Sic Itur Ad Astra:
Divinity & Dynasty in Ovid's Metamorphoses

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Preface

“Humanity does not pass through phases as a train passes through stations: being alive, it has the privilege of always moving yet never leaving anything behind. Whatever we have been, in some sort we are still. Neither the form nor the sentiment of this old poetry has passed away without leaving indelible traces on our minds.”¹

On the opening page of The Allegory of Love, C. S. Lewis used this description as the intellectual context for courtly love—not the manifold functions that divine aspects serve within the Ovidian corpus. Nonetheless, Lewis' central premise that whatever we have been, in some sort we are still reflects crucial concerns addressed in this thesis: in literature, what happens when humanity changes to become something more?

The applicability of Lewis' statement extends beyond the mindset of courtly love alone and to a general observation about humanity: though humans change, some things within them always remain constant. This truth is reincarnated in the Metamorphoses: often are sentient beings transformed into non-sentient ones, yet retain shades of their former character. From nymphs and men and women to birds and beasts and gods, realistic (and occasionally historical) characters are transformed into the fantastical. Even in Ovid's exilic works, which are ostensibly set in the real world, he writes about wine that freezes and how his poetry changes with his setting²—but he remains a poet anyway. The inclusion of historical figures does not

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¹ Lewis 1.
² Ex. P. 4.13.17.
necessarily transform the poetic world itself into a depiction of reality—though the
exilic poetry allegedly chronicles Ovid's own hardships, it is nonetheless a fictive
narrative.

Here I wish to examine one such fantastical change pulled from the world of
Roman history: ascension to godhood. As the subject of the *Metamorphoses*
necessitates the transgression of the boundaries of nature, it seems natural that
apotheosis occurs in the poem's narrative. Apotheosis, particularly of imperial figures,
is often prefigured by the state of semi-divinity. Although representations of semi-
divine (or super-human) figures predate the Empire, my interest lies in the semi-
divinity that occurs within the intersection of Augustan politics and Ovidian literature.
This "breed" conflates divinity and dynasty, blending the divine and the human as a
standard precursor to apotheosis.

In my first chapter, I shall establish that a Virgilian paradigm outlining
parameters for semi-divinity already existed, and that this paradigm was received and
modified by Ovid to suit his inclinations. I will demonstrate the paradigm by
synthesizing prior scholarship with an analysis of the relevant passages in the *Aeneid*.
After the paradigm's establishment, I will show its shared features with Ovid's system
of divinity in the *Metamorphoses* and argue that Ovid incorporated the paradigm
within the poetic reality.

In my second and third chapters, I shall analyze this paradigm's influence on
depictions of the imperial couple: Augustus in the *Metamorphoses* in the second
chapter, and Livia in the *Tristia* and *Ex Ponto* in the third. In my chapter on Augustus,
I will show how Ovid frames the *princeps* as part of a tradition of apotheosized figures, who partake a modified version of the Herculean paradigm. This framing will demonstrate that the ambiguity of Ovid's portrayal is due to the paradigm's competing tendencies, and thus a natural result of its use. In turn, my chapter on Livia will demonstrate that the use of this paradigm transcends genres and remains a standard way of discussing the imperial family during Ovid's exilic poetry. This argument will show the importance of the Livia-character in the exilic works, as it is the earliest portrayal of the *femina princeps* extant.

**Ovid's Augustan Looking Glass**

As an upper-class Roman writing in the Augustan period, Ovid provides a fruitful avenue for investigation of the imperial household through his works. The *Metamorphoses* alone contains a remarkable variety of potentially "Augustan" features. Such features include the imperializing and seemingly humorizing of various divinities, the all but self-contradictory accounts of Roman foundation myth, and the paradox of seemingly ambiguous motifs rooted in Ovid's own world. Traditional scholarly responses read primarily two motives: blatant anti-Augustan sentiment, or wholehearted support.³ Recent scholarship, especially that of Feeney and Miller, allows for a more nuanced, less binary view of Ovid's underlying motives. I agree on this matter. My research provides one reading of the *Metamorphoses* and exilic poetry in line with the argument that one cannot, and ought not, attempt to constrict Ovid's poetic narrative to purely positive or negative political messages.

³ Miller 333.
Though I do not believe that Ovid's depictions of the semi-divine can be read as entirely supportive and devoted to the emperor, neither do I think that Ovid's texts bear the anti-Augustan sentiment once assigned to them. My reasoning for this position, though I shall examine it in greater detail within my chapter arguments, is due to a holistic analysis of the text within the preexisting structure delineated by Tissol and others. The image granted by the complete text of the *Metamorphoses* appears self-contradictory at points and involves a number of conflicting viewpoints, due to factors subsumed from the real world. I argue here that the text competes with itself precisely to prevent the rigid categorization so appealing to some. Furthermore, I suggest these self-competing tendencies are also present in Ovid's exilic poetry, where they serve as a framing device for discussing imperial power in the form of Livia, the *femina princeps* (or "lady ruler"). This subject has received relatively little attention in English scholarship; I hope to contribute to this discussion with my original analysis of Livia in the *Tristia* and *Ex Ponto*.

**Literature and Methods**

My first chapter argues for the use of a particular rubric in reading the *Metamorphoses* based on the poem's recurring divine themes. This is in agreement with Feeney's prior work on the paradigmatic implications of divinities and semi-divinities and Feldherr's study on the absorption of genres in the *Metamorphoses*. This rubric draws directly from its textual forefather in the *Aeneid*, in accordance with Hardie's connections between the *Aeneid*'s titular hero to other classical semi-

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4 Similar views are espoused in Feeney, Miller, Feldherr, &c.
divinities. Additionally, the correlation between this paradigm and the overall narrative structure of the *Metamorphoses* I draw from Tissol's persuasive framing of the poem's final five books as the "historical phase".

My second chapter aims to examine the presence of Augustus as thematically interwoven with divinities in the *Metamorphoses*. Due to the cumulative nature of sources for each progressive chapter, the works I have already mentioned for my first chapter are vital. Severy's broader analysis of Augustus and the development of familial politics in the early empire contributes an insightful, interdisciplinary perspective. Miller's succinct argumentation for the subtlety of Ovid's commentary on Augustan politics contributes to my examination as well. Finally, Barchiesi's examination of Augustus and Ovid broadly informs my study.

My third chapter examines the often-overlooked female presence in the Augustan dynasty, Livia, and her depictions within Ovid's exilic poetry. Here I analyze Livia's few appearances in light of the existing model of the imperial family in the *Metamorphoses*, including those mythological characters who prefigure Livia's depiction. Barrett's work on Livia serves as the historical core of this chapter, and Milnor's book on gender and domesticity in the Augustan era contributes to the aspect of gender. Due to the relative scarcity of scholarship on the exilic works, save Johnson's article on Livia as model wife, original analysis is foremost among my concerns in this chapter.\(^5\)

\(^5\) For ease of reference, I briefly reiterate these sources at the start of each chapter. Unless stated otherwise, all translations are my own.
I

The Herculean Paradigm

The inclusion of the Julian clan within the text of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* has troubled prior scholars, partially because of the narrative problems created by the inclusion of historical figures. The way in which the family of Augustus is treated with divine framing, first through dynastic connections to the gods and later through assumed divinity via apotheosis, provides further cause for curiosity: is the divinized portrayal of Augustus and his family meant to mock the emperor, or to praise him? Scholars have come to both conclusions.\(^6\) I argue that Ovid's merge of real-world aspects with the theoretical framework of his poem is due to the incorporation of a Virgilian paradigm of the semi-divine, carried to its natural conclusion as part of the poetic world. I here wish to trace the evolution of this paradigm from its inception as an Augustan phenomenon to its conclusion as a basic aspect of godhood in the *Metamorphoses*.

The Herculean paradigm's importance to the *Aeneid* was noted by Feeney, who analyzed Aeneas' rage in battle as sharing in the paradigm. The relationship for which I argue between the historical pentad of the *Metamorphoses* to Anchises' speech is, furthermore, present within Hardie's works.\(^7\) I begin with the Parade of Heroes in *Aeneid* 6 and berserk Aeneas in *Aeneid* 10 to establish an understanding of the paradigm in its initial context. Next, I apply the paradigm to the apotheosis of Caesar

\(^6\) Miller 333.
\(^7\) Feeney 161; Hardie 1997 186-187. The intertextual nature of the last pentad of the *Metamorphoses* was also noted by Tissol (308).
and, indirectly, the concept of godhood itself in the *Metamorphoses*. Examinations of this topic have ranged from Feldherr's study of the multifaceted traditions surrounding the gods of the *Metamorphoses* to Tissol's article on the historical pentad; unification of the two, as I seek to accomplish here, provides the most comprehensive guide. Where useful, I intend to take advantage of narratological methods of examination. In particular, I shall analyze the primary fictional narrative and the stratification of the imbedded narrators and focalization therein.

**Virgil's Hercules: Forming a Paradigm**

Though the ideas behind the Herculean paradigm have been present in Graeco-Roman literature since Homer, the paradigm itself is crystallized through Virgil. The Virgilian model of the semi-divine man demonstrates the competing tendencies between humanity and divinity. The poem constructs this model through the interactions of the purely divine, the semi-divine, and the purely human.⁸ These figures (among whom Hercules is our relevant model) recall earlier heroes from the tragic-epic tradition, suggesting these tendencies are a necessity within the pre-Virgilian model. Within Virgil, we find the basis upon which Ovid built the latter part of the *Metamorphoses*.

Virgil often incorporates historic figures into his poetic world through the use of embedded narrators. While the poet himself ought not mention historic figures for fear of compromising the literary cohesion of his tale, his embedded narrators are framed in such a way that they can do what the poet himself cannot. These embedded

⁸ Feeney 157.
narrators make mention of the most transparent instances of the Herculean paradigm, including the "trope namer"—Anchises' speech during the Parade of Heroes in *Aeneid* 6.

\[
\begin{align*}
nec \ vero \ Alcides \ tantum \ telluris \ obivit \\
fixerit \ aeripedem \ cervam \ licet, \ aut \ Erymanthi \\
pacarit \ nemora \ et \ Lernam \ tremefecerit \ arcu; \\
nec \ qui \ pampineis \ victor \ iuga \ flectit \ habenis \\
Liber, \ agens \ celso \ Nysae \ de \ vertice \ tigris. \\
et \ dubitamus \ adhuc \ virtutem \ extendere \ factis, \\
aut \ metus \ Ausonia \ prohibet \ consistere \ terra? \\
\end{align*}
\]

\textit{(Aeneid 6.801-807)}

Truly, Alcides [Hercules] did not pass over so great a land, although he slew the bronze-footed doe, and pacified the Erymanthian woods and made the beast of Lerna tremble with his arrows; nor did triumphant Bacchus turn his team with viny whips, driving his tigers to the high peak of Nysa, Do we yet hesitate to extend valor with such deeds, or will fear keep you from the Ausonian land?

Anchises shows Augustus to Aeneas in 6.792, and afterwards issues forth this comparison: Augustus' rule shall extend such that not even Hercules or Bacchus may compare. The comparison of Augustus to Hercules and Bacchus serves as a deliberate
invocation of the paradigm in anticipation of its final Virgilian form. By making Anchises the narrator of the speech containing the comparison, Virgil's poem incorporates historical figures within the mytho-historical setting without altering the continuity of the narrative. Because Anchises is an embedded narrator and exists outside the realm of the poem's normal time, he may invoke figures from the poem's past and present as well as historic figures from the poem's projected future. Using such narrative techniques, Virgil compares Augustus and Hercules while preserving the poem's narrative integrity—an important decision, as the comparison of the princeps with a god could be considered audacious.9 The act is straightforward in its praise and subversive in its unflattering implications, both in accordance with the established norms for divine power.10 Yet even before Virgil Hercules is a "collision" of mortal and godly perspectives and power, a fact not ameliorating but focalizing for what soon follows in the Aeneid's narrative: the slaughter of Book 10.11

Aeneid 10 shows us this collision of mortal form and godlike power through Aeneas' aristeia, his virtus in battle. Evander, while celebrating Hercules' victory over Cacus (another semi-divine being), voices his own reading of Aeneas as a new Hercules. This reading of Aeneas serves to further explicate the paradigm suggested in Anchises' comparison of Augustus to Hercules. Unlike Anchises, Evander himself is present within the poem's "ordinary" world; his words normalize the use of the paradigm suggested by Anchises. This reading seems to be confirmed by Aeneas'

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9 As indeed it was, in an Ovidian context.
10 Feeney 160-161.
11 On the collision of perspectives, see Feeney 156-157.
intense power as it wavers between grotesque violence and divine furor in a strikingly physical realization of the previously intellectual paradigm in Aeneid 10. Though Anchises evokes the paradigm with reference to Aeneas' descendent Augustus, Evander demonstrates that the paradigm applies to Aeneas himself.\(^\text{12}\)

The bestial power inherent in a semi-divine being like Hercules is demonstrably present even in pius Aeneas, and thus provable as an underlying facet of this paradigm. An example comes in the interaction between Magus and Aeneas in Book 10.

\begin{quote}
'per patrios manis et spes surgentis Iuli
te precor, hanc animam serves gnatoque patrique.
est domus alta, iacent penitus defossa talenta
caelati argenti, sunt auri pondera facti
infectique mihi. Non hic victoria Teucrum
vertitur aut anima una dabit discrimina tanta.'
\end{quote}

\((A. 10.524-529)\)

"By the shade of your father and your hope in growing Iulus,
I pray you, spare this soul for father and son alike.
For me there's a high hall, and buried talents of embossed silver lie within, and gold wrought and unwrought.
Not this turns the victory for the Teucrians,
not one soul give such great divides."

\(^{12}\) For relevant passages, see Aeneid 8.185 and following. For explication on the correlation between Evander's tale and Aeneas, see Feeney 158-159.
Magus comes to Aeneas as a suppliant, praying as one might to a god; he invokes Aeneas' sense of *pietas*, mentioning Anchises and Iulus. In case his appeal to *pietas* and his supplication fail, Magus mentions his monetary assets as well: a purely material appeal. Aeneas, unswayed, responds:

'argenti atque auri memoras quae multa talenta
gnatis parce tuis. Belli commercia Turnus
sustulit ista prior iam tum Pallante perempto.
hoc patris An hesiae manes, hoc sentit Iulus.'

(A. 10.531-534)

"Spare the many talents of silver and gold you recall
for your own sons. Turnus destroyed such trade of war
previously, when he slew Pallas.
Thus thinks father Anchises, thus thinks Iulus."

Aeneas' refutation is short and merciless. His rebuttal interweaves *pietas* (*hoc patris...Iulus*) with the biting viciousness of Pyrrhus in *Aeneid 2*. This behavior is not characteristic of Aeneas: rather, it suggests a level of ferocity expected in an Achilles or Neoptolemus. The comparison continues: Aeneas mocks Tarquitus' corpse (*istinc nunc...iace*), and in doing so evokes both Hecuba's warning to Hector against Achilles (*εἳπε γάρ σε κατακτάνη...κάνεις ταχέες κατέδονται*) and the dialogue between the

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13 *Aeneid* 10.531-534; for a Homeric precedent, see *Iliad* 22.338-339.
combatants as well (οὲ μὲν κύνες...κτεριοῦσιν Ἄχιλλοι).\textsuperscript{14} Pius Aeneas, now become like his enemies of old, furit and his furor strikes down the pietas of others.\textsuperscript{15}

Evander's reading frames Aeneas' behavior for us as that of a new Hercules, focalizing his future behavior through foreshadowing. Aeneas is still pius, but with a wrath bordering on monstrous. This suggests that existence—bestial, human, divine—operates on a scale wherein the qualities on the far ends become more and more similar. If we understand the Herculean paradigm as a state of existence in which inhuman power accompanies the blurred boundaries between man and god, Aeneas' ferocity may be interpreted as part of the "arbitrary" divine numen seen elsewhere.\textsuperscript{16}

The paradigm's gradual incorporation into the Aeneid makes its presence more effective still: first invoked in Anchises' comparison of Augustus, it later expands through poetic transference to foreshadow Aeneas' behavior. The full extent of the paradigm's implications is revealed in the bloodshed of book 10. The transformation of the paradigm from its initial form regarding Augustus to its telos with Aeneas is expected: Feeney states that Aeneas, as the "embodiment of a historical force", proffers a type for Augustus, "who has inherited control of the historical force first given expression by Aeneas".\textsuperscript{17} One cannot be surprised by the closeness of their association; Virgil makes Augustus part of the diegetic universe of the Aeneid. He is,

\textsuperscript{14} Aeneid 10.557-560; Iliad 22.86-89; 335-336
\textsuperscript{15} Aeneid 10.557-560; 10.545. Compare Iliad 22.365 (τέθναθι), Aeneid 2.550 (nunc morere), Aeneid 10.567 (nunc iace).
\textsuperscript{16} Feeney 156-160.
\textsuperscript{17} Feeney 161.
as a result, subject to the rules of that universe—including the disturbing implications of the Herculean paradigm.

Although Aeneas demonstrates the paradigm exemplified in Hercules, the traits of the two characters conflict.\textsuperscript{18} Both characters demonstrate the paradigm of the semi-divine, both in \textit{furor} and in solitude. As is the case with any semidivine person, Hercules and Aeneas both symptomatically struggle to cohere with greater society. The solitude of Hercules seems to conflict ideologically with Aeneas, whose explicit goal is the greater foundation of his race; even \textit{pius} Aeneas lacks the deep personal interconnection one might expect from either normal humans or, indeed, the gods themselves. Whether these liminal figures are divine or bestial, they are unfailingly distant. This distance is the center of the Herculean paradigm: although \textit{furor} is a convenient marker, it is not the sole determining factor. As further chapters will show, figures may still fall within the paradigm without exhibiting Herculean recklessness.

In establishing the paradigm, Virgil clears the path for Ovid to adapt its principles to fit his poetic vision. Aeneas' status as a divine man is distinguished by existence within a lonesome, liminal field between god, man, and beast. This shows that the very definition of the Virgilian model contains competing tendencies and inherent tension. These tendencies, when coupled with a naturally fluid approach to human-divine boundaries, form the backbone of the \textit{Metamorphoses}' use of both divinity and metamorphosis itself. Next, I will examine the paradigm's function within the \textit{Metamorphoses}.

\textsuperscript{18} See Hardie 1990 for further studies regarding opposing characters, though not on this subject.
Use of the Herculean Paradigm in the *Metamorphoses*

The *Metamorphoses* discusses apotheosis with unflinching frankness, a fact emphasized by the anachronistic inclusion of Hercules in Ovid's Trojan cycle.¹⁹ I wish here to examine two distinct yet intertwined issues: the blurring between classes of beings, including but not limited to gods and men, as well as the clearest instance of authorial merge between the poetic and real worlds—the apotheosis of Caesar (*Met.* 15.744-852) in the "historical pentad"—²⁰ in light of this paradigm.

Virgil's Hercules (and, as he demonstrates, Aeneas) represents a "collision" of human and divine, yet this collision is restrained to a transformation from man to somewhat-divine.²¹ I argue that we may understand Ovid's gods as also partaking in this same paradigm, though they represent not so much a collision as an overall blurring of any boundary at all. Furthermore, I argue that this blurring is demonstrable in the various metamorphoses that occur throughout the poem. Ovid's take on Virgil's alteration of a Homeric model expands the paradigm to its extreme: Ovid's gods, whether they originated as such or not, partake in multiple literary traditions at once. The very nature of the gods in the *Metamorphoses* allows the poet to partake in multiple traditions without violating consistency of character.²² So too in his depictions of metamorphosis throughout the poem.

The flexibility afforded to the nature of creatures in the *Metamorphoses* is demonstrated through the many metamorphoses in which figures retain their minds

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¹⁹ Wheeler (136-137); Feldherr (99).
²⁰ Tissol 305.
²¹ Feeney 157.
²² This examination builds in part on Feldherr 48-49, 58.

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after transformation. These include humans (Cadmus, 4.576-603; Arachne, *Met.* 6.139-145; Niobe, 6.301-312; Philemon and Baucis, 8.711-720; Hersilia 14.840-851), nymphs (Daphne, 1.558-567; Io, 1.628-650; Callisto, 2.476-488), and others still. Arachne retains her ability to create her *ars*, even as a spider, and pursues it after changing; Philemon and Baucis continue to express their love after transforming into trees. Cadmus, like Philemon and Baucis, attempts to speak to his wife after he is incapable of it. Daphne, now a tree, shrinks back (*refugit*) from Apollo's kiss; Io tries to supplicate Argus with both her arms and her voice, but she has neither, and flees (*refugit*) her own appearance. Callisto keeps her *mens* (2.485) even after she transforms into a bear, and, like Io, yearns for small, human comforts. Of these cases, Niobe alone transforms into a non-living thing, and even so continues mourning as a stone.

Not all of these metamorphoses directly reflect the paradigm, and some reflect different takes on the paradigm altogether. Although metamorphosis is an isolating process by definition, Hersilia provides a different perspective. Her metamorphosis is a premortem apotheosis, which sees her experience not even the change of hands to claws or skin to bark; rather, she maintains complete continuity in her mind even as she transforms into the star Hora. The isolation of her apotheosis is outweighed by the unity she has with her likewise-divinized spouse (*quae nunc dea iuncta Quirino est*). Metamorphosis removes a person from their form, but apotheosis removes a person from form, family, and context.

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23 "...who now, as goddess, is joined with Quirinus [deified Romulus]," *Met.* 14.851.
Alteration in form need not require an alteration of mind; even semi-divine creatures can transform into beasts (e.g. Callisto), yet retain their distinct personal character. In Hersilia's case, her catasterism prevents her from conforming to the natural tensions in the Herculean paradigm. Hersilia's form is changed, but her nature—non-bestial as it is—is not. Even so, she still exhibits the characteristic removal from wider society that one would expect from a newly-deified participant in the Herculean paradigm. This is a sign of a wider tendency in the *Metamorphoses*: because a person's body is susceptible to change, one's distinguishing characteristics must be immaterial qualities. As a result, almost any permutation of changed forms is possible without altering the underlying consciousness.

If Ovid adapts the fluidity of the Virgilian model for his gods and, more broadly, his very paradigm of metamorphosis, then application of such non-rigid characterizations to historical figures within the poem should not come as a thematic leap. As Tissol noted, Ovid prepares the reader for the "metamorphosis" of historical figures into poetic characters from the poem's start.24 The diegetic Julius Caesar is framed as divine long before his apotheosis, in part through political *pietas*. Augustus, having surpassed his father, must too be divine.25

The effects of the Herculean paradigm are best observed in the familial relations between the gods and the Julians in the *Metamorphoses*. Though my next chapter deals directly with the apotheosis of Caesar in the *Metamorphoses*, it is worth a mention of these relations here. By subordinating Caesar's deeds (*acta*) to his role as

24 Tissol 306.
25 Severy 6, 173.
father (*pater*), Ovid provides for the primacy of family in his apotheosis of Caesar\(^{26}\) consistent with the *Aeneid*'s *pius Aeneas*. If the Venus *genetrix* so familiar to us from the *Aeneid* greets us, we have expected it; if she is the mother of the race as well, so much the better (*quid nunc antiqua recordor/damna mei generis?*)\(^{27}\). Ovid creates an expectation such that the audience expects her presence in the passage and that her subsequent entreaties are framed in relation to her (semi-) human descendants.\(^{28}\) Jupiter-*genitor*’s response indicates a power differential between fate and the gods similar to that of the gods and humans.\(^{29}\) Even if we deal with divinities in a divine framework and focalization, the power dynamic nonetheless places the gods at the mercy of a greater power (*insuperabile fatum*).\(^{30}\) The *genitor* reveals the truth of the passage: it concerns Caesar only insofar as he is *pater* of Augustus, who in turn is *pater* and *rector* at once (*pater est et rectorque uter*).\(^{31}\) This elevation of the Augustan family alongside the identification of Jupiter-*genitor* recalls Venus’s own paradigmatic familial constructs, by which she connected herself to Iulus and Caesar (*solum mihi restat Iulo...Dardanio*).\(^{32}\)

The poet continues to emphasize these cross-referential notions of family, but with a problematic twist. As comparanda for Augustus’ surpassing of Caesar, the poet mentions Agamemnon and Atreus, Theseus and Aegeus, Achilles and Peleus—all

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\(^{26}\) *Met.* 15.746-751.

\(^{27}\) "Why do I now recall the ancient fate of my race?" *Met.* 15.774-775.

\(^{28}\) *Met.* 15.765-767; 769-778.

\(^{29}\) *Met.* 15.807-809.

\(^{30}\) *Met.* 15.807.

\(^{31}\) "Each is father and ruler alike." *Met.* 15.819-831.

\(^{32}\) “This alone remains to me of Trojan Iulus...” *Met.* 15.765.
figures considered great, but often in a tragic sense. It is difficult to think that Ovid's listeners would have been able to ignore the long tragic tradition behind the illustrious (human) fathers and sons.\textsuperscript{33} Similarly, as much of the \textit{Metamorphoses} until this point has detailed the flaws of Jupiter, the comparison is not entirely flattering. This subversion of expectations is characteristic of Ovid: while the poet provides us with parallels from other characters and their glorious deeds in epic, their familial data—a thing of utmost importance in this passage—is best known from tragedy. Extrapolated from the shared characteristics of characters in the epic-tragic tradition, the paradigm here suggests the competing tendencies that underlie such figures in any genre. This, too, is consistent with the function of the Herclidean paradigm elsewhere in Ovid.

\textbf{Conclusion}

If we find Ovid's take on the Herclidean paradigm is at tension with itself, it has been so since Ennius codified Romulus as the model of apotheosis.\textsuperscript{34} To this end, I propose that we read Ovid as expanding a pattern incorporated by Virgil rather than opposing him.\textsuperscript{35} The ambiguity suggested by the Herclidean paradigm is a vital part of the epic tradition; consequently, its presence in the \textit{Aeneid} and latent force in \textit{Metamorphoses} is unsurprising. Ovid's work here is not a rebuttal of Virgil, but an expansion upon accepted historio-mythic themes set in a shared framework of interrelated narrative traditions. As Feeney observed, the \textit{Metamorphoses} "explicates

\textsuperscript{33} See Feeney 220 on a connected issue.
\textsuperscript{34} Feeney 161.
\textsuperscript{35} I would suggest also that Ovid's tirade against readers in \textit{Tristia} 2, where he mentions the less than exemplary actions of \textit{Aeneid} characters, is not intended to criticize the \textit{Aeneid} but to show precedent or excuse for his own work. See \textit{Tristia} 2.1.533-534.
more systematically than any other ancient poem" the superhuman nature of semi-
divine power. By using the common paradigm of the "divine man", the author may
address real-world issues within the diegetic structure while preserving the poem's
integrity.

Although Ovid's text does not acknowledge the Herculean paradigm explicitly,
it is clear that the poet has crafted the relationships between his gods and mortals
within the framework of this model. The poet does not play off Virgil as his
predecessor alone, but instead takes a common way of treating the Herculean
paradigm and carries it to its natural conclusion. Ovid incorporates the inherent,
conflicting tendencies underlying the Herculean paradigm as a basic aspect of the
poem's creative reality. As a result, the poet interweaves his representations of
historical figures with his gods without restricting himself to any binary statement
regarding its real-world implications.

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36 Feeney 222.
II

Augustus

My previous chapter demonstrated the importance of Virgilian literary types in analyzing Ovid's text, and here I hope to expand on this concept more fully through an examination of the "Augustan" passages in the *Metamorphoses*. We have established the importance of the Herculean paradigm to the *Metamorphoses* as a whole; here I will show how this paradigm is played out through analysis of several texts with a focus on *Metamorphoses* 15.744-870. I propose that Ovid's system of divinity is rooted in an offshoot of the Herculean paradigm, as is his entire poetic world. The construction of this system normalizes the inclusion of the imperial family within the poem, allowing him to blend men with gods and extradiegetic reality with the universe of the poem.

In addition to the literature cited in the previous section, Severy's work on the Augustan family is particularly useful for understanding the interaction between poetry and history. Miller's and Barchiesi's respective works also assist vitally through their respective yet distinct contributions to the examination at hand.

Family First

Metamorphosis and the Herculean paradigm share a number of common factors, as is demonstrated through the inclusion of the imperial family and their frequently apotheosized members within the *Metamorphoses*. I have previously demonstrated the applicability of the paradigm to the familial connections established
by the gods in the later pentad of the *Metamorphoses*; here I will examine how these familial connections relate to Augustus and his family.

Although the explicit focus of *Metamorphoses* 15.744-870 is the apotheosis of Caesar, he in fact functions as a focusing device akin to the Herculean paradigm. Augustus himself (to whom Caesar's apotheosis is attributed) is the true focus of the passage.

Caesar in urbe sua deus est: quem Marte togaque
praecipuum non bella magis finita triumphis
resque domi gestae properataque gloria rerum
in sidus vertere novum stellamque comantem,
quam sua progenies; neque enim de Caesaris actis
ullum maius opus, quam quod pater exstitit huius.

(Met. 15.746-751)

Caesar in his own city is a god: whom, eminent through Mars
and the toga,
not more than wars completed in his triumphs
and by things done in home to quick-won glory
than did his descent, to change him to a new constellation,
a crested star;
for there is no greater achievement among Caesar's deeds
than that he stood as father for him [Augustus].
The text subordinates Caesar's wars completed in triumphs and swift-won glory to the role of fatherhood. His successor (sua progenies) brought him among the stars, not his acta. Distinct aural separation give the string of triumphus with res gestae and domus and gloria extra force. The stage is set, then, for the sidus, the apotheosis of the man himself, through a reference to the comet that traced its path through the sky after Caesar's death. Yet his greatest role remains that of father—the narrator subordinates the stereotypical stuff of epic to an issue of family.  

Rather than being an Ovidian innovation, this subordination of epic to family draws from the Aeneid's precedent. To return to Aeneid 6.785-795, when the Parade of Heroes begins and Anchises bids Aeneas to "turn [his] gaze (nunc flecte acies) and "gaze upon your Roman family" (aspice gentem Romanosque tuos), Virgil uses Anchises to focalize Aeneas' gaze upon Caesar, Iulus' descendants, and finally Augustus in order to build up to the latter's dominion and might in battle. The familial descent is important, but ultimately serves to support the mighty deeds from Augustus in conjunction with the Herculean paradigm. As noted by Hardie, the effect of this parade on Aeneas within the text is much the same as the effect of the text itself upon its readers. Anchises serves as the focalization point for our understanding of the descendants of Iulus in the Aeneid, but the narrator himself serves as the focalizing
lens in the *Metamorphoses*—one diegetic level closer to the audience. This passage, then, is emphatically not an Ovidian satire of either the epic genre or the political sphere, but rather part of a cohesive mode of storytelling suggested in the epic tradition itself.

Though we begin with Caesar as *pater*, we soon move on to Venus as *genetrix*. Here she is typified as biological mother and mother of a race, by which name she is worshiped. Thus, when Venus appears in *Metamorphoses* 15.762 and seeks to intercede for "[what] remains to me of...Iulus", it is wholly within expectation that she is called *genetrix*, again returning to the Herculean paradigm.

*...quod ut aurea vidit*

*Aeneae genetrix, vidit quoque triste parari*

*pontifici letum et coniurata arma moveri,*

*palluit et cunctis, ut cuique erat obvia, divis*

'adspice,' dicebat 'quanta mihi mole parentur*

*insidiae, quantaque caput cum fraude petatur,*

*quod de Dardanio solum mihi restat Iulo.*

(Met. 15.761-767)

When the golden mother of Aeneas saw this,

saw the dark end and armed conspiracy prepared for her priest,

she paled and to each god, as she met with them, said,

"See how great the plots are prepared against me,*

and with such deceit it seeks the head—
which alone remains to me of Trojan Iulus."

This point in the passage represents a shift in locality and focalization. While prior discussion of family was rooted in a specific place and time, the author here takes us to the mythic world before Caesar's assassination. First Venus speaks directly, and soon the focalization of the passage shifts from god to god. This is, perhaps, one of the most transparent uses of the Herculean paradigm as it applies to real-world figures: the permeable boundary between man and god allows for close familial relations between the two, and thus lends credence to Venus' actions.

Venus' title of *genetrix* points to a wider philological tradition behind the paradigm. *Mater* and *pater* carry associations beyond that of a progenitor, as is clear from the title of *pater patriae*; the receiver of the *Metamorphoses* recalls Venus Genetrix from the *Aeneid* and a literal *genetrix* at once. The title in the *Aeneid* applies to only three characters—Venus, Cybele, and the mother of Euryalus. Venus receives the title more times than any other figure, and yet the other two *genetrices* are likewise framed within divine and Julian contexts relevant to this discussion. Cybele's approach to Jupiter (*Aeneid* 9.82-100) evokes, albeit in an inverted way, Venus's invocation of the same through the use of familial dynamics to strengthen and support a particular divine request. Likewise, Euryalus' request that Ascanius care for his mother is met with the response that "*namque erit ista mihi genetrix nomenque Creusae / solum defuerit*" (*Aeneid* 9.297-298)—another example of a semi-divine Julian bringing an unrelated figure within the intellectual confines of their family. These three different

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39 Severy 160-161.
40 "She will be as a mother to me, and lack only the name of Creusa."
*genetrices* represent varying forms of divine or quasi-divine motherhood, all bound by the Julian family in one way or another.

The Venus *genetrix* of the *Metamorphoses* has her own subversions, yet still recalls the basic core in Virgil's *genetrix*. She declares her woes (15.765), and calls Caesar "*solum mihi restat Iulo...Dardanio*", explicitly binding several sets of characters together—a) herself and Caesar, b) Trojan Iulus and Caesar, c) herself and Iulus. She draws our attention to her bonds of kinship, and when Venus addresses the conspirators against Caesar, she discusses them in terms of *mihi*. Their connection to her is vital; the offense is not simply leveled at a human, but at a divine ancestor who is joined through their descent so strongly that she sees the conspiracies as against *her* as well.

'solane semper ero iustis exercita curis,
quam modo Tydidae Calydonia vulneret hasta,
nunc male defensae confundant moenia Troiae,
quae videam natum longis erroribus actum
iactarique freto sedesque intrare silentum
bellaque cum Turno gerere, aut, si vera fatemur,
cum Iunone magis? quid nunc antiqua recordor
damna mei generis? timor hic meminisse priorum
non sinit; en acui sceleratos cernitis enses.
quos prohibete, precor, facinusque repellite neve
caede sacerdotis flamas exstinguite Vestae!'
"Will I alone be chased always by just cares?
I, whom the son of Tydeus wounded with his Calydonian spear,
and now the poorly-defended walls of Troy confound me—
I watched my son driven in long wanderings, and tossed on the waters,
and descending into silence, and waging war with Turnus—
or, if I may speak truly, with great Juno? Why now
recall the ancient wrongs of my race? This fear does not permit
me to remember prior ones; behold, see you wicked knives being whetted?

Forbid these, I beg you, and halt the deed—
do not extinguish Vesta's flame with her priest's blood!"

In calling herself she whom the son of Tydeus wounded with his Calydonian spear, Venus summons two familiar scenes from epic: the original scene from the Iliad, in which Aphrodite comes to Aeneas's aid and is wounded by Diomedes in turn (Iliad 5.334-340), and the scene in Aeneid 10 when Venus intercedes, here on behalf of Aeneas himself. Although the Iliad establishes the premise on which both the Aeneid and the Metamorphoses spin their own tales, for our purposes the Aeneid holds the more relevant passage.

In Aeneid 10.30, Venus proclaims, "I, your child, delay mortal arms," (et tua progenies mortalia demoror arma) to Jupiter. Virgil's use of the term arma recalls the
first line of the poem, *arma virumque cano*, linking Venus' fears to the wider battle plaguing the Trojans. The intertextuality of the passage suggests the central Herculean paradigm at work. This use of the paradigm may be applied onto Ovid's passage as well: the intertextual nature of the scene comes as part of an Iliadic tradition connected to the paradigm's earliest forms. The battle scene provides a physical grounding for the familial relationship to which it is ultimately subordinated. In each instance, Venus uses her battle-scars to justify interceding for her "family's" well-being. Again we have a clear demonstration of the integration of the traditional stuff of epic (battle-wounds from heroes) with the real and human (concern for one's familial line), further emphasizing the lack of boundaries between human, hero and god.

Venus continues to frame her portion of the tale through her Trojan son and the struggle to found a new city as told in the *Aeneid*. She picks out two foes by name: Turnus (15.773) and Juno (15.774). Caught between Juno's wrath and the arranged union of Turnus and Lavinia, Venus's personal actions with Aeneas were aimed entirely at the foundation of this line ("*quid nunc antiqua recordor damna mei generis?*"; 15.775). While tradition holds Juno as the dynasty goddess, having both birth and marriage as her special concerns, Ovid instead gives Venus to us with practical rather than programmatic familial concerns that fulfill her paradigmatic role as the *genetrix*, or biological source, of the Julian line. The passage then returns to the

41 Though this thesis has focused on a "Herculean" paradigm due to its presence in Virgil, the concept of the θεός ἄνιψ (literally "divine man") dates back to the epic cycle and was heavily developed in the Alexandrian tradition as well.
42 Severy 160, 218.
43 "Why now recall the ancient wrongs of my race?" See p. 28.
religious and/or divine focus established previously with *delubrum* and *pontifex*: "facinusque repellite neve caede sacerdotis flammas extinguite Vestae!" (15.779).44

Our attention is thus brought back to the various religious roles fulfilled by Caesar and to the divinities with whom the Augustan family would so vigorously bind themselves. Not only do men and gods blend together, but reality and poetry as well.

Though the gods here empathize with Venus (a stark change from the events of the *Aeneid*), they are not able to go against the decree of the fates (15.781). Despite the premonitions and signs of turmoil that range through the *fora*, one's *domus*, and all the *templa* (15.796), Caesar nonetheless must fall by the *curia*. Venus's mourning leads backwards in myth-time; she takes us back to Aeneas, Paris, Menelaus, and Diomedes (15.804-806). The connection between the *Metamorphoses*, the *Aeneid*, and the *Iliad* is again crystalized for us as Venus attempts to take action, suggesting the tradition into which the poem plays. Rather than showing us yet another mortal struggling to strive against gods, Ovid shows us a god striving against fate.

Talibus hanc genitor: 'sola insuperabile fatum,
nata, movere paras? intres licet ipsa sororum
teca trium...

*(Met. 15. 807-809)*

Thus spoke the father to her: "Will you alone, child,
strive to change inevitable fate? It's permitted for you to enter

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44 "Do not extinguish Vesta's flame with her priest's blood!" p. 28.
the threefold doors of the sisters...

Here established as *genitor*, Jupiter consoles Venus (established as *nata*) through recounting the future success and triumphs of her line. Invoking *insuperabile fatum*, Jupiter tells her that her ingress to the dwelling of the fates is "allowed" (*licet*)—terminology that emphasizes the powerlessness of even the gods against fate. This demonstrates the ways in which a system of divinity rooted in the Herculean paradigm manifests itself through a nebulous power more potent than the gods themselves. In subsequent lines, Jupiter's recollection of the "fate of [Venus'] race" (*fata tui generis; Met. 15.814*) illuminates the truth of this passage: it is about Caesar, indeed, but Caesar insofar as he is the *pater* of Augustus. The true, indirect subject of the passage is Augustus through his father—Augustus as *pater* and *ultor* at once (15.819-831). Much in the same way that the narrator subordinated Caesar's deeds to his familial interactions previously, Jupiter too subordinates Augustus' battles first to his laws and judicial matters, and then to his family (*Met. 15.832-839*).

The elevation of the Augustan family along with the immediate identification of Jupiter as *genitor* recalls the paradigmatic familial connections constructed by Venus in the prior passages (15.765). Jupiter is *genitor* here with reference to Venus,* but he is elsewhere *pater*; the suggested line of descent from Jupiter through Augustus is clear, tracing the transformation of a mortal family into a superhuman one with divine heritage through literature.* Additionally, the consolatory role Jupiter here

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*45 See also *Aen.* 1.256-260 for another instance of Venus-*nata* invoking aid from Jupiter-*genitor*. As Hershkowitz indicates, these are paradigmatic scenes.

*46 Severy 218.*
plays for Venus bears shades of Anchises' speech regarding doomed Marcellus (A. 6.860-886). In both cases a father explicates future events to a child with an end focus on unchangeable fate. Even so, the answer in both of these events is change: Virgil uses reincarnation to change the forms of heroes, and Ovid's entire poem focuses on changed forms in whichever way he pleases—but with particular emphasis in this passage on the change into godhood (apotheosis).

A close cousin to these consolation scenes is Propertius' 3.18 commemorating in real-time the death of Marcellus. Though the elegy is sung in such a way that it appears firmly positioned within the "real world", it partakes in the same poetic tradition that informed Ovid and Virgil—Marcellus died where the Trojan Misenus lay and Hercules built partitions (3.18.1-8). That he was embraced into the Julian family rather than born into it made no difference (3.18.12); the poet ends by invoking apotheosis as well, asking that he be brought in astra as with Claudius and Caesar. Though Propertius did not write within the narrative framework of the Metamorphoses, it is still clear that the ideas Ovid put into action as a vital part of the poem's structure were present elsewhere in poetic thought: within Virgil's tradition, inherited by Ovid, and adapted elsewhere by Propertius and Horace.47

While the narrative scheme hitherto has focused primarily on the viewpoints of traditional divine figures, this soon changes. As soon as Venus is assured of Caesar's transformation, the narrator retakes the scene and follows the Caesar-star into space.

47 Of course, Propertius died before Ovid wrote the Metamorphoses; however, since the paradigm was a part of wider poetic thought rather than something directly handed down from author to author, it is still a relevant comparison here.
Indeed, our final thought through Caesar's viewpoint is that he "rejoices to be overcome by him [Augustus]" (vinci gaudet ab illo; Met. 15.851). The unconquerable general rejoices to be overcome not in wars and battles, but in the greatness of his son. In spite of the punitive language, the relationship is amicable, not warlike—a welcome conquest that yet again demonstrates the usurpation of traditionally battle-focused language and successions to serve familial or dynastic purposes.

Augustus' viewpoint on the matter is unsurprising: although he would well prefer his father's acts to be considered greater than his, fate has declared otherwise (hic sua praeferrit quamquam vetat acta paternis/libera fama tamen nullisque obnoxia iussis/invitum praefert unaque in parte repugnat; Met. 15.852-854). This provides a curious parallel: as Venus previously desired to save Caesar's life against fate's declaration, Augustus too wishes to honor his father above himself, though fate repulses this desire (repugnat, 15.554). In many ways, this overarching theme of gods and men similarly struggling against the notion of fate is the one unchangeable part of the Metamorphoses.

Ovid prevents the reader from wholly comfortable view of the relationship between Augustus and Caesar by introducing a set of mythic parallels with famous fathers and sons. The figures chosen for comparison are Agamemnon and Atreus, Theseus and Aegeus, and Achilles and Peleus—all known well to us. They do not simply recall the nether-space between myth and history that the Trojan War occupies;

48 *Vinco* is not a term known for its friendliness.
49 "Though he forbids his own acts to be preferred over his father's, fame, free and liable to no one's orders, praises him (reluctant though he is) and refuses this one thing."
instead, they bring to mind a specific succession of events. The generation of Argonauts is recalled in Theseus and Peleus, along with the tragedies therein; Agamemnon and Achilles draw us directly back to the Trojan War. The comparison itself also suggests *Aeneid* 6, from where listeners might recall Anchises' comparison of Bacchus and Hercules against Augustus; likewise salient are Propertius 3.18 and Horace 3.3. The result is succession of narrative, political, and even poetic roles at once.

The narrator then introduces us to one final comparison, towards which the entire passage has pointed: Augustus has surpassed Caesar as Jupiter himself surpassed Saturn, the former in each pairing being "father and ruler" alike (15.858-860). The use of *pater* here suggests the less literal usage of the term as increasingly found during the Augustan period; he is not literally the father (that is, the *genitor*) of the Roman people, but he acts in a way that befits the social and cultural expectations of the *pater familias* on a national scale.\(^50\)

Even if the inclusion of Augustus and company is part of a wider narrative scheme, the intertextual references prevent a binary reading. As I previously noted, it is difficult to think that Ovid's listeners would have been able to ignore the long tragic tradition behind the illustrious (human) fathers and sons and Hercules himself. Since much of the *Metamorphoses* until this point has detailed Jupiter's problematic behavior, the comparison is not necessarily flattering. Nonetheless, it is both characteristically Ovidian and drawn directly from the real world of Roman politics:

\(^{50}\) For more on the political implications of *pater* in the Augustan age, see Severy.
as Feeney observes, Octavian himself encountered publicity issues as a result of his Apollo-based costuming, and the mature emperor would no doubt be aware of the non-neutrality of divine comparisons. Extrapolated from the shared characteristics of figures in the epic-tragic tradition, the paradigm here illustrated hints at additional shades of grey coloring the comparison being made.

Whether or not we read a critique implicit in the comparison between Augustus and Jupiter, the narrator still situates them within a distinct cross-section of storytelling and politics. The archetypal pater here carries the force described by Severy, while rector indicates less "ruler" and more "guide". The parallels rely on a shared concept of paternal leadership, suggesting the construction of an archetypal role. Though the depiction's intertextuality prevents it from being wholly positive, it is nonetheless consistent.

This passage, then, shows the integration of the real-world princeps into an existing poetic paradigm while affirming the latter's role both as a crucial part of the extant narrative structure and a wider poetic understanding of divinity. It is clear that rather than being a perfunctory afterthought stuck into the poem, the incorporation of these real-world figures is deliberate, and ought to be considered a vital function of the poetic narrative. Beyond a simple inclusion of the man Augustus and his lineage, however, we must also consider the unit conceptualized as the imperial household.

Household

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51 Feeney 220-221.
For all the weight that *genetrix* carries in the *Metamorphoses*, the most important part of a conceptual family was not *familia*, but the *domus*—a term which gained its full force due to the constructed Augustan family of adoptees.\(^{52}\) When Ascanius assures Euryalus that his mother shall be akin to Creusa (*A. 1.256-260*), Virgil suggests the establishment of a Julian tradition of bringing non-relations underneath the umbrella of family (or *domus*); Ovid provides us an analogous situation, but swaps out gods for humans and uses the *penates* in place of successors.

Ovid's final prayer (*Met. 15.861-870*) follows a Virgilian didactic precedent (*Georgics 1.498-501*). Contextualized in Virgil as a prayer to assure the rescue of the Roman world through Octavian's intercession, the narrator of the *Metamorphoses* instead uses his prayer to solidify the associations with and concepts of the divine and mortal lines of the *gens Julia*.\(^ {53}\) The poet first reviews those figures around whom the past hundred lines have been structured through intertextually-based dynastic references—Aeneas (15.861), Romulus as "genitor Quirine" (15.862), and Mars as "genitor...Quirini" (15.863). Lastly of all comes the appeal:

Vestaque Caesareos inter sacrata penates
et cum Caesarea tu, Phoebe domestice, Vesta
quique tenes altus Tarpeias Iuppiter arces.

(*Met. 15.864-866*)

Vesta, sacred amongst Caesar's household gods,
And you, Phoebus, with Caesarean Vesta,

\(^{52}\) Severy 214-218.  
\(^{53}\) Miller 368.

Thomas 36
and you, Jupiter, who hold the high citadel of Tarpeia...

Mentioning Mars only as the father of Romulus, the gods are simultaneously leveled with and absorbed into the Julian line. Vesta, who appears only in Book 15 of the *Metamorphoses*, plays a crucial role within the broader frame of Caesar's personal gods—not simply a god, but their god, and thus brought into the broader schemata of the imperial *domus*. Apollo's unusual epithet of *Phoebus domesticus* brings him, too, under Caesar's roof; the narrative threads started in 1.557-565 when Apollo sees Daphne's adornment of Augustus' physical house as a fitting substitute for *conubia* are thus brought to a close.\(^{54}\) Rather than connecting them to the Julian line through a mythic family link (as with Mars and Venus) or conscious paralleling (as with Jupiter and Saturn), the poet incorporates them into the emperor's *domus*. Laurel trees did adorn the doorposts of Augustus' house, and the *domus* was indeed connected to a temple of Apollo. While serving a poetic function in order to merge the mortal and the divine, the passage also combines the observable Roman world with the mythic reality of epic tradition.

The gradual divinization of the emperor's household ends not with the *Metamorphoses*, but is continued and codified in the exilic poetry, where the imperial family themselves become part of Ovid's *penates*. Though Feeney found the domesticated deities "enervated",\(^ {55}\) it is important to note that the normalizing of gods into tangible parts of the real world (whether one encompassed by the same universe as the narrative in the *Metamorphoses* or not) represents a final shift into a less fluidic

\(^{54}\) Miller 370.

\(^{55}\) Feeney 217.
reality and one instantly recognizable as the Romans' own. Ovid's system of divinity within the *Metamorphoses* is rooted in the Herculean paradigm, which effectively normalizes the inclusion of the imperial household. In my next chapter, I will examine the exilic poetry and its key semi-divinity: Livia, the wife and, one could argue, accomplice of Augustus.
Livia

No scant scholarship exists on Livia. Between her magnetic person and her role as founder of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, scholars have found the "murderous stepmother" of Tacitus a polarizing character who merits inspection and debate. Less investigated than the tabloid version of the woman found in Tacitus, however, is the closest thing to a contemporary account extant: the Livia found in Ovid's exilic works. I hope to suggest here an alternate interpretation for the *femina princeps* as depicted in the literature of her own day: not the villainous control freak found in Tacitus, but a respected, fairly independent ruler whose portrayal reflects a tradition of characterization found in other contemporary authors.

Recent years have seen a resurgence of interest in the exilic poetry, although it remains a somewhat underdeveloped area. Williams' *Banished Voices* remains the authority on the exilic poetry, but does not address Livia's presence. Johnson discussed the Livia of Ovid's exile as model wife, importantly acknowledging Ovid's groundbreaking via his inclusion of Livia, but maintained that the exilic poetry's tone conveyed more sophisticated criticism of the Augustan regime than Ovid's prior works⁵⁶. Barrett's otherwise excellent work sees Ovid's post-exile work involving Livia as "sickeningly fulsome, addressed to a goddess-in-the-making", which I argue is a half-truth: Ovid does depict Livia as a divinity, but the disdain for the exilic works

⁵⁶ Johnson 405-406.
is unfounded.\textsuperscript{57} Still, the paucity of current English scholarship on Livia in the exilic corpus ought not be taken as an indication that the texts are infertile—Johnson notes that a wider examination of Livia in the \textit{Tristia} and \textit{Ex Ponto} would be "rewarding".

Prior readings of Ovid's exilic Livia have been troubled by a series of key methodological issues. The primary issue is anachronistic reading, and the secondary issue is the absence of comparative reading. Tacitus and Dio contribute to the first issue, as their non-contemporary accounts lead to modern reading biases about Livia. Yet Ovid's depiction of Livia is the earliest extant literary depiction, and as such lacks the obvious bias present in Tacitus' portrayal of the non-adopted emperors. To read Ovid's Livia as Tacitus' murderous mother is anachronistic and prevents a thorough analysis of the exilic poetry's originality and complexity. A non-anachronistic reading will serve as a central goal here both for its literary and historical implications.

Furthermore, it is beneficial to compare this approach to approaches regarding Ovid's representation of Augustus. Recent scholarship comparing textual and numismatic sources has argued and effectively shown that much of our perception regarding the \textit{sidus Iulium} is the result of Ovid's literary retrofitting of his contemporary world to prior events.\textsuperscript{58} Combined particularly with Feeney's prior examinations of imperial semidivinity in Ovid, a coherent paradigm for understanding the relationship between Ovid's works and Augustus emerges. I argue that an examination of the texts reveals that Ovid casts Livia within a context and a paradigm of leadership akin to those of Augustus. The probability of these comparisons'

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{57} Barrett 234. \\
\textsuperscript{58} See Pandey.}
deliberateness is further increased by the similarity between the poetic world of exile and the mythic world of the *Metamorphoses*, which allows for shared paradigms.  

**Unreading Tacitus' Villainous Livia**

Although Ovid's Livia is one of the only contemporary accounts of the woman we have, the most influential depiction of Livia in the eyes of modern readers is Tacitus' "wicked stepmother". I wish to briefly examine the hallmark qualities of the Tacitean Livia in order to establish how Livia is most often read—and, to be precise, how we shall not read her.

Tacitus' historical context lies in the reign of the adopted emperors. He has a vested interest in showing the pitfalls of blood succession, even if (as has been demonstrated) adoption was commonly a feature of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, and this shows in his depiction of Livia.  

The Tacitean Livia is introduced when the author all but accuses her of murder (*Annales* 1.3), casting her as a domineering woman with a weak, aged husband. In short, Livia is a distinct and polarizing figure who conveniently supports Tacitus' narrative agenda. Tacitus does not pretend to report the facts in a dry, neutral fashion; he has a distinct narrative aim in accordance with his socio-political context, and it is in support of that aim that he frames his Livia.

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59 Johnson 405-406 outlines the particular value of Ovidian intertextualism for the *Tristia* and *Ex Ponto*.

60 Tacitus' bias against Livia in particular is treated extensively and far better than I may here by Barrett (pp. 239-247).

61 *nam senem Augustum devinxerat, Annales* 1.3.
The castigation of Livia as Julio-Claudian matriarch continues through the Annals. Though Tiberius himself is portrayed as rather weak and arrogant, significant criticism is directed towards Livia as well. She comes under suspicion for killing Augustus (Annales 1.5), and the explicit use of crime language further assigns blame for the downfall of Augustus and the ascension of Tiberius. Tiberius himself only shows agency after he ascends to his adoptive father's position, and even then, it is shared with his mother in the context of a hurried assassination (propius vero Tiberium ac Liviam; Ann. 1.6). In spite of the almost comically negative light Tacitus wraps around Livia, he nonetheless admits that senatorial parties desired to award her various titles and honors, which Tiberius refused (Ann. 1.15). Suetonius notes that one such title would call Tiberius "Liviae filius" (Tib. 50.3.1) in the same way that Augustus was filius Caesaris. Livia's inclusion here is not intended to demonstrate the public opinion of her, though it does; rather, these few positive words in Livia's favor show her existence within the narrative is almost exclusively as a pressure point for Tiberius.

Additionally, Livia serves as a scapegoat for Tacitus' ideological disagreements with former dynasties. If his interest lay in showing the problems of a genetic dynasty, then he would have no need to smear the imperial system itself: the adopted emperors were still emperors, and besmirching Augustus would be unlikely to endear Tacitus to his readers or better his reputation in the emperors' sight. On the other hand, Livia was not only an ambitious woman with skillful propaganda of her

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62 "son of Livia" and "son of Caesar" respectively.
own, but the genetic origin of the Julio-Claudian bloodline—making her the root of all imperial evil and a way to criticize the first genetic dynasty by proxy. Fascinating though his "wicked stepmother" Livia may be, she is the result of Tacitus' socio-political climate and agenda merged with real-world criticisms.\footnote{For example, see Germanicus' criticisms of Livia in Dio 55.32.2.}

The wide-ranging influence of Tacitus' Livia upon modern scholarship has resulted in the retrofitting of a Tacitean character type onto an Ovidian one. As a result, even though Tacitus wrote long after Livia herself died and Ovid was a contemporary, Ovid's Livia is often assumed to possess the same depth and quantity of negative qualities that Tacitus' does. Though Ovid's Livia was indeed a powerful figure whose all but luxuriates in ambiguity, she is not the wicked stepmother of Tacitus and must not be read as such. Therefore, in the following argument, I have sought to analyze the Ovidian text on its own, without reference to later biographers and historians. Scholars frequently remove themselves from their modern context in order to understand the context of the literature they study, so we too must "unread" Tacitus in order to interpret Ovid's Livia—the earliest extant depiction of the \textit{femina princeps} we have.

\textbf{The Three Liviae}

Though Livia's appearances are scarce, she is an important figure in the exilic corpus and a vital part of Ovid's poetic scheme for discussing the imperial household. Her explicit textual function is intercessory: Ovid casts her as poetic leverage in his supplications, whether he appeals to Augustus himself or Ovid's own wife. In each
case, however, she functions within the framework of standard Augustan political
domesticity known to us from monuments and historical records—perhaps suggesting
a tie between the textual Livia and the historical one.

Exilic Livia is typified in three ways throughout the *Tristia* and *Ex Ponto*:
imperial wife, imperial priestess, and divine woman. The first Livia I wish to examine
is the Augustan Livia: the imperial woman who equally matches her spouse in their
semi-divine union.

**Imperial Wife**

*Livia sic tecum sociales compleat annos*

*quae, nisi te, nullo coniuge digna fuit,*

*quae si non esset, caelebs te vita deceret,*

*nullaque, cui posses esse maritus, erat,*

*(Tr. 2.1.161-164)*

Thus may Livia live out allied years with you,

who, but for you, would have deserved no spouse,

and if she were not, an unmarried life would befit you,

for you could have wed no other woman.

Ovid introduces us to Livia through addressing her husband, and indeed
demonstrates a peculiar equality between the two. Livia was "deserving" (*digna*) of
Augustus alone, and Augustus couldn't have been husband to another. The situational
descriptors are formulated as parallels (*nisi te, nullo coniuge digna fuit*/*si non
*esset...nullaque, cui posses esse maritus erat*), further supporting a reading of
Augustus and Livia's equivalence in the passage. Although the truth-by-technicality in Ovid's claim (Octavian and Livia married twelve years prior to the former's "transformation" into Augustus) has prompted sarcastic interpretations, it is worth noting that the "match made in Olympus" also serves to further the poetic narrative concerning the Augustan family established in the _Metamorphoses_. The princeps and his _coniunx_ are functionally two halves of a whole poetic entity implied within Ovid's works concerning the Augustan family. The isolation of semi-divinities in the _Metamorphoses_ suggests that like is drawn to like.

Demonstrations of Livia's importance as part of the Augustan family are manifold in the _Ex Ponto_. In Letter 2.8, Ovid thanks Cotta Maximus for sending him an imperial token, including the image of Augustus, Livia and Tiberius ( _est iibi Caesaribus Livia iuncta suis_; _Ex P._ 2.8.4). In the same letter, Ovid invokes Livia and other members of the Augustan family in his supplication of Augustus ( _perque tori sociam, quae par tibi sola reperta est/et cui maiestas non onerosa tua est_; _Ex. P._ 2.8. 29-30). He later calls Livia the _mater_ of the _domus Augusta_ ( _Ex. P._ 3.3.87), further inquiring during a prediction of triumph why Livia holds off from preparing a triumphal procession ( _quid cessas currum pompamque perare triumphis/Livia?_ _Ex. P._

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64 Johnson 408.
65 "There Livia is joined to her Caesar."
66 "And through your ally, who alone was found equal to you and for whom your might is not a burden."
3.4.95-96). In *epistula* 4.13, close to the end of the exilic poetry, Ovid returns to Livia as wife, but now within the context of a "personal" letter to Carus.

materiam quaeris? Laudes: de Caesare dixi.

adiuta est novitas numine nostra dei.

nam patris Augusti docui mortale fuisse

corpus, in aetherias numen abisse domos:

esse parem virtute patri, qui frena rogatus

saepe recusati ceperit imperii:

esse pudicarum te Vestam, Livia, matrum,

ambiguum nato dignior anne viro:

esse duos iuvenes, firma adiumenta parentis,

qui dede rint animi pignora certa sui.

(Ex. P. 4.13. 23-32)


My new try was helped by the god's will.

For I taught how the form of father Augustus was mortal,

yet his will departed to the ethereal dwellings:

how, equal in virtue to his father, he took up mastery

of empire when asked, which so often he refused:

how you, Livia, are the Vesta of chaste mothers,

and it is uncertain whether more deserving of spouse or son:

---

67 "Why do you hesitate to prepare a chariot and procession for the triumph, Livia?"
how there are two sons, strong help to their father,
who had given clear proof of their spirit.

Even though the letter’s addressee is Carus, Ovid gives an apostrophic address to Livia. He previously showed (*docuit*) Augustus' apotheosis, albeit preemptively, in the *Metamorphoses*; now that the predicted event has occurred, he gives his attention to Livia as the remainder of the imperial duo. Here she is the "Vesta [pudicarum] matrum" (4.13.29) in a twofold reference: first to her role as divine wife, and second to her role as divine mother and religious figure. That she is *Vesta* is a reflection of her self-styled role elsewhere rather than a comment on the *femina princeps*’ sexuality.⁶⁸ Livia did indeed have associations with both Vestals and mothers. She alone possessed the personal sacrosanctity and public force of a Vestal and the maternal domestic positioning of a mother.⁶⁹ That it is *ambiguum* whether she is more deserving of her son or spouse suggests her roles as model wife⁷⁰ and mother while relating her to the dual qualities of empire (in her living son) and divinity (in her deified spouse). This is a deliberate echo of Ovid's representation of the Julian men. Not only are Caesar and Augustus defined in relation to one another, they are defined as a group with respect to their divine relatives (cf. Saturn and Jupiter, succession of Caesar by Augustus, etc.). Now Ovid extends the method to Livia. The inclusion of the two youth (*duos iuvenes*)

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⁶⁸ Johnson 409-410, 418.
⁶⁹ Severy 135; she received the right to sit with the Vestals following Augustus’ death (*Annals* 4.16.4); after her deification, her cult was given over to the Vestals (*Dio* 60.5.2). Barrett notes an abundance of examples of "priestess Livia" in archaeological records (Barrett 161).
⁷⁰ See Johnson for more on this issue.
cements this depiction as a cohesive, if short, depiction of the imperial family—one anchored by Livia herself.

Livia and Augustus' mutual equivalence in these passages does not represent an Ovidian innovation. Instead, this poetic entity is an Ovidian representation of a peculiar Augustan phenomenon, as marital relationships in the late Republic and early Empire were not exactly unshakeable or ironclad. Divorces and remarriage for political gain, particularly regarding the triumvirates, were fairly common; Caesar was swift to divorce Pompeia in spite of a lack of evidence, while Antony's wife was subject to propaganda in her own right. That Augustus and Livia maintained their relationship as they did (in spite of what Johnson dubs "widely advertised problems") and presented themselves as a unit is a striking feature of the Augustan program, and one here represented through parallelisms and framing.

Priestess

The second variety of Livia in the exilic poetry is the priestess Livia. Often connected with Vestals, as above, the priestess-Livia of Tristia 4 stands apart from Augustus, if not Augustan politics. If Augustus' power source came from his deified father, then religious importance provides a major portion of Livia's power. Livia's roles as counterpart to Augustus and as religious leader, although here separated for convenience, are not only mutually compatible but deeply interrelated. As shown

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71 Johnson 405.
72 Worthy of note is Livia’s appointment as sacerdos, which Ovid references in Tristia 4.2, which may have been modeled upon the relationship between the Flamen Dialis and his wife, the flaminica. Among other things, they were both bound by rigid prohibitions and took part in the same rituals (Barrett 160).
before, there is no contradiction in Livia being the *Vesta matrum*, as her real-world associations with the Vestals contextualized this claim. Instead, Livia's combination of prior roles, much like Augustus', demonstrates compliance within the narrative to Ovid's conceptualization of the Augustan family.

Priestess-Livia appears in several significant instances. *Tristia* 4.2 opens in a manner reminiscent to the end of the *Metamorphoses*; as Ovid anticipated the deification of Augustus and his own apotheosis through literature, so too he anticipates a triumph on Tiberius' behalf against Germany.

\[
cumque bonis nuribus pro sospite Livia nato
munera det meritis, saepe datura, deis,
et pariter matres et quae sine crimine castos
perpetua servant virginitate focos;
\]

*(Tr. 4.2.11-14)*

And with her good daughters-in-law, Livia for her son's safety gives gifts to the worthy gods, as oft, and equally both mothers and they, without stain, perpetually virgin, watch over the hearth.

Here Livia's multiple roles are displayed through a combination of religious function and familial *pietas*. Without epithet, she offers sacrifices for Tiberius' safety, and rallies both mothers and maidens to her cause. That this is a common occurrence is clear (*saepe*), suggesting formality in the event: rather than simply being a mother at prayer, Livia's actions are official. Here framed without mention to her husband,
priestess Livia is equally accessible to mother, maiden and Vestal. One might argue this is an early representation of Livia as the *mater patriae*: mother of an entire country, for whom multiple seemingly exclusive identifications are a matter of course.\textsuperscript{73} These identifications were indicative of both power and respect, as Suetonius later records, and often awarded by the senate. Those who might be threatened by this, however—namely Tiberius—prevented the titles from becoming official, as they gave his mother (functionally a part of the "old" regime) great power.\textsuperscript{74} Given the unity expressed by Livia's multiple identifications within this passage, it seems this depiction may foreshadow inadvertently Livia's honors to come.

**Divinity**

Livia's third and final role presents itself after a review of her functions as wife and priestess: as divinity. Shortly after calling his wife, who is sadly otherwise uncharacterized, the *coniugis exemplum...bonae*,\textsuperscript{75} Ovid exhorts her to approach Livia.

\begin{quote}
nota tua est probitas testatque tempus in omne
sit virtus etiam non proboitate minor.
non tibi Amazonia est pro me sumenda securis,
aut excisa levi pelta gerenda manu.
numen adorandum est, non ut mihi fiat amicum,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{73} Tac. *Ann.* 1.14.2.; coins from Romula designate Livia as *genetrix orbis* and from Leptis Magna as *mater patriae*. However, note that no woman until Julia Domna was officially recognized as mater patriae (Barrett 157).

\textsuperscript{74} Suet. *Tib.* 50.2.1.; however, Barrett argues that Tiberius' actions "should not be considered remarkable, nor any evidence of serious dissension between himself and his mother..." 157.

\textsuperscript{75} "example of a good spouse"
Your probity is known and accounted for in all time;
may your valor be no less than your probity.
There's no Amazonian weapon you must take up for me,
nor grasp a cut shield with your delicate hand.
You must implore a divine power, not to be amicable to me,
but merely to be less angry than before.

Ovid's two-count praise of his wife suggests comparisons to Livia even before
the latter is identified. If Ovid's wife is an "exemplum coniugis bonae" and her
probitas is "nota", it seems difficult to avoid comparing her to the imperial "Vesta
matrium". Though virtus might suggest a kind of militaristic courage, Ovid's mention
of the epic Amazons negates this concept: she only has to supplicate a godlike power
(numen). At this point in the poem, it is unclear about whom Ovid speaks; the
revelation that it is Livia comes only some twenty lines later.

Caesaris est coniunx ore precando tuo,
quae praestat virtute sua, ne presca vetustas,
laude pudicitiae saecula nostra premat:
quae Veneris formam, mores Iunonis habendo
sola est caelesti digna reperta toro.
quid trepidas et adire times? non impia Procne
filiave Aeetae voce movenda tua est,
nec nurus Aegypti, nec saeva Agamemnonis uxor,

Scyllaque, quae Siculas inguine terret aquas

Telegonive parens vertendis nata figuris,

nexaque nodosas angue Medusa comas...

(Ex. P. 3.1.114-124)

It's the wife of Caesar to whom your lips must pray,

who proves with her virtue that prior ages

do not overtake ours in praise of chastity:

she who, with the beauty of Venus and characters of Juno,

alone was worthy to share the divine couch.

Why do you tremble and fear to go? Not impious Procne

nor the daughter of Aeetes must your voice address,

nor Aegyptus' daughter-in-law, nor harsh wife of Agamemnon,

nor Scylla, who terrifies Sicilian waters with her loins,

nor the parent of Telegonus, born with changing form,

nor Medusa, her locks bound with snakes.

Ovid frames Livia as a divinity, for the coniunx Caesaris must be petitioned

(prechando), whose virtus in pudicitia refutes a basic trope of Greco-Roman

storytelling: that prior ages surpassed the latter ones. This refutation of a mythic trope

represents an alignment with traditional panegyric. Such an occurrence has already

appeared in the Metamorphoses, where the repeated comparisons of Augustus to

Jupiter and Caesar to Saturn highlight the superiority of latter times. Livia, though as
coniunx, has surpassed being merely a priestess; she is now a god. She has Venus' beauty (*veneris formam*) yet the ways of Juno (*mores Iunonis*), combining the positive traits of the two most relevant female deities in the Julian paradigm. That she alone was worth to share in the divine bed (*sola...toro*) further cements her characterization as a kind of feminine analog to her husband, at least as far as their respective roles within the wider narrative are concerned. An additional mix of subversion and support comes in Ovid's following statements: that Livia is *not* Procne, Medea, Danaïd or Scylla or any other of the mythic women mentioned is a negative parallel to the comparison of Augustus' succession to the father-son relationships in *Metamorphoses* 15.855-860. Livia is *not* a superhuman witch in the same way that Augustus is *not* a hero with tragic paternity: the comparisons are relevant for the contextual framing, but the precise—and unflattering—implications as a result of the comparison are left to the reader.

76 Livia is *not* a superhuman witch in the same way that Augustus is *not* a hero with tragic paternity: the comparisons are relevant for the contextual framing, but the precise—and unflattering—implications as a result of the comparison are left to the reader.

77 Feeney 222-223 is relevant here. As Feeney says, "it is a god-like prerogative to be beyond the limits of human behaviour...the kindred nature of imperial and divine power is the entire point of conceiving of humans as god-like. That power can be saving in epiphany, a source of manifest blessing for the threatened; it can be arbitrarily and unpredictably devastating."

But a lady ruler, in whom Fortune proves she can see,

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76 See previous chapter for a full discussion of this comparison.
77 Feeney 222-223 is relevant here. As Feeney says, "it is a god-like prerogative to be beyond the limits of human behaviour...the kindred nature of imperial and divine power is the entire point of conceiving of humans as god-like. That power can be saving in epiphany, a source of manifest blessing for the threatened; it can be arbitrarily and unpredictably devastating."
and bore falsely the allegation of blindness: other than whom nothing on earth from sun's rise to set more illustrious does the world hold, save Caesar.

The negative anaphora is finally contradicted when Ovid identifies Livia as the *femina princeps*. Though *princeps* is not an unusual term in its own right, particularly concerning the idea of being *princeps* in a particular area, the combination of *femina* with *princeps* is primarily found in Ovid.78 Yet a natural ambiguity exists: is this an adjectival *princeps*, indicating her primacy in something, or is it an appositive to *femina*, carrying the implication of rulership?79 Ovid does not say *feminarum princeps*, and the original adjectival meaning, even in its most authoritative context, does not seem to fit. Neither does the preceded meaning entirely mesh, though it is still a better fit for *femina* if only due to Ovid's own previous use of it in the *Fasti*—Juno calls herself *regina...princepsque dearum*.80 The uniqueness of the phrase and rarity of this usage of *princeps* suggests Ovid is experimenting with depictions of female power. Furthermore, that nothing is more outstanding than her (save her husband) further suggests her narrative importance: Livia is to Ovid's wife much as Augustus was to Ovid himself in the *Metamorphoses' final passages*. As the *Metamorphoses* used context and characterization to frame historical figures within divine realms, so too

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78 Ovid also identifies Livia as a *femina princeps* in *Tristia* 1.6.25, although (again) that passage is not helpful for explicating the precise implications of the phrase. 79 See *princeps*1 *OLD* s.v. 5 and *princeps*2 s.v. 5. respectively. 80 *Fasti* 6.37. Note that this usage is undisputed, being a citation for the meaning "person in charge, head; leader" in the *OLD*. Notably, she also muses "*fratre magis dubito glorier anne viro*" (6.28), possibly setting precedent for Livia's *ambiguum dignior*. 

Thomas 54
does the exilic poetry frame Livia: a complex, unique woman with no shortage of power.

Although Johnson suggests that an echo between Augustus' adoption of princeps and Livia as femina princeps "would likely have fallen on deaf ears", the narrative framework suggests this is indeed the intended—richly intertextual—reference. If we consider femina princeps the female equivalent of a princeps, we ought recall the relationship between imperial power and the Herculean paradigm from my prior argument: namely, the relationship suggested between the divine, numen, and violence as a representation of such. If we extend that argument to the femina princeps as well, given that she was explicitly called a numen earlier in the letter, it provides further context for the long list of negative exempla. Johnson considers the negative exempla to be part of a "devastating" comparison in the context of Ovidian mythology;\(^8\) I would suggest that it is no more devastating than the final comparison in Metamorphoses 15 or Ex Ponto 1.2 and 2.2, and possibly—due to the context I propose—even an expected part of Ovid's approach to the Augustan family in accordance with the accepted poetic protocols of the age. Rather, our understanding of the comparison to be devastating is due to anachronistic readings that retrofit the Tacitean wicked stepmother onto Ovid's Livia.

What might one conclude from the threefold Livia, Ovid's femina princeps? It is clear that the character of Livia contains competing tendencies that create a certain tension inherent in the figure, leading some scholars to consider her portrayal critical.

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\(^{81}\) Johnson 417.
Yet this is exactly in line with the expectations set forth in the Herculean paradigm. The *Aeneid* suggested the possibility of such a portrayal as this, which was adopted in the *Metamorphoses* for Augustus and is continued here with Livia. Ovid's typification of Livia is similar in form, function, and effect to his typification of Augustus in the *Metamorphoses*, emphasizing the paradigmatic role underlying their depictions.  

Two figures in the *Metamorphoses* are particularly useful to an examination of exilic Livia: Juno, the original "divine woman", and Hersilia, the deified wife of Romulus. Although one might suppose that, as Augustus' divine analog in the *Metamorphoses* is Jupiter, Livia's would then be Juno, we find relatively little common ground between the two. Though Ovid states that Livia has the *mores Iunonis*, the Juno of the *Metamorphoses* appears primarily as an antagonist in its truest sense: she, like her Virgilian counterpart, often opposes the main action of the stories rather than propelling them. A more likely Juno is the marriage-Juno of Roman tradition, whose social and religious connotations were very closely aligned with Livia's self-styling as model wife and mother. Hersilia, on the other hand, provides a female example of the Herculean paradigm in action. Deified as Hora at the end of *Metamorphoses* 14, Hersilia closely parallels Livia both in their position relative to their husbands and respective apotheoses, in addition to her catasterism's positioning paralleling that which follows in Book 15. It seems plausible that, given the paradigmatic use of Romulus' apotheosis for early imperial deifications and paralleling

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82 For more on this matter, see Feeney and Miller.
found elsewhere, Hersilia is intended as a narrative avatar of Livia, corresponding roughly with Hebe from the Herculean paradigm.\textsuperscript{83}

**Material Remains**

Finally, let us consider Ovid's exilic Livia in light of Livia's historical presence. That Livia was a figure of great importance in the *domus Augusta* is obvious; her role as advisor to Augustus, while a point of caricaturing as an archetypal "wicked stepmother" in the hands of Dio and Tacitus, paralleled the advisory role of republican matrons.\textsuperscript{84} In the private realm, Livia's actions were not novel in their own right; rather, any novelty came from the way in which her fairly traditional actions occurred within the context of a wider phenomenon: metamorphosis of old customs and positions into something new.

In public, however, Livia's role took a different shape. The old-in-new concept of state forwarded by Augustus necessitated considerations of roles within that concept, particularly involving dynastic continuation of the *pater patriae* title. As the wife of the *pater*, Livia solved this trouble through the cult of Concordia. Though Livia had previously been involved with public building projects, a turning point came when she dedicated an *aedes Concordiae Augustae*, which Ovid claims to have been erected to celebrate her *concordia* with Augustus. Yet the term *concordia* has dual meanings: harmony within family, and salving for political turmoil.\textsuperscript{85} Livia would have had knowledge of both of these meanings, as it was a crucial parallel in ancient

\textsuperscript{83} Myers 208.
\textsuperscript{84} This advisory role included a number of prominent women, including Cicero's own wife as well as his mother. See Severy 149.
\textsuperscript{85} Severy 132-134.
political thought. Though this parallel existed before Augustus, the association between a harmonious familial unit and a harmonious state was argued by Augustan discourse as a whole—Augustus and Livia had a vested interest in declaring the harmony within the family of the princeps, femina or otherwise.

In turn, the marriage of the political and the familial allowed Livia to legitimize a public position while still adhering to traditional female roles. If the state depended on the domestic, then by definition the mater, in concordia with the pater, was deeply connected with the state. Within her public appearances, personal dedications, and independent projects, Livia constructed herself as the model Roman wife and mother, yet possessing the independence and visibility of a Vestal.86 Livia herself played a significant role in undertaking these actions with some independence. If the building projects, rededications, and the involvement in various religious and social functions were not products of Livia's own ambition,87 it is still noteworthy that they were depicted as such.

If we find these peculiar, competing ideas within Ovid's exilic Livia, we must acknowledge that they are due in part to the historical Livia herself. Like Augustus, she used combinations of prior roles in Roman society to create her own position within the new state, and by doing so set the prototype for future imperial women. Indeed, that modern readers see Ovid's reference to Livia as the "Vesta of mothers" as

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86 For examples, focusing particularly on Livia's archaeological building footprints, see Severy 132-134.
87 Though it is, at present, irrelevant to the argument in this chapter, I think there is good reason to believe that the role created by/for Livia was likely of her own volition, not the least due to the sheer amount of financial and political independence she possessed (see Barrett).
an ironic critique\textsuperscript{88} is less indicative of Roman attitudes towards her than our own biased reading based upon later authors.

\textbf{Conclusion}

In conclusion, we may determine several things clearly from a comparative study of Ovid's exilic Livia to other works in the Ovidian corpus and other depictions of Livia. First, I argue that rather than defaulting to an isolated view of the exilic works, we ought to interpret the character of Livia within the paradigmatic framework of the \textit{Metamorphoses}. A close examination of her character in light of the paradigm reveals that her depiction is consistent with the \textit{Metamorphoses}' Augustus, even partaking in the same literary paradigms as her male counterparts. I propose that we extend the same ambiguity acknowledged in Ovid's depiction of Augustus to his depiction of Livia as well. Though the \textit{Metamorphoses} and the exilic poetry exist in different poetic worlds, they still contain the same paradigmatic frame of reference when it concerns the imperial family. Ovid's formative depiction of Livia shows us a powerful figure with significant influence—not a scheming witch, as in Tacitus, but an honored \textit{princeps}. In the absence of Tacitus' bias against the Julio-Claudians, Ovid gives us a female analogue for the Augustus of the \textit{Metamorphoses} and demonstrates the paradigm's applicability to both genders.

\textsuperscript{88} Johnson 417-418; for much academic hand-wringing over Livia's "disastrous" inclusion, see Kenney 41. Though Kenney's works are now somewhat outdated, Barnett's comments indicate that Kenney's general sentiment remains (see Barnett 234).
IV

The End of Things

"But there is also, I suppose, a real question of taste involved: a judgement that the heroic or tragic story on a strictly human plane is by nature superior. Doom is held less literary than ἀμαρτία."\(^89\)

The impulse that once led English philologists to disdain *Beowulf* (or otherwise disdain the monsters) finds its inverse in those scholars who disdain the imperial household in the Ovidian corpus. Whether it's a dragon among the Danes or Julius Caesar transforming into a star, the discomfort certain scholars exhibit with narrative blending is unlikely to dissipate. Nonetheless, I have shown here that the merging of real-world figures within a poetic setting is part of an existing narrative method. As such, analysis of their inclusion as characters ought to conform to the standard of analysis elsewhere in the poem rather than being subjected to futile conjectures that force the poem into binary political positioning.

My first chapter showed the existence and applicability of a Virgilian paradigm that establishes basic parameters for semi-divine figures. This argument built largely on Feeney's work in his section on the *Aeneid*, but extended the paradigm's influence to the worldbuilding in the *Metamorphoses*, particularly with reference to divinities and their interactions with humans. I argued that this Virgilian paradigm ought to be presupposed as a part of the *Metamorphoses'* world and, thus, fundamental to a grounded reading.

\(^89\) Tolkien 12.
My second chapter demonstrated the way in which this Virgilian paradigm's incorporation allowed Ovid to merge figures (namely Augustus) from the historical world into the poetic world of the Metamorphoses. Due to the natural flexibility of Ovid's poetic world and the use of this paradigm, political propaganda may be transformed into poetic reality. Because this paradigm and the flexibility therein are inherent to the world of the poem, however, the inclusion of these figures cannot be read as a black and white political statement. The paradigm contains natural tension; a world built upon such a paradigm must also contain such tensions. Therefore, the Augustus of the Metamorphoses ought not be perceived as a fawning attempt of Ovid's to obtain the emperor's favor, nor a sarcastic jab at his propaganda, but instead as part of an accepted practice found in Virgil as well. The natural ambiguity of the depiction need not be Ovidian snark, or else it might be Virgilian snark as well—rather, the ambiguity results from preexisting conceptions regarding the semi-divine.

In my final chapter, I suggested a new reading of Ovid's Livia in accordance with this Herculean paradigm shown to run through the Metamorphoses. Throughout the exilic poetry, Ovid regularly casts Livia as an analogue for Augustus in the Metamorphoses. This suggests the inclusion of the paradigm within the Tristia and Ex Ponto, and further suggests that the paradigm's usage is programmatic for discussing members of the imperial family, irrespective of gender. In addition to her importance as part of Ovid's depiction of the imperial family, this Livia is intriguing from a historical point of view as well: Ovid's Livia is the earliest contemporary account we
have of the *femina princeps*, and must be evaluated free of the bias which later authors introduce.

It is difficult to make a pronouncement on what an ancient author "means" in a given text, especially with one so slippery as Ovid. In this case, however, the text suggests a remarkably non-contentious answer for a contentious problem. Ovid's inclusion of Augustus and other real-world figures within the *Metamorphoses* is the logical result of an established epic tradition. The *Aeneid*'s mythic past predicted a very real future—the author's present day. In a similar way, the *Metamorphoses* shows a mythic history of change, culminating in a near-merge with the author's present day. The systematic method of discussing divinity and power as found in Ovid is rooted in Virgil's Herculean paradigm, normalizing the aforementioned mix of mythic pasts with real futures. Ovid's Augustus and Livia should be appreciated for what they are: complex characters built on a poetic tradition of inherent tension merged with real-world influences that demonstrate the range of their author's skill.


