that Ovid wishes to revive as he draws near the end of his 'little *Aeneid*'. The warriors' bravery, the partisan gods, and especially the desire to reach a military victory, ultimately the principal goal of both contestants as Lavinia and her kingdom gradually move to the background (*Met*. 14.567–71), reflect the situation at Troy, just as much as they echo Virgil's narrative.[19] The conclusions, then, of both the 'little *Iliad*' and the 'little *Aeneid*' not only centre on scenes that replicate and complement each other, but their symmetrical placement strengthens the unity of Ovid's history of the Trojan era. In addition, these concluding scenes generate a network of textual associations, which extend beyond the boundaries of the *Metamorphoses* to converse with the epic's major archetypes, the Homeric *Iliad* and Virgil's *Aeneid*. In sum, the miraculous transformation of Ardea, taken together with its association with the Memnonides episode, aptly illustrates the complex texture of Ovid's epic and advertises the poet's ability to create an orderly and balanced narrative.[20]

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[19] Although one should note that Turnus, in the night before his final engagement with Aeneas, violently proclaims his determination to fight for the hand of Lavinia (*Aen*. 12.14ff.).

[20] I am grateful to James O'Hara and Andreas Michalopoulos for reading earlier drafts of this paper and offering valuable comments that strengthened my thesis, and to Alison Keith, to the anonymous referee, and to the editor of *CQ* for their most helpful suggestions on style.

OVIDIAN PLUMBING IN *METAMORPHOSES* 4*

Ovid's narrative of Pyramus and Thisbe needs little introduction: two young lovers arrange a nocturnal tryst, but end up committing suicide as a result of a tragic misunderstanding.[1] The story concludes with a description of a mulberry tree that is spattered with blood from Pyramus' wound and thus changes the colour of its fruit from white to red. Although Ovid's narrative has become canonical for the Western tradition, evidence exists of an alternative version of the story. The essential features of the story are the same, with one important metamorphic difference: in this version it is not the fruit of the mulberry that is transformed, but the lovers themselves—Thisbe into a spring, Pyramus into a river.

Evidence for an aquatic version of the Pyramus and Thisbe story postdates Ovid's *Metamorphoses* by some considerable time.[2] It is possible, nevertheless, that the later version has preserved traces of a *pre*-Ovidian, possibly Hellenistic, tradition. This idea was explored by Knox in 1989.[3] He proposed that origins for the aquatic version of the

* I would like to thank Philip Hardie, Vedia Izzet, Jason König, and the anonymous referee of *CQ* for their helpful comments.

[1] The essential components of this story were famously reworked by Shakespeare into *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; more recently Ted Hughes used the Pyramus and Thisbe episode to conclude his *Tales from Ovid* (London, 1997).

[2] The literary evidence dates from the fifth century A.D. onwards: Nonnus, *Dion*. 6.344–55, 12.84–5; Himerius, *Or*. 1.11; Them. *Or.* 11.151; Nicolaus, *Progymn*. 2.9 (*Rhet. Gr*. 1.271 Walz); Ps.-Clemens, *Recogn*. 10.26.

[3] P. E. Knox, 'Pyramus and Thisbe in Cyprus', *HSCP* 92 (1989), 315–28; cf. P. M. C. Forbes Irving, *Metamorphosis in Greek Myths* (Oxford, 1990), 305: 'It is possible that this was the Hellenistic aetiological story from which Ovid derived his own story.'

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Pyramus and Thisbe story, as depicted on a second- or third-century A.D. mosaic from Nea Paphos, Cyprus, could be located in mainland Cilicia (not far from the island of Cyprus), where, at least as early as the first century B.C., Pyramus was well known as a river god. He further suggested that Ovid may have been acquainted with the Cilician version of the story, and that it was Ovid himself who introduced his own variation: the transformation of the mulberry fruit (relocating the story from Cilicia to Babylon at the same time).

Knox concluded his discussion by raising the intriguing possibility that 'Ovid alludes to the metamorphosis of the local myth when he describes Thisbe's reaction to the sight of Pyramus lying near death' at lines 4.134–6: *retroque pedem tulit, oraque buxo / pallidiora gerens exhorruit aequoris instar, / quod tremit, exigua cum summum stringitur aura*. 'For the learned reader familiar with the version not followed,' he added, 'Ovid's comparison of the trembling Thisbe to the surface of the water disturbed by the breeze must surely have provoked a smile.'[4] This is not the only reference to water in Ovid's land-locked tale, nor is it even the most striking. In the following paragraphs I shall develop the idea that Ovid makes playful and sophisticated use of aquatic imagery as a nod to the version of the story that he has chosen not to tell. At the heart of my discussion lies the simile of the water pipe at 4.121–4. Few would wish to deny the obvious sexual imagery suggested by the spouting water-pipe; that this same simile in fact comprises a nexus of words with a striking musical/poetic charge is, however, largely ignored. As I shall argue, the spurting pipe furnishes the knowing reader with an ironic commentary on Ovid's own use of source material.

Book 4 opens with the daughters of Minyas who have refused to participate in the rites of Dionysus: they sit indoors, weaving at their looms, and entertain themselves by telling stories. The first sister passes over three alternatives from her repertory of Babylonian stories before she settles on an appropriate story to tell. Two of these stories are expressly concerned with water and water-based metamorphosis,[5] whilst the third concerns the daughter of fish-shaped Dercetis (4.47–8). Any expectation that the story she finally chooses to tell will have a similarly watery theme appears at first sight to have been frustrated: the story of the mulberry tree is clearly located on *terra firma*. Nevertheless, any reader who is familiar with a watery version of the story of Pyramus and Thisbe will soon discover traces of that same version embedded in Ovid's narrative.[6]

[4] Knox (n. 3), 328.

[5] 4.45–6 *Derceti, quam versa squamis velantibus artus / stagna Palaestini credunt motasse figura*; 4.49–51 *nais an ut cantu nimiumque potentibus herbis / verterit in tacitos iuvenalia corpora pisces, / donec idem passa est*.

[6] Such a reader will have already have picked up on the words of the daughter of Minyas concerning the story of the mulberry at 4.53 *vulgaris fabula non est*. This may simply mean that the story of Pyramus and Thisbe is not widely known; it may, however, also imply that the story reproduced here will be in a *version* that is not widely known; cf. Knox (n. 3), 328. The narrator of the story of the mulberry tree is not the only one of the daughters of Minyas to display an interest in matters aquatic. The sororal trilogy of storytellers will be completed by Alcithoe who takes up the theme of watery transformation in the story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus at 4.285–7 *unde sit infamis, quare male fortibus undis / Salmacis enervet tactosque remolliat artus, / discite. causa latet, vis est notissima fontis*. There is in fact good reason for the interest shown by the daughters of Minyas in aquatic narratives, since they come from a notably aquatic family. Their father, the legendary founder of Orchomenus in Boeotia (where the 'action' of the *Met.* 4 takes place), has an impressive number of family trees that all seem to tell a different story, but on one thing they are all largely agreed: his father (or grandfather) was that most watery of gods—Poseidon (see

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Ovid's land-locked narrative contains several references and allusions to water.[7] The simile that compares Thisbe to a body of water has already been noted above; Ovid also marks the time when the two lovers will at last be reunited with a description of the sun setting into the water and the subsequent rise of night, again from the water at 4.91–2 *et lux tarde discedere visa* / *praecipitatur* ***aquis****, et* ***aquis*** *nox exit ab isdem*. Such allusions may seem unremarkable enough on their own. They are followed, however, by perhaps the most striking aquatic image in the whole of classical literature. During the description of Pyramus' suicide, at 4.121–4, the young man extracts the blade of the sword that he has just plunged into his chest, and blood promptly gushes from his wound, like water from a broken pipe:

> cruor emicat alte,
> non aliter, quam cum vitiato fistula plumbo
> scinditur et tenui stridente foramine longas
> eiaculatur **aquas** atque ictibus aëra rumpit.

Like the preceding two watery references, the spurting pipe acts as an ironic reference that directs the knowing reader to the version of the story that Ovid has chosen *not* to tell: the transformation not of the fruit of the mulberry, but of the lovers themselves.[8] The extraordinary image of the broken pipe itself demands closer scrutiny.[9] As mentioned above, the imagery of this passage is commonly figured in sexual terms. For Segal, the simile that describes Pyramus' spurting blood was 'perhaps the least subtle *double-entendre* in the poem'.[10] Anderson saw the simile in somewhat different terms as an 'unpoetic' and anachronistic reference to the Roman water system, designed to 'sabotag[e] the Minyeid's naive narrative'.[11] Yet the approaches of neither Segal nor Anderson have come to terms with the striking cluster of musical/poetic terms employed in the construction of the simile: *fistula*, *foramen*, *ictus*, *tenuis*, and *stridens*.

At the four other places where Ovid uses the word *fistula*, the reference is to a pipe not of water but of music.[12] The musical resonance suggested by *fistula* is powerfully reinforced by Ovid's use of the phrase *tenui stridente foramine* at 4.123: *foramen* is the

'Minyas' [1] *RE* 15.2 [1932], 2014–18). However, Minyas is not merely related to aquatic deities; he was himself a river god, whose very river ran through Boeotian Orchomenus (Eust. *Il.* 2.511 [272: 35] *ὁ δὲ Βοιώτιος Μινύειος, ἐπειδὴ Μινύας ποταμὸς αὐτὸν παραρρέει*).

[7] References to the *fons* from which the wild beast drinks in Ovid's narrative have been excluded from this discussion, since it appears to have featured in both versions of the story. For a detailed commentary on this scene, see F. Bömer, *P. Ovidius Naso Metamorphosen: Kommentar, Buch IV–V* (Heidelberg, 1976); more recent articles include C. Newlands, 'The simile of the fractured pipe in Ovid's *Met.* 4', *Ramus* 15 (1986), 143–53; N. Holzberg, 'Ovid's "Babyloniaka" (*Met.* 4.55–166)', *WS* 101 (1988), 265–77; M. Janan, '"There beneath the Roman ruin / where the purple flowers grow": Ovid's Minyeides and the feminine imagination', *AJPh* 115 (1994), 427–48.

[8] Cf. 13.876–97 where Ovid does in fact describe the metamorphosis of a dying lover (Acis) into a river. It is especially appropriate that Ovid alludes to the variant transformation during the very scene that itself *describes* the transformation of the mulberry fruit: with self-conscious verve the poet has metamorphosed one scene of metamorphosis into another.

[9] A similar column of spurting blood issues from the throat of Damasichthon at 6.259; but neither in that case, nor elsewhere, does Ovid reprise the image of the broken water pipe.

[10] C. P. Segal, *Landscape in Ovid's* Metamorphoses*: A Study in the Transformation of a Literary Symbol*, Hermes Einzelschriften 23 (Wiesbaden, 1969), 50. In a similar fashion, Newlands (n. 7), 143 describes the intrusion of 'overt sexual symbolism'.

[11] W. S. Anderson, *Ovid's* Metamorphoses *Books 1–5* (Oklahoma, 1997), 424–5.

[12] 1.687–8, 2.682–3, 8.192, 13.784.

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standard technical term for a 'stop' on a musical pipe;[13] while the poetic force of the adjective *tenuis* in Augustan poetry, as a mark of one's 'allegiance' to the aesthetic model of Callimachus, does not need to be laboured.[14] The shrieking (*stridens*) tenor of the pipe itself recalls the sound of a musical instrument.[15] Musical/poetic imagery is carried through to the final line of the simile (4.124), where the *ictus* of the water, though naturally suggestive of the way that the blood pulses out of Pyramus' wound, also recalls the beat of a metrical foot.[16]

So far, this note has explored the possibility that Ovid had before him a version of the story of Pyramus and Thisbe in which the lovers are transformed into watery bodies, and that references to water in Ovid's narrative provide a nod to the knowing reader about the version of the story not followed. I would like to close by raising the further possibility that the simile of the *fistula* provides the reader with a pointed commentary on Ovid's use and transformation of his poetic sources for the story of Pyramus and Thisbe.

Just as a plumber uses pipes to channel and control water, so Ovid uses a form of 'poetic' plumbing to channel and control his own watery source, to keep an unwanted variant hidden under the surface of his own narrative. Pipes, of course, do not always contain their supply of water with perfect efficiency: when the metal corrodes (*vitiato . . . plumbo*) water may seep out. Watery allusions in and around the narrative of Pyramus and Thisbe suggest an analogous seepage. An actual rupture in the fabric of the pipe (*fistula . . . scinditur*) can have an altogether more dramatic effect. At the very moment when Ovid is describing the metamorphosis of the mulberry fruit, it appears that the pressure of controlling and suppressing the earlier source has proved too great: the pipeline of Ovid's narrative bursts open, allowing the source of watery metamorphosis to spurt up dramatically before us. This narrative rupture is described by Ovid as both *tenuis* and *stridens*. It might seem strange that Ovid would refer to his own craftsmanship in such a jarring, and paradoxical, fashion. Yet here is a paradox of Ovid's own making: in order to demonstrate his poetic skill in controlling his source-material, he must also inevitably reveal his incompetence, as poet-plumber, in failing entirely to control that same material. Like the hole in the pipe, Ovid's narrative is at the same time both *tenuis* and *stridens*, sophisticated *and* jarring.

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[13] *OLD* 2; see Hor. *Ars P.* 203: *foramine pauco*.

[14] See Callim. *Aet*. 1.24: τὴ]ν Μοῦσαν . . . λεπταλέην; Verg. *Ecl*. 6.3–9, 6.8: ***tenui*** . . . *harundine*; Hor. *Ars P*. 202–3: *tibia non, ut nunc, orichalco vincta tubaeque* / *aemula, sed* ***tenuis*** *simplexque foramine pauco*.

[15] See e.g. Catull. 64.264 *horribili* ***stridebat*** *tibia cantu*. Virgil connects the shrieking of the pipe with the incompetence of the musician at *Ecl*. 3.26–7 *indocte, solebas* / ***stridenti*** *miserum stipula disperdere carmen*?

[16] *OLD* 4c 'a musical or metrical beat'; on the use of the phrase *pedis ictus*, see S. Hinds, *The Metamorphosis of Persephone* (Cambridge, 1987), 16–17.

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