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OVID'S WIFE IN THE TRISTIA AND EPISTOLAE EX PONTO:
TRANSFORMING EROTIC ELEGY INTO CONJUGAL ELEGY

by

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(Under the Direction of T. KEITH DIX)

ABSTRACT

Augustus exiled Ovid to Tomis in AD 8 in part, the poet says, because of his *carmina*, the *Ars Amatoria*. Ovid presents the misfortunes of exile in two collections of elegiac epistles, the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*. As the recipient of nine epistles, Ovid's wife is his most frequent addressee. Other poems throughout the two works also mention her. Ovid models the persona of his wife in the exile poetry on characters he developed in the *Amores*, *Heroides*, and *Ars Amatoria*. She appears initially as an abandoned heroine, then as a beloved from whom Ovid seeks fulfillment of his needs, and eventually becomes a pupil in imperial courtship. The resulting "conjugal love elegy" does not replace his earlier erotic elegy, but reconfigures it as a means for Ovid to lament his misfortunes, present a new image for his poet-narrator, and immortalize his genius.

INDEX WORDS: Augustus, Context, Elegy, Epistolary Poetry, *Epistulae*, Exile, Latin, Love, Ovid, Ovid's wife, *Tristia*