

NOTES ON PROPERTIUS BOOKS I AND II

I offer some notes on the text of Propertius. In the apparatus to individual passages Ω is employed to indicate the archetype, i.e. the consensus of N and A. Only two quires of A are extant, and after 2. 1. 63 its place is taken by descendants: F, L (2. 21. 3 ff.) and P. These derive more immediately from a manuscript of Petrarch (here called *II*), copied from A in the Sorbonne in 1333, and now lost. The delta mss. (DVVo.) I discard; they are too interpolated and contaminated to aid in the reconstruction of *II*. They may contain some elements of truth independent of N and A/*II*, but J. L. P. Butrica¹ has shown that another group of mss. headed by Vat. Lat. 3273 has a stronger claim to be cited in the apparatus for these readings, as it antedates Δ . However, as the matter is controversial and not of vital importance for my discussions, the group is here ignored. In the absence of a satisfactory arrangement of the humanistic conjectures into groups akin to those introduced by Mynors in his Catullus,² I use the age-old catch-all ζ for unauthoritative readings found in fifteenth-century mss.

I refer to the following editions: Vulpius (Padua, 1755); Burman/Santen (Utrecht, 1780); Butler (London, 1905); Butler and Barber (Oxford, 1933); Enk (Book I) (Leiden, 1946); Camps, Book I (Cambridge, 1961), Book II (Cambridge, 1967); Richardson (Norman, Oklahoma, 1977); Hanslik (Leipzig, 1979); also to Enk, P. J., *Ad Propertii Carmina Commentarius Criticus* (Zutphen, 1911); Platnauer, M., *Latin Elegiac Verse* (Cambridge, 1951); Shackleton Bailey, D. R., *Propertiana* (Cambridge, 1956); and Smyth, W. R., *Thesaurus Criticus ad Sexti Propertii Textum* (Leiden, 1970).

1. 1. 31–6

uos remanete, quibus facili deus annuit aure,
 sitis et in tuto semper amore pares.
 in me nostra Venus noctes exercet amaras
 et nullo uacuu tempore defit Amor.
 hoc, moneo, uitate malum: sua quemque moretur
 cura, neque assueto mutet amore locum. 35

32 et] ut Richards 33 in me] me non Housman noctes] uoces ζ , ci. Postgate

In line 33 recent commentators have accepted that *nostra Venus* means 'Venus, whom we lovers serve'. In itself, the phrase might mean 'my goddess' (i.e. Cynthia), and such variation between first person singular and plural is common enough in Propertius. But the sense of *noster* (= *meus*) is clear in other examples, as it is not here. The leading idea of the preceding couplet is 'uos, amantes'; the leading idea of this is 'ego, amans'; *nostra Venus* is the goddess who patronises both. With this phrase Propertius brings together himself as an unsuccessful lover and those to whom Love is favourable. It is because of this unity that he can act as an adviser to all lovers.

About the remainder of the line no consensus has yet appeared. I shall examine the difficulties inherent in each of the approaches so far made.

(a) Butler translates: 'Against me the goddess plies nights of bitterness', and comments 'The *noctes amarae* are regarded as weapons in the hands of Venus'. Enk

¹ Unpublished Toronto thesis, 1978: 'The Manuscript Tradition of Propertius'. The University of Toronto Press advertises a forthcoming revised version, *Phoenix Supplementary Volume 17*.

² Oxford, 1958.

in his *Commentarius Criticus* follows the same line; and Shackleton Bailey considers this a 'barely possible interpretation', but, after listing a large number of cases where *exerceo* does bear some such meaning, concludes that '*exercere noctes* in this sense is... much bolder than any comparable expression'. The examples he quotes fall into two groups, abstract nouns such as *regnum* (Livy 5. 2. 8), *saevitiam* (Livy 7. 4. 3), *contentiones* (Tacitus, *Ann.* 13. 28. 5), and weapons such as *tela* (Accius, ap. Cic. *Fam.* 7. 33. 1) or *fulmina* (Claud. *Cons. Stil.* 2. 29). Only Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 7. 786³ stands out as being bold: '*uanos exercet in aera morsus*'. But there the sense is quite clear: a poetic circumlocution for 'the dog bites the empty air'. There is no verb 'to night'.

Even allowing for Propertius' freedom of diction, we do not have here a satisfactory explanation of verse 33.

(b) Butler also suggests as an alternative: 'In my case the goddess vexes my nights with agony', taking *amaras* as proleptic and *in me* as in line 17. Butler and Barber prefer this interpretation, and Enk in his edition of Book I claims '*noctes exercet amaras = uexat meas noctes*'. Shackleton Bailey, in his 1949 article,⁴ notes that *in me... (meas) noctes* is an awkward combination. In fact the lack of *meas* is crucial. *Exerceo* meaning 'vex, harass' is very rare without a personal object. I list the examples I have found in *Th.L.L.* and *OLD*, and the commentators' own contributions:

(i) Plautus, *Miles Gloriosus* 626: '*Hancine aetatem exercere mei amoris gratia.*' But *aetatem* is in fact personal (see *OLD* 3) and Nixon in the Loeb reasonably translates 'But to harass him at his age with my love affair?'.

(ii) Catullus 71. 3: '*aemulus iste tuus, qui uestrum exercet amorem.*' I think the lexicographers have misunderstood; the meaning is 'who carries on your affair', i.e. goes to bed with your girlfriend. *uestrum*, where *tuum* would be expected, wittily expresses the appropriation of the addressee's love.

(iii) Vergil, *Aen.* 8. 377-8: '*nec te, carissime coniunx, | incassumue tuos uolui exercere labores.*' Fordyce translates 'put you or your endeavours to work'. In any case, the combination of personal object, and impersonal object so closely associated with the personal, is quite different from Propertius' line.

(iv) Lucretius 5. 1424: '*aurum et purpura curis | exercent hominum uitam.*' *hominum uitam = homines per uitam*. No such equation can be made in Propertius; we have no *meas*.

(v) Livy 21. 16. 4: '*Sardos... lacesisse magis quam exercuisse Romana arma.*' 'The Sardinians had provoked Rome without giving her soldiers practice in war.'

(vi) Silius 13. 544: '*Rhadamanthus... mortem exercet inanem.*' As *Th.L.L.* notes, *mortem = mortuos*.

(vii) Valerius Maximus 8. 3. 2: '*inuitatis foro latratibus adsidue tribunalia exercendo.*' At last, a real example of an impersonal object, and the verb actually meaning 'to trouble', but not of course a parallel to the supposed use of Propertius. There is no sign of a proleptic adjective to confuse a daring new formation. Even if our line had ended with *amaritudine*, it would have begun with the infelicitous *in me*.

(c) Camps suggests as an alternative to (b): 'works (i.e. brings about) nights of torment', comparing Vergil, *Aen.* 4. 99: '*quin potius pacem aeternam pactosque hymenaeos | exercemus.*' Richardson follows him in this interpretation. But the quotation is only parallel in being an oddity. Austin's commentary gives an excellent explanation of the 'Vergilian experiment in language' (I would suggest the legal usage *OLD* 8 has also affected the poet's extension of the verb's meaning), an explanation that cannot, as far as I can see, be re-applied to Propertius 1. 1. 33.

(d) Shackleton Bailey cogently notes that every example of *exerceo* with an object signifying time means 'employ industriously'. This exacerbates our problems in

³ The epigraph of Ezra Pound's *Maunderley*.

⁴ *CQ* 43 (1949), 23.

supposing that Propertius is innovating here. Innovation should be clear and not hint at a quite irrelevant standard usage.

However, Shackleton Bailey's own suggestion – 'In my case' (or 'against me') 'our goddess Venus works zealously through nights of bitterness' – I find most unattractive. His translation is impenetrable, and his examples are quite beside the point, as there adverbial ideas complete the sense: Seneca, *Contr.* 2. 5. 4 'sic uir et uxor noctes exercebant'; Fronto, *Ep. de Fer. Als.* 3. 8 'noctes diesque negotiis exercebant'. *Th.L.L.* col. 1377. 50 ff. does provide two examples without adverbs: Vergil, *Aen.* 10. 807 'ut possint sole reducto | exercere diem'; and Seneca, *Contr.* 8. 5 'ille annos suos exercuit, ego uici meos'. Whatever we may decide the verb means here (and I would say 'exploit' is the best translation in the latter citation, whilst Servius glosses the former 'ipsi per diem exerceri'), the subjects are zealously employing their own time, whereas the nights of bitterness belong undeniably to Propertius and not Venus.

No convincing interpretation of the text as it stands has yet been offered. Let us consider emendation.

Apart from tinkering with *nostra* (e.g. *dura* Francius, *uestra* Richards) Smyth's *Thesaurus Criticus* notes three critical conjectures on the line. Postgate's *uoces* and Paley's *leges* help us not a whit, but Housman's contribution⁵ is altogether weightier. He took Venus to be the goddess, but thought this rendered *nostra* meaningless. He removed this apparent problem and the harshness of 'in me noctes exercet' by making the 'very slight alteration' *me non* for *in me*. Thus *exercet* finds a personal object and so may keep the sense it cries out for, 'harasses', whilst *noctes amaras* becomes an accusative of duration (Housman compares Horace's *longas pereunte noctes* – *Carm.* 1. 25. 7) and stands aligned with *nullo tempore* in the pentameter. This is just what is wanted. But *non nostra Venus* I cannot accept. That *meus tuus suus noster uester* = *secundus* is incontestable. But that *nostra* here refers to *uos et ego* I hope I have shown in my opening paragraph. Besides, an easier change is to hand. If *me* is to be the object of *exercet*, *in* must go, and *nam* may stand in its place. A similar corruption has occurred at 4. 1. 81: *nunc* in *II*. Moreover, *in me* begins verse 17.

Palaeographically, then, *nam* presents no problems. We must also consider sense and style. A translation: 'You remain, whom the god hears favourably, nodding assent, and may you be forever well matched in a secure love. For me Venus our goddess harasses throughout the bitter nights, and unrequited Love is never absent. I warn you, avoid this pain of mine. Let each stay with his true love and not change place once he has grown used to his passion.' The *nam* may seem illogical at first sight, but Propertius is arguing for his right to give advice, and to be a *magister amoris*, and it is his position as an unsuccessful lover that gives him the insight to fulfil this role. The couplet 33–4 in particular explains the half-line that follows: 'avoid this pain, because it's terrible'; but *hoc... uitate malum* is merely a negative version of the other commands and wishes. 'I tell you to remain' (notice the skill with which his word is chosen to look back to *ferte etc.* and forward to *neque mutet locum*) 'because otherwise you will end up like me.' (I do not think this means Propertius has been unfaithful, merely that if the atmosphere is warm and friendly within an affair, then the world outside will seem very cold.)

Of the seven occurrences of *nam* in Book I, four are in similar contexts (and *OLD* has a section – 2b – for explanatory *nam* after command or request). Each element in the flow of 1. 1. 31–6 can be paralleled in the following passages: 1. 3. 39 ff.; 6. 19–24; 8. 17–23; 14. 13–16: a command or wish is followed by explanatory *nam* introducing

⁵ *JPh* 16 (1888), 33–4 = *Classical Papers* (Cambridge, 1972), 52–3.

a statement that explains what follows as much as what precedes. A fresh command or wish concludes the context. A neat circle is described, but progress is made too, because of the explanation that is set in the middle, and because of the refinement brought about by the repetition of the idea in new words.

1. 10. 11–14

In poem 1. 10 Propertius spends ten lines expressing his delight at witnessing the consummation of an affair of Gallus. There follow these two couplets:

sed quoniam non es ueritus concedere nobis,
accipe commissae munera laetitiae. 12
non solum uestros didici reticere dolores:
est quiddam in nobis maius, amice, fide.

11 concedere ζ concedere Ω confidere Enk 13 calores Guyet furores ζ 14 quidam
N primo

Can *dolores* stand in 13? *uester* is equivalent to *tuus* elsewhere in Latin,⁶ but cannot be so here. Verses 9–10 have stressed the mutuality of the lovers' passion; *uestro* there and *uestris* in 2 compel us to read *uestros* in 13 as a true plural. The possessive adjective presents the lovers as united. There is nothing in the poem to suggest mutual pain contrasting with mutual pleasure – the tears of line 2 are surely tears of joy. Nor anywhere else in elegy do we have a clearly mutual *dolor*, to which Propertius might refer so vaguely. *uestros dolores* can only stand if the noun means 'love'.

Commentators rely on 2. 15. 35 as a parallel for this sense:

quam possim nostros alio transferre dolores.

But the word there can be translated 'my love with all its woes' (Butler), 'Sehnsucht' (Enk, *Commentarius Criticus*); the passion of Propertius as an elegiac lover involves *dolores* in a way that the mutual passion of Gallus and his girl cannot. Even there the word is not secure; Beroaldus not unreasonably conjectured *calores*. And there is no other classical usage cited where *dolores* supports the simple equation *uestros dolores* = *uestrum amorem*.⁷ Two more parallels, offered by Shackleton Bailey, demonstrate the residue of bitterness in the word: Sidonius, *Carm.* 11. 62–4

calet ille superbus
Ruricius nostris facibus dulcique ueneno
tactus uotium suspirat corde dolorem.

and Horace, *Serm.* 1. 2. 109–10

hiscine uersiculis speras tibi posse dolores
atque aestus curasque graues e pectore pelli?

In the former *suspirat* strengthens the sense of longing in *dolorem*, and in the latter the ambience of *aestus curasque graues* and the very idea of driving love away show the word has a nuance of unpleasantness. Once it is admitted that *dolor* retains connotations of pain, it is difficult to see how the phrase *uestros dolores* can be kept. What is painful about love is separation from the beloved; when the emotions are mutual, they are not painful but delightful.

⁶ See Housman's article, *CQ* 3 (1909), 244–8 = *CP* 790–4.

⁷ Einar Löfstedt, *Vermischte Studien* (Lund, 1936), 114–17 argues that *dolor* can mean 'Leidenschaft, Liebe' in Propertius as perhaps in later authors. But I do not find late medieval manuscripts and late antique texts convincing evidence that Propertius would use a word indicating pain of a passion that is mutual.

I therefore accept Guyet's conjecture, *calores*. This is the Latin equivalent of the notion of a love so powerful that it hurts. The word occurs twice elsewhere in Propertius. At 1. 12. 17 it has been ousted in the text of N by *colores*; at 3. 8. 9 *doloris* has replaced it in a group of fifteenth-century mss. In 1. 10. 13 we know that Propertius wrote a word that led to *dolores* in the archetype; sense demonstrates that it is unlikely that he wrote *dolores*. An editor must place the possibilities in the balance; in this case the emendation quite outweighs the paradosis.

calores is most suitable in context: a synonym of *ardor* (10), it brings out the passion that was the dominant feature of the scene Propertius has witnessed and lovingly described. That Propertius has lovingly described? But does he not say here 'not only have I learnt to keep quiet about the passion you two show for each other'? This is the very opposite of what he has been doing in the first ten lines. One might suppose that he is indulging in the most audacious irony – and the oddness of the expression 'I have learnt to be silent' might be used to support this. But rather easier is a slight change in the text: read *recitare* for *reticere*, and the poet openly admits the outrageousness of his first five couplets.

Support for my hypothesis comes from Ovid, *Tristia* 4. 10. 45–6:

saepe suos solitus recitare Propertius ignes
iure sodalicii, quo mihi iunctus erat.

This not only removes any doubt about the Latinity of *recitare calores*, but I think is also positive evidence that Propertius used such a phrase. One expects Ovid to allude to the author to whom he refers. Thus the lines in *Tristia* 4. 10 about Tibullus (51–2),

nec auara Tibullo
tempus amicitiae fata dedere meae,

employ a phrase abstracted from Tibullus 1. 4. 36:

formae non ullam fata dedere moram.

The couplet in which Ovid talks of listening to Horace (49–50):

et tenuit nostras numerosus Horatius aures
dum ferit Ausonia carmina culta lyra

brings out Horace's position as Rome's lyric poet, *numerosus* referring to the variety of his metres; the pentameter recalls such Horatian claims as *Carm.* 3. 30. 12–14; and there is at least one specific allusion, *Ausonia lyra* being a variation on *Romanae lyrae* (*Carm.* 4. 3. 23).

But in the couplet that speaks of Ovid's friend Propertius I can find no particular wit or allusion, beyond the plural *ignes*, which Propertius thrice employs of passionate love (and even this metaphor is used by a number of other poets after Catullus). If, however, Propertius 1. 10. 13 is emended as I have suggested, then Ovid provides *recitare*, a functional word in his poem, with a context that alludes to one of the two occurrences of the word in Propertius,⁸ an allusion that works through a typically neat variation: *suos* for *uestros*, and the synonymous *ignes* for *calores*. If, as seems likely, Propertius' use of *recitare* with a noun signifying the content of the recited poems was an innovation, it is particularly effective for Ovid to repeat the same natural extension of the verb's meaning.

We can now consider the quatrain as a whole: it forms a pivot, linking the erotic description of 1–10 with the erotodidaxis of 15–30. The four lines involve a complex series of puns on the meaning of *fides*: trust, ability to keep a secret, credibility.⁹

⁸ The other is at 2. 26. 25.

⁹ Cf. Seneca *Contr.* 6. 1 for a similar play on *fides*.

Gallus has had confidence in Propertius' trustworthiness in a matter of delicacy (see Plautus, *Asin.* 80 for intransitive *concredere*) and, as it were, entrusted to him the experience of first love (*commissae...laetitiae*). But Propertius has treated this *fides* as if it were a financial deposit, and so repays it (12). Ironically, the only way an experience can be returned is in a graphic description, and this the Propertian poetry of 1–10 provides. A change in the understanding of the concept *fides* has enabled the poet to obey the letter of his friend's trust, but to do the opposite of his real intention. Being a good banker, he can return the principal with interest (14), not only describing the passion he has been trusted to keep silent, but also adding something more, advice for more troubled times ahead. As an elegiac poet, Propertius has an unbelievable (*maius fide*) power to aid lovers.

2. 1. 39–42

sed neque Phlegraeos Iouis Enceladique tumultus
intonet angusto pectore Callimachus, 40
nec mea conueniunt duro praecordia uersu
Caesaris in Phrygios condere nomen auos.

There seems to be no point in the subjunctive in verse 40. Callimachus does not thunder; this is a fact, not something potential or hypothetical. The present indicative in 41 is best correlated with a present indicative in 40. Why not write *intonat*? This obvious conjecture is mentioned by Burman ('*intonat* in primo Leidensi quod admitti potest propter *conueniunt*').¹⁰ Such corruptions are psychological rather than visual; they are also very common. In book I, for example, there are 12 discrepancies between N and A where a change of a single letter has brought about a change of tense or mood. The correct present indicative has been turned to present subjunctive in A at 1. 14. 11, 22; 1. 16. 9. Nor are such corruptions limited to late medieval manuscripts, as a glance at any Vergilian apparatus will show. So at 2. 34. 59, where 'see what a life of luxury I lead' (55–8) is followed by

me iuuat hesternis positum languere corollis,
quem tetigit iactu certus ad ossa deus,

which one might paraphrase as 'would that I might lead a life of luxury', one is not to suppose the illogicality is a mark of Propertian style; instead read *iuuat* (P), with *Vergilio* (Ω) *est* (Baehrens) in 61: 'I like living a life of luxury, lover that I am; it's for Vergil to have the power to write an epic' (cf. 1. 20. 13–14, 3. 3. 41–2). And the subjunctives at, e.g., 4. 1. 38 (*putet*) and 57 (*coner*) will be accepted if they fit the editor's understanding of the flow of thought, not merely because they are the transmitted readings. Thus I am certain that the tralatitious *me iuuat* is correct at 2. 13. 11 because the hypothetical futures of 13–15 reveal that at present the poet does not enjoy Cynthia's favour.

Finally a word about Enceladus at 2. 1. 39: the reference is pointed. Even in his first hymn, Callimachus does not describe the titanic battle with Zeus, but he does mention the outcome elliptically in the *Aetia* prologue (fr. 1. 35–6):

τό μοι βάρος ὄσσον ἔπειτι
τριγλώχιν ὀλοῶν νῆκος ἐπ' Ἑγκελάδω.

¹⁰ CQ's referee informs me that in fact Leidens. B.P.L. 133A (Burman's *primus Leidensis*) immediately changed *intonat* to *intonet*; this suggests the reading was a slip not a conjecture. He also puts forward the view that one might correlate the two verbs by writing *conueniant* to match *intonet* and supports this by saying that *a* and *u* are perhaps easier to confuse than *a* and *e*. Sense, I think, supports the indicative; and the palaeographical point is without weight.

In typical Callimachean style Propertius has dove-tailed this allusion to his model's programme with the more obvious reference to *βροντᾶν οὐκ ἐμόν, ἀλλὰ Διός* (fr. 1. 20).

2. 8. 31–2

uiderat ille fuga stratos in litore Achiuos,
feruere et Hectorea Dorica castra face.

31 fuga *P* fugas *Ω* stratos *Passerat* tractos *Ω* fractos *ζ*

The sense of the passage – Achilles' impassivity in the face of Greek defeats – and the particular part of the *Iliad* summarised suggest very strongly that *fuga* (in whatever form) is the right word: the flight of the Greeks; their destruction; the burning of the ships. *tractos* is therefore wrong: the ignominious dragging of the corpse will be Achilles' revenge in 38. *stratos* is the obvious correction. But modern editors should have at least questioned Passerat's solution *fuga stratos*. Enk's so-called parallels bring out the difficulty in *fuga*. At Vergil, *Aen.* 5. 586 (*et nunc terga fuga nudant*) and 9. 660 (*pharetramque fuga sensere sonantem*) the nakedness and the sound occur throughout the flight, or at least as it begins; the ablative can be regarded as causal. But in our passage *stratos* indicates a punctual event breaking into the flight, as Enk's gloss *dum fugiunt* acknowledges. The conjectures of Heinsius (*fuga sparsos*), Burman (*fugas, stratos*), Lachmann (*pyras, fractos*) show awareness of the problem. Heinsius' *sparsos* is further from *tractos*, offers a word used in a different sense in 34, and produces a phrase that fits less well with the locative *in litore*. Lachmann makes unnecessary changes in the paradosis; mention of the rout is appropriate. Burman's version is possible, but a singular *fugam* would be preferable, the poetic plural being unattractive with two real accusative plurals following. A copula would make the structure clearer too. I suggest that Propertius wrote an ascending tricolon to match the climactic events:

uiderat ille fugam et stratos in litore Achiuos,
feruere et Hectorea Dorica castra face.¹¹

For elision at this point in the line, see Platnauer (pp. 83–4), who says Propertius has 21 such verses, including three (2. 1. 23; 3. 4. 17; 4. 1. 69) of exactly the rhythm proposed: – ∪ ∪ | – ∪ : ∪ (–) : | – :. The *et* after an elided syllable and in an unusual position might easily be omitted, so the corruption assumed is hardly more involved than that which the vulgate text supposes.

2. 18. 5

quid mea si canis aetas canesceret annis *N*
quid si iam canis aetas mea caneret annis *II*

Recent editors print *N*'s text with Heinsius' fiddling change to *candesceret*. Two considerations show that this is highly unlikely to be right. Firstly it does not account for the unmetrical version in the *II* mss., which will not have arisen simply from *N*'s text; it is conceivable that *canesceret* might be corrupted to *caneret*, but who would attempt to fill out the line by moving *mea* and adding *iam*? Secondly the letters *can-* and the sense 'white' occur twice (in itself this is not necessarily unstylish), each time applied to old age. Such pleonasm is pointed when the subordinated idea explains the metaphor or the bold phrasing of the leading idea. Thus Tibullus writes *liceatque caput*

¹¹ *fugam stratosque* is another possibility (cf. Ovid, *Met.* 11. 394); but *et* points the structure better.

candescere canis (1. 10. 43), *canis* 'with white hair' explaining *caput candescere*. But this must be *contrasted* with our line, where 'white years' monotonously offers the same metaphor as 'white old age'. A similar argument shows that the manuscript text is corrupt at 2. 34. 20:

ipse meas solus, quod nil est, aemulor umbras,
stultus, quod stulto saepe timore tremo.

The repetition could be defended if *stulto timore* were a natural phrase that explained *stultus*. As it is not, the probability is very great that *stulto* has arisen from the common scribal error of perseveration. However, I believe *falso*, not Heinsius' *nullo*, is the missing word: cf. Ovid, *Tristia* 1. 5. 37 *neue metu falso nimium trepidate*.

At 2. 18. 5 there is no obvious substitute for *annis*, and the probability is that the corruption has been caused by perseveration or anticipation. But which? Where corruption is diagnosed, attention must be paid to the divergencies of the tradition. I suggest that the archetype had

quid mea si iam canis aetas canesceret annis,

perhaps with supralineal annotation. The superfluous syllable will have encouraged alteration, both conscious and unconscious. In N it has been discarded simply through the omission of *iam*. *II*'s text is reached through the condensation of *canesceret* to *caneret*; the transposition of *mea* introduces a caesura. These changes are of course misguided; *canis* is the offending word; perhaps it has ousted *actis*: 'What if my life were already growing grey with the passing of years?' This solution has an advantage over *multis* cod. Salmanticensis 245,¹² *tacitis* Heukrath, *seris* Luck¹³ in that it retains the relevant *iam* (cf. 3. 5. 23) and explains its presence in *II*. Propertius elides *iam* also at 2. 16. 33, 26. 4, 29. 20, 34. 43.

2. 19. 17–18

ipse ego uenabor: iam nunc me sacra Dianae
suscipere et Veneri ponere uota iuuat.

18 Veneris ζ

A typical Propertian couplet: the sense is clear, but how that sense is to be derived from the paradosis is less clear. For once editors emend; and they are wrong.

The required meaning is 'I want to become a devotee of Diana, laying aside the worship of Venus', and the sort of devotion and worship meant is the activity governed by each goddess: venation and venery. The first phrase is easy: 'to take up the rites of Diana'; the second seems to balance this, *uota* being equivalent to *sacra*, and *ponere*, 'to lay aside', opposing *suscipere*. But *uota* is not a synonym of *sacra*, and the dative of disadvantage sits a little awkwardly if we read the line so.

A natural translation of the phrase would be 'to set up votive offerings to Venus'. Enk adopted this, but, as he thought the *uota* were the hunted animals, failed to provide the necessary antithesis. The phrase will signify the retirement from venery if we imagine the *uota* to be the tools of the trade, the *exuiuae* he is going to dedicate at 2. 14. 25–8, presumably the paraphernalia of the komos: garland, lyre, wine-flask, torch and crow-bar. There the offering is made in gratitude for success; but the dedication of tools on retirement was a common religious act, at any rate a frequent

¹² According to Hanslik.

¹³ *AJPh* 100 (1979), 78.

raison d'être for Greek epigrams. Usually the retirement is the result of old age; cf. Horace, *Carm.* 3. 26. 1–8:¹⁴

Vixi puellis nuper idoneus
et militavi non sine gloria;
nunc arma defunctumque bello
barbiton hic paries habebit,

laeum marinae qui Veneris latus
custodit. hic, hic ponite lucida
funalia et uectis et arcus
oppositis foribus minaces.

Also relevant to Propertius' dedication is Anonymous XXXVIII in Gow–Page, *Hellenistic Epigrams* (= *A.P.* 6. 48):

Κερκίδα τὴν φιλοεργὸν Ἀθηναίῃ θέτο Βιττώ
ἄνθεμα, λιμνηρῆς ἄρμενον ἐργασίης,
πάντας ἀποστύξασα γυνή τότε τοὺς ἐν ἐρίθουσιν
μόχθους καὶ στυγερὰς φροντίδας ἱστοπόνων.
εἶπε δ' Ἀθηναίῃ, τῶν Κύπριδος ἄψομαι ἔργων
τὴν Πάριδος κατὰ τοῦ ψήφου ἐνεγκαμένη'.

and the related epigram of Antipater Sidon. (*H.E.* XLIII = *A.P.* 6. 47), in which a poor spinster dedicates her shuttle to Athene because she is turning to the profession patronised by Aphrodite. Similar dedications occur in Phanias, *H.E.* III (= *A.P.* 6. 295), where a promoted clerk offers his writing implements to the Muses, and IV (= *A.P.* 6. 297), where Alkimos presents his digging tools to Athene, on his retirement after discovering a hoard of treasure. A komastic poem of Meleager (*H.E.* LXX-III = *A.P.* 5. 191) ends with the poet hanging up his garland for Cypris, abandoning this komos, if not the practice, in disgust:

ἐν τῷδ' ἐπιγράψας, 'Κύπρι, σοὶ Μελέαγρος ὁ μύστης
κῶνων κώμων στοργᾶς κῦλα τὰδ' ἐκρέμαε'.

And so Propertius in his genius expresses 'to lay aside the rites of Venus' as 'to set up offerings to Venus'.

Thus *sacra Dianae suscipere* and *Veneri ponere uota*, which balance in form, also, but in a different way, balance in meaning. For this stylistic quirk (one might call it 'split antithesis'), the best known parallel in Propertius is 2. 5. 28:

Cynthia forma potens; Cynthia uerba levis.

The author of the *Moretum* offers (verse 80)

inde domum ceruice levis, grauis aere redibat.

Ours is a more complex example.

2. 19. 23–4

haec igitur mihi sit lepores audacia molles
excipere et structo figere auem calamo.

24 structo ζ, *Salmasius* stricto Ω

'This then would be my boldness: to lie in wait for gentle hares and to fasten a bird to a jointed lime-twig.' No-one will wish to retain a reference to archery after reading

¹⁴ Quoted by Vulpius *ad loc.* His interpretation, accepted by Burman, is close to mine, but they do not bring out the point that Propertius' offering marks a change in occupation rather than the success of a prayer.

Shackleton Bailey's confirmation of Foster's note (*CPh* 11 [1907], 213–5): 'to shoot untethered birds with bow and arrow implies a skill quite beyond the ordinary sportsman, let alone Propertius'. *structo* is rightly accepted as 'put together in sections'. Only the problem of the verb is skated over ('*figere* may be taken legitimately as "attach"'). Enk rejects Rothstein's objections to *figere*, by asking 'si recte dicimus *aliquem cruci figere*, cur non dicere licet *aves figere calamo* (dat.)?'. I would answer, 'because fastening someone to a cross is not done stealthily, with glue, to a movable thin stick, at more than arm's length'. *figo* means 'to stick in', hence 'to fasten up with nails', hence 'to fasten up, fix in position'; I know of no closer parallel than that Enk adduces. Until I see such a parallel, I shall think conjecture in order, and offer *tangere*, which is shown to be suitable and perhaps to be a technical term by the following two passages: Plautus, *Bacch.* 1158 'tactus sum uehementer uisco'; Petronius 109. 7 'ecce etiam per antemnam pelagiae conserant uolucres, quas textis harundinibus peritus artifex tetigit; illae uiscatis illigatae uiminibus deferebantur ad manus'. As for the corruption: confusion of dactylic words of a similar function is a frequent phenomenon, perhaps encouraged in this case by the corruption *stricto calamo*; the scribe supposed this to be an arrow drawn from the quiver and so supplied a more suitable verb, whether consciously or not.

2. 28. 43–8

pro quibus optatis sacro me carmine damno:	
scribam ego 'Per magnum est salua puella Iouem';	
ante tuosque pedes illa ipsa operata sedebit,	45
narrabitque sedens longa pericla sua.	46
hoc tibi uel poterit coniunx ignoscere Iuno:	33
frangitur et Iuno, si qua puella perit.	34
et tua, Persephone, maneat clementia, nec tu,	47
Persephoniae coniunx, saeuior esse uelis.	

45 operata P operta Q 33–4 huc transposui; post 3 Passerat perperam; del. Rantz 47 et
ego haec NLP nec F

There is no reason for dividing the poem; the subject, Cynthia's illness, is the same throughout, and her changing condition is clearly signposted. If 41 is separated from 1, then *miserere* lacks its subject; mention of Io/Isis at 17–18 and 61–2 helps draw the poem together.¹⁵

Of late, Passerat's transposition has generally been accepted by editors, though other scholars¹⁶ have seen that it is wrong: 3–4 explain why the weather god might be blamed for Cynthia's death – it is the Dog days. Verses 33–4 interrupt the flow ruinously and leave *enim* (v. 3) without its point. However, the couplet cannot remain in its traditional position. It must stand where *tibi* can refer to Jove; in 31–2 the second person indicates Cynthia, and the third the god. Nor does *hoc* find an adequate meaning in *uertitur*. Mere deletion is unattractive; the comment is Propertian in its wit, and fits precisely the theme of the poem. If it originally stood after 46, there would be a mechanical explanation for the transposition: *pericla* 46/*puella* 34; *hoc tibi* 33/*hec tua* 47.

¹⁵ See also G. Williams, *Figures of Thought in Roman Poetry* (Yale, 1980), 140–44. R. Whitaker, *Myth and Personal Experience in Roman Love-Elegy* (Göttingen, 1983), 101, esp. n. 39, draws attention to the repetition of *forma* and *formosus* throughout the poem.

¹⁶ U. Knoche in *Miscellanea Properziana* (Atti dell' Accad. Properz. del Subasio – Assisi, 1957), 66; Margaret Hubbard, *Propertius* (London, 1974), 53.

I bind myself to write a sacred hymn in return for your fulfilling these desires of mine: I shall write "My love was saved by the majesty of Jove". She herself will sit in worship at the feet of your statue, and, sitting there, tell the tale of her long, dangerous illness. Even your wife, Juno, will be able to forgive you this. Even Juno relents, if a girl is dying. And you, Persephone, let your clemency continue; and you, husband of Persephone, have no wish to be crueller than she.

The repetition of *coniunx* binds the quatrain together in a neat chiasmic order: Jove, Juno, Persephone, Pluto. *hoc* in 33 refers to the whole context: Jove's pity (41); his granting of the prayer (43); the saving of the girl's life (44); and his consequent familiarity with her (45–6). In 47 the change to *et* seems preferable, though perhaps not essential. *haec* would mean 'this (clemency) of yours, in not killing so far'; *et* shows the poet moving from one divine appeal to another, and correlates effectively with *nec tu*.

Thus the transposition saves a fine couplet; and ameliorates one of the poem's apparent hiatuses.

2. 32. 11–16

scilicet umbrosis sordet Pompeia columnis
porticus, aulaeis nobilis Attalicis,
et creber platanis pariter surgentibus ordo,
flumina sopito quaeque Marone cadunt,
et leviter nymphis tota crepitantibus urbe
cum subito Triton ore recondit aquam. 15

13 creb. plat. *Π* plat. creb. *N* surgentibus ζ urgentibus Ω 15 toto...orbe *Heinsius*
lato...orbe *Housman* 16 recludit ζ refundit *Heinsius*

The last of these three couplets is in three respects problematic:

(i) *leviter* and *tota...urbe* are contradictory. Heinsius' conjecture attempts to cure this, but *toto orbe* is so often 'all over the world' that an unusual sense is immediately awkward; and the detail seems quite uninspired – one naturally expects the water of a fountain to sound 'over the entire basin'.

(ii) *recondit* must go. Shutting off the water would hardly cause *crepitus*; the word would have to mean 'bring out of store', but no-one has provided a parallel or a reason for Propertius to adopt such an extraordinary phrase. *recludit*, found in some unauthoritative 15th-century mss., was doubtless inspired by Vergil, *Georgics* 2. 175 *sanctos ausus recludere fontis*; but opening up a fountain is not the same as opening up water. I do not know why Heinsius' *refundit* has not been generally accepted; *fundo* is a reasonable verb to express the relationship between a fountain as subject and water as object. *subito* indicates that the action is not continuous, and the *re-* prefix stresses the resumption of pouring. Precise verbal parallels are not required. The corruption is of a common type: cf. 4. 7. 41 *rependit*] *fundit Π*; 4. 8. 11 *corripit*] *colligit Π*; 1. 20. 8 *tinixerit*] *traxerit F*.

(iii) The construction of the sentence is *sordet porticus et ordo fluminaque et... what?* Where is the subject of *sordet* in our couplet? Camps finds it in *Triton*, or in the whole *cum* clause. But the postponement of the subject is much bolder than any other we find in Propertius (Rothstein compares, but might contrast, 3. 22. 3), even if we change *cum* to *qui* with Markland. I suggest a more logical approach would be to seek the solution of (i) and (iii) in a single corruption; critical attention ought to be turned to *leviter*. The context demands that a noun stand here as the subject of *sordet*. I conjecture *sonitus*; although the words have only two letters in common, they are of very similar shape: *sonit*² → *leuit*². The noun may seem neutral in sense, but can be defended by reference to 3. 15. 27, 33, and 2. 16. 49; the descriptive genitive in 'the

first two cases and the following *fulmina* in the last define the nature of the sound, as does the ablative absolute in our line. '...and the noise all over the city of splashing water, when the Triton suddenly begins pouring a fountain from his mouth'. The structure of the previous couplet is repeated – noun defined by ablatives in the hexameter, subordinate clause in the pentameter – but the expected variation is provided as well, 15–16 having only one subject.¹⁷

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