

## On the Autonomy of Ovid's *Tristia* 5.2b

The textual tradition of the *Tristia* “is not good” (Wheeler-Gould, *Ovid* [London 1996] xxxix). The sorry state of the manuscript has implications not only for readings in the text but for identifying the start and finish of individual poems. *Tristia* Books 1, 3, 4, and 5 each contains at least one poem whose integrity has been challenged. My paper will address the question of unity in *Tristia* 5.2. Most scholars see this poem as forming a unified whole consisting of two parts. The first part (1–44) appeals for help to Ovid's wife or a very dear friend. Ovid scolds this person, however, for not advocating to Augustus to effect a transfer for him from Tomis. The second part (45–78) is a direct appeal to Augustus to exchange Ovid's place of exile for a safer location. A cause and effect relationship appears to connect the two parts. Failure of the addressee to act in Part 1 prompts Ovid to make his own request to Augustus in Part 2.

My paper will argue that Part 2 forms a separate poem from Part 1, as some of the manuscripts indicate and as Dickinson suggested over forty years ago (in Binns, *Ovid* [London 1973] 184). An overarching ring-composition structure defines the beginning and end of 5.2b, with *numina~dei* (45; 76), *sospite~tutius* (47; 78), *precor* (53; 78); and *poena(e)* (54; 77) forming pairs. The four pairs frame two internal ring structures. The first ring (55–60) emphasizes Augustus's *clementia*; the second (61–76) focuses on the danger to which Ovid is exposed as a result of his relegation to Tomis. The relationship between the internal rings calls into question Augustus's leniency since he relegated Ovid to a dangerous geographical location.

*Tristia* 5.11 repeats the same topics covered in 5.2. In both, Ovid mentions the clemency of the Princeps, the sparing of his life, that he was relegated—not exiled, and his hope that Augustus' *catasterism* will occur later rather than sooner. *Tristia* 5.11, then, appears to function as the thematic complement to 5.2b, providing further evidence in support of 5.2b's autonomy.