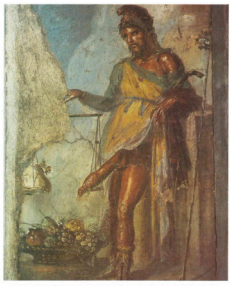

Priapus lets it all hang out. Pompeian wall-painting from the House of the Vetii.

standards really quite modest and not at all obscene, using euphemistic rather than explicit vocabulary, but nonetheless Ovid makes it quite clear what is going on. The (anonymous) girl tried everything she could, but it was no use, and in the end she decided to give up and go and splash herself with water ('so that her maids wouldn't know that she hadn't been touched'). It's a strange poem, especially in a culture where vulnerability, weakness, and the hurt inner child are hardly something to wear on your sleeve, but in another sense it is only taking to extremes something which lies at the heart of Roman elegy and indeed of much love poetry: unfulfilled desire. At the same time, even the experience of failure can be an opportunity to brag: Ovid assures us that on previous occasions he had performed 'twice with Chloe, three times with Pitho, three times with Libas' and a massive nine times in one short night with Corinna. (If you don't believe this to all at one level about poetry, go and have a look at Catullus 32, and also remember that there are nine Muses.) Moreover, now, as he writes, he is ready for action. Writing poetry and having sex seem to be tied up in his mind.

(Poetic) fantasist

But for all his big talk, much of the eroticism of the *Amores* consists in a refusal of self-exposure, with a veil playfully pulled over the true heart of the matter which readers so often, perhaps inevitably, try to penetrate. Indicative of this is the way Ovid introduces 'himself' and 'love' right from the beginning. Instead of this amazing girl who makes him fall head over heels in love and therefore driven to write love poetry, we see a poet trying to write an epic on a suitably martial topic, when the love god steals away a metrical foot and forces the poet into love elegy. (In epic, every line has six feet, whereas elegy is made up of alternating lines of six feet and five feet.) His complaint at having no suitable subject matter for this metre is answered by Cupid's arrow. When finally, in the fifth poem, we get to an unusual moment of success for the lover and one of the most erotic scenes in Latin literature, Ovid playfully refuses to let us watch: 'who doesn't know the rest?' He also refuses to let us know whether he is really in love, who Corinna 'really is', and whether the Ovid who tells the story is the same as the Ovid in the bed – and/or the same as the one who writes the poem.

So should we be condemning Ovid for bragging? For being hypocritical in complaining about other people bragging? At one level, I'd be quite happy to answer 'yes' to both questions, since one thing I've learned from 25 years of reading Ovid is never to trust him. But let's take a closer look at what he said. 'I talk only sparingly even about my true love affairs, and my mystic thefts are hidden beneath firm faithfulness' (*The art of love* 2.639–40). What is that but a refusal to speak while enticing us into thinking he's telling us something? It is, itself, a kind of seduction of the reader, tempting us with apparent hints about his personal life. Are we to take the impudence poem – the unlucky girl herself, Corinna, the contents of Ovid's attentions with their obviously literary Greek names, and Corinna herself – real, fake, or fictional? The name 'Corinna' alludes to an earlier Greek poetess, but it also suggests a generalized meaning of 'girl'. Ovid is constantly playing hide-and-seek over the fictionality or otherwise of his poetic universe. Nowhere, perhaps, is this more explicit than in the poem where he complains about the naive gullibility of readers in taking as truth things which are (really) inventions of the poets (*Amores* 3.12). 'Honestly, how can you believe all that stuff about Jupiter turning into a bird or a shower of gold or a bull in order to seduce some poor girl, or the obvious fiction of part-human monsters, hundred-armed giants, and people turned to stone?' (You should be thinking about the *Metamorphoses* now.) 'Believe that and you'll believe anything – even that I was telling the truth about Corinna!' But there's a rather subtle double bluff going on here. Ovid is complaining that his poetry has prostituted his mistress and that 'she who was just now called mine, whom I alone loved, I fear may be had by many', because everyone knows about her through his books. 'Any sophisticated reader', he is implying, 'should know that I have seen that my praise of my beloved was meant to be fictional'. Implication: 'but you didn't took it as truth and so (think you) are sleeping with her'. Hmm. So his claim for the fictional identity of Corinna is put forward as if it were to protect the real identity of a real beloved. Which is the trick?

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The mystery of the temple of Zeus at the sanctuary of Nemea

Michael Scott

The temple of Zeus at the sanctuary of Nemea has often been written off as a dull, inconsequential temple of the fourth century B.C. This article seeks to re-write the temple's reputation by arguing that the temple was designed to bolster the sanctuary's own chequered history during a period in which the sanctuary of Nemea was fighting for its survival. Religion and politics were fundamentally connected in the Greek world, as the story of the Nemean sanctuary shows.

When the pioneer travel writer, Pausanias, in the second century A.D., visited the sanctuary of Nemea, situated not far from the Isthmus dividing mainland Greece and the Peloponnese, he wrote a rather

disparaging note for his guidebook. 'In Nemea', he wrote, 'is a noteworthy temple of Nemean Zeus but I found that the roof had fallen in and that there was no longer remaining any image [of the god]'. Today the temple still looks the worse for wear.

Nemea and its temple are dealt with swiftly in two paragraphs and Pausanias is off again on his travels. Nemea hosted Panhellenic ('all-Greece') athletic games, just like the sanctuaries of Olympia, Delphi, and Isthmia. Yet Pausanias devotes a much larger space in his guide book to Isthmia (book 1.13.3-2.2), an entire book of his guide to Delphi (book 10), and two books to Olympia (books 5 and 6). Nemea, it seems, was sadly lacking in tourist value.

In part, Pausanias wasn't interested because Nemea had a very chequered history as a sanctuary hosting crown games on a level with Olympia and the rest. It alone among these great sanctuaries sat in the middle of an often flooded marshland. No major city stood near the sanctuary to organize it and protect it. The sanctuary, and particularly its games, sat prey to the desires of more powerful nearby cities like Argos. Several times Argos stole the games hosted at Nemea and transferred them and the glory that went with them to its city. The Greeks, it seemed, hadn't cared much about Nemea, so why should Pausanias?

Coming out of the pits

This article is, however, about a period of time when the Greeks, or at least some of them, did seem to care about Nemea. The period in question is the second half of the fourth century B.C. The Greek world was in turmoil (when was it not?). Sparta, so strong at the beginning of the century, had fallen. Athens was still engaged in desperate attempts to build a second empire. Argos was busy gathering strength to the north. Macedon. By 338 B.C., King Philip of Macedon's influence and power in Greece were undeniable.

Philip liked the crown games sanctuaries. In a world without mass communication, in which most people stayed in their own city for most of their lives, the games provided almost unique opportunities for people from all over the Greek world to come together in 'neutral' places not directly controlled by one city. But for Philip they also provided good locations and events through which he could organize and manipulate the Greeks. It is thus not a surprise that the crown games sanctuaries all received some sort of attention from Philip, and the sanctuary at Nemea in particular received not only the crown games back from Argos at this time, but also was the recipient of a huge financial investment that saw, amongst other things, a new temple being built at the site, the same temple Pausanias saw and which we see today.

The temple of Zeus at Nemea today.