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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

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[1] For other (and some rather different) versions, see (e.g.) Fränkel (1945) 205f. 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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747–68: the *conuiuium*
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
> $\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad$ (99f.)

and

> si licet a paruis animum ad maiora referre
>   plenaque curuato pandere uela sinu
> $\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad$ (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 some-
what loose and artificial.[3] For example, during the initial stages of
instruction the *praeceptor* must sometimes assume, before broach-
ing the subject of how to meet men, that the *puellae* already

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[2] However, Weisert (1970) 3f. places the main division at 467f. (*fert animus
propius consistere: supprime habenas, | Musa, nec admissis excutiare rotis*), and labels
101–466 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 (Wiesert (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 reca-
pitulations at 1.263–8, 1.771f. 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

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[4] Fränkel (1945) 206 n. 9; compare Hermann (1970). See also the note on 370
maius opus.
[5] See Hollis for parallels in didactic poetry for the preliminary announcement
at 1.35–40. 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 conueniat, tum ad ea transibo, quae ad morbos curationesque
eorum pertinebunt*.
[6] For an explanation of the style of reference used here, see Method of the
Commentary, p. 83.

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earlier books of the *Ars* (1.771f.; 2.9f.) or in the *Remedia* (70, 577f., 811f.).[7]

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.[8] Furthermore, the linear progress of the affair becomes increasingly hard to trace towards the end of the book.[9] 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 *conuiuium* (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 immedi-
ately 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 *conuiuium*
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 *conuiuium*
(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 oppor-
tunities 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). Archestra-
tus' *Hedupatheia* and Nicander's *Alexipharmaca*, for example, are
essentially catalogues of foodstuffs and poisonous substances re-
spectively, 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 con-
cerned 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. *Il.* 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.

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the addressee is 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 cat-
alogue 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), ac-
count 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 po-
etry 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 techni-
cal, 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 sim-
ply 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
insitione* 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 sepa-
rately from epic – undoubtedly because an 'instructional' strain
was felt to be a fundamental part of Homer and his tradition.[15]

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[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.

[15] See the critical survey of Toohey (1996) 5–7. On the difficulties of defining
didactic as a separate genre, see, briefly, Gibson (2002) 338–9.

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Casting the *Ars* in an uncharacteristic metre, then, serves one
likely purpose, namely the establishment of a claim for the im-
portance 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 ex-
emplars 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 inter-
      esting (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).[18]

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

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[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, 1 *arma dedi* 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 appar-
ently 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 or-
dinary imperative.[19] 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'.[20] The
character of the text as one which places less emphasis on ex-
plicit 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 compari-
son 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 impera-
tival 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

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[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.
[20] Wilkinson (1969) 4.