Ovid, 43 B.C.–17 A.D. or 18 A.D.

[Epistulae ex Ponto. Liber 1]

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In the modern revival of interest in Ovid’s exilic poetry, the *Tristia* have long received the most attention, although his last elegies, the *Epistulae ex Ponto*, reward the reader no less and are arguably more appealing—works in which his inventiveness flourishes no less than before, and in which his imaginative self-fashioning is as ingenious and engaging, though now in a minor key, as it always was from the time of his *Amores*. Their comparative neglect resulted partly from a dearth of commentaries. Whereas Luck’s commentary on the *Tristia* (1967, 1977) long made that collection more accessible, the reader of the *Epistulae ex Ponto* had until recently little beyond Keene (1887) in English and Scholte (1933) in Latin on book 1, both difficult to obtain. Now, however, Ovid’s readers can look forward to the completion of M. Helzle’s German commentary on all four books, of which the first volume, on books 1–2, appeared in 2003; his commentary on selected elegies of book 4 (1989) is in English. On book 2 we have Pérez Vega (1985) in Spanish and Galasso (1995) in Italian. In 2005 appeared J. F. Gaertner’s commentary in English on book 1, a valuable work, whose vast scale perhaps diminishes its accessibility to some readers. I am greatly indebted to these predecessors, especially Helzle and Gaertner, in the writing of the present commentary, which, consistent with the aims of this series, is meant to assist students as well as interest scholars.

I began this work in idyllic circumstances as Blegen Fellow in the Department of Classics at Vassar College. I am deeply grateful for support also from the University Research Committee of my own institution, Emory University, and from Emory’s Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry, which provided a year’s leave, enabling me to complete the project. It is a pleasure to thank my colleagues at Emory for their encouragement and support. My greatest debt is to my editor, Professor E. J. Kenney, who promptly scrutinized each portion of the commentary as it was written, offering invaluable advice, recommending improvements, and rescuing me from many errors. His vast learning in Latin literature and especially in Ovid, generously shared with so many over many decades, remains a source of inspiration and encouragement for all who pursue these studies.
ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations of Latin authors and works are as in the Oxford Latin Dictionary except Ex P. for Pont., F. for Fast., Her. for Ep., Virg. for Verg.


Erasmus D. Erasmus, Opera omnia. Amsterdam 1969–.


LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Otto

ROL

SEG
*Supplementum epigraphicum Graecum*. Leiden 1923–.

SH

Smyth

TLL
*Thesaurus linguæ Latinae*. Munich 1900–.

Tosi

Wheeler–Goold