Precincts of Venus: towards a prehistory of Ovidian genre

by Joseph Farrell

1. Introduction

One of the characteristically Ovidian themes in contemporary Latin studies is the plasticity of genre and the inventiveness with which Roman poets address generic concerns. Coming to terms with this problem has greatly advanced recent work on Latin poetry. In particular, our heightened ability to appreciate the shimmering ambiguity of Ovidian genre has led to a much more productive model for practising the hermeneutics of indeterminacy than had been current in Latin studies. Another recent gain has been an increased understanding of Ovidian genre in its historical dimension, particularly in terms of its later influence. The Latin poets of the early empire have often been viewed as the successors of Vergil, most compellingly in Philip Hardie's much admired book.[1] But Hardie and other scholars have also begun to explore the extent to which these poets were Ovid's successors as well.[2] One result of this movement is that, as the specifically Ovidian contours of imperial and postclassical poetry come into focus, poems like the *Metamorphoses* and the *Fasti* – poems of extreme, but nevertheless characteristically Ovidian generic complexity – look somewhat less *sui generis* today than they did only ten or fifteen years ago.

The same point can be made about Ovidian readings of antecedent literature. As our appreciation of Ovid improves, we tend to find proto-Ovidian elements in the work of his predecessors.[3] There is a sense, however, in which Ovid's poetry

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[1] *The Epic Successors of Vergil: A Study in the Dynamics of a Tradition* (Cambridge 1993).

[2] See the contributions by Holzberg, Keith in this volume.

[3] This tendency has been especially pronounced in reassessments of the relationship between Vergil and Ovid. See Stephen Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (Cambridge 1998), ch. 4, 'Repetition and Change,' pp. 99–122; J. Farrell, 'Introduction' in *The Vergilian Century* (=*Vergilius* 47 (2001) 11–28).

remains somewhat difficult to explain, a sense that has to do with origins. If we think particularly of the *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti,* whom will we identify as Ovid's generic forerunners? Some years ago I alluded to the difficulty of situating the *Metamorphoses* within 'the epic canon alongside the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid'* because of the poem's 'manifold departures from the epic norm which the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* more nearly represent.'[4] Richard Thomas, wishing to emphasize the 'strangeness' of the *Aeneid* within the epic genre, has taken exception to this statement, for reasons that I well understand, but it seems to me as unarguably true as when I first made it.[5] Even if we grant, as I certainly would do, that the *Aeneid* is, in Thomas' terms, a 'strange' epic as compared to the Homeric poems, when we place it on a typological continuum of epic poetry, with the *Iliad* at one end and the *Metamorphoses* on the other, the *Aeneid* will stand much closer to the *Iliad* – and so far from the *Metamorphoses,* perhaps, that the idea of a continuum may break down altogether.

I want to be clear: Vergil's attitude towards generic protocols is complex (and this, I think, was the point of Thomas' remark); but Ovid's attitude is so much more complex, and so much more central to his poetics overall, that genre in his hands becomes almost a different thing. The question 'What is the genre of the *Aeneid?'* is one that can be answered – not without qualification, perhaps, if we wish to do full justice to Vergil's originality, but it can be answered, and without much discomfort, by using ordinary terms, such as 'epic,' that are common within genre studies. In contrast, the question 'What is the genre of the *Metamorphoses* or of the *Fasti?'* really cannot be answered at all simply. Any answer that can be advanced will run up against weighty counter-arguments, and the discussion will quickly become so complex and rival positions so qualified, that general agreement seems impossible.

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[4] 'Dialogue of Genres in Ovid's 'Lovesong of Polyphemus' (*Metamorphoses* 13.719–897),' *AJP* 113 (1992) 237–68. The passage in question occurs on pp. 236–37.

[5] *Virgil and the Augustan Reception* (Cambridge 2001) p. 20.

The situation I am describing goes well beyond the obvious differences between Ovid and Vergil. The truth is that, for all the inventiveness shown by Catullus and Lucretius, Vergil and Horace, Propertius and Tibullus, I find in these poets no convincing inspiration for the generic inventiveness that characterizes Ovid's career. My question, then, is simple: where did it all come from? This paper advances a provisional answer, locating the closest parallels to Ovid's generic experimentation in the material culture and social practice of the late Republican period.[6] I base my argument not, as is customary, on the kind of specific intertextual relationships that are normally adduced in genre studies (Vergil and Theocritus, Horace and Alcaeus, and so forth). But, to lend a degree of unity to my argument, I wish to consider a number of literary and artistic designs, or 'precincts' as I call them in my title, that have to do with the goddess Venus. Venus is an opportune focal point for such a study because of her active career in the politics of the late Republican and Augustan periods; because of her frequent appearances in the art, architecture, and literature of those periods; and, not least, because of the affinity that Ovid explicitly claims with her. The precincts in question are the complex of buildings dedicated to Venus Victrix by Cn. Pompeius Magnus in 55 B.C.; the fourth book of Ovid's *Fasti;* and the fourth book of Horace's *Odes.*[7] My point in comparing these precincts of Venus is to bring out the generic sophistication of their designs and of the ways in which they represent the goddess herself. What I will try to show is that the generic dialogism of Venus and of the *opera Pompeiana* bears a strong relationship to the situation found in *Fasti* 4, which I

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[6] It will be seen that I do not follow the usual route of regarding material artifacts as a more stable point of reference by which to clarify the more unstable meanings of literary artifacts. For a shrewd discussion of this issue, see Don Fowler, 'The Ruin of Time: Monuments and Survival at Rome' in *Roman Constructions: Readings in Postmodern Latin* (Oxford 2000), pp. 193–217; cf. 'Opening the Gates of War (*Aen.* 7.601–40)' in *Vergil's* Aeneid: *Augustan Epic and Political Context,* ed. H.-P. Stahl (London 1998), pp. 155–74.

[7] I will also briefly consider some aspects of Augustus' monumental building program as a counterpoint to the *opera Pompeiana* and, by implication, to the *Fasti.*

take to be representative of Ovid's poetry in general.[8] I will also contrast the roles that Venus plays in *Fasti* 4 with what we find in Horace's fourth book of *Odes* in order to show what is distinctive about Ovid's approach as compared with that of an important literary predecessor. To repeat, I do *not* argue that Ovid's design in *Fasti* 4 can be explained by assuming that he was specifically imitating or responding to either of these artifacts directly. Rather, the inference I draw is that Ovid's characteristic attitude towards genre has strong affinities with attitudes that are very much in evidence in the realms of late Republican architecture and cult, and that it exhibits equally distinct divergences from the characteristic tendencies of antecedent literature, which was generally more conservative in this respect.

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[8] Since the extension of the literary term 'genre' to the spheres of architecture and religion is probably the chief methodological innovation of my argument, it deserves some comment here. The innovation consists in the rather banal fact that 'genre' is not a term commonly used in architecture criticism or in the study of religion. Using the term as I will do here involves only a modest extension of its usual sphere of influence. The word 'genre' means 'kind' (a word that literary theorists often use in preference to 'genre'); and even if the philosophy of categories has presented notorious problems since the time of Plato if not before, it is virtually impossible to talk about anything without using some system of classification by kinds, however ad hoc. Moreover, it is obvious that there are different kinds of buildings, and that these kinds can be defined formally, or according to purpose, or in other ways – exactly as is true of poems and other literary kinds. In addition, 'genre' is already used regularly in certain subfields of art history. (I think of particular of baroque 'genre paintings.') For better or worse, ancient terminology is no help: there is no dependable equivalent to 'genre' in our sense in either Latin or Greek (certainly not *genus,* which in literary terms is most often used in rhetoric to speak of the *tria genera dicendi* (e.g. *Rhet. Her.* 4.11–16). Vitruvius uses *genus* as well as *species* to denote different 'kinds' of building (as in the proem to book 4, where he mentions his discussion in the previous book *de aedium sacrarum dispositionibus et de earum generum varietate quasque et quot habeant species earumque quae sunt in singulis generibus distributiones*), but also uses *genus* in a more specialized sense when speaking of the Ionic, Doric, or Corinthian 'order' (which is also called *constitutum,* as in the continuation of the passage just cited, *ex tribus generibus quae subtilissimas haberent proportionibus modulorum quantitates ionici generis moribus, docui; nunc hoc volumine de doricis corinthiisque constitutis et omnibus dicam eorumque discrimina et proprietatis explicabo*). But even though his terminology is fluid, it is clear that Vitruvius does treat temples (and theaters and so forth) as different 'kinds' of building in a sense that is analogous to literary genres, generally grouping various kinds together according to their general purpose.

2. Shifting forms: the *opera Pompeiana*

Everyone knows that it was 55 B.C. before Rome had its first permanent stone theater, the *theatrum Pompeii*.[9] Now, thanks to an impressive dossier of evidence published by Ann Kuttner, we have a better idea of how important a place not only this theater, but the entire complex of which it was part, occupied in the Roman cultural imaginary.[10] We also can better appreciate, thanks to the highly suggestive work of Kathryn Gleason, exactly what the complex was in a purely formal sense.[11] Above all, what must be stressed is how extraordinary a design it was, not just as a piece of architecture, but in terms of the multiple roles that it played in Roman civic life.

Between the remains that are visible at street level, the evidence contained in an important fragment of the Severan marble plan of the city, and numerous literary testimonia, we are in a position to understand the most crucial aspects of the design.[12] The ground plan shows an arrangement of major elements that goes by the name of *quadriporticus post scaenam* – that is, a semicircular theater looking into a rectangular

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[9] This textbook statement is, strictly speaking, true, but requires some qualification. According to Livy (40.51.3), M. Aemilius Lepidus as censor in 179 B.C. *theatrum et proscaenium ad Apollinis...locavit;* and this theater may have remained in use until the late sixties (Plutarch *Cic.* 13.4), though even the building of this theater, let alone the possibility of its continued existence, is difficult to reconcile with another passage in Livy (*per.* 48; cf. Val. Max. 2.4.2) in which we are told that the censors of 151 abandoned their plan to build a theater when Scipio Nasica declared it un-Roman to sit in a theater. Some (e.g. E. S. Gruen, *Culture and National Identity in Republican Rome* (Ithaca 1992) 205–10) therefore doubt whether Lepidus' theater was ever built, but Nasica's position in 151 may have been 'no *more* theaters in Rome' rather than no theaters at all. If Lepidus' theater was built and remained in use for over a hundred years, it has to be regarded as 'permanent.' It is not clear, however, what materials were used, or whether the *scaena* was as durable as the rest of the structure or was struck after each production and rebuilt for the next. The *opera Pompeiana* were dedicated in 55 B.C. during Pompeius' second consulate (Asconius *in Cic. Pis.* 1 [Stangl 11]); Tacitus *Ann.* 14.20; Dio 39.38.1–6).

[10] 'Culture and History at Pompey's Museum,' *TAPA* 129 (1999) 343–73. In addition, I am indebted to Alex Thein for discussing with me his unpublished work on the *theatrum Pompeii* and a number of other points that come up in this paper.

[11] Kathryn Gleason, '*Porticus Pompeiana:* A New Perspective on the First Public Park of Ancient Rome,' *Journal of Garden History* 14 (1994) 13–27.

[12] The fundamental study remains that of John Arthur Hanson, *Roman Theater-Temples,* Princeton Monographs in Art and Archaeology 33 (Princeton 1959).

enclosure surrounded by covered colonnades.[13] Atop and
behind the *cavea* of the theater was a temple dedicated to Venus
Victrix that was (probably) flanked by several smaller temples.[14]
Venus' temple was placed at the west end of the axis around
which the entire complex was organized. At the east end was a
curia or senate house.[15] Within the *quadriporticus* was a formal
garden dominated by allees of plane trees; an impressive
collection of statuary; and probably a fountain.[16] The complex
draws on a variety of sources in the Hellenistic and Roman
world.[17] But what is most interesting about the design for my
purposes is not so much its references to previous monuments
or its sophisticated combination of components, but rather the
way in which these references and components, as parts of an
ensemble, lose the stability of their individual identity and
significance, and gain a protean quality from their relationship
to the whole.

The *quadriporticus post scaenam* groundplan involves a
standard combination of elements. Vitruvius, citing the
theatrum Pompeii and other examples, recommends it as a way
of giving theatergoers a place to to take shelter in case of rain
(5.9.1). But the realization of this design of the *opera Pompeiana*
goes beyond this utilitarian motive by combining characteristic
elements of Italian architecture that had previously been kept
distinct. On the one hand, we find in several towns close to

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[13] The phrase *quadriporticum pone scaenam* is found in an incription from Tibur
(*CIL* 14.3664).

[14] There were certainly temples to Honos, Virtus, and Felicitas and possibly one
to Victoria as well: Hanson (1959) 52–52 n. 51; L. Richardson, jr, *A New
Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (Baltimore and London 1992) 384.

[15] G. Marchetii Longhi, *L'area sacra del Largo Argentina* (Rome 1960), 76–78; E.
Nash, *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Rome,* 2d ed, (London 1968), 1:148.

[16] The principal evidence is conveniently assembled by Richardson (1992) s.v.
'Porticus Pompeii,' 318–19.

[17] Plutarch reports that Pompeius was inspired to build his theater when he saw
the theater at Mytilene (*Vit. Pompeii* 42.4); but since that theater has not survived, it
is impossible to understand what if anything in the Mytilenian design Pompeius'
theater may have reproduced. The *quadriporticus post scaenam* relationship is found in
Praeneste and Tivoli, sites that antedate the *opera Pompeiana,* and on Vitruvius'
testimony (*de arch.* 5.9.1) at Athens, Smyrna, and Tralles as well. Later it seems to
become common in less pretentious settings (e.g. the forums at Tusculum and
Ostia).

Rome – Praeneste, Tibur, Gabii, Terracina – sanctuaries
consisting of a semicircular theater dominated by a temple
situated above and behind it. The placement of Venus' temple
above and behind the *theatrum Pompeii* clearly alludes to this
plan.[18] On the other hand, closer to home we find another
circular area with concentric *gradus* dominated by an imposing
rectangular building: this is exactly the arrangement of the
comitium and *curia* in the northeast corner of the Roman
Forum.[19] The plan was evidently exported to other towns, such
as the Roman colony of Cosa, where the same arrangement is
found.[20] The design of the *opera Pompeiana* places the *curia* at
the east end of the *quadriporticus,* diametrically opposite the
templum, an arrangement that clearly signals the felicitous
combination of two similar formal relationships (a circular area
with *gradus* for sitting or standing dominated by an imposing
rectangular structure above and behind it) that were used for
different purposes (theatrical performances and religious
observance on the one hand, political activities on the other).
But in spite of their differences, theater and politics had come
by the time of the late Republic to resemble one another.[21] In a
sense, then, the complex acknowledges the political character of
theatrical productions as well as the theatrical quality of
contemporary political life.

In spite of these underlying similarities of form and purpose,
the inclusion of a senate house is very striking in a complex
devoted mainly to pleasure. The placement of *curia* and
theatrum at opposite ends of the complex expresses the
antithetical nature of these two elements. Indeed, the presence
of both structures within a single complex will have given the
ensemble that contained them not only a mixed, but even a
protean character. Both *curia* and *theatrum* will have had their
own very different schedules of events. Senate meetings and *ludi*
were by definition not to take place at the same time; thus the

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[18] Hanson (1959) 29, 31, 47.

[19] Hanson (1959) 37–39.

[20] Richardson, 'Cosa and Rome: *Comitium* and *Curia,' Archaeology* 10 (1957)
49–55.

[21] This point is famously and epigrammatically made by Cicero himself at *Sest.*
106.

complex will have changed its general aspect depending on
whether one visited on a *dies fastus* or *nefastus*.[22] On the day of a
senate meeting, it will have been a place of *negotium,* with
Senators occupying the *curia* to conduct state business. On a
day of *ludi,* the public will have bypassed the *curia,* almost
literally neglecting this temple of *negotium* on their way to the
temple of *otium* that stood at the opposite end of the complex.

The park that separated theater from *curia* did much to
reconcile and harmonize the antithetical elements that
surrounded it. It, too, will have changed its aspect according to
the disposition of the complex on any given day. The hangers-
on of the great men doing state business in the *curia* will have
cooled their heels in the sumptuous garden, surrounded by the
symbols of Pompeius' conquests: a series of fourteen statues by
the sculptor Coponius representing the nations that Pompeius
had subdued; trophies representing specific battles; and the
plane trees themselves: all of them spoils that had graced
Pompeius' triumph over Mithridates in 61 B.C.[23] But perhaps
these visitors enjoyed the same features that we more readily
associate with theatergoing: exotic works of art, tapestries, old
master encaustic panels, and more statues: statues of the Muses,
of famous courtesans and poetesses, even of women who had
given birth in some prodigious way.[24] The poets who mention
the complex think most readily of these features and of the
colonnade where trysts and chance encounters might take
place.[25] Not for nothing was the presiding deity of this place
Venus, the goddess of love.

The centrality of Venus in this design was given the
maximum possible emphasis. A moment ago I spoke of
theatergoers as having to 'bypass' the *curia,* and I meant this in
the most literal sense. The design of the *opera Pompeiana*– in
contrast to most theater structures, to which entrance was
gained from behind and under the *cavea* – required visitors to

[22] On the character of different days in the civil calendar see A. K. Michels, *The
Calendar of the Roman Republic* (Princeton 1967) 22–54.

[23] F. Coarelli, 'Il complesso pomeiano del Campo Marzio e la sua decorazione
scultorea,' *RPAA* 45 (1971–1972) 99–122.

[24] Plin. *NH* 7.98; 37.12–16, 18; App. *Mith.* 17.117; Kuttner (1999) 345–350.

[25] Cat. 55, Prop. 32.7–16, Ov. *Ars* 1.68, 3.387–88.

enter on the opposite end, the east, across the garden and
porticus that adjoined the theater, where the *curia* was located.[26]
The purpose of this unusual feature seems clear, in that the
sight lines of the entire complex are organized on a central axis
connecting the theater to the *curia*. Or, to be more precise, the
focal point of the view to the west is not the theater itself so
much as the temple of Venus that surmounted it. A remark
attributed to Pompeius himself illustrates this aspect of the
design. According to him, the immense *cavea*, which could seat
thousands and which had the characteristic form of a Greek
theater, was really just a staircase that he added to the temple of
Venus Victrix at the top of the structure.[27] He did allow that
staircases might serve as seating for theatrical performances as
well, implying that there was clear precedent for the design in
the form of podium temples like that of the Magna Mater on
the Palatine, where an ample staircase provided tiers of seating
when spectacles were presented.[28] Pompeius' remark was either
a joke or an absurdly disingenuous piece of casuistry intended
to deflect criticism of this ostentatious structure. But it is
justified by the fact that the seats of the *cavea* were indeed
designed to serve, both visually and functionally, as an
enormous staircase leading up to the temple of Venus Victrix
that was placed at its top.

This system of visual organization has been analyzed with
great clarity by Kathryn Gleason, who further suggests that
original design of the theater involved another sophistication:
namely, the absence of a *scaena*.[29] If she is correct, then in the
absence of a permanent stage-building, temporary *scaenae* –

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[26] Gleason (1994) 19–23.

[27] Tertullian *de spect.* 10.

[28] Sander M. Goldberg, 'Plautus on the Palatine,' *JRS* 88 (1998) 1–20.

[29] Gleason (1994) 21. The suggestion is attractive, but unprovable in view of the
evidence currently available. Most scholars regard the *scaena,* which is clearly visible
on the Severan Marble Plan (G. Carrettoni et el., *La pianta marmorea di Roma antica*
(Rome 1960) 103–6; E. Rodriguez-Almeida, *Forma Urbis Marmorea* (Rome 1981)
130–34), as part of the original design. The anecdote related by Gellius (*NA*
10.1.7–9) about Pompeius' concern for propriety in the wording on an inscription
on the *scaena* proves nothing either way, since the *scaena* in question, however
magnificent, could have been either a permanent or a temporary one: see the
following note and note 32.

even quite elaborate ones, to judge from precedent – would
have been built from time to time to accommodate
productions.[30] At other times, visitors would have enjoyed an
unobstructed view from the eastern entrances, and especially
from the *curia* itself, through the garden to the temple, perched
atop its enormous 'staircase.' In fact, this perspective was
focalized and, in a sense, authorized by the placement of a
statue of Pompeius himself in or next to the *curia,* perhaps
looking up to Venus.[31] At the same time, Venus would have
looked out from the commanding height of her temple onto the
park that extended towards the east – a highly planned vista of
natural and artificial components, some of them imported from
exotic locales, all of them attesting her support of Pompeius'
military endeavors on behalf of Rome. Pompeius did not
happen to comment (so far as we know) on the absence of a
scaena when he asserted that the *cavea* of his theater was really
just a staircase in front of a temple.[32] But of course if there
really was no *scaena,* then his (fundamentally specious) claim
will have been that much more superficially plausible. In any
case, it is notable that, according to the man who built this

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    [30] On the remarkably elaborate *scaenae* built in temporary theaters, such as the
earlier theater of L. Aemilius Scaurus (58 B.C.) and the later theater of C. Scribonius
Curio (53 B.C.), see Pliny *HN* 34.36 and 36.13–20.
    [31] On the position of the statue see Cic. *Div.* 2.23, Plin. *HN* 35.59, Suet. *Iul.*
80.4, 88, *Aug.* 31, Plut. *Brut.* 14, Cass. Dio 44.16, 47.19.
    [32] We happen to have Cicero's description (*Fam.* 7.1) of the *ludi* performed when
the theater was dedicated in 55. He mentions performances of the *Clutemestra* of
Accius and an *Equos Troianus* (we have fragments of such tragedies by Livius
Andronicus, Naevius and an unidentified poet) as well as *Osci ludi* (i.e. Atellans).
Presumably a *scaena* was constructed to accommodate these plays. But Gellius (*NA*
10.1.7–9) reports that Pompeius, in the course of preparations for the dedication of
the Venus Victrix temple in 52, consulted Cicero on whether an inscription intended
for a *scaena* should read *cos. tertium* or *cos. tertio,* each of which was considered
correct by different *viri doctissimi civitatis.* It could be that Pompeius meant to put a
new inscription on a *scaena* that had been standing since the dedication of the theater
in 55, but it is equally possible that the *scaena* of 55 had been struck after the *ludi*
were finished, and that a new one was being built for the second dedication. In any
case, this *scaena* was not the last. According to Gellius (who quotes a letter of Tiro),
Cicero advised against seeming to give offense to his learned advisors by writing *cos.
tert.* But Gellius goes on to say that the *scaena* of 52 eventually collapsed and was
rebuilt with one that was still extant, which bore the inscription *cos III.* Gellius'
report of a collapse may of course be inferential, and in any case the *scaena* of 52 may
not have been intended as a permanent structure.

remarkable complex, what we think of as the most prominent and important element was a theater that was not a theater, or a staircase that was not a staircase.

The impact of the *opera Pompeiana* was enormous partly because of the sheer scale and cost of the place, but our ancient sources tend to linger more on its wondrous character. The combination of disparate components in a context where even the identity of individual elements, such as the *cavea,* was ambiguous, was surely a factor in endowing the structure with a singular atmosphere. One might rephrase that last sentence as follows: the singular atmosphere of the *opera Pompeiana* derives in large measure from the inventive attitude towards genre that informs the entire design. This statement involves a transferral of the critical term 'genre' from the realm of literature, where it is very much at home, to that of architecture, where it may be less so. But surely 'genre' can denote a kind of building just as well as it can a kind of poem. The *theatrum,* obviously, is a genre; the *porticus* is another, and the *curia.* So is a *templum,* of which Vitruvius recognizes several subgenres.[33] The *opera Pompeiana* complex, which comprises and combines all these elements, is from this point of view a clear example of what students of literature call *die Kreuzung der Gattungen.* This fact explains part of its impact, but there is another point to consider. Indeed, the metaphor that normally remains latent when the concept of *Kreuzung* is invoked, blooms and bears fruit in this precinct of Venus; for the *opera Pompeiana* are not simply a mixture of otherwise discrete elements but a true and very advanced hybrid.[34] These garden metaphors of course are very much at home in a structure that is now recognized as a masterpiece of ancient landscape architecture.[35] But other generic metaphors are equally apt. Like the *Metamorphoses* or *Fasti,* which combine so many disparate generic elements, the *opera Pompeiana* amount to a kind of *Kataloggedicht* – but (and

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[33] In fact, Vitruvius recognizes different principles for distinguishing different subgenres. At 3.3 he names five *species* that are distinguished by their relative abundance of intercolumnar spaces.

[34] I accept fully the implications of Barchiesi, 'The Crossing,' in *Texts, Ideas and the Classics,* ed. S. J. Harrison (Oxford 2001) 142–63; cf. Farrell (1992) 236–38.

[35] Gleason (1994).

this point is crucial), again as in those poems, the individual elements of the composition *change their meaning* in combination with one another, even to the extent that their generic identity becomes unstable. (Theater *cavea* or temple podium? Epic or elegy?) Is the complex as a whole, then – and again like the *Metamorphoses* or the *Fasti* – so thoroughly heterogeneous and unstable in its categorical affinities that we cannot confidently assign it to any single genre?

3. Venus Victrix

I have referred to *opera Pompeiana* not only as a wonderfully unstable generic construct, but also as a 'precinct of Venus.' The complex as a whole was dedicated to Venus Victrix, whose temple, as I have noted, was the focal point of the entire ensemble. But who is Venus Victrix, and why did Pompeius give her this temple, together with its magnificent appurtenances?

As a matter of fact, before Pompeius vowed this complex, Venus Victrix did not exist. The Roman cults of Venus that we can date include that of Venus Obsequens, whose *aedes* was begun in 295 B.C.[36] There were others as well, such as the infamous Venus Cloacina ridiculed by Augustine.[37] But Venus' real ascendancy began with the cult of Venus Erycina, which was imported from Sicily in 215 B.C.[38] This move was decisive because of that cult's traditional connection with Troy.[39] The next crucial step was Sulla's adoption of Venus Felix as his tutelary deity.[40] Sulla's Venus is an important forerunner to the

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[36] It is 'the oldest known temple of Venus in Rome' according to Richardson (1992)(408).

[37] *De civ. Dei* 4.8, 23; *epist.* 17.2. Worship of Cloacina (or Cluacina) is attested as early as Plautus (*Curc.* 471). It is not known, however, at what date the cult was associated with Venus (Richarson (1992) 92 s.v. 'Cloacina, Sacrum').

[38] The first temple to this goddess was built on the Capitoline by Q. Fabius Maximus (Livy 22.9.10, 22.10.10, 23.30.13–14, 23.31.9). A second was vowed by L. Porcius Licinus in 184 and dedicated in 181 (Livy 40.34.4).

[39] On these aspects of Venus worship at Rome see G. K. Galinsky, *Aeneas, Sicily, and Rome* (Princeton 1969).

[40] The cult is known only from a dedicatory inscription (*CIL* 6.781, 782 = *ILS* 3166, 8710). On Sulla's adoption of Venus and of the agnomen Felix (rendered by Sulla in Greek as 'Epaphroditos' according to an inscription quoted by Plutarch,

Venus Victrix of Sulla's follower, Pompeius.[41] But Pompeius' goddess also stands in a rather complex relationship to another Venus, the Caesarian goddess Venus Genetrix.[42] It is very difficult to distinguish these Venuses from one another by their iconography. Venus Felix, Venus Victrix, and Venus Genetrix – or, one might just as well say, Sulla's Venus, like those of Pompeius and Caesar – were apt to be portrayed nude, semi-nude, or fully clothed, with or without battle-gear, possibly in the company of Victory or of Cupid, perhaps holding an object that might be a globe, representing her universal dominion, or else the apple inscribed 'for the fairest' that she won through the judgment of Paris.[43] The key literary text on this goddess is the beginning of Lucretius' *De rerum natura,* where Venus appears as not only as primal force, but also as Empedoclean principle of peace, Homeric *femme fatale,* vanquisher of Mars (and so of war itself) and, crucially, divine ancestress of the sons of Aeneas.[44] The *opera Pompeiana* complex is just about contemporary with this text, and it seems obvious that the conceptions of Venus represented in the two works have a lot in common. Of course the *gens Iulia* by this time had begun to promote Venus Genetrix as the progenitor not of the Roman people in general, but of their own clan.[45] Does Pompeius' Venus gesture towards a Julian interpretation of the goddess? And if so, what specifically is it saying? Does Pompeius' promotion of Venus flaunt the fact that he had married into a patrician family descended from the goddess? Or is it a wary counter-move to Caesar's own relentless campaign of self-promotion through his divine ancestress? Or is it both?

Whatever the answer to these questions may be, there is a simpler point to be made. It obviously does violence to Roman

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Sulla 34.3–4) see R. Schilling, *La Religion romaine de Vénus depuis les origines jusqu'au temps d'Auguste* (Paris 1954) 272–95.

[41] Schilling (1954) 296–301.

[42] Schilling (1954) 301–24.

[43] Schilling (1954) plates xxviii–xxx illustrate a good many of the types, which share attributes although the identity of the moneyer changes.

[44] Schilling (1954) 346–58.

[45] The claim was first made in Caesar's funeral oration for his aunt (Suet. *Iul.* 6.1, Plut. *Caes.* 5.1) probably in 69 B.C. (L. R. Taylor, 'Caesar's Early Career,' *CP* 36 (1941) 122–23).

conceptions of divinity if we try to keep these Venuses too distinct from one another. They are the same goddess presenting herself (or regarded by her worshipers) under different aspects. And yet the different aspects are real as well. Venus is, therefore, not a singularity, but a category – and a productive category at that. Each particular instance contained within this category carried some particular meaning. But these meanings were apt to change over time and to generate new meanings; and the different aspects themselves had a tendency to combine with one another.

When it is put this way, a further application of the term 'genre' becomes irresistible. We have already extended the term from literary to architectural categories; I now suggest that it applies equally well to the discursive category 'Venus.' The literary genre of elegy contains all manner of subtypes: sympotic poems, love letters, instruction manuals, even calendars; but also laments, paraenesis, and so on. The genre of Venus also comprises a number of subtypes. We have mentioned Venus Victrix and Venus Genetrix, Venus Obsequens and Venus Erycina, and could add others as well.

Of course Venus is hardly unique in this respect. Other gods and goddesses are worshipped under several, sometimes quite different, aspects as well. And in cult as in literature, we find associations across generic categories. The very idea of Venus as a victor in war crosses the boundaries that, in literature at least, normally define her precinct.[46] In Republican and Augustan coinage, however, Venus may appear clothed or semi-nude but with such attributes as helmet, spear, and shield or with such emblems as the goddess Victory or a globe to represent universal dominion.[47] In later Imperial times she might appear

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[46] This is especially true if one bears in mind the very unsuccessful military career of the Homeric Aphrodite (*Il.* 5.311–430).

[47] See, e.g., a silver denarius struck by M. Mettius in 44 featuring, on the obverse, a bust of Caesar wearing a wreath and accompanied by the legend 'CAESAR IMP.' and, on the reverse, Venus standing left holding Victory in her right hand and a spear in her left, with her left elbow resting on a shield, which rests in turn upon a globe (M. H. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage* (Cambridge 1974) # 480/3. Cf. the very similar iconography of a denarius struck by Octavian between 32 and 29 featuring, on the obverse, a bust of Octavian and, on the reverse, depicting Venus as semi-nude, leaning against a column, holding a spear and a helmet with a shield at

in full battle-gear.[48] Indeed, in these later images Venus so resembles Minerva in her aspect as Athena Parthenos that if the goddess were not named, one might take the figure depicted to be Minerva. So the *Kreuzung* in this case finds points of contact between two goddess-genres that are conventionally regarded as quite different.

But the arms worn by Venus Victrix do not necessarily 'belong' to Minerva – or rather, to maintain the terms of my discussion, these arms represent a generic crossing between Venus and some other divinity. Appian quotes the inscription that Sulla had engraved on an axe that he dedicated to the goddess to commemorate a dream in which 'Aphrodite appeared in battle wearing the arms of Ares.'[49] The detail that it is Ares' arms the goddess wears may be important: for there is also a tradition of representing Venus wearing or playing with the battle-gear of Mars in the context of either foreplay or else the war-god's post-coital exhaustion.[50] Venus, then, victorious in her element, strips Mars of his armor and dons it herself. This image takes us back to Lucretius and, in a sense, unlocks the conceptual contradiction inherent in the iconography of Venus Victrix: she is still the goddess of peace (as in Empedocles and in Lucretius), but of peace achieved through war, a peace that is figured not merely as subsequent to war, but

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her feet, and surrounded by the legend 'CAESAR DIVI F.' (C. H. V. Sutherland, *Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (London 1984) # 250a).

[48] The reverse of a denarius struck by Titus shows Venus, seen half from behind standing right, leaning on a cippus, and holding a helmet and a spear (Sutherland (1984) # 205 (Vespasian)). The reverse of a silver denarius struck by Caracalla depicts the goddess wearing a gown, equipped with spear and helmet and with a shield at her feet, holding Victory, and surrounded by the legend 'VENUS VICTRIX' (Sutherland (1984) # 311c (S)).

[49] Appian, *BC* 1.97: *teúchesi toîs Áreos marnaménen énoplon.*

[50] The Aphrodite of Capua, a variant on the type in which the goddess gazes at herself in a conventional mirror, represents her as admiring herself in a full-size shield (*Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (Zürich-München 1981-1999) vol. 2: 71-73). This type is found mainly in free-standing sculpture, so it is not absolutely clear whose shield it is; but there also exist scenes of Venus paired with Mars in which she admires her reflection in his shield (2: 376). Mars' armor figures in various ways in other scenes where he is clearly depicted as Venus' lover (2: 544-51, esp. 547, # 376). There is also a type, not abundantly represented, of Aphrodite standing alone and wearing a sword (2: 57), but this type does not seem to be connected to Aphrodite's liaison with Ares/Mars or with the iconography of Venus Victrix.

as victorious over war. It makes sense that such ideas could find expression only through the paradoxical combination of categories that are normally kept separate.

These parallels provide some context for understanding the generically innovative and heterogeneous character of the *opera Pompeiana* and the appropriateness of such a design to celebrate the goddess to whom the complex was dedicated. It would be useless to insist that the design was really that of a theater, to which everything else was subordinate, or that of a park, or of a senate house with amenities. Pompeius' remark about the staircase-*cavea* captures the protean nature not only of the whole, but of its individual elements. Nor can we say that the complex is merely an assemblage of different elements: its formal design is so tightly unified that it demands to be regarded as a whole. As such, it has points of great affinity with contemporary literature (like Lucretius' epic poem cum philosophical treatise) and was admired both by poets from the time of its opening to the public until the late empire (as Kuttner's dossier attests). But as a masterpiece of generic manipulation, it is well in advance of any poetry that has reached us, until the time of Ovid.

4. Goddesses in *Fasti* 4

With this background in mind, let us turn to a poetic precinct of Venus, the fourth book of Ovid's *Fasti*.[51] Here we learn that April, the fourth month of the Roman year, belongs to Venus: Ovid adopts the Varronian etymology (*DLL* 6.33) that connects the name *Aprilis* with the Greek name Aphrodite (*Fasti* 4.61–62). In the opening passage of the book, Venus is

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[51] Ovid did not fail to notice or comment upon this remarkable precinct (*Ars* 1.67, 3.387). It is even true that in *Fasti* 3 Ovid made much of the iconographic overlap between the two divinities whom I have named as possible contributors to the military iconography of Venus Victrix, Minerva and Mars. Hinds, 'Arma in Ovid's *Fasti*, Part 1: Genre and Mannerism,' *Arethusa* 25 (1992) 81–112, esp. 87–82, 98–102. Thus the *Ars amatoria* establishes Ovid's absorption of the *opera Pompeiana,* together with other monuments, into his erotodidactic world-view, while *Fasti* 3 involves the kind of iconographic crossing that we have seen in the image of Venus Victrix herself. But while I do see the *opera Pompeiana* as a forerunner to Ovid, I do not claim that Ovid's treatment of Venus is directly based on representations of Venus Victrix in the *opera Pompeiana.*

ostentatiously invoked as the presiding deity of Ovid's poem, of his chosen genre, and of his career (1–18). The reason for this careful treatment is that the goddess has to be propitiated by the poet, who has just devoted a book to the month of Mars, theoretically the least elegiac god in the pantheon. The sequence is apt in a variety of ways. It is well known how fond Ovid is of characterizing the elegiac couplet as a pair of would-be epic verses that suddenly change course as the second line weakens and shortens, morphing into the 'pentameter' that establishes the elegiac form; and by changing form in this way, the meter becomes unsuitable for standard epic themes, and so must exchange these for lighter topics like love.[52] In the early books of the *Fasti,* the narrator has been worried about overloading his slender verse with weighty themes like astronomy, history, and so on.[53] Nowhere has the thematic burden been greater than in March, month of the war-god.[54] In the sequence March-Mars > April-Venus as well, the most epic month and divinity are followed by counterparts that (re)establish elegiac decorum after all. If we view this progression not just in terms of the elegiac couplet and its generic associations, but also keep its Empedoclean associations in mind, we find the familiar pattern of Mars' ascendancy followed by that of Venus, or war followed by peace.

With April we enter the realm of the feminine as well; for Venus is the first goddess to preside over a month in Ovid's calendar. She will not be the last: Maiestas and Maia are both invoked as the eponymous deities of May (*F.* 5.1–110), while Juno and her daughter Juventus both lay claim to June (while Concordia tries to prevent a quarrel by offering a third etymology: *F.* 6.1–100). So the second half of the *Fasti* is rich in eponymous goddesses. Too rich, in fact: for, in the last two books, it proves impossible for the poet to declare with certainty out of all possible contenders the goddess for whom the months of May and June are named.

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[52] The process is programmatically enacted in *Amores* 1.1.
[53] E.g. *F.* 2.3–8.
[54] Hinds (1992) 87–93.

No other goddess claims the month of April, however. It belongs to Venus alone. But while she gives her name to the month, she does not dominate it altogether or render it monochromatic. An important theme of the *Fasti* concerns the relationship between a month's presiding deity and the various other divinities whose festivals occur during those thirty days. This relationship can, and often does, have a generic character of considerable sophistication: thus Mars proves in March to be in some ways a less bellicose divinity than Minerva, and this characterization has a lot to do with Ovid's success in bringing this epic deity into the ambit of his elegiac poem.[55] After the generically transgressive month of March, however, April is presented as a return to elegy; and Venus is made the presiding deity not only of the month, but of the elegiac genre as well.

> 'Alma, fave', dixi 'geminorum mater Amorum';
>   ad vatem voltus rettulit illa suos;
> 'quid tibi' ait 'mecum? certe maiora canebas.
>   num vetus in molli pectore volnus habes?'
> 'scis, dea', respondi 'de volnere.' risit, et aether   5
>   protinus ex illa parte serenus erat.
> 'saucius an sanus numquid tua signa reliqui?
>   tu mihi propositum, tu mihi semper opus.
> quae decuit primis sine crimine lusimus annis;
>   nunc teritur nostris area maior equis.   10
> tempora cum causis, annalibus eruta priscis,
>   lapsaque sub terras ortaque signa cano.
> venimus ad quartum, quo tu celeberrima mense:
>   et vatem et mensem scis, Venus, esse tuos.'
> mota Cytheriaca leviter mea tempora myrto   15
>   contigit et 'coeptum perfice' dixit 'opus'.
> sensimus, et causae subito patuere dierum:
>   dum licet et spirant flamina, navis eat.

Stephen Hinds and Alessandro Barchiesi have brought out most of the essential aspects of Ovid's dialogue with Venus in the book's opening lines.[56] The familiar relationship between poet and goddess, the past that they share in love elegy, marks the

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[55] Hinds (1992).
[56] Hinds (1987) 118 and (1992) 85–87; Barchiesi (1997) 55–61.

exchange between them in a way that is unique in the *Fasti*.
Not only the month, but the poet as well, belongs to Venus.
Venus is here almost a generic marker of elegy in a context
where the poem's genre is very much at issue. The introduction
of Venus at the half-way point of the poem is figured as
restoring generic decorum, not only immediately after the
month of the war-god, but after all the weighty themes that
have been addressed over three previous books that greatly
expand upon Ovid's earlier elegiac program.[57]

Then there is the matter of book-design; L. Braun has drawn
attention to the careful arrangement of episodes in the poem,
and Elaine Fantham has clarified still further the structure of
book 4.[58] I have adapted elements of their accounts and put
them in the form of a chart:

Festivals	Goddesses
Veneralia (133–62):	Fortuna Virilis (145–54),
	Venus Verticordia (155–62)
Megalensia (255–372)	Magna Mater
Cerialia (393–620)	Ceres
(*Fordicidia:*	Numa and Faunus (629–75))
Cerialia (679–712)	Ceres
Parilia (721–806)	Pales
Vinalia (863–76)	Venus Erycina
Robigalia (905–42)	Robigo
Floralia (943–54)	Vesta

If we pay attention to festivals, we find that the book contains
episodes devoted to eight: the Veneralia, Megalensia, Cerialia,
Fordicidia, Parilia, Vinalia, Robigalia, Floralia. Only one of
these, the Fordicidia – which is sandwiched between accounts
of the Cerialia – is not dominated by one goddess or another.

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[57] Of particular importance is the programmatic couplet *tempora cum causis,
annalibus eruta priscis, / lapsaque sub terras ortaque signa cano* (11–12), an all-but-
exact quotation of *F.* 1.1–2 and a strong signal that the poem is about to begin again.
For this passage as a 'proem in the middle' see Barchiesi (1997) 56.

[58] L. Braun, 'Kompositionskunst in Ovids Fasti,' *ANRW* 2: 31.4, 2344–83;
Fantham, *Ovid: Fasti, Book 4* (Cambridge 1998) 36–38.

All the rest are devoted to their eponymous divinities – Venus, Magna Mater, Ceres, Pales, and Robigo – except the Vinalia, which is assigned Venus Erycina, and the Floralia, which is mentioned only to say that a full discussion will be postponed to the following book. As April unfolds, then, we find that not only Venus, but a variety of goddesses are accorded major episodes. These include Olympians like Ceres and Vesta, foreign imports like the Magna Mater, and such native personifications or abstractions as Fortuna Virilis, Pales, and Robigo. There is no other month in the poem that comprises so many festivals in honor of female divinities, and so few in honor of gods.

This fact in itself is remarkable; but I want to go a bit further to consider the ways in which these goddesses are represented. Their 'personalities' vary greatly, as we see immediately if we consider how these goddesses stand in relation to typical elegiac themes. Fortuna Virilis, at least, who grants women success in relationships with men, is clearly at home in Venus' month. The other goddesses, however, might seem at first to fit rather less comfortably. Ceres and Magna Mater are goddesses whose august dignity and indeed chastity are stressed.[59] And of course chastity is Vesta's defining characteristic. Among the Olympians, it is either she or Diana who comes closest to being Venus' exact opposite. As for Pales and, especially, Robigo, one has to admit that they are among the least sexy goddesses in the pantheon. It is not obvious, then, that any of these goddesses has a lot in common with the erotically-charged, elegiac Venus.

It was the more or less random sequence of festivals in the Roman religious calendar, of course, that presented Ovid with this motley collection of goddesses.[60] But one would be

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[59] On Ceres and chastity see B. S. Spaethe, *The Roman Goddess Ceres* (Austin 1996) 113–16.

[60] On *Fasti* 4 as a reaction to religious developments reflected in Augustan calendar see Molly Pasco-Pranger, '*Conditor anni:* Ovid's 'Fasti' and the Poetics of the Julio-Claudian Calendar' (diss. Michigan, 1998) ch. 3, 'Venus' Month,' 135–87. Pasco-Pranger traces many of the connections between the goddesses of *Fasti* 4 to the organic development of the calendar and of the cults involved and to what she believes was a popular perception that the cults were related. In her view, this social reality and Ovid's poetic treatment of his material are codependent elements. This is

disappointed in Ovid if he had shrunk from the opportunity to find links between them and the presiding divinity of this month and book. In fact, he succeeds brilliantly at this, often through what might seem throwaway gestures. For instance, when Magna Mater is en route from Asia to Rome, her ship puts in briefly at Cythera, which is called 'sacred to Venus' (*Veneri sacra Cythera* 286). Fantham (ad 285–86) notes that including the famous cult-site 'in this sketchy itinerary recalls the importance of Venus throughout this month/book.' I quite agree, and would suggest something in addition. Details of this sort multiply in such a way as not only to remind us constantly that we are in the book and the month of Venus, but to associate Cybele with Venus as well. When Ovid begins the episode of the Great Mother by asking the goddess for a learned interlocutor, she appoints one of the Muses, who are called her granddaughters (191–96). The one she chooses is Erato, who of course has a history of being singled out in generically sophisticated contexts.[61] Here Ovid states that she is chosen because her name is appropriate to Venus' month (*mensis Cythereius illi / cessit, quod teneri nomen amoris habet*, 195–96). In light of Ovid's earlier treatment of Venus as an emblem of erotic elegy (1–18), we can infer that his association of the Great Mother with both Venus and the Muse of erotic poetry is a way of making Cybele to acknowledge that she feels at home in Venus' precinct. Further, when Erato explains the reason behind Cybele's notorious association with the *galli*, her self-castrated priests, she presents the aetion, in keeping with the erotic connotations of her name, as a tragic love story (228–44), rather than, as in Catullus' famous version (*carm.* 63), a psychological study of religious ecstasy and its aftermath. Attis, according to Erato, was a beautiful boy with whom Cybele once fell in love:

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probably correct, although I would be inclined to place rather more stress on Ovid's inventiveness.

[61] On Vergil's invocation of Erato and its model in Apollonius of Rhodes, see Damien Nelis, *Vergil's* Aeneid *and the* Argonautica *of Apollonius* (Leeds 2001) 267–75.

Phryx puer in silvis, facie spectabilis, Attis
    turrigeram casto vinxit amore deam;
hunc sibi servari voluit, sua templa tueri   225
    et dixit 'semper fac puer esse velis.'

Cybele's is, to be sure, a 'chaste love' (*casto…amore* 224), in keeping with the goddess' character, and she wishes Attis to remain a virgin. Of course he fails, erotic hero that he is, unable to resist the nymph Sagaritis (*fallit, et in nympha Sagaritide desinit esse / quod fuit* 229–30). The Great Mother takes her revenge, killing the nymph by destroying a tree to which her life was bound (230–32) and driving Attis mad so that he castrates himself (233–42). By this act he fulfills the oath that he had taken to Cybele, that he would remain chastely faithful to her. The exact wording of this oath is important as well: *'si mentiar,' inquit, / 'ultima, qua fallam, sit **Venus** illa mihi'* (227–28).

The wording of the oath is another of those small ways in which Ovid keeps reminding the reader that this month belongs to Venus. At this point, it is true, Cybele's relationship to Venus looks almost purely antithetical, which makes the purpose of her later visit to Cythera rather obscure. But this would be a superficial judgment. When Erato finishes the story of Attis, Ovid asks her how it was that Magna Mater came to Rome in the first place (247–48). Erato then tells the familiar story of how, at a particularly bleak moment during the Second Punic War, Cybele's cult was imported on the advice of the *XVuiri sacris faciundis,* the priestly college in charge of interpreting the Sybilline books. The details that concern us first have to do with the moment of the goddess' arrival in Rome. There are two versions of this story. In one, the Sibylline books disclose that the goddess could be received only by the *vir optimus* in the city (Livy 29.14.10–14). In the other, the ship bearing the goddess runs aground on a shallow spot in the Tiber, and no amount of force can dislodge it. At this point a noblewoman by the name of Claudia Quinta steps forward, prays to Cybele, and tows the ship to shore all by herself.

It is, not surprisingly, the more miraculous version of the story that Ovid chooses to tell. In his rendition, when Claudia Quinta prays to Cybele, she uses these words: 'Accept on these

specific terms the prayers of your suppliant, nurturing one, fertile mother of the gods' (*supplicis, alma, tuae, genetrix fecunda deorum / accipe sub certa condicione preces* 319–20). There is nothing strange about hailing the Magna Mater in this way, but two details deserve comment. Addressing any goddess as *alma genetrix* is hard to do without recalling Lucretius' famous invocation of Venus at the beginning of the *De rerum natura* – *Aeneadum genetrix... alma Venus* – and thereby activating Lucretius' heady conception of Venus as embodiment of sexuality, Empedoclean principle of love, and earth-mother all in one. And as we have seen, the first-century Roman discourse about Venus that Lucretius' proem represents was widespread and emphasized the manifold capacities of the goddess, even capacities that might seem mutually incompatible or unlikely to occur in the same figure. Furthermore, Ovid's adoption of the Lucretian epithet *alma* as the very first word of *Fasti* 4 stamps the epithet as Venus' property. The form of address used by Claudia Quinta, then, activates this discourse and suggests that Venus and the Great Mother – who from certain angles might look almost like opposites – actually have a lot in common.

For example, they have Claudia Quinta herself, who looks like Venus, but behaves like a chaste devotee of Cybele. She is as beautiful as she is noble and virtuous, though widely traduced by irresponsible rumor:

> Claudia Quinta genus Clauso referebat ab alto   305
>   (nec facies impar nobilitate fuit),
> casta quidem, sed non et credita: rumor iniquus
>   laeserat, et falsi criminis acta rea est.
> cultus et ornatis varie prodisse capillis
>   obfuit ad rigidos promptaque lingua senes.   310
> conscia mens recti famae mendacia risit,
>   sed nos in vitium credula turba sumus.

It is in fact this gossip that causes her to vindicate herself publicly by performing the miracle that completes Cybele's journey to Rome.

haec ubi castarum processit ab agmine matrum
    et manibus puram fluminis hausit aquam,
ter caput inrorat, ter tollit in aethera palmas   315
    (quicumque aspiciunt, mente carere putant),
summissoque genu voltus in imagine divae
    figit, et hos edit crine iacente sonos:
'supplicis, alma, tuae, genetrix fecunda deorum,
    accipe sub certa condicione preces.   320
casta negor: si tu damnas, meruisse fatebor;
    morte luam poenas iudice victa dea;
sed si crimen abest, tu nostrae pignora vitae
    re dabis, et castas casta sequere manus.'
dixit, et exiguo funem conamine traxit;   325
    mira, sed et scaena testificata loquar:
mota dea est, sequiturque ducem laudatque sequendo;
    index laetitiae fertur ad astra sonus.

The goddess' arrival is attended by many women who are, like her, 'chaste mothers' (*castarum…matrum* 313). The heroine of Erato's story steps out of this group (*processit* 313), thus distinguishing herself from them. After a brief act of ritual purification (314–15), which causes onlookers to think she is crazy (316), she addresses the goddess in words that I have already discussed (316–20), and asks that the rumors about her be proven either true – in which case she agrees to suffer the death that she would deserve – or false (321–24). She then grasps a cable that is attached to the boat that bears the goddess and, to the delight of the onlookers, easily draws the boat to shore (325–28). By accomplishing herself what strong men could not, she proves that chastity is not incompatible with beauty and, incidentally, shows herself to be the precise inverse of Attis in Erato's tale: where he prayed for punishment if he should break his vow of chastity, did break it, and was driven mad, Claudia was thought mad, prayed for punishment if she had been unchaste, and was vindicated. Clearly, this Claudia, and not Attis, is the ideal servant of the Great Mother,

especially in this precinct of Venus, because she possesses attributes of both goddesses.[62]

On this reading, Ovid's treatment of goddesses seems to parallel rather closely his virtuoso 'crossing' of literary genres. The same process of association extends beyond Magna Mater to other goddesses, all of whom, no matter how different, come in this book to resemble both Venus and one another. Previously I mentioned Cybele's call at Cythera en route to Italy. Fantham points out (ad *Fasti* 4.281) that this portion of Cybele's route is essentially reversed by that of Ceres when she sets out in search of Proserpina: Cybele's progress from the Hellespont to the Cyclades through the Icarian Sea past Sicily to Rome, is mirrored by Ceres' journey from Sicily past the Cyclades through the Icarian Sea to the Hellespont. Again, a chart helps to make clear the relationship:

Cybele's route to Rome	Ceres' search for Proserpina
Longaque Phrixeae stagna sororis…veteres Eetionis opes 278–80	*urbes Asiae…Hellespontum* 567
Cyclades 281	*Cycladas* 565
[*mare*] *Icarium* 283	*Icariumque* 566
mare Trinacrium 287	

Cybele and Ceres are linked in other ways as well, primarily as mothers, and Ceres is linked with Venus as a manifestation of female generative force. But it is not only sexuality that characterizes these goddesses. When Cybele arrives in Rome, she is met by all orders of society, including all honest women, married and unmarried: *matres nataeque nurusque / quaeque colunt sanctos virginitate focos* (295–96). The story that Erato is telling Ovid involves not only beauty, but chastity as well, so the presence of the Vestals is fitting. This detail looks ahead to the end of the book when Ovid mentions the final festival of

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[62] Claudia is also, I note in passing, a wonderful emblem of the elegiac woman in the post-exilic phase of Ovid's career. Space does not permit me to explore her possible relevance as a poetological figure.

the month, the Floralia. His allusion to the licentious character of this festival is brief (*scaena ioci morem liberioris habet* 946), and, since the celebration extends into May, he decides to put off his narration until the following book, where he does in fact cover it with enthusiasm (5.183–330). Here instead, he gives the day to Vesta, a goddess about as different from Flora as she can possibly be. One might have said different from Venus as well. But observe how Ovid introduces her: *cognati Vesta recepta est / limine: sic iusti constituere patres* (949–50). Convincing parallels suggest the *cognatus* whom Ovid has in mind is none other than Augustus.[63] The relationship runs through Troy back to Venus. Thus even the goddess who is most nearly Venus' conceptual and behavioral opposite within the Olympian pantheon becomes acclimated to the precinct of Venus.

Such gestures not only remind us that this is Venus' month and book, but invite us to associate Venus with the other goddesses with whom she shares her month and book. I began by noting that Ovid first presents Venus as an emblem of his earlier erotic poetry, and we could certainly decode the relationships between Venus and these other goddesses in more traditional ways by correlating them with specific literary forms. In fact, the fundamental work on Ovidian genre takes just this path, in Richard Heinze's and then in Stephen Hinds' readings of the Persephone story through the lenses of epic, elegy, and hymn.[64] When we read about Claudia Quinta's miracle, for instance, we are told that it was miraculous, but that one has to believe it because it was the subject of a play (*mira, sed et scaena testificata loquar* 326).[65] Later, as if to confirm Cybele's associations with the stage, Ovid discusses with Erato the origin of the *ludi Megalenses* (357–60).[66]

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[63] See Fantham's comment ad *Fasti* 4.949–51.

[64] Heinze (1919), Hinds (1987).

[65] It is a nice touch that the Muse herself should cite a play as conclusive proof that an allegedly historical event actually occurred.

[66] As I noted above (n. 28), Pompeius when appealing to precedent in justifying the presentation of plays before his temple of Venus Victrix, cited the *ludi Megalenses* performed in front of the temple of Magna Mater on the Palatine.

Thus the parallel between goddesses and literary genres runs strong. What I am recommending is an extension of this insight, according to which the goddesses are not merely emblems of various literary genres, but are themselves, as it were, specific representatives of the genre 'goddess,' related but differentiated in the way that all members of any category necessarily are. But it is understood that in this book, the genre 'goddess' is shaded in the direction of the subgenre Venus. This process entails both finding elements of Venus within the other goddesses and expanding our notion of Venus to make room for their attributes as well. In essence, this precinct of Venus, which Ovid presents as a return to his old haunts, transforms Venus by associating her with other goddesses who are less obviously emblematic, or not at all emblematic of elegiac love poetry. By this process of association, Ovid's Venus becomes a complex figure whose cult extends to both matrons and streetwalkers, whose generative force animates both farmlands and the Roman imperial family, and whose manifestations extend from literally naked sexuality to ritual chastity.

5. Venus in Horace's Fourth Book of *Odes*
The development of Ovid's Venus between the *Amores* and *Fasti* 4 traces an arc that leads from one-dimensional, elegiac love goddess to a much more diverse figure with complex generic associations. I do not find this treatment of goddess or genre anticipated in previous literature. While I obviously cannot test this hypothesis by canvassing all of Ovid's literary predecessors, I can focus on an exceptionally important comparandum in Horace's fourth book of *Odes*.[67]

Odes 4 and *Fasti* 4 are obvious candidates for intertextual analysis. Their formal interrelationship is strong. Each stands fourth in a series of poetry books.[68] Each of them begins with its poet encountering Venus, but not for the first time: both

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[67] I am grateful to Michael Putnam for discussion of this relationship, on which see Feeney (1998) 101–4, Barchiesi (1997) 54–57, 60, 83, 268–69.

[68] Barchiesi (1997) 54. This parallelism remains strong in spite of the fact that *Odes* 4 is an independent *corpus* as is the earlier collection of books 1–3, whereas *Fasti* 4 is part of a single *corpus* of six books.

Horace and Ovid figure their encounters as resuming relationships that had lapsed.[69] And in both cases, the poets treat Venus as an emblem of their previous love poetry. There are less direct correspondences as well. Again in poem 1 Horace honors the aristocratic courtier Paullus Fabius Maximus (10–11), who does not happen to appear in *Fasti* 4, but who is an important honorand elsewhere in the *Fasti*.[70] A passage in which Paullus figures indirectly is the end of book 6, where his wife, Marcia, appears in the temple of Hercules Musarum.[71] When Hercules in the last words of the *Fasti* strums his lyre (*increpuitque lyram* 6.812), Ovid seems to be quoting the last poem of *Odes* 4 (*increpuit lyra* 4.15.2).[72] This correspondence, then, establishes a formal similarity between the *Fasti* as a whole (that is, in its surviving condition as a six-book corpus) and Horace's fourth book.

If we look for additional details that might have caught Ovid's eye as he read *Odes* 4 in preparation for writing *Fasti* 4, we will not be disappointed. *Ode* 11, which takes place on the Ides of April, connects that month with Venus by the same etymology involving the name of Aphrodite to which Ovid refers (*carm.* 4.11.13–16; *F.* 4.61–62). To a reader (or writer) of the *Fasti,* Horace's deployment of a reference to the Ides of April in the eleventh poem of fifteen might seem momentarily to convert his book of *Odes* into a kind of calendar – an interpretation supported by Horace's treatment of state religious festivals in his earlier collection of odes.[73] In view of

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[69] Barchiesi (1997) 54–55.

[70] 1.605–6; 2.193–242. See Barchiesi (1997) 55.

[71] See Newlands (1996) 22, 219

[72] Barchiesi (1997) 269. Ovid is also recalling his earlier quotation of this passage in another final poem, *Amores* 3.15.17. On these relationships see Newlands (1996) 218.

[73] Horace's location of the Ides of April, the thirteenth day of a thirty-day month, in the eleventh of fifteen poems or 404 (or 406) lines into a book that contains 580 lines, involves only an approximate correspondence between the size of the book and that of the notional month to which it corresponds (13/30 = .433, 404/580 = .697), but Ovid varies by similar amounts in the placement of fixed days within books of the *Fasti;* and in fact his placement of the Ides of April is very similar to that of Horace, beginning at line 621 of 954-line book (= .651).

these congruencies, it seems certain that *Odes* 4 was in Ovid's mind as he designed the fourth book of the *Fasti.*

By the usual procedures of intertextual analysis, it would be possible to interpret *Fasti* 4 to some significant extent as a permutation of *Odes* 4. Such an interpretation would not of course argue that *Fasti* 4 derives solely or perhaps even principally from Horace, but it would tend to construe any differences between the two books as instances of *variatio* or dialogue within a substantially unified and continuous poetic tradition. Thus when Ovid devotes no more than a cursory four-line notice to the Ides (621–24) – a notice that is among the very briefest devoted to any fixed day in the *Fasti* – and mentions two temple foundations, those of Jupiter Victor and Libertas, with no indication that Maecenas' birthday was on his mind in the least, the interpreter may see something that looks not like neglect of *Odes* 4.11, but like complementarity: where Horace by his usual practice had made the day one of private celebration, Ovid instead connects it with public events. In any case, the overall impression of congruency between the two books is strong enough that most readers would probably conclude that *Odes* 4 is an important literary source or model for *Fasti* 4, and that it would therefore be worth investigating whether Horace is also a source for Ovid's representation of Venus and of his characteristic attitude towards generic miscegenation.

What this investigation will show is that the relationship between *Odes* 4 and *Fasti* 4 actually *excludes* the possibility that Horace could be advanced as a source or even as a plausible analogue to Ovid's treatment of the goddess or to his characteristic attitude towards genre. In fact, Ovid's treatment of Venus in *Fasti* 4 differs decisively from Horace's approach in *Odes* 4, and each poet's development of the theme of Venus closely parallels his handling of genre.

Upon reflection, what initially look like strong similarities between Horace's Venus and Ovid's come to look rather superficial. Both poets, as I have said, address Venus at the opening of their respective books as the goddess of love and as

an emblem of their previous poetic endeavors. The goddess visits Horace unbidden and, as it appears, against his will.[74] In fact, he tells her, repeatedly, to go away (*parce* 2, *desine* 4, *abi* 7). He is not what he once was, he tells her (*non sum qualis eram* 3). This attitude is in sharp contrast to that of Ovid, who, as we have seen, summons the goddess to assist him (*Alma, fave* 1) as he approaches her month; and when she, unlike Horace's Venus, shows reluctance on the grounds that Ovid has become interested in more elevated themes (*'quid tibi' ait 'mecum? certe maiora canebas'* 2), the poet insists that he is still her poet, and does so in terms that establish a pointed contrast to Horace's reluctance. Whereas Horace, borrowing the elegiac motif of *militia amoris,* complains that he is too old to obey Venus' *imperiis* (6) or when he suggests that his young friend Paullus is better able to carry the standards of her army (*late **signa feret militiae tuae*** 16), Ovid insists that he has never deserted those standards (*saucius an sanus numquid **tua signa** reliqui?* 7) and asserts his unwavering devotion to Venus (*tu mihi propositum, tu mihi semper opus* 8).

Thus Horace and Ovid are engaged in very different projects. For his part, Horace is not playing a game that tests or blurs the boundaries of genre; rather, as usual in the *Odes,* he is concerned to establish or confirm the independence and self-sufficiency of lyric as against other genres. With respect to his earlier lyric poetry, Horace's project in *Odes* 4 is to specify what is different about this new collection. Here Horace adopts a tendentiously monolithic perspective on lyric; for the proposition 'lyric poetry = love poetry' is clearly false. For proof one need look no farther than Horace's first collection of lyrics, which includes love poetry but also hymns, paraenesis, and various other kinds.[75] Nevertheless, by adopting this

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[74] My interpretation of Venus in *Odes* 4 is based on those of Putnam (1986) and Feeney (1993).

[75] G. O. Hutchinson, 'The Publication and Individuality of Horace's *Odes* Books 1–3,' *CQ* 52 (2002) 517–37, argues that *Odes* 1–3 only gradually assumed the shape of a unified collection. From the perspective of *Odes* 4, however, and still more that of *Fasti* 4, it is legitimate to think only of the unified result, and not of the gradual process that produced it.

tendentious stance Horace opens the way to refashion the genre
on different lines than before.[76]

One technique that Horace employs to effect this
redefinition of lyric is to mark certain themes as belonging to
other genres. This is a technique that he had used to good effect
in *Odes* 1–3. To take the textbook example, in *Ode* 1.6 Horace
declares his inability to write epic poetry, telling Agrippa that he
had better apply to Varius for a poem on his exploits. He thus
establishes a distinction between epic and lyric that serves to
define his current project in terms of genre. But between the
first and second collection of odes there is an important
difference. The ode to Agrippa, while distancing Horace's lyric
project from Varius' hypothetical epic, also demonstrates the
capacity of Horatian lyric to honor the deeds of great men. This
is a major goal of *Odes* 1–3 as a whole: not merely to delimit a
narrow space within which Horatian lyric might distinguish
itself from other genres, but to demonstrate the capaciousness
of that space and the ability of the genre to do many things,
including things that might be thought especially appropriate to
other genres. There is admittedly an element of genre-crossing
in this strategy; but Horace's point is rarely, or perhaps never to
pose teasing questions about the nature of his generic project.
Instead, throughout the first collection of odes he regularly
appeals to canonical precedents for virtually everything that he
does in the realm of lyric poetry.

Against this background, the fourth book of *Odes* takes on
an even more conservative generic aspect. In a certain sense, this
book does not introduce anything to the genre that is not
already present, if only *in nuce,* in *Odes* 1–3; it does, on the
other hand, greatly accentuate certain of those elements at the
expense of others. This it accomplishes, as I have said, by
tendentiously defining the first lyric collection as 'love poetry'

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[76] On the strategy of pretending that a given genre is a simpler and more
monochromatic thing than it in fact is, see Hinds, 'Epic Essentialism from Macer to
Statius' in *Matrices of Genre: Authors, Canons, and Society,* ed. Mary Depew and Dirk
Obbink (Cambridge, Mass., 2000) 222–23; Alison Keith, *Engendering Rome: Women
in Latin Epic* (Cambridge 2000); Farrell, 'Classical Genre in Theory and Practice' in
Theorizing Genres II, ed. Hayden White and Ralph Cohen, *New Literary History* 34
(2003) 383–408.

in order to define the new collection as something else. When
Horace begins by asking Venus not to revisit him after a long
absence, he falsely suggests that 'lyric poetry' was in the past
coextensive with 'love poetry'; and when he then immediately
invokes the elegiac motif of *militia amoris* by saying that he is
too old to obey Venus' *imperiis* and that Paullus should be the
one to carry her standards, he begins the process of
distinguishing his new lyric project from the false image of his
previous one by saying, in effect, that 'love poetry' is now the
province of his earlier lyric poetry (or perhaps of elegy), but not
of mature Horatian lyric. Note that his purpose in making this
claim is very different from the one he had made in declaring
that he could not give Agrippa an epic. There his point was to
establish the boundaries and the integrity of his chosen genre as
against epic, but also to show that lyric poetry has its own
protocols of praise. Here an elegiac motif is invoked in order to
exclude from Horace's new vision of lyric the very theme that,
as he speciously suggests, had previously defined the genre.
Elegy, in fact, plays a role in this project that continues
throughout *Odes* 4.[77] The sophistication of Horace's generic
project in *Odes* 4 is thus very apparent; but it is hardly false to
the spirit of this project to maintain that all of Horace's generic
sophistication is deployed in the service of *narrowing* the genre
and *restricting* its purview to only a part of what it might be – of
what, in Horace's own previous lyric poetry, it had actually
been.

Ovid's project in *Fasti* 4 could hardly be more different from
this. As I have noted, the book presents itself as a return to 'love
poetry', as does *Odes* 4; but unlike Horace, who affects to shun
the implications of Venus' return, Ovid embraces them, except
in so far as he claims that it is not so much a matter of 'return,'
because he himself has never left the goddess' service. Already
this is an ambitious claim about the boundaries and capacities
of elegy: the reader has (in an ideal sense) just finished reading a
book about the month of Mars in which the issue of
accommodating military elements within an elegiac poem was a

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[77] Note in particular Putnam's arguments concerning reevaluation of Propertius
(1986, 26–28 and passim).

major theme.[78] At the beginning of *Fasti* 4, then, the word *signa* invokes not just the theme of *militia amoris,* but also the generic duality between epic and elegy that is never far from the poem's surface and is very much in play here at the juncture between March and April, the months of Mars and Venus. What is more, *signa* in the *Fasti* possesses an entire register of significance that is lacking in *Odes* 4. Recall that *signa* in the sense of 'sidereal constellations' is the word that Ovid uses at the beginning of *Fasti* 1 to denote the poem's astronomical program – a passage that he repeats very soon after he pledges his continued allegiance to Venus' standards (*tempora cum causis, annalibus eruta priscis, / lapsaque sub terras ortaque signa cano,* 4.11–12; cf. 1.1–2). Thus we cannot simply read Horatian and Ovidian *signa* as identical. Horace invokes the motif of *signa* to launch a strategy of excluding erotic themes from his new lyric project. Ovid instead, even as he declares that he has really never been anything but a love poet, proves that his poetry is inextricably involved in generic projects of quite other sorts with no intrinsic connection to love poetry at all.[79]

These sharply contrasting generic programs parallel very different treatments of the goddess as well. Horace begins by identifying 'lyric poetry' with Venus and then moves in a very clear direction from one conception of goddess and genre to a very different conception of both. *Odes* 4 moves from a narrowly and tendentiously defined literary Venus, closely identified with Sappho's Aphrodite, to one who is more at home in Roman cult and in Augustan propaganda as the

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[78] Hinds (1992).

[79] It is worth mentioning in passing the line following Ovid's declaration that he has never deserted Venus' standards, in which he insists that Venus always was and always would be his subject (*tu mihi propositum, tu mihi semper opus* 8). This line is also open to an intertextual reading that involves Horace, in that Ovid seems to have phrased it in such a way as to emphasize Horace's fickleness. At any rate in the *Epistles* Horace had made a similar promise to Maecenas (*prima dicte mihi, summa dicende Camena* 1.1.1); and it is in *Odes* 4 that he breaks this promise, relegating Maecenas to a relatively unimportant role as compared with his extreme prominence in all of Horace's previous works. It may also be significant that Ovid elsewhere (*Ars* 3.346) uses *opus* to mean 'literary genre.'

mother of the Roman people.[80] Introduced in poem 1 as
dulcium / mater saeva Cupidinum (5), by the end of the book
(*Ode* 15) she remains a mother, but her character and that of
her offspring have changed: no longer *saeva,* but *alma,* she has
given birth to a new subject for Horace's song, not *amor* (or
Amor) but a whole genealogy summed up in the phrase
Troiamque et Anchisen et almae / progeniem Veneris (31–32).

How are we to understand this change? Denis Feeney is right
to insist that 'any one work may contain numerous different
ways of conceiving of a single divinity' and that even if 'modern
readers may consider such variety to be incoherent,' the net
result is more accurately read as an index of the multifarious
power that Romans typically associate with divinity.[81] I would
add to this that, while actual incoherence is (usually) beside the
point, neither poet nor reader is under any obligation to resolve
the various tensions created by a disunified representation of
godhead.[82] In the case of Venus in *Odes* 4, Horace's project of
lyric resumption clearly begins in one place and moves
relentlessly to another. Along the way, goddess and genre shed
their prior associations. As Michael Putnam puts it, 'The
tranformation of Venus from goddess of love to historical
ancestress of Rome and exemplary divinity of the Augustan
peace is metaphoric for alterations in the personae that Horace
chooses to adopt and in the poetry that describes them.'[83]
'Transformation' is the *mot just,* and Putnam captures the
essence of Venus' transformation in a superb epigram: 'The
mater Cupidinum has become someone whose offspring is

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[80] On Sappho see Putnam (1986) 39–42.
[81] Feeney (1993) 101.
[82] On 'unity' as an arbitrary criterion see A. Sharrock, 'Intratextuality: Parts and
(W)holes in Theory' in *Intratextuality: Greek and Roman Textual Relations,* ed. A.
Sharrock and H. Morales (Oxford 2000) 1–39. I say that incoherence is 'usually'
beside the point because incoherence in a different sense from the one that concerns
Feeney can indeed be an important element in Roman representations of divinity.
Ovid in particular is a master of this principle. The most obvious, and emblematic,
example of productive Ovidian incoherence would be his representation of Janus as
Chaos (*Fasti* 1.103). A more subtle but nevetheless powerful instance involves the
representation of Apollo, Phoebus, and Sol in the *Metamorphoses,* about which I have
once again learned much from Alex Thein.
[83] Putnam (1986) 298.

Aeneas.'[84] Feeney is in fundamental agreement: 'Not only the manner of representing Venus changes after the first poem, however, for the 'savage mother of the sweet Cupids,' the menacing figure of love lyric, will be changed by the final poem into a different kind of mother, with different offspring.'[85] This line of analysis seems to me absolutely right. *Odes* 4 unquestionably develops with two contrasting conceptions of Venus in mind; and the work it performs is not to integrate these two conceptions, but to move convincingly from one to the other – and to do so in a way that does not seem to be concerned with closing the loop and going back again.[86] The road from Sappho's love goddess to Augustus' ancestor leads us in only one direction and involves not an expansion but a redefinition – and, in my view, a deliberate narrowing of Venus' significance.

Ovid's handling of Venus could not be more different from this. *Fasti* 4 works by expanding the meaning of both Venus and elegy, moving not in a straight line from one specific meaning to another, different meaning, but roaming through a spacious field of associations by which both goddess and genre acquire greater and more complex significance. The process is at once a celebration of Venus' divinity and an expansion of elegiac potential. In sum, the differences between *Odes* 4 and *Fasti* 4 that involve Venus closely parallel fundamental differences between Horace's and Ovid's conceptions of literary genre. In spite of a clear intertextual relationship between these two works, there is a significant difference in outlook as well, and one that is not easily explained in terms of organic development within the realm of poetry alone. Much more could be said on this score, but I do not want to overstate the case. The main point is that Ovid adopts, celebrates, and develops a polyvalent conception of Venus and of genre with

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[84] Putnam (1986) 296 n. 50.

[85] Feeney (1993) 102. It seems to me particularly significant that Feeney makes this comment on Venus' development in *Odes* 4 in a context where he is at pains to emphasize the multidimensionality and polyvalence of Roman conceptions of divinity.

[86] The motif on linear movement is in one direction only is reinforced by the relentless linkage in *Odes* 4 of the theme of love with that of aging and death.

which Horace must also be familiar. But where Ovid embraces this diversity, Horace instead works to focus on just a few very specific characteristics both of Venus and of the lyric genre in which he celebrates the goddess.

It would be extremely interesting to trace the literary development of Venus along a continuum from the time of Lucretius to that of Ovid. If we were to do so, I believe we would find that, despite many points of similarity between Ovid and Catullus, Vergil, Tibullus, Propertius, and Horace, only Lucretius among Latin poets approaches Ovid in his celebration of Venus in all her complexity. Even so, I do not see how one could sustain an argument that the Venus of *Fasti* 4 derives mainly from the goddess as she is represented in the *De rerum natura.* Lucretius refers to a conception of Venus that, however striking and original it may be, is clearly meant to be familiar to contemporary readers. It is to the Venus of Sulla, Pompeius, and Caesar that he refers, and to the relationship between this politicized Venus and the Empedoclean allegory of Love and Strife. The image of Venus in *Fasti* 4 is, I would say, not simply derived from, but rather cognate with that of Lucretius. It is engaged with the development of Republican Venus cults from the time of the Second Punic War, and it shows strong affinities with the highly tendentious discourse surrounding the cults promoted by Sulla, Pompeius, and Caesar. Before proceeding to the final stages of my argument, it will be useful to review briefly a few of the more salient points pertaining to Venus in the building programs of Pompeius and Caesar, and to Augustus' reponse to these programs.

6. Augustus and the *opera Pompeiana*
When Julius Caesar was assassinated, his heir inherited the opportunity to follow through on Caesar's projects in whatever way he saw fit. One of these projects was a theater planned to be even larger than that of Pompeius. Its site between the Circus Flaminius and the Forum Holitorium was only a few minutes' walk from the *opera Pompeiana,* so that comparison would be unavoidable. But there were additional reasons for choosing this site. The cult of Apollo Medicus had been installed here in response to a plague that struck the city as long

ago as 433 B.C., in the early days of the Republic. The person
who imported this cult was, opportunely, C. (or Cn.) Iulius
Mento, who built the original temple on this site in 431.[87]
Some sense of the area as a more or less coherent district may
have begun to develop by 291, when the cult of Asclepius, god
of healing and son of Apollo, was imported from Epidaurus and
established on the Tiber island, directly across from the site of
the Apollo temple.[88] But in any case the *ludi Apollinares,* which
eventually occupied nine days in July every year, were first
celebrated outside the Apollo temple in 212; and in 179 a
theater was built there – probably, then, on the site that was
eventually occupied by the Theater of Marcellus.[89] At this same
time, the temple of Juno Regina was built nearby.[90] In 131 Q.
Caecilius Metellus surrounded this temple and that of Jupiter
Stator with a monumental *porticus.*[91] This was rebuilt in 27–25
B.C. as the *porticus Octaviae.*[92] There was only one other major
temple in this area, that of Bellona, which had been vowed by
Appius Claudius Caecus in 296, and which remained identified
with the Claudii thereafter.[93] Augustus' marriage to Livia
brought this legacy into his family as well.

It is resonable to think of the structures in this area as
defining a rather marked Julio-Claudian zone. In formal terms,
this zone differs in key ways from the one defined by the *opera
Pompeiana.* For one thing, there was no *curia* in Augustus'
theater district, where theaters were theaters and nothing else.[94]

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[87] Livy 4.25.3, 4.29.7.
[88] Val. Max. 1.8.2, Livy 10.47.6–7 and *epit.* 11, Ovid *Met.* 15.736–44, Pliny *NH*
29.16, 72, Plut. *QR* 94, Aur. Vict. *De vir. ill.* 22.
[89] *ludi:* Livy 25.12.3–15, 27.23.5, Festus 438 L, Macrob. *Sat.* 1.17.27; *theatrum
et proscaenium:* Livy 40.51.3
[90] Livy 40.52.1.
[91] Vell. Pat. 1.11.3–7. 2.1.1. The date of Jupiter Stator is not known, but it is
generally assumed to be earlier than that of Juno Regina. Metellus may have rebuilt
either or both temples at the time when he built his *porticus,* but this too is uncertain.
[92] Vell. Pat. 1.11.3.
[93] Livy 10.19.17, Ovid *F.* 6.201–4, Pliny *HN* 35.12.
[94] Senate meetings might take place in any temple, and of course there were
temples in this district. The temple of Apollo Medicus, for instance, was 'a favorite
place for meetings of the senate, especially for meeting foreign embassies and
deliberating about triumphs' (Richardson (1992) 13); similarly the adjacent temple
of Bellona (Richardson (1992) 58).

The *theatrum Marcelli* did contain temples (of Diana and Pietas); these did not, however, dominate the *cavea,* turning it into an enormous staircase, but were relegated to the tiny, unimportant *porticus* behind the stage.[95] The important *porticus* serving this theater was the *porticus Octaviae,* which was directly adjacent, but off-axis, indeed almost wilfully unrelated to the theater by any overt formal design, such as one sees in the *opera Pompeiana.* The *porticus Octaviae* contained temples to Juno Regina and Jupiter Stator; but the really important temple in this district was just outside the *porticus.* This was the temple of Apollo Medicus (later Sosianus), the temple that had given rise to the first theater on this site. Again, however, this temple is an unambiguously free-standing structure rather than an integral part of the Augustan theater, and there is absolutely no ambiguity involving the formal relationship between temple and *cavea.* For this reason, the spatial relation of *cavea* to temple in the *theatrum Marcelli*/Apollo Medicus complex can be read as a pointed reply to the deliberate combining and mixing of architectural genres that we see in the *opera Pompeiana.*

If we consider other temples in the same area, we notice a kind of studied casualness in their relation to the theater, to the portico of Octavia, and to one another. Apollo Sosianus (another project begun by someone else and finished by Augustus in a way that served his own purposes rather than those of the original builder[96]) is situated directly behind and

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[95] In fact, two old temples in honor of Diana and Pietas were demolished to make room for the theater. The cults were installed in shrines within the *porticus* of the theater by way of compensation.

[96] The temple of which part is visible today is often called the temple of Apollo Sosianus (Pliny *HN* 13.53, 36.28), which indicates that it was vowed by C. Sosius, one of Julius Caesar's lieutenants, consul in 32, and an ally of Antonius at Actium. To judge from the pedimental sculpture (an Amazonomachy), the temple would presumably have been vowed in connection with a victory in the east, such as Sosius' triumph over Judaea in 34 (references in T. R. S. Broughton, *The Magistrates of the Roman Republic* (Cleveland 1952) 2: 412–13); but an interior frieze depicting a sacrificial procession appears to commemorate northern rather than eastern victories. It is therefore assumed that Octavian took control of Sosius' project after Actium and used it to commemorate his own subsequent victories in the north. Sosius evidently cooperated in this change of direction: he prospered under Augustus and is listed present as along with Augustus, Agrippa, and the rest of the *XVviri sacris faciundis* at

on-axis with the *cavea* of the *theatrum Marcelli;* but, like the
temple of Bellona next to it, the temple faces southeast (towards
the *forum holitorium*), while the theater faces southwest
(towards the Tiber Island), so that they do not 'read' as if they
were components of an integrated design. The *porticus Octaviae,*
by contrast, and the two temples that it encloses, face in exactly
the same direction as the theater; but they are decidedly off-axis
in relation to it. Thus the differences between the structures in
this precinct and those of the *opera Pompeiana* are very clear.
Apart from a *curia,* the same major elements (theater, temples,
monumental *quadriporticus*) are found in both precincts. But
where Pompeius created a colossal, integrated, axially-organized
complex in a space that had previously held nothing, the
Augustan precinct of Apollo Medicus gives little impression of
being part of a single master plan and much evidence of having
grown organically and with ostentatious respect for precedent.

The contrast between the two great theater precincts is very
clear. The *opera Pompeiana* complex was revolutionary: nothing
this novel and ambitious had even been built before in Rome. It
daringly challenged conventional categories of public space by
oscillating between the uses of *otium* and *negotium.* It even
posed as a new center of civic life, threatening to replace the
Forum itself. The Julio-Claudian precinct to the south of
Pompeius' complex gives a very different impression. Lacking
any single geometric plan to give it rigorous formal unity, it in
effect advertises the fact that it developed organically through
centuries of Republican government; but it does so in such a
way as to give witness both to the historical importance of
Augustus' ancestors and to the overwhelming importance of his
family in the present day. It does not attempt to mix *otium* and
negotium: lacking a senate house or any other administrative
facility, it was mainly a celebration of leisure. It certainly did
not challenge the Forum as a civic center; nor did it need to.

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the performance of Horace's *carmen saeculare* in the Theater of Marcellus during the
ludi saeculares of 17 B.C. (*CIL* 6: 32323 = *ILS* 5050, 150). On the iconography of
the temple see E. La Rocca, *Amazonomachia: le sculpture frontonali del tempio di
Apollo Sosiano* (Rome 1985) and A. Viscoglioso, *Il tempio di Apollo in Circo e la
formazione del linguaggio architettonico augusteo* (Rome 1996).

Julius and Augustus each built fora to which they gave their names. Viewed in isolation, both of these new forum projects might appear as evidence of colossal arrogance. But when judged against the overweening ambition of the *opera Pompeiana,* the *forum Iulium* and *forum Augustum* look like much more conventional and badly needed additions to the ancient center of public life rather than attempts to replace it.

Augustus' cultural program in many respects contributed to a narrowing of focus in defining Roman civic life. This is most apparent in Augustus' virtual monopolization of patronage, which even functioned retroactively. It is obvious that his restoration of so many public buildings had the effect of making him, as much or more than the original builders, the patron of most of the public architecture in the city. Accordingly, besides building or sponsoring projects that would rival Pompeius' greatest architectural legacy, Augustus took the opportunity to 'restore' this legacy as well. We do not know when this work took place or exactly what it entailed.[97] It appears that one aspect of the rebuilding involved converting the *curia* – the place where Caesar had been assassinated – into a public latrine.[98] By removing the *curia,* Augustus eliminated the principal source of the tension between *otium* and *negotium* that had enlivened the original design. It is possible that he further compromised the integrity of the original concept by erecting a stage building to divide the theater from the portico, effectively destroying the sight lines that focused on the temple of Venus.[99] This is not to say that Augustus ruined Pompeius' greatest architectural legacy, which remained Rome's most important theater throughout antiquity, or even that he wanted

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[97] The restoration is conventionally dated to 32, when Agrippa as aedile undertook a massive public works program, but there is no positive evidence that the *opera Pompeiana* were involved in it.

[98] Casius Dio 47.19.1.

[99] I have mentioned Gleason's suggestion that the original design did not include a permanent *scaena.* It is clear, however, that one was eventually built, and if Gleason's argument is correct, then it seems likely that the *scaena* was added at this time. The effect of this addition would have been to separate the theater and the portico enclosure into two very distinct spaces, resolving some of the ambiguity that had characterized the original design.

to ruin it.[100] Rather, in 'restoring' it, he reinterpreted it in a way that is not so different from the way in which Horace reinterpreted his earlier lyric poetry in book 4 of his *Odes*. By separating the theater proper from the garden portico, Augustus would have clarified the role of each space, eliminated some of the ambiguity involved in the theater's design, and removed much of the structure's generic indeterminacy. In addition, and not incidentally, Augustus' 'restoration' put him in the position of claiming at least co-authorship of Pompeius' masterpiece.

Both these points are important. We can see quite clearly what was involved in Augustus' reinterpretation of the theater. Without any question, he stepped back from the more radical mixing of categories that characterized the *opera Pompeiana* in favor of a more ordered approach that kept different architectural forms and different social purposes much more distinct.

7. Conclusion

I have in a way done little more than broach a potentially very large topic. Any conclusions must therefore be modest and should be regarded as tentative. But I do hope to have established a few basic points.

First, I think it is clear that Ovid's treatment of Venus in *Fasti* 4 does, as I argue, expand the goddess' frame of reference without sacrificing (what Ovid regards as) her basic character as the Goddess of Love. He effects this expansion by associating with Venus a range of other goddesses whose festivals are celebrated during 'her' month. By virtue of this fact and of Ovid's canny narration of the various stories involved, Venus and her sister goddesses come to resemble one another, even in cases where the only imaginable relationship (such as that between Venus and Vesta) might seem to be antithesis. I correlate this treatment of Venus with Ovid's characteristic attitude towards genre. Venus is introduced in this book not only as Goddess of Love but (in the generic register) as Goddess

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[100] 'It was always the most important theatre in Rome' (Richardson (1992) 384); Cassius Dio speaks of it as 'the theatre in which we take pride even at the present time' (38.39.1); cf. the wealth of testimonia collected by Kuttner (1999).

of Elegy as well. But just as Venus gains by association with other goddesses throughout this book, so does elegy gain by the incorporation of other genres (such as the *praetexta* in the case of the tale of Claudia Quinta). Thus Ovid develops the numinous and the literary-generic aspects of Venus and her sister goddesses in closely analogous ways.

Seeking antecedents to this procedure, one is left disappointed by a search in the expected place, the poetic tradition of the immediate past. Horace's fourth book of *Odes* offers fertile ground for intertextual analysis with *Fasti* 4, but Horace's treatment of Venus and of genre in this book is very different from if not opposite to Ovid's. In Horace's hands, the goddess Venus and the lyric genre are initially defined as the Goddess and the Genre of Love; but rather than expanding this definition to include an Ovidian wealth of diverse goddesses and genres, Horace leaves behind the Goddess of Love and her poetic genre, replacing them with a comparatively austere Venus and a 'higher' lyric strain apropriate to weightier themes. The differences between Horace's procedure and Ovid's are hard to account for as mere intertextual gamesmanship, and so require us to explain Ovid's approach in some other way.

The closest analogue to Ovid's practice, in my view, is found not in other literary manifestations of the Augustan Venus, but in the late Republican Venus of the *opera Pompeiana.* Here one finds the range of heterogeneity within a tightly unified artistic structure – dedicated, like *Fasti* 4, to Venus – that is required to furnish a precedent for Ovid's practice. I do not suggest that *Fasti* 4 is a deliberate imitation of Pompeius' Venus complex; rather, I argue that the attitudes towards religious and formal syncretism that are evident in the design of both works, make them kindred spirits. I note that, just as Ovid differs from Horace, so do the attitudes that I detect in his work differ from those that inform Augustus' building projects, which were more nearly contemporary with Ovid's poetry. I note further that Augustus' revisions to the design of the *opera Pompeiana* draw a bright line between his aesthetic principles and those of his great forerunner. To explain just how it is that Ovid's mature poetry resembles in spirit the public works of a previous

generation rather than those of the more immediate past must remain an opportunity for further investigation.

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