

Life in Tomis: *Tristia* 5.7a and 5.7b

Tristia 5.7 appears as a single poem of 68 verses in all the manuscripts with one exception; *Berolinensis lat. oct.* 67 (B2) indicates the start of a new poem at line 25. Heinsius was the first editor to follow this manuscript in dividing *Tristia* 5.7 into two poems (1–24, 25–68). Heinsius’ division was later accepted by Luck (vol.1, 1967) and Hall (1995). The separation of *Tristia* 5.7 into 5.7a and 5.7b, however, has met with resistance from most scholars, presumably because the two parts appear to be directed to the same individual (referred to as *carissime* in line 5 and *amice* in lines 22 and 26) and to be concerned with the same theme of Ovid’s life among the bellicose barbarians of Tomis. Green, for example, comments that “the tradition (fostered by Heinsius on the basis of one MS) of starting a second elegy, 7B, at line 25 can confidently be rejected” (1997, 283), while Williams opines that “division [after line 24] is misguided” and “unnecessary” (1994, 21). Evans acknowledges that “there is a distinct break [in the poem] at line 25,” but does not consider “the transition” between lines 24 and 25 to be problematical: “Ovid answers the friend’s questions about Tomis (lines 11–24) before turning to news from Rome [lines 25–30]” (1983, 188, n. 5). My paper will offer a new approach to the question of the unity of *Tristia* 5.7 by examining the poem’s structure and by showing how *Tristia* 5.7a (lines 1–24) and *Tristia* 5.7b (lines 25–68) are organized in distinct ring-composition patterns. The thematic relationship between the consecutive poems will call into question the long-held theory that the arrangement of *Tristia*, Book 5 “is based not on theme” (Evans, 1983, 106).

Bibliography

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