

<CT> Oenone (*Her.* 5), Acontius (*Her.* 20), and the Ovidian *seruitium amoris*

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<AB>This paper argues that an allegedly incriminating “imitation” of *Heroides* 20, from Acontius to Cydippe, in *Heroides* 5, from Oenone to Paris, is better understood as a pointed allusion. This understanding supports the authenticity of disputed passages in *Heroides* 5, sheds light on a very Ovidian brand of the elegiac trope of *seruitium amoris*, where rape is an element, and stresses the importance of the female voices in both the single and double *Heroides* for our understanding of the Ovidian output as a whole.

<TH1D>Introduction

<TXT>The argument of this paper departs from the alleged inauthenticity of one of two disputed passages in *Heroides* 5, which narrates a rape. One of the objections against the authenticity of this passage (*Her.* 5.139–44) is that it contains an allegedly “clumsy imitation” of *Her.* 20.81–2 in *Her.* 5.141–42, which implies that the couplet in *Her.* 5 is a forgery modelled on that in *Her.* 20.¹ Against this position, this paper argues that these *loci similes* are better understood as keys to a deeper appreciation of both poems as well as of the Ovidian kind of *seruitium amoris*.

In established scholarship, Ovid is not ranked among the most prominent employers of this trope,² and only two longer passages have been identified as extensive examples of the *seruitium amoris* in his output. These passages are *Ars am.* 2.209–32, where the apprentice lover is advised by the *praeceptor amoris* to serve the beloved in the manner of a slave,³ and *Her.* 20.75–90, where Acontius fantasizes about being punished physically like a slave to prove his love for Cydippe.⁴ Acontius’s passage contains descriptions of the tearing of hair and scratching of cheeks (*Her.* 20.81–2) that do indeed evoke elements in the disputed rape scene of Oenone

(*Her.* 5.141–2). However, as will be argued, the lexical link between *Heroides* 5 and 20 may not so much disqualify Oenone’s rape scene as inauthentic as flag further connections between these two letters. For rape is not only explicitly and disturbingly highlighted in the transmitted text of Oenone’s letter, but also forms a disquieting element in the undercurrent of Acontius’s discourse; similarly, the professed *seruitium amoris* of Acontius is mirrored in Oenone’s description of her love-inspired service to Paris, as she recalls their past life together in *Her.* 5.13–20, notably also evoking the other extended example of Ovid’s *seruitium amoris*, in *Ars am.* 2.209–32. Oenone’s letter thus evokes both of the two extensive examples of Ovidian *seruitium amoris* that have been recognized as such in scholarship.

Moreover, by focusing on Oenone as a link between already acknowledged examples of *seruitium amoris* in Ovid, this paper argues that in his output this trope is expanded to accommodate harsher perspectives on the slavery of love, including not only that of Briseis (*Her.* 3), but also that of Hermione (*Her.* 8), another casualty alongside Oenone of Paris’s adultery, and a victim of a series of rapes.

Upon closer scrutiny, Oenone thus emerges as a key figure for a deeper appreciation of the Ovidian brand of the elegiac trope of *seruitium amoris*, which in turn should condition our understanding of the output of Ovid as a whole.

<TH1D>(In)authenticity

<TXT> In the literature on the *Heroides* and in that on the trope of the *seruitium amoris*,⁵ Oenone and Acontius are rarely considered together.⁶ Yet, as already touched upon, a cue to a connection between them is arguably found in the debate on the disputed passages in *Heroides* 5, of which the first runs as follows:

<PXT>Me fide conspicuus Troiae munitor amavit:

Ille meae spoliū uirginitatis habet.

Id quoque luctando; rupi tamen ungue capillos,

Oraque sunt digitis aspera facta meis;

Nec pretium stupri gemmas aurumque poposci:

Turpiter ingenuum munera corpus emunt.⁷ (Ov. *Her.* 5.139–44)

The founder of the walls of Troy, conspicuous for the lyre, loved me: he has the spoil of my virginity; it happened with fighting, too. I did, however, tear hair with the nail, and cheeks were made rough with my fingers. I did not demand gems or gold as a price for the criminal sexual assault: it is shameful for gifts to buy a freeborn body.⁸

<TXT>The second passage is the following couplet:

<PXT>Ipse repertor opis uaccas pauisse Pheraeas

Fertur et e nostro saucius igne fuit. (Ov. *Her.* 5.151–52)

[Apollo] himself, the inventor of healing, is said to have herded the Pheraean cows, and he was wounded by the fire that consumes me too.

<TXT>Before entering on the discussion of these passages, two very important aspects of Oenone's account of her rape by Apollo are particularly worth noting in the context of Ovid's output: firstly, the passage neatly complements the famous story of Apollo and Daphne in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1.452–567), for, like Oenone, Daphne is also the daughter of a river-god (Peneus); so, while Apollo fails to possess her, his *primus amor* (Ov. *Met.* 1.452), he succeeds

eventually in raping Oenone, the daughter of Cebren.⁹ Accordingly, even if the story of Apollo sexually assaulting the nymph daughter of this river-god is a hapax in ancient literature,¹⁰ then one can hardly imagine a more illustrious parallel to Apollo sexually assaulting a nymph daughter of another river-god within the exact same world than that which is offered by Ovid's Apollo and Daphne episode.

Moreover, among the large number of much studied Ovidian rapes,¹¹ Oenone stands out, as she gives voice to the upsetting aspects of these rapes from the point of view of the victim herself, in the first person singular of the epistolary mode of the *Heroides*. The disturbing immediacy and intimacy of this description is relevant for our understanding of the victims in all the rape scenes in Ovid's output, as well as for our understanding of the diversity of female figures in the *Heroides* as a whole, in the sense that this work displays a wide range of sexual experiences from female points of view, from the most pleasurable to the most painful, at the extreme end of which we find that of Oenone—a point to which we will return below. Consequently, given the specificities and relevance of Oenone's violent encounter with Apollo, her description of that encounter should be everywhere in studies on rape in the Ovidian corpus as well as in antiquity in general. Yet, this is not so.¹² Why?

One reason may be that such studies are impeded by the textual criticism targeting this passage in numerous editions of the *Heroides* in modern times.¹³ Rudolf Merkel obelizes the passage in his Teubner edition of Ovid's *opera omnia* in three volumes (1850–1852),¹⁴ yet provides no further explanation as to why he doubts the authenticity of these passages. However, Arthur Palmer in his first edition of the fourteen *Heroides* that he regarded as genuine at the time (1874)¹⁵ not only keeps Merkel's obeli, but also adds the following comment as to why:

<EXT>Merkel has given his authority to the rejection of six lines here, and two after 150, all of which disfigure the poem. Accordingly, I have omitted them from the text. They were probably an interpolation by somebody who thought “ad sua dona” in 146 not sufficiently explicit without the explanatory “medicas artes.” The lines are self-condemned in every possible way: not to speak of the grossness of sentiment which contrasts so strongly with the rest of the poem, the first line directly contradicts 133: the repetition of “opem” so soon after “opis” in the same peculiar sense of “medicine” is flagrant; and the utter absurdity and needlessness of the last line to prove Apollo was subject to love, after 139, is apparent. These two lines were probably an effort of the same interpolator, who wished to display his acquaintance with Callimachus, where this form of legend of Apollo’s feeding the flocks of Admetus is given: Hymn. *In Apoll.* 48.¹⁶

<TXT>Later, E. S. Schuckburgh agrees with Merkel and Palmer in his edition of select epistles from the *Heroides* (1879), in which he explicitly says that: *sex uersus ... quorum iactura leuis est, praesertim pueris* (“the throwing out of [these] six verses is a slight loss, especially for (school)boys”).¹⁷ Palmer leans not only on Merkel, but also on Shuckburgh in his full edition of all the twenty-one *Heroides* (1898) when he sums up his condemnation of the verses as *turpes*, “disgusting.”¹⁸ Yet, the uncertainties surrounding the removal of these passages is evident from the fact that Rudolf Ehwald restores both of them in his revision of Merkel’s edition (1888). At the same time, Grant Showerman in his Loeb edition of the *Heroides* (1914) does relegate this passage to the apparatus. Notably, this move is preserved in George Goold’s revision of Showerman’s edition (1977), which is the version that is digitally accessible today.¹⁹ So, even though Gianpiero Rosati (1989)²⁰ and Peter E. Knox (1995)²¹ keep the rape passage in their

editions (the latter still brackets verses 151–52, which will be returned to below), Showerman’s removal of the passage, approved of by Goold, still conditions much scholarship, as the Loeb series is so widely used because of its accessibility, offering not only English translations, but also online availability.

Notably, none of the disputed passages includes anomalies in transmission, linguistics, or metre.²² In other words, there are no decisive technical or external pieces of evidence to back up their removal. Such an elimination can consequently be made only on hermeneutical grounds. As shown above, these grounds have initially consisted in what has been considered inappropriate for schoolboys to read and the personal and very emotional disgust of scholars in the Victorian age.²³ However, Sergio Casali provides firmer hermeneutical grounds for keeping the couplet that Knox brackets, which—almost as a corollary—results in his rejecting the authenticity of the rape passage.

Casali (1992) shows that the couplet Knox brackets²⁴ contains important allusions (pointed out as incriminating by Palmer; see above) not only to the proto-elegiac Callimachus (*Hymn* 2.49), but also Ovid’s own favourite Latin elegiac precursor, Tibullus (2.3.11), including an Alexandrian footnote (*fertur*) to flag the allusions, as well as providing a link to Ovid’s own output, in the Apollo and Daphne episode in the *Metamorphoses* (sic!). Here Apollo professes that *non ego sum pastor* (*Met.* 1.513, “I am no herdsman”), which is a claim rich in Callimachean–Tibullan–Ovidian allusive irony, as all of these authors in other works (see references above) tell of how the god actually did act precisely as a herdsman. Casali thus succeeds in arguing that the couplet of *Her.* 5.151–2 seems thoroughly Ovidian and authentic.

This conclusion leads, however, to the problem that these two passages, which display Apollo as a sexual predator (*Her.* 5.139–44) and Apollo as a humiliated lover (*Her.* 5.151–52),

seem mutually exclusive. And indeed, it does seem a little strange that Oenone would first describe Apollo as her rapist and then identify with the same Apollo when he demeaned himself by performing servile chores out of love for Admetus, without being able to cure himself. And, as has already been pointed out, of the two seemingly self-contradictory statements, Knox keeps the rape scene and brackets the Apollo–Admetus couplet, while Casali, who makes an excellent case in favour of the couplet’s authenticity, rejects the rape scene.

Among Casali’s additional arguments against the authenticity of this passage²⁵ is the alleged absurdity of the idea that Oenone would mention that she was not a virgin before she met Paris (cf. *spolium uirginitatis*, above), when at the same time she claims that she has remained *casta* (*Her.* 5.133) and rejected the erotic advances of satyrs and Faunus after Paris abandoned her (*Her.* 5.133–38). Yet, Oenone’s line of reasoning is generally somewhat “absurd,” as is seen for example in her claim to be sure that Helen, whom she blames for being promiscuous, must have had sex with Theseus when he abducted her, because, as Oenone contends, she herself knows what it is to love: *amo* (*Her.* 5.130)! What Oenone claims is thus that she is morally superior to Helen, since she must have had sex with Theseus, because that is what Oenone herself would have done. Such arguments are very much in line with Oenone claiming to be a faithful wife to a deceitful husband (*Her.* 5.133–4), and at the same time reminding this husband of how he too could have been the victim of his own laws (*et poteras falli legibus ipse tuis*, *Her.* 5.134), since she has not only just barely kept lascivious male creatures at bay, but actually once failed to fend off a god. This line of reasoning is therefore perfectly in keeping with Oenone’s personality as she expresses herself throughout her letter. In the words of Rosati, who makes the same observation:

<EXT>La contraddizione però non sembra intollerabile, e può rientrare nel carattere stesso di Enone che non segue una coerente linea argomentativa: pur sostenendo di non aver ripagato Paride della sua stessa moneta, ella ricorre a un argomento consueto nelle proteste degli innamorati non corrisposti, cioè l'esibizione delle offerte d'amore ricevute da altri pretendenti, generalmente illustri (come qui: semidivinità agresti e poi addirittura Apollo).²⁶

<TXT>Finally, there is the argument, as already mentioned, that the passage also contains “a clumsy imitation of *Her.* 20.81–82.”²⁷ Setting aside the fact that Acontius addresses Cydippe in the hortative subjunctive, and thus encourages her to inflict physical injuries on him, while Oenone tells in the indicative perfect what happened to her, there remain a number of matches between the passages, thus:

<PXT>Id quoque luctando; **rupi** tamen ungue **capillos**,

Oraque sunt digitis aspera facta meis; (*Ov. Her.* 5.141–42)²⁸

<PXT>Ipsa meos **scindas** licet imperiosa **capillos**,

Oraque sint digitis liuida nostra **tuis.** (*Her.* 20.81–82)²⁹

<TXT>Certainly, Acontius's *scindas* mirrors Oenone's *rupi*, their choice of the word *capillos* is the same, as is that of *oraeque sunt*—*ora* which are variously *liuida* and *aspera facta* by the same *digitis*. But is Oenone's couplet “clumsy” and Acontius's not? By contending that Oenone's passage is a “clumsy imitation” of Acontius's, Casali implies (like Palmer; see above) that not Ovid, but a forger who has first read the epistle of Acontius, and then composed and interpolated the rape scene into Oenone's letter, has also repeated, consciously or unconsciously, parts of

Her. 20.81–82. Casali’s implication thus evokes a very influential strand of classical scholarship on issues of (in)authenticity, in which forgeries are believed to be of a lower quality compared to the original.³⁰ Against this position, I will argue that *Her.* 5.141–42 contains profound points, which are sharpened through their echoes in *Her.* 20.81–82.

Now, one of the reasons why Casali regards Oenone’s couplet as less felicitous is that while one may expect the hair and cheeks to belong to Apollo, this sense is not really conveyed by the actual Latin. For, as Casali points out, Oenone’s couplet “should most naturally mean ‘I tore *my* hair and scratched *my* face.’”³¹ And indeed, Casali’s interpretation must be correct, not so much because an immortal god may only with difficulty be hurt in this way,³² as because the notion that the hair and cheeks are Oenone’s arguably increases the sophistication of her couplet. For Oenone’s self-justifying *tamen* suggests that although she failed to prevent Apollo from taking the “spoils of her virginity,” she not only tried to resist him (*id quoque luctando*), but also, once the rape was consummated, showed the appropriate grief through self-harm.³³ At the same time, the pithiness of Oenone’s narrative is such that it creates an optical illusion, in which her self-harm (*Her.* 5.141–42) seems like an extended description of the rape proper (*Her.* 5.140–41), which is how both Rosati and Knox interpret the passage.³⁴ This illusion is arguably facilitated by the absence of possessive pronouns in the couplet of *Her.* 5.141–42, which thus not only resonates with that of *Her.* 20.81–82, but also offers a pointed contrast to these lines, inasmuch as the presence of possessive pronouns in Acontius’s couplet leaves no doubt about who is (imagined as) doing what to whom. Thus, Oenone narrates how she fought, was defeated, and grieved appropriately, but in a fashion that may also give the (false) impression that she actually harmed a god.³⁵ In the context of the high self-esteem that Oenone expresses throughout her letter, which is also an important prerequisite for her *seruitium amoris* (see below), this

illusion—facilitated by the concision of her narrative and absence of possessive pronouns—testifies to her literary artistry. Thus, Oenone’s passage does indeed appear worthy of a genuine “Ovidian heroine as author.”³⁶

<TH1D>Acontius

<TXT>The contrast between the absence and presence of possessive pronouns in *Her.* 5.141–42 and *Her.* 20.81–82 is arguably one of several examples of how allusive links between the letters of Oenone and Acontius make sense. More such examples can be detected in the extensive passage by which the couplet discussed above is framed, that represents the *seruitium amoris* of Acontius:

<PXT>Ante tuos liceat flentem consistere uultus

Et liceat lacrimis addere uerba suis,

Utque solent famuli, cum uerbera saeua uerentur,

Tendere submissas ad tua crura manus.

Ignoras tua iura: uoca! cur arguor absens?

Iamdudum dominae more uenire iube.

Ipsa meos scindas licet imperiosa capillos,

Oraque sint digitis liuida nostra tuis.

Omnia perpetiar; tantum fortasse timebo,

Corpore laedatur ne manus ista meo.

Sed neque conpedibus nec me conpesce catenis:

Seruabor firmo uinctus amore tui.

Cum bene se quantumque uoles satiauerit ira,

Ipsa tibi dices: “quam patienter amat!”

Ipsa tibi dices, ubi uideris omnia ferri:

“Tam bene qui seruit, seruiat iste mihi!” (Ov. *Her.* 20.75–90)

Let me have leave to stand weeping before your face and have leave to add words which suit the tears; and let me, like a slave in fear of bitter stripes, stretch out submissive hands to touch your feet! You know not your own right; call me! Why am I accused in absence? Bid me come, forthwith, after the manner of a mistress. You may, imperious, tear my hair and make my face livid with your fingers. I will endure all; my only fear perhaps will be lest that hand of yours be bruised on me. But bind me not with shackles nor with chains – I shall be kept in bonds by unyielding love for you. When your anger has been fully sated to your utmost desire, you will say to yourself: “How enduring is his love!” You will say to yourself, when you have seen me bearing all: “He who is a slave so well, let him be slave to me!”

<TXT>So far so good: in itself, the passage is clearly a specimen of the elegiac trope in question. There is, however, a problem with Acontius’s *seruitium amoris*, when understood in the context of his own letter, as well as that of his addressee Cydippe. This problem is that his “slavery of love” may not be what it seems at first glance. Indeed, there are good reasons to regard this passage as a feigned concealment of Acontius’s real interest in Cydippe, which is as far removed from a slave’s perspective as that of an owner and a rapist.³⁷

Indeed, Acontius professes to submit to his *domina* as her slave (compare especially, *dominae more*, *Her.* 20.80), as is fitting from the point of view of the trope of the *seruitium*

amoris. Yet, the fact that Acontius does not really regard his addressee as a *domina*, but rather sees himself as her *dominus* in the most demeaning sense, that is, as an “owner,” becomes clear a little further on in his letter, when he addresses his rival, the fiancé of Cydippe, thus:

<PXT>Quis tibi permisit nostras praecerpere messes?

Ad sepem³⁸ alterius quis tibi fecit iter?

Iste sinus meus est! mea turpiter oscula sumis!

A mihi promisso corpore tolle manus!

Improbe, tolle manus! quam tangis, nostra futura est:

Postmodo si facies istud, adulter eris.

Elige de uacuis quam non sibi uindicet alter;

Si nescis, dominum res habet ista suum. (Ov. *Her.* 20.143–50)

Who gave you leave to reap my harvests before me? Who laid open the road for you to trespass on another’s fields? That bosom is mine! Mine are the kisses you take! Away with your hands from the body pledged to me! Scoundrel, away with your hands! She whom you touch is to be mine; henceforth, if you do that, you will be adulterous. Choose from those who are free one whom another does not claim; if you do not know, that thing has an owner of its own.

<TXT>Thus, Acontius reveals that he regards Cydippe as *messes*, a “crop,” *sepem*, “enclosed land,” as well as *res ista*, “that thing”/ “that chattel,” of which he is the *dominus*, “owner.” In the harshest terms, a slave is precisely a piece of property like any other in the ancient world. Thus, after Acontius has played along with the codes of elegy and staged himself in the required

posture of the *seruitium amoris* (*Her.* 20.75–90), he cannot help revealing that he reifies Cydippe as a Roman *dominus* could reify a slave (*Her.* 20.143–50).

In a similar manner, that is, by on the one hand, acting according to the erotic-elegiac code and, then on the other, breaking this code, Acontius also reveals himself as a prospective rapist. Thus, initially, Acontius brags about his bloodless conquest in the form of words: *Per gladios alii placitas rapuere puellas;/ Scripta mihi caute littera crimen erit?* (“With the sword have others stolen away the girls they loved; shall this letter, discreetly written, be called a crime?”, *Her.* 20.37–38). Yet, a little later on in this epistle, Acontius openly claims that he will use arms to get what he wants: *Si non proficient artes, uenimus ad arma,/ Inque tui cupido rapta ferere sinu* (“If tricks will not suffice, I shall resort to arms,³⁹ and you, raped, will be borne away in the embrace that lusts for you”, *Her.* 20.47–8). The use of the simple future, as if Acontius were stating an inevitable prospect, the application of *rapta* and *ferere* to Cydippe in combination with the lustful embrace, *cupido sinu*, of Acontius, and the *arma*, which must be motivated by Cydippe’s expected resistance, propose a violent rape, which, as we have seen, is also a prominent theme in the transmitted text of Oenone’s letter.

<TH1D>Oenone

<TXT>Just as rape thus lies embedded in Acontius’s letter, the surface of which conspicuously displays the trope of *seruitium amoris*, this trope arguably underlies Oenone’s letter, the transmitted surface of which so conspicuously presents a patent rape scene. For, as will be argued here, when considered more closely, Oenone’s letter seems indeed to represent a significant contribution to the Ovidian concept of *seruitium amoris*.

Notably, the Ovidian brand of this trope is already recognized as being related to that of the cunning slave known from Roman comedy.⁴⁰ Equally important is the lover's high-born status combined with submissive (cf. *Her.* 20.81–82) and obsequious behaviour (cf. *Ars am.* 2.209–32). Thus, Oenone stresses her willingness to pay service to Paris in the relevant setting of their rustic existence:⁴¹

<PXT>Nondum tantus eras, cum te contenta marito
Edita de magno flumine nympa fui.
Qui nunc Priamides – absit reuerentia uero –
Seruus eras; seruo nubere nympa tuli.
Quis tibi monstrabat saltus uenatibus aptos,
Et tegeter catulos qua fera rupe suos?
Retia saepe comes maculis distincta tetendi,
Saepe citos egi per iuga longa canes. (*Her.* 5.13–20)

Not yet so great were you when I was content to wed you – I, the nymph-daughter of a mighty stream. You who are now a son of Priam – let not respect keep back the truth – were then a slave; I deigned to wed a slave – I, a nymph ... Who pointed out to you the coverts apt for the chase, and the rocky den where the wild beast hid away her cubs? Often have I gone with you to stretch the hunting-net with its wide mesh; often have I led the fleet hounds over the long ridge.

<TXT>The elegiac *seruitium amoris* has no point unless it is self-imposed, socially inverted, and evitable. This aspect is also disclosed when the *praeceptor amoris* instructs the apprentice lover to hold a mirror in his freeborn hand, like an *ornatrix*: *Nec tibi turpe puta (quamuis sit turpe*

placebit)/ *Ingenua speculum sustinuisse manu* (“Nor think it base [though base, it will give pleasure] to hold a mirror in your freeborn hand”, *Ars am.* 2.215–16).⁴² Similarly, Oenone’s assumption of the role of a servant for someone who at the time was himself a slave (*seruus eras*, *Her.* 5.12) is aggravated by her own high status, inasmuch as she is the daughter of a river-god and thus worthy of royal in-laws – precisely like the real parents of Paris:

<PXT>At cum pauper eras armentaque pastor agebas,

Nulla nisi Oenone pauperis uxor erat.

Non ego miror opes, nec me tua regia tangit,

Nec de tot Priami dicar ut una nurus:

Non tamen ut Priamus nymphae socer esse recuset,

Aut Hecubae fuerim dissimulanda nurus.

Dignaque sum fieri rerum matrona potentis:

Sunt mihi, quas possint sceptrum decere, manus;

Nec me, faginea quod tecum fronde iacebam,

Despice; purpureo sum magis apta toro. (*Her.* 5.79–88)

... but when you were poor and shepherded the flocks, Oenone was your wife, poor though you were, and none else. I am not dazzled by your wealth, nor am I touched by thought of your palace, nor would I be called one of the many wives of Priam’s sons – yet not that Priam would disdain a nymph as wife to his son, or that Hecuba would have to hide her kinship with me; I am worthy of being the consort of a man who wields great power; my hands are such as the sceptre could well beseem. Nor despise me because

once I pressed with you the beechen frond; I am better suited for the purpled marriage-bed.

<TXT>Notably, Oenone's high and indeed freeborn status, cf. *ingenuum corpus*, is also a central point in the rape scene quoted above.

In fact, the rape scene serves several purposes; firstly, it is related to Oenone's attempt to underscore her sexual attractiveness, as exemplified by the satyrs's and Faunus's erotic interest in her:

<PXT>Me Satyri celeres—siluis ego tecta latebam—

Quaesierunt rapido, turba proterua, pede,

Cornigerumque caput pinu praecinctus acuta

Faunus in inmensis, qua tumet Ida, iugis. (*Her.* 5.135–8)

Me, the swift satyrs, a randy gang on rapid feet, used to come in quest of – where I would lie hidden in covert of the wood – and Faunus, with horned head wreathed with sharp pine needles, where Ida swells in boundless ridges.

<TXT>Apollo represents a third example. Next, Oenone uses the rape scene to differentiate between herself and her rival Helen in her idiosyncratic, readily “absurd” fashion, as seen above. Thus, Oenone denigrates Helen by suggesting that she herself was to blame for her kidnapping by Theseus. By stressing the violence she suffered, Oenone depicts herself in contrast to Helen, who in Oenone's letter emerges as the spurious victim of a series of “rapes”:

<PXT>Sit facie quamuis insignis, adultera certe est:

Deseruit socios hospite capta deos.

Illam de patria Theseus, nisi nomine fallor,
Nescio quis Theseus abstulit ante sua.
A iuvene et cupido credatur reddita uirgo?
Unde hoc conpererim tam bene, quaeris? amo.
uim licet appelles et culpam nomine ueles:
Quae totiens rapta est, praebuit ipsa rapi. (*Her.* 5.125–32)

Let her seem how fair so-ever of face, none the less she surely is an adulteress; smitten with a stranger, she left behind her marriage-gods. Theseus, unless I mistake the name, one Theseus, even before, had stolen her away from her father's land. Is it to be thought she was rendered back a virgin, by a man young and eager? Whence have I learned this so well? you ask. I love. You may call it violence and veil the fault in the word; yet she who has been so often stolen has surely lent herself to being raped.

<TXT>Thus, according to Oenone, Helen is promiscuous and calls her consensual sex “rape,” in contrast to Oenone herself, who really was raped. Finally, by stressing that she did not ask for precious gifts in compensation for the offence, Oenone underscores not only that she is freeborn but also that she is (metaphorically) untouchable.

This last point is very important, in the sense that it not only distinguishes Oenone from any association with prostitution, which easily clings to Helen, but also provides a pretext for focusing on the gifts she actually *did* receive from Apollo: *Ipse ratus dignam medicas mihi tradidit artes/ Admisitque meas ad sua dona manus* (“[Apollo] himself, having found me worthy, taught me the arts and administered his gifts to my hands,” *Her.* 5.145–46). These gifts prefigure the tragic end that lies in store for Oenone and Paris, namely, the healing powers she in bitterness

will refuse to employ once he has been gravely wounded in the Trojan War, thus bringing about his death and her subsequent suicide in regret (cf., e.g., Lycoph. *Alex.* 57–68; Parth. *Amat. narr.* 4; Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.12.6; Conon, *Narr.* 23). And, as if unwittingly anticipating this tragic end—in keeping with the Heroidean dynamic of “future reflexive”⁴³—she already now acknowledges that such powers are futile in the domain of love. And her proof, as already touched upon, is the mythological example of Apollo, who, out of love for Admetus, demeaned himself to act as a herdsman for the king, at *Her.* 5.151–52. Not only is this reference fitting for Oenone’s line of reasoning, it is even so *sub specie seruitii amoris*, so to speak, since the tale of Apollo and Admetus is the mythological example of the trope *par excellence* (cf. also *Ars am.* 2.239–40),⁴⁴ alongside Milanion paying service to Atalanta (cf. *Her.* 4.99–100, *Ars am.* 2.185–92) and Hercules acting as slave to Omphale (cf. *Her.* 9.55–82, *Ars am.* 2.217–20, and *Fast.* 2.303–57).⁴⁵

Indeed, the aspects of *Heroides* 5 outlined above, including the learned reference, in the manner of an Alexandrian footnote, filled with Callimachean and Tibullan echoes, to the Apollo–Admetus story in the couplet *Her.* 5.151–52, locate Oenone at the centre of the conception of the Ovidian *seruitium amoris*.⁴⁶ Notably, Acontius not only places an implicit allusion to Oenone’s rape scene in *Heroides* 5 at *Her.* 20.81–82, but explicitly evokes Briseis in *Heroides* 3 as the enslaved captive of Achilles, just before he embarks on his elaborate *seruitium amoris* passage: *Hesionen Telamon, Briseida cepit Achilles;/ Utraque uictorem nempe secuta uirum* (“Telamon won Hesione, Briseis was taken by Achilles; each of a surety followed the victor as her man.”, *Her.* 20.69–70) Through this reference and the couplet that resonates with Oenone’s rape scene, Acontius consequently alludes to the well-established representative of both a real slave–lover, as embodied by Briseis,⁴⁷ and of a metaphorical *seruitium amoris*, just like that of Oenone in the single *Heroides*.

As already touched upon, within the *Heroides* as a whole, Oenone's rape scene contributes significantly to a pattern of sex-related experiences which runs from the most pleasurable, represented by Sappho's explicit climax (*Her.* 15.134),⁴⁸ and Laodamia's more demure kissing and evocation of lovemaking with her husband on the one side (*Her.* 13.115–22),⁴⁹ to the most horrible sexual assault, represented by Oenone's overt description of rape and Hermione's only slightly more covert portrayal of the same, on the other (*Her.* 8.105–116; see below).

Placing Oenone alongside Hermione at the extreme negative end of the spectrum of sexual experiences in the *Heroides* also significantly adds to the complexity of how rape is represented in this work. Not only does this connection between Oenone and Hermione problematize the double standards Oenone employs as she distinguishes between rapes that are real, e.g. her own, and those that are fake, e.g. Helen's, but there is more. Helen is famously Hermione's mother, and the rape theme thus establishes a disquieting link between these three female figures that simultaneously underscores how the latter two are both casualties of the adultery of Paris.⁵⁰

More importantly in the context of this paper, there is a significant difference between Oenone's and Hermione's experiences of rape; the former appears to be subjected to this only once, while the latter seems to suffer from it on a regular basis, as she *saepe*, "often" (*Her.* 8.111; 115), or rather every night, so it seems, has to encounter her enemy husband, *hoste uiro* (*Her.* 8.110), thus:

<PXT>Cum tamen altus equis Titan radiantibus instant,

Perfruor infelix liberiore malo;

Nox ubi me thalamis ululantem et acerba gementem

Condidit in maesto procubuique toro,
Pro somno lacrimis oculi funguntur abortis,
Quaque licet, fugio sicut ab hoste uiro
Saepe malis stupeo rerumque oblita locique
Ignara tetigi Scyria membra manu,
Utque nefas sensi, male corpora tacta relinquo
Et mihi pollutas credor habere manus.
Saepe Neoptolemi pro nomine nomen Orestae
Exit, et errorem uocis ut omen amo. (*Her.* 8.105–116)

Yet my unhappy soul has the comfort, when Titan is urging aloft his radiant steeds, of being more free in its wretchedness; but when the dark of night has fallen and sent me to my chamber with wails and lamentation for my bitter lot, and I have stretched myself prostrate on my sorrowful bed, then springing tears, not slumber, is the service of my eyes, and in every way I can I shrink from my mate as away from a foe. Often I am distraught with woe; I lose sense of where I am and what my fate, and with witless hand have touched the body of him of Scyrus; but when I have waked to the awful act, I draw my hand from the base contact, and look upon it as defiled. Often, instead of Neoptolemus the name of Orestes comes forth, and I love the mistaken word as an omen.

<TXT>Given that Hermione's existence is now marked by repeated non-consensual sex, the question she poses at the outset of her letter arguably acquires a more sinister depth than that which may be detected at first glance: *Quid grauius capta Lacedaemone serua tulissem,/ Si raperet Graias barbara turba nurus?* ("What worse fate could I have endured as a slave, with

Sparta taken, if a barbarous throng raped all the Greek girls ripe for marriage?," *Her.* 8.11–12). The question is of course rhetorical, and the answer should be "nothing," but perhaps one could also add that this is so because Hermione is already being raped on a regular basis, which thus renders her life, in her opinion, similar to that of a real slave, *serua*.

By thus aligning slavery and rape, Hermione arguably cracks the fiction open and offers a glimpse into a chillingly realistic *seruitium amoris* of antiquity, when slaves were always at risk of being sexually abused by their owners, parallel to the way in which the theme of abortion cracks the fiction open in the case of the complementary trope of the *militia amoris* in Ovid's *Amores* 2.12, 2.13, and 2.14.⁵¹ And Oenone, through her centrality in the pattern of the Ovidian *seruitium amoris* as well as her inclusion of an explicit rape scene, arguably paves the way for Hermione to do so.

<TH1D>Conclusion

<TXT>Against the background of the present paper it appears accurate to say that the trope of *seruitium amoris* has a wider range in Ovid compared to the other elegists. This wider range encompasses service offered to the beloved, the idea of being a slave despite higher status, some connection between slavery and rape, and standard mythological exempla of the *seruitium amoris*: in short, all features which are present in *Heroides* 5 – that is, if you keep both the disputed passages in this letter.

If we keep the passage that narrates the rape, we get to understand how Oenone (however idiosyncratically) asserts her sexual attractiveness and her moral superiority compared to her rival Helen, as well as how Oenone got her healing powers. Moreover, if we keep the couplet that evokes Apollo and Admetus, we get to read between the lines that Oenone will fail to apply

these powers in the domain of love. And, as if this emblematic mythological example were not enough to make us see how central Oenone is in the conception of the Ovidian *seruitium amoris*, we get further hints through the similarities between the descriptions of her service to Paris and that of the apprentice lover's at *Ars am.* 2.209–34, and the allusion to the conspicuous (albeit deceitful)⁵² specimen of that trope in *Her.* 20.81–2.

This latter link would then be another example of how the two collections of epistolary elegies form one work in two parts that together embrace Ovid's entire literary career—as the single *Heroides* (1–15) appear to be designed to represent a starting point in this career,⁵³ and the double *Heroides* (16–21) seem to represent an end point.⁵⁴ As such, the single and double *Heroides* frame the output of Ovid in a way that arguably should condition our understanding of it as a whole. This is an especially important point since, as is well known, in Ovid's poetry many elements may seem male-centred or even misogynist when scrutinized in isolation. Yet, when framed by the majority—and diversity—of female perspectives in the *Heroides* 1–21, such elements appear much less stereotypical and sometimes even what we would today term “feminist.” This is also why the importance of the *Heroides* in the bigger picture of Ovid's poetry and indeed ancient literature is very hard to exaggerate.⁵⁵

<TH1D>*Works Cited*

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<FNTXT>¹ Throughout, the *Heroides* text, both single and double, is that of Rosati (1989). Moreover, I use the translations of the Loeb Classical Library, sometimes in modified form. However, as there is no translation of the passage of *Ov. Her.* 5.139–44 in the Loeb edition of Ovid's *Heroides*, I have translated this myself, see below. The text of the *Amores* and the *Ars amatoria* is that of Kenney (1995). I use the terms "single *Heroides*" for letters 1–15 (cf., e.g., Knox (1995)) and "double *Heroides*" for letters 16–21 (cf. Kenney [1996]), which are now well established in scholarship, despite the fact that the latter collection of poems also contains letters from heroes. Moreover, I consider all the *Heroides*, single and double (1–21), as authentic works by Ovid; see Thorsen (2013a), (2013b), and (2014).

² See Copley (1947), Lyne (1979), Murgatroyd (1981), and Fulkerson (2013) for the *seruitium amoris* in general. Spoth (1992) 67–75 focuses specifically on the employment of the trope in the *Heroides*, with particular focus on Briseis in *Heroides* 3. See also Fitzgerald (2000) for a broader conception of slavery in ancient literature.

³ Murgatroyd (1981) 605–6.

⁴ Murgatroyd (1981) 603.

⁵ See esp. Fulkerson (2013) and further references given in n. 2, above.

⁶ The addressee of Oenone's letter, Paris, and Acontius are, however, compared, as they both carve the name of their beloved on objects, Paris on trees (*Her.* 5.21–2), like Acontius in the Callimachean version of his tale (*Aet.* fr. 72 Pf./Harder), as well as on the apple, which contained the oath to marry Acontius that Cydippe unwittingly read aloud, of course; see Lindheim (2000) 87 n. 14; 88 n. 18; and Drinkwater (2015) 308.

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⁹ Apollo's attempted rape of Daphne takes place at the dawn of the new age, when Jupiter has decided to stop the flood (cf. *Met.* 1.324–9), while the rape of Oenone takes place after the founding of Troy (cf. *Troiae monitor*, *Her.* 5.139) in the subsequent heroic age, and thus Apollo's failure precedes his success in raping a nymph in Ovid's chronological order. Notably, Casali (1992) detects connections between *Heroides* 5 and the Apollo and Daphne episode of the *Metamorphoses*, but not by identifying Daphne and Oenone as the attempted and real victims of the same perpetrator, and the reason for this is that Casali does not regard the rape passage as genuine (Casali [1997]); see also below.

¹⁰ “Although all accounts of Oenone's story attribute to her the unique ability to heal Paris, no other source attributes this power to a gift from Apollo or refers to his rape of Oenone. If the episode was O.'s innovation, it derives from a familiar model. In Greek mythology compensation for lost virginity regularly follows rape by a god and it may take many forms: at *Met.* 14.133 the Cumaean Sibyl describes Apollo's offer of eternal youth and beauty.” Knox (1995) 166; cf. also *Met.* 12.195–203 for Neptune's rape of Caenis and his subsequent compensation in the form of her metamorphosis to the male Caeneus, I am grateful to Chiara Battistella for the latter point.

¹¹ See e.g. Lively (2012); James (2012), (2016); Kahn (2015), and Marturano (2017); see also Zuckerberg (2018) 89–142, for recent entry points—with references—to the ongoing exploration and discussion of the many rapes in the Ovidian output.

¹² It is hard to provide references for this claim, as works on rape in Ovid usually do not treat Oenone, and even when they do, as is the case for Marturano (2017) 66–68, the authenticity debate blunts the argument.

¹³ These editions thus form part of a larger movement of expurgating the classics in this period; see Harrison and Stray (2012). I am grateful to Stephen Harrison for a copy of the book.

¹⁴ Merkel (1850) I. 87–88; there is no apparatus in this edition.

¹⁵ In Palmer's later, and indeed posthumous edition (1898, with Louis Purser) he had changed his view regarding the authenticity of *Heroides* 15, the authenticity of which he then defended. The edition was reissued and co-edited by Kennedy (2005). For a survey of reasons why the authenticity of some of the *Heroides* was in doubt, see Thorsen (2014) 96–122.

¹⁶ Palmer (1874) 45.

¹⁷ Shuckburgh (1879) 29. Given the focus on the upsetting experience of rape from the victim's point of view, this passage should on the contrary be especially suitable for schoolboys, as Donna Zuckerberg pointed out when we were discussing this problem in a private conversation.

¹⁸ In Palmer, Purser, and Kennedy (2005) vol. I, 30.

¹⁹ Showerman (1977 = 1914) 68. The Loeb series is actually on the whole markedly bowdlerized, as demonstrated by Lawton (2012) and Gram (2020).

²⁰ Rosati (1989) 138–41.

²¹ Knox (1995) 54–55; 166–69.

²² Knox (1995) 166; Casali (1997) 306 points out some alleged “various stylistic anomalies,” referring to lines 139 and 141. Style is more ambiguous as evidence in debates on authenticity than problems relating to transmission, linguistics, and metre, which are not necessarily decisive in themselves either.

²³ See, e.g., Leary (2012).

²⁴ Casali (1992) is not referred to in Knox (1995).

²⁵ Casali (1997) 306–307.

²⁶ Rosati (1989) 138–39.

²⁷ Casali (1997) 307.

²⁸ For the translation, see above.

²⁹ For the translation, see below.

³⁰ Seminal here is Axelson (1960).

³¹ Casali (1997) 306–307.

³² Apollo is of course badly hurt by Cupid’s arrow in the first book of the *Metamorphoses* (1.473) and the goddess Aphrodite is famously wounded by Diomedes at Hom. *Il.* 5.334–43; but generally, the gods are immortal and invulnerable.

³³ A recurring feature in the *Heroides*; cf., e.g., *Her.* 12.154, *Tuta nec a digitis ora fuere meis*, concerning Medea and her cheeks, and *Her.* 14.51, *laniata capillos*, concerning Hypermestra and her hair.

³⁴ Rosati (1989) 139: “... gli strappai con le unghie i capelli e il suo volto fu tutto graffiato dalle mie dita.” Knox (1995) 167: “It is Apollo’s hair that is referred to, and in the next line his face (*ora*) that is scratched.”

³⁵ The way she proceeds to recount how she refrained from demanding compensation for the criminal assault, using the legal term of *stuprum*, further demeans the god and places him on a par with a simple rapist, a strategy that simultaneously elevates Oenone herself to a superior level compared to him.

³⁶ I refer here to the title of Fulkerson's important study of Ovid's *Heroides*.

³⁷ See Thorsen (2019) for Cydippe's response to these aspects of Acontius' letter. The *seruitium amoris* is to a certain extent always feigned in Latin love elegy, but arguably rarely as conspicuously as in the letter of Acontius.

³⁸ Heinsius's correction of the variously transmitted *spe/spem* is not accepted by Rosati, but printed by Kenney (1996) 71; 203–4. I follow Kenney on this point.

³⁹ “Or resort to epic – act like Paris in starting the *Iliad*?” as Stephen Harrison intriguingly asks in private correspondence.

⁴⁰ See esp. Fulkerson (2013); see also Brecke (forthcoming).

⁴¹ As e.g. in Tib. 1.1.

⁴² See Murgatroyd (1981) 594; 599.

⁴³ Barchiesi (1993).

⁴⁴ For the occurrence of this as an exemplum of the *seruitium amoris* in Callimachus and Tibullus, see above.

⁴⁵ For Hercules and the trope of the *seruitium amoris*, see also Fucecchi (2018) 554–66. I am grateful to the author for a copy of the article.

⁴⁶ One may also add that the mastery Oenone displays through her specific employment of the elegiac trope of *seruitium amoris* ironically underscores her ultimately un-slavish character,

which thus acquires an additional metapoetical layer as a stand-in for the poet; cf. also n. 36 above.

⁴⁷ Spoth (1992) 67–75.

⁴⁸ The line has also been expurgated in the course of transmission and—along with the whole epistle of *Heroides* 15—declared inauthentic; see Thorsen (2014) 16.

⁴⁹ Thorsen (2014) 142–6.

⁵⁰ The complexity extends to the double *Heroides* and increases further when Helen sympathizes with Oenone in her Heroidean letter to Paris, by criticizing Paris for having abandoned his first wife (*Her.* 17.195–6).

⁵¹ Here, the poet–lover triumphantly boasts of having conquered Corinna without bloodshed (*sanguine praeda caret*, *Am.* 2.12.6, “the booty lacks blood”), which in *Am.* 2.13 turns out to be false, as Corinna has now attempted an abortion and hovers between life and death (*in dubio uitae lassa Corinna iacet*, *Am.* 2.13.2), and in *Am.* 2.14 the poet–lover concludes that because of unwanted pregnancies, love is indeed warfare to women (... *sine Marte suis patiuntur uulnera telis, / Et caecas armant in sua fata manus*, *Am.* 2.14.3–4, “... without the god of war they suffer wounds from their own weapons and provide arms to their blind hands to their own undoing”).

⁵² Deceitfulness may of course be an aspect of all the examples of the *seruitium amoris* in ancient literature.

⁵³ This is the main argument of Thorsen (2014).

⁵⁴ There are at least three reasons to regard the double *Heroides* as a late, exilic work by Ovid: 1) the work contains linguistic and metrical features found only in Ovid’s other later works; see e.g. Thorsen (2013b) 117 n. 10 with further references; 2) Ovid does not mention this work in any of his other works, which is against his habit of referring to previous works in his next; and 3) as

Barchiesi (1993) argues, the double *Heroides* offer – hermeneutically – a brilliant closure of Ovid’s career as a Latin love elegist. See also Thorsen (2018) 257–8.

⁵⁵ I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to Chiara Battistella for inviting me to the wonderful conference where the original paper was given and for improving the final article. Moreover, for various references and help in developing the argument I am especially grateful to the anonymous referee of *Illinois Classical Studies*, Stella Alekou, Marco Fucecchi, Stephen Harrison, Andreas Michalopoulos and Donna Zuckerberg.