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Jan Kochanowski's Amorous *Foricoenia*.

Ovidian Models

Part 1: The *topoi* in the little *Ars Amatoria**

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to find classical references in Jan Kochanowski's amorous *foricoenia*, as yet not systematically studied. Scholars have focused on the meaning of the title *Foricoenia* (Szatyńska-Siemion) or on the ancient references (e.g. the presence of Terence in some epigrams or the translations from Greek, studied by Głombiowska), but have not studied the amorous epigrams as a whole.

At the beginning the author indicates some *topoi* that are typical of elegiac poetry (*recusatio* or the heroes treated like elegiac lovers). Firstly, the author shows that Kochanowski uses elegiac material and *topoi* in his epigrams, presenting to the reader a little epigrammatic collection *Ars Amatoria*, based on Ovid's model. Secondly, he argues that even when Kochanowski translates epigrams from Greek, he chooses those that are more appropriate to his literary project, i.e. the "elegization" of the epigrams. Conclusions: Kochanowski "elegizes" his epigrams, first of all presenting

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a small *Ars Amatoria*, and then writing his texts according to the elegiac tradition, both in terms of *topoi* and textual imitations.

Having singled them out, I propose an interpretation of Kochanowski's choices: I argue that he engages in a long-distance dialogue with Ovid's *Ars amatoria* and, in more general terms, with the whole ancient amorous-elegiac tradition, which he sometimes denies. I bring forward a few examples, starting from a comparison between Kochanowski's epigram XVI and Ovid's *Remedia amoris* 501–502 and *Ars amatoria* I 45–48 (i.e. the hunter caught in his own nets). Epigram V, *In paellas venetas*, introduces a particular instance of Ulysses described as amorous, a lover rather than an epic hero, patterned exactly after the Ovid's model of this character. Furthermore, writing epigram LXIX to his friend Torquato, Kochanowski assures him he can make people fall ill with love, as well as cure his friend of such a "disease;" similarly, Ovid teaches how to make people fall in love (*Ars amatoria*) and how to recover from love (*Remedia amoris*).

Keywords: Polish neo-Latin poetry, Renaissance poetry, Jan Kochanowski, *Foricoenia*, Ovid, elegy, love poetry, epigrams

In this paper I would like to discuss the probably not immediately apparent impact of the Roman elegiac writers (most of all Ovid) on Latin erotic epigrams of Jan Kochanowski. Although it is unthinkable to dismiss the influence of Greek epigrams on the cycle of *Foricoenia*, those of them that are dedicated to the subject of love owe most to Latin elegies and chiefly to Ovid, the "teacher of love" (*magister amoris*). I wish to analyse several of the Ovidian models and manners of imitation employed by Kochanowski.

1. The topics of *recusatio*

Twenty of Kochanowski's epigrams are dedicated to love. These poems (IV, V, VIII, XIV, XVI, XIX, XXI, XXII, XXIV, XXV, XXVIII, XXXI, L, LVIII, LX, LXV, LIX, LXXI, LXVII, CV) are grouped between numbers IV and XXXI, as well as L and CV. Bearing in mind the objectives of this study, I focus solely on those epigrams that are

clearly influenced by Ovid. I also mention other works that aid the explanation of questions that are of interest here.

May epigram IV, *De Naeaera*—a translation of Anacreontic¹ 26 (A) 16,² which is provided next to the Latin text—be the introduction to this study.

Σὺ μὲν λέγεις τὰ Θήβης,
δ' αὖ Φρυγῶν αὐτὰς Ἐγὼ δ' ἐμά κάλω σεις. Οὐχ ἵππος ὤλεσέ με, Ὅυ
πεζὸς οὐχ ἰνῆες, Στρατὸς δὲ καινὸς ἄλλος, Ἄπ' ὀμμάτων βαλῶν με.

[You sing the history of Thebes,
And you—the cries of Phrygians,
I—my own doom.
It was not my horse that caused my loss,
Nor an infantryman, nor ships,
But an army that is different, new,
Which can shoot with its eyes.]³

IV. *De Naeaera*

Thebana bella tu quidem
Cantas et ille Troica,
Ego mea infortunia.
Me non eques, me non pedes
Aut classis ulla perdidit,
Sed sideribus certantia
Dulcis Naeaerae lumina.

¹ On the relation between *foric.* IV and the Anacreontic, see K. Bronikowski, *O Foricoeniach Jana Kochanowskiego*, Kraków 1888, p. 38; J. Czerniatowicz, *Recepcja poezji greckiej w Polsce w XVI–XVII wieku*, Wrocław 1966, p. 75; Z. Głombiowska, *Łacińska i polska muza Jana Kochanowskiego*, Warszawa 1988, pp. 157–158, 161–162; S. Łempicki, “*Foricoenia* Jana Kochanowskiego,” *Pamiętnik Literacki* 1 (1930), pp. 232–248, a reprint entitled “Fraszki łacińskie Jana z Czarnolasu,” in: S. Łempicki, *Renesans i humanizm w Polsce. Materiały do studiów*, Kraków 1952, pp. 159–179; K. Stawecka, “O *Foricoeniach* Jana Kochanowskiego,” *Roczniki Humanistyczne* 27 (1979), pp. 93–106.

² According to the following edition: *Poetae lyrici Graeci*, quartis curis recens. Th. Bergk, pars 3: *Poetaemelici*, Lipsiae 1914.

³ Translated by Kaja Szymańska.

[IV. On Neaera

You sing the Theban war, and he
sings the war of Troy—
I only sing my own misfortunes.
I was not defeated by cavalry or infantry,
or by any fleet,
but by the eyes of sweet Neaera
that compete with stars.]

Detailed studies of this Latin reinterpretation of the Anacreontic written by Kochanowski have been published by Zofia Głombiowska.⁴ Despite the fact that there are no specific references to Latin poetry in this epigram, it implements the topos of *recusatio*, characteristic of elegies, in the form of a refusal to write epics.⁵ Many Latin *similia*, however, may be found in epigram V:

V. In puellas venetas

Quotquot in Adriacis fuerant Nereides undis,
Vel potius toto quotquot in Oceano,
Omnes deduxit Venetam Neptunus in urbem,
Conspicitur vasto nulla puella mari.
Hic saga est Circe, miserorum pestis amantum,
Hic Siren nautis insidiosa canit.
Ut loto abstineas, ut noxia pharmaca vites
Ceraque auriculas cautus ut usque linas,
Immo absurdescas, oculis nisi captus, Ulysse, es,
Captus es et forma moly tuum illud hebet.

[V. On Venetian Girls

As many Nereids there were in the waves of the Atlantic, or rather as numerous they were in the whole Ocean, Neptune brought all of them to Venice, so you cannot find even one girl in the whole sea.
The magic Kirke is here, the ruin of all the unfortunate lovers, as well as the Siren, who deceives sailors with her songs.

⁴ Z. Głombiowska, *Łacińska i polska...*, pp. 157–158.

⁵ I will return to this poem in the recapitulation of epigram XXVIII, *De Neaera*.

And even if you did not eat lotus, avoided lethal poisons, cautiously closed your ears with wax, or even went deaf—it is enough that your sight is not impaired, Ulysses, and you will not escape harm. And no magic herbs will help you.]

Biliński⁶ argues that this epigram is inspired by the Latin distich of Klemens Janicki *De Urbe Venetiarum*:

Si tot in hoc videas prostantes urbe puellas ex isto – dices – est Venus orta mari.

[XLIV On the city of Venice

When you see all these girls

Selling love: “Oh, Venus was born in this sea!” you will say.],⁷

as well as by two verses of a German poet Georgius Fabricius:

Adriaticae blandae sunt vultu et voce puellae His si credideris, postea nullus eris.

[The girls living by the shore of the Adriatic sea seduce with their voices and faces, If you let them seduce you, you will shortly be no one.]

In Kochanowski's poetry the *puellae* were hyperbolically compared to Nereids. No longer do these “sea goddesses” live in the sea, but *hic*, here in Venice, with Kirke described as the ruin of unfortunate lovers (*miserorum pestis amantum*), and the Siren, who “deceives sailors with her songs” (*insidiosa nauta canit*). The last six verses include a clear allusion to Ulysses; the only way to avoid being seduced by the Siren's singing is to deprive oneself of sight.

The eroticism present in this poem is very different from what we could expect judging by the title; it rather sheds playful light on

⁶ B. Biliński, “Riflessi italiani nelle poesie di Jan Kochanowski – Giovanni Cochanoio,” in: *Jan Kochanowski / Johannes Cochanoivus poeta rinascimentale polacco, 1530–1584. Nel 450–mo anniversario della morte*, Roma 1980, pp. 46–47.

⁷ Translated by Kaja Szymańska.

epic characters and focusses on the following hyperbole: girls become Nereids, the Adriatic sea becomes an ocean, Kirke and the Siren live in Venice, a friend (let us remember Fabricius' verses) becomes Ulysses. Summarizing, the poem is a continuation of the discourse commenced in *De Neaera*. There, we deal with a refusal (*recusatio*) to use epic in favour of eroticism. In the poem *In puellas venetas*, a poetic game is demonstrated, in which the epic convention becomes the object of a scholarly, yet jocular erotic reinterpretation. An episode like this one, featuring Homeric sirens, which is a general allusion to *Odyssey*, is told in a joyful manner, indulgently, with an emphasised erotic aspect.

Let us stay a little longer with the character of Ulysses. This will help us specify the nature of this eroticism, and consequently its relations with the ancient tradition, more precisely. Authors who wrote erotic poetry usually opposed elegy to heroic epic, from which they distanced themselves (which I mentioned before, presenting the *recusatio* topos). Nevertheless, sometimes their poems feature epic heroes. Writing on the manner in which Propertius drew from mythology, Paola Pinotti⁸ notices that the epic material he used has more than only a decorative function. It is analogically related to the events of the poet's own life, refined and made significant by the reference to the "mythological code" comprehensible to all readers. These statements, with certain reservations may also refer to other elegiac writers. Tibullus, as we know, used this mechanism sparingly, while Catullus, and especially Ovid, employed it much more frequently.

Odysseus as a character in Latin poetry was discussed by Alessandro Perutelli great deal in his monography on this subject. In Perutelli's opinion, in introducing Ulysses to his poetry, Catullus turned him into a leading epic hero in accordance to his own needs⁹ and rendered him his *porte-parole*, which was different from

⁸ P. Pinotti, *Lelegia latina. Storia di una forma poetica*, Roma 2002, pp. 112–113.

⁹ A. Perutelli, *Ulisse nella cultura romana*, Firenze 2006, pp. 30–32.

the Alexandrian epyllion, where Ulysses played only the role of an element in a comparison (*σὺγκρισις*). Propertius is rather cautious about making Ulysses a character in an elegy; there are few places in which the latter appears.¹⁰ But for us the most interesting character is Ovid, who moves from utter distrust in Odysseus, particularly in *Amores* (distrust most probably caused by the urge to confirm his own status as an elegiac poet; this was also the purpose for which the *recusati* topos was used¹¹—to reject epic in favour of elegy), to ironic¹² engagement of this character in his other works. While in *The Heroides* there are no particular elements that might characterise Ulysses as an elegiac lover—describing him in her letter, Penelope recalls episodes from Homer, adding little new traits¹³—in *Ars amatoria*, Ulysses finally becomes an elegiac character; his main features include cunning and eloquence: “non formosus erat, sed erat facundus Ulixes” (*Ars* II 123). He is mentioned once more due to his eloquence in *Remedia Amoris*, in the episode with Kirke (261–268), and later in *Met.* XIII in the scene of Ulysses’ and Ajax’ conflict over Achilles’ armour.¹⁴

I think that this excursus should suffice to enable us to appreciate Kochanowski’s proposal: epic subjects were in principle extraneous to love poetry, which very rarely featured the myth of Ulysses. Ovid was the first to change this situation, giving Ulysses more space in his works.

¹⁰ See *ibidem*, pp. 52–56 apropos of I 15 and III 12.

¹¹ *Amores* II 1, 30–31: *quid pro me Atrides alter et alter agent, / quique tot errando, quod bello perdiditannos...*

¹² I use this word here rather freely and not very literally. I would thus like to emphasise the difference between the epic Ulysses and Ovid’s elegiac Ulysses. Ovid’s character is deprived of the seriousness with which he was described by epic poets. He is rather a lover, looked upon by the poet with irony, a smile, almost a conspiratorial wink.

¹³ A. Perutelli, *Ulisse nella...*, p. 58.

¹⁴ On the other hand, in Ovid’s works written in exile, Odysseus becomes a suffering expatriate, whom Ovid treats similarly to Catullus in 101.

The term *moly*, that is “herbs against magic,” is a calque from the Greek μῶλυ, a word appearing in *Ode X 305*, in the episode in which Hermes gives the herb to Ulysses, which is why the latter will manage to avoid turning into a hog. Ovid introduced this word in Latin in *Met. XIV 292*: here, similarly, Cyllenius (Mercury) gives Ulysses the same remedy against the goddess’ magic. It is worth adding that this fragment is the only confirmed use of the term *moly*¹⁵ in ancient Latin poetry. In Kochanowski’s work, Ulysses becomes an alter ego of an unidentified friend. All this is told with a hint of irony.¹⁶

2. The little *Ars Amatoria*

Let us read epigram XXVIII *De Neaera*¹⁷ once again:

Acria cum dura fuerant mihi bella Neaera
 Nec pacem potui foederave ulla pati.
 Risit Amor teneramque iubet lacrimare puellam,
 At mihi pugnaces obstupuere manus.

¹⁵ Bibliotheca Teubneriana Latina, <http://www.degruyter.com/view/db/btltll> (accessed: 14 May 2011). It also appears later in the works of Pliny the Elder (14 times) and Scribonius Largus (once).

¹⁶ Here, I should also mention Kochanowski’s elegy IV 1, which is a propempticon to his friend, Paweł Stępowski, who was planning to go to Italy. Here, however, the addressee did not stay far from his motherland and waiting wife for a long time, as in the case of Ulysses, whose journey is elaborately told by the poet (200 verses). In this poem, Kochanowski complies with the rules of ancient and renaissance poet-ics (e.g. Robortello), which postulated the introduction of mythological *exempla* in elegies (see J. Pelc, *Jan Kochanowski. Szczyt renesansu w literaturze polskiej*, Warszawa 2001, p. 396. This scholar emphasises that in books III and IV Kochanowski tried to achieve a higher level of literariness. He certainly considered elegy to be a genre that should follow subject to rules and tradition more; epigram, on the other hand, was to him a minor genre and allowed more freedom to play with conventions).

¹⁷ It is worth mentioning that Łempicki (“*Foricoenia* Jana Kochanowskiego,” p. 247) suspects that epigram XXVIII may be an imitation of some Greek predecessor, but no such source has been identified to date.

Tum nostro victrix iniecit brachia collo
 Per noctes vinctum detinuitque duas,
 Nec mihi cessavit meritas infligere plagas.
 At quales plagas? Cum subit, emorior.

[When I conducted a fierce war with the ruthless Neaera, I could not have borne any thought of peace or arrangements. Cupid laughed and made the beautiful girl cry, and my pugnacious fists fell down at once— then she victoriously threw her arms around my neck and kept me bound for two nights. She also did not cease to deliver me smacks, and what smacks they were... I die from just recalling them!]

Writing love poetry, Kochanowski drew handfully from the legacy of Latin elegiac poets. There is a line, let me call it the erotic-elegiac line, which is common to all the love epigrams analysed here. We may risk claiming that in his epigrams Kochanowski created a specific miniature *ars amatoria*. They contain numerous references to Ovid and his suggestions concerning love. Each of the eight verses of the epigram quoted above proposes a subject typical of Latin elegy.¹⁸ The topoi appear here in the following sequence: *militia amoris*¹⁹ accompanied by “fierce wars” (*acria bella*) conducted against the

¹⁸ The use of only elegiac topoi here is particularly interesting even if there are no textual references to specific sources.

¹⁹ I shall restrict myself to several examples from Ovid's *Amores*: I 9; III 7, 68: “nunc opus exposcunt militiamque suam;” and from *Ars* I 35–36; II 233. The epigram is littered with martial lexis: *Acria bella*; *pacem*; *foedera*; *pugnaces manus*; *victrix*; *victum detinuitque*; *infligere plagas*. As we know, the *militia amoris* topos is much older but Ovid was the first writer (G. Baldo's comment to the second book of *Ars amatoria*, in: Ovid, *Ars amatoria*, a cura di E. Pianezzola, Milano 1991, 2007, p. 298 *ad v.* 229 and 233), who classifies it as inconsistent with the *otium* in the already mentioned elegy from *Amores* I 9, 46: “Qui nolet fieri desidiosus, amet!,” returning to this concept in *Ars* II 229: “Amor odit inertes.” An example of *amor otiosus* may be found in Tibullus I 57–58: “Non ego laudaricuro, mea Delia, tecum // dum modo sim, quaeso, segnis inersque vocer.”

ruthless Neaera;²⁰ the inexorability of the enamoured²¹ (1–2); Cupid mocks such behaviour of the poet and makes the girl cry,²² which utterly disarms the poet²³ (3–4); the girl throws her arms around her lovers neck²⁴ and makes love to him²⁵ (5–6), delivering him *meritas plagas* at the same time.

The verses of the epigram may be grouped in the following way: 2 + 2 + 3 + 1. Each part corresponds to a certain stage of a battle: there is an introduction describing the initial situation; a turning point, when the enamoured lover capitulates before his beloved; the “result” of this defeat, and the last exclamation, ironically confirming the suffering resulting from the combat injuries. *Cum* in the first verse (“*Acria cum fuerant mihi bella Neaera*”), repeated in “*cum subit, emorior*,” seemingly creates a paradox: we return to the starting point, the battle was purposeless, did not improve my situation—the

²⁰ See Prop. I 17, 15–18, particularly elegy I 8 by Tibullus, the small *ars amatoria*. The adjective *tener* used by Kochanowski in contrast with the “severity” of the girl towards the *senes amatores* suggests a closer tie with Tibullus: “*In veteres esto dura, puella, senes. / Parce precor tenero: non illi sontica causa est, / sednimiusluto corpora tingitamor*” (v. 50–52).

²¹ “*Nec pacem potui foederave ulla pati*,” may be compared e.g. with Prop. III 20, 15–16: “*Foedera sunt ponenda sunt prius signandaque iura/ et scribenda mihi lex in amore novo*.”

²² Ovid, *Am.* I 8, 83–84; *Ars* I 659–662, III 291–292; Tib. I 9, 37–38; Prop. I 15, 40 and III 24, 25–26.

²³ In these hands prepared to hit, we can find an allusion to elegiac lovers who raise their hands in jealousy against a disloyal girl. See Ovid, *Am.* I 7.

²⁴ Catullus XXXV 7–12.

²⁵ Latin elegy only praises two accomplished love acts: Prop. II 15 and Ovid. I 5, related to each other because Ovid refers to Propertius’ elegy (see a comment to the same elegy in: J. C. McKeown, *Ovid, Amores: text, prolegomena, and commentary*, Liverpool 1989). The action in Ovid’s elegy takes place, untypically, in the afternoon. Kochanowski is more faithful to the tradition as his scene lasts “*per noctes duas*” (let us here recall *Am.* I 13, where the prayer to Aurora, so that she did not board her carriage too soon, was supported by the example of Jove, who “*commisit noctes in sua vota duas*,” in order to be with Alcmena, 46).

poet suggests—because even now, when my beloved surrendered to me, I suffer torments.

In fact, all this may be explained easily if we reread the whole text; the events follow from the girl's decision. She is the one who causes the breakthrough in the battle with her determined move (cry), she surrenders, she—for all that—constantly hurts the poet who is utterly passive, consistent with the rules of *servitium amoris*, according to which a man is only a servant of a woman.

Having traced the elegiac topoi in epigram XXVIII, I shall explain what I mean by *ars amatoria*. Three epigrams, namely XXVI, LVIII and LXIX, may be a programmatic manifesto of our *ars*, whose elements are dispersed in different places in the collection. Let us begin with epigram XXIV *Ad Faustum*:

Morbus amor gravis est; ego quamvis non amo, Fauste, Sed quia amavi olim,
nunc quoque discrucior.

[To Faustus:

Love is a severe sickness: and so, dear Faustus, although I do not love today,
I did love once and hence I suffer until this day.]

Love is a sickness. Kochanowski had gone through it, which entitles him to empathise with his friend.²⁶ And here comes the second element of the programmatic manifesto, epigram LVIII *In Amorem*:

Me igni, me nivibus, me, si ipso fulmine mavis, Obrue, me in scopulos et
vada caeca rape, Nam cura assidua et longo duratus amore Non videor laedi
posse neque igne Iovis.

²⁶ Love as a sickness, see Prop. II 1, 57–58; *discrucior* refers to the famous *excru-*
cior of Catullus 85, just as the contrast between “I do not love” and “I did love” weak-
ens the juxtaposition of *odi et amo*. The title is a significant paratextual constituent
of poetry (G. Genette, *Palimpsesti. La letteratura al secondo grado*, trad. di R. Novità,
Torino 1997, p. 5). In the context of the utter lack of happiness, *Faustum* is a name
that sounds positively ironic.

[*On Cupid*

Strike me with fire and snow, or if you prefer—with a thunder, throw me on reefs and blind shallows:

because to me, exhausted with constant worry and long love, even Jove's fire does not seem dangerous.]

This time, the poet is alone on the scene, which is emphasised by a fourfold repetition of the pronoun *me* in the two first verses of the poem. The fourth verse echoes the incipit; here, fire appears again contributing to a metaphorical shorting: as it is Jove's fire mentioned here (in verse 4). This is a metaphor that is supposed to help the reader understand the meaning of the first verse. The poet presents himself as *duratus*—unimpressed and resistant to the strikes of love.

Let us now take a look at the most extensive of all the three epigrams, that is LXIX *Ad Torquatum*:

Tun hilares inter solus, Torquate, recumbes
 Maestus et ipse tuum cor taciturnus edes?
 Tun fugies solus certamen dulce Lyaei,
 Solus Apollinea non capiere lyra?
 Fallor, an ingratae succurrunt facta puellae
 Et tibi non aequus pectora mordet amor?
 Noli dissimulare, Venus me non sine plagis
 Perdocuit, ne sim vestro in amore rudis.
 Nec dependendi tantum (modo consule) morbi,
 Sed curandi etiam credo me habere modum.
 Optandum aut nunquam incipere, aut desistere nunquam:
 Est mel, cum incipimus, fel, ubi desinimus.

[*To Torquato*

Are you alone, Torquato, supposed to sit among joyful people sad and lonely, in silence, and suffer in your heart? Are you alone to avoid the sweet competition of Bacchus?

Are you alone not to admire the sound of Apollo's lyre?

Am I wrong? Or is this about the doings of an ungracious girl and unreciprocated love hurts your heart?

Do not pretend! Not without severe smacks did Venus teach me, so that I know your love issues! I think I know a way—listen intently—not only to recognize this sickness but also to cure it:

you must either never begin to love or never cease, because when you begin, there is honey, and when you cease, there is bile.]

The conversation takes place at a feast and the interlocutor is precisely named: it is Torquato. The first half of the poem (verses 1–6) contains three rhetorical questions that the poet asks his interlocutor; in the second part of the epigram (6–12), the poet—*magister amoris*—becomes a protagonist (which is emphasised by the pronoun *me*): he has also experienced the hardships of love, which enables him to understand Torquato's suffering and to act in the capacity of a master who heals love wounds, in whom his friend may confide: "Noli dissimulare, Venus me non sine plagis / Perdocuit, ne sim vestro in amore rudis."²⁷

Let us now take a closer look at our epigrams from another perspective, analysing them in the context of the whole cycle of erotic epigrams. Kochanowski describes love as a sickness that he has also gone through himself. Having lived through this experience and being healthy now, he is able to understand his friend (XXIV). What is more, it seems that he has achieved a certain distance. In whatever manner this deity tries to harm me, it shall not succeed—the poet seems to say. In the end, consoling his friend in *Ad Torquatium*, he expressly assumes the role of *magister amoris*. Verses 9–10 are the most important for the whole treatment pursued by the poet: "Nec dependendi tantum (modo consule) morbi, / Sed curandi etiam credo me habere modum." This proposal is similar to that of Ovid: the Roman poet taught how to get sick, how to make someone sick (*Ars amatoria*), and how to recover (*Remedia amoris*).²⁸

²⁷ This phrase appears in Prop. II 34, 81–82: "Non tamen haec ulli venient ingrata legenti, / sive in amore rudissime peritus erit." Propertius gives advice to his interlocutor, saying, among other things (3–4): "Expertus dico, nemo est in amore fidelis: / formosam raro non sibi quisque petis."

²⁸ When it comes to the vast literature concerning the "hardships of love," one text worthy of reading is M. Peri, *Malato d'amore. La medicina dei poeti e la poesia dei medici*, Catanzaro 1996. Worthy of attention are also observations noted by

Let us return for a moment to verses 3–4 of epigram LVIII *In Amorem*: “Nam cura assidua et longo duratus amore/ Non videor laedi posse neque igne Iovis.” The term *duratus*, meaning “accustomed to enduring” the shortcomings of the lover is found in the context of an amorous relationship in *Ars* II 647–652, in a georgic metaphor:²⁹

Quod male fers, adsuesce: feres bene; multa vetustas lenit at incipiens omnia sentit amor.

Dum novus in viridi coalescit cortice ramus, concutiat tenerum quaelibet aura, cadet; mox etiam ventis spatio durata resistet firmaque adoptivas arbor habebit opes.

[Get used to the things you cannot withstand and you will endure them more easily. Experience alleviates many things, while a freshly roused love feels perceives single thing. When a young sprout becomes corticated, It may fall with a slight gust; but it will grow strong with time, it will resist the winds, and a powerful tree will bear adopted fruits.]

With irony implied by verb *videor*, Kochanowski, “accustomed to endure,” assumes the same attitude as his model, who played with his idea of *obsequium*, striping *servitium amoris* from tragedy and suffering: courtship were an intellectual game, in which the prize was the desired girl. So like *servitium*, also one of the verbs characterizing them is deprived of pathos.³⁰

K. Ziemia in her “Clemens Janicius – Johannes Cochanovius: due concetti di elegia,” in: *Polonia, Italia e culture slave. Aspetti comparati tra storia e contemporaneità* [...], a cura di L. Marinelli, M. Piacentini, K. Żaboklicki, Varsavia–Roma 1997, pp. 55–67), who having studied the Latin elegies of Kochanowski, explains his choice of elegy not only by its prestige in the humanist world, but also by his wish to present to his compatriots the creative potential of this literary genre.

²⁹ G. Baldo, in: Ovid, *Ars amatoria*, p. 337 *ad loc.*

³⁰ Apropos of the verb *durare* (and its derivatives), that is enduring the suffering inflicted by the lover, let us recall Catullus VIII 9–12: “Nunc iam illa non volt; tu quoque, inpotens, noli, / necquae fugit sectare, nec miser vive, / Sed obstinate mente perfer, obdura,” and Ovid’s *Am.* III 11, 27: “His et quaetaceo duravi saepe ferendis.”

We may trace the development of this little *ars amatoria* beginning with epigram XVI *In Milanionem*:

Milanion ego sum, teneram quem ferre puellam
 Et medios inter cernitis ire canes.
 Venor apros, ago cornipedes in retia cervos,
 At me Amor ipse suis implicuit laqueis.

[I am Milanion, who carries a young girl on his arms and steps, as you may see yourself, surrounded with a herd of dogs:
 I hunt boars, I catch deer with corneous hoofs in my traps, but Cupid alone caught me in his snare.]

Milanion is of course the “conqueror” of Atalanta,³¹ now carrying his trophy in his arms surrounded by a herd of dogs. Therefore, the first two verses prepare a paradox that is concretised in the next distich, the one concerning the victorious hunter enslaved by his own prey: Love/Atalanta. Thus Kochanowski confuses the reader with one more paradox, unexpectedly placed at the beginning and not at the end of the poem: reading the title, we instantly recall the history of Atalanta and Milanion. Atalanta was the one who was supposed to be an infallible and invincible huntress (the famous episode with the Caledonian boar). In this poem, however, the roles seem to be reversed: Milanion is the hunter,³² while Atalanta is the prey,³³ which eventually becomes the huntress again—Love mentioned at the end of the poem to have caught the hunter, may be interpreted as a metaphorical allusion to Atalanta herself; the conquered girl deprehends

³¹ See Prop. I 1, 9–16.

³² It does not seem that Hipomenes/Milanion was thus characterised by mythographers, see P. Grimal, *Enciclopedia dei miti*, a cura di C. Cordié, Milano 1995, pp. 76–77, 350.

³³ See Ovidio, *Ars amatoria*, Milano 2007, p. 193, commentary by E. Pianez-zoli *ad locum*: “Both in Greek and Latin literature (from Plaut on), hunting [...] is a frequently used metaphor of courtship [...]: Ovid regards love to be equal with other [...] techniques, justifying this with his educational objectives” (emphasis F. C., transl. by K. S.).

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