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THE INTERTEXTUAL FATE OF A GREAT HOMERIC HERO:
DIOMEDES IN VERGIL (*AEN.* 11.252–93)
AND OVID (*REM.* 151–67)

Summary: In this paper I argue that the subtext for Ovid's positive portrayal of Diomedes at *Rem.* 151–167 is the Vergilian episode of Diomedes' reply to the embassy of the Latins (*Aen.* 11.252–93), and that the adjustment of this episode to the frame of Ovid's erotic didactic is achieved through a number of similarities in diction and theme. Ovid's treatment of the Vergilian Diomedes, however, is subversive and the Vergilian narrative is being undermined and reworked in a brand new way.

Key words: Diomedes, Aeneid, Remedia, intertextuality, Ovid.

I.

In the *Iliad* Diomedes along with Achilles and Ajax form the team of the strongest Achaean heroes. His activity on the battlefield culminates in the 5th and in part of the 6th book (the so-called *Διομήδους ἀριστεία*),¹ where he destroys his opponents and even wounds Aphrodite and Ares with the help of Athena.²

This act of Diomedes is established in literary tradition as the most well-known case of an attack against the gods and the classic example of human sacrilege *par excellence*. It is used as such by Ovid in his *prooemium* to the *Remedia amoris*, in his address to *Amor*. In his effort to calm down the omnipotent god, who has every right to be upset about the title of his new work (*Rem.* 1f.: *Legerat huius Amor titulum nomenque libelli: / 'Bella mihi, video, bella parantur' ait*), Ovid proclaims his innocence and distances himself from the son of Tydeus, who wounded Venus (3–6):³ *Parce tuum vatem sceleris damnare, Cupido, / tradita qui toties te duce signa tuli. / Non ego Tydides, a quo tua saucia mater / in liquidum rediit aethera Martis equis*. The mention of Mars and his horses is not only due to the fact that in the well-known Homeric model of this episode Aphrodite is carried away from the battle on his

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¹ Hdt. 2.116: *Ἐπιμένηται δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐν Διομήδεος Ἀριστηίῃ.*

² For the wounding of Aphrodite see Hom. *Il.* 5.329–352. For Ares see 5.846–863.

³ It is noteworthy that Ovid uses the *exemplum* of Diomedes, the archetypical sacrilege, although it is not associated directly with *Amor* but with his mother *Venus*.

chariot (*Il.* 5.363–7). It is also fully integrated with the context, in which love and war (*bella*, twice in line 2 / *duce*, *signa* line 4) are the two opposing poles. In the *Remedia amoris* Diomedes constitutes the epic representative of the anti-elegiac and anti-erotic way of life; he is the personification of violence, which threatens the carefree life of love.

This depiction of Diomedes in the prologue of the *Remedia amoris* is reminiscent of his appearance in the *Amores*. In *Am.* 1.7 Ovid accuses himself of having struck his beloved.⁴ He claims that his act equals sacrilege (*Am.* 1.7.5f.: *tunc ego vel caros potui violare parentes / saeva vel in sanctos verbera ferre deos*) and compares it with the worst act of impiety and irreverence ever recorded in myth, the wounding of Venus (mentioned allusively as *dea*, since the episode is widely known) by the son of Tydeus⁵ (*Am.* 1.7.31–4): *pessima Tydides scelerum monimenta reliquit. / ille deam primus perculit; alter ego! / et minus ille nocens. mihi, quam profitebar amare / laesa est; Tydides saevus in hoste fuit*. Ovid compares himself and his act directly with Diomedes,⁶ reaching the paradoxical and humorous conclusion that the crime of the Achaean hero is less atrocious than his (*minus ille nocens*, 33), because it was committed in a time of war and against an enemy (*saevus in hoste fuit*, 34), while he on the other hand had wounded the girl he purported to love (*mihi, quam profitebar amare laesa est*, 33).⁷

In both the *Amores* and the *Remedia amoris* the attack against the god is called a *scelus*, a word with particularly negative connotations.⁸ However, Ovid treats the *exemplum* differently. In the *Amores*, although initially it seems that he considers Diomedes' act as the worst by far (*pessima monimenta*, 31), he gradually reaches the sophistic conclusion that he is an even worse criminal than Diomedes.⁹ In contrast, in the prologue of the *Remedia amoris*, Ovid does not attempt a comparison with Diomedes, but condemns him as a hideous criminal right from the start. The reason for this different approach can be found in the specific goal of each work. In the *Amores* Ovid presents himself as guilty of violence against his mistress. He does not attempt

⁴ For a detailed discussion of Ov. *Am.* 1.7 see H. A. KHAN: *Ovidius furens: a reevaluation of Amores 1.7*: *Latomus* 25, 1966, 880–894; B. E. STIRRUP: Irony in Ovid, *Amores* 1.7: *Latomus* 32, 1973, 824–831; J. BARSBY: *Ovid Amores I*, Bristol 1979 (repr.), 82–91; S. GÖSSL: Ovid, *Amores* 1.7: *GB* 10, 1981, 165–180; J. C. MCKEOWN: *Ovid: Amores, Vol. II: A Commentary on Book One*, Leeds 1989, 162–197; B. W. BOYD: *Ovid's Literary Loves. Influence and Innovation in the Amores*, Michigan 1997, 122–130.

⁵ According to A.A.R. HENDERSON: *P. Ovidii Nasonis Remedia Amoris*, Edinburgh 1979, on *Rem.* 5 Diomedes with his attack “had provided Ovid with a typically *grande in parvis exemplum* for his own conduct towards Corinna (*Am.* 1.7.31ff.)”.

⁶ For this *peccatorum comparatio* see R. WHITAKER: *Myth and Personal Experience in Roman Love-Elegy. A Study in Poetic Technique*, Göttingen 1983, 160; MCKEOWN (n. 4) on Ov. *Am.* 1.7.31–4.

⁷ This exaggeration by Ovid is particularly funny and ironic, when one considers that all he did to his mistress was spoil her hairdo and scratch her cheeks (1.7.11): *ergo ego digestos potui laniare capillos?* (1.7.49f.): *at nunc sustinui raptis a fronte capillis / ferreus ingenuas ungue notare genas*.

⁸ Cf. Ov. *Am.* 1.7.27: *quid mihi vobiscum, caedis scelerumque ministrae?* R. PICHON: *Index Verborum Amatoriorum*, Hildesheim 1966 (repr.) states s.v. *scelus*: “*scelus dicitur quidquid amantibus potest obici ... ac praecipue perfidia et fallacia ... aut iracundia* (Ov. *Am.* 1.7.67)... Denique *scelus* hyperbolice dicitur quodcumque committitur contra ea quae amantes decent.”

⁹ For Ovid's way of thinking and his proofs see MCKEOWN (n. 4) ad loc. E. GREENE: *The Erotics of Domination: Male Desire and the Mistress in Latin Love Poetry*, Baltimore 1998, 88 believes that Ovid is striking a pose and BOYD (n. 4) 123 speaks about Ovid's “operatic pitch of self-reproach”.

to defend himself and justify his act, but intends to point out how terrible his crime is, using a series of exaggerations.¹⁰ Hence he does not hesitate to compare himself with mankind's worst criminal and to claim that he is even worse! His goal is none other than humour and irony.¹¹ Besides, things are not that dramatic after all, since his beloved needs only to tidy her hair to bring it back to its previous state, before the supposedly violent attack (*Am.* 1.7.67f.: *neve mei sceleris tam tristia signa supersint, / pone recompositas in statione comas!*).¹² The whole effect of this elegy depends on the excessive stress of Ovid's guilt in relation to the unimportance of his crime; this is why his comparison with Diomedes, the worst criminal of all, is necessary.

Things are different in the prologue of the *Remedia amoris*. Despite the humorous and light mood that dominates this work, too, Ovid is supposed to be the target of omnipotent *Amor*, just as he is getting ready to compose a poem against him. It is therefore necessary to shake off any suspicion or accusation raised against him from the very beginning.¹³ While in the *Amores* his opponent was his mistress, this time Ovid must face a god, which means that he is no longer the stronger party in the conflict. This explains why he puts Diomedes on trial and condemns him with no further ado, without even allowing him the excuse of the war, which acquitted him in the *Amores*.

II. A

Nevertheless, Ovid's negative stance towards Diomedes changes in the course of the *Remedia amoris*. In order to rid themselves of passion Ovid exhorts his love-lorn pupils to turn to works of peace (courts, *Rem.* 151f.) or war (*Rem.* 153f.).¹⁴ The first example of military prowess brought forward is taken from contemporary history: Augustus' successful campaign against the Parthians (*Rem.* 155–8),¹⁵ a case alien to love. There follows however an *ex maiore ad minorem* mythological *exemplum*,¹⁶ which is very familiar to Ovid's readers, Venus' wounding by Diomedes (*Rem.* 159f.): *Ut semel Aetola Venus est a cuspide laesa, / mandat amatori bella gerenda suo*.¹⁷ Instead of his usual patronymic, *Tydidēs*, the hero is mentioned indirectly with

¹⁰ See MCKEOWN (n. 4) 164 on Ovid's humorous exaggerations.

¹¹ For the irony of *Am.* 1.7 see KHAN (n. 4); MCKEOWN (n. 4) 164; BOYD (n. 4) 123–124.

¹² See D. PARKER: The Ovidian coda: *Arion* 8, 1969, 84–87.

¹³ Similarly in *Pont.* 2.2.9–14 Ovid presents Diomedes and the Giants as characteristic impious criminals against the gods and then distances himself from them stating that his fault is not that serious.

¹⁴ Ovid's pupils must avoid by all means the dangerous and love-inducing *otium* (*Rem.* 139f., 143f.). G. B. CONTE: *Genres and Readers. Lucretius, Love Elegy, Pliny's Encyclopedia*, Baltimore 1994, 60 notes: "...the didactic argument of the *Remedia* goes on to attack elegy in one of its fundamental ideological presuppositions: the refusal of the active life, the deliberate choice of *otium desidiosum*."

¹⁵ For this campaign and its importance for the dating of the work see HENDERSON (n. 5) xi–xii and P. PINOTTI: *P. Ovidio Nasone: Remedia amoris*, Bologna 1988, on *Rem.* 155–156.

¹⁶ See D. JONES: *Enjoinder and Argument in Ovid's Remedia Amoris*, *Hermes Einzelschriften*, Heft 77, Stuttgart 1997, 56–57.

¹⁷ When later in the *Metamorphoses* Venus complains about her misfortunes, she mentions her wounding by Diomedes using vocabulary reminiscent of this *Remedia amoris* passage (*Ov. Met.* 15.768f.): *solane semper ero iustis exercita curis, / quam modo Tydidæ Calydonia vulneret hasta*. Cf. *Ov. Fast.* 4.119f.: *pro Troia, Romane, tua Venus arma ferebat, / cum genuit teneram cuspide laesa manum*, where

the phrase *Aetola cuspidē*, which points to his origin.¹⁸ It is important, as we shall see later, that the adjective *Aetol(i)us* is first used for Diomedes by Vergil in *Aen.* 11.428:¹⁹ *non erit auxilio nobis Aetolus et Arpi*. *Cuspis* is a common grand metonymy for *hasta*²⁰ and along with the adjective *Aetola* bestow Ovid's *exemplum* with epic colour. On the other hand Mars, the terrifying god of war, adjusts to the humble erotic-elegiac environment and becomes a lover (*amator*), to whom his mistress entrusts the continuation of the war.

Contrary to Diomedes' previous appearances in the *Amores* and the *Remedia amoris*, this is the first and only time in Augustan poetry that Venus' wounding by him, this well-established paradigm of human irreverence, is presented as a positive example, because this is what Ovid's didactic plan demands.²¹ Not only is the hero not condemned for his sacrilege, but also his action is approved, because it brought about Venus' withdrawal from the battle. Love and war cannot be reconciled, as Zeus told Aphrodite after her wounding in *Iliad* 5 (line 428): *οὐ τοι τέκνον ἐμὸν δέδοται πολεμῆια ἔργα*.²² The *exemplum* now becomes a successful precedent for love's (Venus') defeat by war (Diomedes). The contrast to the prologue is clear and visible and Ovid's pupils are now asked to follow the example of the man, who had been condemned by their teacher for his crime some 150 lines ago.

II. B

Diomedes' *exemplum* is followed by the story of Aegisthus. Ovid puts aside the traditional version of the myth, involving an ancestral feud between Agamemnon and Aegisthus,²³ and claims that the latter one was almost forced into a relationship with Clytemnestra, because there was no political life in Argos during the Trojan war and he had too much spare time to spend on love (*Rem.* 161f.):²⁴ *Quaeritis, Aegisthus*

Diomedes' name is silenced and emphasis is laid on Venus' bodily pain. For Venus' pain see Hom. *Il.* 5.352–4.

¹⁸ Oeneus, Diomedes' grandfather, was the king of Aetolian Calydon.

¹⁹ In Martial, Statius and Silius Italicus it is widely employed for Diomedes. In Greek literature see Hom. *Il.* 4.399f. (Tydeus), 23.470–2 (Diomedes), Eur. *Suppl.* 1217f. (Diomedes).

²⁰ MCKEOWN (n. 4) on Ov. *Am.* 1.1.11. *cuspis* is used twelve times in the *Aeneid*, but not in association with Diomedes.

²¹ Horace's allusive reference to the same episode (*Carm.* 1.6.15f.) is attentively vague, as he calls Diomedes *superis parem*. In *Met.* 15.803–6, as Venus is about to cover the murdered body of Julius Caesar with a cloud, Ovid recalls the two previous cases when the goddess did the same, first with Paris and then with Aeneas, without however mentioning her wounding by Diomedes: *tum vero Cytherea manu percussit utraque / pectus et Aeneaden molitur condere nube, / qua prius infesto Paris est ereptus Atridae, / et Diomedeos Aeneas fugerat enses*.

²² See PINOTTI (n. 15) on *Rem.* 159–160.

²³ Aegisthus was the son of Thyestes, Atreus' brother. By killing Agamemnon, the son of Atreus, Aegisthus wanted to avenge his father. See HENDERSON (n. 5) on *Rem.* 161.

²⁴ See H. J. GEISLER: *P.Ovidius Naso. Remedia Amoris mit Kommentar zu Vers 1–396*, Diss. Berlin 1969, 227; M. H. T. DAVISSON: *Quid moror exemplis?: Mythological Exempla in Ovid's Pre-exilic Poems and the Elegies From Exile: Phoenix* 47, 1993, 213–237, at p. 220; M. H. T. DAVISSON: *The Search for an Alter Orbis in Ovid's Remedia Amoris: Phoenix* 50, 1996, 240–261, at pp. 248–249.

quare sit factus adulter? / in promptu causa est: desidiosus erat and (167): *quod potuit, ne nil illic ageretur, amavit*. This is a bright and humorous treatment of a very familiar episode, already established in the *Odyssey* and very common in tragedy.²⁵ Ovid picks this epic-tragic episode and innovates upon it in his elegiac-didactic manner with impressive results.²⁶ Unlike Diomedes', Aegisthus' example functions as a deterrent for the young people, who had better turn to other pursuits, in order to avoid his fate.

One however is inclined to wonder why does Aegisthus' *exemplum* come after that of Diomedes' and what is the rationale behind this sequence. These two figures are certainly not associated in any mythological tradition, since they move in entirely different spheres: Diomedes excels on the Trojan battlefield, whereas Aegisthus, who is not mentioned in the *Iliad* at all, goes down in history as an adulterer and a murderer back in Agamemnon's palace.²⁷

It is true of course that both are associated with Argos, since Diomedes was born there, when his father Tydeus, an exile from Aetolian Calydon, got married to Deipyle, daughter of king Adrastus.²⁸ To strengthen this association Ovid places Aegisthus specifically in Argos and not in neighbouring Mycenae (*Rem.* 166): *vacuum litibus Argos erat*.²⁹ It is also true that in *Am.* 1.7, before treating the episode of Venus' wounding by Diomedes mentioned above, Ovid refers to Orestes and his impious murder of his mother Clytemnestra (9–10): *et, vindex in matre patris, malus ultor, Orestes / ausus in arcanos poscere tela deas*? Although Aegisthus is not mentioned, his presence is felt, as his part in this story is well known.

II. C

However, Ovid's peculiar collocation of Diomedes' and Aegisthus' *exempla* in the *Remedia amoris* is not satisfactorily accounted for by their common Argive origin, much less by their allusive co-existence in *Am.* 1.7. One has to look in another

For Clytemnestra's jealousy of Agamemnon's extra-marital affairs (Chryseis, Briseis, Cassandra) as the cause for her affair with Aegisthus see Ov. *Ars* 2.399–408.

²⁵ See HENDERSON (n. 5) on *Rem.* 161.

²⁶ See DAVISSON (n. 24) 214 with n. 4 who also cites Ov. *Tr.* 1.9.33–34.

²⁷ PINOTTI (n. 15) on *Rem.* 159–160 comments on the transition from Diomedes to Aegisthus: "il distico, introducendo un episodio del ciclo troiano, funge da cerniera con il successivo *exemplum* di Egisto, preparandolo non solo sul piano del contenuto ma anche su quello formale. Infatti i vv. 159–160, caratterizzati da un livello stilistico piuttosto basso a fronte dei precedenti *exempla* tratti da Omero, preludono al tono da 'adulterio borghese' con il quale Ov. descriverà la storia del figlio di Tieste".

²⁸ In the *Aeneid* (11.246f.) Diomedes names his new city *Argyripa*, so as to remind him of his homeland, Argos: *ille urbem Argyripam patriae cognomine gentis / victor Gargani condebat Iapygis agris*. Cf. Plin. *NH* 3.104, Serv. *Aen.* 11.246.

²⁹ On the other hand Agamemnon is constantly mentioned as *Mycenaeus*, first at Verg. *Aen.* 11.266. See J.C. MCKEOWN: *Ovid: Amores, Vol. III: A Commentary on Book Two*, Leeds 1998, on *Am.* 2.8.11–12. See also Ov. *Her.* 3.109f., 5.1f., *Tr.* 2.1.400. The adjective *Argivus* is used by Ovid in a passage only indirectly relevant to Aegisthus (*Am.* 3.13.31–4): *Argiva est pompae facies; Agamemnone caeso / et scelus et patrias fugit Halaesus opes / iamque pererratis profugus terraque fretoque / moenia felici condidit alta manu*.

direction to come up with a feasible explanation for this particular passage of the *Remedia amoris*.

My suggestion, based upon what I consider to be conclusive evidence, is that Ovid's starting point for this collocation was Diomedes' reply to the embassy of the Latins in *Aeneid* 11.³⁰ In *Aeneid* 8 the Latins dispatch an embassy to the Argive hero (*Aen.* 8.9–17), who now lives in Apulia,³¹ to ask for his help in their war against the Trojans, feeling almost certain that he will be willing to face again his enemies of old.³² Their hopes, however, are shattered, as Diomedes does not want to fight the Trojans any more and further suggests that the Latins make peace with them.

His reply to the Latin delegates is reported by Venulus³³ in direct speech before the council of the Latin leaders in book 11 (252–293). Diomedes thinks of the misfortunes that struck himself and the other Achaeans after the war:³⁴ first, he mentions Ajax, son of Oileus (259f.), Menelaus and Odysseus (261–3), Neoptolemus, Idomeneus and the Locreans (264f.). He then covers in three lines, i.e., one third of his account of the *nostoi*, Agamemnon's return to Mycenae and his murder by Aegisthus, who is *not* mentioned by name though (266–8): *ipse Mycenaeus magnorum ductor Achivum / coniugis infandae prima inter limina dextra / oppetiit, devictam Asiam sub-sedit adulter*.

This is the first time in Latin poetry that Aegisthus is called an *adulter*.³⁵ The recurrence of this epithet in *Rem.* 161, at exactly the same metrical *sedes*, the end of the hexameter, is our first reliable indication that Ovid may be thinking of the Vergilian Diomedes' reply to the Latin embassy in his advice to take up works of peace in the *Remedia amoris*.³⁶ Thanks to its metrical form, *ādūlter* would easily fit in many

³⁰ It is not by chance that in the previous lines of the *Remedia amoris* Ovid again draws on Vergil. The phrase *bina tropaea* (*Rem.* 158) is reminiscent of *Georg.* 3.30–3, while lines 169–196 constitute a miniature of the *Georgics*. See Henderson (n. 5) 61–62.

³¹ For Diomedes' settlement in Italy after the war see S. J. HARRISON: *Vergil Aeneid* 10, Oxford 1991, on *Aen.* 10.28; and S. PAPAIOANNOU: *Romanization and Greeks in Vergil's Aeneid*, PhD Thesis University of Texas at Austin 1998, 240–243.

³² In the Vergilian epic Diomedes is constantly depicted as the strongest of the surviving Greeks [HARRISON (n. 31) on Verg. *Aen.* 10.29, who cites W. W. DE GRUMMOND: *Virgil's Diomedes: Phoenix* 21, 1967, 40–43]. Cf. *Aen.* 1.96–7: *o Danaum fortissime gentis / Tydide!* Aeneas considers him an equal to Achilles (Verg. *Aen.* 2.195–8). For the close relation between Diomedes and Achilles in the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* see S. PAPAIOANNOU: *Vergilian Diomedes revisited: the re-evaluation of the Iliad: Mnemosyne* (ser. 4) 53, 2000, 193–217, at pp. 194–195. For the portrayal of Diomedes as a valiant warrior throughout the *Aeneid* except for book 11 see DE GRUMMOND (n. 32) 40–41; PAPAIOANNOU (n. 32) 198–207.

³³ One is tempted to read in Venulus' name a dark foreboding for the outcome of the embassy, since the name is destined to recall in Diomedes' mind Venus, whom he wounded in battle.

³⁴ K. W. GRANSDEN: *Virgil's Iliad. An essay on epic narrative*, Cambridge 1984, 175–176 notes that in his account of the sufferings of the Greek heroes after the war Diomedes lays emphasis on their impiety and presents the sack of Troy as an "act of moral outrage." Cf. PAPAIOANNOU (n. 32) 212–213.

³⁵ Cf. later Sen. *Ag.* 955: (El.) *Adulterorum virgo deserui domum. Adulter* is a standard modifier for Paris: Verg. *Aen.* 10.92, Hor. *Carm.* 1.15.19, Prop. 2.34.7, Ov. *Her.* 1.6, 19.177, *Ars* 2.365. HARRISON (n. 31) comments on Verg. *Aen.* 10.92: "*adulter*... is rare in high poetry, belonging rather to the language of abuse." For the relation between the adulteries of Helen and Clytemnestra see M. J. CROPP: *Euripides Electra*, Warminster 1988, on 213–214.

³⁶ For the criteria that help us establish an intended allusion see S. HINDS: *Allusion and Intertext. Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry*, Cambridge 1998, 26–27; K. MORGAN: *Ovid's Art of Imitation: Propertius in the Amores*, Leiden 1977, 3.

other positions of a dactylic hexameter. Therefore Ovid's choice to place it at exactly the same *sedes* as Virgil may have been conscious and deliberate. This assumption is further strengthened by the fact that, as we have already noted, Ovid in this particular *Remedia* passage calls Diomedes an Aetolian (using the metonymy *Aetola cuspide*), just as he is called four times in *Aeneid* 10 and 11 in passages concerning the embassy of the Latins.³⁷

The points of contact between these two passages do not end here. Apart from the probably coincidental, still noteworthy, common occurrences of *Graecia* (*Aen.* 11.287: *et versis lugeret Graecia fatis* – *Rem.* 164: *transtulerat vires Graecia tota suas*) and *Venus* (*Aen.* 11.277: *Veneris violavi vulnere dextram* – *Rem.* 159: *Ut semel Aetola Venus est a cuspide laesa*), both passages contain Diomedes' comments on the long duration of the Trojan war. At *Aen.* 11.288–290 the hero attributes the delayed victory of the Greeks to the resistance of Hector and Aeneas:³⁸ *quidquid apud durae cessatum est moenia Troiae, / Hectoris Aeneaeque manu victoria Graium / haesit et in decimum vestigia rettulit annum*. In the *Remedia amoris* Ovid refers to the prolonged absence of the Greeks at Troy, without however giving the specific reason for the delay (163f.): *pugnabant alii tardis apud Ilion armis*:³⁹ */ transtulerat vires Graecia tota suas*. Not only that, but he uses this delay for his erotic-didactic purposes and claims that it was the reason for Aegisthus' adultery with Clytemnestra, since the man had no other better things to do (165–167): *sive operam bellis vellet dare, nulla gerebat: / sive foro, vacuum litibus Argos erat. / quod potuit, ne nil illic ageretur, amavit*.

Carrying this connection a step further, Ovid capitalizes upon Vergil's *devictam Asiam* (*Aen.* 11.268), which refers to the defeat of the Trojans, and now turns to the forthcoming defeat of the Asian Parthians by the legions of Caesar, the first of the examples he uses in the *Remedia amoris* to prove that taking up war can kill love, both literally and metaphorically. In the *Aeneid* the adulterer Aegisthus awaits the fall of Asia to make his move against Agamemnon. In the *Remedia amoris* the attack of a young man in love against Asia (the Parthians) or the participation of Aegisthus in the Trojan campaign would result in the death of love rather than that of Agamemnon.

The fate of Diomedes' fellow warriors is another common element of both texts. However, whereas in the *Aeneid* the most important Achaeans are mentioned

³⁷ Verg. *Aen.* 10.28, 11.239, 308, 428. Later in the *Metamorphoses*, in his own "little *Aeneid*" [for the title see F. BÖMER: *Metamorphosen XII–XIII, Kommentar*, Heidelberg 1982, 361], Ovid uses the same adjective for Diomedes (*Met.* 14.460–2): *sed Venulus Turni postquam mandata peregit / auxiliumque petit, vires Aetolius heros / excusat* with F. BÖMER: *Metamorphosen XIV–XV, Kommentar*, Heidelberg 1986 ad loc. Cf. 14.528: *arma Aetola*.

³⁸ For the function of Aeneas' praise by Diomedes in the *Aeneid* see DE GRUMMOND (n. 32) 42–43; PAPAIOANNOU (n. 31) 273–276. Ovid's Diomedes in the *Metamorphoses* does not mention Aeneas' valour. G. K. GALINSKY: *Ovid's Metamorphoses: an introduction to the basic aspects*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1975, 237 explains: "As for the traditional character of Aeneas as a warrior, he [Ovid] has highlighted it before and can therefore eliminate it from the Diomedes story especially since he, unlike Vergil, does not retell the battles in Latium in which the hero's martial prowess is essential."

³⁹ For Ovid's implied reproach in *tardis armis* (*Rem.* 163) and his innovative use of *tardus* in the sense "making slow progress" see PINOTTI (n. 15) ad loc. The adjective *tardus*, modifying the *arma* of the Achaeans, can be easily associated with Aegisthus too, who was also *tardus* in another sense. In his transition from inertness to his love affair with Clytemnestra Aegisthus is practically following Ovid's advice at *Am.* 1.9.46: *qui nolet fieri desidiosus, amet!*

by name, in the *Remedia amoris* Ovid squeezes the whole Greek army into a distich containing no names (*Rem.* 163f.): *pugnabant alii tardis apud Ilion armis: / transtulerat vires Graecia tota suas*. The indefinite pronoun *alii*⁴⁰ substitutes for the best of the Greek leaders. What became of the other fighters does not concern Ovid in the *Remedia amoris*, since his focus remains centered on the catastrophic consequences of adulterous love.

Shortly after mentioning Agamemnon and Aegisthus, Vergil's Diomedes recalls Venus' wounding.⁴¹ He regrets his madness and attributes all the misfortunes that struck him to his impious acts (*Verg. Aen.* 11.275–7):⁴² *haec adeo ex illo mihi iam speranda fuerunt / tempore cum ferro caelestia corpora demens / appetii et Veneris violavi vulnere dextram*. In other words in *Aeneid* 11 Diomedes mentions right after Aegisthus the one episode of his military career, which Ovid uses as an *exemplum* at *Rem.* 159f. The only difference is that Ovid reverses the order of his references, placing the episode of the goddess' wounding first, followed by his own version of how Aegisthus came to be an *adulter*. The reversal of the order of the examples is necessary, since Ovid's goal is to mention Diomedes' case first, so as to turn the reader's attention to the hero's appearance in the *Aeneid*, and then to deal with Aegisthus, just as the Vergilian Diomedes did in his speech to the Latin embassy.

The positive portrayal of Diomedes is one more point of contact between *Aen.* 11.252–93 and *Rem.* 151–67. In *Aeneid* 11 Diomedes is depicted as a reformed hero and a lover of peace, who acknowledges the moral superiority of the Trojans and

⁴⁰ In a similar manner, either for brevity or to avoid the boredom of his readers Ovid in his 'little *Aeneid*' avoids mentioning by name the Achaean heroes and their misfortunes during their return from Troy (*Met.* 14.466–474), hence he passes over in silence Agamemnon's murder by Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. For the different treatment of Diomedes' story in the *Metamorphoses* in relation to the *Aeneid*, with particular emphasis on the transformation of Diomedes' comrades into birds see B. OTIS: *Ovid as an Epic Poet*, Cambridge 1966, 291; GALINSKY (n. 38) 236–237; G. K. GALINSKY: *L'Eneide di Ovidio* (*met.* XIII 623–XIV 608) ed il carattere delle Metamorfosi: *Maia* 28, 1976, 3–18, at p. 13; J. B. SOLODOW: *The world of Ovid's Metamorphoses*, Chapel Hill and London 1988, 151–152; J. D. ELLSWORTH: *Ovid's "Odyssey"*: *Met.* 13,623–14,608: Mnemosyne (ser. IV) 41, 1988, 333–340 lays stress on the relevance of Diomedes' story with that of Odysseus.

⁴¹ S. F. WILTSHIRE–A. H. KRICKEL: *Diomedes and Aeneas: A Vergilian Paradox*: CB 58, 1982, 73–77, at p. 75 note: "Vergil exploits the link between mother and son by creating for Diomedes a refusal to engage Aeneas in combat because of the consequences of having already fought Venus". In her speech to the council of the gods Venus remembers her wounding by Diomedes, as she sees his imminent alliance with the Latins against the Trojans (10.26–30): *muris iterum imminet hostis / nascentis Troiae nec non exercitus alter, / atque iterum in Teucros Aetolis surgit ab Arpis / Tydides. equidem credo, mea vulnera restant / et tua progenies mortalia demoror arma*. PAPAIOANNOU (n. 32) 206 notices the bitter irony in Venus' words about Diomedes.

⁴² See R. HEINZE: *Virgil's Epic Technique*, (tr. H. and D. HARVEY, F. ROBERTSON), Bristol 1993, 80. Cf. *Ov. Met.* 14.476–8: *patriis sed rursus ab agris / pellor, et antiquo memores de vulnere poenas / exigit alma Venus*. Whereas, however, Vergil's Diomedes accepts his guilt and acknowledges that his punishment by the goddess is just, in the *Metamorphoses* he presents his punishment "more like a personal vendetta than an act of just retribution (14.477–8)", as SOLODOW (n. 40) 152 remarks. Cf. GALINSKY (n. 38) 236. The repeated elaboration of Diomedes' story in his "little *Aeneid*" (*Met.* 14.454–511) shows how great Ovid's interest in the exiled Diomedes is. The emphasis of course is on the transformation of his comrades into birds. On the other hand, in the treatment of this episode in the *Remedia amoris* Ovid is mainly interested in a) the contrast between love and war, that is Venus' wounding by Diomedes, and b) Aegisthus' adultery with Clytemnestra. This is a clear difference of emphasis and literary intention.

thus becomes the herald of the transition to a new, post-Homeric era.⁴³ In the *Remedia amoris*, on the other hand, Diomedes, for the first time in Ovid's love poetry, is portrayed as a positive example, which backs up his advice on the fight against love. It goes without saying of course, that the scope of the two episodes is certainly disproportionate, since the serious and imposing presence of Diomedes in *Aeneid* 11 contrasts sharply to his light-hearted and humorous appearance in the elegiac framework of the *Remedia amoris*. It is exactly this difference of tone that Ovid wants to exploit in his version of the story and this can be achieved only through comparison with the Vergilian Diomedes of *Aen.* 11.

Ovid's question to his readers at *Rem.* 161 is also worth examining: *Quaeritis, Aegisthus quare sit factus adulter?* At a first level this question is to be taken as a standard formula of didactic poetry aiming at maintaining the reader's interest and creating the illusion of a real lesson; it also facilitates the smooth transition from one topic to another.⁴⁴ At a second level, however, *quaeritis* also functions as an intertextual bridge, since it may be addressed not just to Ovid's readers, but also to the readers of the *Aeneid*, who did not learn from the Vergilian Diomedes why Aegisthus became an adulterer. Vergil's Diomedes said absolutely nothing about the reasons that lead Clytemnestra and Aegisthus to adultery, possibly thinking that these were well known to the readers. Ovid thinks differently on the matter. His treatment of his Vergilian model is ironical and playful. He strikes a pose as a teacher and enlightens his pupils. He covertly criticizes Vergil for failing to supply the relevant information and further outdoes him by offering a brand new explanation for Aegisthus' amorous-adulterous exploits.

Servius' comment on *Aen.* 11.269 makes the relation between *Aen.* 11.252–93 and *Rem.* 151–67 even closer. According to one version of the myth the reason for Diomedes' self-imposed exile in Apulia was his wife's affair with Cyllarabus, son of Sthenelus, instigated by Venus as revenge against him for wounding her in battle.⁴⁵ In the light of such evidence Diomedes' mention of the gods' hostility in *Aen.* 11.269f., right after his reference to the extra-marital relationship between Clytemn-

⁴³ See K. W. GRANSDEN: *Virgil Aeneid Book XI*, Cambridge 1991, 16. For Diomedes' change of heart and mind in *Aen.* 11 and his portrayal as a post-Homeric hero see DE GRUMMOND (n. 32) 40–41; W. W. DE GRUMMOND: Aeneas Despairing: *Hermes* 105.2, 1977, 224–234, at p. 233; WILTSHIRE-KRICHEL (n. 41) 74–76; SOLODOW (n. 40) 151–152; PAPAIOANNOU (n. 32).

⁴⁴ For Ovid's other didactic features in the *Remedia amoris* see HENDERSON (n. 5) index s.v. *didactic formulae* and PINOTTI (n. 15) index s.v. *formula didascalica*. A. S. HOLLIS: *Ovid, Ars Amatoria Book I*, Oxford 1977 notes on *Ars* 1.35: "Traditional didactic language is found most frequently in Ovid's transitions and introductions". See also E. PÖHLMANN: Charakteristika des römischen Lehrgedichts: *ANRW* I 3, 1973, 814–901, at pp. 859–862, 892–894; HOLLIS (n. 44) on *Ars* 1.50, 263–5, 513–24; W. STROH: Rhetorik und Erotik. Eine Studie zu Ovids liebesdidaktischen Gedichten: *WJA* 5, 1979, 117–132; M. LABATE: *L'arte di farsi amare. Modelli culturali e progetto didascalico nell'elegia ovidiana*, Pisa 1984, 166–167; J. F. MILLER: Apostrophe, Aside and the Didactic Addressee. Poetic Strategies in *Ars Amatoria* III: *MD* 31, 1994, 231–242; A. R. SHARROCK: *Seduction and Repetition in Ovid's Ars Amatoria* 2, Oxford 1994, 261–263.

⁴⁵ According to another version, Nauplius, Palamedes' father, traveled to the whole of Greece before the return of the Greek warriors and made sure that all their wives took new lovers, because he wanted to avenge the death of his son. See Lycoph. *Alex.* 1093–95, Apollod. *Ep.* 6.9–10, Dictys Cretensis 6.2, Diod. Sic. *Hist.* 7.2 FHG II, vii.

estra and Aegisthus, is particularly pointed, since it turns out that he, too, just like Agamemnon, was the victim of his wife's infidelity.⁴⁶

This perspective is equally important for the *Remedia amoris*, too, since it aptly justifies the succession of Diomedes' example by that of Aegisthus. The transition from Venus' wounding to Aegisthus' adultery is facilitated by a clear analogy between them: just as the relationship of Venus and Mars was illicit,⁴⁷ so was the one between Aegisthus and Clytemnestra; moreover, let us not forget, Diomedes was a cuckolded husband, too.

The reminiscence of the Vergilian episode and its adjustment to the frame of Ovid's erotic didactic in the *Remedia amoris* is achieved through a number of similarities in diction and theme, as has been shown above. Ovid's treatment of the Vergilian Diomedes is subversive. Diomedes is no longer the apologetic hero of the Vergilian version, but a bright example for Ovid's pupils to imitate. In this way the Vergilian episode of Diomedes' reply to the embassy of the Latins constitutes a crucial subtext for Ovid's positive portrayal of the great hero in the *Remedia amoris*. Nevertheless, there is a catch for them. The knowledge of the Vergilian Diomedes' repentance and of the miserable consequences of his attack on the goddess undermines the value of Ovid's *exemplum* and advice, which must inevitably be evaluated on the basis of Diomedes' words in the *Aeneid*. The Vergilian precedent demonstrates very clearly that any attempt to fight against the goddess of love is doomed to failure right from the start.⁴⁸

On the other hand Ovid's novel approach to the story of Aegisthus aims at an elegiac "correction" of his great epic model and produces the elegiac truth about what happened. The reason for Agamemnon's murder is not the gods' thirst for revenge against the sacrilegious Greeks,⁴⁹ but Aegisthus' inert and boring way of life at Mycenae. Ovid's target group is the suspicious readers who are familiar with the Diomedes episode in the *Aeneid*. He converses with his grand epic predecessor and no doubt takes great enjoyment in undermining and recasting him in a brand new way.

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⁴⁶ Diomedes, however, avoids giving any details about this embarrassing story. See WILTSHIRE-KRICKEL (n. 41) 73 for Diomedes' and Agamemnon's similar fortunes after their return home.

⁴⁷ Mars is intentionally called Venus' *amator* (*Rem.* 160). PINOTTI (n. 15) ad loc. comments on the Iliadic and Lucretian tradition of the Ares and Aphrodite affair and the assimilation of a Homeric divinity in erotic poetry.

⁴⁸ For the idea that resistance against the will of the gods is futile see Callim. *Hymn* 2.25: *κακὸν μακάρεσσιν ἐπίζειν*, Tib. 1.6.30: *contra quis ferat arma deos?* with K.F. SMITH, *The elegies of Albius Tibullus*, Darmstadt 1913 and P. MURGATROYD, *Tibullus I*, Pietermaritzburg 1980 ad loc. For the incongruity of many *exempla* in the *Remedia amoris*, which "undercut the thesis that love can be safely categorized and controlled see DAVISSON (n. 24) 219 and DAVISSON (n. 24).

⁴⁹ In the *Metamorphoses* Diomedes singles out Ajax, the son of Oileus, as the sole responsible for the misfortunes of the Achaeans. See SOLODOW (n. 40) 152 on Ov. *Met.* 14.477f.