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The Allusive Exile: Philomela and Palamedes in Ovid's *Tristia* 1.1

Until recently, Ovid's exile poetry had itself been exiled from scholarly attention, chiefly because Ovid's pose of poetic decline had been taken far too seriously. Gordon Williams, however, suggests that Ovid's allusive technique in the exile poetry can be "a valid touchstone for the refutation of the pose of decline" (*Banished Voices* [Cambridge 1994], 58). I will make use of this touchstone by examining two allusions to the *Metamorphoses* that are closely placed in *Tristia* 1.1. These self-references convey intertextual messages that refute Ovid's pose of decline and provide a subtle commentary on his perception of himself as an *exul*.

The first allusion features two pairs of hunter and prey: the one a hawk and a dove, and the other a wolf and a lamb (*Tr.* 1.1.75-78). Green, Luck, and Della Corte all point out Ovid's frequent use of both images in his earlier poetry (e.g., *Ars* 2.363-64), but do nothing to illuminate the meaning behind their appearance in the *Tristia*. While the topos of hunter and hunted does have a long history, Ovid's verbal cues recall his description of Philomela at *Met.* 6.527-30, and the echoes between the two passages (e.g., *saucia*, *excussa*, *avidus/avidos*, *unguibus/ungues*) confirm that this is not an incident of accidental confluence of language. The similarities between the two passages are significant and illuminating: Ovid and Philomela have been removed from civilized places to barbarous lands; their conditions are excruciating because of the silence imposed upon them; and both of them employ textual means to overcome this silence. Ovid has found in Philomela an effective model for the depiction of his exilic persona.

The second allusion (*Tr.* 1.1.83-86) recalls the story of Palamedes (*Met.* 13.43-62). Explaining his fear of the *Caesaream domum* and its residents, Ovid likens himself to sailors who steer clear of the Capherian rocks (*Tr.* 83-84). This is an allusion to the story of Nauplius, Palamedes' father, who avenges his son's death by kindling a large signal fire on Mt. Caphareus that will guide many of the homeward-bound Greeks to a deadly shipwreck on the rocks below. Although Ovid does not relate this story in the *Metamorphoses*, he does explain the reason for Nauplius' actions: accused of a bogus crime (*fictum ... crimen*, 13.59-60), his son was stoned to death by the Greeks. Thus, while the learned reference to the Capherian rocks recalls the story of Nauplius' revenge, it also recalls the reason for that revenge. Ovid, who frequently denies that he committed a *crimen* (e.g., *Tr.* 3.2.5, 4.3.47), has found a sympathetic character in Palamedes, who should have had a blameless death (*letum sine crimine*, *Met.* 13.57). Despite Luck's denial of a deeper meaning in the passage ("mehr liegt in dem Vergleich nicht"), we can now see that the learned geographical reference to the Capherian rocks allows Ovid to reinforce his plea of innocence with the mythological exemplum of Palamedes.

The allusions to Philomela and Palamedes in *Tristia* 1.1 convey complex, intertextual messages that place Ovid among the characters of his *Metamorphoses* and reinforce his depiction of exile in terms of the unreal and mythical. Ovid's pose of poetic decline in exile can thus be seen as part of this myth of exile, since elegance, beauty, and the most

subtle poetic techniques can be found within Ovid's unadorned and hirsute book (*Tr.* 1.1.3, 12).