

*Fama Novi Fontis* : The Sexual Curiosity of Minerva in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* V  
Handout  
April 3, 2014

**I.** *Oraque regis  
ore Medusaeo silicem sine sanguine fecit.  
Hactenus aurigenae comitem Tritonia fratri  
se dedit : inde cava circumdata nube Seriphon  
deserit, a dextra Cythno Gyaroque relictis,  
quaque super pontum via visa brevissima, Thebas  
virgineumque Heliconam petit; quo monte potita  
constitit et doctas sic est adfata sorores.* (V.248-55)

And with Medusa's face, he (Perseus)  
Changed the king's face to a bloodless stone.  
Minerva thus far had accompanied  
Her golden-born brother. Now she left Seriphos,  
Wrapped all about in cloud, and on the right  
Passed Gyaros and Cythnos, setting course,  
Her shortest course, across the sea to Thebes  
And Helicon, the Muses' mountain home.  
Alighting there she stopped and thus addressed  
The learned sisters.

**II.** *Hanc pelagi rector templo vitiasse Minervae  
dicitur : aversa est et castos aegide vultus  
nata Iovis texit.* (IV.798-800)

She, it's said, was violated in Minerva's shrine  
By the sea's lord. Jove's daughter turned away  
and covered with her shield her virgin's eyes.

**III.** *Fama novi fontis nostras pervenit ad aures,  
dura Medusaei quem praepetis ungula rupit.  
is mihi causa viae: volui mirabile factum  
cernere: vidi ipsum materno sanguine nasci.*' (V.256-59)

'There has reached my ears  
A tale of a new fountain that burst forth  
Beneath the hooves of flying Pegasus.  
That is my journey's purpose, my desire  
To see the miracle. I saw that horse  
Brought into being from his mother's blood.'

**IV.** *excepit Urania: 'quaecumque est causa videndi  
has tibi, diva, domos, animo gratissima nostro es.  
vera tamen fama est: est Pegasus huius origo  
fontis,' et ad latice deduxit Pallada sacros.  
quae mirata diu factas pedis ictibus undas  
silvarum lucos circumspicit antiquarum.  
antraque et innumeris distinctas floribus herbas  
felicesque vocat pariter studioque locoque  
Mnemonidas...* (V.260-68)

Urania replied: 'Whatever cause  
May bring you to our home, you find our hearts  
Most welcoming. The tale indeed is true;  
The author of the spring is Pegasus.'  
She led Minerva to the sacred spring.  
The waters issuing from his hoof's hard stroke  
Long held her wondering eyes; then she gazed  
around at the green bowers of the ancient woods,  
The caves and grottoes and the spangled lawns  
With all their countless flowers. Blest, she said,  
The Muses were alike in their pursuits  
And in their home.

**V.** *'O, nisi te virtus opera ad maiora tulisset,  
in partem ventura chori Tritonia nostri,  
vera refers, meritoque probas artesque locumque,  
et gratam sortem, tutae modo simul, habemus.  
Sed (vetitum est adeo scelere nihil) omnia terrent  
virgineas mentes...'* (V.269-74)

'Had not thy valour, Pallas, led thee on  
To greater tasks, thou wouldst be numbered with  
Our company. Thy words are true; our arts,  
Our happy home deserve thy praises; blest  
Indeed our fortune here, were we but safe.  
But crime is so unchecked that everything  
Frightens our virgin hearts.'

VI. *Pars ego nympharum, quae sunt in Achaide,*  
*'una fui: nec me studiosius altera saltus*  
*legit nec posuit studiosius altera casses.*  
*sed quamvis formae numquam mihi fama petita est,*  
*quamvis fortis eram, formosae nomen habebam.*  
*nec mea me facies nimium laudata iuvabat,*  
*quaque aliae gaudere solent, ego rustica dote*  
*corporis erubui crimenque placere putavi.'* (V.577-84)

'One of the nymphs whose home is in Achaia  
 I used to be, and none more keen than I  
 To roam the glades, more keen to place the nets.  
 Though I was strong and brave and never sought  
 Beauty's renown, yet I was known for beauty,  
 Nor did its praise—too praised—once profit me.  
 That dower of beauty, other girls' delight,  
 Brought but a bumpkin's blushes to my cheeks  
 And in my thoughts it seemed a crime to please.'

VII. *'lassa revertabar (memini) Stympthalide silva:*  
*aestus erat, magnumque labor geminaverat aestum.*  
*invenio sine vertice aquas, sine murmure euntes,*  
*perspicuas ad humum, per quas numerabilis alte*  
*calculus omnis erat, quas tu vix ire putares.'* (V.585-89)

'I was returning tired, I well remember,  
 From hunting in the woods; the heat was great  
 And doubled my toil. I found a stream  
 That glided with no eddy, with no sound,  
 Clear to the bottom, each pebble in its depths  
 Easy to count; it hardly seemed to move.'

VIII. *'Accessi primumque pedis vestigia tinxi,*  
*poplite deinde tenuis neque eo contenta recingor.'* (V.592-3)

'I approached and first moistened my feet,  
 Then up to my knee, and not being satisfied,  
 I ungirdled.'

IX. *Fons erat inlimis, nitidis argenteus undis,*  
*quem neque pastores neque pastae monte capellae*  
*contigerant aliudve pecus, quem nulla volucris*  
*nec fera turbarat nec lapsus ab arbore ramus;*  
*gramen erat circa, quod proximus umor alebat,*  
*silvaeque sole locum passura tepescere nullo.*  
*hic puer et studio venandi lassus et aestu,*  
*procubuit faciemque loci fontemque secutus.* (III.407-14)

There was a pool, limpid and silvery,  
 Whither no shepherd came nor any herd,  
 Nor mountain goat; and never bird nor beast  
 Nor falling branch disturbed its shining peace;  
 Grass grew around it, by the water fed,  
 And trees to shield it from the warming sun.  
 Here—for the chase and heat had wearied him—  
 The boy lay down, charmed by the quiet pool.

\*Text from Anderson (1997) and (1972), Norman: University of Oklahoma.

\*Translation from Melville (1986), Oxford.

### Selected Bibliography

- Ahl, Frederick. 1985. *Metaformations: Sound and Wordplay in Ovid and Other Classical Poets*. Cornell.  
 Anderson, William. 1997. *Ovid's Metamorphoses: Books 1-5*. Norman: University of Oklahoma.  
 ———. 1995. "Aspects of Love in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*." *Classical Journal* 90:265-269.  
 ———. 1972. *Ovid's Metamorphoses: Books 6-10*. Norman: University of Oklahoma.  
 Barchiesi, Alessandro. 2005. *Metamorfosi Ovidio, Libri I-II*. Roma: Fondazione Lorenzo Valla.  
 ———. 2002. "Narrative Technique and Narratology in the *Metamorphoses*." In *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*. Cambridge.

- Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Curran, Leo. 1984. "Rape and Rape Victims in the *Metamorphoses*." In *Women in the Ancient World: The Arethusa Papers*. State University of New York Press.
- Fantham, Elaine. 2004. *Ovid's Metamorphoses*. New York: Oxford.
- Fedeli, Paulus. 1994. *Sexti Properti: Elegiarum Libri IV*. Teubner.
- Fredrick, David. 1997. "Reading Broken Skin: Violence in Roman Elegy," In *Roman Sexualities*. Princeton.
- Hallett, Judith. 1997. "Female Homoeroticism and the Denial of Roman Reality in Latin Literature," In *Roman Sexualities*. Princeton.
- Hardie, Philip. 2002. *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion*. Cambridge.
- Heath, John. 1991. "Diana's Understanding of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*." *Classical Journal* 86:233-243.
- Irigaray, Luce. 1985. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. trans. Catherine Porter. Ithaca: Cornell.
- James, Sharon. 2010. "*Ipsa Dixerat*: Women's Words in Roman Love Elegy." *Phoenix* 64:314-44.
- Keith, Alison. 1997. "*Tandem Venit Amor*: A Roman Woman Speaks of Love." In *Roman Sexualities*. Princeton.
- Kennedy, Duncan F. 1993. *The Arts of Love: Five Studies in the Discourse of Roman Love Elegy*. Cambridge.
- Nagle, Betty Rose. 1984. "*Amor, Ira*, and Sexual Identity in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*." *Classical Antiquity* 3:236-255.
- Probyn, Elspeth. 2005. *Blush: Faces of Shame*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.
- Richlin, Amy. 1992. "Reading Ovid's Rapes." In *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome*. Oxford.
- Rimell, Victoria. 2006. *Ovid's Lovers: Desire, Difference, and the Poetic Imagination*. Cambridge.
- Salzman-Mitchell, Patricia. 2005. "The Fixing Gaze: Movement, Image and Gender in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*." In *Gendered Dynamics in Latin Love Poetry*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins.
- Segal, Charles. 1998. "Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies: Art, Gender, and Violence in the *Metamorphoses*." *Arion* 5:9-41.
- . 1969. *Landscape in Ovid's Metamorphoses: A Study in the Transformations of a Literary Symbol*. Wiesbaden: F. Steiner Verlag.
- Sharrock, Alison. 1991. "Womanufacture." *Journal of Roman Studies* 81:36-49.
- Walters, Jonathan. 1997. "Invading the Roman Body: Manliness and Impenetrability in Roman Thought." In *Roman Sexualities*. Princeton.
- Wyke, Maria. 2002. *The Roman Mistress: Ancient and Modern Representations*. Oxford.