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"Tempora Digesta": Changing Ideologies and Ordered Time in the *Fasti*

My paper sets out to examine how in Ovid's *Fasti* 'night' is first defined through an ideological construct that later, in a way that is characteristic for this multi-vocal poem, will be destabilised. At the same time, I show that an ordered temporal framework is maintained throughout the poem.

I start with the observation that the poem's first episode, on the god Janus, is framed by two programmatic sections: one on days (65-62) and one on nights (295-316, the 'star proem'). Since Janus is represented as a doorkeeper, the text presents night on one side and day on the other side of the door. This I suggest makes the reader recall Hes. *Theog.* 745ff., a passage that advocates the mutual exclusivity of day and night, and allows us to transfer Hesiod's ordered sequence to the *Fasti*'s conceptualisation of time. Moreover, a clear divide between day and night is hinted at in the poem's opening couplet, where the pentameter adds nocturnal stars to the non-nocturnal calendrical *tempora* found in the hexameter.

The pure temporal sequence, however, is loaded with ideological meaning. The first couplet implies a contrast between first *Latium* and second inquiry into the stars on, which is presented later in book I as a Greek invention. More importantly, of the two passages that frame the Janus-episode, the section on days discusses business in the *forum*, *comitia*, official sacrifices, and war; the section on nights, by contrast, praises those who have freed themselves from such occupations to conduct research into the stars.

While this seems to invite a reading that understands the antiquarian researcher-poet (who later aligns himself with Numa, not incidentally knowledgeable in matters astrological) as detached from the dominant themes of Augustan ideology and politics (Newlands and Barchiesi), my paper aims to show that subsequent representations of night in the poem destabilise the contrast so neatly drawn at the poem's beginning. A first hint in that direction is suggested by the fact that the star myth that follows immediately upon the star proem thematises the failure to find a certain star. But the poem elaborates further on the problematic attribution of ideological meaning to day and night. This is made clear by two episodes, to which I will turn in the second half of my paper.

The first episode at which night figures significantly is Lucretia-episode at the end of book 2. Here, night functions as the setting for first the perfidious attack on the Gabii, and second the no less violent rape of Lucretia. My reading of the episode will show how it picks up nearly all the themes from which the poet had detached night in the star proem: sex, wine, war, *ambitio*, and *gloria*; hence, by the end of book 2 night is no longer solely charged with the poet's disinterested astrological research.

The narrative of the rape of Proserpina, which will form my second example, takes issue with the positive definition that was given in the star proem: inquiry and research. While Ceres' inquiry into the nocturnal whereabouts of her daughter resembles the poet's inquiry

into the position of the stars, the differences question the attached ideologies. Ceres inquiry is directed to the underworld and not to heaven; she is no *felix anima*, but a desperate mother in fear for her daughter; political business is present because Jupiter deals with her in the language of power; the merely half-satisfying solution of the episode indicates that the way upwards is less desirable than the poet had initially suggested; finally, as all this takes place in a Greek setting, the contrast between engaged Roman politics and detached Greek research crumbles, too.

The ideological load that was attached to night in the proem, then, is destabilised by the middle of book 4. But I suggest that the stability of the non-ideological temporal frame is maintained: six months' darkness and six months' brightness resemble the order of day and night that surrounded the Janus-episode.