

Ovid's Revisions: The Editor as Author. Francesca K. A. Martelli.
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The relationship between editor and author is often fraught with tension, raising questions of who controls the published text and what authorship actually means. In *Ovid's Revisions: The Editor as Author*, Francesca K. A. Martelli, an assistant professor of classics at UCLA, engages issues of editorial practice and authorial identity by considering a body of work by Publius Ovidius Naso (43 BCE–ca. 18 CE), the Roman poet most of us know today as Ovid. As Martelli demonstrates, a striking feature of Ovid's work is his career-long practice of revising his own work and drawing readers' attention to those revisions. Through looking across five of Ovid's major works, Martelli makes visible a wide range of editorial practice still quite relevant today, as well as the import of that work for authors and readers alike.

Martelli opens her volume with a substantive discussion of revision as transformative for texts and authors, recognizing trends in authorship studies and related fields that stress such concepts as distributed, or collaborative, authorship and the socially constructed aspects of the author. Yet Ovid's work, she notes, offers a window into the complexity of even a so-called single author, revealing ways in which authorial revision serves to multiply the author's identity, making the singular into a plural by having the author fill multiple roles, certainly, and by revising who the author "is" over the course of a career, due to maturation and construction.

Challenging assumptions, too, that revision "always aims at improvement" (4), Martelli claims that Ovid's work shows a sense of value in revision for revision's sake. This view of revision as play, of multiple drafts as equally valid, unsettles an editorial approach based on determining either an author's original or final intention. The text does not originate in one singular moment, in other words, but across time. In this sense, revision is not a corrective but an extension. Such a view promotes efforts to produce collected parallel works or

edited volumes that preserve, rather than collapse or redact, differences among drafts.

Martelli notes Ovid's transparency about the revisions of his own works through, for example, prefaces that contextualize not only the individual works they frame but also their place in Ovid's larger body of work, and through making available overlapping written material. This project allows Martelli to "plot some of the narratives of revision that run through" his work (29), looking at diverse editorial approaches—"the *Amores* foreshortens, the *Ars Amatoria* extends, the *Fasti* supplements and foreshortens, the *Tristia* re-routes, the *Ex Ponto* collates" (33)—and the effects of such approaches on texts and readers.

Martelli devotes each of chapters 2–6 to Ovid's revisions in connection with one of the works listed above. Chapter 2 observes that the *Amores* (the work scholars usually date as the chronological first of Ovid's enduring works) opens with a preface that describes the work as a revised (and shortened) version. Today's readers have no access to a previous version—if one truly existed. Martelli, though, considers that even the *idea* that the work is a revision influences ways of reading the text, including building admiration for the author (who can both create a longer work and do the difficult work of editing the work down). In addition, seeing the work as an abridged second edition promotes reader curiosity about what exists in the extended version. Ovid's editorial choices and Martelli's observations reveal rhetorical power in prefatory and other ancillary materials, which shape readers' expectations and interpretations of the central text.

Ancillary content, though, is not the only editorial material that wields hermeneutical influence, as evidenced in Martelli's third chapter. There, she turns to considering editorial additions to the main text (as opposed to reductions). The *Ars Amatoria* is, she notes, "a text that appears to have some difficulty reaching or finding its ending" (68). The "original" poem is a two-book work, but Ovid added two addendums—the text known as *Ars 3* and the *Remedia Amoris*. Martelli argues that these "mobile" endings build narrative tension in this work devoted to sexual desire (the text is essentially instructions on seduction and resisting seduction) by weaving between desire and the death of desire.

Chapter 3 discusses additions that extend a work's ending, and chapter 4 demonstrates that texts that seem unfinished may actually be self-contained. Chapter 4 focuses on *Fasti*, a six-book poem built around the recently modified

Roman calendar, yet glaring for its treatment of only the first six months. Common interpretation sees the truncated poem as unfinished, and this incompleteness is usually attributed to Emperor Augustus's banishing Ovid from Rome to Tomis in 8 CE for causes unknown. Martelli counters this interpretation, observing that since the poem shows indications of revision throughout with no attempts to produce additional content, we have ample reason to view the poem as complete. In doing so, we can recognize a significant function of the poem—Ovid's challenge to the Roman calendar itself and the power structures that determine even public experiences of time. Although editors face pressures to produce works that appear complete according to genre expectations, those same editors may take note of the effects texts can create in readers by breaking those expectations. The *Fasti* example can also serve to reinforce the opposite claim, given widely accepted interpretations that the poem *is* incomplete. To expand possibilities, we can consider the *Fasti* in connection with Martelli's earlier examples—that is, allowing authors and editors to experiment with meaningful form, but providing at least some hints toward interpretation in ancillary materials such as prefaces or addenda.

Chapter 5 analyzes *Tristia*, which, Martelli argues, “brings to the fore Ovid's role as editor, not just of this particular text, but also of his larger textual output and identity” (146). Each of the five books comprising the poem—written during Ovid's exile—is presented as a stand-alone work, and the differing revisions lead to variations in the authorial vision among the books. Of particular interest to those who may be most familiar with Ovid in connection to his most famous work, the *Tristia* overlaps with the epilogue of the *Metamorphoses*, rewriting that epilogue multiple times, yet standing independent. This practice, Martelli writes, “breaks down the distinctions between” Ovid's works, “as the revision of one work is made to overlap with the composition of another, and the different authorial identities that these two works produce are made to coexist within the ‘same’ textual space” (32).

For editors working with bodies of independent works that overlap in content—repeating ideas or even passages—the intersection between Ovid's *Tristia* and *Metamorphoses* provides an example of how revising and modifying one work inescapably influences the meaning of others, challenging editors to read any revisions they make in a more varied context than a single volume or collection.

The *Tristia* also complicates Ovidian authorship while raising questions about authorial self-presentation and editorial transparency. This poem functions in many ways as a monument or monuments to prominent names (from Ennius, Lucretius, and Horace, to Homer, et al.). At the same time, it is a rare exception in Ovid's own body of work because he leaves his name off the title pages, while instead incorporating himself into the text (making references, for example, to the image of his face on a ring and to an epitaph for his tombstone). "In exile," Martelli writes, "Ovid empties his authorial name of its performative force, in the knowledge that that name now has a new referent" (165). As we near the end of Martelli's volume, then, we see significant developments in the function of Ovid's authorship. And although the point of Martelli's project is considering Ovid's self-editing, more traditional editors also face decisions about how much to expose or conceal their participation in the "final" text. Ovid's example of how and why he alters his approach to transparency in the *Tristia* can serve as an entry point for other editors in selecting their own approaches to this persistent challenge.

Martelli next examines the *Epistulae ex Ponto*, a collection of letters from Ovid to a series of readers. The evident editorializing and revising of this collection—despite Ovid's claims to the contrary—show him crafting the audience with whom he wishes to participate, a strategy that all editors must consider when selecting textual interventions. He chooses, for instance, to address private individuals in domestic realms, rather than reaching out to a public audience, even while knowing that this private/public distinction was a fiction, since he edited the collection for publication. Ovid was attempting to secure immortality not through his literary fame but through the "continuing support of his friends in Rome" (224), seeking to extend his identity through the world outside the text. Whether editing standard volumes (i.e., intervening directly in texts prior to their publication as ostensibly cohesive single-authored works) or producing editions that note alterations and/or provide commentary, traditional textual editors also make their decisions based on audience—and not necessarily obvious audiences, but audiences they select through their own approaches.

In all these chapters, Martelli grounds her arguments thoroughly in the texts themselves, pursuing close readings of her texts with attention to the features and functions of specific lines. In her epilogue, she returns to her broader inquiry into authorship, citing authorial revision as both "reinforc[ing] the identity of the

author” and “mark[ing the] author’s disappearance” (230). She also considers the editorial moves Ovid makes in the above five works in the context of his other works (the *Metamorphoses*, *Heroides*, and *Ibis*).

Taken as a whole, Martelli’s work in this volume marks a valuable contribution to classical studies while simultaneously furthering urgent conversations in the realms of editorial theory, studies in authorship and publishing, and textual studies. Work in these latter fields that draw on this book might return to consider differences in editorial practice when revising one’s own work versus the work of others; the shifting identity of any given author; the possibilities and limitations of representing multiple versions of a text in edited editions; how making editorial revision transparent to readers may influence reading interpretation and experience; how authors shape their own audiences; and how authors endure or disappear. Such queries, tied to Martelli’s thoughtful scholarship in these pages, hold potential for lively and transformative discussion in the decades to come.

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