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Chapter 8
Philostratus' *Erotic Epistles* and Latin Elegy Revisited

Introduction

The prevailing orthodoxy in scholarship on Imperial Greek literature for the best part of a century has been to reject outright almost any possibility of allusion in the direction of later Greek texts alluding to earlier Latin ones. The reasons for this are twofold: first, that Hellenes of the Imperial period were not generally brought up reading Latin (as Romans were, conversely, reading Greek). But this is only a generalisation, and cannot be used to argue against an individual case that indicates the contrary. Secondly, the Greek sophistic authors had their Hellenic pride to think of, and would not dream of alluding to the literature of their Roman rulers, even if they did read it.[1] This 'anti-Roman' narrative is too simplistic, as subsequent scholarship has recognised:[2] elite Greek authors such as Philostratus, Plutarch, and Aelian, to name but a few, were Roman citizens who did nothing to try and hide the fact, and even, in some cases at least, openly made use of Latin works in their writings.[3] The tide is gradually begin-

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1 Cf. Swain (1996) for a good example of this approach.

2 E. g. Whitmarsh (2001b).

3 Aelian in particular is a Roman from Praeneste, and Greek is probably his second language; yet even in his case, the scholarly conversation has not usually been about Aelian's knowledge and use of Latin authors, but his place alongside other Greek authors (rather, authors in Greek) of the Empire and the contemporary Second Sophistic movement. See Smith (2014) 16–19 for various possibilities concerning Aelian's linguistic and genealogical identity, and evidence of his knowledge of some Latin poetry; further, index s.v. Latin; Wilson (2006) on Aelian's Latinisms. Genre makes a difference, naturally: Greek historiographers and technical authors of

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ning to turn on this issue, thanks in part to Bruno Rochette's excellent work;[4] Daniel Jolowicz's recent monograph on Latin in the Greek novels, the first substantial and detailed examination of a limited corpus of Imperial Greek texts focused on precisely this question, is set to move the debate on further.[5] But there is still a great resistance to the idea of Greek allusion to Latin literature in this period, and the default response to any suggestion of this remains that it is unlikely, and impossible to 'prove' anyway—as if 'proof' in the other direction, Greek authors alluded to by Romans, were in principle any easier. This does not only result in resistance when allusion in this direction *is* occasionally proposed: perhaps even more significantly, it means that almost no one writing scholarship about Imperial Greek literature until recently has considered the question or looked for such allusions in the first place,[6] with the result that quite striking counter-examples to the general opinion, such as my first example from Philostratus' *Epistles*, are consistently overlooked. In this chapter, by arguing that Philostratus alludes to Roman elegy in his *Epistles*, I aim to reintroduce a long dormant strand of criticism to Philostratean studies, and thereby to studies of Greek prose letters and their connections with Latin elegiac epistles and other elegies. But much more than this, the present case, if accepted, would offer a very strong corrective to the prejudice against the idea that Imperial Greek authors of the so-called Second Sophistic in general might show their reading of Latin literature by allusion and intertextuality. The fact that the author is Flavius Philostratus,[7] who defined the Second Sophistic and is thus emblem-

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the Empire are far more likely to refer openly rather than only allude to Roman authors. Lateness too makes a difference: it is far more acceptable to argue that Aristaenetus (5th century CE; see Drago (2007)) or Nonnus (fifth century CE), for example, alluded to Latin literature, than most Greek authors in the first-fourth centuries CE.

4 (1997). Cf. briefly Hodkinson (2018) 203–205 with references on possible Latin knowledge in Alciphron; on Latin in Longus also Klein (2018); on Chariton, Tilg (2010) 261–297.

5 Jolowicz (2021). Olivier Demerre's recent PhD thesis (Demerre (2022)), will expand the field of Latin intertextuality in the Greek novels further.

6 Cf. Jolowicz (2021) 7: "once an orthodoxy ossifies, it influences future criticism and reading practices: if we are assured that Greeks do not read Latin poetry, then we shall not look for evidence that they did (or we shall at least be less diligent in our search). In such a climate, when potential evidence is unearthed, it is usually explained away as proof of a 'lost common source'."

7 I assume, as all scholarship in recent decades, that the author of the *Epistles* is the same as the author of *VA, VS, Heroikos, Gymnastikos*, and *Imagines*. See Hodkinson (2017b), Drago (forthcoming b), Puech (2001) 380; Hodkinson (forthcoming b) in more detail. It is impossible to pin down a date of composition for the *Epistles* within Philostratus' lifetime, except that given the reference to Rome in *Ep.* 55 (quoted and discussed below), at least some of them would likely have been composed after his first stay in Rome.

atic of the set of authors and rhetors who are supposed not to admit to reading Latin literature in their own writings, makes the implications of accepting my arguments more far-reaching than a comparable case about most other Imperial Greek authors.[8] This argument therefore has implications for studies of the 'Second Sophistic' and Imperial Greek literature as a whole, and for the question of Latin-Greek intertextuality in classical literature more generally.

Were it not for the common preconceptions concerning Greek knowledge of, and allusion to, Latin literature, it would not be difficult to conceive of Philostratus having such knowledge and making such allusions. Philostratus spent time at the Imperial court both in Rome itself and when the Emperor and his retinue were abroad. He was undoubtedly a Roman citizen; he was highly educated and certainly very well-read in Greek literature, and it is inconceivable in this position that he did not have at the very least a working knowledge of the Latin language.[9] Furthermore, he married a Roman woman, Aurelia Melitina, and his family—numbering at least one senator among the grandsons—would therefore have been bilingual in Latin and Greek;[10] a bilingual household, and full fluency in Latin on the part of our author, including familiarity with much of the Latin literature that his household would have known, is by far the most likely scenario from the limited data we have about Philostratus' life. If any of his literary works were composed and/or circulating during his life among other educated Romans whose first language was Latin, he might well have wished them to see him alluding to 'their' literature too, and to display to them his *paideia* in Roman as well as Greek literature; this would not detract from his credentials in Hellenic *paideia* (and indeed would necessarily go unnoticed by any Greek-speakers who did happen to believe that reading and alluding to Latin literature was unnecessary or for any reason unacceptable). Others have recently begun to argue, persuasively, for Philostratus' knowledge of specific Latin texts in works besides the *Epistles:* Vielberg on Cicero in the *Life of Apollonius* and MacDonald on Ovid in the *Imagines*.[11] If the identity of the *Epistles*' author with that of the majority of

8 That is, if one were to accept arguments for allusion to Latin in Aelian's or Alciphron's letters, or in any single Greek novel (to take other examples in the erotic literary tradition), one would not necessarily therefore infer that such allusion is likely to be found in other contemporary texts, since in Aelian's case his Italian origins and his Latinity in other works are established, in the other cases little to nothing is known of the authors and little or no secure reference made to their works by contemporary Greek authors, so that each could easily be discounted as an exception to the rule.

9 Cf. Rochette (1997).

10 See Puech (2001) 378 – 381.

11 Vielberg (2016); MacDonald (forthcoming).

the Philostratean corpus is accepted, then use of Latin texts in any other text in the corpus makes it highly plausible that it would be found in the *Epistles* too.

It has been observed elsewhere in recent scholarship that the Philostratus of the *Erotic Epistles* adopts a submissive, fetishistic, at times masochistic persona, which at least resembles the personae of Latin elegists more than any other extant classical literature.[12] In addition to this, specific similarities between his erotic *Epistles* and Latin elegy have long been noted, and the possibility of an intertextual relationship between them has been entertained since at least the early twentieth century.[13] Of course, the language difference does cause difficulties for any attempt at a 'proof' of this relationship, when it comes to the kinds of verbal echoes that are often part of an argument for intertextuality between texts in the same language; but that has never prevented anyone from finding countless Latin allusions to Greek authors, provided that the subject matter, expressions, and so on are close enough to be plausible (and indeed, often too when they are quite distant, the allusion is still safely argued for and seen as plausible by many, because everyone knows and accepts that Latin authors allude to Greek ones). So the fact that the texts are in different languages is not the problem: the difficulty is rather that scholars have been trained to believe that allusion in this direction does not happen for so long that it is now a struggle to convince anyone in every single case of allusion in this direction, and the standards of plausibility are far more strict than those applied in the opposite case. The precise relationship that Gollnisch and Heinemann[14] envisaged was often not one of direct influence between the Latin elegists and Philostratus and the other erotic epistles they were investigating. It will come as no surprise that it often depended on common Hellenistic sources—and that these supposed common sources are merely hypothetical.[15] These scholars did, however, sometimes allow for some interaction of a more straightforward sort: that is, they allowed that later Greek authors might occasionally allude to Latin literature, and that such similarities do not *always* call for the invention of lost common sources. This is in contrast to later scholarship, which became extremely sceptical about this possibility: for instance, Day's still (even if indirectly) influential monograph on Latin elegy[16] contains a whole chapter trying to disprove even the existence of some of the similarities, let alone the possibility of Latin influence upon

12 E.g. Hodkinson (2009) 197–208, Gallé Cejudo (2013), (2018b) with refs.; Hodkinson (2009) 227–244 arguing specifically for the Latin elegy connection.

13 By Gollnisch (1905); Heinemann (1910).

14 Gollnisch (1905), Heinemann (1910).

15 On 'lost common sources' see Jolowicz quoted n.8 above.

16 (1938).

Greek. In denying similarities, Day says:[17] "This sort of thing may be found in almost any indecent literature"! His point is, of course, that similarities need not be seen as proof of influence: if several authors are all engaged in the writing of what he quaintly calls 'indecent' literature, then there will likely be similarities between them—it is a matter of commonplaces and *topoi* of the erotic literary tradition. This sceptical approach has the advantage of not inventing hypothetical texts, and thus is much more economical in its argumentation. It has largely been accepted implicitly ever since: this has remained very much the common opinion, both among scholars of Latin elegy and of Imperial Greek literature, until very recently.

However, while there are clearly allusions both in Latin elegy and in Philostratus to Hellenistic and earlier erotic literature (especially epigram, but also other genres such as Greek elegy, Anacreontics, and representations of love in New Comedy), this does not account for all of the similarities between the two later genres of erotic letters and Roman elegy. What many individual Latin elegiac poems and erotic *Epistles* of Philostratus have in common is a basis in a (sometimes much) shorter, and therefore simpler idea found in erotic epigrams, expanded to develop that idea and explore several more aspects only found *in potentia* in such a kernel. As will be seen below, such expansions can be strikingly similar in particular pairs of *Epistles* and Roman elegiac texts. It is not only in specific allusions, however, but also at the level of genre, in creating a longer form of first-person erotic discourse that operates in large part by means of such expansion of epigrammatic themes, and in employing certain features that are more typical of Roman elegy than of the Greek epigrammatic hypotexts, that Philostratus may have followed the Roman elegists as well as their Greek models.

In what follows, I offer three cases of possible allusion in the *Epistles* to Latin elegiac texts.[18] The first (§ 1) is *prima facie* the strongest, since it combines similarities to the Latin text with explicit references to Rome and Roman religious festivals, information about which is highly likely to have come from Latin sources. The second (§ 2) is chosen precisely because we know for certain that a (partially lost) Hellenistic source, Menander's *Perikeiromene*, is behind an *Epistle* and a Latin elegiac text. The point here is to show that this is never the end of the story: intertextuality in sophisticated literary texts such as Philostratus' *oeuvre* is far more complex and layered (including 'window references'),

17 (1938) 50.

18 The commentary I am preparing on the complete *Epistles* (see further Hodkinson 2021) will explore many others; see Hodkinson (2009) 230–234, 237–40, 241–2 for more examples.

than is allowed for by the idea that lost common sources could 'explain' (or explain away) relationships between two extant texts. The third (§ 3) is one of the strongest cases for an *Epistle without* any explicit reference to Roman matters alluding to a Latin elegy.

1 The Floralia: Philostratus' lover in Rome

My first example of allusion by Philostratus to a Latin elegiac poet is the most convincing, because it explicitly evokes an occasion when the letter writer was in Rome,[19] and refers to a specifically Roman religious festival, the Floralia. Ovid's *Fasti* is the first place to look for information about the religious festivals of the Romans, and editors of the *Epistles* make the connection.[20] Of course, Philostratus *might* have found out about this festival from a Greek speaker or author, either one with local knowledge, or one who had read the *Fasti* (or other Roman works describing it) and who thus functions as another hypothetical lost source for our *Epistle*. But a Greek author, sometime resident of Rome, writing explicitly about a Roman institution, has no reason to hide his knowledge of Latin texts about it, even if he does not necessarily expect all or most of his Hellenophone audience to notice the similarities to a Latin source, or to appreciate this as an example of allusion.

> Here is the letter in full:
> Γυναικι [or ἑταίρᾳ γυναικί][21]
> Ὄντως τὰ ῥόδα Ἔρωτος φυτά, καὶ γὰρ νέα, ὡς ἐκεῖνος, καὶ ὑγρά, ὡς αὐτὸς ὁ Ἔρως, καὶ χρυσοκομοῦσιν ἄμφω καὶ ταὖλλ' αὐτοῖς ὅμοια· τὰ ῥόδα τὴν ἄκανθαν ἀντὶ βελῶν ἔχει, τὸ πυρρὸν ἀντὶ δᾴδων, τοῖς φύλλοις ἐπτέρωται, χρόνον δὲ οὔτε Ἔρως οὔτε ῥόδα οἶδεν, ἐχθρὸς γὰρ ὁ θεὸς καὶ τῇ κάλλους ὁπώρᾳ καὶ τῇ ῥόδων ἐπιδημίᾳ. εἶδον ἐν Ῥώμῃ τοὺς ἀνθοφόρους τρέχοντας καὶ τῷ τάχει μαρτυροῦντας τὸ ἄπιστον τῆς ἀκμῆς, ὁ γὰρ δρόμος διδασκαλία χρήσεως· εἰ μὲν οὖν ἅψῃ ταχέως τῶν ῥόδων, μένει, εἰ δὲ μελλήσεις, ἀπελήλυθε. μαραίνεται καὶ γυνὴ μετὰ ῥόδων, ἂν βραδύνῃ. μὴ μέλλε, ὦ καλή· συμπαίξωμεν, στεφανωσώμεθα τοῖς ῥόδοις, συνδράμωμεν.
>
> To a woman: [or To a woman who is a courtesan:]
> Truly roses are Love's flowers, for they are young like him, and lithe like Love himself, and

19 As Miles observes (2018) 143, the setting of the letter itself is not Rome, as that occasion is in the past from the letter writer's current point of view. See further *loc. cit.* on *Ep.* 7: "The reference to the elephant among Romans could be taken as an indication that the letter is written and received at Rome, but need not necessarily be." On references to Rome, the 'Philostratus' persona of the *Epistles* as foreigner, and possible settings for the *Epistles*, Hodkinson (Forthcoming a).
20 Benner-Fobes (1949), followed by Conca (2005), Gallé Cejudo (2010), all *ad loc.*
21 Two MSS of F1 have the addition of ἑταίρᾳ to the inscription.

> both have golden locks, and they resemble one another in their other traits as well: roses have thorns for shafts, red blushes for torches, and they have petals for feathers, and neither Love nor yet roses know length of time, for this god [Time] is hostile both to beauty's autumn and to roses' lingering stay. I saw at Rome the flower-bearers running and by their speed indicating how precarious is beauty's prime; for their running signifies that that prime should be enjoyed. If you hesitate, it is gone. A woman too withers with the roses, if she loiters. Do not delay, my fair one; let us join in sport. Let us crown ourselves with roses; let us speed upon our way together.
>
> Philostr. *Ep.* 55.[22]

Ovid describes the Floralia in detail in the *Fasti* at 5.331–54. Not only do some points of fact about the festival coincide—which would be expected in any pair of texts mentioning the festival, and would not demonstrate one author's direct knowledge of the other—but there are also echoes in Philostratus of the following couplet:

> *et [Flora] monet aetatis specie, dum floreat, uti;*
> *contemni spinam, cum cecidere rosae.*
>
> ...and she warns us to use life's flower, while it still blooms:
> for the thorn, she reminds us, is flouted when the roses have fallen away.
>
> Ovid, Fasti 5.353–4, trans. Frazer (1987).

The message of Flora celebrated at the Floralia is a *carpe diem* lesson: the festival, with its licentiousness and associations with sexuality, is concerned with the idea that beauty's prime, like the rose's, passes quickly and thus one should enjoy it while it lasts (see the wider context in *Fasti* 5.349–54). Parts of the Philostratean letter seem clearly to echo these Ovidian lines, even at the level of vocabulary, by using precise synonyms. (I have underlined the key words in Philostratus, but not in Ovid, since every significant word in this couplet, i.e. all apart from conjunctions, is evoked in the *Epistle*.) The ideas of 'using' or 'enjoying' in both passages are derived from the obvious Greek and Latin synonyms χράομαι (its cognate noun χρῆσις being employed here), a middle verb used in an active sense, and the deponent (the closest grammatical equivalent that Latin has to the middle voice) *utor*. Ancient Greek-Latin glossaries give χράομαι and *utor* as the translations of one another.[23] Given the sexual licentiousness

22 All translations of Philostratus are from Benner—Fobes (1949).

23 For the equivalence see also *Gloss.* II 479, 17; III 80, 62; III 163, 18. On these glossaries, attested from the Imperial period and especially in Late Antiquity, see the overviews in Dionisotti (1988) 1–44; Dickey (2016) 100–101. (For brief consideration of their possible use as supplementary evidence for this kind of point, see Jolowicz (2021) 17–18.) They do not prove anything, but

with which the Floralia is associated, it is appropriate in both texts that both Latin and Greek words for 'using' one's prime of beauty and youth can be understood in a sexual sense.[24] Both ἀκμή and *species aetatis* have the analogous sense of 'beauty's prime', the key word in each being found in the genitive; while χρόνος, 'time', is an alternative translation of *aetas*.[25] The idea of instruction from Flora or from the ritual actions of her festival is also present in '*monet*', 'she instructs/teaches', in the Latin and in διδασκαλία, 'teaching'.[26] These three pairs of Greek and Latin related words are found very close together in their respective texts, all within one line of Ovid (within the space of six words), and in the space of five words in Philostratus, making the close coincidence look more like a reminiscence of this one particular line of Ovid. The rest of the letter also contains echoes of this couplet, in 'thorns', and in the 'withering' or 'falling away' of the roses, in both used as a lesson to enjoy one's prime of beauty while it flourishes, which is for a brief time for humans, as for roses.[27] The focus on the rose throughout Philostratus' letter is of course a commonplace of erotic poetry, and one that he adapts in several of his other *Epistles*;[28] but in this one alone, he combines it with a reference to the Floralia.

Besides the couplet quoted above, the ending of the *Epistle*, συμπαίξωμεν, 'let us join in sport'—while in this context it obviously euphemistically refers to sex with his addressee[29]—in its original context evokes the games at which Flora was celebrated, in particular the opening of Ovid's address to Flora at 5.183: *Mater, ades, florum, ludis celebranda iocosis!* 'Come, Mother of Flowers,

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if certain equivalences that they record were among standard or widely known translations of words between Latin and Greek learned and practiced by those writing literature in either (or both) language(s), or translating between them, then an allusion to a text in one language in a text in the other language might well employ these equivalances, to achieve a bilingual equivalent of a verbal echo.

24 *Utor:* Adams (1982) 198, who also compares χράομαι. Χράομαι: LSJ *s.v.* IV.2. Philostr. *Epp.* 17 and 46 use the verb in contexts in which it allows for a sexual double entendre; *Ep.* 17 is closely connected to *Ep.* 55 as Benner and Fobes (1949: 450 n.1) observe (see Hodkinson forthcoming b for more details), so that the noun χρῆσις being used instead of the verb here is case of variation of expression for the same idea; if Philostr. had the Ovid passage in mind while composing *Ep.* 55, he had it in mind while composing *Ep.* 17 also. The noun is used in sexual sense too: e.g. Pl. *Lg.* 841a ἡ τῶν ἀφροδισίων χ., Arist. *HA* 581b13 also with ἀφροδισίων.

25 Indeed, there is a precise verbal correspondence between these two terms in the glossaries: *Gloss.* II 12, 32.

26 For this educative sense of *moneo*, see e. g. ThLL s.v. 1406,76 – 78; 1407,5; 15; 22; 41; 43; 54.

27 Miles also notes that "line [534] is... close to Philostratus' use of the image of the withering rose in this letter," (2018) 148 n. 24.

28 See further Pontoropoulos, this volume pp. 127 – 138.

29 For the motif of erotic game, see also Calame (1999) 53 – 54.

that we may honour thee with merry games!', and the discussion of the games in which the couplet 353–354 falls: see for example 331–2,

> *quaerere conabar, quare lascivia maior*
> *his foret in ludis liberiorque iocus.*
>
> I was about to ask why these games are marked by greater wantonness and broader jests.
> Ovid *Fasti* 5.331–2

and

> *turba quidem cur hos celebret meretricia ludos,*
> *non ex difficili causa petita subest.*
>
> The reason why a crowd of drabs frequents these games is not hard to discover.
> Ovid *Fasti* 5.349–50

The 'wantonness' inherent in Flora's games, and their celebration by courtesans, *meretrices*, might have further suggested to Philostratus their adaptation to an erotic context; perhaps, too, the addressee on whom Philostratus is urging his 'games' while she has her beauty is imagined to be a courtesan or prostitute, as several of his female addressees seem to be. If the addressee of the letter reported by a minority of the MSS as ἑταίρᾳ, 'to a courtesan', has any authority, this context for the Floralia would add to the case for this reading; indeed, Philostratus' knowledge of the Floralia festival, which was associated with prostitutes and licentious displays,[30] makes it likely that the addressee of this particular *Epistle* is imagined as a courtesan or prostitute, whether stated in a title or not. At these games, and in the whole passage concerning Flora, roses are frequently referred to—again here:

> *tempora sutilibus cinguntur pota coronis,*
> *et latet iniecta splendida mensa rosa;*
>
> The brows of wassailers are wreathed with stitched garlands, and the polished table is buried under a shower of roses.
> Ovid *Fasti* 5.335–6

—and the garlands worn by those taking part in the revels may give rise to Philostratus' στεφανωσώμεθα τοῖς ῥόδοις, 'We will garland ourselves with roses'. And the closing encouragement to his addressee to run with him as well as join in the games with him (συνδράμωμεν, 'Let us run together') is an idea suggested by the games referred to throughout Ovid's description of the Floralia,

30 Cf. also Sen. *Ep.* 97.8. On the Floralia see further Baudy (2006).

both in general (as already quoted above) and in particular the games of the circus (*Fasti* 5.189, 190). Finally, both texts refer to the roses' red or purple colour and compare it with flames, as 'torches' or 'glowing': roses have πυρρὸν ἀντὶ δᾴδων, 'red blushes for torches' for Philostratus, while in Ovid Flora says:

> *"vel quia purpureis collucent floribus agri,*
> *lumina sunt nostros visa decere dies;*
> *vel quia nec flos est hebeti nec flamma colore"*
>
> "Lights are thought to befit my days either because the fields do glow with purple flowers; or because neither flowers nor flames are of a dull colour."
>
> Ovid Fasti 5.363 – 365

If an allusion to Ovid is accepted, Philostratus expertly transplants multiple facets of the imagery of Flora and the Floralia from their original, public festival context into an erotic epistolary one, drawing on aspects that already lend themselves to this field, while adding in the god Eros and making him, instead of Flora (who is not named by Philostratus), the main divinity of his text.

Given that Ovid's *Fasti* was the most famous source of information about Roman religious festivals, and given this close proximity in the two texts between multiple shared ideas and motifs, some of them expressed in Greek and Latin synonyms and close equivalents, it is only the traditional reluctance to look for allusion in this direction that would prevent anyone from seeing allusion by Philostratus to Ovid here as at least highly plausible (and with allusion, as opposed to explicit reference, plausibility is the most that can ever be obtained). An analogous case in which the earlier text was in Greek, the later in Latin, would be accepted unquestioningly by most scholars as a case of probable allusion or imitation. Since Philostratus was a Roman citizen, a member of the Roman élite who is known to have spent time living in Rome, a well-known Latin source is very likely to have been available to him. This leaves the possibility of a Greek intermediary who read Ovid's *Fasti* (8 AD) and wrote a lost work based on it before Philostratus wrote the *Epistles:* this is, of course, possible, but again, it is only an unwillingness to consider Latin-to-Greek literary influence, rather than an examination of these two texts in particular and of the likely facts about their authors, that would lead to this construct. I contend that the burden of proof would rest with any proposer of a hypothetical lost intermediary, for which there is no other evidence, rather than on anyone arguing that Philostratus' source in *Epistle* 55 was most likely Ovid's *Fasti*.

II Perikeiromene: *Philostratus and/on Ovid on Menander*

The next example presents a different kind of situation, and constitutes a brief excursus from the selected very strong cases for Philostratus alluding to Latin. Here there is a known, partially lost common 'source' for Philostratus and a piece of Latin elegy; however, the 'source' is not elegiac, but dramatic. There is a close verbal parallel between Philostratus' *Epistles* 61 and 16—both based on Menander's *Perikeiromene*, and acknowledged as such in the text of 16—and Ovid's *Amores* 1.7. To begin with, here are the openings of *Epistle* 61, and the similar line in Ovid:

> Οὐδὲ ὁ τοῦ Μενάνδρου Πολέμων καλὸν μειράκιον περιέκειρεν...
>
> Not even Menander's Polemon polled a handsome boy...
>
> *Ep.* 16

> Τίς σε, ὦ καλή, περιέκειρεν; ὡς ἀνόητος καὶ βάρβαρος ὁ μὴ φεισάμενος τῶν Ἀφροδίτης δώρων.
>
> Who polled you, my pretty one? How senseless and barbarous the person who spared not the gifts of Aphroditê!
>
> *Ep.* 61

> *Quis mihi non 'demens!' quis non mihi 'barbare!' dixit?*
>
> Who did not say to me: "Madman!" who did not say: "Barbarian!" [sc. for tearing the hear of my mistress]
>
> Ovid *Am.* 1.7.19, trans. Showerman (1914).

McKeown in his commentary discusses this and many other similarities between this poem and the two Philostratean letters.[31] He (and others he refers to in that discussion) acknowledge that this similarity is enough to posit a lost line containing precisely these ideas in the common source, Menander. I would not rule this possibility out by any means; but there is always the possibility that

31 (1989) *ad loc*, q.v. for full details; for Philostr. *Epp.* 16 and 61 and Menander, see notes in Gallé Cejudo (2010), Benner-Fobes (1949), Conca (2005) *ad locc*. For reasons of space, and since no one disputes at least the two connections between Ovid and Menander on the one hand, and Philostratus and Menander on the other, I do not set out all the similarities here; the primary point of the present section is *not* to establish allusion to Ovid in Philostr. *Epp.* 16 and 61, but to consider what happens when a common source is extant. Benner-Fobes (1949) also compare Philostr.'s opening with this line of Ovid.

this line is Ovid's own invention, and that Philostratus is alluding to it. What McKeown says in his introductory paragraphs on this poem is apposite:

> However convincing these affinities with later Greek works may be as proof of a direct debt by Ovid to the *Perikeiromene*, the significance of the debt should not be exaggerated. There are no certain parallels on points of detail between the poem and the very substantial fragments of the play itself which are now extant (some 450 lines); it seems that Ovid exploits it in only a general way, to give his poem a dramatic structure which allows him to develop at considerable length a theme related on a small scale elsewhere in elegy.

This seems to be precisely what Philostratus is doing in *Epistle* 61, which continues (excerpted) as follows:

> ...φεῦ ἀναιδοῦς παλάμης. ὄντως πάντα τὰ ἐκ πολεμίων πέπονθας·... ἀλλ᾽ ἐπεὶ τετέλεσται τὰ δεινά, κἂν μήνυσον τὰς κόμας ποῦ κεῖνται, ποῦ τέτμηνται, πῶς αὐτὰς ὑποσπόνδους λάβω, πῶς φιλήσω χαμαὶ κειμένας. ὦ πτερὰ Ἔρωτος, ὦ κεφαλῆς ἀκροθίνια, ὦ κάλλους λείψανα.
>
> ... Ah, what a shameless hand! In very truth you have suffered all that people suffer from their foes in war.... But since the dreadful deed is done, tell at least where your locks are laid, where they were cut off, how I may recover them under truce, how kiss them as they lie upon the ground. O wings of Love! O first offering of the head! O relics of beauty!
>
> *Ep.* 61

This is an elegy or epigram in prose, very much like the other Philostratean letters;[32] it is not a simple imitation of Menander, and this expression would be quite out of place in a Menandrean play. So, just as McKeown warns us not to assume that parts of Ovid's poem alluding to the *Perikeiromene* represent its lost contents directly, so with this *Epistle*, there are individual elements and allusions to a wide range of literature in various genres, as in all works by Philostratus. The coincidence here is indisputably 'explained' by a partially surviving common 'source', of the sort we are supposed to accept to explain connections between other passages in Philostratus and Latin elegy, rather than direct allusion by Philostratus to Ovid. But even when we so nearly have the piece of text we are usually missing, it is no 'explanation' at all: what is really striking (and innovative in one or both cases) is the decision by Ovid and Philostratus to com-

32 Compare its ending with that of *Ep.* 18 in particular for the characteristically odd imagery applied to hair in one, footprints in the other: "Fear not, the dust will welcome your tread as it would welcome grass, and we shall all kiss your footprints. O perfect lines of feet most dearly loved! O flowers new and strange! O plants sprung from earth! O kiss left lying on the ground!" Also the ending of *Ep.* 61's companion piece, 16. This accumulation of variations on a theme, amounting to a rhapsody of praise about one particular feature of the beloved, is found throughout the *Epistles*.

pose a short elegiac-erotic first-person text (or two, in Philostratus' case) based primarily on the hair-rending theme of the play, transposing it into a different genre and a much shorter form, and telling it only from the lover's perspective in his own voice, as befits their respective genres.[33] Either Ovid and Philostratus independently thought of this idea (a less likely hypothesis, but far from implausible), or Philostratus is engaging in a 'window reference' or 'two-tier allusion':[34] alluding to the play directly and at the same time to Ovid's reworking of the play's themes in elegy, echoing particular expressions, while (as throughout the *Erotic Epistles*) transforming elegiac verse from one source or another into prose epistle. The several similarities noted by McKeown and others before him between Philostratus and Ovid here, then, as well as the more similar genres of literature they are writing (than the similarity between either and Menander's genre), mean that Philostratus, if it is admitted that he might allude to Latin at all, might just as well be alluding to Ovid as to a hypothetical lost line of Menander, where the two are particularly close—or to both at once, in a window reference. This is especially so given that some of the detailed parallels which McKeown does not find between Ovid and Menander *are* found between Ovid and Philostratus. If the previous, more compelling case (§ 1) of Philostratus alluding to Latin and in that case specifically to Ovid is accepted, or if any other is, then Philostratus' additional allusion to Ovid as well as Menander could be entertained in the present example.

This example is instructive. In itself, it is not the strongest case of possible allusion to Latin by Philostratus, but it is at least a possibility (among many oth-

33 Of course, the other Imperial Greek epistolographers, Aelian and Alciphron, play the same generic games in relation to Menander; it is impossible to know who did this first, since we know nothing securely about Alciphron's date, and Aelian's known dates, 175 – 235 AD, make him a precise contemporary of Philostratus (c. 170 – 247/250 AD). If Philostratus took his cue in converting Menandrian plots into epistolary miniatures from one of those Greek texts, the case for alluding to Ovid in these examples is reduced, but even there, the possibility cannot at all be excluded that Aelian or Alciphron also followed Ovid in doing so, and again there is nothing to exclude a complex and multi-layered intertextuality between two or more of the Greek epistolographers and Ovid.

34 On the concept of 'window references' or 'two-tier allusions', see McKeown (1987) 37 – 45, Hinds (1997) 9, 151; Nelis (2001) 5. Another comparable case is that of Meleager *AP* 12.101, Propertius 1.1, and Philostr. *Epp.* 36 – 37: both Philostr. and the Latin elegist transform and extend the Meleagrian epigram in some quite similar ways with of course changes as well; while both could independently have arrived at the same idea to transform and allude to the same hypotext, a window allusion in which Philostr. also re-transforms aspects of Prop.'s text is far likely in this case, if he is admitted to allude to Latin in any cases. (And if any Ovidian elegy, then surely also Prop. 1.1 at least would be known to him). For fuller details on this case, Hodkinson (2009) 232 – 4; Hodkinson (forthcoming b).

ers) that would have to be taken seriously were any one stronger case accepted. But more importantly it shows that, for the other cases discussed in this chapter, in which there is no extant Greek 'source' found for an *Epistle* of Philostratus and a passage in Latin elegy, if a hypothetical lost text connecting the two later texts were to be found on a newly-published papyrus, we would not accept that as the end of the story: intertextuality is not linear and exclusive, and opens up possibilities of reading, rather than closing them down. There is often an implicit assumption that, were we to discover a lost 'common source' for any case of similarity and possible intertextuality between Philostratus (or any Imperial Greek text) and Latin elegy, that would be 'case closed': neither the need nor the possibility would remain to consider that Philostratus could *also* have read the Latin text. But this is self-evidently fallacious on a purely logical level; and it does not accord with how literary scholars think when they are considering Latin authors' allusions to multiple Greek and Latin texts which themselves have intertextual relationships with one another, nor when they are considering later Greek authors' allusions to multiple earlier Greek texts.

III Playing the man's part: Ovid Amores 2.15 and Philostratus Epistle 54

The next example is of a common sub-genre of erotic literature, particularly in epigrams: the gift given to the beloved which the lover wishes to become himself,[35] in order to be close to the recipient of the gift. There are several examples of this which could count as a common model for Ovid's *Amores* 2.15, in which Ovid gives Corinna a ring, and Philostratus' *Epistle* 54, in which he gives the mistress a rose.[36] But Philostratus' and Ovid's expansions of this common epigrammatic motif are among the few examples in which the wish to become the gift is played out as an elaborate fantasy, rather than staying as merely a simple wish; and in these two cases alone, the conceit is taken so far that the inanimate object is given the power and physical attributes actively to make love to the recipient.

Anule, formosae digitum vincture puellae,
In quo censendum nil nisi dantis amor,
Munus eas gratum! te laeta mente receptum

35 See McKeown (1998) 316–8 (introduction *ad Amores* 2.15) for survey of Greek and Roman examples; Philostr. *Epp.* 9, 20, 46 and 63 play the same game with roses standing for the lover, though none so strikingly as the present *Ep.*

36 McKeown (1998) *ad* 2.15.25–26 briefly notes the similarity.

Protinus articulis induat illa suis;
Tam bene convenias, quam mecum convenit illi,
Et digitum iusto commodus orbe teras!
Felix, a domina tractaberis, anule, nostra;
Invideo donis iam miser ipse meis.
O utinam fieri subito mea munera possem
artibus Aeaeae Carpathiive senis!
tunc ego, cum cupiam dominae tetigisse papillas
et laevam tunicis inseruisse manum,
elabar digito quamvis angustus et haerens,
inque sinum mira laxus ab arte cadam.
idem ego, ut arcanas possim signare tabellas,
neve tenax ceram siccaque gemma trahat,
umida formosae tangam prius ora puellae—
tantum ne signem scripta dolenda mihi.
si dabor ut condar loculis, exire negabo,
adstringens digitos orbe minore tuos.
non ego dedecori tibi sum, mea vita, futurus,
quodve tener digitus ferre recuset, onus.
me gere, cum calidis perfundes imbribus artus,
damnaque sub gemmam fer pereuntis aquae—
Sed, puto, te nuda mea membra libidine surgent,
Et peragam partes anulus ille viri.
Inrita quid voveo? parvum proficiscere munus;
Illa datam tecum sentiat esse fidem!

O ring, that art to circle the finger of my fair lady, in which naught is of value but the giver's love, mayst thou go to her a welcome gift! May she receive thee with glad heart and straightway slip thee on her finger; mayst thou fit her as well as she fits me, and press her finger with aptly adjusted circle! Happy ring, thou wilt be touched by the hands of my lady-love; already, ah me, I envy my own gift. Ah, might I suddenly become that gift, by the arts of her of Aeaea, or of the ancient one of Carpathus! Then when I desired to touch my lady's breasts and place my left hand within her tunic, I would slip from her finger, however tight and close; I would grow loose with wondrous art and fall into her bosom. Likewise, to help her seal her secret missives, and to keep the dry, clinging gem from drawing away the wax, I should first touch the moist lips of my beautiful love—only so that I sealed no missive that would bring me pain. If you wish me given over to the casket's keeping, I will refuse to leave your finger, and lessen my circle to keep firm hold. I would not ill become you, my life, nor be a burden your tender finger would refuse to bear. Wear me when you spray yourself with the warm rain of the bath, nor shrink at the harm from water leaking beneath the gem—but methinks my passions would rise at sight of your fairness, and I, though naught but that ring, would play the man's part. Why pray for what cannot be? Little gift, go on thy way; let my lady feel that with thee my true love comes!

Ovid *Am.* 2.15 (entire; trans. Showerman 1914, adapted)

Εἰ κἀμὲ φεύγεις, ἀλλ' ὑπόδεξαι κἂν τὰ ῥόδα ἀντ' ἐμοῦ, καί σου δέομαι μὴ στεφανοῦσθαι μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ κοιμηθῆναι ἐπ' αὐτῶν, καὶ γάρ ἐστιν ἰδεῖν μὲν καλά, οἷαν τὸ πῦρ ἔχει τὴν ἀκμήν, ἅψασθαι δὲ μαλακὰ καὶ πάσης στρωμνῆς ἁπαλώτερα ὑπὲρ τὸν Βαβυλώνιον κόκ-

κον καὶ τὴν Τυρίαν πορφύραν· καὶ γὰρ εἰ σπουδαῖα ἐκεῖνα, ἀλλ᾽ οὐ πνεῖ καλόν. ἐνετειλάμην αὐτοῖς καὶ τὴν δειρήν σου φιλῆσαι καὶ τοῖς μαστοῖς ἐπελθεῖν καὶ ἀνδρίσασθαι, ἂν ἐφῇς, καί, οἶδα, ἀκούσεται. ὦ μακάρια, οἵαν γυναῖκα περιβάλλειν μέλλετε. ἀλλὰ δεήθητε αὐτῆς ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ καὶ πρεσβεύσατε καὶ πείσατε, ἐὰν δὲ παρακούῃ, κατακαύσατε.

Though you shun me, yet do at least accept the roses in my place. And I pray you not only to garland yourself with them but also to sleep on them. For indeed they are both beautiful to behold, possessing splendour as of fire, and delicate to touch and softer than any bed, surpassing the Babylonian scarlet and the Tyrian purple; for, although these are magnificent, yet they have no beautiful fragrance. I have told the roses to kiss your throat and to cling to your breasts and to play the part of a man, if you will permit; and I know that they will obey. O happy roses! What a woman you are going to embrace! Pray beseech her in my behalf and serve as my ambassadors and prevail upon her; and if she will not listen, consume her.

Ep. 54[37]

The structure, content, and techniques of these two pieces have some similarities: both open with the idea of the roses as gift from lover-elegist or -epistolographer to beloved; both apostrophise the gift—Ovid's first word, *anule*, 'O ring!', and later (l.7) *Felix*, 'Happy ring!', and Philostratus' ὦ μακάρια, 'O happy [roses]!'. Both begin with reference to the object as gift: Ovid's 'go to her a welcome gift! May she receive thee'; Philostratus' 'accept the roses'. Both turn to a striking image of the gift's potential actions on the lover's behalf (discussed shortly below), but then end with a more realistic view of what the gift can actually achieve, deflating the earlier fantasy: compare Ovid's 'Why pray for what cannot be?' with Philostratus' 'if she will not listen'; while the latter's phrase, 'Pray beseech her in my behalf...' returns the roses, just now imagined as physically acting upon the addressee, to their ordinary status as a gift that only delivers a message to her—a more conventional metaphor for how lovers' gifts 'speak' their love to the beloved, but here also perhaps envisioned momentarily as a less metaphorical reality, the ground having been prepared by their physical actions. Both the ring, naturally, and the roses, are described as being put on and worn by the woman, in the latter case in the ring-shaped form of a garland, encircling her or 'embracing' (περιβάλλειν) her. Both gifts are praised for their own attractive qualities, though only in passing in Ovid (the ring will be becoming to the beautiful recipient: *non ego dedecori tibi sum*, 'I won't be unbecoming to you'). Both ring and roses are to be touched by her, and to touch various parts of

37 See Gallé Cejudo (2013) 358 for analysis of this letter's use of the rose as a fetish ("fetiche instrumental").

her body, including her breasts.[38] Both are wished by their senders to be close to their recipients in a state of undress, either while she bathes or serving as her bed covers.

The most striking parallel between the two texts, however, comes late in both, in the idea that the gifts are both to play the part of a man and somehow have sex with the women—in a paradoxical inversion of the role of the penetrator and penetrated, given that the momentarily 'male' gift will 'embrace' or 'circle' the female recipient. Both rose and ring are symbolically feminine, but here paradoxically phallic. In Ovid, the ring *as* Ovid will 'act out' or 'accomplish' the part of the man (*peragam partes... viri*, l.26): the combination of *perago* and *partes* (more or less closely with *viri*) is understood in three overlapping but also contradictory senses here:

1) the ring is only substituting for the man—it is in fact a mere ring (diminutive *anulus*, l.26: 'a mere / little ring'), but nonetheless 'accomplishes' the man's (Ovid's) 'function' or 'duty' in the sexual encounter;[39]
2) having already been identified as Ovid wishing that he has been transformed into the ring, it now accordingly 'plays the part' of the man in the same sense that an actor plays a role;[40] in this role as Ovid, the ring has a member that rises at the sight of her naked: *te nuda mea membra libidine surgent*, 'with you naked, my passions [as the Loeb translation above; or more literally, member[s]] will rise with lust/desire' (l.25); so, in this role, the ring *is* a man that *has* a member, and is not a male member itself. The plural of *membra* in this sense can simply be poetic for the more usual singular *membrum virile*, male member (as also at *Amores* 3.7.65); but the more general sense of limbs, parts of the body, suggests also the recipient's hand or fingers, which can play the penetrating role of the man with the woman while she bathes, touching herself while wearing the ring that 'is' Ovid, so that the ring is both

38 A similar but simpler, shorter idea is found in the epigram *AP* 5.84 (anon.), εἴθε ῥόδον γενόμην ὑποπόρυρον, ὄφρα με χερσὶν | ἁρσαμένη χαρίσῃ στήθεσι χιονέοις: "Oh, would I were a pink rose, that thy hand might pluck me to give to thy snowy breasts" (trans. Paton 2014). Here the gift motif is lacking, but the writer wishing to become the rose in order to touch the breasts might have inspired Ovid and Philostr. The general idea of 'I wish I were...' in erotic poetry is very common: cf. e. g. *Scolia* 900, 901 Campbell for examples from Greek lyric; Rosenmeyer (2001) 332-3 on Philostr.

39 OLD s.v. *perago* 4, 5, and with *partes: perago* 8 *partes peragere*; OLD s.v. *pars* 10, 8, and 9 for theatrical sense (see next n.) usually in plural; Lewis and Short s.v. *perago:* III and s.v. *pars* II.B.2, one of the senses specifically found in the plural *partes*, a transference of the theatrical role sense (see next n.).

40 Lewis and Short s.v. *pars* II.B.1, 'a part, a character', on the stage, a use specifically found in the plural *partes*. OLD s.v. *pars* 9.

encircling and penetrated by her finger, and at the same time is penetrating her.

3) the ring as Ovid 'penetrates'[41] the '[private] parts'[42] of the recipient, with his member (or her *membra*). While in senses 1) and 2) *viri* is understood closely with *peragam partes*, in this sense, perhaps *viri* 'of a man' should be understood strictly with *anulus ille*, 'that little ring', since the ring is a gift of a man, and it is not *partes… viri*, 'the private parts of a man', that are being penetrated. But, given the playful ambiguities and inversions of the penetrator/penetrated role taken by the ring/Ovid, a strict sense is not required[43]—the fluidity between penetrator and penetrated continues throughout.[44]

In the Philostratean *Epistle* 54, we have a similar productive ambiguity in the key term for 'playing the part of a man', ἀνδρίζω. This verb, in the active voice meaning 'make a man of, make manly', is not at all common. In its middle voice, it means, more commonly, 'play the role of a man', including by 'dressing like a man'—as for a role.[45] In this sense, 'Philostratus' goes to his recipient in the form of the gift of roses, which are to substitute for him—as the ring (itself, and not its 'member') does in my senses 1) and 2) of Ovid's l.26 above. But less commonly, the middle of the Greek verb can mean to fulfil the role of the man towards a woman in the sense of penetration or other sexual acts with her,[46] just as Ovid's ring does in my sense 3) of the same line. Philostratus, by

41 Lewis and Short s.v. *perago:* I, a poetic meaning of the verb; OLD s.v. *perago* 9.

42 OLD s.v. *pars* 6; Lewis and Short s.v. *pars* II.H, 'a part of the body', 'especially the private parts'; of female genitalia, e. g. Ovid *A.A.* 2.584.

43 See McKeown (1998) *ad loc.:* "convoluted Ovidian wit" and introduction *ad* 2.15: "That couplet [25 – 6] is… wonderfully illogical."

44 Cf. McKeown (1998) *ad loc.:* he notes the co-existence of contradictory senses along the lines readings 1) and 2), without venturing to express the masturbatory possibility implicit in 2) and implied by the penetrative sense 3) of *perago*.

45 LSJ s.v. ἀνδρίζω, in mid./pass. meaning 'play the man', citing Xen. *An.* 4.3.34, Pl. *Tht.* 151d.; 'dress like a man', 'play the part of' (women doing so): Philostr. *Imag.* 1.2 (licence given to revelling women to masquerade as men, men to dress as women).

46 LSJ s.v. ἀνδρίζω: in mid./pass., sexual sense, 'playing role of man' (towards a woman), citing Dio Cassius 79.5.5, Philostr. *VA* 1.37; Ach. Tat. 4.1 ('exercise the rights of a husband', tr. Gaselee), 2.10.1; Hld. 5.4.5; besides LSJ's suggestions, Luc. *Eunuch* 13, of the eunuch Bagoas 'playing the part of a [whole] man', has similar ambiguity between acting the role of someone he is not and an innuendo for a sexual penetration. Note that among the few uses of this uncommon verb cited by LSJ, Philostr. uses it a few times and in both these senses of its middle voice. This 'playing a man's part' towards a woman is most naturally taken as penetration with the penis, as being something exclusive to men (and conceived of as being excluded for a eunuch in the Luc. *Eunuch* passage above), but of course any kind of sexual activity between male and

the use of this uncommon verb, creates a similar ambiguity as Ovid does about the precise situation envisaged: the roses, sometimes arranged as a garland:

a) are penetrated by, encircle, 'embrace' the woman;
b) act like the male sender by touching her (she is imagined touching herself with the roses);
c) act as/on behalf of the male sender by conveying what he would say to her; and
d) act as a man in sexual penetration of the recipient.

As Pontoropoulos has observed,[47] Philostratus' lover persona in the *Epistles* frequently plays in various ways with inversions of gender roles in heterosexual contexts, and of *erastês* / *erômenos* roles in pederastic contexts; this letter is an example that illustrates that tendency particularly well—drawing on an Ovidian intertext in so doing. He further argues, convincingly, for a metaliterary reading of the roses in this letter and in the other rose-themed *Epistles:* the roses equal the letter, since both gifts and letters alike are means of conveying the lover's thoughts and feelings, and also because of the common play in (especially epigrammatic) poetry with garlands of flowers standing for anthologies of verse.[48] The epistolary scenario that the gift of the ring participates in at the heart of Ovid's poem (ll. 15–18), complete with its metaliterary suggestion that Ovid-as-ring will participate in future written communications from the recipient back to Ovid, is the only substantial idea that has no analogue in the content of Philostratus' *Epistle*. But of course, this has its analogue instead in Philostratus' epistolary form, complete with the metaliterary potential present in garland and especially of the ending, in which their status as specifically *verbal* messages, not only gifts conveying erotic feelings, emerges: 'beseech her in my behalf and serve as my ambassadors and prevail upon her; and if she will not listen…' Ovid's poem makes explicit in this central section that ever-present potential for slippage in elegiac love-poems about or accompanying gifts, between elegiac and epistolary form. This may have been suggestive for Philostratus in choosing this particular poem to allude to in his love letter, *Epistle* 54.

The multiple parallels between these two texts, with their similar central ideas, ambiguities, and games, are too many for this to be coincidence; the

female could be hinted at, and the Philostratean lover-letter writer may equally be imagining his beloved touching or rubbing herself with the roses; see Gallé Cejudo (2013) 358, who argues that two conditions for a 'fetish' are met in this passage of *Ep.* 54: subsitution and 'frotteurism', a paraphilia involving sexual gratification through rubbing.

47 (2019) esp. 218–223.

48 (2019) esp. 55–95.

'lover as gift' motif is not unique to these, and is common in epigram, but this particular expansion of epigrammatic material by both, the gift becoming both substitute for and role-player of the male sender, and physically enacting the man's penetrative and other sexual roles, is not found elsewhere; this in combination with the playfully paradoxical status of each gift as both penetrator and penetrated, as both more literally a sexual substitute for the male sender and less literally a gift that she will touch herself with; and in combination as well with an epistolary-metaliterary idea, makes them quite alike in many respects, without one being by any means a translation of the other. Rather, Philostratus, on my reading, as with Flora in the *Fasti* above (§1), is engaging with Ovid in a complex intertextuality that transposes a hypotext into a new scheme, Philostratus' set of *Erotic Epistles*, and within them the large subset of letters that privilege roses as the central erotic image. In this case it is not a transplant from a non-erotic to an erotic context, but an ingenious transformation of the ring into a garland of roses. Both authors make the 'lover as gift' theme their own, but Philostratus is writing with awareness of Ovid's unusual treatment of this common motif, and making his own further unusual variant to follow it. Philostratus' version is like Ovid's in several ways, but also clearly his own, both as part of the running theme of roses in his book of *Erotic Epistles*, and also because of the far darker tone—encapsulated in the ending, 'if she will not listen, consume her'[49]—typical of Philostratus' elegiac persona.[50]

Conclusions

There is enough evidence in these case studies, in the form of similarities at various levels combined in *Ep.* 55 with the explicit reference to being present in Rome and to exclusively Roman religious practice, to suggest that Philostratus very probably alluded to Latin elegiac poetry in at least some of the *Epistles*. If the possibility is accepted even in one case, there can no longer be any reason to refrain from seeking them out in other *Epistles*, or from supposing that other, less close parallels are possible allusions to Latin literature instead of ruling that out. To invent lost common sources is not sound scholarship when there are other explanations available, unless those other explanations are completely implausible. That Philostratus alludes to Latin literature is an explanation which

49 The darkest hint in the Ovidian poem is the far subtler threat *exire negabo, adstringens digitos orbe minore tuos:* 'I will refuse to leave your finger, and lessen my circle to keep firm' (lines 19–20).

50 Hodkinson (forthcoming a) with refs.

until a few years ago would have been thought completely implausible, due to the preconceptions of scholars about Greeks in this period and their attitude towards Latin; but this should no longer be the case.

The similarities which I have argued are allusions to Latin elegy in this chapter are not perfect matches: but of course, when dealing with allusion, as opposed to translation or very close paraphrase, we should not expect that. If allusions are recognised, then an author such as Philostratus is not likely to simply recollect or echo an earlier text; he will play games with the texts he alludes to, making them his own or capping them, which of course makes the fact of an allusion far harder to prove to begin with. Because of this, we should not expect any precise parallels to be very lengthy within the context of such short pieces, as Philostratus would naturally allude to a range of texts and alter the meanings and contexts of the originals. It is hoped, though, that the cumulative weight of similarities might persuade readers of at least the possibility that the *Epistles* may contain allusions to Latin elegy, and thus reveal a Philostratus who was willing to engage with Latin literature.

If so, the question of readership for the *Epistles* is raised: although it is not essential to appreciating them that the reader has read any Latin elegy, it adds an extra dimension if Philostratus' remaking of a Roman poetic genre in his prose letters is noticed, or indeed any of the specific allusions which contribute to that effect. Philostratus' ideal audience would therefore include other readers of contemporary Greek and of Roman literature. This would presumably include educated elites with whom Philostratus associated, possibly in Athens, and/or (perhaps more likely for the knowledge of Roman literature) in Rome; they could be ethnically Greek, Roman, or others. Philostratus might well have exchanged writings with other literati with the Imperial entourage, or elsewhere during his career Rome and around the Empire, who would have been comfortable with both Latin and Greek, and may have been familiar with at least some literature in both languages. It is not difficult to imagine a situation in which others in his circle could have appreciated works such as the *Epistles* including references to Latin elegy.