

LOVE'S OTHER HAND: PROPERTIUS 1. 9. 23–24

necdum etiam palles, vero nec tangeris igni:
 haec est venturi prima favilla mali.
 tum magis Armenias cupies accedere tigris
 et magis infernae vincula nosse rotae, 20
 quam pueri totiens arcum sentire medullis
 et nihil iratae posse negare tuae.
 nullus Amor cuiquam facilis ita praebuit alas,
 ut non alterna presserit ille manu.
 nec te decipiat, quod sit satis illa parata: 25
 acrius illa subit, Pontice, si qua tua est,
 quippe ubi non liceat vacuos seducere ocellos,
 nec vigilare alio nomine cedat Amor.
 qui non ante patet, donec manus attigit ossa:
 quisquis es, assiduas a fuge blanditias! 30

The couplet on Love's offering "easy wings" to the lover is one of the most difficult and controversial in an author noted for his challenging metaphorical expressions.¹ Commentators have been in substantial disagreement over the meaning of both *praebuit alas* (23) and *alterna manu* (24). There are thus essentially five schools of thought on the couplet's overall significance: (1) that Love allows the lover to grasp him by the wings, so that he is free in turn to grab the lover by the throat, either with a hand that alternately rests and attacks (M. Rothstein)² or with alternating thrusts of the right and left hand (P. J. Enk, H.-P. Stahl);³ (2) that Love flies down ("offers wings") to the lover, so that he can shoot him with his bow, operated by an "alternating" gesture of the hands (V. Eckert);⁴ (3) that Love alternately releases and constrains the lover, who is imagined as a bird tied to a string (G. Luck, P. Fedeli);⁵ (4) that Love gives wings to the lover and harnesses him to a chariot, controlled by alternate gestures either of pulling and slackening the reins (J. P. Postgate)⁶ or of the right and left hand tugging on the reins (J. A. Davison);⁷ (5) that Love gives wings to the lover with one hand and in turn pushes

1. For examples of confusion over the couplet's meaning, see the standard commentaries of H. E. Butler and E. A. Barber, *The Elegies of Propertius* (Oxford, 1933), pp. 167–68; W. A. Camps, *Propertius: Elegies, Book I* (Cambridge, 1961), p. 66; L. Richardson, *Propertius: Elegies I–IV* (Norman, 1977), p. 172; R. I. V. Hodge and R. A. Buttimore, *The "Monobiblos" of Propertius* (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 135–36. Some editors have resorted to emendation of verse 24 (e.g., Burmann's *utraque* for *alterna*, Barber's *vice* for *manu* [later withdrawn], or Phillimore's *alternam senserit . . . manum*). None of these conjectures is attractive.

2. *Die Elegien des Sextus Propertius*, vol. 1 (Berlin, 1898), pp. 62–63. He is followed by E. V. D'Arbela, *Properzio: Elegie*, vol. 1 (Milan, 1964), p. 182, and in regard to 23, by J. S. Phillimore, "In Propertium Re-ractiones Selectae," *CR* 33 (1919): 93–94, who, however, emends 24 (see n. 1 above).

3. Cf. K. Prinz, "Properz-Lesungen," *WS* 54 (1936): 93–95; Enk, *Sex. Propertii Elegiarum Liber I (Monobiblos)*, vol. 2 (Leiden, 1946), pp. 91–92; Stahl, *Propertius: "Love" and "War"* (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 67–68. This also seems to be the approach very tentatively preferred by Richardson, *Elegies I–IV*, p. 172.

4. *Untersuchungen zur Einheit von Properz I* (Heidelberg, 1985), pp. 309–10, n. 45.

5. Cf. Luck, rev. of W. A. Camps, *Propertius: Elegies, Book I* (Cambridge, 1961), *Gnomon* 34 (1963): 158; W. Stroh, *Die römische Liebeselegie als werbende Dichtung* (Amsterdam, 1971), p. 27, n. 62; Fedeli, *Sesto Properzio: Il primo libro delle Elegie* (Florence, 1980), pp. 243–44. This interpretation was earlier proposed as a possibility by J. P. Postgate, *Select Elegies of Propertius*² (London, 1884), pp. 77–78, who however preferred view (4).

6. *Select Elegies*, p. 78.

7. "Propertius i. 9. 23–4," *CR* 62 (1948): 57–58.

him down with the other hand (W. R. Smyth, D. R. Shackleton Bailey).⁸ I shall argue on the basis of literary parallels for a modified version of the last view, emphasizing that the process described is not a single act (as Smyth believes) but an ongoing cyclical "alternation" of the two hands, appropriately expressing the paradoxical nature of Amor's influence.

The other views all present major difficulties. The first view would offer an image of the lover actively fighting against Love, wrestling with the god's wings while himself being grabbed by the throat. This can only serve as a figure for attempting to overcome and control the emotion,⁹ which is not, however, what Ponticus is described as either trying or wanting to do elsewhere in the poem. Moreover, this explanation has difficulty accounting for the significance of *alterna manu* in 24: why should Love grasp the lover with alternating hand or hands, instead of both hands? Under this interpretation, both of Love's hands would be free, and the lover's two hands preoccupied with grasping Love's wings; there is no need for Love to attack the lover only *alterna manu*.¹⁰ Also lacking is any clear literary parallel for this scene: out of all the representations of Eros or Amor in ancient poetry, we do not elsewhere see him involved in a wrestling match with the lover. Rothstein offers the parallel of Dido playing with Cupid disguised as Ascanius (*Aen.* 1. 657–722),¹¹ but this scene is clearly different from the more overtly hostile encounter proposed here.¹²

The second view fails to provide adequate parallels either for *praeibit alas* meaning "fly toward" or *alterna manu* referring to an arrow shot; it also has the disadvantage of making 23–24 a rather feeble rendition of the Love's arrow topos which has already been evoked much more vividly in 21 (*pueri totiens arcum sentire medullis*). In terms of logical sequence, it does not make good sense to describe the lover as painfully wounded by Love's arrow in 21, and then to depict

8. Smyth, "Interpretationes Propertianae," *CQ* 43 (1949): 119–21; Shackleton Bailey, *Propertiana* (Cambridge, 1956), pp. 27–28. This also appears to be the approach tentatively favored by Hodge and Buttimore, *"Monobiblos"*, pp. 135–36.

9. For the traditional idea of "doing battle" with desire in Greek philosophical texts, see the discussion and references in M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 2: *The Use of Pleasure*, trans. R. Hurley (New York, 1985), pp. 66–67, 259–60, nn. 11–16.

10. Stahl, *Propertius*, pp. 67–68, tries to explain *alterna manu* by saying that Love is "not close enough to use both hands at the same time: he must stretch out one arm to reach the lover (while the other arm and shoulder move backward). This seems plausible because the lover's arms are longer than those of Amor who is a boy." It is not, however, so plausible if Amor's wingspan at least equals the lover's armspan. In any event, the contortions involved in this interpretation hardly present an obvious picture; this would not provide an effective illustration of Love's power to subdue the lover, when he can just barely reach the lover's throat. Rothstein also seems to have been aware of the vulnerability of his thesis on this point, since he changed his interpretation of *alterna manu* by the time of his third edition (= *Propertius Sextus Elegien*³, vol. 1 [Dublin and Zurich, 1966], p. 120), to be "mit der Hand, die zwischen freundlichen und feindlichen Handlungen, zwischen *alas praebere* und *premere* wechselt." This is, as I shall argue, close to being the correct interpretation of *alterna manu*, but it is impossible with Rothstein's construction of 23 (which he maintains even in the third edition), since *alas praebere* is not an action of Love's hand if he is allowing the lover to grasp the tips of his wings; it is merely an action of his wings, and leaves very unclear what Rothstein means by "freundlichen Handlungen" of the hand. This interpretation of 24 can work only if Love is actually offering a set of wings to the lover with his hand.

11. *Elegien*, p. 62 (= *Elegien*³, p. 120).

12. Stahl, *Propertius*, p. 68, believes that the situation must have been modeled on a familiar work of art. But there are no real parallels for it anywhere in the abundant extant iconography of Amor. If there was an artistic model, it can only have been a rare one, which Propertius could hardly have relied on to make the situation clear to his audience.

Love as coming to help him in 23, only to wound him with the arrow in 24. The poem starts with Ponticus already in love.

The third and fourth schools of thought both rely on implied images to interpret 24. While there is a somewhat stronger literary tradition behind the idea of Love as a charioteer than there is in support of the bird-on-a-string image,¹³ both images seem overly specific in interpreting *alterna presserit manu*. Neither is so pervasive in elegiac poetry as to be automatically evoked by the words of 23–24, and it may be demanding too much of a reader's imagination to expect that these images will be called up with no more specific verbal signposts than we have. These constructions also yield a distorted view of the couplet's overall significance: both string and reins suggest the problem of freedom and constraint in love, which is certainly present in the poem (cf. 3–6, 22, 27–28), but is perhaps not so primary a theme in the immediate context as that of pleasure and pain (the focus of 17–22, building up to our couplet).

However, the fourth view is correct in its interpretation of 23 as Love "giving wings" to the lover, based on parallels ranging from Anacreon to the Greek Anthology.¹⁴ That *praebuit alas* can have this sense is clearly demonstrated by Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 13. 606.¹⁵ I do not think Smyth is correct, however, in seeing an allusion here to Daedalus and Icarus, or to suppose that Love is detaching his own wings and giving them to the lover.¹⁶ The prevalence of winged phallus-birds in Greek iconography¹⁷ and the famous scene of giving wings to the new citizens of Cloudcuckooland in Aristophanes' *Birds* (1305–1469)¹⁸ suggest that such divinely bestowed wings are infinitely replicable, rather than being limited to one or two pairs. Verses 23–24 are clearly gnomic (with a gnomic perfect) and generic, referring to the wings that every love gives to every lover.

13. Ar. *Nub.* 761–63 and Σ *Nub.* 763 refer to the practice of tying a bird to a string, but it has no relation to Love and hardly seems to be a literary motif, given the absence of other references to it. The idea of Love as a charioteer is better attested: cf. Anac. frag. 360. 3–4 PMG; Ibyc. frag. 287. 6–7 PMG; Hermesianax 7. 83–84 P; Meleager, *Anth. Pal.* 12. 86. 2, 12. 119. 2, and the other parallels cited by Davison, "Propertius," p. 57.

14. Cf. Anac. frag. 378 PMG; Pl. *Phdr.* 249A, 251B–D, 256B–D; Meleager, *Anth. Pal.* 12. 132. 4; Paulus Silent. *Anth. Pal.* 5. 268; Ov. *Met.* 1. 540, and the other parallels adduced by Smyth, "Interpretationes," pp. 119–20; Shackleton Bailey, *Propertiana*, pp. 27–28; and J. C. Kamerbeek, "Propertius I 9, 23 Confertur cum Fragmento Bucolico Graeco Vindobonensi (Page, *Literary Papyri* I 123,12)," *Mnemosyne* 4 (1951): 80. A. Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet* (Princeton, 1986), p. 156, also sees the metaphor as implicit in Sappho frag. 31. 6 L.–P. and Alcaeus frag. 283. 3–6 L.–P.

15. Smyth, "Interpretationes," p. 120, seems to intend this line (incorrectly cited as 12. 604). His other parallel, Claudian 8. 558, is not quite the same idea, meaning rather that Pegasus "offers wings" in the sense of allowing a rider on his back. That *praebere* can have the sense of "hand something over to someone" in Propertius is indisputable: cf. 2. 7. 13, 3. 7. 3, 3. 21. 4. Although one does not normally think of doing this with body parts, the case of removable wings may be special.

16. "Interpretationes," pp. 119–21. Here I agree with Shackleton Bailey, *Propertiana*, pp. 27–28.

17. For illustrations and discussions of this common motif in vase paintings, lamps, and stone relief, see J. Marcadé, *Eros Kalos: Essay on Erotic Elements in Greek Art* (Geneva, 1965), pp. 50–57, 103–5; E. Vermeule, "Some Erotica in Boston," *AK* 12 (1969): 14, and pl. 11; A. Mulas, *Eros in Antiquity* (New York, 1978), p. 118; E. C. Keuls, *The Reign of the Phallus* (New York, 1985), pp. 76–77, 80. See esp. the interesting interpretation of the motif's significance by W. Arrowsmith, "Aristophanes' *Birds*: The Fantasy Politics of Eros," *Arion* n.s. 1 (1973): 136–37, 163–67.

18. Earlier in the play, the parabasis antepirrheme (785–800) explained that "nothing is better than growing wings," because of the absolute freedom from human laws and restrictions which they provide—esp. the freedom to fulfill physical desires without hindrance, including those of sex (793–96). On this scene, see Arrowsmith, "Fantasy Politics," pp. 136–37. While I would certainly not wish to argue that Aristophanes was a direct influence on Propertius, his play demonstrates that the idea of "growing wings" or "being given wings" was already a literary topos with complex associations.

The repetitive and generic nature of the process is also, I think, the point of *alterna manu* in 24. Smyth goes to some lengths to interpret *alterna manu* as simply "with the other hand" or "in turn," but the closest parallel he can produce for this noniterative meaning of *alternus* is in Statius.¹⁹ Nevertheless, Smyth is right to see in the phrase a contrast between the actions of each hand, being those of verse 23 and 24 respectively. The juxtaposition of 23, where the lover is enabled by the Love-god to soar aloft in his ecstasy, with 24, where the lover is pushed down by the Love-god's hand,²⁰ creates a clear antithesis between elevation and downfall of fortune, emotional elation and depression, love's pleasure and pain—tensions which are at the very heart of Propertius' poetics and recur throughout the *Mono-biblos*.²¹ Moreover, *totiens* in 21 underscores that Love's pain (and presumably also its hope) is experienced repeatedly by every lover.

The idea of Love's changing favor is certainly well attested in Propertius: 2. 18. 21–22 ("saepe Cupido / huic malus esse solet, cui bonus ante fuit") shows the same declination from good to bad as we see in 1. 9. 23–24. That the fortunes of love can change in either direction is clear from 2. 8. 7–8:²² "omnia vertuntur: certe vertuntur amores; / vinceris aut vincis, haec in amore rota est." "Conquering" corresponds to soaring aloft with Love's wings; "being conquered" corresponds to being pressed down by Love's hand. Clearly, the wheel of love in 2. 8. 8 is a sub-species of the familiar Wheel of Fortune,²³ as is acknowledged by the prefatory *omnia vertuntur* in 2. 8. 7, introducing the subclass of *amores*. While there is no wheel image in either 1. 9. 23–24 or 2. 18. 21–22, its application to love in 2. 8. 7–8 indicates a perceived congruence between Love's changing favor and that of Fortune generally.²⁴

In *Aeneid* 11. 425–27, Vergil specifically uses the adjective *alterna* to describe Fortune's repeated changes of favor:

19. "Interpretationes," p. 121, citing Stat. *Theb.* 2. 182–83, where *alternus* clearly is synonymous with *alter*. However, Stat. *Silv.* 3. 3. 49–50 (his other parallel) is unconvincing, since this context, like Prop. 1. 9. 23–24, describes a universal law that is endlessly reapplied and repeated; indeed, this passage tends to support seeing Prop. 1. 9. 23–24 as a cyclical alternation of fortunes.

20. The verb *premere* in Propertius usually refers to downward pressure, particularly if it is applied to a person (as in 1. 1. 4 "capit impositis pressit Amor pedibus," 1. 13. 22 "Taenarius facili pressit amore deus," 3. 9. 5–6 "turpe est, quod nequeas, capiti committere pondus / et pressum inflexo mox dare terga genu," 3. 18. 9 "his pressus Stygias vultum demisit in undas"; cf. 1. 10. 7, 2. 15. 42, 2. 29. 35). It less often refers to lateral pressure (cf. 2. 1. 10, 3. 9. 41, 3. 10. 14), but never designates pulling, as the verb must if we understand either the bird-on-a-string or lover-yoked-to-a-chariot metaphor here. 1. 1. 4, involving Amor's action on the lover, is without question the closest analogue to v. 24.

21. For the mixture of pleasure and pain in love, particularly in the form of former happiness and present distress, cf. 1. 5. 9–10, 1. 11. 25–26, 1. 12. 7–14, 1. 13. 5–10, 1. 18. 7–8. On the general background of this paradox in Greek poetic tradition, see Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet*, pp. 3–9.

22. Smyth, "Interpretationes," p. 121, notes the parallel of 2. 8. 7–8 and 2. 18. 21–22, but fails to see the more general conventional pattern of which these passages are a part.

23. The idea of Fortune's alternations forming a "wheel" or κύκλος goes back at least as far as the fifth century B.C. For general discussions of the tradition, see G. Norwood, *Pindar* (Berkeley, 1945), pp. 132, 253–55, and D. M. Robinson, "The Wheel of Fortune," *CP* 41 (1946): 207–16. For occurrences of the topos in Latin literature, see K. F. Smith, *The Elegies of Albius Tibullus* (New York, 1913), pp. 306–7.

24. For the changing favors of Fortune applied specifically to the erotic context, note also Tib. 1. 5. 69–70 ("at tu, qui potior nunc es, mea furta timeto: / versatur celeri Fors levis orbe rotae"). D. M. Robinson, "The Villa of Good Fortune at Olynthos," *AJA* 38 (1934): 503–5, notes the inscription Ἀρροδίτη καλὴ specifically connected with a late fifth-century mosaic of the Wheel of Fortune, testifying to the motif's association with erotic fortunes even at its earliest stage.

multa dies varique labor mutabilis aevi
 rettulit in melius, multos alterna revisens
 lusit et in solido rursus Fortuna locavit.

Fortune's movements are also described as a process of raising men to the sky with wings and then dashing them to the ground, as we see in Horace, *Carmina* 1. 34. 14–16 (“hinc apicem rapax / Fortuna cum stridore acuto / sustulit, hic posuisse gaudet”). The importance of the god's hands in this alternating movement of throwing aloft and pushing down is stressed in Pindar, *Pythian* 8. 76–78:²⁵

δαίμων δὲ παρίσχει.
 ἄλλοτ' ἄλλον ὑπερθε βάλλων, ἄλλον δ' ὑπὸ χειρῶν,
 μέτρῳ καταβαίνει.

After cautioning the victorious athlete to remember the humiliating fate of his defeated opponents, Pindar continues by comparing the glory of success to soaring on high with wings, only later to face a harsh fall to earth (*Pyth.* 8. 88–94), thus illustrating the truth of the earlier maxim concerning the god's movements. As in Propertius, flying with newly gained wings is assimilated to being raised aloft by the god's hand. It is clear that all these descriptions of Fortune's actions involve a continuous pattern of changing favor and disfavor, both within the life of each man and as she turns her attention to different men. While I would not necessarily argue that Propertius is directly influenced by Pindar in depicting Amor as he does, there is good reason to believe that Propertius was familiar with Pindar's odes,²⁶ and that Pindar would have been one of many literary sources for Fortune's alternation, suggesting to him an equal applicability to the changing favors of Amor (as seen most clearly in 2. 8. 7–8).

It is clear that *alterna manu* can refer to separate and even opposite actions of each hand, which occur in succession but not simultaneously. Scholars advancing the view that Love is described as grabbing the lover's throat with alternating hands have appealed to Propertius' use of the phrase *alterna manu* in 1. 11. 12 (in reference to swimming) and in 4. 7. 18 (in reference to climbing down a rope), arguing that Propertius must use the phrase to designate a hand-over-hand movement, that is, one in which the two hands are preforming the same action.²⁷ But it

25. One finds the same emphasis on antithetical movements of the god's hands, expressing favor or disfavor, in a specifically erotic context in Pindar's address to Hora, herald of Aphrodite (*Nem.* 8. 1–3): “ὦρα πότνια, κάρυξ Ἀφροδίτας ἀμβροσίαν φιλοτάτων, / ἃ τε παρθενήϊος παίδων τ' ἐφίξοισα γλεφάρους, / τὸν μὲν ἡμέροις ἀνάγκας χερσὶ βαστάξεις, ἕτερον δ' ἑτέραις. H. Fraenkel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy*, trans. M. Hadas and J. Willis (Oxford, 1975), p. 483, n. 5, notes the parallel between this passage and Prop. 1. 9. 23–24, but neglects the even more obvious parallel of *Pyth.* 8. Note also the late epigram of Palladas Alexandrinus on Tyche (*Anth. Pal.* 10. 80. 3–4 καὶ τοὺς μὲν κατὰ γούσα πάλιν σφαιρηθὼν ἀείρει, / τοὺς δ' ἀπὸ τῶν νεφελῶν εἰς αἶθρην κατὰγει).

26. It may be significant that one of the wall-paintings in the villa believed to be that of Propertius depicts the myth of Iamus' birth, for which Pindar is our sole extant literary source; see M. Guarducci, “La Casa di Propertio ad Assisi,” in *Bimillenario della morte di Propertio: Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi Propertiani* (Assisi, 1986), p. 139. For Pindar's general influence among the Augustan poets and their familiarity with his work, see M. Brozek, “De Scriptioribus Latinis Antiquis Pindari Laudatoribus et Aemulis,” *Eos* 59 (1971): 101–4; J. H. Waszink, “Horaz und Pindar,” *A&A* 12 (1966): 111–24; L. P. Wilkinson, “Pindar and the Proem to the Third Georgic,” in *Forschungen zur römischen Literatur: Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag von Karl Büchner* (Wiesbaden, 1970), pp. 286–90; P. Wilson, “Pindar and his Reputation in Antiquity,” *PCPS* n.s. 26 (1980): 97–99.

27. Cf. Davison, “Propertius,” pp. 57–58; Stahl, *Propertius*, p. 327, n. 33.

is a mistake to think that the adjective's semantic range is so confined: *alternus* is frequently used in reference to reciprocal acts of two different people (cf. 1. 10. 10 *alternis vocibus*, 4. 5. 40 *alternis litibus*),²⁸ and in Ovid, *alterna manu* refers to the blows given and received by combatants.²⁹ 2. 12. 7 clearly uses the image of the *alterna unda* as a metaphor for the up-and-down movements of erotic fortune. Moreover, as the Vergilian passage cited above (*Aen.* 11. 425–27) shows, *alternus* can refer to a god's changing attitudes of favor and disfavor. This alternation of changing attitudes can easily be expressed by the image of successive actions undertaken by each of the god's hands, given the parallels we have discussed and the frequent description in narrative poetry of separate actions undertaken by a character's left and right hands.³⁰

But the best parallel for understanding the use of *alterna manu* here is another passage in the Monobiblos, from 1. 20. 25–30, a poem that is likely to be earlier than 1. 9:³¹

hunc duo sectati fratres, Aquilonia proles,
hunc super et Zetes, hunc super et Calais,
oscula suspensis instabant carpere palmis,
oscula et alterna ferre supina fuga.
ille sub extrema pendens secluditur ala
et volucres ramo summovet insidias.

This passage is itself nearly as controversial as 1. 9. 23–24, but the construction which I find most plausible is that advanced by Camps and Richardson: the Boreads are to be imagined as attacking Hylas both from above (27 *suspensis palmis*) and from below, as they turn over on their backs to fly up and kiss Hylas' lowered face (28 *oscula ferre supina*).³² That these attacks are continually being made from both directions is suggested by Hylas' dual means of defense in 29–30, where he wards off the Boread on top by covering his head under his arm³³ and

28. Cf. Hor. *Sat.* 1. 8. 40, *Ars* 81 (of dialogue); Verg. *Ecl.* 3. 59, 5. 14, 7. 18–19 (of amoebaeon song); Ov. *Met.* 3. 385 (of echoes).

29. *Fast.* 2. 234 (*volneraque alterna dantque feruntque manu*), *Tr.* 5. 5. 34 (*alterna qui periere manu*). Cf. *Fast.* 1. 176 (*et damus alternas accipimusque preces?*); the "alternation" is as much in the giving and receiving as in coming from both sides.

30. Cf. Catull. 64. 311–13; Verg. *Aen.* 2. 443–44, 2. 552–53, 11. 862; Ov. *Ars am.* 3. 319, *Met.* 2. 874–75, 9. 522, 15. 655–56, *Fast.* 1. 99, 5. 607. The actions of the hands may even be antithetical, as in Archil. frag. 184 W. τῇ μὲν ὕδωρ ἐφόρει δολοφρονέουσα χειρὶ, θῆτῆρῃ δὲ πῦρ.

31. With only 50 percent disyllabic pentameter endings, 1. 20 would seem to be one of the earliest poems in the Monobiblos, as opposed to 1. 9, which, with 88.2 percent disyllabic pentameter endings, is far closer to the technique of Book 2, and is thus probably one of the latest components of the Monobiblos.

32. Camps, *Propertius*, pp. 95–96; Richardson, *Propertius*, p. 205. D. R. Shackleton Bailey, "Interpretations of Propertius," *CQ* 41 (1947): 89, and *Propertiana*, p. 58, conclusively shows that *oscula ferre* must mean that the Boreads bring kisses to Hylas, not that they take them away. Accordingly, *supina* must refer to the Boreads turning themselves in such a way as to face upward, not to Hylas' upturned face, as many commentators assume. Shackleton Bailey himself, however, misconstrues *supina* in taking it to mean that "the brothers swoop down from behind, one after the other, and kiss Hylas' upturned face." The epithet refers rather to a posture similar to lying on the back, which can only be designed to kiss Hylas' downturned face.

33. This interpretation of the line originates with A. H. Wratishaw, "Notes," *Journal of Philology* 1. 2 (1868): 152–53, and is followed by Camps, *Propertius*, p. 96, and Richardson, *Propertius*, p. 205. It provides a much more natural means of defense against aerial attack than interpretations that assume *ala* to refer to one of the Boreads' wings from which the boy hangs—whether the tip of the wing (cf. Enk, *Monobiblos*, pp. 185–86; H. Heubner, "Propertiana," *Hermes* 89 [1961]: 383; Fedeli, *Properzio*, pp. 473–74) or the joint of wing and shoulder (cf. Postgate, *Select Elegies*, p. 98; Butler and Barber, *Elegies*, p. 185).

shoos away the Boread trying to kiss his face from below by waving a branch in front of him.³⁴ Clearly, the image of the beleaguered boy is more striking and emphatic if he is having to defend himself from both directions at once, rather than against one form of attack only. The hexameter thus gives the means of defense corresponding to the means of attack in the hexameter of the previous couplet, and the pentameters correspond in the same way.³⁵ If the Boreads are indeed attacking Hylas alternately from above and below, as Hylas' dual defense suggests, then the phrase *alterna fuga* in 28 must refer to both forms of the Boreads' attacks,³⁶ not just to the attacks from below described in 28. Accordingly, *alterna fuga* applies not only to the pentameter, but refers to the two separate actions of the hexameter and pentameter as being those which alternate. It therefore provides an exact analogue to *alterna manu* in 1. 9. 24 (indeed, it appears in the same metrical position),³⁷ which also describes the alternating motions of each hand as depicted first by the hexameter (giving wings to the lover) and then by the pentameter (pushing him down with the other hand). And as *alterna fuga* helps show, *alterna manu* designates a continuing process of alternation, not just one movement of each hand.

In addition to according better with the specific language of the passage and with parallels from literary tradition, our interpretation fits 1. 9. 23–24 into its immediate context better. Verses 17–22, leading up to the couplet, concentrate on images of coming pain (18 *venturi mali*)—fire (17–18), Armenian tigers (19), Ixion's wheel (20), and Love's arrow penetrating the marrow (21). The immediately following couplets (25–28) instruct Ponticus not to be deceived by appearances: although his slave-girl may appear to be an "easy" target (25 *satis illa parata*), she is really the most dangerous one because of her continual proximity. Verse 29 warns that Love's true intentions are not apparent until he has reached the marrow with his dart and inflicted the ultimate pain. The focus of both what precedes and what follows 23–24 is therefore on Love's pain, which conceals itself at first (in this case, as an "easy" slave-girl) only to be revealed later (here, as a woman in the house from whom the lover cannot escape). Such an emphasis is best correlated with an interpretation of 23–24 as a contrast between unsuspecting present happiness and impending erotic pain. This we have if we construe Love's "easy wings" in 23 as the fluttering excitement brought the lover by his new-found relationship with an easy slave-girl, and Love's hand pressing down in 24 as the pain of the lover's subsequently discovering his newly acquired emotional burden. As *totiens* in 21 makes clear, this alternation of Love's hope and Love's pain is repeated many times in each lover's experience. Among the proposed interpretations of this

34. This interpretation would give special force to the *sub-* prefix in *summovet*.

35. On this parallelism, see Heubner, "Propertiana," p. 383, and Fedeli, *Propertio*, p. 474.

36. It has been demonstrated that *fuga* can refer to any rapid motion, not just flight away from something: see Rothstein, *Elegien*, p. 131 (= *Elegien*³, p. 195); Shackleton Bailey, "Interpretations," p. 89; Fedeli, *Propertio*, p. 473.

37. On the favored . . . A / . . . S word-order in elegiac pentameters, see J. Heyken, *Über die Stellung der Epitheta bei den römischen Elegikern* (Kiel, 1916), pp. 11–23; H. Patzer, "Zum Sprachstil des neoterischen Hexameters," *MH* 12 (1955): 87–89; D. O. Ross, *Style and Tradition in Catullus* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), pp. 136–37. That both 1. 9. 24 and 1. 20. 28 feature the same formulaic word order suggests that Propertius may have had 1. 20. 28 in mind when writing 1. 9. 24, as opposed to 1. 11. 12 (where *alterna manu* refers to swimming) which uses the A . . . / . . . S form, like 4. 7. 18.

couplet, ours is the one which clarifies and sharpens its antithetical structure the best, and which is truest to the “ups” and “downs” of romantic experience.³⁸

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WAS AUGUSTUS A VISITOR AT THE PANATHENAIA?

In two separate articles that, however, are identical as to the point discussed here, M. Hoff has recently claimed that Augustus visited Athens in 12 B.C. and that he participated in the Panathenaic festival.¹ He adduces as evidence Cassius Dio 54. 28. 3. Dio reports there that when Augustus received word of Agrippa's serious illness, he immediately left where he happened to be and hastened to see him, but arrived in Campania only after Agrippa's death. According to Hoff, he left from Athens, because Dio says of him: ἔτυχε δὲ ἐν τοῖς Παναθηναίοις ὀπλομαχίας ἀγῶνας τῶν παίδων ὀνόματι τιθεῖς. The wording, in fact, implies more than a spectator's role: it makes Augustus sponsor of gladiatorial contests at the Panathenaia in the names of his (adopted) sons.

All of this seems very odd. First of all, gladiatorial combats were never part of the Panathenaia. The idea that Augustus could have introduced them and sponsored them in the name of his adopted sons is hardly tenable: what could have been the purpose with regard to Athenian spectators? Furthermore, the Panathenaia of 12 B.C. would have been the lesser, annual event, since the greater Panathenaia only occurred every third year of the Olympiad. Those had been celebrated in 14 B.C. and would again be held in 10 B.C. It would be rather surprising to see Augustus involve himself in the minor event. Be that as it may, Hoff's thesis collapses before the fact that the Panathenaia, the greater as well as the lesser, were held in mid-summer, whereas Agrippa died in March.

It has long been known that the Panathenaia took place during the last decade of Hekatombaion, the first month of the Athenian year that began in July, and that their principal day was Hekatombaion 28.² The larger, penteteric festival may have lasted from Hekatombaion 23 to 30, whereas the annual event, occurring during

1. “Civil Disobedience and Unrest in Augustan Athens,” *Hesperia* 58 (1989): 267–76, esp. p. 275; “The Early History of the Roman Agora at Athens,” in *The Greek Renaissance in the Roman Empire*, ed. S. Walker and A. Cameron (London, 1989), p. 5: “Augustus' final recorded visit occurred in 12 B.C. when the emperor was attending the Panathenaic festival. Dio reports that while Augustus was in Athens Agrippa fell ill in Rome and died before Augustus was able to return to Italy” (same text in *Hesperia* article, except that there the words “in Rome” are missing and “he” stands for “and”).

2. A. Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum* (Leipzig, 1898), p. 52. The basic testimonies are Proc. in *Ti.* 9B: τὰ γὰρ μεγάλα (Παναθήναια) τοῦ Ἑκατομβαιῶνος γίνετο τρίτῃ ἀπιόντος, and schol. on Pl. *Resp.* 327A: καὶ ταῦτα (τὰ μεγάλα Παναθήναια) μὲν ἦγον εἰς ἄστυ Ἑ[κα]τομβαιῶνος μηνὸς τρίτῃ ἀπιόντος. See J. D. Mikalson, *The Sacred and Civic Calendar of the Athenian Year* (Princeton, 1975), pp. 33–34.