.1, further exploring these relationships, and positioning his own identity between the center and periphery. In *Tristia* 3.1, Ovid's book journeys to Rome for the first time, following the imagined set up of *Tristia* 1.1.

#### Lines 1-6: Little Book Reaches the Big City

*1 Missus in hanc venio timide liber exulis urbem  
da placidam fesso, lector amice, manum;  
neve reformida, ne sim tibi forte pudori:  
nullus in hac charta versus amare docet.  
5 Haec domini fortuna mei est, ut debeat illam  
infelix nullis dissimulare iocis.*

Sent into this very City, I come in fear, a book of exile  
Friendly reader, give a gentle hand to the wearied;<sup>41</sup>  
Do not recoil, at the shame I perhaps should be to you;<sup>42</sup>  
No verse on this here page teaches love.  
Such is my master's fate that he ought—

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"illusory damned space" and Tomis a "privileged land" (76). According to Popescu, in *Ex Ponto*, Ovid positions Tomis as his "new cosmic center," and breaks down "the emotional and spiritual barriers between [him] and the Tomitan population" (76).

<sup>41</sup> Another allusion to *Tristia* 1.1 is Ovid's use of the vocative address in line 2 of *Tristia* 3.1. In *Tristia* 1.1, Ovid addresses his book; here, the book addresses the *lector amice*, "friendly reader" (2). While the book implores the imaginary reader to guide it with *placidam...manum*, "a gentle hand" (2), Ovid implores the reader to sympathize with him, a wearied outsider. Also to bridge the gap between himself and his reader, Ovid warns his reader *neve reformida*, "not to recoil" (3).

<sup>42</sup> Drawing the peripheral book and the Roman reader closer, Ovid anticipates the discomfort of shame that both might feel, and he reassures them. In *Tristia* 1.1, Ovid orders his book *neve pudeat*, "do not be ashamed" (13). In *Tristia* 3.1, he implores his reader *neve reformida...pudori*, "do not recoil at the shame" (3). The use of both *neve* and *pudere* (or its cognate) in both passages seems deliberate. In *Tristia* 1.1.13 the book should not be ashamed because of its blots, and in *Tristia* 3.1.3 the reader should not recoil with shame, because it is not reading the *Ars Amatoria*. Nevertheless, these similarly worded assurances show Ovid's empathy for both the urbane Roman reader and his peripheral Pontic book. His capacity to empathize with both a central and peripheral figure possibly reflects his conscious effort to mediate these two sides of his identity.

The un-happy one—not hide it with any jokes.

In the first six lines of *Tristia* 3.1, Ovid’s little book speaks from Rome—it has reached the big city. But it comes with some baggage, the stigma of its author’s exile. Moreover, the little book is mindful of his master’s fate, which it mentions in line 5.<sup>43</sup> When the book explains its author’s history, we see several reminders of *Tristia* 1.1. Ovid’s use of *domini fortuna* recalls his word choice in *Tristia* 1.1. His word order reinforces the direct connection between book and author introduced in *Tristia* 1.1,<sup>44</sup> as does the exclamation *infelix* (6). This is the same othering epithet attached to Ovid’s book in *Tristia* 1.1.<sup>45</sup> Evidence of the direct relationship between Ovid and his book, and of their shared peripheral other characteristics, is present throughout *Tristia* 1.1, but here *infelix* is made especially conspicuous by enjambment. In *Tristia* 3.1, Ovid draws out these themes, and others himself explicitly.<sup>46</sup>

*Tristia* 3.1’s first few lines recall the opening of *Tristia* 1.1 in other ways, too. The paramount city of Rome again looms as the last word of the first line ...*urbem*, and its position as the epicenter of the empire is underscored more forcefully by the emphatic *hanc*. The fundamental tension between the central *urbem* and the peripheral book of exile is highlighted by the concentration of *liber exulis urbem* at the end of the first line. Similar to *me liber urbem* in the first line of *Tristia* 1.1, *liber exulis urbem* sums up *Tristia* 3.1’s main theme.<sup>47</sup>

### Lines 9-10: The Book’s Emotional Baggage

9 *Inspice quid portem: nihil hic nisi triste videbis,*  
*carmine temporibus conveniente suis.*

Look at what I bring: nothing to see here except sadness,  
 Poetry which fits its condition.

These lines remind the reader that the book, as an extension of Ovid, carries the burden of its author’s emotional baggage. *Nihil hic nisi triste* (9), with its hyperbolic negating language, conveys Ovid’s all-encompassing sadness. Line 10, with *temporibus conveniente*, evokes *Tristia* 1.1.4’s *temporis*, in which Ovid defines the un-happy, un-refined nature of exile, as well as *Tristia* 1.1.6’s *conveniens*, in which Ovid remarks that color does not fit sorrow. Logically, Ovid’s book should lack color, because its poetry fits its condition (3.1.10), the condition of sadness, or sorrow (3.1.9), with which color does not fit (1.1.6). Ovid recalls this lack by intertextual use of

<sup>43</sup> This is what its *dominus*, Ovid, exhorted it to do in *Tristia* 1.1.10.

<sup>44</sup> Literally, *domini fortuna mei est* can be read as: “master’s fate is mine,” and this same sentiment is evoked more literally later in the poem: *In genus auctoris miseri fortuna redundat / et patimur nati, quam tulit ipse, fugam*, “The fate of our un-happy author abounds in his offspring / and we suffer from birth that which he has borne, exile” (73-74).

<sup>45</sup> And to Briseis in *Heroides* 3.3.

<sup>46</sup> *Infelix* is not the only example of othering language advanced in *Tristia* 1.1. Ovid also uses four negating words in these first six lines: *neve, ne, nullus, nullis*.

<sup>47</sup> In lines 7-8, Ovid’s book explains that Ovid now condemns and hates the bad work (probably referencing the *Ars Amatoria*) which amused him when he was *viridi* green (young, but also note the color language associated with Ovid’s time at Rome).

*conveniens/conveniente*. Thus, a few lines down,<sup>48</sup> *Tristia* 3.1 reiterates the characteristics which this book lacks, among them, color.<sup>49</sup>

**Lines 13-14: No golden color? Not refined with pumice? Check and check.**

*13 quod neque sum cedro flauus nec pumice levis,  
erubui domino cultior esse meo;*

If I am not golden with cedar oil, nor refined with pumice,  
It is because I blushed to be more refined than my master;

The most prominent features which defined Ovid's book as peripheral in *Tristia* 1.1, surface again in these four lines. There is the absence of color,<sup>50</sup> signified by *neque...flauus* (13),<sup>51</sup> and the marked roughness, or absence of refinement, signified by *nec pumice levis* (13). But there is also mention of the book blushing,<sup>52</sup> found in line 14, which in this context seems so peculiar that it warrants closer scrutiny. I interpret this line (taken with line 13) to mean that Ovid's book retains all these peripheral accessories so as to make his master, Ovid, look more refined by comparison.<sup>53</sup>

Only in this instance does the book present itself as different from, rather than as an extension of, its master. This anomaly deepens our understanding of Ovid's complex identity as in limbo between center and periphery. Here we see the book struggling with its appearance. Colorless and unrefined, it is torn between appearing excessively peripheral at Rome, and appearing more refined than is expected, considering its unrefined origin at Tomis. Having been othered as something distinctly *incultus*, un-refined (*Tr.* 1.1.3), the book is wary to become *cultior*, more refined (*Tr.* 3.1.14). Once in Rome, the peripheral book must appeal to audiences of the imperial center, by excusing its obviously peripheral provenance. As a result, the book finds itself caught between center and periphery: it is peripheral in origin, but its orientation is towards the

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<sup>48</sup> In lines 11-12, Ovid again uses the physicality of the book as an opportunity for metaphors, and to demonstrate the physical distance between the center and the periphery: *Clauda quod alterno subsidunt carmina versu / vel pedis hoc ratio, vel via longa facit*, "if crippled poems sink in alternating verses it is because of this meter's foot, or the long journey." Here Ovid makes a metaphor for the feet of the elegiac meter, which are crippled by their alternating lengths. The physical distance between Tomis and Rome is signified by *via longa*.

<sup>49</sup> In one case, Ovid attributes embarrassment to the book, paradoxically using the word *erubui*, which means to turn red, or to blush, even though Ovid is clear that the book lacks color.

<sup>50</sup> The absence of color motif appears in another personification of the book later in the poem. The book is so afraid of Rome, that *quatitur trepido littera...metu*, its pages shake with the tremble of fear, and *exsanguis chartam pallere colore*, its paper pales with a bloodless color.

<sup>51</sup> And the use of *cedro*, the word for cedar-oil, to signify the tinge of the ideal Roman book's pages.

<sup>52</sup> It is worth recalling Martial's emulation of the blushing-book motif in 2.93.2, *pudoris habet*. This descriptor is used by Ovid too, and it seems to become part of the poetic tradition for characterizing books, along with color words and the theme of sending a book to Rome or to the provinces.

<sup>53</sup> This interpretation can also account for the awkward phrasing (apparent in both the Latin and the English translation) of line 14. Read literally, the book says that it has these color-less, rough characteristics because it would be embarrassing to appear more refined than his master, who is currently in an *incultus*, *infelix* position at Tomis.

center. Ovid's situation, by contrast, is the inverse of his book's: he is intrinsically Roman, but his orientation is shifting towards the periphery.

**Lines 15-18: Blots made by tears? Poor barbarian grammar? Check and check again.**

15 *littera suffusas quod habet maculosa lituras,*  
*laesit opus lacrimis ipse poeta suum.*  
 18 *in qua scribebat, barbara terra fuit.*

If the letters have spots and blots covering them,  
 It is because the poet struck his own work with his tears.  
 If any lines do not seem like grammatical Latin,  
 The place in which he was writing, it was a foreign land.

Ovid's marginalization has so far been exhibited most clearly by his intertextual identification of himself with the *barbarica* Briseis of *Heroides* 3.3. This intertextual identification recurs in these lines, and it is even more pronounced here. In line 13, Ovid uses the word *littera*, closely connecting his written work to *Briseide littera* (*Her.* 3.3.1), and he complements this with the similar-sounding *lituras* at the end of the line. Line 5 of *Tristia* 3.1 follows through on Ovid's admonition that his book should be mindful of his fate in *Tristia* 1.1.10. Similarly, lines 15-16 of *Tristia* 3.1 follow through on Ovid's command in *Tristia* 1.1.13-14, that his book should let the reader know that *litararum...lacrimis factas...meis*, its blots were made by Ovid's tears. Moreover, while reiterating *Tristia* 1.1's discussion of blots and tears, lines 17-18 closely resemble *Heroides* 3.3.2. The *non dicta Latine* with which Ovid *scribebat* parallels the *vix bene...Graeca* which Briseis uses. And the explanation for the poor Latin and Greek is the same in both cases, too: *barbara terra*, "a foreign land," and *barbarica manu*, "a foreign hand." In his descriptions of Briseis' writing and his own, Ovid opposes the model of the Roman or Greek self against the non-Roman or non-Greek other marked by the foreign land or hand. In Ovid's defense, Ovid's book explains here the reason for its peripheral features, assigning blame to the *barbara terra*, not to *ipse poeta*, "the poet himself." But while his book is trying to orient itself towards the Roman center, these efforts are in vain, for Ovid finds himself slipping away, in the direction of the *barbara terra* of Tomis—even his writing is taking on foreign characteristics.

In sum, *Tristia* 3.1's opening lines are strongly reminiscent of *Tristia* 1.1's, and of *Heroides* 3.3's, to which both *Tristia* 1.1 and 3.1 allude. They reinforce the connection between Ovid and his book, the tension between the center at Rome and the peripheral book, and the outward signs of the book's peripheral nature, particularly its lack of color, rough surface, and blots caused by Ovid's tears. Most significantly, as Ovid navigates his limbo between center and periphery, he finds his orientation shifting closer to the periphery. This realization becomes central later in the poem, in the scene where Ovid's book, following its tour of Rome,<sup>54</sup> approaches the first imperial library, seeking refuge.

<sup>54</sup> Throughout this tour, Ovid emphasizes the physical displacement of himself and his peripheral book from the imperial center: *hospes in urbe liber*, "foreign book in the city" (20); *in patria...tua*, "in your homeland" (24); *terraque marique / longinquo referam lassus ab orbe pedem*, "by land and by sea I come weary from a faraway region" (25-26); *his Stator, hoc primum condita Roma loco est*, "here is Stator, this



### Lines 59-62: When Center and Periphery Collide

59 *Inde tenore pari gradibus sublimia celsis*  
*ducor ad intonsi candida templa dei,*  
*signa peregrinis ubi sunt alterna columnis,*  
 62 *Belides et stricto barbarus ense pater*

Then I am led up the even course with lofty steps  
 To the eminent gleaming white temple of the unshorn god,  
 Where there are statues alternating with foreign columns,  
 The Danaids and their foreign father with a drawn sword

In these lines, Ovid's book approaches the first of three libraries in Rome where it hopes to settle, the Palatine Library in Rome, established by Augustus in 28 BCE in the Temple of Apollo. The portico of this temple arguably is the most central location of the imperial center, as indicated by *tenore pari gradibus celsis* (59), the even course and lofty steps one reaches it by. The *tenore pari*, "even course" can be distinguished from the book's rough and uneven surface *nec...levis*, (3.1.13) and *nec...poliantur* (1.1.11). The un-polished, peripheral book can also be distinguished from the eminent temple itself, which is *candida*, "gleaming white" (60).<sup>55</sup>

The *candida templa* here reminds the reader of the *candida cornua*, "white horns" of *Tristia* 1.1. Just as the *candida cornua* in *Tristia* 1.1 are offset by a *nigra fronte*,<sup>56</sup> or black brow (*fronte* denotes the presence of hair),<sup>57</sup> the *candida templa* stands in contrast to a hairy, *intonsi dei* (60), an unshorn god.<sup>58</sup> In both *Tristia* 1.1 and 3.1, Ovid creates a tension between a gleaming white figure and a hairy figure, using synchysis in *Tristia* 1.1 (*candida nec nigra cornua fronte*), and chiasmus in *Tristia* 3.1 (*intonsi candida templa dei*). Another instance of synchysis in line 61, *signa peregrinis ubi sunt alterna columnis*, which has alternating statues vie with the foreign columns, highlights a similar tension. The alternating words help the reader visualize the alternation between the Roman statues and foreign columns.

This back-and-forth between central and peripheral architectural elements is then thrown off balance when Ovid focuses on one statue group composed of Danaus and his daughters, peripheral figures. Danaus, is discernibly foreign,<sup>59</sup> a fact that is further highlighted by his

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is the place where Rome was first founded" (31-32); *qui procul extremo pulsus in orbe latet*, "[Ovid], who is banished, lurking far off on the world's edge" (50).

<sup>55</sup> Bechet notes that in Ovid's exile poems, "the temples and altars of the gods are bright white"—*candidus* occurs 11 times in this context (11). *Fulgentibus armis*, "gleaming weapons" (3.1.33) which adorn *tecta digna deo*, "a house fit for a god" (34) carry the same sense.

<sup>56</sup> This black-and-white opposition figures into center/periphery. Bechet concludes that "the Scythian landscape illustrates only two colors: black and white (*niger* and *candidus*)" (20). While many more colors than black and white are represented, her point that "exile has created a chromatic fracture for Ovid" making him "achieve a distortion of the light which is focused into two poles: one black and one white" (20), is valid. Through the center/periphery lens, her conclusion acquires more nuance: the two poles, black and white, are analogous to the two poles of periphery and center which Ovid is torn between.

<sup>57</sup> Ovid tidily opposes *candida* and *nigra*, separating them only with a *nec*.

<sup>58</sup> The *dei* likely signifies Apollo, known for his long, un-shorn hair.

<sup>59</sup> Danaus was the mythical ruler of Libya before becoming king of Argos in Greece.

intertextual similarities with the Getae. Directly after *Tristia* 5.7.18, in which Ovid explains how the Getae have *non coma, non ulla barba resecta*, “neither hair, nor any beard trimmed,” he also tells of *cultro quem iunctum lateri barbarus omnis habet*, “the knife that every foreign one has strapped to his side” (5.7.19-20). The order in which Ovid mentions these characteristics aligns with that in *Tristia* 3.1. There is the *intonsi* figure, with no hair trimmed, and the *barbarus pater*, foreign father, with the *ense*, sword at the ready.

Why does Ovid choose to focus on the most peripheral features of this ultra-central Roman temple?<sup>60</sup> And where does he find himself positioned himself amid these various tensions between center and periphery? Ovid complicates the reader’s view of this ultra-central Roman temple to reflect the confusing limbo that he experiences, caught between center and periphery. Through his focus on foreign attributes, and through the similarities between his book (an extension of himself) and the temple, he also demonstrates his point of view in this limbo: it is shifting towards the periphery. Ovid singles out peripheral elements, like the *intonsi* quality of Apollo, the *peregrinis...columnis*, and the *barbarus pater*, to downplay the centrality of the temple. Similar to the temple, his identity, once purely Roman, still possesses a Roman foundation, but becomes more peppered with foreign attributes.

### Conclusion

Ovid makes copious, apparently offhand references in *Tristia* 1.1 and 3.1—to white things and hairy things, to tear blots and bad Latin, to pages lacking cedar-yellow tinge and smooth-pumice finish. All these references go underappreciated without the lens of center/periphery. The dynamics of the relationship between Ovid and his book, their respective relationships to Rome, and Ovid’s relationship to peripheral figures like Briseis, are neither offhand nor unconnected. In fact, they saturate *Tristia* 1.1 and 3.1, and permeate Ovid’s exilic canon. We can even gain greater understanding of his exilic canon by examining its connection to similar dynamics in his pre-exilic works like the *Heroides*. Simultaneously, the largely overlooked issues of exclusion and alterity recur in the othering descriptions of Ovid’s un-happy, un-refined, color-less book, the un-cultured Getae, and barbarian Briseis, all of whom are rendered as peripheral in comparison to the center. Likewise, Ovid explores the issue of his own marginality through the personification of his book, which, as an epistle, “should bridge the distance—physical, emotional or otherwise” although “its very existence...also creates that distance.”<sup>61</sup> Rife with such antithetical tensions, Ovid’s book is the vehicle through which Ovid processes his own experience in the limbo between center and periphery. The tears he sheds onto its pages are not just tears of sadness, but also tears of internal strife, and ultimately, as Ovid’s identity shifts towards the periphery, tears of reconciliation.

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<sup>60</sup> Newlands also recognizes the “unusual emphasis” Ovid gives to Danaus, stating “out of the many artistic decorations in the portico, the book singles out for attention only the statues of Danaus and his daughters” (68).

<sup>61</sup> Mordine, 528.

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