

**Zeitschrift:** Museum Helveticum : schweizerische Zeitschrift für klassische Altertumswissenschaft = Revue suisse pour l'étude de l'antiquité classique = Rivista svizzera di filologia classica

**Herausgeber:** Schweizerische Vereinigung für Altertumswissenschaft

**Band:** 42 (1985)

**Heft:** 1

  

**Artikel:** Ovidiana

**Autor:** Watt, W.S.

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-32617>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 15.09.2025

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

## Ovidiana

By W. S. Watt, Aberdeen, Scotland

### I. Heroides

11, 43f. (Canace to Macareus)

*a, nimium vivax admotis restitit infans  
artibus et tecto tutus ab hoste fuit.*

Canace's unborn child resists the attempts at abortion made by her nurse.

The manuscripts vary between *tecto* (so P) and *tectus*. Although the former is the vulgate, it has more than once been queried as a suitable epithet for the nurse, and the similarity of *tecto* (or *tectus*) and *tutus* is suspicious. I suggest *artibus; infesto*, comparing 9, 36 *infesto ne vir ab hoste cadat* and Am. 1, 9, 17 *infestos ... in hostes*.

12, 89ff. (Medea to Jason)

*haec animum (et quota pars haec sunt!) movere puellae  
simplicis, et dextrae dextera iuncta meae.  
vidi etiam lacrimas (an pars est fraudis in illis?);  
sic cito sum verbis capta puella tuis.*

Housman (Class. Papers 405) objected to (a) the question in line 91 as being absurd (Medea knows that Jason's tears helped to cajole her), (b) *est* instead of *fuit* ('the tears and the cajolery are both of them past and gone'). The former objection is justified; the latter has been convincingly disposed of by D. R. Shackleton Bailey in CQ 4 (1954) 165. It only remains to emend *an*. Both *ac* (Riese) and *sua* (Shackleton Bailey) are possible, but L. Mueller's *a!* would not conform to Ovidian usage (see A. Kershaw in CP 78, 1983, 233). I would add *nam*, which is an easy change and very common indeed in a parenthesis.

13, 159ff. (Laodamia to Protesilaus)

*per reditus corpusque tuum, mea numina, iuro  
perque pares animi coniugiiue faces  
perque quod ut videam canis albere capillis  
quod tecum possis ipse referre caput ...*

\* I am very grateful to Professor E. J. Kenney for detailed and most helpful comments on an earlier version of these notes.

In 162 *quod* spoils the grammar, and looks like an erroneous repetition from the previous line; and *tecum* is bizarre. What is required is something like Riese's *mox tutum* or Birt's *integrum* or (I suggest) *intactum* (cf. ThLL VII 1, 2068, 29ff.); Laodamia then repeats what she has already said at 72, *te quoque non ullum vulnus habente*.

20, 175ff. (Acontius to Cydippe)

*hoc faciente subis tam saeva pericula vitae;  
atque utinam pro te qui movet illa cadat!  
quem si reppuleris nec quem dea damnat amaris,  
et tu continuo, certe ego salvus ero.*

It is the suit of the other man which is causing Cydippe's ill health; if she rejects that, she will get well. 'If Cydippe is not well, neither can Acontius be, for "iuncta salus nostra est" says he at 233sq., "miserere meique tuique: / quid dubitas unam ferre duobus opem?"'; so Housman, Class. Papers 419. In order to eliminate *certe*, which is unmetrical and 'perverts the sense', Housman rewrites the pentameter *continuo per te <tunc> ego salvus ero*, a line which he admits 'is not at all to be admired'. If such a rewriting is to be considered, I suggest *tecum continuo sospite salvus ero*; if *sospite* fell out before *salvus*, the resulting gap would have had to be filled somehow. Compare not only (with Housman) line 186 *teque simul serva meque* but also 19, 206 *numquam nisi te sospite sospes ero* and (for *tecum*) 21, 247 *quid nisi, si cupio mihi iam contingere tecum, / restat, ut adscribat littera nostra 'vale'?*

21, 24 (Cydippe to Acontius)

*excreat et †ficta† dat mihi signa nota.*

While Cydippe is writing to Acontius she posts her nurse outside the room to signal the approach of visitors, so that she should have time to conceal the unfinished letter.

To replace *ficta* a number of words have been suggested, e.g. *tecta*, *dicta*, *pacta*, *certa*. I suggest that we need do no more than write *d* for *ct*; both the nurse herself and the signal she gives can appropriately be called *fida*.

21, 211ff.

*certe ego convalui nondum de vulnere tali,  
ut iaculo scriptis eminus icta tuis.  
quid tamen huc venias? sane miserabile corpus  
ingenii videas bina tropaea tui.*

*vulnere tali*, which has been misunderstood (e.g. by Palmer), is correctly explained by E. J. Kenney (CQ 29, 1979, 422) as a wound caused by writing. Now Acontius had wounded Cydippe twice by his writing, first on the apple, secondly in the letter to which she is now replying. Hence *bina* in 214 should be retained; it is wrong to change it to *magna* (which has often been adopted) or *digna* or anything else.

## II. Amores

2, 14, 9f.

*si mos antiquis placuisset matribus idem,  
gens hominum vitio deperitura fuit.*

The *mos* in question is the practice of abortion.

'Burman's dubious explanation that *hominum* is to be understood twice (i.e. *gens hominum hominum* (= *suo*) *vitio* ...) seems the right one', says E. J. Kenney, CQ 8 (1958) 63. I find this incredible: even if it is linguistically possible, the sense is weak. I think that Bentley was right in desiderating an adverb, but his *subito* does not give the right sense: the human race would have died out not 'suddenly' but 'quickly' or 'soon'; read *citiu*<*s*>. Ovid uses *citius* in the sense of *cito* at Her. 1. 110 *tu citius venias*.

## III. Medicamina Faciei Femineae

35ff.

*sic potius †uos urget† amor quam fortibus herbis,  
quas maga terribili subsecat arte manus:  
nec vos graminibus nec mixto credite suco  
nec temptate nocens virus amantis equae.*

A girl's beauty is better than magic herbs for (?arousing, ?retaining, ?recovering) love.

This passage is discussed by G. P. Goold in HSCP 69 (1965) 58. His conjecture *iungendus* fits the context but is (I think) palaeographically incredible. He makes the point that the ablative *herbis* calls for a passive verb; I suggest *servetur*. Haplography of *s* and neglect of the *ur* compendium would produce *eruet*, 'emended' to *urget*, and *uos* has been introduced from 37 to mend the metre; the jussive verb fits in with the following imperatives.

That magic is useless in matters of love is a theme which recurs at Ars 2, 99–106, a passage which is very similar to ours. Note especially *servari* at 103f. *Phasias Aesoniden, Circe tenuisset Ulixem, / si modo servari carmine posset amor.*

IV. *Ars Amatoria*

1, 389f.

*aut †non temptasses† aut perface: tollitur index  
cum semel in partem criminis ipsa venit.*

Should one try to seduce the *ancilla* of the woman one would win?

The available remedies are: *aut non temptaris* (Heinsius); *aut nolim temptes* (Lenz); *aut non <rem> temptes* (Courtney). The first of these is ungrammatical (see Courtney, BICS 29, 1982, 49f.), the other two are unconvincing on palaeographical grounds. In this context we should expect *temptare* to have its sexual sense, as at 273 *femina ... blande temptata*, 365 *tum quoque temptanda est*, and 394 *perprime temptatam*. I therefore suggest *aut non tempta<nda> est* (sc. *ancilla*). I see no difficulty in *temptanda est* being followed by *perface* (sc. *rem*); for the imperative *perface* ('finish the job') without *rem* see Cic. Att. 7, 1, 8 and 13, 32, 1 (similarly *confice* in several passages of Cicero's Letters).

1, 543f.

*ebrius, ecce, senex pando Silenus asello  
vix sedet et pressas continet arte iubas.*

The adverbial use of *arte*, 'skilfully', is very common in Ovid, but to say that drunken Silenus's assmanship was 'skilful' is the opposite of the truth (at 546f. the *malus eques* proceeds to fall off). Hence Merkel suggested *ante*, 'before him', a ridiculous reading, suggesting as it does that he *might* have had the ass's mane at his rear. Kenney in his OCT takes *arte* as ironical, but I think that there is a better solution: read *non tenet arte*, 'unskilfully holds'. Surely *tenet*, not *continet*, is the word which we should expect, and the order of words (*non* separated from *arte*) need cause no surprise; examples of *non* separated from the word to which it belongs are given by Housman in Class. Papers 1228 and in his note on Lucan 1, 145. For the confusion between *non* and the prefix *con* cf. Cic. Fam. 5, 20, 9 (*conscindi* / *non scindi*), 7, 12, 1 (*non placebas* / *conplacebas*), 11, 2, 1 (*non scripsissemus* / *conscripsissemus*).

For *pressas* Heinsius suggested *prensas*, which has apparently been universally ignored. I think it is right.

1, 581f.

*huic, si sorte bibes, sortem concede priorem:  
huic detur capiti missa corona tuo.*

Pay compliments to the husband of the woman you would win.

'La couronne posée sur ta tête' (Bornecque, Budé edition); this is surely an impossible meaning for *missa*. 'The garland which has dropped from your

head' (Mozley-Goold, Loeb edition); this is perhaps possible, although the natural word would be *lapsa* (as at Am. 1, 6, 38, Martial 11, 8, 10; cf. *delapsa est* at Met. 2, 600). But Dousa had a better idea: 'coronam tuo capiti paratam destinataque illi impone, tamquam meliorem ac digniorem demereri cuperes'. However the natural Latin for *parata destinataque* is not *missa* but (I suggest) *nexa*.