

Faculté de philosophie, arts et lettres

Dreaming of Ovids

Translating Exile in *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*

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Preface

It is now almost traditional for classicists to lament the imminent demise of their field, despite seemingly being on the edge of the precipice for more than a hundred years. In 1912, Henry Browne, an Irish Jesuit, could write:

I am by no means among those who prophesy that Classical Education in this country is doomed beyond all hope. Neither can I pretend that it is not in serious peril.¹

Yet classical education and the Ancient World are far from dead, with retellings and rewritings of old myths and texts, such as the works of Jennifer Saint and Stephen Fry, ensuring that the Classics are alive and kicking in the 21st century. The study of ancient texts has never been a static domain, though many of the complaints across time concerning the fate of classical works stem from a reaction to innovative interpretations, all the way from the Atticists of the 2nd century CE, lamenting the neglect of “pure” Attic models from the heyday of Athenian democracy in the 5th and 4th centuries BCE in favour of the adaptations of newer “Asianic” rhetorical forms², to anyone wincing at Wolfgang Petersen’s 2004 film *Troy* on the grounds of historical inaccuracy (rather than the more legitimate criticism of how it portrays the Ancient World from a modern perspective). The search for historical inaccuracies, should it need to be undertaken, might begin in the *Iliad* itself, rather than in its subsequent depictions.

Where the doomsayers may have a word to say, however, is in the study of the Ancient Greek and Latin languages. Few and far between are those who are able to read these texts in the original, with translations now the primary medium through which modern readers can access them. The importance of the translator in this transmission cannot be understated, as they essentially become the mouthpiece of the Ancient World for a modern audience. Innovation in the field of classical

¹ Admittedly, Browne (1912) was in favour of popularising and reforming classical education in Ireland.

² The distinction is arguably a red herring, a construct from the so-called “Second Sophistic” period that encouraged social distinctions, see Kim (2010), pp. 478-9, and Whitmarsh (2013).

translations might then be considered a cardinal sin for the purist seeking to defend a text's "original" meaning.

However, it is precisely this novelty and variation which allow the works of Antiquity to speak to their modern readership. The history of classical translations arguably serves as a mirror of the times of the translator, while highlighting novel and interesting ways of approaching the Classical texts. It remains, however, relatively underexplored in scholarship. This thesis seeks, in a crudely translated French turn of phrase, to add its stone to the edifice by providing a comparative look at two contemporary French-language translations, fashioned by Danièle Robert and Marie Darrieussecq, of the exilic works of one of Rome's greatest poets, Publius Ovidius Naso, otherwise known as Ovid. These translations speak to varying approaches to the analysis, interpretation, and reception of classical texts, which continuously shift throughout the ages, and may keep the Ancient World firmly on the edge of the precipice, for another hundred years at least.

Colm Murphy

Introduction

Ovid in exile and his reception

The Roman poet Ovid, whose repertoire ranged from the epic-versed *Metamorphoses* to the scandalous *Ars Amatoria*, spent the last days of his life in exile on the shores of the Black Sea, at Tomis, one of the furthestmost outposts of the Roman Empire. The reasons behind his exile in 8 CE remain the subject of scholarly debate, with much speculation around the nature of the famed *carmen et error* which the poet cites in the second book of the *Tristia* as his main missteps vis-à-vis the Roman Emperor, Augustus.³ In a 1995 historical thriller entitled *Ovid*, classicist David Wishart imagines a plot concerning a Roman aristocrat, Marcus Corvinus, who is tasked with retrieving Ovid's ashes from his place of exile.⁴ Despite the work's novelistic nature, it does highlight an important element in Ovidian reception: the figure is dead both in reality and in the fictive narrative, with any subsequent interpretations of his life and purpose left to the imaginations and subjectivities of the reader and the characters of Wishart's novel. One of the difficulties with engaging with Ovid's fate is that the main source of information concerning it is the work of Ovid himself, who describes his ails in exile in the aforementioned *Tristia* (lit. "Sad things") and *Epistulae ex Ponto* (lit. "Letters from Pontus", the term "Pontus" referring to the Black Sea). The historicity of his exile does not appear to be in substantial doubt, though some scholars have attempted to defend the view that it was purely fictional, a merely literary exercise.⁵ This remains a minority view, though it is arguable that the experiences described by

³ More precisely, a *relegatio*, or "relegation", an exile which allowed the sanctioned party to keep their Roman citizenship, as opposed to a *deportatio*, or "deportation", which stripped them of their citizenship, see Cohen (2008) p.206 n.2. For the sake of clarity and given the general modern understanding of it as an exile, that term is preferred here. For a summary of the reasons behind Ovid's exile, see Green (2005), pp. 44-59.

⁴ Wishart (1995).

⁵ Particularly given the relative silence of Ovid's contemporaries concerning his exile, see Williams (1994), pp. 3-4 for a summary of the different arguments surrounding the historicity of the poet's exile. For a striking view of Ovid having imagined his ordeal, see Fitton-Brown (1985). One of the initial proponents of this view appears to have been J. J. Hartman, see van der Velden (2020), pp. 336-342.

Ovid in his works entertain a flexible relationship with reality.⁶ It may be possible to distinguish between the literary persona which the poet adopts in the *Tristia* and the *Epistulae ex Ponto*, and the historical figure of Ovid.⁷ This has not prevented certain scholars from attempting to draw historical information from the poetic works, despite the ambiguity of the poet's stance.⁸ These attempts hinge on taking Ovid's words at "face value", which may prove difficult in the case of such a subversive poet.

In terms of the literary aspects of the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*, the works have historically been considered as inferior to the rest of Ovid's oeuvre.⁹ This has led to some scholarly neglect over the centuries¹⁰, although there has been a revival of interest in the works in the latter stages of the 20th century and the early 21st century, with the seminal work of Jo-Marie Claassen leading the way in terms of reconsiderations of the figure of the poet in exile.¹¹ Renewed interest in the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto* has broadly stemmed, *inter alia*, from the more cultural and psychological effects of his expulsion from Rome¹² (leading to a sort of literary exile), from the particular ethnological and imperialist perspectives present in the works¹³, the stance of the poet vis-à-vis political power as embodied by Augustus¹⁴, as well as from the interplay between the works and the rest of Ovid's oeuvre.¹⁵ This may be described as a sort of self-reception, with the poet in exile reflecting back on and engaging with his previous work.¹⁶

Despite the varying scholarly interest in the literary merits of the poet's exilic works, there has been a consistent engagement with them on the part of various poets and authors, both in and out of exile. Examples include the Roman

⁶ One striking example is the poem which Ovid claims to be writing in the midst of a storm, *Trist.*1.2.

⁷ See Claassen (2008), pp. 8-10, and Murphy and Ceulemans (2023), p. 9.

⁸ See Lambrino (1958), or Batty (1994).

⁹ See Nagle (1980), p. 5. Much of the negativity surrounding the literary qualities of the exilic works may come from the self-depreciatory views of Ovid himself, despite arguable bearing in reality, see Syme (1978), p. 226.

¹⁰ See Nagle (1980), p. 5.

¹¹ See Claassen (1999; 2008).

¹² See Claassen (2003).

¹³ See Lambrino (1958).

¹⁴ See Barchiesi (1994) and Ingleheart (2006).

¹⁵ See Michalopoulos (2021).

¹⁶ For an analysis of how the poet "receives" his own work, see Sara Myers (2014), pp. 8-21.

philosophers Seneca and Boethius¹⁷, French Renaissance author Joachim Du Bellay¹⁸, Romanian writer Vintilă Horia, Australian novelist David Malouf, and Austrian author Christoph Ransmayr.¹⁹ Beyond the content of his works, Ovid appears to have become a paradigm of exile in his own right, an idealized image of the poet at the very edge of civilisation. His reception has accordingly taken the form of literary allusions in poetry or drama (Du Bellay, Seneca²⁰), novelizations of his fate (Horia, Malouf, Ransmayr), and philosophical musings (Boethius), amongst others. These literary receptions of Ovid have contributed to a multifaceted image of the poet, with which any modern analysis of the exilic works ought to contend. They are also illustrations of the sheer breadth of potential readings of the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*, which are not restricted to linear lexical interpretations.

The exilic work of Ovid may therefore be difficult to consider as unitary, as varying forms of engagement with the texts have produced any number of possible readings, which depart from traditional ideas concerning lexical rigour and dogma. The notion that the texts may be read in a variety of manners points to certain ideas in reception theory, with the broader question of how one ought to read Ovid coming to the fore. This is equally true of the modern-language translations of the works, which contribute to our understanding and study of the texts, shaping how this part of the Classics is perceived in modern times. This may be considered as a two-way relationship, continuously informing our own engagement with these literary works. The study of Classical translations plays a key role in this, with evolving practices perhaps indicating a shift in the way the Ancient World is represented, beyond philological dogma.

¹⁷ In the case of Boethius, the Roman philosopher who found consolation in writing philosophy before being executed (*Consolatio Philosophiae*), an initial despair is arguably depicted in Ovidian terms as an exile from philosophy, before being quelled by a return to his homeland by means of his discussion with Lady Philosophy, see Claassen (2007), p. 6-8.

¹⁸ Du Bellay's *Regrets* are somewhat styled on the *Tristia*, as the Renaissance author seeks to portray his own stay in Rome as an exile from his beloved France. Classical models pervade the *Regrets*, see Bellenger (1975), p. 75.

¹⁹ The latter two authors novelized Ovid's experiences in exile, see Godel (2014), pp. 454-468. For a broader analysis of the presence and use of the poet in modern times, see the work of Ziolkowski (1997; 2005; 2009).

²⁰ See Littlewood (2004), p. 265, and Trinacty (2016), p. 30.

Ovid in translation

A full history of the translations of Ovid, given the historical and literary importance of the poet, would be quite beyond the scope of this thesis.²¹ The *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*, however, by virtue of their relative scholarly neglect (on the grounds of their style rather than their content, as discussed here above), have been translated far less often than works such as the *Metamorphoses*, the *Amores*, or even the *Ars Amatoria*. As remarked upon by the translator Michel Volkovitch, the French-language translations of the exilic works are quite few before the 20th century.²² Before 1900, 6 translations appear to have been published: those of Jean Binard (1625), Abbé de Marolles (1661), Étienne-Algay de Martignac (1697), Jean-Marin de Kervillars (1723), Armand-Balthazard Vernadé (1834), and Charles Nisard (1838). After 1900, 7 new translations have appeared, which speaks to the renewal of interest in Ovid's exilic *oeuvre*: those of Émile Ripert, (1957), Jacques André (1968), Dominique Poirel (1989), Chantal Labre (1998), Danièle Robert (2006), Marie Darrieussecq (2008), and Jean-Luc Lévrier (2017). In contrast, 15 (albeit partial) French-language translations of the *Metamorphoses* were published only between 1526 and 1557.²³ Beyond the scope of formal translations, the reception of Ovid has been the subject of a great deal of scholarly interest, from chapters in the edited volumes of Martindale (1988), Rees (2009), and Barchiesi, Hardie, and Hinds (1999), to the monographs of Lyne (2001), Martin (1998), Brown (1999), and Bate (1994), amongst others. Many of these concern historical receptions of the poet's work, and their development across time. Just as translation scholar Odile Gannier puts it:

on ne peut lire les Tristes de la même façon du temps d'Ovide, au début du XVII^e et aujourd'hui : en plus des choix personnels des traducteurs, chaque époque doit donc retraduire.²⁴

²¹ For an overview of English translations of Ovid, mainly focusing on the *Metamorphoses*, see Martin (2009), pp. 469-484.

²² See Volkovitch (2010).

²³ See Sicard (2019).

²⁴ Gannier (2019), pp. 5-6.

This thesis deals with two of the more modern French-language translations of the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*, namely those of Danièle Robert and Marie Darrieussecq, on account of their radically different engagement with the text and the classical past, which speaks to a shift in attitudes towards Antiquity and its reception. Danièle Robert is an award-winning translator and author, who translates from Latin, English, and Italian into French. She has translated a variety of Ovidian texts as well as Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Marie Darrieussecq, for her part, has also won awards for her writing and translating. Her novels include *Truismes* and *Il faut beaucoup aimer les hommes*, the latter of which won the Médicis prize in 2013.

Translating the Classics, reviewing the literature

Before proceeding to any considerations of specific translations of Ovid, it is fitting to address historical and current views of translation as a medium through which classical literature can be transmitted to a lay audience. With the blossoming of the field of Translation Studies, from the second half of the twentieth century onwards, many theoretical avenues have been opened up for a variety of academic disciplines, including that of Classics. The interrelation of the Humanities and other domains has indeed allowed for a number of analytical tools to cross over the ever-dynamic boundaries between them. Much early literary translation theory stemmed from the field of Classics²⁵, which traditionally deals with the civilisations (cultures, histories, arts, works of literature, etc.) of Ancient Greece and Rome. Inversely, developments in postcolonial theory and other new theoretical avenues have provided new tools with which to analyse the Ancient World.²⁶ Those same tools have led to a certain questioning of the very essence of the discipline, with some calling for its deconstruction and even a radical redefinition.²⁷ Within this very questioning, issues of translation have come to the fore. In a 1948 article on the

²⁵ See Munday (2016), pp. 29-50.

²⁶ E.g., de Jonge (2022), who argues that the postcolonial concept of "migrant literature" is a useful way to consider the works of itinerant Greek-language (but ethnically non-Greek) authors, pp. 10-36. Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) famously reprises the Greek-Persian opposition as one of the proto-examples of the eponymous phenomenon, which helped pave the way for further academic considerations of the barbarian "Other" in the Ancient World, see *inter alia* Hall (1989), Gruen (2010), and Harrison (2020).

²⁷ A verbal clash between scholars Dan-el Padilla Peralta and Mary Frances Williams, at a panel concerning "The Future of Classics" in January 2019, epitomises the debate. The latter had defended the Classics as the foundation of Western civilisation, to which Padilla responded that he hoped for the utter demise of the field, if that were indeed its definition, see Poser (2021).

state of the study of classical languages, Berthold Louis Ullman, an American classicist, lamented the rise of classical texts being studied in translation rather than in the original.²⁸ This perspective has partially stood the test of time, yet it must be recognised that many eminent figures in the history of English literature (and beyond) were rather poor readers of the classical languages, despite a profound knowledge of ancient authors and their works.²⁹ This knowledge would therefore have been derived from translated versions of the texts. The role of these translations can be conceived of as part of a literary polysystem, a notion developed by Israeli Translation Studies scholar Itamar Even-Zohar.³⁰ Though a case study is beyond the scope of this thesis, it will consider certain connections between Translation Studies concepts in certain parts of classical scholarship, and the role they have played in the redefinition of the very notion of “translation” within the field of Classics. On the early map of the field of Translation Studies drawn by Holmes and Toury³¹, the theme of this literature review could be said to be part of the “pure” side, with considerations of both certain “partial” translation theories on the “theoretical” side and “function-oriented” studies on the “descriptive” side. As Pym has noted, however, the map does not allow for a specifically historical dimension of Translation Studies.³² It is precisely within such a dimension that the arguments of the works considered here may be considered, as they form part of a general review of shifting attitudes towards translations in the field of Classics. Even further, it could be argued that classical translations occupy their own particular positioning within the history of translation.

Reactions to translations in the classroom

The theory of (mainly literary) translation has a long and varied history, predating the advent of Translation Studies as a full academic field. In the 20th century, classicists of the English-speaking world were faced with the decline of the study of their field in schools and universities.³³ The rise of translated versions of

²⁸ See Ullman (1948), pp. 71-74.

²⁹ See Beard and Henderson (1995), pp. 62-63.

³⁰ See Even-Zohar (1970/1978).

³¹ Derived from the theoretical foundations laid by Holmes (1972/2000) and Toury (1980).

³² See Pym (1998), p. 3.

³³ And beyond, though the case of the German philological tradition appears more nuanced, with Wilamowitz and Jaeger contributing to the revolution of the field in the first half of the 20th century.

classical texts, in both the public and academic domains, provoked varying reactions from scholars.

Firstly, in a 1937 article on translations in the field of Classics, American academic Sherman Plato Young noted the developments in the English-speaking world concerning classical texts being taught in translation, looking to develop some general programmatic guidelines for such courses.³⁴ While recognising that many of his peers were set against this particular practice, Young viewed it as an opportunity for the future of the field, remarking that:

The situation is ripe for a rediscovery of the life and literature of Greece and Rome by widespread groups of our population which have been intellectually underprivileged in other eras. Lovers of the classics can create an unparalleled revival of interest in humanistic values and extend the influence of those values to areas of society which have never been able to enjoy them because of their linguistic incapacity. The present opportunity requires our most enthusiastic and intelligent planning and teaching.³⁵

There is a clear social element to this particular perspective, which will recur later in this review. The prospect of teaching Classics in translation was still considered as a transmission of “Western culture”³⁶, but a door to a more inclusive approach was being opened. In terms of the actual translations to be employed, Young further states:

The classics department will be rigid in its demand for clear expression in idiomatic English. This is a general aim which the classics department must strive diligently to achieve and maintain.³⁷

The favour shown to an idiomatic rendering in the target language, as well as the necessity to “relegate him [the translator] to a secondary position”³⁸, appears in line with what Lawrence Venuti would later term “the invisibility of the translator”, especially in the case of English-language translations.³⁹ Blatant interference with

Wilamowitz notably began the gradual scholarly acceptance of translations in the domain, challenging the views of his contemporaries, see Lanza and Ugolini (2016/2022), pp. 189-237.

³⁴ See Young (1937), pp. 241-244 & 288.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 288.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 243.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 244.

³⁹ See Venuti (1995), pp. 1-2.

the original, seemingly akin to clear modifications to the source text, ought therefore to be kept to a minimum, in Young's view. The outlook on translation in this article is more optimistic than that of Ullman, cited hereabove, but nevertheless keeps translations on a secondary level.

Secondly, a similarly positive view is displayed by Walter Allen Jr, another American academic, in a 1955 article on the same topic, "Teaching the Classics in Translation".⁴⁰ It is a far more pragmatic piece than Young's, offering practical advice for the teaching of Classics through translation, along with examples from the author's own didactic experiences. It includes advice on academic necessities (examinations, the function of the teacher⁴¹), as well as on the course content (namely concerning general courses on classical literature, drama, epic, and historiography⁴²). Concerning translation, Allen Jr recognises that the original ought to be frequently consulted by the teacher:

The teacher should reread the translation every time, and the original as often as he can. He may not have the leisure to reread the original every time [...]. He can, however, reread at least a portion every time, while he will keep the texts at hand for reference whenever the English is not clear.⁴³

The clarifying and authoritative aspects of the original text remain prevalent in this particular view, playing into the notion that the translation is a secondary text and perhaps a necessary evil.

Finally, another perspective on this particular issue is developed by another American scholar, David H. Porter, in a 1970 article entitled "Classics in Translation: Some Comments and Suggestions".⁴⁴ Despite some apprehensions concerning Classics being taught in translation, dubbing the practice "a disappointingly imperfect form"⁴⁵, Porter recognised the value of actively engaging the student in a discovery of the Ancient World, setting out three practical ways, in the article, of achieving this. The first concerns widening the variety of interpretations given of a

⁴⁰ See Allen (1955), pp. 105-116.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 106-109.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 108.

⁴⁴ See Porter (1970), pp. 289-293.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 289.

particular classical work, compelling the students to reflect on these competing views and then apply their frameworks on another classical work.⁴⁶ The second concerns the notion of “relevance”, by allowing for more modern works (which draw on classical sources) to be analysed alongside the classical ones in order for the student to feel like the ancient text speaks to their own day and age.⁴⁷ The final one concerns creativity, as the student is encouraged to undertake an artistic project concerning a classical work or mythical episode (such as the staging of a play), subject to their own interpretation of it, effectively translating it into a novel cultural form.⁴⁸ Though the concept of translation is not directly addressed by the article, it does presage modern reworkings and readings of ancient texts, turning away from philological inflexibility in order to maintain the relevance and therefore survival of the Classics.

The ideas developed by these articles may be found in slightly different forms elsewhere, beyond the English-speaking world⁴⁹, yet they speak to shifting attitudes towards translations in the field of Classics, despite a certain degree of reticence.

Classical translations: a European question

Until now, this review has mainly concerned itself with reflections on classical translations and their use in the English-speaking world in the twentieth century, which restricts its scope. In the broader context of this thesis, reflections on French-language translations are particularly salient, even though certain common patterns may be observed beyond national borders throughout history. In 1549 Joachim Du Bellay, a French Renaissance author, famously penned a work entitled *La Défense et illustration de la langue française*, in which he sought to promote the French language and its literary status. He argued that the imitation of classical works would serve to enrich French, but that translation was to be rejected as excessively derivative, a pale copy of the classical original.⁵⁰ Du Bellay himself would later adopt a seemingly more nuanced view, publishing a translation of the fourth book of the

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 290.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 291.

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 291-293.

⁴⁹ See Laurens and Jouanna (2019), p. 428.

⁵⁰ The fifth and sixth sections of the *Défense* are particularly damning towards translators.

Aeneid.⁵¹ His own *Défense*, however, draws heavily from, and arguably translates, parts of Sperone Speroni's *Dialogo delle lingue*, which did not take the kindest view of translation.⁵² Some of Du Bellay's contemporaries went so far as to accuse the French author of plagiarism⁵³, with several rebuttals being produced, notably on the theme of translation.⁵⁴ In a broad sense, this Renaissance example serves to indicate that views on translation may not simply be divided along national lines, with debates on the subject taking place across Europe from very early on. Nevertheless, in the scope of this thesis, some of the later developments in the French-speaking world concerning classical translations may be considered.

By the 19th century, Du Bellay's vision, along with that of his fellow members of the *Pléiade*, of the French language becoming equal to Latin and Greek in prestige, appears to have been realised to a certain extent, with French forming a core part of school curricula along with the two classical languages.⁵⁵ With the advent of the great German philological tradition, many critical editions of various classical works came to be published, which in turn gave rise to an increasing number of translations. The publication of great collections of classical works in French translation in the course of the same century and into the next seems to have contributed to the somewhat blurring lines between specialist and more popular access to classical works as a whole.⁵⁶

The 20th century would also bear witness to a rise in the sheer number of French-language translations of classical works, now brought into more general publishing practices.⁵⁷ In the chapter of the 4th volume (concerning the 20th century) of the *Histoire des traductions en langue française* on the subject of classical literature in translation, Pierre Laurens and Jacques Jouanna relate yet another debate between target- and source-oriented translators (*sourciers* and *ciblistes*) in

⁵¹ See Gautier (2018) for the blurred lines between translating and rewriting in Du Bellay's translations.

⁵² Du Bellay would have to defend himself from various critiques, Vianey (1930), pp. 32-36.

⁵³ The core originality of the *Défense* would also be questioned by 20th-century critic Pierre Villey-Desmarets (1908), p. 101.

⁵⁴ Namely Aneau and Sébillet, amongst others, see n. 52.

⁵⁵ See Le Blanc (2012), p. 211.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

⁵⁷ See Laurens and Jouanna (2019), pp. 454-464 for an overview of this generalisation, which would effectively turn into a contest between different publishing houses.

France, in the 1960s, namely on the subject of Pierre Klossowski's translation of Book 6 of the *Aeneid*, which sought to reproduce, in French, the "dislocation" of the Latin word order, which made for a seemingly jarring text.⁵⁸ The subsequent rejection of this Latinised French speaks to a greater emphasis on the end result than on the "original". The somewhat too clear-cut division between the two is also reprised in Michel Volkovitch's critique of Marie Darrieussecq's translation of the *Tristia*, favourably compared to the more "academic" Budé translation. Volkovitch refers to the latter as a tool to understand the Latin text, while the former more suitably belongs to the world of poetry.⁵⁹ This idea suggests that there is an original meaning to be sought in the Latin text, beyond any differing sorts of receptions, a question which will be addressed here below. He does, however, liken Darrieussecq's translation to the language of Ovid, in principle if not in a literal sense. All of these discussions represent a move away from the scholarly milieu, with translations of Classical texts now subject to the same scrutiny as vernacular languages. The 20th century, which saw the broader developments in translation theory and the development of the field of Translation Studies, aided by French figures such as Jean-René Ladmiral, Yves Bonnefoy or Henri Meschonnic, would, in the words of Robert Larose, represent "la victoire de l'esprit sur le littéralisme du siècle précédent".⁶⁰ In a broad sense, this speaks to the advent of new possibilities in the field of classical translation, away from the more stringent philological and scholarly demands of the previous century.

With the canon of classical texts often being represented (however inaccurately) as part of European heritage, it is pertinent to view evolving views of and discussions around classical translations as taking place in a context which goes beyond the national level. While no single consensus can be forcefully proven to have held absolute sway, debates surrounding the stakes of classical translations have gradually followed the wider developments in translation theory, beyond the remit of classicists. The blending of these domains is further developed here below.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 464.

⁵⁹ See Volkovitch (2010).

⁶⁰ See Larose (1989), p. 9.

Accessibility and adaptability: Classics hand-in-hand with translation

Particularly in the scope of reception theory, interest in the culture-centred theories developed in Translation Studies has flourished in recent times in the field of Classics, with notably the publication, in 2008, of an edited volume concerning translation and the very notion of the “Classic”.⁶¹ The collaboration of Translation Studies scholars Lawrence Venuti, Theo Hermans, Susan Bassnett, and Maria Tymoczko with classical scholars (and editors of the volume) Alexandra Lianeri and Vanda Zajko (*inter alia*) speaks to a certain blending of fields, particularly concerning literary translations. Edith Hall’s chapter within the volume discusses the positive impact of translations on the accessibility of the field of Classics, moving away from the 19th and- 20th-century conceptions of the subject as that of a privileged, male, and often white sphere, difficult to access for women.⁶² She further argues that a better appreciation of the history of translation within the field, which would be conceivably part of a Translation Studies-oriented approach, would help appreciate the very history of the study of the Classics, further mingling the disciplines.⁶³

Beyond the scope of that particular volume, certain considerations of classical translations have arisen in more Translation Studies-oriented publications, such as David Hopkins’s chapter in the 2019 *Routledge Handbook of Literary Translation*.⁶⁴ The scholar considers a history of various literary figures’ perspectives on translations of classical poetry, noting the lingering wariness of many classical scholars vis-à-vis overly creative translations.⁶⁵ His history does not go beyond the writings of Carne-Ross, however, leaving a dubious void concerning more recent developments, such as the translations and ideas of Josephine Balmer and, of particular interest in the scope of this thesis, those of Marie Darrieussecq and Danièle Robert.

An English poet, Balmer has met with some success as a translator of ancient Greek and Latin literature, combining a scholarly approach with a creative one.⁶⁶ A

⁶¹ See Lianeri and Zajko (2008).

⁶² See Hall (2008), pp. 315-340.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ See Hopkins (2019), pp. 105-117.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 115.

⁶⁶ See Bassnett (2018), p. 336.

classicist herself, Balmer's translations have sought to adapt classical texts to a modern audience, while maintaining a profound connection with the source text. She has noted the potential of classical translators to build upon the past and to innovate for new generations.⁶⁷ Her work, both academic and practical, blurs the imaginary lines between the fields of Classics and Translation Studies, which can be perceived in certain domains to overlap to a great extent. While it plays into a developing relationship with the notion of "translation" within the discipline, it does not reach the radical redefinitions of modern reception theory.

Reconsidering translation: answers to the fidelity of translation

Some twenty-three years after Porter's article, following considerable developments in both critical theory and the burgeoning field of Translation Studies, in a 1993 work on the reception of classical texts, *Redeeming the text: Latin poetry and the hermeneutics of reception*, Charles Martindale challenged the philological rigidity of classical studies and established a new way of approaching ancient literature, relying on the theoretical foundations laid by Jauss and Gadamer.⁶⁸ Further, he directly connected these notions of reception theory with conceptions of translation, drawing on the work of translation theorists Walter Benjamin, George Steiner, and Susan Bassnett.⁶⁹ Relying heavily on the "cultural turn" in Translation Studies⁷⁰, Martindale's theory allowed for any and indeed every reading of a text to be considered as a translation, and opened up the study of classical texts to any number of potential readings.⁷¹ One of the key elements of the work takes the form of the rejection of the "text-in-itself" and the idea that there is an intrinsic meaning and intention to be decoded in any literary production.⁷² This particular approach has not been universally admitted, of course, with Richard F. Thomas, for example, another prominent scholar of classical reception, arguing instead that receptions are closer to distortions to be deconstructed in order to better our understanding of an

⁶⁷ Balmer (2006), p. 184.

⁶⁸ See Martindale (1993), pp. 2-34. The turn of phrase "Meaning, could we say, is realized at the point of reception" (p. 3) has become a major point of reference for subsequent considerations of classical reception theory, see Batstone (2006), p. 14.

⁶⁹ See Martindale (1993), p. 76.

⁷⁰ See Armstrong (2008), p. 197.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 100.

⁷² Ibid., pp. 3-5.

original source text.⁷³ Both scholars nevertheless agree on the construed nature of readings, and Martindale's engagement with the theory of Translation Studies was indicative of a broader shift within the field of Classics in opinions concerning translations, which went beyond questions of teaching.

The work of Donald Carne-Ross, an eminent later 20th-century critic of classical translations, also played an important role in the legitimation of the practice in the field of Classics. Though they may be considered light on theory, Carne-Ross's writings consider translations and originals as two objects equally worthy of literary analysis and criticism, which complement each other in different ways. Kenneth Haynes's edited volume collects a variety of Carne-Ross's close readings of classical translations, serving as useful point of reference for their history and analysis.⁷⁴

Shortcomings and future research avenues

If certain strides are being made in a "deconstruction" or reshaping of the Classics from the perspective of its historical study and postcolonial analyses, the attempts to consider the historical attitudes towards translations have thus far failed to match that pace. A certain resistance in scholarly circles remains vis-à-vis the novelties of reception theory, which now arguably occupies its own niche within the field of Classics. Certain gaps doubtlessly need to be filled, as the considerations of this review were restricted to the English-speaking world, which remains a crucial point of reference in the discipline, a leftover effect from the prevalence of 19th-century British classicism, which may still shape certain perceptions of the Ancient World. The importance of translations in the development of popular conceptions of Antiquity remains equally underexplored, even if said translations should take the form of retellings such as those cited by Balmer, for example, David Malouf's *An Imaginary Life*, a retelling of Ovid's exile.⁷⁵ If translations have played such a key

⁷³ See Thomas (2001), xi-xx.

⁷⁴ See Haynes (2010).

⁷⁵ Malouf's 1978 novella has been studied in the scope of Ovidian reception, but the view of Alessandro Barchiesi (1997, p. 4) embodies some of the issues facing classicists in analysing such works: "Overstatement, vulgarity [...], and romancing: can we really think that this postmodern narrator (Anglo-Lebanese by birth, whose work is published in Australia) has any contribution to make to the study of Ovid's poetry?". One fails to see the relevance of Malouf's birth and the place where his work is published, unless one obstinately clings to a Eurocentric view of the question.

role in classical education over the last century or so, their study has thus far been limited to some of the great literary translations of the past, such as that of Dryden and Pope, and to certain canonical authors such as Ovid, Homer, and Virgil. It is precisely within this gap that this thesis seeks to make its argument, as modern translations of classical works play a key role in current conceptions of the Classical world.

Furthermore, the more formal and technical aspects of classical translations have been greatly neglected in favour of more literary narratives, perhaps out of a sentiment that efforts to analyse them would not bear much pertinent fruit. Given the more particular contexts in which these translations are produced, this would perhaps seem quite natural, but represents a gap within which some research could be carried out. The differences between historical translations of classical works in various modern languages could also be considered, but remain outside the remit of this thesis.

Finally, it would be remiss not to point out that analyses of translations and receptions have remained firmly rooted in European, and thereby Eurocentric, perspectives, which may buckle under the weight of their conceptions and traditions.

Conclusion of the review

To conclude, this review has sought to consider some of the relevant literature concerning shifting attitudes within the field of Classics towards the practices and theories of translation. If some scepticism has never been wholly absent, evoked in the papers published around the middle of the 20th century, a number of developments in the field have paved the way for theoretical conceptions to allow for a reconsideration of the linguistic and socio-cultural functions of classical translations both within the field and in society as a whole. This very reconsideration has allowed for broader approaches to the transmission of classical texts, especially through the medium of translation. The collaboration between classical and Translation Studies scholars, as well as the diversification of some academics' areas of interest, speaks to the interdisciplinary nature of translation, which remains somewhat underexplored in the field of Classics.

Topic and methodology

As discussed here above, this thesis seeks to consider two modern French-language translations of Ovid's *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*. The length of the works prevents a comparative study of all of the verses contained therein, so a selection of certain poems will be considered. Specifically, this thesis turns to three fundamental aspects of the exilic works, namely the poet's relationship with imperial power (in the form of Augustus), his portrayal of the inhabitants of Tomis, his place of exile, and the ways in which he writes about the composition of poetry, and its significance for the poet in exile. For the first of these, the second book of the *Tristia*, which is a single poem addressed to Caesar, is of paramount importance. For the second, the poems pertaining to the locals of Tomis (commonly referred to by Ovid as "Getae", though the population would more likely have been more diverse, as Ovid himself points out elsewhere⁷⁶) are to be considered, namely *Tristia* 3.9, 5.2, 5.7, and *Epistulae ex Ponto* 4.13, 4.14. For the last of these aspects, the various references to poetry and literature in the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*, in a broad sense or pertaining to his own works, are to be examined across nine poems, namely *Tristia* 2, 4.1, 4.10, 5.1, 5.7, and *Epistulae ex Ponto* 4.2, 4.13, 4.15, 4.16. Accordingly, this thesis shall consider the fundamental differences between Robert's and Darrieussecq's translations, and ask how these translators receive, read, or translate Ovid. As per Martindale's theory of classical reception, discussed hereabove, there may be no "original" meaning to be sought in a text beyond the reading of each individual who engages with it. This extends to the realm of translation, with an infinite variety of potential approaches and translations, two of which are to be considered here. Following the same theory, this thesis provides readings into the translations rather than definitive claims when it comes to any intrinsic meanings *within* the translations themselves. The reception of these translations (the thesis' arguments) may be challenged by those who engage in further reception by reading this thesis, which continues the discussions and debates surrounding the texts. In discussing the Ovidian exilic works, it is important

⁷⁶ See Ovid, *Trist.* 2, 191-192, which despite textual difficulties, namely with regard to emendations (see Hind (2007)), consistently points to diversity at Tomis. The critical edition used throughout this thesis, when the Latin text is cited, is that of the Loeb edition.

to distinguish between the historical poet and the various facets of his literary persona.⁷⁷ Accordingly, one may also distinguish the authorial voices of the translated exilic works, with Robert's Ovid presenting starkly different characteristics to that of Darrieussecq's, as both receive the Latin text in varying manners. It is therefore appropriate to point out that the three are to be considered quite separately throughout this thesis, with representations and indeed receptions of the poet's life in exile being the main focus. The exile of Robert's Ovid, for example, must not be considered in historical, but rather in literary terms. The thesis attempts to clearly distinguish between the characters in its various chapters. When deemed necessary, functional English-language translations of certain Latin terms are provided to aid the basic understanding of the Ovidian text, for a reader who does not read Latin. For reasons which the author hopes are apparent, full translations of the passages discussed have been avoided, save for that of an Isocrates passage in chapter 2, whose reception through translation is of limited interest here.

⁷⁷ See Claassen (2008), pp. 8-10.

1 Ovid and Augustus: Poetry and Empire

Introduction: Reading Ovid's Tristia 2

One of the most difficult questions facing any reader of the second book of Ovid's *Tristia*, a single poem comprising 578 lines, is that of Ovid's attitude towards and relationship with the emperor Augustus. While the addressees of the *Epistulae ex Ponto* are for the most part named, those of the *Tristia* are not, save for his wife and the case of this individual poem, which is framed as being directed at the emperor himself. The content of the poem would appear to reflect an attempt by Ovid to persuade Augustus that this exile is a sentence which far outweighs the severity of the error or crime committed. It has been analysed as a traditional rhetorical defence, replete with the customary elements which that entails (*exordium, probatio, refutatio*).⁷⁸ The core of the defence would appear to centre around the question of *carmina et error*, the two faults for which Ovid has been condemned to exile.⁷⁹ The poet himself appears to not wish to address the *error*, which compels him to defend his *carmina*, his poetic work, seemingly the *Ars Amatoria*, a work presented as a sort of manual for the art of love and seduction. In the broader context of Augustus' wish to morally reform Roman society, such a work may have been perceived as undermining the emperor's efforts, which therefore compelled him to exile the poet to Tomis.

Many commentators have noted, however, the unsatisfactory nature of Ovid's defence, with references to some of Augustus' own moral failings, as well as to the potentially ironic deification of the emperor, having been perceived as undercutting any serious attempt on Ovid's part of justifying his poetic tendencies, or even of trying to earn a recall back to Rome.⁸⁰ Questions are therefore raised surrounding Ovid's sincerity, and the fundamental nature of his relationship with Augustus. The poet himself appears to compromise the extent to which he, or his work, should be trusted:

⁷⁸ See Owen (1924), p. 55.

⁷⁹ See n. 3 *supra*.

⁸⁰ See Marache (1958), pp. 412-419; Wiedemann (1975), p. 268; Nugent (1990), pp. 239-245.

magnaue pars mendax operum est et ficta meorum:
plus sibi permisit compositore suo.
Nec liber indicium est animi, sed honesta voluptas:
plurima mulcendis auribus apta feret.⁸¹

The implications are striking, as a sharp distinction appears to be made between the author and his poems. This would also cast some doubt on the veracity of Ovid's own claims concerning his condition in exile, as they belong to his poetic output. His intent in *Tristia* 2 is therefore unclear, with some scholars positing that his stance is starkly subversive, a challenge to Augustus, while others maintain that the poet is legitimately attempting to align himself with Augustan ideals, despite some uncomfortable passages.⁸² The variety of approaches appears to contribute to this dissonance, as *Tristia* 2 allows for discussions on literary, political, and moral matters. The very point of Martindale's reception theory is, however, that questions of intent and inherent meaning are chimeras, with any number of readings of a given text being possible (and in the case of Ovid, a very wide range of readings have indeed been presented).

Accordingly, any translations of a work offer a novel reading of it, and allow for original approaches to the text. This chapter seeks to explore the ways in which Danièle Robert, Marie Darrieussecq and translate Ovid's plea to the emperor Augustus, arguing that the former's translation portrays a more defiant poet, who undermines imperial authority and legitimacy, and that the latter reads the confrontation as an erotic one, centring around the personal relationship between the poet and the emperor, and deploying the style of a romantic poet in order to discuss what is turned into a romantic issue. The emphasis in Robert's translation may be said to lie on the standing of Ovid as an equal to Augustus, at least in his own field (poetry, which is removed from the imperial domain), with a challenge laid to the emperor's authority in this matter. Darrieussecq, for her part, turns to the personal dynamic between the pair by highlighting the emotional impact of Augustus' sentence on the poet, perhaps rendering the tone erotic, with an Ovid who adopts

⁸¹ *Tristia* 2, 355-358.

⁸² See Nugent (1990), pp. 243-244.

the role of a spurned lover (the trope of the *exclusus amator* in a *paraklausithyron*⁸³) in the poetic production. This does not necessarily suggest that the translator herself is implying that Ovid and Augustus were romantically involved, but speaks to a novel way of receiving the Ovidian text. In such a reading, Darrieussecq's Ovid turns away from the poet's previous precepts concerning the trope of the *exclusus amator*, and in doing so marks a turn away from his previous romantic poetry. The chapter first considers Robert's translation before turning to Darrieussecq's, with a subsequent comparative analysis which considers the ways in which these translations differ.

Poetics and Empire: Robert's Ovid vs the emperor

The very ambiguity of *Tristia* 2 vis-à-vis the emperor presents a challenge for the translator, as it forces them to make a series of assumptions concerning what may or may not be ironic, sincere, witty, or serious, in order to produce a consistent outlook throughout the effort. To translate the poem, and indeed any poem, is to offer certain perspectives into the work. The translations produce, in Martindale's terms, a two-way dynamic, with the source text allowing for the target text to be created, target texts that thereafter lead to novel readings of the source text. In the scope of *Tristia* 2, as discussed here above, much attention has been paid to readings of the text in which the Roman poet Ovid variably negotiates his stance towards the emperor, embarking on a sort of rhetorical and literary defence of the *Ars Amatoria*. The political implications of the poem have largely hinged on critical discussions of the *Ars* itself and the "intent" of the poet.⁸⁴ In the case of Danièle Robert's translation, this chapter argues that the onus is on a stance of defiance on Ovid's part, but not in the manner of an "anti-Augustan" individual, as has traditionally been argued in scholarly discussions of potential oppositional stances in *Tristia* 2.⁸⁵ Rather, the reading offered in this reception might be described as an effort to depict the poet as the ruler of his own empire (poetics) which evades the

⁸³ One of the most well-known tropes of Roman elegiac poetry and beyond, see Canter (1920), pp. 355-368.

⁸⁴ See Nugent (1990), pp. 239-257; Sharrock (1994), pp. 97-98; McGowan (2009) p. 33.

⁸⁵ Augustan morality is held to have been impacted by the *Ars*, which is what led to Ovid's exile. Discussions concerning the poet's stance have therefore centred on his views of those principles, whether they are in favour of the emperor's moral reforms or not. The emphasis on the *Ars* has potentially overshadowed other potential readings of the poem.

imperial power of Augustus, and has the potential to undermine it. The *Ars Amatoria* and its potentially corrupting influence, in Robert's reading, do not take pride of place, with greater emphasis being laid on the interactions between the figure of the poet and that of the emperor. While Darrieussecq's reading, discussed here below, arguably centres around the same question, the two translations differ greatly in that it is the position of literature which Ovid adopts in Robert's reception, rather than that of a relation of Augustus. The figures of the poet and the emperor are held up in a distinct opposition throughout the translated text, with a gradual subservience of imperial power (and loftier genres of poetry) to the sort of verse which Ovid writes (and of which he is indeed the prince) being construed.

The first part of the poem, traditionally referred to as the *exordium*⁸⁶, has been perceived as an ode to Augustus' accomplishments in the decades preceding Ovid's day, with praise being lavished on his conciliatory efforts:

tu quoque, cum patriae rector dicare paterque,
utere more dei nomen habentis idem.
idque facis, nec te quisquam moderatius umquam
imperii potuit frena tenere sui.
tu veniam parti superatae saepe dedisti,
non concessurus quam tibi victor erat.
divitiis etiam multos et honoribus auctos
vidi, qui tulerant in caput arma tuum ;
quaeque dies bellum, belli tibi sustulit iram,
parsque simul templis utraque dona tulit ;
utque tuus gaudet miles, quod vicerit hostem,
sic victum cur se gaudeat, hostis habet.
causa mea est melior, qui nec contraria dicor
arma nec hostiles esse secutus opes.⁸⁷

This may be assimilated to a *captatio benevolentiae*, as Ovid appears to hail Augustus' character and clemency at the term of the Roman civil war towards his vanquished foes, in order to set the stage for his own plea for forgiveness, which

⁸⁶ See n. 78.

⁸⁷ *Trist.* 2, 39-52.

appears to begin with *causa mea*. The emperor himself is encouraged to act in the manner of Jupiter, the god with whom he is said to share a name (*utere more dei nomen habentis idem*), with the vocabulary of war permeating the passage (*superatae, victor, arma, bellum, belli, miles, vicerit, hostem, victum, hostis, arma, hostiles*). The poetic elevation of the emperor serves as the first reminder of the ability of poetry to praise and immortalise certain political and moral achievements, and Robert translates:

Or toi que l'on appelle aussi père et maître de la patrie,
Agis comme ce dieu dont le nom est le même que le tien.
C'est ce que tu fais, et personne n'a jamais été capable de tenir
Avec plus de sagesse les rênes de son empire ;
Tu as souvent accordé ta clémence à un parti vaincu
Qui ne t'eût pas pardonné s'il eût été vainqueur.
J'ai même vu beaucoup de gens comblés de richesses et d'honneurs
Alors qu'ils avaient pris les armes contre toi.
Tu as en un jour mis fin à la guerre et à ta colère concernant cette guerre,
Et les deux partis ont porté ensemble leurs offrandes aux temples ;
Et de même que tes soldats se réjouissent d'avoir triomphé de l'ennemi,
L'ennemi a des raisons de se réjouir d'être vaincu.
Ma cause est meilleure, car il n'est pas dit que j'ai accompagné
Une lutte armée ou l'opposition.⁸⁸

The last two verses point to Robert's Ovid highlighting his lack of military or political opposition to Augustus, which begs the question as to why he appeals to the emperor's clemency towards his opponents in the first place (if he did not partake in such a struggle, he cannot be said to have been *vaincu*, rendering any question of forgiveness moot). The issue may be resolved if one considers the translator as reading the notion of *mea causa* as a specifically literary opposition to the emperor in the work of Ovid, away from any directly political or imperial considerations. While Augustus has indeed overcome his opponents when it comes to *la guerre*, he is being challenged in the domain of poetry, the *ma cause* which Robert's Ovid depicts

⁸⁸ Robert (2006), p. 50.

as being *meilleure*. The opposition is implied, with the subsequent verses addressing the role of the poet vis-à-vis higher authority:

Ta gloire n'est pas grandie par mes vers et n'a pas de lieu
Où s'accroître pour devenir plus grande.
Jupiter jouit d'une gloire immense : il aime cependant
Que l'on raconte ses exploits, être le sujet d'un poème
Et lorsqu'on rappelle les combats de la guerre des Géants
Il est vraisemblablement heureux de s'entendre louer.
D'autres te célèbrent sur un ton tout à fait approprié
Et chantent tes louanges avec plus de talent ;
Mais le dieu est tout aussi touché par l'hommage d'un peu d'encens
Que par le sang versé de cent taureaux.⁸⁹

The *encens* mentioned in the penultimate verse of this passage refers back to a previous line within the same poem, which sees the poet claiming that he had burned incense in honour of Augustus. Despite the notion that the emperor's renown is not added to by the verses of Robert's Ovid, it does benefit from them, with poetry playing a laudatory role towards it. Jupiter's "glory", assimilated to his warring triumphs, is told through the poets, who make it known. Poetry cannot be seen as adding to military prowess, as it pertains to an altogether different domain, but is the medium through which *imperium* may receive adequate praise. The same possibility is open to Augustus, though Robert's Ovid is seemingly not the one to do so in the appropriate tone, with others displaying more talent in that genre of poetry. The poet's verses are kept away from the exploits of the emperor, before the implication that they are also affected by the more subtle effects of this Ovid's sort of poetry (the *encens* referred to previously). He further reminds the emperor of his own renown, opposing the reach of literature to that of Augustus' *imperium*:

Mais ma famille serait-elle d'origine ou de fortune modeste,
Elle n'est pas obscure grâce à mon talent ;
Et si je semble en avoir fait usage de manière trop juvénile,
Je porte un nom célèbre dans le monde entier ;
L'ensemble des gens de lettres connaît Nason et n'hésite pas

⁸⁹ Robert (2006), p. 51.

À le compter parmi les hommes qui ne sont pas sans intérêt.⁹⁰

Robert's Ovid has the ear of every learned individual across the world, with his talent to thank rather than illustrious ancestry. What he writes is relevant not only to the emperor directly (as it affects him), but to the *ensemble des gens de lettres*, and how they then perceive Augustus. The *fama* of empire may then be read as linked to the Roman poet's output, distancing the emperor and his achievements from the domain of poetry while reminding him that they are also reliant on it. In this reading, Robert's Ovid may be said to nuance his praise of Augustus' exploits in favour of a greater distinction between them and the abilities of the poet, while maintaining a form of subservience of the former to the latter (which has not seemingly been hampered by Augustus exiling him).

The second part of the poem has been read as a didactic poem, recounting the history of Graeco-Roman literature in which Ovid is keen to insert himself.⁹¹ A didactic slant may also be read in Robert's reception of the text, yet it may arguably also be read as a challenge to Augustus in that the themes of the poet's sort of verse (elegiac love poetry) underpin all of the "acceptable" genres of literature, even challenging the behaviours of the gods to whose ranks Augustus is said to belong:

Quand elle sera dans le temple de Jupiter, c'est le temple de Jupiter
 Qui lui dira le nombre de femmes que ce dieu a rendues mères ;
 [...]
 En voyant Pallas, elle se demande pourquoi cette vierge
 A élevé Erichthonios, né d'un crime ;
 Si elle vient dans le temple du puissant Mars, ton œuvre,
 Vénus s'y trouve près du Vengeur, son époux à l'entrée ;
 [...].⁹²

The connection between Jupiter and Augustus now seems rather contentious, as the divinity's own misbehaviour may be tied to moral missteps made by the emperor. The line mentioning Erichthonius refers back to the autochthonous myth of the Athenians, which holds that the first occupants of the city were born of the

⁹⁰ Robert (2006), p. 52.

⁹¹ See Davis (1999), pp. 799-809.

⁹² Robert (2006), p. 58.

very earth. Whether or not the myth was accepted literally is up for debate⁹³, but it is intrinsically linked to the foundation of the city of Athens. The following line brings the matter straight back to Rome in mentioning Mars, a key figure in the early days of the foundation of the city. Robert renders *tua munera* (lexically pointing to a gift of sorts) as *ton œuvre*, tying Augustus to that divinity and its adulterous behaviour with the goddess Venus, another one of the foundational gods of Rome. The city, its gods and Augustus himself are brought into question in Robert's translation, creating a combative Ovid who undermines imperial and divine authority. A similar challenge is put to the more "respectable" genres of literature, namely epic and tragedy, as Robert's Ovid claims that his own theme, namely love, underpins all of the tales which pertain to those very genres:

Qu'est-ce que l'*Iliade* sinon l'histoire d'une femme adultère
 Pour laquelle une guerre a lieu entre l'amant et le mari ?
 Quel en est le début sinon la passion pour Briséis et la colère
 Des généraux à partir de l'enlèvement de la jeune fille ?
 Qu'est l'*Odyssée* sinon l'histoire d'une femme aux prises avec l'amour,
 Désirée par bien des hommes en l'absence de son mari ?
 [...]
 Comment saurions-nous, sans les révélations du grand Homère,
 Que deux déesses s'enflammèrent de passion pour leur hôte ?
 La tragédie est le plus sérieux de tous les genres littéraires ;
 Elle aussi a toujours l'amour pour sujet.⁹⁴

The subsequent verses cite a wide variety of examples drawn from tragedy in which the subject matter deals with romantic issues. In this passage, the italicized Homeric works point to their stature in both Robert's translation and the view of a classical audience, now rendered subordinate to the themes in which this Ovid is claiming his authority. In the third verse of this particular passage, Robert inverts the order of the first line of the *Iliad* by putting its first word, *colère* (rendering the original

⁹³ A line in Euripides' *Ion* offers the most explicit challenge to any literal interpretation of the myth, namely verse 542: "The earth does not bear offspring". The play portrays Athenians rejecting foreign rule and supposedly destabilising diversity, see Saxonhouse (1986), pp. 253-262. For an etymological consideration of the autochthonous myth, see Cohen (2000), p. 92.

⁹⁴ Robert (2006), p. 60.

Iliadic $\mu\eta\nu\iota\nu$), at the end of the translated verse, after *passion*, adding to the thematic reversal of literary grandeur, whereas the Latin text does not nominalise the notion of anger. In the case of the *Odyssey*, the song about the “far-wandering man”, with “man” ($\alpha\upsilon\delta\omicron\pi\alpha$) as its opening word, is now about a woman (*l’histoire d’une femme*) and her struggles with love and suitors. In this rendition of *Tristia* 2, therefore, it may be argued that the poet presents the greater history of literature as subservient to his own allotted subject matter. A final challenge is put to imperial authority with the final work discussed beyond Ovid’s own, Virgil’s *Aeneid*, which has traditionally been read as a broadly pro-Augustan national epic:

Pourtant, l’heureux auteur de ta chère *Énéide* a porté
 “Les armes et le héros” dans le lit de la Tyrienne,
 Et nul passage n’est plus lu de l’œuvre tout entière.⁹⁵

The irony of *ta chère Énéide*, with the term *chère* lacking a lexical equivalent in the Latin text, describing the crown jewel of the literary production of Augustus’ day, challenges not only the work itself, but also the emperor’s literary discernment, establishing a clear distinction between the imperial and poetic domains. The Robert’s translation once again highlights an opening line, this time by placing *armes et héros* at the start of the translated verse, followed by *le lit de la Tyrienne*, creating a direct opposition where the Latin text follows a chiasmic pattern:

et tamen ille tuae felix Aeneidos auctor
 contulit in Tyrios arma virumque toros,
 nec legitur pars ulla magis de corpore toto,
 quam non legitimo foedere iunctus amor.⁹⁶

The translated passage produces a stance of literary and political defiance, which Robert’s Ovid adopts consistently throughout the poem. Accordingly, it may be argued that this particular translation is not geared towards a pro- or anti-Augustan position, but towards a declaration of independence vis-à-vis imperial authority from a poetic standpoint. The ability of poetry to immortalise the

⁹⁵ Robert (2006), p. 65.

⁹⁶ *Trist.* 2, 533-536.

achievements of an empire, while also undermining it, is addressed in a tone which warns the emperor of the consequences of his interference. The notion of divinity is played with to further cement this particular warning, with various grand literary models challenged by the sort of poetry which Robert's Ovid writes. In this manner, Danièle Robert's reception of *Tristia* 2 presents a figure of the poet who is measured and defiant in his writings, without delving into the broader issues of Augustan morality.

Defending the Ars with Amor: Darrieussecq's Ovid and the emperor

Traditional readings of *Tristia* 2 have focused on the nature of Ovid's defence of the *Ars Amatoria*, considering either the various ways in which the poet may or may not be effectively pleading his case, or the very nature of his case. Danièle Robert's translation may be said to offer a view into the place which the Roman poet seeks to carve out for himself within the Roman literary tradition, setting himself up defiantly as an authority in the domain of poetics, as opposed to an Augustus who is not qualified in this particular field. The result is one which speaks to the position of the poet and poetry as a whole vis-à-vis imperial power.⁹⁷ In the case of Darrieussecq, however, that position might be said to be reduced to a more personal relationship between the two individuals. Such a reading has not been the main focus of scholarship, beyond some scrutiny of the nature of the *error* and what it was that Ovid saw (which was enough to make Augustus, whose reign had otherwise been known for its leniency towards opposition, exile the poet to the very fringes of his empire), but Darrieussecq's reception arguably renders *Tristia* 2 into a highly original and emotional plea to the emperor, composed in a style that moves away from veiled references and literary criticism towards an erotically-charged setting, which speaks to the nature of the text being defended (the *Ars Amatoria*). In the *Remedia amoris*, a work which purports to provide ways to survive heartbreak, the poet Ovid explicitly advises his readers to avoid the condition of the *exclusus amator*, who is left bereft after being rejected by their beloved:

dixerit, ut venias: pacta tibi nocte venito;

⁹⁷ See Nugent (1990), p. 239.

veneris, et fuerit ianua clausa: feres.
nec dic blanditias nec fac convicia posti
nec latus in duro limine pone tuum.
postera lux aderit: careant tua verba querelis,
et nulla in vultu signa dolentis habe.⁹⁸

The poet calls on his readers to endure (*feres*) such a rejection as bravely as they can, without showing any outward sign of emotion and by maintaining an element of dignity. The three negative injunctions introduced by *nec* point to the three typical behaviours of the *exclusus amator*, who beseeches their beloved at the threshold or door of their home (the motif is termed the *paraklausithyron*, or closed-door). This chapter argues that it is precisely this sort of behaviour which Darrieussecq's Ovid displays in *Tristia* 2, which points to a reading in which the poet is indicating a rejection of his previous romantic poetry, positing himself as an *exclusus amator* (against his previous advice!), beseeching his beloved (Augustus) to open the door to him (back to Rome). This sort of reading has been suggested by scholars, but mainly in the broader scope of elegiac parallels, and seldom in reference to *Tristia* 2, which has mainly been considered along the lines of literary criticism, rhetoric, and politics.⁹⁹ In this manner, paradoxically, a romantic poem is used to argue Ovid's case that he ought not to be sentenced on account of a romantic poem, which is a radically new way of receiving the Ovidian text. The wider moral and political questions are left behind in favour of a more personal composition, which first appeals to Augustus' sympathy through a barrage of pleas traditionally associated with those of the *exclusus amator*, before engaging with the question of the *Ars Amatoria*, which is portrayed as an essentially romantic betrayal. A wide range of passages argue in favour of such a reading, which shall be examined here below.

⁹⁸ Ovid, *Rem. amor.*, 505-510.

⁹⁹ See Nagle (1980) for a comprehensive overview of the elegiac language of Ovid throughout the exilic works, of how the style and traditions of elegy are adapted to exile poetry. Nagle does not, however, directly address the specific tone of *Tristia* 2, and the potential application of elegiac tropes in the poet's relationship with Augustus. Vaiopoulos (2010) considers the trope in Ovid's *Heroides*, but does not turn to the exilic works. Darrieussecq's translation reads it in *Tristia* 2 as well, allowing for a new way of approaching the Ovidian text.

As discussed here above, it has been traditional to perceive *Tristia* 2 as a form of defence of the *Ars Amatoria*, yet to portray the latter work as a romantic betrayal allows for the poem to be framed as a *paraklausithyron*, with Darrieussecq's Ovid playing the role of the *exclusus amator*. The idea of faithfulness is reprised on a number of occasions throughout Darrieussecq's translation, in a manner which suggests faithfulness to Augustus as a romantic partner, also in direct reference to the *Ars Amatoria*, which takes the form of a romantic indiscretion. The following passage serves as an example:

je suis l'homme le plus fidèle
l'adultère je n'y connais rien
un libertinage factice m'a perdu
j'écris des vers galants
mais qui peut rapporter la moindre histoire sur moi
mes mœurs sont irréprochables
aucun mari même du peuple
ne peut douter de sa paternité à cause de moi
ma Muse est folâtre je suis sage
mensonges et fictions que mes œuvres
ce n'est pas ma vie que j'y raconte
c'est un passe-temps innocent
une question de rythme
de mélodie
la seule partie du corps que j'y caresse
c'est l'oreille¹⁰⁰

The alignment between the *Ars Amatoria*, the cause of the exile, and a *libertinage factice*, or a denial of adultery, would appear to confirm the implication that the work has been likened to a romantic betrayal, which Darrieussecq's Ovid is now denying. The poet in this translation claims innocence by distancing his own moral conduct from that seemingly presented in the *Ars*. In the erotically charged ambiance of this translation, and in the scope of a *paraklausithyron*, this may be read as Ovid denying infidelity to Augustus himself, swearing to his faithful conduct

¹⁰⁰ Darrieussecq (2008), p. 78.

in order to regain his (lover's) favour. The end of the passage includes an explicitly physical suggestion concerning the ear, with the Latin verse *plurima mulcendis auribus apta feret*¹⁰¹ being read as an intimate gesture.

Within this setting, the hallmarks of the *paraklausithyron* throughout *Tristia* 2, which bewails the direct consequence of his *Ars Amatoria*, i.e., the poet being left out in the cold outside his beloved's (Augustus') door (to Rome). Darrieussecq's Ovid states that hating poetry would be a logical outcome of his fate, given what he has suffered on account of the *Ars*, but thereafter claims that Augustus himself loves it:

haïr la poésie
ce serait raisonnable
moi
je suis fou
[...]
peut-être
tel le roi de Teuthras que son malheur sauva
mes vers amadoueront celui qu'ils ont blessé
César
la poésie il l'aime¹⁰²

There does not appear to be any lexical equivalent in the Latin text for this notion of love¹⁰³, but the transition from *haïr* to *il l'aime* concerning poetry could not be more contradictory, unless it is Augustus' own love which should come to redeem this negative feeling towards poetic production, and would therefore heal the poet himself if it were to be restored to him (via Ovid being allowed to return to Rome). The sentimental nature of the passage is reinforced by the term *amadouer*, which may speak to the intimate aspect of the poem's attempt at reconciliation, removed from affairs of state and morality. Darrieussecq's Ovid may be arguing that his exile on account of his poetry does not speak to the nature of the emperor's true and

¹⁰¹ *Trist.* 2, 358.

¹⁰² Darrieussecq (2008), p. 66.

¹⁰³ Which does not equate to asserting that that is not what the text means, the lines appear to translate *Trist.* 2, 15-22.

intimate feelings towards his very art, an art which is aligned with the poet himself. A second passage, a few verses later, supports such a reading:

avec toi contre moi je n'ai plus un ami
je me suis presque haï moi-même
la foule a ton visage
on se détourne
on déteste mes livres¹⁰⁴

The notion of *haïr* is now turned towards Ovid himself, a self-depreciatory tactic common in the *paraklausithyra* of elegiac poetry¹⁰⁵ as it is Augustus' judgment and lack of affection which makes the poet feel isolated, and would therefore save him if he could return to his good graces (to Rome). One may quite easily read this Ovid's seeing the emperor's face in the crowd as having romantic implications, but the more forceful point is that there is an alignment between the feeling close to hatred that Ovid feels towards himself, and the disdain shown for his books. After highlighting Augustus' love for poetry (and therefore for the poet), Darrieussecq's Ovid appeals to the emperor's sympathy for his plight, and testifies to his own devotion towards him:

ma cause à moi n'est rien
je n'ai pas porté les armes contre toi
je n'ai pas comploté avec les opposants
je le jure par la mer par la terre par le ciel
par toi-même
mon cœur battait pour toi
j'ai toujours prié pour toi
moi qui ne pouvais faire mieux
j'ai brûlé de l'encens¹⁰⁶

The sequence of sentences beginning with *je* speak to a heartfelt declaration, while the verse *mon cœur battait pour toi* may quite clearly be understood as an expression of romantic affection towards Augustus, and evoke the pleas of the

¹⁰⁴ Darrieussecq (2008), p. 68.

¹⁰⁵ This sort of tactic is well-known in elegiac poetry and abounds in the works of poets such as Catullus, Propertius, and Tibullus, see Greene (1998) and James (2001).

¹⁰⁶ Darrieussecq (2008), p. 67.

exclusus amator who is calling out to his lover through the *paraklausithyron*, appealing to their sympathy. This follows an escalation in the entities by which Darrieussecq's Ovid is prepared to swear: *mer, terre, ciel, toi-même*. The emperor's own person is placed above the sea, the earth, and the sky in this Ovid's sentiment. The Latin text lexically points to the notion that Augustus is a deity, an idea which allows the poet to swear by him:

Causa mea est melior, qui nec contraria dicor
 arma nec hostiles esse secutus opes.
 per mare, per terras, absentia numina, iuro,
 per te praesentem conspicuumque deum,
 hunc animum favisse tibi, vir maxime, meque,
 qua sola potui, mente fuisse tuum.¹⁰⁷

Scholars have pointed to the ambiguity in Augustus' being referred to as a divinity (*deum*), and then as a man (*vir maxime*).¹⁰⁸ Yet Darrieussecq's translation chooses to somewhat circumvent this particular question by reading the text as a romantic declaration, with the term *mente*, traditionally held to refer to the soul or the mind, seemingly being rendered into the term *cœur*. The translator does include a reference to a religious practice, *j'ai brûlé de l'encens*, which may now be read as a more erotic gesture. Jo-Marie Claassen has noted how Ovid's use of religious terminology in the exilic works may be interpreted as "the appropriation of the language of religion to poetics".¹⁰⁹ In this instance, it may be argued that Darrieussecq's Ovid is appropriating the language of religion for romantic poetics. Throughout *Tristia* 2, the Roman poet likens Augustus to Jupiter, with the term *fulmen*, associated with Jupiter's thunderbolt, metaphorically describing Ovid's punishment.¹¹⁰ The term is also reprised in the *Amores*, but is ascribed to Cupid and love, specifically in *Amores* 1. 6. It has been argued that Ovid indulges in another *paraklausithyron* in that particular poem¹¹¹, which lends weight to the idea that *Tristia* 2 may be read in the same manner, as the plea of an *exclusus amator*. The

¹⁰⁷ *Trist.* 2, 51-56.

¹⁰⁸ See Nugent (1990), p. 246.

¹⁰⁹ See Claassen (1999), p. 123.

¹¹⁰ *Trist.* 2, 144.

¹¹¹ See Laigneau (2000), pp. 317-326.

sequence of *je*-clauses is mirrored by a subsequent series of verses which address Augustus directly:

mais tu as été clément
 tu m'as laissé la vie
 tu aurais pu la prendre
 tu as épargné mon patrimoine
 tu aurais pu le confisquer
 tu as prononcé toi-même la sentence
 ni Sénat ni tribunal spécial
 tu m'as fais [sic] grâce de la honte d'un décret
 tu t'es vengé seul
 en prince¹¹²

The dichotomy between *je* and *tu* may point to an erotic dynamic as well, as Darrieussecq's Ovid makes the issue an intensely personal one, far removed from any outside intervention. The power imbalance between the poet and the emperor is highlighted here, evoking the imagery of the *exclusus amator* calling out to his *puella* in a self-depreciatory tone, which suggests that the previous deification of Augustus must be read in the context of a *paraklausithyron* dynamic rather than as a literal act. The translation offers a multitude of direct calls for pity and sympathy towards the poet's plight, in language which mirrors a very personal relationship between the pair: *je t'en supplie*¹¹³, *pitié pour moi*¹¹⁴, *je t'en prie je t'en supplie*¹¹⁵, *je te supplie*¹¹⁶... Several references to the adverse conditions (*le froid les barbares*¹¹⁷, *la mer prise par la glace*¹¹⁸, *l'axe glacial de la vierge de Parrhasie*¹¹⁹) also evoke the plight of the *exclusus amator*, who is compelled to endure them before returning to his beloved.¹²⁰ A final key element in the reading of *Tristia* 2 as a *paraklausithyron* is the tendency of Darrieussecq's Ovid to recall previous happier occasions between

¹¹² Darrieussecq (2008), p. 70.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 67.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 71.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 72.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 84.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 72.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 71.

¹²⁰ See Copley, F. O. (1947), pp. 285-300.

the pair, which may be read as bearing indications of some romantic affection. A final sequence of passages are particularly notable:

tu m'as accordé ton estime César
j'ai reçu un cheval de tes mains
tu m'as passé en revue sur ce cheval
ce n'est peut-être pas grand-chose
mais tu n'avais alors aucun grief contre moi
[...]
tu m'as distingué
approuvé quelquefois
et sans la faute que j'ai commise
cela aurait suffi pour toute une vie
[...]
j'ai écrit *L'Art d'aimer* dans ma jeunesse
et je le paie dans ma vieillesse
tu me laissais défiler devant toi
tranquille chevalier
quand j'avais déjà écrit ce livre¹²¹

The *Ars Amatoria* is once again cited as the primary fault, but the more important point at this moment is the implication of the very visual *tu m'as passé en revue sur ce cheval* and *tu me laissais défiler devant toi*, which speak to happier occasions between the pair and may quite simply be read as suggesting a more romantic gesture than simply the examination of a political leader. Reminiscing about past happiness occurs on a number of occasions throughout Roman elegiac love poetry¹²², further indicating that *Tristia* 2 may be read, as Darrieussecq's translation arguably does, as a romantic *paraklausithyron*.

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter has argued that both Darrieussecq's and Robert's translations of Ovid's *Tristia* 2 present novel ways of reading the text, which allow

¹²¹ Darrieussecq (2008), pp. 68-9, 83.

¹²² E.g., Catullus 72, 3-4; Ovid, *Amores* 2. 19, 9-20; Propertius, *Elegiae* 2. 17., 11-12.

for renewed considerations of the relationship between the poet and the emperor in the scope of the poem. In the case of the former, the poem may be said to take the form of a *paraklausithyron*, in which the poet is presented as a forlorn lover at the doors of his beloved, who will not let him in despite his imprecations. Darrieussecq arguably presents her Ovid as a model of an *exclusus amator*, reprising a number of tropes which are traditionally associated with the role. As the poet himself had rejected this sort of plea in his earlier poetic works, this particular gesture takes the form of a rejection of his previous writings and self, further cementing his penitence vis-à-vis his alleged misdeed, the *Ars Amatoria*, which is read as a romantic indiscretion. Darrieussecq's translation may be said to present a novel way of receiving the text in that it allows for renewed considerations of the Latin text, while forming a new literary production. In the case of Robert's translation, greater emphasis is put on the broader questions surrounding Ovid's exile, while maintaining its focus on the relationship between the two. Her poet is arguably more steadfast in his plea, pointing to core differences between the worlds of empire and poetry. One may read a range of allusions to the ability of poetry to celebrate and undermine imperial and divine authority, with Ovid presenting himself as a higher authority in his own domain, as his own subject matter lies at the heart of the more "prestigious" genres, finally laying a challenge to the emperor's own favoured work, the *Aeneid*. The translation heightens the direct relationship between Augustus and the poet, with the former being directly implicated in the broader questions of empire and poetry, of the domains proper to each.

2 Translating the “Other”: Ovid and the “Getae”

Introduction : Tomis, Greekness, and Rome

Tomis, the place where Ovid was exiled and later died, lay on the outermost fringes of the Roman Empire. It was initially a Greek settlement, founded around the beginning of the 5th century BCE, in what was considered to be “Scythian” territory. The word “Scythian” was an umbrella term for various groups of nomadic peoples who inhabited the Pontic Steppe, ranging from the shores of the Black Sea to those of the Caspian Sea. Lying to the north and northeast of Greece, further north than the Persian Empire, the Scythians occupied a particular place in the imaginations of the Greeks, embodying a form of “Otherness”, which they shared to a certain extent with the Persians themselves.¹²³ In the fourth book of his *Histories*, Greek historian Herodotus spends some time discussing their customs and history, casting them as a sort of foil to the Hellenes.¹²⁴

With no extant writings from the Scythian side, it is difficult to establish the historicity of Herodotus’ claims, yet the idea that these peoples were in essence a mirror image of the Greeks would also appear in more literary productions, centring around the figure of Anarchasis, a semi-legendary figure of a Scythian sage who came to Greece to learn the ways of the Hellenes.¹²⁵ Anarchasis would arguably come to serve as a tool for thinking “Greekness” from a Greek perspective, particularly in the period commonly referred to as the “Second Sophistic”, a time when Greek identity was somewhat recast in light of its falling under Roman rule¹²⁶. For its part, Roman literary production would, to a certain extent, inherit the language of the divisions established by the Greeks, though their notions of identity were of course rather different.

¹²³ Hartog (1988) remains a point of reference for Herodotus’ treatment of the Scythians. For the Persians, see n. 26.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ See Kindstrand (1981) for the most comprehensive overview of the tradition of the Anacharsis legend.

¹²⁶ See e.g. Goldhill (2001), Richter (2017), Dench (2017), and Whitmarsh (2013). Exact dating has proved to be problematic, with academics such as Whitmarsh challenging the denomination and the time period. For the sake of conciseness in this thesis, the term refers to the late 1st to the mid-4th century CE.

In the time of Ovid, a little under a century before that period, questions of Roman and Greek identity were equally salient, with the possession of Roman citizenship being perceived as being part of the civilised world.¹²⁷ To a certain degree, Greeks benefitted from their political and cultural affiliation to the Roman Empire, with Hellenic literature, philosophy, art, and rhetoric (amongst others) being held aloft as models for educated Romans to follow.¹²⁸ This admiration for Greek culture limited itself to a certain idealised view of the Greek past, however, with the condition of Greece under the Roman Empire being far removed from the heyday of Attic and Peloponnesian power.¹²⁹ Places such as Tomis, at the very outskirts of the Roman Empire, would not traditionally have been perceived as being a part of that idealised past, however Greek their origins.

It is in this general ideological context that Ovid would come to be exiled to Tomis, in 8 CE. The Roman poet's own relationship with the peoples inhabiting the region appears to have been somewhat fraught, though there are no other sources for this particular part of the exile. Across the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*, Ovid refers to the inhabitants of Tomis, at a certain moment even addressing them directly. He most frequently refers to them as indiscriminately "Getae", another umbrella term which belies the diversity which was doubtless present in Tomis at that time.¹³⁰ His depictions arguably fit into the simplified "traditional" binary oppositions between the civilised Greek/Roman and the "barbarian", although the multi-ethnic realities of empire give the lie to this division. The language of the passages is variable, with Ovid sometimes criticising the mores of the locals, their language and their propensity to war, other times seeking to placate them. The translations of these passages are of particular importance, as they reveal how both

¹²⁷ The question of citizenship was of particular salience throughout the last century of the Roman Republic and the early days of the Empire, see Čulík-Baird (2020), pp. 389-395. The case of Cicero's famous *Civis romanus sum*, in his *In Verrem* (2.5.62), does not need further elaboration here.

¹²⁸ Philhellenism was not universal in the Roman Empire, with certain republican figures, such as Cato the Elder, rejecting Greek culture, see Henrichs (1995), pp. 244-250. Its prevalence in the arts, however, cannot be overstated. A notable case is that of Archias, a poet accused of acting as a Roman citizen under false pretences, and defended by Cicero in 62 BCE. Cicero would famously argue that since Archias was a Greek poet, even if he were not a Roman citizen, he would certainly deserve to be one, on account of the cultural importance of Greece for Rome (*Pro Arch.* 4.).

¹²⁹ See Goldhill (2001).

¹³⁰ See n. 76.

Danièle Robert and Marie Darrieussecq read Ovid’s depictions of alterity, and seek to reproduce them in their own works.

The concept of “Otherness” in Antiquity is difficult to pinpoint, with varying competing visions and distinctions being present and made at different times. The notion of “barbarian”, from its Greek roots to its 21st-century connotations, has evolved considerably in the Western world. Accordingly, the translations of Robert and Darrieussecq may not only speak to how certain classical distinctions between the “civilised” Roman and the “barbarian” Other are perceived by modern readers, but also how the effect of alterity is reproduced in modern productions. In different media, films such as Zack Snyder’s *300* and Wolfgang Petersen’s *Troy* have been criticised for their portrayals of the Classical world, with the former particular guilty of portraying the Greek-Persian dichotomy, consciously developed by numerous Ancient Greek authors, as a conflict between freedom-seeking Greeks, and orientalised Persians, who rely on slave labour.¹³¹ The historical inaccuracies are plain to see for any student of history, but the real issue may lie in a transposition of what was a very real conflict and opposition¹³² into a form which, through this misrepresentation, speaks to more modern Orientalist tendencies. In navigating these translations, therefore, some attention must be paid to the representation of the part of the Classical world in which Ovid resided in exile, through his own writings.

On the back cover of her translation of the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*, Marie Darrieussecq writes the following:

Il y a deux mille ans exactement, en décembre 08, Ovide est exilé par Auguste aux confins du monde connu, chez les Barbares du delta du Danube. Après un long périple par les mers et les terres, le grand poète mondain va vivre huit ans entouré d’hommes vêtus de peaux de bêtes, qui ne parlent ni latin ni grec [...].¹³³

She repeats the idea that none of the locals spoke Latin or Greek elsewhere in her work.¹³⁴ This claim, on the surface level, is very unlikely, as certain members of the Tomitian community would certainly have spoken Latin, while notions of Greek

¹³¹ For an overview of some of the criticism levelled at the film from academic circles, see Burton (2017), p. 308.

¹³² Which even Ovid refers to, see *Trist.* 5.10, 33-34.

¹³³ Darrieussecq (2008).

¹³⁴ See Darrieussecq (2021), p. 125.

would have been even more widespread.¹³⁵ The further characterisation of the locals as being *vêtus de peaux de bêtes* speaks to further stereotypical notions of the “barbarian”. These elements do, however, speak to the reading of the Ovidian texts that Darrieussecq seeks to offer in her own translation, which buys into a view of the Roman world as inherently civilised, whereas Tomis and its inhabitants lie outside of it. Robert seems to be more aware of the likely realities of the world of Ovid’s exile, and notes the poet’s feeling of superiority over the locals.¹³⁶ In line with Martindale’s theory of reception, the intrinsic meaning of the Ovidian text is not to be sought (though historical comment may certainly be added), but its receptions can certainly be analysed in the productions of both Robert and Darrieussecq.

This chapter will examine these points by considering the translations of the passages in which Ovid refers to the inhabitants of Tomis, along two main axes. Firstly, the episodes in which he discusses the inhabitants of Tomis and their origins, which serves as the knot of his depiction of the “Other” during his exile, representing them as foils to Roman culture and civilisation, and secondly, the passages in which he considers his own status as a Roman exile amongst “barbarian” strangers who are allegedly unable to speak his language. To translate these passages is, in essence, to choose between various ways of representing the “Other”, revealing both how the translators read or receive the Latin text, and how they decide to depict these Classical divisions in a contemporary literary ecosystem.

The “Getae” as non-Greeks, non-Romans

In the ninth poem of the third book of the *Tristia*, Ovid (or at least his poetic persona¹³⁷) discusses the origins of the city of Tomis, as well as the etymology of its name.¹³⁸ In the opening verses, he writes:

Hic quoque sunt igitur Graiae – quis crederet? – urbes
Inter inhumanae nomina barbariae;
Huc quoque Mileto missi venere coloni,

¹³⁵ Given the city’s Greek origins, variously attested, see Lambrino (1958).

¹³⁶ See Robert (2006), p. 17.

¹³⁷ The distinction between the poet and the poetic persona he assumes is one which allows for separate treatment of the historical and the literary, see Claassen (2008), pp. 8-10.

¹³⁸ Ovid’s discussion is mythological and far removed from any serious etymological considerations.

Inque Getis Graias constituere domos.¹³⁹

The “Greekness” of the cities in the region of Ovid’s exile is seemingly brought into question, and brought into opposition with the *inhumanae nomina barbariae*, lexically the “names of the savage barbarian ones”. The Milesian colonists who settled in Tomis are also mentioned, yet their only legacy appears to have been Greek houses among the Getae, from Ovid’s perspective. Robert’s translation follows the Latin structure and wording quite closely:

Il y a donc ici aussi – qui le croirait ? – des villes grecques
 Parmi des noms d’une grossière étrangeté.
 C’est là aussi que sont venus des colons partis de Milet,
 Qui ont construit des maisons grecques chez les Gètes.¹⁴⁰

This particular translation evokes the simple clarity of the bilingual Loeb editions, fitting for a grammatical understanding of the Latin text, while preserving a level of stylistic elegance. The pattern chosen is a balanced Greek-Other-Greek-Other, only slightly deviating from the order followed in the Latin text. Some particular lexical choices have been made, however. The terms *inhumanae barbariae* yield *grossière étrangeté*, which allows for the alterity of the region while perhaps downplaying the Greek-barbarian dichotomy. The names of the cities appear to be simply vastly different, with the only pejorative wording coming in the form of the term *grossière*. Darrieussecq’s approach is rather different:

qui le croirait
 on trouve ici des sites grecs
 des noms grecs dans la Barbarie
 des colons de Milet ont bâti chez les Gètes¹⁴¹

The incredulity (the translation of *quis crederet*, here *qui le croirait*) is given pride of place, with a gradual build-up to the establishment of the *coloni* amongst the Getae, the original mingling of the Greeks and the “Others”, with a Greek-Greek-Other-Greek-Other pattern. The Greek-barbarian dichotomy could not be clearer,

¹³⁹ *Trist.* 3.9, 1-4.

¹⁴⁰ Robert (2006), p. 83.

¹⁴¹ Darrieussecq (2008), p. 116.

with *inhumanae barbariae* rendered into the broader term *Barbarie*, turning the names into a general notion of barbarian "Otherness". Darrieussecq's reception of the text focuses on this division, and arguably seeks to make a powerful impression on its reader with the initial blending of the Greeks amongst the Getae. Robert's translation attenuates the opposition, while Darrieussecq's fans its flames. In the broader question of portraying the "Other", the more structurally independent translation, that of Darrieussecq, receives the Latin text in a more forceful manner, accentuating the alterity of Ovid's place of exile, while Robert's appears to downplay it, despite remaining close to the structure and morphology of *Tristia* 3.9. A similar phenomenon arises in the second and seventh poems of the fifth book of the *Tristia*, when Ovid addresses the question of language amongst the Getae:

In paucis extant Graecae vestigia linguae,
Haec quoque iam Getico barbara facta sono.
Unus in hoc nemo est populo, qui forte Latine
Quamlibet e medio reddere verba queat.¹⁴²

These lines appear to confirm Marie Darrieussecq's claims concerning the complete lack of any Latin or Greek speakers at Tomis, while acknowledging the presence of a local patois which bears some linguistic resemblance to what Ovid considers to be the Greek language. Grammatically, *barbara facta* refers back to *Graecae vestigia linguae*, implying that it is the remnants of the Greek language that have been rendered "barbaric". Robert's translation once again attenuates the contrast, as it reads:

Certains d'entre eux conservent des vestiges de la langue grecque,
Encore que l'accent gète finisse par les rendre barbares.
Il n'y a pas un seul homme, issu de la masse de ce peuple,
Qui soit capable de s'exprimer correctement en latin.¹⁴³

The translation is more lexically and structurally liberal than the previous translated passage, given the awkwardness of the Latin phraseology. The term *paucis*, indicating a low number, is translated as the more indefinite *Certains*, while

¹⁴² *Trist.* 5.7, 51-54.

¹⁴³ Robert (2006), p. 133

the notion of *accent gète* is what barbarises the *vestiges de la langue grecque*, which speaks to a more subtle linguistic shift. The latter two verses allow for the possibility that some of the locals are able to speak some Latin, but simply not to a level that Robert's Ovid deems to be acceptable. This may be more in line with the likely realities of Tomis during Ovid's exile, with a complete lack of any Latin being more improbable, even at the very extremities of the empire. One may read a certain level of contempt in the translation, but it does not evoke the damning contrasts present elsewhere. The alterity or "Otherness" of the locals is stated, but is not as striking as in Darrieussecq's rendition, who presses home the opposition discussed earlier:

chez quelques-uns s'entendent des vestiges de grec
 barbarisé par l'accent gète
 mais il n'y a personne dans tout le pays
 qui puisse dire un mot latin
 même pour les choses les plus usuelles¹⁴⁴

This translation does not allow for any one inhabitant of the wider region who speaks a word of Latin, going far further than Robert's notion that the local Latin is simply poor. As such, the locals are portrayed as even less part of the cultural and linguistic domain of which Ovid is a member, heightening their alterity. Rather than the traces of the Greek language being made "barbarous", it is the Greek language itself which has been barbarised, or *barbarisé par l'accent gète*. The population of the region is thus pushed away from Greekness and Roman-ness, after a fashion. A third passage compounds this core difference between the two translators' reception of "Otherness" in the work of Ovid:

Nesciaque est vocis quod barbara lingua latinae
 Graecaque quod Getico victa loquella sono est¹⁴⁵

The "barbarian" language (*barbara lingua*) is made the subject of the first verse, mirroring the structure of the second, in which *Graeca loquella* is the main nominative. The former is ignorant (*nescia*) of Latin, while the latter has been overcome (*victa*) by the Getic accent (*Getico sono*). In this manner, the "civilised"

¹⁴⁴ Darrieussecq (2008), p. 206.

¹⁴⁵ *Trist.* 5.2, 67-68.

languages, Latin and Greek, are paired together, whereas the Getic accent is merged with the “barbarian” language. Marie Darrieussecq’s translation adopts a chiasmic pattern which reproduces the opposition between the two:

entendre ce patois ignorant du latin
ces mots grecs maltraités sous les sons du gétique¹⁴⁶

Darrieussecq translates *barbara lingua* as *patois*, a term which is laden with its own sociolinguistic connotations, traditionally referring, in French, to substandard vernaculars spoken in the countryside.¹⁴⁷ This emphasises the binary division, with the idea of the Greek being almost physically harmed (*maltraité*) by the local accent (*sons du gétique*). One might feel that the term *sons* is substituted for the physical term *coups*, which would fit more neatly with the preposition *sous*. The violence of this language prevents any sort of mingling between the two, which are seemingly inherently incompatible. As for Robert’s translation, it once again attenuates the relationship between the sets of languages:

Un langage barbare qui ignore tout du parler latin
Et une langue grecque qui est déformée par l’accent des Gètes¹⁴⁸

The opposition is equally chiasmic, though the two subjects are more clearly contrasted. The term *déformée* reveals a lighter impact on the Greek language, and could be read as implying that the Getic accent is merely plying the Greek into a slightly different form, rather than attacking it. It remains far removed from Latin, but that relationship was not quite at stake concerning the local vernacular, which was always going to be closer to the Greek on account of the city’s origins. Getic, in this particular translation, is brought slightly closer to one of the “civilised” languages, in contrast with Darrieussecq’s total rejection of the notion.

Ovid amongst the Tomitians

Thus far, the passages considered have been centred on the depictions of the local inhabitants which do not address Ovid’s own engagement with them, his own

¹⁴⁶ Darrieussecq (2008), p. 188.

¹⁴⁷ The term has been defended by some linguists, see Walter (1988), pp. 17-18. The connotations for a modern readership may still be rather negative, however, with the term also being historically associated with colonial perspectives on Creole and other languages, see Kasuya (2001), pp. 235-251.

¹⁴⁸ Robert (2006), p. 124.

position in Tomitian society. On a number of occasions, the poet appears to address his interactions with them more directly, which leads to a different sort of tone:

Nec te mirari si sint vitiosa decebit
 Carmina quae faciam paene poeta Getes.
 A! pudet, et Getico scripsi sermone libellum,
 Structaque sunt nostris barbara verba modis:
 Et placui (gratere mihi) coepique poëtae
 Inter inhumanos nomen habere Getas.¹⁴⁹

The initial statement is dubious at best, with no clear evidence that Ovid's poetic ability has diminished.¹⁵⁰ The more remarkable element in this passage is that the poet claims to have composed a small book of poetry (*libellum*) in the Getic language (*Getico sermone*), and adapted it to Latin metrical patterns (*nostris modis*). Ovid concludes with a seemingly ironic boast, declaring that he has begun to bear the name of poet amongst the Getae, who are described as *inhumanos*. The cultural implications of this particular passage are evidently salient, as Darrieussecq translates:

ces défauts de mes vers ne sont guère étonnants
 me voilà devenu un auteur quasi gète
 honte à moi
 j'ai écrit un poème en gétique
 j'ai adapté les mots barbares à la métrique
 et j'ai eu du succès
 tu peux me dire bravo
 ces Gètes sans culture me proclament poète¹⁵¹

The breathless quality of the verses contributes to the feeling that this is a poet who is struggling to find the right words, lending stylistic weight to Ovid's claims. One of the key elements here is that Darrieussecq removes any specification, namely *nostris*, from the notion of *modis*, translated here as *la métrique*. The verses the "barbarian" words (*barbara verba*) have been adapted to are no longer bound to

¹⁴⁹ *Epist. ex Pont.* 4.13, 17-22.

¹⁵⁰ The claim is part of what has been described as a poetic stance of self-depreciation, see Claassen (2008), pp. 52-75 or Williams (1994), ch. 2.

¹⁵¹ Darrieussecq (2008), p. 408.

any specific cultural origin, but are, in this translation, considered to be the universal standard. Other *modis* are, in essence, inconceivable, as it is *la métrique*. Roman metrical systems are implied to be the pinnacle of verse production, without the need for any justification or specification. The point is further emphasised by the translation of *inhumanos*, here *sans culture*. Darrieussecq's Getae are deprived of culture, rendering the title they grant her Ovid rather paradoxical. Danièle Robert's translation reprise the same wording concerning the term *inhumanos*, but nevertheless qualifies *modis*:

Il ne faudra pas t'étonner si tu trouves mauvais ces vers
 Que je fais presque comme un poète gète.
 Ah ! j'ai honte d'avoir écrit un livre en langue gète
 Et d'avoir disposé ces mots barbares selon notre métrique ;
 Et j'ai plu ! – félicite-moi ! – et ces Gètes sans culture
 Me donnent maintenant le nom de poète !¹⁵²

The triple exclamation which concludes this passage create a sense of incredulity and despair, removed from the stunted irony present in Darrieussecq's rendition. The choice of *avoir disposé*, when referring to the supposed¹⁵³ literary manipulation of *barbara verba*, is markedly different to that of *j'ai adapté*, as Darrieussecq's Ovid more actively modifies the "barbarian" words, rather than simply organising them in metric terms, as Robert's does. By qualifying *nostris modis*, translating it as *notre métrique*, Danièle Robert allows for the existence of other forms of metrical arrangement, and therefore *actual* Getic poetry. The result is that the cultural activity and poetic prowess of the Roman poet is more evident in the former case than in the latter, reinforcing the contrast between the worldly and cultured Ovid and the local population. The poet further claims that he had partaken in a sort of reading of his Getic poetry, before the local population:

Materiam quaeris ? Laudes : de Caesare dixi.
 Adiuta est novitas numine nostra dei.
 Nam patris Augusti docui mortale fuisse

¹⁵² Robert (2006), p. 250.

¹⁵³ It remains historically unlikely that Ovid did write such a poem, despite claims to the contrary, see Williams (1994), pp. 91-93.

Corpus, in aetherias numen abisse domos :
 Esse parem virtute patri, qui frena rogatus
 Saepe recusati ceperit imperii :
 Esse pudicarum te Vestam, Livia, matrum,
 Ambiguum nato dignior anne viro :
 Esse duos iuvenes, firma adiumenta parentis,
 Qui dederint animi pignora certa sui.
 Haec ubi non patria perlegi scripta Camena,
 Venit et ad digitos ultima charta meos,
 Et caput et plenas omnes movere pharetras,
 Et longum Getico murmur in ore fuit.
 Atque aliquis "scribas haec cum de Caesare," dixit
 "Caesaris imperio restituendas eras."¹⁵⁴

When reading the summary of this alleged Getic poem, the reader is encouraged to imagine it being read in Getic, though the language and verse remains Latin. This particular passage may be read as a sort of performative code-switch¹⁵⁵, in which the Roman poet acts as if he is switching languages in a particular context, for literary purposes here.¹⁵⁶ The term *pharetras* points to the quivers worn by the locals, a trope which had been associated with the Scythians as a whole for some centuries prior to Ovid's exile.¹⁵⁷ From a grammatical and metrical perspective (the metre remains elegiac couplets throughout), the summary is incorporated into the Roman poet's narration of the episode, yet Darrieussecq's reading is a novel one:

et sur quoi ai-je écrit me demanderas-tu
 tu vas être content
 j'ai écrit sur César
 son influence ailée m'a aidé dans ma tâche

¹⁵⁴ *Epist. ex Pont.*, 4.13, 23-38.

¹⁵⁵ Roman authors would often use code-switching as a way to showcase learning, specifically by using the Greek language in their works, see Adams (2003). In this case, it would appear that Ovid is using a sort of performative code-switch in order to demonstrate the reversal of his learning amongst the Getae, a markedly different tactic.

¹⁵⁶ See Gumperz (1982) for the socio-cultural uses of code-switching, specifically pp. 48-50 & 59-99.

¹⁵⁷ Depictions of Scythians as archers date back to Herodotus, and are recurrent throughout Greek literature in Antiquity, see Rostad (2019), pp. 337-338.

car voici en deux mots ce que j’ai enseigné
 Son corps était mortel Son esprit est divin
 Il survit dans l’éther aux demeures du ciel
 celui qui malgré lui a hérité du trône
 a égalé son père en dignité
 Livie Vesta de notre ville épouse et mère
 a su se montrer digne et du père et du fils
 Rome s’enorgueillit aussi des jeunes princes
 l’un et l’autre futurs piliers de notre Empire
 j’ai lu entièrement mon poème aux barbares
 quand la fin du rouleau fila entre mes doigts
 mes auditeurs se mirent à secouer la tête
 à secouer leurs carquois pleins de flèches
 et leurs bouches gétiques firent entendre un long murmure d’approbation
 « puisque tu écris ça de César
 dit l’un deux
 il faut qu’il te reprenne
 il faut que tu retournes à son empire »¹⁵⁸

In this translation, the recital in Getic is grammatically and stylistically separated from the narration, standing on its own as a poem in and of itself. This poem-within-a-poem adds credence to the idea that the poet did indeed compose and read out Getic stanzas, while departing from the grammatical structure of the Latin text. Its lofty tone is elevated beyond the audience, which is once again described as being made up of *barbares*. The term lacks a lexical equivalent in the Latin text, but may be associated to the terms *non patria [...] scripta Camena*. The core idea is that the poem which Ovid composed in his native Muse (or language), is reduced, in Darrieussecq’s translation, to the “barbarism” of his audience, cementing the opposition while further dismissing the culture of the locals. Another notable choice is the phrasing *il faut que tu retournes à son empire*, which implies that Darrieussecq’s Ovid is not currently in Augustus’ Empire, despite Tomis being one of its outposts. The city and region, as well as its inhabitants, are excluded from the Roman Empire. The trigger for this statement is Ovid’s show of learning and poetry,

¹⁵⁸ Darrieussecq (2008), pp. 408-409.

even in the language of the locals, which do not belong in the fringe territories, but are indicative of his belonging to the cultural and imperial centre, i.e., Rome itself. The feelings of Darrieussecq's poet constitute a reading of this passage of the *Epistulae* in which Otherness, or the "barbarian", are wholly excluded from the world of "civilisation", compounding his isolation and, arguably, his ignorance. Robert's reading is, as usual, more measured:

Tu veux savoir le sujet ? Tu vas m'approuver : j'ai parlé de César.
 Une puissance divine m'a assisté pour le thème nouveau.
 Car je leur ai appris que si le corps d'Auguste notre père était
 Mortel, son essence divine était partie vers les demeures éthérées,
 Que celui qui a souvent refusé de prendre les rênes de l'empire
 Qu'on lui offrait égalait son père en vertu,
 Que toi, Livie, tu es la Vesta des mères honorables
 (Es-tu plus digne de ton fils ou de ton époux, on ne sait),
 Qu'il y a deux jeunes gens, aide solide pour leur père,
 Qui ont donné des gages certains de leur courage.
 Lorsque j'ai terminé cette lecture d'une poésie étrangère
 Et lorsque j'ai eu en main le dernier feuillet,
 Tous ont secoué la tête et leur carquois plein de flèches
 Et un long murmure d'approbation a parcouru l'assemblée gète ;
 Quelqu'un a dit : "Puisque tu écris cela de César,
 Tu devrais retrouver tes droits par ordre de César."¹⁵⁹

The rhythm and style do not measurably shift between the summary of the Getic poem and the poet's narration in this translation, mirroring the Latin text, even in a grammatical sense, as Robert replicates the structure of the Latin in French: a series of subordinate clauses with infinitive forms governed by the verb of the primary clause, *docui*, which are translated by a series of subordinate clauses governed by the primary construction *je leur ai appris que* (with additional *que*-forms renewing the construction). The language concerning the locals is once again more conciliatory than that of Darrieussecq's translation. The Getic audience is described as *l'assemblée gète*, which grants it a level of esteem far removed from the term

¹⁵⁹ Robert (2006), p. 250.

barbares, and appears to translate the terms *Getico* [...] *ore*, which Darrieussecq more narrowly translates as *bouches gétiques*. Robert's Ovid describes his poem as *poésie étrangère*, which allows for the existence of Getic cultural production while maintaining its alterity. The empire which Darrieussecq's Ovid ought to return to becomes, in Robert's translation, *Tu devrais retrouver tes droits*, pointing to a more legal issue than an inherently cultural dismissal. Despite being qualified as "Others", Robert's Getae are a more serious entity than Darrieussecq's, and are not portrayed as overawed by the poetic composition.

The representation of the locals has thus far only taken place in a descriptive manner, yet elsewhere in the *Epistulae ex Ponto*, however, Ovid addresses the Getae directly, after they appear to have gotten wind of his writings about them during his exile:

Talia suscensent propter mihi verba Tomitae,
Iraque carminibus publica mota meis.

[...]

Molliter a vobis mea sors excepta, Tomitae,
Tam mites Graios indicat esse viros.¹⁶⁰

As stated earlier, that the Tomitians appear to have learned of Ovid's claims about them would confirm that some level of Latin would have been spoken among them. Despite this particular poem being addressed to Tuticanus¹⁶¹, there appears to be an awareness that his words will reach the ears of the locals, as the Roman poet attempts to pacify them, praising their acceptance of his exile (*Molliter a vobis mea sors excepta*). The more striking terms are *Graios* [...] *viros*, which bring the Greekness of the Tomitians back into play. Robert's translation broadly follows the Latin syntax:

La sympathie avec laquelle vous avez accueilli mon sort, Tomitiens,
Montre que les Grecs sont des hommes vraiment aimables.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ *Epist. ex Pont.* 4.14, 15-16 & 47-48.

¹⁶¹ Evidently a relative or friend of Ovid's in Rome. The epistolary element of the exilic works should not be forgotten, see Claassen (1999), pp. 103-131.

¹⁶² Robert (2006), pp. 252-253.

This reading suggests that the Tomitians themselves are Greek, despite the previous doubts raised concerning their belonging to that community. By accepting him in their midst through the quality of *sympathie*, the Tomitians have earned the right to be Greek, implying that Greeks are inherently imbued with that manner of virtue. From his standpoint as a “civilised” Roman, Robert’s Ovid is able to bestow cultural legitimacy on them, allowing them back into the Graeco-Roman sphere. Darrieussecq’s Ovid adopts a different stance:

chers habitants de Tomes votre hospitalité
et votre humanité ont tout de l’âme grecque¹⁶³

Despite the informal and epistolary nature of this translation (*chers habitants*), the Tomitians are kept at arm’s length from Greekness and all of its cultural implications. Though their qualities are indeed likened to the “Greek spirit” (*âme grecque*), this is quite different from directly assimilating the population to Greeks. The famous Isocratean declaration from the *Panegyricus* springs to mind:

τοσοῦτον δ’ ἀπολέλοιπεν ἡ πόλις ἡμῶν περὶ τὸ φρονεῖν καὶ λέγειν τοὺς ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους, ὥσθ’ οἱ ταύτης μαθηταὶ τῶν ἄλλων διδάσκαλοι γεγόνασι, καὶ τὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ὄνομα πεποιήκε μηκέτι τοῦ γένους ἀλλὰ τῆς διανοίας δοκεῖν εἶναι, καὶ μᾶλλον Ἑλληνας καλεῖσθαι τοὺς τῆς παιδείας τῆς ἡμετέρας ἢ τοὺς τῆς κοινῆς φύσεως μετέχοντας.

And our city has left other men so far behind in thought and speech that her students have become the teachers of the rest, and she has made it so that the name of “Greeks” is no longer considered to be a race but a way of thinking, and that are called Greeks those who share in our education rather than in a common origin.¹⁶⁴

This particular statement *must* be considered in the broader imperial context in which it was written¹⁶⁵, which points to a definition of Greekness which is closely tied to specifically *Athenian* education and thinking, and seeks to open up that definition to the rest of Greece rather than those who lie beyond, such as the

¹⁶³ Darrieussecq (2008), p. 413.

¹⁶⁴ Isocrates, *Panegyricus* 50. This particular translation is my own.

¹⁶⁵ For insight into the context of this particular claim, which centres around an idealised Greek culture for ethnic Greeks, see Dench (2017), p. 104, or Hall (2002), pp. 209-210.

Persians or indeed the Scythians.¹⁶⁶ Darrieussecq's translation flirts with the idea of the virtues of *hospitalité* and *humanité* being intrinsically Greek values, without describing the Tomitians as Greeks themselves. In essence, the qualities which they exhibit are tied to an identity which is not their own, implying that Tomitian or Getic custom is not to demonstrate the qualities of *hospitalité* and *humanité*. Her Ovid suggests that they are similar to Greeks, and therefore closer to "civilisation", insofar as they display those characteristics, but never quite the same, reinforcing their fundamental differences, and cementing the Roman poet's condition as a judge of what is to be considered Greek, or "civilised", and what is not. The conciliatory tone is therefore tainted with its own set of cultural implications, as Darrieussecq reads this passage of the *Epistulae ex Ponto* as a double-edged sword. Robert's translation, despite similar ideas, is not as forceful as its counterpart, which steadfastly highlights the "Otherness" of the Tomitians.

Conclusion

Darrieussecq's reception of Ovid's depiction of the Getae, in all of these passages, represents a firm opposition between the locals and the civilisations of Greece and Rome, buying into the traditional dichotomy developed hereabove. Her Ovid is very much the educated Roman who is utterly dismissive of the Tomitians, portraying them as the absolute "Other", uncivilised, definitively un-Greek and un-Roman. This reading of the Roman poet sees him refusing to assimilate the Tomitians to Greek culture, while placing himself above the locals across the board. In the case of Robert, the alterity is downplayed in favour of the more probable historical circumstances of the Roman poet's exile, which may take away from the poetic forcefulness of her Ovid, who comes across as a more level-headed, if still culturally condescending, observer of the local population. The cultural distinctions are not as marked as in Darrieussecq's translation, and the poet is slightly more conciliatory in his position towards Tomitian society.

¹⁶⁶ A reminder of the Anarchasis tale may be of use, as in the traditional version of the story, the Scythian is killed upon his return home for having become excessively Hellenised, which speaks to a fundamental incompatibility between the two aspects of his identity. See Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives of the Philosophers*, 1. 103.

These receptions do not chase after an original meaning, but reveal how these two translators read the work of the poet in exile, and represent his depictions of and feelings towards the Tomitians. From a historical perspective, Darrieussecq's translation seeks to represent the feeling of "Otherness" in its most contrasting disposition, with stronger language, while Robert's takes a step back, adopting a more nuanced tone. The former runs the risk of promoting and perpetuating that narrow dichotomy between "civilised" Greeks/Romans and the "barbarian Other", a view of the Classics which is being discussed and challenged, while the latter runs the risk of glossing over some of the more pejorative connotations and terminology associated with those who lay outside the upper echelons of the Graeco-Roman cultural sphere. One of the key advantages of Darrieussecq's reception, however, is that it allows for direct critical thinking about the literary concept of the "Other" in Antiquity and beyond, without remaining constrained by the structural requirements of the Latin text, or by academic prudence. With no intrinsic or original meaning to be found in the Ovidian text, however, the choice of reception is left to the reader.

3 The Consolation of Poetry: literature and exile

Introduction: Poetry as pain and solace

The two first chapters of this thesis have focused on aspects of two translations of the Ovidian exilic poetry, from the perspective of Martindale's theory of reception. A two-way relationship lies at the heart of said theory, with source texts allowing for any number of readings, or translations, which in turn create further considerations of the source text. The first chapter turned to how Danièle Robert and Marie Darrieussecq read the Ovidian text, focusing on the latter part of the two-way dynamic as it looked back at how the Latin might be read. The second chapter is slightly more geared towards the former part of the dynamic, emphasising the representation of "Otherness" in more modern receptions of the Ovidian works, with a clearer focus on the translations as productions in their own right, while addressing their representations of the classical world. This third chapter will centre on a more purely literary part of the translators' receptions of the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*, namely that of the function of poetry in Ovid's exilic writings. The previously discussed notion of *carmen et error*, with which the reader will now be familiar, points to the Roman poet's regrets concerning his *Ars Amatoria*, blaming his poetry (his *Musa*) in the opening lines of *Tristia* 2. His poetic output is held responsible for his current predicament in exile, which seems paradoxical when this blame is expressed in verse. The contradictory nature of Ovid's relationship with poetry has is a recurrent motif throughout the Latin text, as the Roman poet also appears to be claiming to find solace within the composition of poetry in exile:

non equidem vellem, quoniam nocitura fuerunt,
 Pieridum sacris inposuisse manum.
 sed nunc quid faciam ? vis me tenet ipsa sacrorum,
 et carmen demens carmine laesus amo.¹⁶⁷

The final line points to the duality of the poet's feeling towards his poetry, with *laesus* and *amo* clearly pointing to the contradiction, which speaks to the author's

¹⁶⁷ *Trist.* 4.1, 27-30.

relationship with his own work and to his own self-reception.¹⁶⁸ The tone repeatedly shifts from blame to praise and back again throughout the exilic works, as Ovid appears to entertain a dual attitude towards his own verse. The function of poetry within the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto* has also been described as a way to reach immortality through writing, a common motif which Ovid uses consistently in the exilic works.¹⁶⁹ While translating these particular ideas, the translator is faced with the question of how to translate the author's relationship with writing, thereby adding different layers to said relationship. In the scope of reception theory, this plays into how these translators receive the textual relationship between the poet and his work, redefining that relationship in their own translations. In the case of Danièle Robert, this chapter argues that the translator portrays a declining faith in the power of poetry, both in consolatory and rhetorical terms, while in the case of Marie Darrieussecq, greater emphasis is put on the poet's feelings towards his work as a fundamental part of his identity, displaying a fraught relationship which focuses on the more direct and psychological needs of Ovid at Tomis. Both of these receptions offer differing views into a poet's sense of priorities and view of literature in exile. Accordingly, this chapter attempts to consider the translations as literary productions in their own right.

Waning faith: poetry and its limitations in Robert's Tristes and Pontiques

As discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, the second book of the *Tristia* takes the form of a letter to the emperor Augustus, beseeching him to allow the Roman poet some respite from his fate in exile. In the opening lines of the poem, Ovid appears to blame poetry from his current predicament, while turning to it in the hope that his compositions might reverse it. The detail of the poet's stance vis-à-vis the emperor need not be further discussed here, yet it is important to note a belief in the rhetorical potential of poetry, the logic being that since it was able to put the Roman into this situation, it might also be able to get him out of it. In the case of Danièle Robert's translation, this thesis has argued that the claims concerning poetry also serve as a reminder to the emperor of its ability to transcend imperial authority. This point speaks to the core conviction of Robert's Ovid concerning the

¹⁶⁸ See Sara Myers (2014), pp. 8-21.

¹⁶⁹ See Claassen (1996), pp. 571-590.

rhetorical potential of his poetic output, as notions of blame are put aside in favour of an optimistic view of literary influence, which also touches upon psychological relief. Some attention has been to the potential trauma, in medical terms, endured by Ovid during his time in exile.¹⁷⁰ In Robert's reception of the exilic works, there is also the notion that poetic composition, despite being symptomatic of madness, also presents certain advantages for one's mental state:

Ainsi, je trouve du charme à mes livres, malgré le mal qu'ils m'ont fait,
Et j'aime le trait responsable de ma blessure.
Peut-être cette passion apparaît-elle comme une folie
Mais c'est une folie qui a un avantage :
Elle empêche mon esprit de se complaire dans son malheur
Et lui fait oublier sa situation actuelle.¹⁷¹

There is a clear indication in this translation that the poet believes in the consolatory power of poetry, as it takes him away from his current troubles and prevents him from wallowing in his own despair. Nevertheless, this belief appears to suffer as Robert's translation progresses, arguably depicting an Ovid who gradually loses faith not in his own talent¹⁷², but in the reach of literature as a whole, both in consolatory and rhetorical terms. This section examines the instances in which Robert's Ovid addresses his poetry, in order to better understand the development of his position throughout the translation.

The first aspect of the relationship between Robert's Ovid and his poetic output is the poet's marked faith in the rhetorical ability of his poetry appears early on in the translated exilic works. At this stage of the figure's exile, some hope is still held in a recall to Rome, despite his previous faults. A statement of belief appears in *Tristia* 2:

Peut-être, comme jadis celui qui avait séjourné au royaume de Teuthras,
Ce qui m'a blessé devrait aussi me guérir
Et ma Muse adoucira-t-elle la vive colère qu'elle a déclenchée :

¹⁷⁰ The language of clinical psychology may always be difficult to apply to ancient testimony but may nevertheless be explored, see Neely (2021).

¹⁷¹ Robert (2006), p. 96.

¹⁷² See Hinds (1985), p. 14, and the aforementioned Williams (1994), pp. 50-99.

Les poèmes souvent apaisent les dieux puissants.¹⁷³

The main ill to be cured here is Augustus' *colère*, which, once appeased, will allow the poet to be recalled from exile (if not to Rome, at least to a more clement region). This Ovid appears to believe that it might be done, arguing for his recall in a poetic form, despite his work having inflicted this situation upon him. The reach of poetry is extended to the divine sphere (*apaisent les dieux puissants*), emphasising its reconciliatory potential, beyond the mortal world. The idea evokes the myth of Orpheus, whose music was able to charm the living and the dead, until the tragic end to his story. The repeated requests to his relatives and friends for help in earning a recall, as well as the poet's continued pleas for sympathy and pity, further emphasise his belief that his work may convince the emperor to relieve him of his exile. This conviction, however, falls away as the work progresses, as Robert's Ovid bewails, in the translation of *Tristia* 4, the lack of an audience that may hear his poetic arguments:

J'allège autant que possible mon triste sort par la poésie
Et, bien qu'il n'y ait personne à qui je puisse la faire entendre,
Je passe au moins le temps et je me distrais.¹⁷⁴

The role of poetry is now reduced to a pastime, which is no longer able to have any outside influence, given that no-one is able to read it. Robert's Ovid turns to posterity for an audience, given that he does not appear to have one from his own perspective:

En effet, bien que notre siècle ait connu de grandes poètes,
L'opinion ne s'est pas montrée méchante envers mon talent
Et si j'en place moi-même beaucoup au-dessus de moi, on ne me juge pas
Inférieur à eux et je suis très lu dans le monde entier.
[...]
Et que je doive ma réputation à ma poésie ou à ton adhésion,
Aimable lecteur, c'est à juste titre que je t'en remercie.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Robert (2006), p. 49.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 116.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 117.

From the perspective of a modern audience, this translation conveys certain contemporary influences, as it appears to speak to the readership with a certain awareness of the subsistence of the poet's work.¹⁷⁶ The translation itself is a sign of this survival, and here speaks to the simple idea that this Ovid is now portrayed as aware of the failure of his poetic arguments in earning him a recall. What it has done, however, is guarantee him posterity in this form. Within the narrative, Robert's Ovid is condemned to remain in Tomis and no longer believes in the rhetorical power of poetry, but is able to speak to posterity. His frame of mind within the translation continues to deteriorate, however, as the initial confidence in poetry, despite its having put him in this situation, gives way to despair towards the end of the translated exilic works:

Ma poésie ne sert à rien, ma poésie m'a nui autrefois
Et a été la première cause d'un exil si douloureux.¹⁷⁷

This resignation highlights the loss of this Ovid's faith in poetry, now holding it absolutely responsible for his current predicament, with no possible redemption for it. Accordingly, Robert's translation portrays the poet as having gradually lost his conviction that the very activity which did him harm could get him recalled and even appease divine anger, as he now describes it as utterly futile.

The second function of poetry highlighted by this translation is that of its immediate consolatory potential for the poet in exile. Robert's Ovid shows himself to be measured in describing the practical effects of poetic composition on his existence at Tomis, as indicated by the passage discussed in this section's introduction. The poet in translation further elaborates on the role of poetry in his current predicament:

Moi aussi, ma Muse me console d'avoir été contraint de partir pour le Pont ;
Elle seule est restée la compagne de mon exil,
Elle seule ne craint, dans cette adversité, ni l'épée du soldat,
Ni la mer ni les vents ni la barbarie.

¹⁷⁶ It has also been argued that, in the case of the Latin text, this constitutes an attempt by the historical Ovid to shape the later reception of his works, see Sara Myers (2014), pp. 8-17.

¹⁷⁷ Robert (2006), p. 251.

Elle sait aussi quelle erreur m'a abusé lorsque je suis tombé
 Et que ce que j'ai fait est une faute, non un crime.
 Elle est sans doute aujourd'hui bienveillante parce qu'elle m'a porté
 Préjudice jadis, quand elle a été déclarée ma complice.¹⁷⁸

The anaphoric *Elle* verses highlight the poet's personification of his work, i.e., his Muse, and emphasis how it remains immune to that which is assailing him, namely *l'épée du soldat, la mer, les vents, la barbarie*. It remains a safe haven for the figure of the poet, opposed to his current predicament. The translated figure of poetry is characterised as consoling (the first verse of this passage includes the term *console*) Robert's Ovid in that it is now *bienveillante* towards him, allowing him to compose in exile, and thereby escape its negative effects. The sheerly practical consolation of the activity of writing poetry is also emphasised in the same poem:

Et cependant ma Muse dans tant de malheur me visite
 Et m'aide à revenir à la métrique et au culte d'autrefois.¹⁷⁹

This Ovid is consoled by the familiarity of his poetic composition, which removes him from his current predicament. The technical term *métrique* points to the idea that the translated poet derives enjoyment from the simple metrical arrangement of verses, providing him with memories of happier times and of Rome. The imagery of the poet devoting his energies to the study and writing poetry is further evoked in the first poem of the translated *Tristia* 5:

Le Champ de Mars a autant de brins d'herbe tendre
 Que j'ai supporté de malheurs dont le remède et l'accalmie
 Ne se trouvent que dans l'étude et l'attente des Muses.¹⁸⁰

The *étude* and *attente* of the Muses are what directly attenuate the ails that Robert's Ovid is forced to endure. This points to the pragmatic consolatory power of poetry for the translated poet in exile, as he mentally escapes his place of exile through the continuation of his work. Further, it highlights the poet's belief in his own

¹⁷⁸ Op. cit., pp. 95-96.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 98.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 120.

composition, despite the repeated claims of poetic decline. However, as was the case concerning the belief in the rhetorical potential of poetic composition, this conviction appears to collapse as the translated work (and this Ovid's exile) progresses. In the second poem of the translated *Epistulae ex Ponto* 4, a missive addressed to Severus, the poet declares that the well of his inspiration has run dry:

Pardonne cet aveu : j'ai mis aussi un frein à mon travail
 Et ma main trace rarement quelques lettres ;
 Le fameux feu sacré qui nourrit le cœur des poètes,
 Que j'ai toujours eu en moi autrefois, m'a quitté.
 Ma Muse a du mal à jouer son rôle, du mal à poser une main
 Paresseuse, presque contrainte, sur la tablette prise,
 Et mon plaisir d'écrire est mince pour ne pas dire nul ;
 Je n'ai aucun goût à enchaîner rythmiquement les mots,
 Soit parce que j'en ai si peu reçu de récompense
 Que c'est même là le début de mes malheurs,
 [...]
 Que me reste-t-il d'autre que les Piérides¹⁸¹, froide consolation,
 Ces déesses qui n'ont pas bien mérité de moi ?¹⁸²

Whatever consolation Robert's Ovid initially found in writing poetry in exile, it has now dissipated, with the very term *consolation* now described as *froide*. The *rôle* of the poet's Muse, which seemingly was to allow him to overcome the ails of exile, is now dubious, as he no longer derives any enjoyment from the activity. The previous delight in metrical arrangement (*revenir à la métrique*) has given way, as the translated poet finds no joy in the notion of *enchaîner rythmiquement les mots*. His fate has stripped him of the very thing which defined his life and enabled him to temporarily retain some sense of belief and consolation. At this stage, the turn away from poetry is complete, with the aforementioned line *ma poésie ne sert à rien*

¹⁸¹ Broadly assimilated to the Muses, although they were their unfortunate opponents in the traditional version of the myth, and even in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 5.300 sqq. His use of this alternative form of the Muses in the exilic works may emphasise the fallen nature of his current verse production.

¹⁸² Robert (2006), pp. 227-228.

cementing the collapse of the translated poet's faith in his poetry at the end of the exilic works.

It may clearly be argued, therefore, that Danièle Robert's translation of Ovid's relationship with his poetic work is one which portrays a decline in the poet's belief in the rhetorical and consolatory capacities of writing poetry. In the former case, an initial conviction, early on in the translated exilic works, underscores the poet's attempts to earn a recall to Rome, pointing to a belief in poetry's ability to sway opinion one way or another. As the figure's exile gives the lie to this particular belief, it wanes as the translation progresses, with addresses to a later readership taking the place of attempts to convince the emperor to recall him to Rome. In the latter case, poetic composition initially allows the translated poet to overcome his woes, speaking to the consolatory power of poetry and indeed of literature as a whole. This notion also weakens as the works progress and the poet's wellbeing deteriorates, leading to the loss of inspiration and enjoyment in writing verse. This reception, therefore, portrays a gradual relationship with writing, which by and large moves away from questions of blame and focuses on the direct consequences of the activity of writing.

Panacean verse: Darrieussecq's Ovid and poetic identity

If Robert's translation may be said to depict a gradual decline in her Ovid's view of poetry, an initial belief giving way to despair, Marie Darrieussecq's poet arguably concentrates on the more directly emotional impact of verse composition, portraying a more consistent relationship with his literary output, which serves as a balm to his ailments. This relationship speaks to the poet's sense of self, as Darrieussecq also focuses on her Ovid's thoughts on his own poetic identity and work. Two main aspects structure this relationship: a depiction of poetry as a cure to what is a mental and physical affliction (a consistent motif throughout the translation), and a personification of poetry which implies a lover's quarrel, with the poet unable to stay away from it as it defines who he is. This translation highlights a relationship with poetry which is far removed from the pragmatic insights and beliefs of Robert's vision of the poet, as it centres around a view of poetry which is as destructive as it is crucial to the Ovidian persona.

The first element to be examined in Darrieussecq's translation of the poet's relationship with his work is the representation of verse as a pacifying cure to the poet's current emotional ills in exile. In the opening verses of the first poem of the translated *Tristia* 4, a poem also discussed hereabove, the poet states:

indulgence
lecteur
j'écris pour trouver la paix non la gloire
pour me changer simplement les idées¹⁸³

The choice of the term *paix* hearkens back to the conclusion of the translated *Tristia* 2, in which Darrieussecq writes the final line *j'implore ma part de paix romaine*. The term *paix romaine* might seem jarring in historical terms (having been coined in a time later to the historical Ovid's, and referring to a period which far outlasted him), but speaks here to a quest for a more tranquil state of mind, away from the terrors wrought by his current exile. Writing provides Darrieussecq's Ovid with the means to escape this particular anxiety, with the term *angoisse* being assimilated to the reason why the poet writes:

je n'écris pas pour la gloire
j'écris pour passer le temps
pour penser à autre chose
d'éternelles angoisses s'emparent de mon âme
elles y pénètrent malgré moi
voilà
je vous ai dit pourquoi j'écris¹⁸⁴

Darrieussecq's Ovid once again distances himself from higher aspirations, turning to poetry only insofar as it allows him to pass the time and overcome his *angoisse*. It is referred to in quasi-medical terms, as it offers the translated poet solace and a remedy in his current predicament:

si donc je vis encore et résiste au dégoût

¹⁸³ Darrieussecq (2008), p. 137.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 183.

si je supporte encore cette vie de torture
je le dois à ma Muse
consolation
repos
remède à mon angoisse
elle est mon guide et ma compagne¹⁸⁵

The poet's Muse is directly referred to as the *remède* to his *angoisse*, speaking to a greater emphasis on the purely emotive influence of poetry. The former term is reprised in the seventh poem of the translated *Tristia* 5:

j'écris pour tromper mes douleurs
pour donner voix à mes chagrins
et tenir mon âme debout
que faire d'autre
abandonné sur ces côtes désertes
quel autre remède à mes maux¹⁸⁶

The repeated term points to an emotionally appeasing function of writing, not entirely dissimilar to the belief in the consolatory power of poetry present in Robert's translation. The focus is narrower, however, as it speaks to the emotional state of mind of Darrieussecq's Ovid rather than the more pragmatic outlook offered by the other translated figure of the poet.

The second aspect to be considered, pertaining to this translation's depiction of the poet's relationship with his poetic output, is that of Darrieussecq's Ovid's loss of his sense of self in a romantically framed relationship with the Muses. It has been argued that the Latin text emphasises various parts of the poet's poetic identity, ascribing a sacred role to himself and portraying himself as the quintessential Roman on the fringes of civilisation.¹⁸⁷ In the case of Darrieussecq's translation, however, it may be argued that the translated poet undergoes a loss of his poetic identity in what is depicted as a turbulent love affair with poetry. While Robert's poet

¹⁸⁵ Op. cit., p. 174.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 205.

¹⁸⁷ See McGowan (2009), pp. 19 and 151-155.

initially held some belief in the rhetorical power of poetry, withholding a wholly accusatory tone, Darrieussecq's poet vehemently blames the Muses in the opening lines of *Tristia* 2, immediately questioning the point of writing:

écrire à quoi bon
des livres pour quoi faire
mon crime
avoir du talent
les Muses ont causé ma perte
on les punit à travers moi
mais ce n'est pas assez d'avoir été banni
je veux encore être lu
alors qu'être lu est ce qui m'a perdu¹⁸⁸

The Muses are held fully responsible for his current predicament (*ont causé ma perte*), with the only benefit to be reaped from continuing to write is the possibility of being read. This may serve as the first indicator of the tempestuous relationship which Darrieussecq's poet experiences with his work, as the translator deploys the language of erotic love to portray her Ovid's relationship with his poetic output, assimilated to his Muse:

ainsi la Muse me console
seule compagne qui me reste
[...]
on la disait complice de mon crime
elle est plus que jamais à mes côtés
je voudrais ne jamais l'avoir connue
mais elle me tient avec ses sœurs
carmina chant et charme
elles m'ont ensorcelé
que faire contre ce charme
j'aime et j'aimerai
le lotus qu'ont mangé les compagnons d'Ulysse
ne les a pas plus envoûtés

¹⁸⁸ Darrieussecq (2008), p. 65.

je suis l'amant des Muses et j'aime mes tourments
et je m'y complais et persiste¹⁸⁹

The poet's relationship with the Muses is explicitly characterised as a romantic one, with the repetition of forms pertaining to love: *j'aime, j'aimerai, amant, j'aime*. The term *charme* is repeated twice, as Darrieussecq's Ovid is unable to escape his lover's grasp, despite the possibly negative effects of the relationship. A further indication of this idea lies in a later line in the same poem, *les Muses ont daigné me suivre en mon exil*.¹⁹⁰ Ovid's wife¹⁹¹, the addressee of a number of poems in the exilic works, had not initially followed him into exile, seemingly remaining in Rome to petition for his recall. In this translation, however, the Muses have accompanied (and even deigned to do so, which may point to a swipe at this Ovid's wife in the exilic works) the translated poet to Tomis, adopting the uxorial position which has been left vacant. Even when the poet blames them later on in his work, he swiftly states that he could not live without them either:

quand je les ai bien maudites je sais aussi
que je ne peux vivre sans elles¹⁹²

Being unable to live without them evokes a romantic liaison, but might also literally imply how fundamental they are to his own survival as a poet. This relationship helps Darrieussecq's Ovid remember who he is, but also reminds him of his pain:

pourtant ma Muse m'accompagne
avec ses rythmes antiques et ses rites inchangés
je ne peux dire mes vers à personne
personne ne comprend le latin
alors pour moi seul j'écris et je déclame
[...]
quand je pense

¹⁸⁹ Op. cit., p. 138.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 139.

¹⁹¹ Most likely Fabia, but Ovid never names her in the Latin text. See Helzle (1989) for an examination of the question of her identity in the exilic works, pp. 183-191.

¹⁹² Darrieussecq (2008), p. 205.

qui j'étais qui je suis
d'où je viens où je suis
ma main exaspérée par ce travail stupide
a souvent fait un geste vers le feu
mais ils ont déjà tant brûlé mes livres
qui que tu sois où que tu sois
lecteur
sois bienveillant
et toi Rome où je suis interdit
ces vers aussi pénibles que mon destin
aime-les¹⁹³

Poetic composition reminds this Ovid of who he was and is (*qui j'étais qui je suis*), but the memory is rather painful, and nearly compels him to burn his work. The poet claims to lack an audience, as was the case in Robert's translation, but the emphasis here is not on the benefits of being well-received and acclaimed as a composer of verse, but rather on the sense of self which it allows him to retain. Further, the attention paid to posterity is one which asks them to appreciate his verse, and thereby remember who he was in a favourable light. As the translated exilic works progress, Darrieussecq's Ovid finds himself apologising to his Muses, as he is losing aspects of his identity:

moi
le poète romain
que les Muses me pardonnent
j'en suis souvent réduit à parler le sarmate
et
cet aveu me fait rougir
je cherche souvent mes mots dans ma langue natale
à force de ne pas le parler
je perds mon latin¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ Darrieussecq (2008), pp. 141-142.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 206.

By losing his Latin and speaking Sarmatian (and thereby evidently losing some of his ability to compose in Latin), Darrieussecq's Ovid is losing part of the *moi* given pride of place at the beginning of this passage (as it in essence forms a single verse), and asks his Muses for forgiveness, as his relationship with them is tied to his own identity. Later on, as his mental state further deteriorates, as in Robert's translation, the language used once again evokes a weakening romantic attachment which follows a loss of self:

le feu sacré je l'ai perdu
cet élan au cœur des poètes
que je sentais toujours en moi
je me force à sortir mes tablettes de cire
mais ma Muse se traîne et je n'ai plus de joie
ou disons qu'il est devenu dérisoire
le plaisir que j'avais à écrire autrefois
[...]
il ne me reste que les Muses
triste consolation car nous sommes en froid¹⁹⁵

The phrasing of *nous sommes en froid* indicates a difficult moment in the relationship, with the poet now having lost the *élan* which is to be found in poets, thereby indicating that he no longer possesses that part of himself within him. At the end of the translated exilic works, the relationship has turned fully sour, as Darrieussecq's Ovid has seemingly completely lost that part of his identity:

ces défauts de mes vers ne sont guère étonnants
me voilà devenu un auteur quasi gète
[...]
la poésie ne sert à rien
elle m'a nui jadis
elle est la première cause de cet exil minable¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ Op. cit., p. 370.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 408-409.

The transition into a Getic poet has stripped him of his identity as the Roman poet Ovid, as he now dismisses poetry altogether and accuses it of lying at the heart of this exile, which is described as *minable*, or altogether deprived of any redeeming qualities. The relationship has now reached its term, as Darrieussecq's poet has lost that which made him who he was. The opening lines of the final two poems point to this loss, concluding the translated exilic works:

reste-t-il encore un homme pour se souvenir de moi
pour se demander si je vis
pour se dire « que devient Nason »
[...]
il faut encore que tu conspues mes vers
ta jalousie poursuit un homme qui n'est plus
le talent on l'encense après la mort
c'est l'usage
en général ce jour fatal ouvre à la gloire
mais moi j'avais déjà un nom
quand j'étais parmi les vivants
[...]
est-il permis que je le dise
ma Muse à sa façon avait un nom illustre
et elle était de celles qui ont beaucoup de lecteurs¹⁹⁷

His very name is lost at the term of the translated exilic works, and is tied to his Muse, whose name is also to be forgotten. Darrieussecq's Ovid dies a poetic death (*si je vis, un homme qui n'est plus*), and perishes along with his Muse, as his sense of self is now fully lost.

The poet's relationship with his poetry in Darrieussecq's translation of the *Tristia* may therefore be read along two main axes, one in which poetic composition is presented as granting this Ovid solace from the mental afflictions of exile, with the repetition of terms such as *angoisse* and *remède* characterising the translator's depiction of said relationship. The other axis focuses on the portrayal of the Muses (and thereby the poet's literary output) as a romantic partner which defines this

¹⁹⁷ Op. cit., pp. 414 & 417.

Ovid's sense of self. As the exile progresses, the relationship and the poet's identity deteriorate into a state of ruin, as Darrieussecq's Ovid loses his very name, and his relationship with his Muse.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has argued that Danièle Robert and Marie Darrieussecq, in their receptions of the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*, depict two different sorts of relationships between the poet and his poetic work. In the case of the former, a firm belief in the argumentative and consolatory power of poetry may be said to erode as the translation progresses, as Robert's Ovid loses faith in his recall (thereby losing faith in the rhetorical potential of verse in general) and is gradually no longer consoled by writing poetry, depicting it as progressively more futile. Whatever conviction in the reach of literature may be present in the early poems, even that which may extend beyond the world of the living, the despair of exile and imperial authority ultimately triumphs over the written word. In the case of the latter, the relationship is portrayed as a much more passionate one, with the language of love and affection used to depict a tempestuous affair which leads Darrieussecq's Ovid to lose his sense of self as the exile progresses, with a final poetic death sounding the death knell of his identity as a poet, or his romantic connection to his Muse. It also displays a greater emphasis on the more pressingly emotional solace to be found in the writing of verse, as it is portrayed as a medical cure. Accordingly, the two translated poets entertain varying dynamics with poetic composition, speaking to how both translators conceive of a despairing poet in exile who seeks some respite through writing.

Conclusion

To conclude, this thesis has sought to examine the ways in which two modern-day French translations of Publius Ovidius Naso's *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto* receive the Latin texts, in line with Charles Martindale's theory of reception. Rather than examining any notions of *intrinsic* meaning within the Ovidian source text, and the extent to which the translations are faithful to said meaning, the argument of this thesis has centred around the very absence of any original meaning or intent, focusing on the novel ways in which the Latin poems are read. This forms the crux of a two-way dynamic, in which the source text produces new literary texts, and is retrospectively approached in different ways by being translated. This plays into how the Classics are read (or received) and thereafter represented in a 21st-century context. After centuries of debates concerning issues of classical translations, considered in the introductory part of this thesis, one may argue for a reception-oriented approach to translating the works of Antiquity, away from philological dogma and criticisms pertaining to what a text *actually* says. This notion lay at the heart of this thesis' arguments, detailed in three chapters which focused on different aspects of the Ovidian experience of exile, as received by Danièle Robert and Marie Darrieussecq.

The first chapter, addressing the question of an exiled poet's relationship with imperial power, focused on the ways in which the two translators approached *Tristia* 2, a single poem addressed to the emperor Augustus. Its examination centred around the ways in which they received the poet's depiction of a plea formulated seemingly in the hope of earning a recall to Rome. In the case of Danièle Robert, this thesis argued that her poet's stance vis-à-vis the emperor was one of defiance, in which poetic authority was set apart from the imperial domain. The emphasis in the translation lay on reminders to Augustus of the benefits and subversive potential of poetry, setting Robert's reception of the poet as an assured individual who is not necessarily pro- or anti-Augustan, but who elaborates a firm position in the face of imperial oppression. In the case of Marie Darrieussecq, the reception of *Tristia* 2 emphasised the more personal aspect of the relationship between the poet and the emperor, framing it as an elegiac *paraklausithyron*, through which the Latin text is

read as a rejection of Ovid's previous position and a call for romantic reconciliation, with the *Ars Amatoria* being depicted as an erotic betrayal. These represent novel ways of reading and engaging with the Ovidian text, allowing for different approaches to their analysis and understanding.

The second chapter focused on the question of the translation of "Otherness" throughout the exilic works. In the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*, the translations of the representations of the local inhabitants (designated under the umbrella term "Getae") were compared, in order to understand how the two translators chose to portray alterity in the early years of the Roman Empire, focusing on the language used in order to depict it. The representation of the Classics is a core part of their reception, as it speaks to how readers relate to ancient texts in modern-day settings. The core differences between the two translations lay in an awareness of the historical stakes of the question of "barbarism", with Darrieussecq opting for an absolutely binary opposition between the "civilised" Roman, her Ovid, and the "barbarian Other", the locals who are portrayed as speaking neither Latin nor Greek, and as being altogether savage. This plays into traditional dichotomies which are now being deconstructed and approached from different angles, and serves as a useful reminder of some of the more common misconceptions concerning the classical past. In a purely literary setting, however, the feeling of alterity is produced in a much more impactful manner than Robert's reception of the poet's writings concerning the Getae, which displays greater awareness of some of the historical conditions which faced the Roman poet from 8 CE onwards. That awareness, however, may run the risk of downplaying certain anti-barbarian sentiments which a classical readership may have felt, and loses some of the literary oppositions which might otherwise be read in the Ovidian text. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the ways in which these receptions, given that they are not to be read in terms of "faithfulness", play into how the Classical world is represented in a 21st-century context.

The third chapter sought to turn away from the Latin text somewhat in order to focus on the translations as literary productions in their own right, in line with the idea, within reception theory, that classical texts also allow for novel creations,

removed from lexical rigour. It examined the ways in which the two translations portrayed the poet's reflexions concerning his poetic output in exile, and the function it plays within that context. Danièle Robert's translation was found to explore a steady decline in both the rhetorical and consolatory benefits of poetry, as her Ovid initially believes in being able to earn a recall through writing, and to console himself with his literary pursuits. This belief wanes as Robert's poet is faced with the realities of exile, which lead him to dismiss his poetic compositions as futile pursuits, unable even to comfort him in his grief. Marie Darrieussecq's Ovid deploys more emotional language to depict his relationship with poetry (personified as his Muse or Muses), characterising it as a romantic attachment which undergoes some turbulent phases. His Muse is described as providing a cure to the poet's concerns, but their difficult relationship goes hand in hand with a loss of poetic identity, as the translated poet loses his sense of self as his exile progresses. Darrieussecq's Ovid, in distancing himself from the figure of poetry, finds himself losing his innermost feeling of being a poet.

These two translations present novel ways of approaching a classical text, a testament to the enduring interest in and pertinence of the Classics in the 21st century. The figure of the poet in exile continues to fascinate, beyond dogmatic notions of philological rigour, raising questions concerning the position of literature when faced with political oppression, the functions it might serve in times of great emotional distress, and the ways in which it contributes to questions of alterity and belonging.

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