

Scholars have discussed only minimally Ovid's pairing of ritually cross-dressed flautists and Marsyas' flaying in his *Quinquatrus Minores*, *Fasti* 6.649-710 (June 13). Newlands (1995.197-203) and Barchiesi (1997.89-92) briefly identify Marsyas and the Roman flautists (exiled in 311 BCE; soon returning) with Ovid in exile under Augustus' censorial powers. But no one has interpreted Marsyas' flaying as a retroactive view of gender anxiety in the cross-dressing of the *Quinquatrus*. This paper suggests that Ovid's pairing of ritual cross-dressing and Marsyas' flaying enables a double perspective upon elite male dis/honor confronting imperial power during the late Augustan, early Tiberian period.

Lacan's concepts of "screen" and *anamorphosis* (*Sem. XI*, 65-119) explain the relation between ritual cross-dressing and Marsyas' flaying. Minerva's etiology of the cross-dressing (F. 6.649-92) provides a "straight-on" view of the calendar's cultural "screen," a repertoire of historical ritual symbols, revealing yet concealing, here, anxious antagonism between *tibicines* and the censors of 311 BCE. But Minerva oddly digresses from this Roman historical view into a Greek tale, Apollo's flaying of Marsyas (cf. *Met.* 6.382-400; Feldherr-James 2004). The Greek tale enables a cultural *anamorphosis*, perceiving the ritual cross-dressing from the angular cultural position of flayed Marsyas. From this position readers retroactively observe an immediately terrorizing specter behind ritual: both tales involve (screens) of masculinity, concealing feminine clothes or revealing male skin; both address male fear of losing manly identity (castration). Apuleius' version of the Marsyas-Apollo contest (*Flor.* 3) retroactively corroborates gender anxiety. His Marsyas verbally excoriates effeminacy in Apollo's music and appearance (Apollo's long women's gown recalls those of the *tibicines*), contrasting Apollo's soft body and clothes with his own manly bristles. Victorious Apollo, symbolizing civilized refinement (and Apuleius' rhetorical style, Harrison 2000.97-99), then excoriates (flays) the body of Marsyas.

The two modes of gender anxiety in Ovid's *Quinquatrus* manifest contrary political strategies. As Rudich argues, the emperor's dominant position blocked patricians from direct access to male esteem gained by competition for the offices, awards and honors with which men had been traditionally "clothed" in *virtus* (cf. Barton). While some men idealized open display of manly independence, risking exile or death, others sought to survive through strategic dissimulation of their antagonism. Marsyas' competition with and flaying by Apollo might symbolize males openly competing with the emperor. Elite male honors with which one might identify oneself are stripped away, excoriated from the "self" (cf. Ovid's exile). Marsyas' flaying materializes this specter of public shame. But cross-dressing *tibicines* exploit a dissimulative strategy: feminine guises upon their return concealed their antagonism behind a differently gendered screen (6.685-90). Entertaining "feminine" artifice diverts power's aim. Lacanian "screen" in Ovid's *Quinquatrus Minores* illustrates different psycho-social negotiations of impending losses of manly honor (castration) in contests with more dominant powers (censors, Apollo, emperor).