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For general introductions to the Ars Amatoria, see Hollis (1973), Socas (1995), Holzberg (1997) 101–21. The introduction to the present commentary offers some background to a range of themes and subject areas handled in the commentary proper (sections 2–5), and provides basic information on the content and structure of Ars 3 (section 1), on the date of the book’s publication (section 6), and on its manuscript tradition (section 7).

1 CONTENT AND STRUCTURE OF ARS 3

(a) Content

I offer below a tabular analysis of the content of Ars 3.¹

1–6: the praeceptor’s intention to make women’s battle with men even
7–28: catalogue of Greek heroines faithful to men
29–42: catalogue of legendary faithless men and their female victims
43–56: narration of the praeceptor’s commission from Venus to relieve women of their ignorance of the art of love
57–82: call to (a restricted category of) women to use their youth wisely and heed his instruction
83–98: call to women to cast aside any doubts about sharing sexual pleasure with men

99–100: ANNOUNCEMENT: ELEMENTARY INSTRUCTION BEGINS

¹ For other (and some rather different) versions, see (e.g.) Fränkel (1945) 295f. n. 9; Pridik (1970) 48f.; Weisert (1970) 3–5; Hermann (1970); Rambaux (1986) 157–60; Wildberger (1998a) 365. For a tabulation of the main correspondences in subject matter between Ars 3 and the two preceding books, see Wellmann-Bretzigheimer (1981) 13 n. 23.
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101–34: praise of cultus

135–68: hairstyles and cultus: choosing a becoming style
169–92: clothing and cultus: choosing a becoming shade of tunic
193–208: personal hygiene and cosmetics
209–34: uitae postscena: concealing cosmetics from the lover
235–50: revealing and concealing the dressing of one’s hair
251–90: uitia corporis: concealing defects from the lover

291–310: crying, walking and talking
311–28: musical accomplishments
329–48: poetry recitation
349–80: dancing and dice and board games

381–404: the city of Rome: where to find men
405–32: the importance of ‘fame’ to poets and women
433–66: men to be avoided
467–98: communication by letter with men

499–500: ANNOUNCEMENT: ADVANCED INSTRUCTION BEGINS

501–24: three character faults which will discourage further advances from men
525–54: how to benefit from each lover; the superior benefits of the poet
555–76: how to treat younger and older lovers; the superior benefits of the older lover
577–610: three ways to keep the lover’s passion strong
611–58: the custos: three sets of stratagems for his circumvention
659–82: the rival: how to win the lover back
683–746: Procris: the dangers of emotional credulity over a rival
CONTENT AND STRUCTURE OF ARS 3

747–68: the conuuium
769–808: the bedroom

809–12: epilogue

(b) Principles of structure and unity

Fränkel (1945) 206 n. 9 notes two organising principles at work in Ars 3. The first is signalled in the cross-reference between:

sed me flaminibus uenti maioris iturum,
dum sumus in portu, prouehat aura leuis

(99f.)

and

si licet a paruis animum ad maiora referre
plenaque curuato pandere uela sinu

(499f.)

Together these lines imply that 101–498 contain ‘elementary’ instruction, and that 501–808 contain ‘advanced’ instruction.² Like those in the earlier books of the Ars, the distinction is somewhat loose and artificial.³ For example, during the initial stages of instruction the praecceptor must sometimes assume, before broaching the subject of how to meet men, that the puellae already

² However, Weisert (1970) 34 places the main division at 467f. (fert animus propius consistere: suprîme habenas, | Musa, nec admisis excussiaret robusti), and labels 101–496 as ‘Bildung’ and 467–808 as ‘Umgang mit Männern’. This has some validity, as instruction on how to deal with men directly does begin, at last, around 467ff. However the text of 467f. n., although programmatically significant, does not refer directly to a change of subject matter, but rather to a change in the style of treatment. Nevertheless, the reader’s attention is suitably arrested by Ovid’s declaration at this important juncture.

³ Instruction proper in Ars 1 is subdivided into two explicitly marked parts: ‘where to find the beloved’ (41–262) and ‘how to capture the beloved’ (269–770). Some detect a bipartite structure also in Ars 2 (Weisert (1970) 3; Kling (1970); Weber (1983) 113), but other subdivisions are possible here; see, e.g., Rambaux (1986) 154f.
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have lovers. Yet such assumptions create few problems for the reader. Furthermore, some justification may be found for the division into ‘elementary’ and ‘advanced’ teaching: ‘the “small” things are matters easy to understand and to master while the “greater” achievements require some measure of self-control . . . , comprehension and discrimination’.4 (The distinction between ‘advanced’ and ‘elementary’ also corresponds broadly to ‘old’ and ‘new’ subject matter. Lines 501–808 deal with a world whose characters, scenes and emotions are familiar from earlier love- elegy. In ‘elementary’ instruction, however, Ovid takes us behind the scenes, as it were, and allows us to see the preparations of the puella for the first time in elegy. Readers of the Amores and of the elegies of Tibullus and Propertius had previously witnessed these scenes only as intruders in the uitae postscaenia; see the note on 135–290.) However the manner in which the praeceptor chooses to inform readers of the main structural principle of Ars 3 is rather oblique compared with his method in the first two books of the poem. There the overall plan is announced clearly in advance at 1.35–40, and the reader is forcibly reminded of it via recapitulations at 1.263–8, 1.77f. and 2.1–20.5 Nevertheless, care is taken in other ways to mark the praeceptor’s progress through his material in Ars 3. Lines 99f. and 499f. (quoted above) form part of a programme of ship imagery, which guides the reader through Ovid’s preparations for the voyage (26 n.), his departure (99f. n.), presence on the high seas (499f. n.) and intention to run for port (748 n.).6 The image is not used so systematically in the

4 Fränkel (1945) 206 n. 9; compare Hermann (1970). See also the note on 370 minus opus.
5 See Hollis for parallels in didactic poetry for the preliminary announcement at 1.35–49. Similar passages are found in technical prose; cf. Cels. proem. 75 (on the tripartite structure of his first two books) his propositis, primum dicam, quemadmodum sanos agere conveniat, tum ad ea transibis, quae ad morbos curationesque eorum pertinebant.
6 For an explanation of the style of reference used here, see Method of the Commentary, p. 83.
earlier books of the Ars (1.77f.; 2.9f.) or in the Remedia (70, 577f., 811f.).

The second organising principle in Ars 3 is that of the progress of the affair through its successive stages. Such a principle operates also in the first two books of the Ars: where to find the beloved (1.41–262), how to capture her (1.269–770) and how to keep her (2.9–732). In Ars 3 a sequence of sorts can be traced as Ovid progresses from preparation of the body (101–290), to personal charm and personal accomplishments (291–380), then to ‘how to make contact with men’ (381–498), and finally to ‘how to deal with your lover after the initial contact’ (501–808). This principle of organisation, however, appears to be of secondary importance. Some transitions, such as those between bodily cultus and personal accomplishments or between the boudoir and the streets of Rome, are theoretically of major importance but lack an explicit underlining in the text.

Furthermore, the linear progress of the affair becomes increasingly hard to trace towards the end of the book. There are traces of a move between ‘capturing the lover’ (555–76) and ‘keeping the lover’ (577–610), which replicates the move made between the latter half of Ars 1 and the beginning of Ars 2 (see above). Yet in Ars 3 this transition is dimly marked; see the notes on 579 and 591. The clearest demonstration of the break-down of a linear treatment of the affair is found in the passage on the conuuium (747–68). The dinner-party is an obvious place at which to meet and make contact with lovers for the first time, and the praeceptor’s emphasis here on attracting men reflects this. The passage might have

7 Note also the complementary use of the image of the ‘chariot of poetry’, at 467f. and 809–12 nn.
8 See the notes on 281ff. and 381–498.
9 For comment, see Myerowitz (1985) 97ff. Nevertheless other, more formal, ways of uniting ‘advanced’ instruction are found. Note the parallelism between 525–54 and 555–76, where in each case the ‘superior’ benefits of a figure closely related to Ovid himself are extolled. Similarly 501–24, 577–610 and 611–58 are all united by the division of their main subject matter into three sections.
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been more at home in the first half of the book, perhaps immediately after the passages on displaying oneself to potential lovers around the city of Rome (381–404, 405–32). This is confirmed by the fact that the two parallel passages for men on the conuuium both occur in the first book of the Ars Amatoria, when Ovid is still dealing with how to find and capture the opposite sex (1.229–52, 565–602). No awkwardness however is felt in Ars 3. The length of the preceding Cephalus and Procris myth (683–746) helps to remove from the minds of readers any strict concern with the stage-by-stage progress of the affair. Furthermore, as Holzberg (1997) 114 points out, the subsequent transition from conuuium (747–68) to bedroom (769–808) replicates the transition between Amores 1.4 and 1.5.

(c) Unity and the ‘catalogue’ style

Formal unity within Ars 3 is established by repeated returns to a select number of subjects, including the control of anger (235–42, 369–80, 501–8), the promotion of the praeceptor as poet and lover (341–8, 405–16, 525–76) and the celebration of the opportunities offered by the modern city of Rome (113–28, 387–96, 633–40). A looser unity is provided by the use of the ‘catalogue’ format.10 Catalogues are an established feature of the didactic genre from Hesiod Op. 765–828 on, where a list of propitious and unpropitious days is provided (cf. Ars 1.399–418). Archestratus’ Hedupatheia and Nicander’s Alexipharmaca, for example, are essentially catalogues of foodstuffs and poisonous substances respectively, and lists of various kinds dominate much of the second book of Virgil’s Georgics and the first book of Oppian’s Halieutica. The three most prominent catalogues in Ars 3 are those concerned with hairstyles (135–54), shades of clothing (169–92) and sexual positions (771–88). Each has the same structure, whereby

10 Female adornment is a subject which lends itself to the ‘catalogue’ style, from the earliest Greek literature onwards; cf. e.g. Hom. II. 5.733ff. (Athene); 14.166ff. (Hera); H. Hom. 6 (Aphrodite). An allusion to the pseudo-Hesiodic Catalogue of Women opens Ars 3; see on 1–6.
the addressee to choose, from the range of options listed, the one which is most becoming to her. Cf. also 261–80, where a list of stratagems for concealing specific physical defects is provided. These passages are supported by catalogues of poets (329–48), of board and dice games (353–68), of sights around Rome (381–96), and of stratagems for secret communication (619–58). Compare further 7–28 (a catalogue of Greek heroines) and 29–42 (a catalogue of faithless men).

This preponderance of catalogues makes both the range of things included in Ars 3 very wide, and the text itself very dense (certainly by contrast with the Amores or Heroides). Long lists are found also in the first two books of the Ars, but these are generally more discursive than their counterparts in Ars 3; cf. especially the list of places and events where puellae may be found, at 1.67–262. Other indications of the relative ‘density’ of Ars 3 include the increased frequency of imperatival expressions (see Gibson (1997) 91f.) and the presence of only one extended narrative myth. The first book has four extended mythological narratives which, in addition to the propempticon for Gaius (1.177–228), account for just under a quarter of the text. In the second book the three extended tales plus the Lucretian ‘myth’ on the origin of civilisation (2.467–92) make up just over a fifth of the whole. In Ars 3 the solitary myth of Procris (683–746 n.) takes up around one thirteenth of the text.

2 THE DIDACTIC TRADITION AND ARS 3

(a) Characteristics of didactic

Toohey (1996) 4 usefully sums up the key characteristics of Greek and Roman didactic verse as follows:

A didactic epic speaks with a single authorial voice and this is directed explicitly to an addressee, who may or may not be named. It is usually a serious literary form. Its subject matter is instructional, rather than merely hortatory. It may be, and often is, quite technical and detailed. Included within the narrative are a number of illustrative panels. These
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are often based upon mythological themes. The metre of didactic poetry is that of narrative epic, the hexameter. Traditionally such poems comprised one book of about 800 lines (but at least 400 lines), although this changed as the form developed.

Ars 3, like the first two books of the poem, possesses most of these key characteristics: around 800 lines long, it features a praeceptor\(^{11}\) who instructs puellae\(^{12}\) in subjects which are often highly technical, and includes an illustrative panel in the extended myth of Cephalus and Procris (683–746).\(^{13}\) The obvious exceptions are the poem’s non-epic metre and its characteristically playful tone.

The oddity (in one sense) of Ovid’s choice of elegiacs needs to be underlined. The recent publication of fragments of an early imperial elegiac poem on the science of astrology by the Greek author Anoubion of Diosopolis may suggest that we are simply ill-informed about the use of elegiacs in didactic poems.\(^{14}\)

Nevertheless, Ovid’s experiment with elegiac metre in didactic texts, begun in the Medicamina and completed in the Remedia, is not repeated amongst other surviving works until the short De insititio by the fifth-century agricultural author Palladius. The reasons for the rarity of elegiacs as a didactic medium are not far to seek. The relationship between didactic and epic was strong and close. Indeed no ancient critic defines didactic poetry separately from epic – undoubtedly because an ‘instructional’ strain was felt to be a fundamental part of Homer and his tradition.\(^{15}\)

\(^{11}\) I often use ‘praeceptor’ when I want to distinguish the teacher in the poem (named Ovid) from the writer of the poem (also named Ovid). But I have not put a premium on consistency, not least for stylistic reasons.

\(^{12}\) On the question of Ovid’s addressees and the male audience of the book, see pp. 35–36.

\(^{13}\) For fundamental studies of the formal characteristics which the Ars shares with the didactic genre, and of its intertextual relations with Lucretius and Vergil, see Kenney (1958); Leach (1964) 149–52; Hollis (1973) 89–94; Küppers (1981); Steudel (1992).

\(^{14}\) P.Oxy. 4503–4507. On the rarity of elegiacs as a didactic medium, see further Obbink (1999) 64.

Casting the *Ars* in an uncharacteristic metre, then, serves one likely purpose, namely the establishment of a claim for the importance of teaching (‘erotodidaxis’) as a key element in earlier Roman love elegy and not just in epic.\(^{16}\)

(b) Instruction in didactic: imperatival expressions

While the *Ars* stands apart from the mainstream of the didactic tradition in its choice of metre, it stands near the centre of that tradition in an important respect. A key feature of the genre is the aim to instruct, and instruction receives more explicit and sustained emphasis in the *Ars* than in the standard Roman exemplars of the genre, Lucretius and Virgil’s *Georgics*. It should be noted here that the type of instruction and intensity of instruction offered by didactic texts vary widely.\(^{17}\) Within the genre we find:

i. works which instruct readers in a body of knowledge, or about phenomena, which are somehow important or interesting (e.g. Aratus);
ii. works which instruct readers how to practise some art (e.g. Nicander’s *Alexipharmaca*);
iii. works which instruct readers about some set of propositions, and try to persuade them to act or think in a certain manner on the basis of those propositions (e.g. Lucretius).

As might be expected, texts usually display the characteristics of more than one type, or affect the appearance of one type while

\(^{16}\) On erotodidaxis in elegy and elsewhere, see pp. 13–21. It is typical of Ovid’s wit that, nevertheless, *Ars* 1 and 2 should open with references to epic figures, and *Ars* 3 with direct references to epic texts (1–6, *t arma doli* nn.).

\(^{17}\) For a full presentation of the argument and evidence summarised below, see Gibson (1997).

\(^{18}\) Effe (1977) classifies didactic poetry on the system of the instructional intent of the texts. The three types identified are the directly instructional (e.g. Lucretius); the obliquely instructional, i.e. a text where a subject of apparently practical instruction is really a cover for another kind of instruction aimed at a different audience (e.g. Aratus, Virgil); and the ornamental (e.g. Nicander).
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expecting the reader to understand it as another. Nevertheless Lucretius offers mostly the kind of instruction classified under (iii) (and to a lesser extent (i)) above; the Ars Amatoria offers mostly that classified under (ii) (and to a lesser extent (iii)); and the Georgics arguably displays a potent mixture of all three. The important differences in type of instruction offered by the three texts are reflected in the kinds of imperatival expression which they adopt and the frequency with which they use such expressions. Ovid favours the use of the ordinary imperative and the third person subjunctive active (as do later practitioners of the genre such as Grattius and Columella). Virgil, by contrast, shows a preference above all for the third person indicative active, and for the ordinary imperative. An intuitive sense of Virgil’s preference for the former may lie behind Wilkinson’s decision to classify the Georgics as belonging to the genre of ‘descriptive poetry’. The character of the text as one which places less emphasis on explicit and sustained instruction is reflected further in the relative infrequency of imperatival forms in the Georgics. Whereas the Ars Amatoria has an imperatival expression roughly every 3·5 / 4 lines, the Georgics has one only every 7 / 8 lines. The Ars is thus made to appear a ‘practical’ and ‘utilitarian’ text by comparison with the Georgics. It is in the area of density of imperatival expressions that a stark contrast between Lucretius and the Ars may also be seen. Lucretius favours a mixture of active second person imperatival expressions and impersonal expressions, but in Book One, for example, an imperatival expression is found roughly only once every 33 lines. The very low density of imperatival expressions in Lucretius reflects the nature of his content. There is little for the reader actively to do (except believe and accept the poet’s message) – hence there is comparatively little need for imperatival expressions, and the bulk of the book is

19 For the third person subjunctive active, see the notes on 266 and 315; for the third person indicative active, see the note on 163. For other imperatival expressions in didactic poetry and prose, see the notes on 129, 201, 207, 216, 263, 333-349, 431.