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**MEDICAL MOTIFS IN AUGUSTAN ELEGIAC
POETRY**

SUMMARY OF THE DISSERTATION

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The dissertation consists of an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, a list of contributions, and a bibliography. It has a total length of 289 pages, of which the main text comprises 257 pages, and 26 pages are dedicated to the bibliographic description. The bibliography includes 399 titles, 104 of which are primary sources (editions of original texts), and 278 are secondary literature (including editions with commentaries), and 17 are online platforms with digitized resources. The list of publications and conference talks related to the dissertation topic includes five publications and six conference talks.

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I dedicate this dissertation to my father, a man of letters and a philologist, who was genuinely curious and passionate about all my academic endeavors but couldn't see its completion.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Academic relevance of the topic

The present dissertation examines a network of tropes that has often been overlooked in the critical studies of elegiac motifs and imagery. The role of medicine in Ovid's epic "Metamorphoses" has been a subject of scholarly attention and inquiry since the late 1980s, when Peter Knox proposed literary parallels between the physical decline of Echo and Narcissus (Met. III. 489: *attenuatus amore*) and the wasting away of elegiac lovers (Knox 1986: 22). In 2010, Gareth Williams underscored the importance of medical themes in Metamorphoses in his chapter "Apollo, Aesculapius and the Poetics of Illness in Ovid's Metamorphoses" (Williams 2010: 63-92). More recently, in 2020 a group of academics established the research network "Body and Medicine in Latin Poetry", seeking to explore the intersections between Roman poetic production and ancient medical traditions of the human body. At the 2017 Ovidian conference in Rome, "Ovid: Death and Transfiguration", prof. Laurel Fulkerson observed in her presentation – and later in her chapter "Ovidian Pathology, in Love and in Exile" from the conference proceedings – that although discussed previously and structurally established "the notion of elegiac love as disease has received less sustained attention than other metaphors" (Fulkerson 2023: 108). Usually in their commentaries and analyses of the Roman elegiac poets, scholars occasionally acknowledge the presence of medical language, referring to 'language of medicine', 'medical imagery', 'linguaggio medico', or 'terminologia medica'. As prof. David Langslow sums up in his essay on medical language in Roman poetry, "The Language of Poetry and the Language of Science: The Latin Poets and 'Medical Latin'", "while such isolated ascriptions are common in modern commentaries, it is much rarer to find a developed general account on poets' attitudes to, and the use of technical and special language" (Langslow 1999: 189).

In addition, literary studies of elegiac tropes have traditionally focused on the use of metaphors per se and their metapoetic significance, thereby often neglecting comparative analysis and direct parallels with ancient medical sources. However, this approach has undergone significant evolution in recent years. Contemporary commentators on Augustan elegiac poets now exhibit a broader engagement with the medical dimensions of specific linguistic patterns, tropes, imagery, analogies, and motifs in elegiac poetry (see Gaertner 2005; Donnelly 2022; Rimell 2024). This shift in the style of elegiac scholarly commentary has opened up new interpretative avenues, allowing for more nuanced medical readings of elegiac

poetry. Over the past decade, this development has contributed to the gradual emergence of a new interdisciplinary field within Roman literary studies, with particular implications for the study of Roman love elegy and Ovid's elegiac corpus. The present study aligns itself with these evolving trends, situating its inquiry within the broader framework of critical scholarship on Roman literature.

2. Subject of research

The subject of the current dissertation is the use of selected motifs in Augustan love elegy, identified throughout the study as medical. Entitled in this manner, the topic focuses on the works of Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid, analyzing a corpus situated within the chronological boundaries spanning from the career of Albius Tibullus in the 50s BCE onward to the presumed death of Ovid in 17 CE. The brief existence of Roman love elegy as a literary genre makes this corpus particularly suitable for examining motifs whose transformations can be more clearly and thoroughly delineated when the focus is placed on such a concise period. The dissertation specifically addresses metaphorical imagery that intersects with medicine as a conceptual source for poetic representations within the broader elegiac motif of love as sickness and its treatment.

3. Aims and objectives

The present study aims, on the one hand, to conduct an in-depth analysis focused on the diachronic development and transformations of selected motifs within the poetry itself. On the other hand, it seeks to identify and reveal these motifs as connected to the field of medicine. The specific objectives corresponding to these aims are as follows:

- ❖ To compile a primary corpus of sources in which certain recurring usages indicate the presence of a persistent motif.
- ❖ To undertake a systematic examination of individual poetic motifs (including ideas, images, and tropes) through an analysis grounded in the use of medically-oriented language and concepts in the selected and studied passages.
- ❖ To propose a new model for classifying certain conventional elegiac motifs by rethinking their role and by establishing a coherent relationship between them from the perspective of ancient medicine.

- ❖ To reconsider the position of Roman elegists not only as poets of desire *per se* but also as authors, engaged with, or influenced by the nosological aspects of sexual activity within ancient medical discourse.
- ❖ To enrich the reading and interpretation of medical imagery in elegiac poetry by uncovering previously unexplored metaphors and technical language within a well-known and extensively studied textual corpus.
- ❖ To reconsider classical perspectives in the elegiac studies, particularly in Ovidian elegiac scholarship, which often neglects medical interpretations of themes and motifs directly or metaphorically linked to the field of ancient medicine.
- ❖ To engage with contemporary trends in critical studies of Roman literature, particularly Ovidian studies, which increasingly increasingly emphasize the intersections between corporeality, emotions, and pathology, seeking connections between poetic texts and ancient medical authors.

4. A Review of Research on Medical Motifs in Elegiac Poetry

A number of critics and commentators have observed that medical themes in Augustan love elegy are embedded in its figurative language, likely influenced by Hellenistic poetic expression, which often incorporated technical language in its pursuit of authenticity and realism. (Zanker 1987: 124–7; Langslow 1999; Gaertner 2007: 163). It has been established that this tradition draws heavily from the classical literary model of lovesickness in Hellenistic literature (Griffiths 1990; Faraone 2006; Rynearson 2009), whose metaphorical framework influenced the elegists directly through Neoteric poetry and, to a significant extent, through the lost elegies of Gallus (Tränkle 1960: 22–3; Ross 1975: 67–8, 91; Cairns 1983: 84–8; Henderson 1979: xiii).

Key studies that systematically examine the reception of the central motif of love as disease and its associated imagery in elegiac poetry reveal that these tropes interact closely with the *sermo amatorius* of Roman comedy on the one hand (Preston 1916: 3–14; Fantham 1972: 82–91; Brecke 2023: 52–77) and, on the other, engage in dialogue with Stoic conceptions of love (Caston 2006, 2012). Moreover, it has been demonstrated that the use of medical language and tropes also reinforces the central motif of exile as illness in Ovid’s exilic corpus. These references not only echo the language of erotic illness found earlier in love elegy (Nagle 1980: 61–3; Claassen 1999: 211) but also interact with medical imagery characteristic of earlier philosophical and consolatory literature (Gaertner 2007: 13, 160, 163).

Alison Keith's research (Keith 1999) represents a significant breakthrough in understanding the fragility and morbidity inherent in elegiac aesthetics and its somatic tropes. Her study examines metaphors of slenderness in Augustan elegy through the lens of Republican rhetorical language, which is deeply infused with physiological analogies.

The literary motif of love as disease is considered primary in relation to its nosological counterpart in medical literature. Over time, this literary conception starts to merge with a depressive form of melancholy, which only began to emerge as a subject of scholarly discussion during the early imperial period (Wack 1990: 6–7; Beecher, Ciavolella 1990: 39–54; Golden, Toohey 1996: 62). Simultaneously, from the Hippocratic corpus onward, sexual activity (*λαγνεία* / *ἀφροδίσια*) has been already regarded as both an essential component of a healthy regimen and a potential source of physical harm. Although Hippocratic texts do not explicitly reference the connection between eros and nosos, they extensively discuss the effects of sexual intercourse (McNamara 2016: 317). This conceptual link predates the Roman elegiac period by far. In Platonic philosophy, love is already viewed as a dual phenomenon and examined through the lens of medicine (*Symposium* 186c–186e). By emphasizing the figure and language of the physician, Plato shifts the dichotomy between healthy love and love as disease from a moralistic framework to a scientific discourse (Ciavolella 1976: 19). Aristotle further elaborates on the origins and mechanics of love, describing it as both a psychological phenomenon and a physiological process. While attraction begins with sensory perception, it ultimately stems from sensual desire (Cabello Pino 2012: 40–41).

The medico-philosophical idea that sexual contact is inherently base and harmful is central to Lucretius' doctrine of love as a form of physiological defect and disease, articulated in Book IV of *De rerum natura*. This dualistic concept of love is reflected not only at the conceptual level but also formally and linguistically in elegiac poetry. Joan Booth observes that conceptual metaphors for lovesickness in Neoteric poetry can be divided into two categories: 'purely metaphorical forms without physical manifestations' and 'physical forms' (Booth 1997: 158). Similarly, elegiac representations of desire engage with the corporeal aspect of love, frequently evoking associations with the physical characteristics of passion and, consequently, with disease and medicine.

5. Clarifications Regarding the Methodology of Research

Elegiac poetry tends to avoid the frequent use of specialized technical vocabulary, with diseases typically introduced indirectly and through periphrasis. The avoidance of

medical terms *sensu proprio*, even when the subject matter explicitly concerns illness, is a genre-specific feature. According to prof. Langslow it may be attributed to the fact that medical language occupies a lower linguistic register and is more commonly employed in genres with more conversational tone, such as comedy, satire, and epigram (Langslow 1999: 191). Another distinguishing feature of medical motifs in elegiac discourse is their predominantly metaphorical usage. A notable characteristic of medical metaphors in elegy is their intentionally sought ambivalence, carefully crafted by the poets themselves (Langslow 1999; Santirocco 1979: 233). For example, Corinna's condition following her abortion in *Amores* I. 13 is only implicitly framed as pathological and is presented through an allusion to Tibullus (cf. Tib. I. 5. 9). The general absence of clearly identifiable medical terminology, combined with the prominent presence of abundant medical metaphors, poses interpretative challenges. These challenges arise because medical ideas are conveyed figuratively, often appearing less 'medical' and more as purely poetic constructs. When analyzing medically oriented motifs, tropes, imagery, and their lexical apparatus, it is crucial to consider the dual semantic levels of many concepts – not only their secondary associations and metapoetic symbolism but also their primary, essential meaning. According to Duncan Kennedy, this primary layer holds greater significance (Kennedy 1993: 52). It is precisely within this primary layer of meaning – the literalization of metaphor – that the focus of this dissertation lies.

As this study ventures into a field that has not been systematically explored, it proposes new methodological models and approaches for analyzing medical metaphors and motifs. This is accomplished through several strategies. **First**, medical ideas – including physiological, medico-philosophical, and therapeutic concepts – are identified by comparing elegiac conceptual metaphors with medical theories from the Hippocratic corpus onward. To establish associative and linguistic connections between elegy and medicine, parallels are frequently drawn with stylistic concepts from Roman rhetoric, which are known to incorporate medical analogies. **In certain cases**, medical linguistic constructions – such as technical terms or medically nuanced meanings – are identified through intertextual comparisons between specific elegiac usages and the language of medical authors, including Cornelius Celsus, Scribonius Largus, and Dioscorides, whose works are chronologically closer to the historical context of the elegiac corpus. Through these methodological approaches, specific structural and functional models incorporating medical aspects are identified and analyzed. These models form a complex system of relationships within the elegiac corpus, constituting **the medical motifs**, which are the central focus of this study. By

employing lexical analysis and tracing intertextual connections, the study attempts to reconstruct medical ideas and semantic nuances by delving into the literal meanings of certain concepts. From the accumulation, repetition, and internal dynamics of a core set of images, motifs are emerging. The latter are subsequently examined through intertextual and intratextual connections within the elegiac corpus on one hand and through comparisons with the language and theoretical frameworks of ancient medicine on the other.

Comparative analyses with ancient medicine are conducted either at an abstract or phenomenological level or as direct references, depending on the specifics of the research object. The exposition alternates between close readings and broader overviews of motifs. The various manifestations of a given motif are classified within a general conceptual framework drawn from both ancient medical theories and their presence in other genres that share medical allusions and concepts with elegy (e.g., Roman comedy, rhetoric, or Lucretius' language). In this way, the progression and development of a given motif along the axis of disease-treatment is established either within an individual author's corpus or across the entire Augustan elegiac corpus.

6. Corpus

The central corpus includes the elegies of Albius Tibullus, contained in the first book and II.1- II.6 of the second book (Tib.); the four books of elegies by Sextus Propertius (Prop. I, II, III, IV); and Ovid's cycle of elegiac works, which consists of:

Heroides / Epistulae; „Heroines“ / „Letters of Heroines“ (Her., I-XXI)

Amores; „The Loves“ in three books (Am., I, II, III)

Ars amatoria; „The Art of Love“ in three books (Ars., I, II, III)

Remedia amoris; „The Cure for Love“ (Rem.)

Medicamina faciei femineae; „Cosmetics for the Female Face“ (Medicam.)

Fasti; „The Calendar“, in six preserved books (Fast., I -VI)

Tristia; „Sorrows“ in five books (Tr., I-V)

Ibis; „Ibis“ (Ib.)

Epistulae ex Ponto; „Letters from the Black Sea“ in four books (Pont., I - IV)

Due to the lack of substantial material, Gallus will not be utilized, and the primary corpus will consist of the elegies of Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid, to whom the terms 'elegiac poets' and 'elegists' are applied. Ovid is the representative of Augustan elegy with the most extensive oeuvre, and unlike Tibullus and Propertius, he develops new elegiac subgenres: the

female epistolary elegy (*Heroides*); erotic didactic elegy (*Ars Amatoria*); anti-erotic didactic elegy (*Remedia Amoris*); cosmetic didactic elegy (*Medicamina Faciei Femineae*); etiological-ethnographic elegy (*Fasti*); exilic elegy (*Tristia*); and epistolary exilic elegy (*Epistulae ex Ponto*). From that point of view, his corpus provides the most convenient framework for exploring and tracing specific motifs.

Given the nature of the study, which focuses on the transformations of medically oriented motifs, particular emphasis will be placed on Ovid's love elegies, didactic elegies, and exilic cycle – works that are more profoundly engaged with the metaphorical framework of the lovesickness motif. Owing to the central role of the epic poem *Metamorphoses* within Augustan poetry and Ovidian corpus, it will be referenced in intertextual parallels, since it enhances key metapoetic ideas and implicit authorial commentary that frequently interact with Ovid's elegiac aesthetics.

Among **the medical authors** employed as sources in the comparative analysis of elegiac motifs and medical theories, priority is given to those, whose dating lies closest to the central corpus of this study. Historically, the works most closely aligned with the Augustan elegiac tradition include the encyclopedia *Artes* of Cornelius Celsus, from which the extensive section *De medicina* (ca. 14–37 CE) has survived; the pharmacological treatise *De materia medica* (Περὶ ὕλης ἰατρικῆς) by Pedanius Dioscorides (ca. 77 CE, Beck 2005: xv); and the medical compilation of recipes *Compositiones medicamentorum* by Scribonius Largus (ca. 43/44 CE, Jocks 2013: 8). Authors whose works are dated after Ovid's death in 17 CE are primarily cited for illustrative purposes, with the aim to clarify the evolution of certain medical ideas and theories. Although this approach may appear anachronistic, such sources are incorporated to support the objectives of this study. Later medical authors often provide more detailed and comprehensive accounts of specific concepts that appear only fragmentarily earlier in the Hippocratic corpus. These later sources are therefore utilized to illustrate particular medical concepts and their diachronic development.

II. THE MOTIF OF EROTIC WASTING

Chapter II focuses on the elegiac motif of bodily wasting by researching poetic terms and tropes (pallor, withering, emaciation, exhaustion, and the wasting away of the flesh).

1. Terms for Slenderness

Emblematic for the elegiac genre lexemes, such as *tenuis* and *gracilis*, correspond to a broad semantic range that links weakness simultaneously with delicacy and slenderness, shriveling and emaciation, frailty and debility, modesty and poverty, among others (OLD s.v.; TLL s.v. 2130 22–26). The terms *macer*, *macritudo*, and *macies* fall into a more distinct category of Latin concepts denoting weakness as an extreme condition (OLD s.v. *macies*). This term can refer to a type of bodily wasting in animals or humans that imparts an unhealthy appearance or results from debilitating illness (TLL s.v. *macies* 18, 19).

2. Hellenistic Models of the Motif

The motif of erotic wasting traces its origins to Hellenistic poetry, particularly in the works of Callimachus and Theocritus, where wasting away from desire emerges as a topos in the portrayal of love-induced suffering, often expressed through idioms such as 'skin and bones.' Such Hellenistic imagery encapsulates the effects of passion while reflecting Callimachean aesthetic principles of stylistic refinement, slenderness, and brevity.

3. Medical Correlations of the Antithesis Slenderness – Fatness

Our analysis of the medical aspects of the antithesis between slenderness and fatness connects its poetic representations to the theoretical framework of ancient physiology. In medical tradition, obesity is systematically associated with sterility and a lack of sensory perception. This is evident in the scientific prose of Aristotle (e.g., GA 725b25–32; HA 583a4–10), within Hippocratic contexts (e.g., Hipp., Aer. 21), and later in the encyclopedia of Pliny the Elder (e.g., Plin., HN XI.200, 212, 213). Conversely, the wasting body is largely associated with the literal consequences of sexual activity, which Hippocratic authors describe using terminology such as 'drying out,' 'weakening,' and 'emptying' (e.g., Hipp., Int. 13; Vict. II.58). This concept is later reinforced by Galen (e.g., San. Tu. III.11). In this section of the chapter, the poetic notion that love transforms its victim into an emaciated

being by draining their vital fluids (visible as early as in Alcaeus, Fr. 347) is reconsidered as a reflection of ancient physiological and medical theories.

4. Rhetorical Aspects of Slenderness

The ancient medical aspects of the antithesis slenderness – fatness intersect with the medically nuanced language of the Republican stylistic rhetorical debates, which is the focus of this section. One group of negative epithets within the debate between Atticism and Asianism revolves around notions of wasting and thinness (*ieiunitas, tenuitas, exilitas, macies*, etc.). Attic oratory, when carried to excess, was often described as 'emaciated,' 'feeble,' and 'frail' (e.g., Cic., Brut. 284; Tac., Dial. 21.1; Quint., IO II.4.9) and frequently such style was logically associated with an ascetic regimen of fasting and hunger (Cic., Brut. 285: *ieiunitatem*; Tac., Dial. 23.3: *illam...sanitatem non firmitate, sed ieiunio*). Moreover, evidence suggests that Attic orators such as Calvus actively adhered to rigorous dietary restrictions and sexual abstinence to preserve their masculine strength, which was deemed essential for the physical exertion and vocal performance required in declamation (Plin., NH XXXIV.166). Consequently, technical epithets within the dichotomy of slenderness and fatness can also be interpreted literally – as reflections of an ascetic oratorical body discipline. Drawing on these sources, as well as the medical aspects of oratorical regimen and diet (e.g., Quint., IO XI.3.119), we propose that slenderness was perceived by Atticists not merely as a stylistic ideal but also as a literal prerequisite for maintaining the health, phallic power, and potency of the declaiming orator, embodied in the training and use of the voice (*cura vocis*). Thus, it becomes evident that the rhetorical model of bodily fragility developed by elegists through figures of wasting represents not only a reworked version of Attic stylistic ideals (Keith 1999), but also a dramatization of the oratorical regimen itself.

5. *Pallor et macies* as Symptoms in Elegiac Poetry

Propertius and Ovid dramatize pallor and emaciation as direct physical consequences of frustrated passion, incorporating realistic situational motifs such as insomnia, *servitium amoris*, *comos* and *paraclausithyron*, which literally exhaust and weaken the bodies of lovers (Prop. I. 5. 19-22; IV. 3. 27-28; Ars I. 735, etc.). In this section, it is demonstrated that pallor and emaciation (*pallor et macies*) frequently appear as a standard pair of symptoms, indicating adherence to the literary convention of lovesickness (e.g., Prop. I.5.19–22;

IV.3.27–28; Ars I.723–730; Met. IX.535–536; Her. XI.27–30; Her. XXI.215–220). A similar configuration is found later in a medical context in the gynecological treatise of Soranus of Ephesus, who identifies the same symptoms as physiological manifestations from the effect of sexual intercourse (Sor., Gyn., I. 7. 30). The three adjectives qualifying the sickly bodies of lovers in Soranus conceptually and lexically overlap with key symptoms of love-induced suffering in elegy (*pallor*, *languor*, and *macies*). Thus, these symptoms function both as symbols of elegiac convention and as literal bodily markers and consequences of lust from a medical perspective. The latter interpretation is supported by our close reading of *Epistulae ex Ponto* I. 10, where Ovid revisits love sickness and its associated symptoms as objective complications arising from wine, feasting, and lust. This is confirmed also in a romantic context, where the motif of erotic wasting operates as a figure through which elegists hyperbolize phallic potency and endurance, embodied in sexually charged lexemes such as *artus*, *vires*, *nervi*, and *latus* (Prop. II. 22. 21-24; Ov., Am. II. 10). Beyond Propertius' treatment, Ovid in *Amores* II.10 subverts the broader medical and Lucretian concept of sex as a pathogenic factor (DRN IV.1121; Cels., Med. I. 1. 4).

6. Erotic lassitude

Secondly, the elegiac aspects of bodily exhaustion and lassitude are examined as categories shaped by the same motif. Here, we explore the interaction between the pathogenic projections of passion and elegiac tropes of exhaustion (concepts such as *languor* and epithets like *languidus*, *fessus*, and *lassus*). First, medical sources are introduced, based on which it is established that exhaustion is perceived as a type of complication in a medical context (κόπος). The latter can be triggered by various physical factors, among which the untimely use of sexual intercourse stands out as a *locus communis* in medical context (Arist., GA 725b; Hipp., Genit. I.1; Gal., San. Tu. III. 11; Aet., LM III. 6. 13). This concept provides a foundational medical model for interpreting the motif of the enfeebled body in elegiac poetry. Three elegiac aspects of lassitude are distinguished: obscene, pathological, and creative.

6.1 *Languor turpis*

Languor frequently describes a state of pleasurable yet painful exhaustion following sexual intercourse (Prop. I.13.15–16; Prop. II. 22a. 25-28; Am. II. 10. 35–36; Ars II. 692). Consequently, tired bodies in Roman love elegy often trigger suspicions of infidelity (e.g., Tib. I. 9. 55-56; Prop. I. 3. 37-38; Ov., Am. III. 7. 79-80).

6.2. Pathological *languor*

At the same time, *languor* emerges as a *locus communis* in three classical narratives of plague and pestilence in Roman poetry (Lucr., DRN VI; Verg., Georg. IV; Met. VII). Such poetical usages inspire Ovid in the second book of *Ars Amatoria* (II.315–336), where the poet incorporates the image of pathological exhaustion into the topos of the *puella*'s illness. The merging of obscene and pathological models of passion becomes evident in the ambiguous uses of *languor*. Our investigation of its elegiac implications reveals that figures of wasting and exhaustion frequently blur the line between the metaphors of illness and the literalism of lust.

6.3 Creative *languor*

On the other hand, the blurring of erotic and creative lassitude is emphasized through metaphors of somatic suffering (e.g., Ovid's impotence in *Amores* III. 7 and *renunciatio* in III. 11) and the gradual employment of the motif of *medicina amoris* toward the conclusions of elegiac collections.

7. Erotic Passion and Images of Bones

The motif of erotic wasting and emaciation unfolds in the elegiac representations of bones and skeletal structures as symbolic locations of morbid lust. This issue is central to the corresponding subsection, which also confirms the medico-physiological connection between elegiac imagery of bones, bone marrow, wasting, exhaustion, and the effect of erotic desire.

7.1 Myelogenetic theories

Ancient sources in physiology and medicine consistently associate bones and the spinal cord with the location of semen and concepts of reproduction. The scientific understanding of the brain's dominant role in vital bodily functions underscores the central and divine nature of the head and spinal cord as spermatogenetic organs. As early as the Hippocratic corpus, sexual intercourse is described as harmful and desiccating, directly affecting the spinal region and its corresponding brain structures (e.g., Hipp., Int. 13).

7.2 Bones and *medulla* in Roman Poetic Context

Elegiac poets establish *medulla* as an erotic locus, engaging both with literary convention and ancient theories concerning the physiological location of passion and seminal fluid (Rosenmeyer 1999). These correlations are evident in Propertius (II. 12; III. 16), where depictions of emaciation, pallor, bloodlessness, and desiccated *medulla* align with ancient

medical notions of sexual exhaustion and the belief that sexual activity could act as a pathogenic factor. In examining transformations of this image within Ovid's elegiac corpus, comparisons with Neoteric models reveal parallels between representations of passion as a voracious and consuming force in Catullus and Ovid. The interplay between poetry and physiology is further illustrated in Ovid's visualizations of bone marrow as a central site for perceiving female pleasure. It can be concluded that Ovid's tendency to feminize medulla likely reflects his broader inclination to explore the nature of female pleasure (cf. Met. III. 314-335).

8. *Tabes*

The analysis of the use of *tabes*, *tabescere*, and related verbs seeks to illustrate the synthesis between medical and poetic discourse in the context of erotic wasting. The term *tabes* denotes a specific form of 'bodily wasting,' 'decline caused by debilitating disease,' together with the corresponding wasting pathologies (OLD s.v. 1a, b). This semantic group encompasses both the degenerative and atrophic effects of diseases such as tuberculosis and the erotic wasting of the body. When compared to its Greek equivalent, the semantic core of τήκομαι, it becomes evident that the term occupies a prominent position both in the erotic metaphors (Hellenistic poetry, tragedy) and in ancient medical conceptions of the atrophic effects of diseases like tuberculosis, as well as the impact of sexual intercourse on the body, as described in the Hippocratic corpus. Intertextual comparisons reveal that in Ovid's work, the semantic core of *tabe-* encompasses the full spectrum of meanings associated with this abstract concept: simultaneously evoking ideas of pathological wasting, decomposition, and liquefaction. This is evident both in the employment of the wasting motif, which characterizes the somatic nature of love-induced suffering as a melting away of flesh, and in Ovid's exilic elegies, where *tabidus* imparts pathological aspects in the depictions of abstractions such as remorse, anxiety, and guilt.

III. FOOD, DIETETICS AND SLEEP IN ELEGIAC POETRY

Chapter III explores representations of vital processes such as eating and sleeping within the elegiac corpus, drawing parallels with ancient medical dietetics. The structure of the two sections is grounded in the causal model of ancient physiological thought and dietetics, which posits that sleep is a direct outcome of the process of eating.

1. Elegiac Etiquette and the Use of Food

In the first part of the chapter, we analyze the medical uses of wine and food in elegy, starting from the paradigmatic absence of gastronomic themes within the elegiac genre. This absence is explained by the lower hierarchical position of such topics within the ancient genre system (Gowers 1993: 22). Food, appetite, and gluttony are standard themes in Attic comedy, Roman comedy, and satire; however, the elevated status of elegy and lyric poetry focuses on drinking and sympotic themes, deliberately omitting food (Griffin 1985: 82).

2. Medical Uses of Wine and Food in Elegy

2.1 Wine and erotic therapy

This section examines the elegiac use of wine, highlighting its medical properties. Wine functions simultaneously as a stimulant and a soporific remedy against eros. At times, it is employed as an aphrodisiac; at others, as an anaphrodisiac and a *remedium amoris*. This dual role is evident in Propertius, who composes an entire elegy as an invocation of Bacchus in the role of healing divinity and *medicus amoris* (III.17). Our analysis on the role of wine in Ovidian didactic strategies shows that wine assumes the form of a pragmatically employed pharmacon – an aphrodisiac in the form of a drink, but also a widely accessible numbing medicine, functioning as an anaphrodisiac. Poetic variations on this motif align with ancient dietetic and pharmacological accounts of wine, where its ambivalent effects were also a subject of discussion.

2.2 Wine and therapy in exile

The second section analyzes the representation of wine in Ovid's exilic cycle, where traditional love-elegiac manifestations of the drink as an aphrodisiac are often concealed under its apparent role as a therapeutic agent.

3. Elegiac love and food

This section examines the role of food in Ovid's elegiac aesthetics and develops a comparative analysis of Ovid's dietary recommendations in *Ars Amatoria* and *Remedia Amoris* alongside ancient medical data on foods prescribed by the poet in his role as a healer.

3.1 The diet of the Ovidian parrot in *Amores* II. 6

As a programmatic illustration of the relationship between elegiac decorum and the concept of 'diet,' we turn to the brief details about the healthy lifestyle of Corinna's parrot in *Amores* II. 6. The sparse information about the bird's diet reflects the programmatic minimalism of the elegiac genre itself, embodying its Callimachean principles of refinement, simplicity, and restraint.

3.2 Elegiac and rhetorical diet

The unusual incorporation of medical discourse on food in Ovidian elegy engages with the influential reception of medical language and dietetic metaphors in ancient discussions of style. Concepts of style are infused with metaphors of nourishment in Roman rhetoric, which is discussed in this subsection.

3.3 Ovidian aphrodisiacs

Ovid's passages on the use of aphrodisiacs in *Ars Amatoria* II (415–423) and the insertion of a regimen with anaphrodisiacs at the concluding lines of *Remedia Amoris* (795–802) provide us with a rare opportunity to examine and compare the Ovidian details on food with their corresponding medicinal uses in ancient pharmacology and medicine. Our comparative analysis reveals overlaps in terms of lexical usage, arrangement, and context between the therapeutic diet of elegiac love and the therapeutic measures in hypersexual disorders described by a number of ancient medical authors. Among these, Celsus, who is chronologically closest to Ovid, offers a discussion of treatments for involuntary seminal discharge that aligns with the Ovidian dietetic *praecepta*. On the other hand, this dietetic discourse is shaped by the strategic transformation of love elegy into a didactic form. Thus medical details here reflect the poet's reformed position, extending his expertise as a *poeta doctus* to an ambition for medical precision. In doing so, Ovid creates an illusion of comprehensive medical knowledge, offering his 'patients' a parody of a restorative diet, reflecting the actual placement of dietary details in real medical literature – at the conclusion of prescriptions.

4. Elegiac Insomnia

4.1 Medical aspects of sleep and its deviations; 4.2 The role of sleep and food in the regimen of health

At the conclusion of Chapter III, an in-depth analysis is conducted on the antithesis between sleep and insomnia. As food and sleep are mutually interconnected in ancient physiology (Hipp., Vict. II.60; Arist., De somn. III, 456b), details regarding these two processes shape the clinical profile of the patient in ancient medical thought (Thumiger 2017: 174–184). This section demonstrates how representations of food and sleep frequently appear as a pair within Ovid's works.

4.3 Literary models of the insomnia motif

Tracing the literary origins of insomnia, we observe that the elegiac reception of the motif merges notions of intellectual wakefulness from the Hellenistic tradition (ἀγρυπνία) with erotic themes inspired by Neoteric poetry (Catullus 50). Callimachus's epigram (Callim., AP. IX.507), framed as a literary critique of Aratus's *Phaenomena*, exerted considerable influence on Roman poets from the 1st century BCE onward. Many of these poets engaged with and translated Aratus, subsequently elaborating on his concept of poetic insomnia, as evidenced in a fragment by Cinna (Cinna fr. 11) and later in Lucretius's prologue (Lucr., DRN I.140–145). From this point, wakefulness takes on dual significance, representing both the effects of love and the intellectual effort of the poet.

4.4 Elegy – a song of wakefulness, *carmen vigilatum*

To elucidate the characteristic blurring of boundaries between the portrayal of wakeful lover and the wakeful poet, this subsection explores the adaptation of the motif of nocturnal labor (*lucubratio*) within the elegiac context and Ovid's extension of this convention by aligning elegy with the tradition of wakeful compositions (*carmen vigilatum*). Parallels between insomnia and care emerge in literary representations of intellectual wakefulness (*labor et vigilia*) in Hellenistic poetry (Callim., AP. IX. 507), which subsequently influence elegiac poetry as well as ancient medical literature, where insomnia and anxiety are regarded as concomitant factors contributing to bodily wasting (Cels., Med., Prooem. 5-7; I. 3.15-16). These parallels shed light on why Propertius and Ovid often draw indirect links between the motif of erotic insomnia and that of their physical emaciation.

4. 5 Erotic insomnia and fevers

In this subsection, we establish conceptual links between the elegiac motif of insomnia and representations of passion through allusions to heat and fever. Correlations between insomnia and feverish states are observed both in elegiac imagery (Prop. III. 7; Ov., Am. I. 2; Tr. IV. 3) and in medical literature, from the Hippocratic corpus (e.g., Coac. 487) to Galen and beyond (Mattern 2008: 135–136).

4. 6 Insomnia and loss of appetite

Insomnia and loss of appetite frequently emerge as a pair of elegiac negations of essential vital processes. A direct reflection of the physiological connection between the two signs is found in the clinical profiles of certain Ovidian characters, particularly within the exilic context (Her. XI. 28-29; Tr. III. 8. 27-28; Pont. I. 10. 20-23).

4. 7 The therapeutic aspects of sleep

Insomnia is presented as both a pathological symptom and a medical motif, juxtaposed with the therapeutic aspects of sleep. At the conclusion of the chapter, this contrast is illustrated through an analysis of the epic representations of the universal and healthy characteristics of sleep in *Metamorphoses*, where images of rest serve as antitheses to elegiac insomnia. Stripped of erotic connotations, sleep also concludes the list of therapeutic measures in *Remedia Amoris*. Depicted as leisurely repose, sleep in this context reclaims its universal characteristics and restorative functions. Ovid underscores this through the allegorical portrayal of sleep-induced healing, embodied in the personification of *Lethaeus Amor*.

IV. EROTIC PASSION, APPETITE AND SATIETY

Chapter IV explores the interplay between elegiac passion and appetite through the lens of the motif of love sickness. The chapter reconsiders the narratology of elegiac passion as a network of metaphors for digestive reactions, framing the dynamics of love as a somatically experienced phenomenon.

1. Elegiac anorexia

1.1 Anorexia and lovesickness

The first part of the chapter examines the motif of erotic loss of appetite and its gradual transformation into a somatics of disgust. Literary models of pathological reactions to food and anorexic behavior are evident in the portrayal of the lovesick Phaedra in *Hippolytus* (Eur., *Hipp.* 274-277), a depiction that gradually becomes a leitmotif in the literary convention for representing frustrated passion (Plut., *Demetr.* 38.2). The motif logically corresponds to the conceptualization of desire as a feverish state, since anorexia is associated with fevers in medical literature (e.g., Cels., *Med.* II. 3. 3, II. 4. 4, II. 8. 4). Lucretius establishes a poetic model for the conceptual fusion of images of appetite, thirst, and lust in Roman literature (*DRN* IV. 858-876), which Ovid develops with particular distinction for the didactic purposes of *Remedia Amoris*. Thus imagery of hunger and thirst serves to delineate Ovid's clinical profile of frustrated lovers.

1.2 Anorexia and sexual deviations

In comparison with ancient medical literature, a recurring blurring of boundaries between appetite for food and sexual intercourse becomes apparent. This interplay is particularly evident in discussions of sexual disorders such as *satyriasis* (Aret., *SA.* II.12; Cael., *Aur.*, *CP.* III.18). Ancient medical theory frequently draws analogies between food and sex, as the physiological framework of antiquity regarded seminal fluid as a residual product of the digestive process. Accordingly, several medical authors, including Rufus, Galen, and Caelius Aurelianus, identify sexual frustration and untimely abstinence as significant factors contributing to anorexic behavior and dyspepsia (Gal., *Loc. Aff.* VI.5).

1.3 Erotic anorexia and the topos 'amor pro cibo'

The standard elegiac depiction of erotic anorexia functions as a motif that alludes to representations of the deviant behavior of *amatores* in comedy. In Plautine drama, love is explicitly equated with food, giving rise to playful metaphors that portray romantic desire as a

substitute for nourishment (*amor pro cibo*) and loss of appetite as a symptom of love sickness (e.g., Plaut., *Merc.* 744-745). Within this framework, the bodily manifestations of appetite in elegiac poetry are paradoxically transferred onto the unnatural fixation and 'hunger' of the lover for the object of their affection, which becomes a fundamental substitute for food.

1. 4 Banquette, food and sexual appetite

Thus elegiac banquets paradoxically serve as a display of frustrated desire, a quintessential torment for the *exclusus amator*, whose *puella* becomes both the central focus of the feast and the object of his hunger. This inverted relationship between sexual drive and appetite is particularly evident in the behavior of Paris in *Heroides* XVI (215-234), which is a subject of close reading in this section. Closely associated with the motif of erotic anorexia and voracious passion is the elegiac emaciation. The two motifs often operate in synergy, expressed through technical terms suggestive of digestive purgation in traditional representations of wasting and weight loss (*Ov.*, *Am.* I. 6. 3-6; *Her.* XI. 27-28; *Pont.* I. 10).

2. From Anorexia to Satiety and Disgust

The second part of Chapter IV focuses on the interplay between erotic experience and appetite through the lens of love's therapeutic treatment, whose purpose is to induce disgust.

2. 1 Satiety and gastric aversion

This section traces how Ovid depicts the transformation and decline of passion into a form of aversion within the chronology of elegiac affair. The lovers' loss of appetite gradually evolves into a sense of satiety. Ovid emphasizes this progression through the systematic use of digestive metaphors and medical allusions to gastric irritation, which are unconventional for the elegiac discourse. A pivotal moment in the transition between elegiac sweetness and therapeutic bitterness, between sweet illness and bitter medicine, is marked by the analogy between accessible love and an overdose of *dulcis esca* in *Amores* II.19. The presence of this image at the very center of the collection of love elegies symbolically marks the point of creative satiety as a digestive reaction.

2. 2 Elegiac sweetness – *Dulcis cibus et elegia dulcis*

Subsequently, we analyze how this new satirical representation of love functions as a polyvalent allusion to the medical and rhetorical dimensions of the sweetness–bitterness dichotomy. Additionally, we demonstrate how the imagery of sweet food engages with Ovid's didactic conception of passion as a carefully calibrated blend of unhealthy sweetness and

restorative bitterness. By drawing comparisons with ancient medical, rhetorical, and generic notions of *dulcedo* and the sensory effects of sweetness, we illustrate that the concept of balanced taste occupies a pivotal role in Ovid's formula for healthy love.

2. 3 Elegiac bitterness – *Elegia dulcis et medicina amara*

In the following subsection, we focus on the poetic images of bitterness within the elegiac cycle. Here, we draw parallels with the properties of bitter foods and the concept of 'bitterness' in ancient scientific thought (Totelin 2018: 60–71) in order to demonstrate how the motif of *remedium amoris* is accompanied by imagery of medicinal bitterness. The incorporation of Lucretius's motif of bitter medicine into elegy underscores the transition of love to the restorative phase, where the obsessive 'illness' must undergo various methods of evacuation and radical treatments.

2. 4 Elegiac therapies – between abstinence and satiety

The analysis of Ovidian erotic therapy reveals that, in *Remedia Amoris*, Ovid constructs a complex and eclectic system of medical allusions to treatments wavering between therapeutic abstinence and satiety. The imposition of curative hunger and thirst establishes intertextual connections with the projections of elegiac love and Lucretian allegories of insatiable passion, as well as intratextual links to elegiac depictions of lovers as hungry and thirsty sufferers. Additionally, this imagery engages with the notion that love manifests as a feverish state and is consequently treated as an infectious fever, a parallel evident in Celsus. This perspective further aligns with Ovid's analogies between love and epidemic contagion.

2. 5 Therapeutic disgust – *fastidium amoris*

Focusing further on the aesthetic dimensions of aversion (Miller 1997: 119; Korsmeyer 2011: 50), we examine Ovid's prescriptions for therapeutic disgust – a synthesis of psychological healing practices and the cultivation of somatic irritation. The elimination of the 'pathogen of love' prompts the *praeceptor amoris* to seek bodily projections of disgust. In alignment with this newly established didactic approach to 'sowing aversion,' inspired by Lucretian thought and language, its psychosomatic effect is introduced through the use of an unusually prosaic and medically nuanced verb such as *inacesco* (Rem. 307), which again is suggestive of gastric irritation.

2. 6 Disgust and evacuation – *Copia tollat amorem*

At the conclusion of the chapter, we observe how the Ovidian aversive practice for eliminating passion contradicts the elegiac and Lucretian motifs of thirst, advocating that love can actually be cured through acts of excessive consumption and satiety. Ovid's depiction of burning thirst in *Remedia Amoris* (353) reinterprets the elegiac motif of thirst as an allegory for insatiable sexual desire (e.g., Prop. II.17) and engages intensely with Lucretian portrayals of thirsty lovers (DRN IV) and the behavior of those afflicted by plague (DRN VI. 1169-76). When compared with medical literature, we identify both overlaps and discrepancies between the clinical profiles of individuals suffering from sexual disorders and the representations in Lucretius and Ovid. The inability to control bodily fluids, characteristic of Lucretian imagery and those afflicted by *satyriasis* in medical texts, contrasts sharply with Ovid's proposed self-therapy through controlled evacuation of fluids and passion.

Our observations lead to the conclusion that Ovid's therapeutic approach aligns with the broader elegiac conception of love as an emotion mediated through the senses, as well as with the overarching argument of this chapter: that passion transitions from a phase of dissatisfaction and loss of appetite to one of ultimate fulfillment and satiety, experienced as gastric aversion. This is confirmed at the end of the chapter, where Ovid vividly portrays a woman's toilette and feminine objects in *Remedia Amoris* (351–356) as a source of disgust. The poet incorporates unusually prosaic and medically nuanced terms such as *nausea* and *stomachus*, merging cosmetic discourse with medical language. By loading his language with imagery of mixed, toxic, greasy, liquid, warm, and foul-smelling substances, Ovid aims to provoke literal *nausea*. The abundance of such images and the overarching context of revulsion at the end of this passage brings back the fundamental idea of the entire poem: Ovid as a healer who cures by offering purgative and cleansing *medicamina*.

V. GYNECOLOGICAL MOTIFS IN ELEGIAC POETRY: PREGNANCY, ABORTION, AND CHILDBIRTH

Chapter V shifts the focus to gynecological themes in elegiac poetry, aiming to provide a feminine perspective on the pathology and physiology of passion. The first section provides an overview of the place of pregnancy and childbirth within elegiac aesthetics and the motifs associated with these topics.

1. Childbirth and Labor Pains – An Epic Matrix

From a generic perspective, pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood emerge as themes predominantly associated with epic and tragedy, functioning as anti-elegiac components. Topics such as childbirth and motherhood occupy a significant role in the poetics and narratology of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where the birthing process is portrayed as a feminine counterpart to epic heroism (Loraux 1995: 29). The absence of these themes from love-elegiac poetry constitutes a form of negation of the feminine epic militia embedded in the metaphors of childbirth. Elegy, by contrast, focuses on *militia amoris* rather than *militia laboris*. In their love elegies, Propertius and Ovid define and narrow their readership (Prop. I. 7. 13; cf. Ov., Am. II. 1.5-6). Ovid further restricts his female audience to categories such as *virgo* and *puella*, thereby excluding respectable mothers – represented by matrons – from his seductive discourse (e.g., Ars I. 31-34).

2. Childbirth, Male Pregnancy, and Elegiac Labor

Through an analysis of the contextual uses of lexemes such as *labor*, it becomes evident that, rather than referring to childbirth, the term signifies the arduous creative labor of poets, metaphorically framed as birth pangs. The pervasive presence of this conceptual metaphor in the works of Propertius and Ovid (e.g., Prop. IV. 1; Ov., Tr. I. 1; I. 7; III. 1. 57; Pont. I. 1.21-22; IV. 5. 29) illustrates how poets appropriate female roles to assert claims of authorship, fatherhood, and motherhood over their literary creations (Leitao 2012: 143). Instead of representing childbirth or labor pains, terms such as *labor* encapsulate the effort and diligence devoted to pursuing and achieving erotic aims. Thus in elegiac symbolism, childbirth and motherhood are transformed from physical/birthing labor and *πόνοϋς* into poetic pregnancy. To establish their authority over the creative process and its product, poets assume

traditionally female roles, adopting the position of mothers. In contrast to the poets, elegiac *puellae* never inhabit these inherently female roles. They remain confined within the archetype of the virgin or seductress, and their hypothetical pregnancy, childbirth, or motherhood constitutes a transgression beyond the established erotic framework of elegy.

3. Childbirth and pregnancy – female elegiac perspective

Through a comparison with gynecological treatises from the Hippocratic corpus and Soranus's writings, in this section we observe that elegiac poetry foregrounds female sexual pleasure, stripping it of medical connotations related to fertility and reproduction. This perspective overturns traditional medical concepts of sex, pregnancy, and childbirth as natural mechanisms for treating gynecological ailments (Hipp., Mul. I.1; Hipp., Virg.; Arthur-Katz 1989: 171). Such a framework partially excludes the theme of female sexual appetite and enjoyment from the broader medical discourse. In contrast, elegiac poets idealize female sexual desire, stripping it entirely from associations with fertility and reproduction. For women in elegy, the goal of passion is not pregnancy or childbirth but the attainment of perfect sexual pleasure (e.g., Prop. II.25.21; Ars II.727–728). Thus, rather than serving as a method of healing, pregnancy and childbirth in Augustan elegy are reimagined as pathological conditions or afflictions. Since the female body and its fragments metaphorically embody the elegant and refined stylistics of the genre, pregnancy in turn is condemned through programmatic anti-elegiac concepts that evoke anti-Callimachean aesthetics, epic, and tragedy – such as those within the semantic core of *tum-*, *turgidus*, and *pondus*. Swelling pregnancy stands in opposition to the flat stomach and taut body of Corinna, the epitome of elegiac perfection in *Amores* I. 5 (21: *planus venter*). Corinna and her *membra* represent the ideal elegiac style; thus, pregnancy is perceived as disfiguring not only the female form but also the stylistic integrity of elegy itself. In Book III of *Ars Amatoria*, for instance, childbirth is reinterpreted as an additional factor contributing to aging. This notion is reinforced by Ovid's innovative analogy between childbirth and harvest (Ars III. 81-82: *partus faciunt breviora iuventae / tempora: continua messe senescit ager*), which parallels Soranus's metaphor linking the degradation of women to that of land in his advice on proper lactation (Sor., Gyn. II. 18).

4. Gynecological Motifs: Pregnancy, Abortion, and Childbirth in Canace's Letter to Macareus – An Analysis of *Heroides* XI

The second part of this chapter offers a detailed exploration of the elegiac representations of pregnancy, abortion, and childbirth in *Heroides XI*, drawing comparisons with scientific thought in the field of gynecology. Building on the general observations from the first part of Chapter V, this section provides an in-depth analysis of *Heroides XI*. Given its density of gynecological themes, the elegy offers a unique opportunity to explore intersections between elegiac representations of Canace's pregnancy, abortion, and childbirth and ancient medical perspectives on these processes.

4.1 *Canace amans* – elegiac portrait, 4.2 *Morbus amatorius* and symptoms of love

In her depiction of love-induced suffering, Canace portrays herself as an inexperienced and emotionally disoriented young woman who, at the same time, articulates her symptoms in accordance with literary conventions and the Ovidian catalog of love signs in Book I of *Ars Amatoria* (729-735). *Indocta Canace* ultimately and ironically reveals herself as *docta* within the literary portrayal of amorous suffering.

4.3 Illness of Canace and the illness of Phaedra – a comparison, 4.4 Symptoms of love – Phaedra and Canace

By drawing literary comparisons, this section juxtaposes the character of Canace with the Euripidean and Ovidian Phaedra (*Heroides IV*). The comparison highlights how a series of elements – symptomatology, behavior, and situational motifs such as the interventions of nurses – intertextually link the condition of Ovidian Canace to the illness of Phaedra in *Hippolytus*. Simultaneously, Ovid's portrayal of Phaedra serves as her elegiac counterpart, offering a nuanced reimagining of her character within the framework of love elegy.

4.5 *Canace gravida* – the portrait of the pregnant Canace

Through a comparative analysis of gynecological accounts in Aristotle, Soranus, and Pliny the Elder, we reveal how Ovid's portrayal of the suffering Canace integrates conventional signs of love with symptoms of early pregnancy, thereby crafting an innovative elegiac portrait of a lover-sick-pregnant *puella*.

4.6 Canace's Abortion

Focusing on the depiction of the abortion, we analyze this episode in comparison with Ovid's diptych on Corinna's abortion in *Amores II.13* and *II. 14*. Furthermore, we conclude that, unlike the two elegies, where abortion is framed through striking military metaphors and heavily hyperbolized imagery, in *Heroides XI*, Ovid portrays the actions of the nurse using

traditional verbs for abortive acts commonly found in technical and medical literature, including in references to the Hippocratic Oath. Moreover, we uncover parallels between the personified depiction of the fetus as a combative warrior and Hippocratic notions of the fetus as an active entity within the womb. This intertextual perspective underscores how Ovid incorporates medical terminology into his poetic narrative while simultaneously revising conventional elegiac motifs.

4.7 *Canace parturiens* – the childbirth of Canace

Turning to the episode of Canace's childbirth, we observe that, although introduced periphrastically, Ovid's phrases describing gestational periods align with accounts found in scientific literature. In our close reading of the scene depicting Canace's difficult labor, we observe how Ovid imbues the episode with psychological depth, stripping it of divine and epic connotations. Instead, he introduces the nurse and the personifications of Canace's tragic guilt and fears as the antagonists. By placing this crisis within the context of Soranus's discussions on difficult childbirth, we establish that a series of somatic and psychological characteristics align Canace with the clinical profile of women suffering from dystocia. Based on these observations and comparisons, we conclude that our analysis of *Heroides* XI foregrounds the presence of previously unexplored gynecological concepts in the early works of Ovidian oeuvre.

4.8. Canace between Elegy and Tragedy

As noted in some prominent studies, tragedy stands as the primary genre in ancient literature that addresses gynecological themes (e. g. Hall 2006). It can be assumed that the Ovidian preference for gynecological detail in this elegy arises from the poet's deliberate strategy to experiment with an anti-elegiac and inherently tragic theme such as childbirth. The fusion of motifs related to lovesickness with gynecological realism, alongside Canace's dual identity as an elegiac *puella* and a tragic mother, mark a pivotal moment in Ovid's exploration of a transition from elegiac to tragic tonalities in his early work. This duality partially reflects his hesitation in the programmatic *Amores* III. 1, where Ovid is torn between the lightness of elegy and the gravitas of tragedy.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE RESEARCH:

1. The study develops an interdisciplinary approach to a philological topic, combining philological analysis of ancient literary texts with conceptual comparisons drawn from ancient philosophical, scientific, and medical literature.
2. A central corpus of elegiac passages and excerpts, along with specific concepts, junctures, and entire poems containing medical allusions, is presented, making them amenable to medical interpretation.
3. The study proposes new methodological models for analyzing medical metaphors in Augustan elegy.
4. Through the aforementioned methodological approaches, specific motifs are identified and selected, revealing significant interactions among them, such as lovesickness-fever-insomnia
5. The dissertation presents a classified analysis of elegiac constructs that, to this date, have not been systematically examined as motifs. It is possible that some of these, such as the aforementioned images of appetite in Ovid and the network of associated digestive reactions, have not yet been identified as motifs.
6. The study revisits classical perspectives in the elegiac scholarship, with a particular focus on Ovidian elegy, which has traditionally avoided medical interpretations of themes and motifs – including ideas, images, and tropes – that are directly or indirectly connected to the field of ancient medicine.
7. Through a systematic analysis of selected motifs, previously unexplored metaphors and technical language are revealed within a well-known corpus of texts. This approach enriches the reading and interpretation of medical imagery in elegiac poetry, which has occasionally been addressed in contemporary commentaries.
8. The study highlights the position of the three authors not only as poets of desire in an ontological sense but also in a literal one, since direct intersections are identified between erotic metaphors and the nosology of sexual act in ancient medical discourse.
9. The study systematically uncovers specific moments of reception within the elegiac aesthetics of illness, inherited from Lucretius's links between love and disease, *eros* and *nosos*.
10. The study seeks to situate itself within contemporary trends in critical scholarship on Roman literature, which increasingly emphasize problems of corporeality, emotions, and pathology.

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SOME PUBLICATIONS ON THE TOPIC OF THE THESIS:

1. Петрова, М. „Трансформации на метафората за болестта в Овидий“ – В: Арнаудов сборник, Том 9, ред. Русев, Р., Пометкова, Я., Недкова, Душкова, М., и др. , Русе, 2017 г., с. 288 – 293. Издател: Лени–Ан. ISBN: 978-619-7058-49-9.
2. Петрова, М. „Дихотомията тяло – душа в *Tristia* и *Epistulae ex Ponto*“ – В: Сборник с научни трудове от международната конференция “On the soul”, ред. Гушева, Ј., Јасмина Поповска, Ј., Кочовска-Стевовиќ, С. и др., Скопие, Македонија, 2018 публикација в електронен носител, с. 265 – 273.
3. Петрова, М. „Вода и зараза в *Tristia* и *Epistulae ex Ponto*“ – В: *Studia Classica Serdicensia*, Том 7, Софийски универзитет „Св. Климент Охридски“. (под печат?).
4. Petrova, M. “Single as a lena – the depiction of procuresses in Roman Augustan literature”, глава от монографија – In: “[The Single Life in the Roman and Later Roman World.](#)” Huebner, S. R, Laes, C., eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019, 165 – 178.
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5. Петрова, М. „*Color bonus* vs. *color malus* в античната медицинска мисъл и поетическа метафорика“ – В: Сборник с доклади от Десета международна конференция: Език, наука, комуникации и спорт, Медицински университет "Проф. д-р П. Стоянов" – Варна, ред. И. Дойкова, А. Добрева, С. Ставрева, Н. Амуджиева, издателство: Медицински университет "Проф. д-р П. Стоянов" – Варна, 2023, с. 453–462, ISSN (online): 978-619-221-452-4, ISBN: 978-619-221-462-3.

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1. Conference talk: “Single as a lena – the depiction of procuresses in Roman Augustan literature”, Международна научна конференция “Singles and the Single Life in the Roman and Later Roman World”, 28 – 30 май 2015 г., Рим, Белгийска академия. [постер](#)
2. Conference talk: „Трансформации на метафората за болестта в Овидий“, [Девети Арнаудови четения](#), Русенски универзитет, 23-24 октомври 2015 г.
3. Conference talk: „Дихотомията тяло – душа в *Tristia* и *Epistulae ex Ponto*“, Международна конференция “On the soul”, 01 – 03. 06. 2016 г. Скопие, Македонија.

4. Conference talk: „Вода и зараза в *Tristia* и *Epistulae ex Ponto*“, [Научна конференция на катедра „Класическа филология“](#), организирана във връзка с 2000 г. от смъртта на Овидий [“Per omnia saecula vivam”](#), Софийски университет, 23–24 ноември 2017 г.
 5. Conference talk: „Аспекти на фригидното и фригидността в *Tristia* и *Epistulae ex Ponto*“, [Трети годишни четения на АРУКО](#), 13–14. декември 2019 г., СУ „Св. Климент Охридски“.
 6. Conference talk: „*Color bonus* vs. *color malus* в античната медицинска мисъл и поетическа метафорика“, [Десета юбилейна международна научна конференция „Език, наука, комуникации и спорт – 60 години академично образование“](#), 16 – 17 юни 2023 г., МУ – Варна.
 7. Conference talk: “Insomniac scholars and melancholic patients”, Международна научна конференция Философия на медицината: подходи и перспективи, БАН 27-27 март 2024 г.
1. Attendance in presence: международна научна конференция, посветена на 2000 г. от смъртта на Овидий [„Ovid: Death and Transfiguration“](#), 9-11 март 2017 г., American Academy in Rome, Sapienza Università di Roma.
 2. Attendance in presence: международна научна конференция, [“Pathology of Love in Greek and Roman Art and Literature”](#), 9–10 юни 2018 г., University of Oxford, Ioannou Centre for Classical and Byzantine Studies, University of Oxford (Oxford, England).
 3. Online attendance: международна конференция [“Body and Medicine in Latin Poetry”](#) Conference, Durham University (Online Conference), 17-18 септември 2020 г. [Постер](#)
 4. Online attendance: международна конференция [“Body, Mind and Medicine: Forms of Mental Illness and their Consequences in the Ancient World and Today”](#), Durham University, 28–29 октомври 2022 г.
 5. Online attendance: международна конференция (хибриден формат) [“Ovidian poetry and its afterlife: new approaches and perspectives”](#), Université de Liège – University of Glasgow, 29–30 март 2023г. [постер](#)
 6. Online attendance: международна конференция (хибриден формат) [“Comparative Guts”](#), Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, 7-9 юни 2023 г.
 7. Participation in a seminar: “Медицината наука и/или изкуство” 16.11.2023 г. организиран от [проблемна група по философия и социология на медицината](#), ИФС, БАН по проект: „Съвременни проблеми и дискусии във философия и социология на медицината“.

8. Online attendance: международна конференция (онлайн формат) “Aesthetics of Illness in Antiquity”, 9-11 февруари 2024 г.