

Innovations to Divine Intervention in *Amores* 1.1

In *Amores* 1.1 Cupid impedes Ovid's planned epic by stealing a foot. But Ovid fights back: he does not acquiesce to Cupid's involvement with his poetry: instead the poet chastises the god and questions his authority. In this way Cupid must resort to a shot from his bow to coerce Ovid into writing elegy.

Recent scholarship (especially Wimmel, Morgan, McKeown, Boyd, Hopkinson) has identified in *Amores* 1.1 many allusions to Ovid's predecessors from Hesiod on, and many elements of two commonplace scenes: 'divine intervention', when the usually obedient poet is instructed by Apollo, the Muses, or a Muse in the style or subject matter of his poetry; and *recusatio*, when a writer, perhaps motivated by a divine prohibition, rejects a genre, usually epic, often through a claim of incompetence.

Ovid's innovations in these two areas, however, have yet to be fully clarified. By examining *Amores* 1.1 through comparison with earlier poetic accounts of divine intervention/*recusatio*, I shall briefly explain Ovid's major innovations. They are fourfold: (1) Cupid replaces the Muses/a Muse/Apollo; (2) Ovid is belligerent to the intervening god rather than obedient; (3) Cupid uses violence, not advice, to persuade the poet; and (4) Ovid censures Cupid rather than being censured by him.

Morgan (1977) and Boyd (1997) both briefly address instances of Propertian and Callimachean influence on *Amores* 1.1, but not in full. Hopkinson (2002) contains a useful summary of the transmission of this influence on Latin poetry, but his goal is not Ovidian analysis. Likewise, Wimmel (1960) acknowledges that Ovid 1.1 may be modelled on Vergil, Propertius, Horace and Callimachus, but he focuses on the transmission of Callimachean influence. Keith (1979) argues that the divine intervention in *Amores* 1.1 is a response to

Propertius 1.1. McKeown (1987) writes that Ovid has Propertius 3.3 in mind. By building on the work of these and other scholars, this paper argues that Ovid *Amores* 1.1 is not a reply to one poem or a transmission of one author's influence, but the careful appropriation and innovation of the motifs of divine intervention and *recusatio*.

Bibliography

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