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**From *praeceptor amoris* to *praeceptor Amoris*: Ovid, Cupid and Fabius Maximus in ex Ponto 3.3**

In ex Ponto 3.3 Ovid recounts to his patron Fabius Maximus how Cupid appeared to him at night. The poet blames him for his exile, but the god denies that the *Ars Amatoria* was the cause for Ovid's banishment and that the poet is concealing the real cause. Cupid also claims that Augustus will relent. The poem ends with an appeal to Fabius's sense of duty towards his clients. The present paper argues that this poem uses, expands and inverts themes from Latin love elegy, especially the topos of the poet-lover presenting himself as *praeceptor amoris*. These adaptations create humour and cast the poet as larger than life. In addition, the erotic echoes are an appropriate subject in a poem addressed to a Fabius whose family had special ties to the goddess Venus.

As early as verse 5, it becomes evident that Ovid reworks Corinna's quasi-divine epiphany in *Amores* 1.5 as well as some aspects of Cupid's epiphany in *Rem.* 549-76. This time, however, Ovid drops some of the erotic features of his earlier work (what Helzle 2002, 24 calls "Enterotisierung"). Further down (23 *magistro*), he also casts himself in the role of the *praeceptor amoris*, well-known from Tibullus 1.4, 1.6, 1.8, Propertius 1.7, 1.9, 1.10, 1.20, Ovid *Am.* 1.4, 2.19, 3.1, 3.4 and, of course, the *Ars Amatoria* and *Remedia Amoris* (see the introductions of McKeown on *Am.* 1.4, Maltby on Tib. 1.4). This elegiac commonplace in itself can be seen as an adaptation of earlier presentations of Cupid or Venus as the one who teaches how to love (cf. Plato *Phaedr.* 257a3-8, Kall. *Aitia Frg.* 67.1 Pfeiffer, Moschus *Frg.* 3,8 Gow, Prop. I 1.5-6, Tib. II 1.75, *Am.* I 6.7-8; see Janka 1997, 32 n.11 and Maltby on Tib. 1.2.19-24). In this very vein, Ovid here presents Cupid as his original teacher (*Pont.* 3.3.29-30 *tu mihi dictasti iuuenalia carmina primus,/ apposui senis te duce quinque pedes*). At other points in the poem, however, the poet advances from Cupid's student to Cupid's teacher (29, 37-48 and 69 *te magistro*). In so doing, he takes the elegiac role of the *praeceptor amoris* somewhat literally and presents himself as *praeceptor Amoris*. The divinity, now in the subordinate role of student, protests in an obvious reference to *Ars* 1.33 that he has learnt nothing illegitimate from the poet (*Pont.* 3.3.69-70 *nil nisi concessum nos te didicisse magistro,/ Artibus et nullum crimen inesse tuis*). By appropriating the role of the teacher and reducing the god to being the consumer of his product, Ovid gets the divinity, rather than the poet-speaker, to protest that what he has learnt from the *magister amoris* was innocuous. The "palinode" (Kenney 1968, 531) is therefore presented by the divinity himself.

All this sounds like vintage Ovid: he echoes himself, he adapts, expands and inverts themes from his love-elegy. The most surprising trait of this poem, however, seems to be the addressee: Q. Fabius Maximus, the quintessential Roman nobleman who became Augustus' right hand man in his later years. One would expect the poet to avoid topoi from love-elegy when addressing such a prominent pillar of the Augustan regime until one realizes that the family of the Fabii must have had some association with the goddess Venus. Their family feast was the Lupercalia on 15th February (*Fast.* II 283-358), which, far from being the festival of Faunus as which it is on record, must have had its origin in

some fertility ritual (NP 7,509-10) at which a goat was sacrificed (Plut. *Rom.* 21, Ov. *Fast.* 2,361 with B<sup>mer</sup>'s note) which means that its original deity was probably female. The connection between the Fabii and Venus is also suggested by the fact that two of them founded a temple to the love-goddess, namely Q. Fabius Gurges (Liv. 10.31.9) and Q. Fabius Maximus Cunctator (Liv. 22.10,10, 23,30,10). In this context we should also not forget that Horace dedicated his fourth book of *Odes* which starts with the phrase *Intermissa, Venus, diu/ rursus bella moves?* to Ovid's very Fabius. In short, addressing a poem in which themes from love-elegy are omnipresent to a Fabius is highly appropriate. More than that, Ovid's self-presentation as the paedagogue to Fabius's patron deity's unruly child adds to the humour and esprit of this poem.

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