

PROPERTIUS AND THE UNITY OF THE BOOK

By G. O. HUTCHINSON

How, in books of Roman poetry, are poems related to each other and to the book as a whole? The question is approached with divergent preconceptions. On the one hand, many assume that the design of a book will be symmetrical, and should be represented in a diagram.¹ In such a scheme, every connection must be plausible—which is never the case; and it must be supposed that ancient readers were given to making diagrams, through which alone such symmetry can be perceived. It is also remarkable how seldom such schemes illuminate the most salient questions about the books. Thus in Book I of Propertius it is the last three poems whose presence most needs to be explained. Skutsch detaches them from his scheme and refers to them as a 'coda or superstructure'.

On the other hand, it is often assumed that the individual poems in a book were written and finished before the poet considered how to order them: the arrangement was not a random process, but it was wholly distinct and secondary.² This idea is by no means self-evident; it seems to derive from the practice of modern poets, such as Housman.³ Some poems plainly defy this conception. Propertius I. 9, for example ('Dicebam tibi venturos, irrisor, amores'), cannot have been composed without a thought of I. 7, which it takes up explicitly. III. 5 must have been written to follow III. 4. Not only is there a pointed contrast between the opening words of each ('Arma deus Caesar', 'Pacis Amor deus est'), and between their final couplets; the reference at the end of poem 5 to the ensigns of Crassus (47 f.) would seem intolerably abrupt if III. 4 had not been read first.⁴ The assumption that the arrangement of the poems in a book was a distinct and secondary process, then, must certainly be abandoned sometimes. Hence, where it appears plausible that poems are connected otherwise than by subsequent collocation, the assumption can furnish no defence.

The question of plausibility is not a simple one. Even works which are moderate in their general approach make much of correspondences which I find strained.⁵ Yet the matter is not wholly arbitrary. It is possible to emphasize the nature of reading in Rome, and to confine oneself to connections which could be apprehended readily, and yet to find in the Latin poets much satisfactory evidence for primary connections between poem and poem and between poem and book. The immediate object of this paper is to remove some of the obstacles which impede us from seeing two books of Propertius as real and significant unities. I hope, however, that the attempt will suggest the general importance of this area of study. Meaning—it will be insinuated—is not always confined within the individual poem: a part of the poet's meaning can be contained in the relations between the poems in a book. To miss this aspect will then be to miss the fullness of his sense.

Such a belief would be hard to reconcile with either of the approaches outlined above. One would be obliged to search for meaning either in a symmetrical pattern,⁶ or in an assemblage of poems produced in isolation. Furthermore, adherents of the first view ought to regard as insignificant connections between poems which do not accord with their

¹ So, in Propertius, O. Skutsch, *CP* LVIII (1963), 238 f., A. Woolley, *BICS* XIV (1967), 80 ff., W. Nethercut, *AJP* LXXXIX (1968), 449 ff., H. Juhnke, *Hermes* xcix (1971), 91 ff., G. Wille, *IBK* xxii (Festschrift für Robert Muth, 1983), 598 ff., *et al.* But not even Homer has escaped.

² So e.g. G. Williams, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* (1968), 177, *id.*, *The Third Book of Horace's Odes* (1969), 23: 'Horace . . . collected the first six so-called 'Roman Odes' at the beginning . . .'; R. G. M. Nisbet and M. Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace, Odes Book II* (1978), 6.

³ See Housman, *Letters*, 197, 15 June 1922. It is notable, however, that until he knows for certain which poems are to be included, he wishes all to be printed purely according to metre, and only later transposed into the quite different arrangement which he will then be able to devise.

⁴ The contrasts prevent us from regarding the two

as a single poem. On the other hand, it is most improbable that two originally unconnected poems were adapted to make a pair. Such a compromise is perhaps possible, though never preferable, elsewhere; it would not materially affect the case of this paper. My concern is not with biography but with intentions as manifested in the books: it matters less whether those intentions operated in the production of a first or of a final version of each poem. But, in this particular area, the importance of intentions of some kind is not to be denied.

⁵ See, in particular, E. Burck, *WS* LXXIX (1966), 405 ff. He still gives more weight to numerical structures than I should care to; so too does C. Becker, *Hermes* LXXXIII (1955), 314 ff., on the *Eclogues*.

⁶ A gallant attempt is made by Brooks Otis, *HSCP* LXX (1965), 1 ff.

scheme. Adherents of the second view sometimes treat such matters with a scorn which the view itself does not necessarily demand.⁷ If my own view is correct, this area of enquiry is not to be separated from the interpretation of the poetry.

For the student of the Golden Age of Latin poetry, the reading of books is a particularly important subject. It is commonly misrepresented, through romantic preconceptions about oral culture.⁸ Even in the fifth century B.C. books were read far more than is frequently assumed. 'Do you so despise the jury,' Plato makes Socrates ask, 'do you suppose them to be so ἀπείρους γραμμάτων that they do not know that the books of Anaxagoras are full of such notions?' (*Ap.* 26d). However ironic this may be, the surface meaning must still bear considerable implications. Even dramas were read.⁹ Nonetheless, poetic texts were largely collections of material designed primarily for performance. The Hellenistic poets, however, wrote to be read: the belief that Callimachus' *Hymns* were performed at festivals ought not to survive a perusal of the fifth or even the first. As a consequence, the *Aetia* and the *Argonautica* are designed in terms of the books into which they were physically divided; the brilliant structure of the latter remains largely neglected. Yet as a rule the poets represent themselves as singers, and their poems as songs. Thus Apollonius, in wishing for the immortality of his poem, prays that his 'songs' will grow ever sweeter for men 'to sing' (IV. 1773-5).

The Romans make it clear that they write for readers, and they often refer to their works as books. Catullus addresses any readers who may set their hands *nobis*, that is, the scroll of his poems (14b). He begins his book of *nugae* by contemplating the physical appearance of the *libellus*. Propertius intends his books to be read by the neglected lover (I. 7. 13), to be read by the girl waiting alone for her man (III. 3. 20); his first book was read all over the Forum (II. 24 a. 2). Readers were expected to start at the beginning and read through to the end, not to dip at random.¹⁰ So in the *Eclogues* 'Sicelides Musae, paulo maiora canamus' (4. 1) makes sense only in relation to the preceding poems; *Eclogue* 10 is marked out as the 'extremum . . . laborem'; presumably the first paragraph of *Eclogue* 6 is displaced from the opening of the book as a deliberate surprise, and was intended to be read after *Eclogues* 1-5. Horace begins the tenth satire of his first book with a direct reference to the fourth: 'Nempe . . . dixi';¹¹ this would puzzle the reader who dipped. The most striking passage of this kind in Propertius is II. 10. 1 f.: 'Sed tempus lustrare aliis Helicon choreis, / et campum Haemonio iam dare tempus equo.' The poet assumes that poems 1a-9 have just been read.¹² *Sed tempus*, and *iam* are used as they are at the end of *Georgics* II.¹³ It is now widely held, to be sure, that these words begin a new book. However, the words 'But now it is time to sing in another vein' demand imperiously that something should precede them.¹⁴ Since the language of the authors indicates that a book would be read, and read consecutively, it need not be anachronistic or unpractical to suppose that a Roman could notice relations between parts and the whole, or between different parts. On the contrary, the environment is propitious and encouraging.

In Book IV we are forced to consider the relation of whole and parts by the book itself. In the first poem Propertius proposes to sing of Roman rituals and antiquities. He is then told by an astrologer that this plan runs contrary to the will of Apollo, and is reminded of Apollo's pronouncement that he should and would be a poet of love. The book itself contains four aetiological poems (2, 4, 9, 10), two poems on Cynthia (7, 8), poems on Actium (6), on the dead Cornelia Lepidi (11), and on a bawd (5), and a letter from a wife to her

⁷ 'Minimal literary relevance', Williams, *The Third Book of Horace's Odes*, 23; 'trivialities', Nisbet and Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace, Odes Book I* (1970), XXIII (in their second volume they are less forthright).

⁸ See e.g. the first paragraph of the *Cambridge History of Classical Literature* II (1982): 'In some respects . . . the literary life of Greece and Rome retained the characteristics of an oral culture . . . nearly all the books discussed in this history were written to be listened to.'

⁹ In the second edition of the *Clouds*, for readers, Aristophanes exceeds the limits of the stage: thus at the end the school is burnt down, and there are five speakers (*contra* the edition of K. J. Dover,

pp. 266 f.).

¹⁰ Contrast Williams, *Tradition and Originality*, 177.

¹¹ Ed. Fraenkel, *Kleine Beiträge* II, 199 ff.

¹² With Ribbeck, I divide II. 1 into 1a and 1b (47-78).

¹³ 'Sed nos immensum spatiis confecimus aequor, / et iam tempus equum fumantia solvere colla.'

¹⁴ O. Skutsch defends nothing but the opening *sed* (*HSCP* LXXIX (1975), 230 f.). For this, the ἀλλά at Tyrt. fr. 11. 1 and fr. 10. 15 would be a most doubtful parallel, even if fr. 11 (transmitted by Stobaeus) were known to be a complete poem, and if fr. 10 (despite Lycurgus) were known to be two. I suggest that fr. 10. 13 f. are interpolated.

husband on campaign (3). The second half of poem 1 makes it surprising that any aetiological poems, and that only two poems on Cynthia, should appear in the rest of the book; the whole poem obliges us to expect more homogeneity in the book than we seem at first sight to find. To this last problem various solutions have been offered. The book is usually divided into aetiological poems and love-poems.¹⁵ This attempt to deal with the non-aetiological poems is by no means convincing. In particular, the poem on Cornelia (11) cannot be accommodated satisfactorily into the scheme. While 3 is a letter from a loving wife, it is not a love-poem in the sense suggested by Apollo's speech (1. 135 ff.): it does not express the love of the poet.¹⁶ It has also been suggested, on the other hand, that the book really is a collection of bits and pieces. It combines parts of an unfinished *Aetia*, some miscellaneous matter, and the topical poems on Actium and Cornelia which prompted the publication of the whole.¹⁷ Thus the prologue to that *Aetia* has been retained as the first part of the prologue to Book IV, but has been followed by a section which contradicts it. This would be a very odd way to unite the new collection, and the hypothesis does not bring us any closer to understanding the book that we possess.¹⁸

We may arrive at a more cohesive—and therefore a more satisfactory—conception of the book if we divide the poems between Rome in its beginnings and Rome in the poet's own day. Those poems in which Propertius is a character (5, 7, 8) of necessity belong to his own time. In each of them the poet carefully brings in Rome and the flavour of modern life, luxurious and cosmopolitan. So 5. 11 *Collinas*, 52 *Foro*, 7. 15 *Suburrae*, 8. 1 *Esquilias*, 29 *Aventinae*, 31 *Tarpeias*, 75 f. *Pompeia . . . umbra, Forum*. In 5 we have much stress on modern luxuries, and we find the cult of Isis;¹⁹ 7 is much concerned with Cynthia's household; in 8 we have a musician from Egypt and a dwarf, a theatre and a *lectica*. The poems on the battle of Actium and on the daughter of Scribonia (6, 11) require no comment. Of 3, the letter of Arethusa to her husband, H. Hafter has written, 'Fast zeitlos und wenig in römischer Situation beheimatet ist die Liebe dieses Paares.'²⁰ This is misleading. The contemporary and Roman setting is precisely marked. The mention of the *hasta pura* in line 68 shows the class of the young Lycotas.²¹ It is in the winter that Arethusa expects to see him again (42): compare Suetonius, *DA* 24. The campaigns he is involved in are much like those that the poets imagine for Augustus. For our purpose it scarcely matters that some of the places mentioned are (to modern readers) implausibly remote.²² That the sentiment is un-Roman, no one will aver who has once read Cicero's letters to his wife from exile.²³

The contrast between the two ages is the subject of the first 38 lines of poem 1.²⁴ The long chain of variations is closed with: 'nil patrium nisi nomen habet Romanus alumnus / sanguinis altricem non putet²⁵ esse lupam.' The aetiological poems themselves lay much weight on the antithesis, and in doing so often remind us of that opening section.²⁶ However,

¹⁵ e.g. A. Dieterich, *Kl. Schr.*, 190 f., P. Grimal, *Les Intentions de Propertius et la composition du livre IV des «Élégies»* (Coll. Latomus XII, 1953), 46, E. Burck, *WS LXXIX* (1966), 408, C. W. Macleod, *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar* 1 (1976), 146.

¹⁶ W. A. Camps classifies 3, 5, 7, and 8 more tentatively: 'a miscellany, but all in varying degrees related to the love theme which was the poet's earlier preoccupation' (p. 3 of his edition). This smooth formulation in part conceals, in part ignores, the problems that are raised by poem 1; so, I fear, does Camps's whole account of the book.

¹⁷ M. Hubbard, *Propertius* (1974), 116 f.

¹⁸ It is doubtful whether *dies* in 1. 69 ('sacra diesque canam et cognomina prisca locorum') gives evidence of an intention which would have been executed in the projected *Aetia*. *dies* takes its sense from the context, and denotes *festi dies*: it is almost a synonym for *sacra*. The aetiological poems do not in fact explain directly any festivals of the state (although the festival of the Bona Dea is dwelt on in 9). But the phrase, in its context, gives an adequate notion of the type of poem in question. Programmatic statements need not be rigorously precise if this suits the dramatic or rhetorical purpose of the writer (cf. D. A. Russell, *Mnemosyne*, Ser. IV, xxxiv

(1981), 72 ff.). Propertius wishes to stress his patriotism and his proximity to Callimachus.

¹⁹ In the Rome of old 'nulli cura fuit externos quaerere divos' (IV. 1. 17).

²⁰ In *Propertius, Wege der Forschung* CCXXXVII (1975), 163.

²¹ See V. A. Maxfield, *The Military Decorations of the Roman Army* (1981), 85.

²² See R. Syme, *History in Ovid* (1978), 187 f.

²³ *Fam.* XIV. 1-4 = 6-9 SB. Note especially the passion of XIV. 4. 1 (cf. Prop. IV. 3. 6), 2. 2; the tears of 3. 1 (cf. Prop. IV. 3. 4), and elsewhere; Terentia's piety in 4. 1 (cf. Prop. IV. 3. 57).

²⁴ These lines will be inspired by Tib. II. 5, as has long been recognized.

²⁵ *putat* rec. P's *putet*, which Fedeli accepts, is clearly inappropriate. One might, however, have expected *quis* in place of *non*: might *non* have come from *nomen* above it?

²⁶ See especially 9. 3 f. (cf. 1. 3 f.), 5 f., 19 f.; 4. 9-14, 73-8 (cf. 1. 20 f.—note also *Tarpeius pater* 1. 7); 10. 18 (cf. 1. 10), 25 f., 27-30 (cf. 1. 34 f.?) ; 2. 59 f. (cf. 1. 21, 5; in 2. 60 one should perhaps read for *grata* the *parva* suggested by a friend of Camps).

some of the elegies make unexpected links between the past and the present and between the two classes of poem. 8 begins with the modern Esquiline,²⁷ beautified by Maecenas (*novis . . . agris*), filled with distributing stations for aqueducts (*aquosis*), and inhabited by Propertius (III. 23. 4). The time is *hac nocte*. We then proceed abruptly to an ancient rite, which is described for twelve lines before Cynthia suddenly appears. The rest of the poem is devoted to the happenings of the night. For his account of Tarpeia in poem 4, Propertius chooses or invents a version in which love, not avarice, drives her to betray the Capitol to Tatius.²⁸ This connects 4 with the 'modern' poems, in several of which love plays an important part. Probably the poem bears a particularly close relation to the poem which precedes it. Burck has already brought out the striking resemblances between them, not only in general situation but in detail.²⁹ Yet he does not emphasize sufficiently the moral antithesis between the longing of the wife for her husband in 3 and the longing of the Vestal Virgin for the leader of the enemy in 4. The *fax* of Arethusa's passion for her husband is fanned by Venus herself (3. 50). The *faces* of Tarpeia's monstrous desire are increased—with an alarming paradox—by the virgin Vesta (4. 70). On her wedding-night Arethusa was becomingly modest (3. 12). Tarpeia looks forward to that occasion with shocking (and amusing) sensuality (4. 57–60). Both the ancient and the modern Roman love; but the love of the modern is proper and admirable, that of the ancient wicked to the last degree. The contrast pleasingly reverses expectation.

It has often been suggested that their position gives a particular emphasis to the central and the final poem (6 and 11).³⁰ Both these poems evince true and solid connections between the present and the past. In 6 Propertius stresses that the battle of Actium is a modern event (*recentibus aris* 7) and dwells on Augustus' temple to Apollo Actius (11, 67), which stands where once Evander's cattle lay (1. 3 f.). Yet Augustus is 'from' Alba Longa, and excels his Trojan ancestors (6. 37 f., cf. 1. 35, 39 ff.). The Egyptian fleet is condemned by the Trojan Quirinus (21 f.); the augury of Romulus on the Palatine embraced this moment (43); the Roman standards are *signa Remi* (80). By his race, and by his deliverance of the ancient city, Augustus stands in direct connection with the past. Both by her lineage and by the nobility of her nature, Cornelia, in poem 11, displays a profound continuity with the past of Rome. The whole of her central speech is devoted to this subject (29–62, with 63–72): note especially 43 f., 47 'mi natura dedit leges a sanguine ductas'. The theme is introduced early (11 f.) and the poem closes with it (101 f.).³¹ The two elements which had mostly been contrasted, or paradoxically conjoined, are here brought to a satisfying unity.

We must now return to the problems raised by poem 1.³² The interruption of Horos is a complete surprise: editors should not spoil it by inserting 'PROPERTIVS' and an inverted comma at the beginning of the poem.³³ Horos opposes explicitly the concerns of the first part, and his account of his successes (89–102) sets us abruptly in modern Rome. He thus conveys dramatically and forcefully the contrast between the two areas of the book. It is not the god Apollo who breaks in on the poet; it is a Babylonian astrologer, who professes to know his will. This surprise (again rather spoiled by the 'HOROS' of the editors) makes it more acceptable that the book should in fact contain αἴτια after all.³⁴ Nonetheless, poem 2, on the Etruscan deity Vertumnus, is intended to startle. So, at first, is III. 4 'Arma deus Caesar': in the previous poem Propertius had been warned by the Muse and Apollo to sing of love, not Roman arms.

²⁷ See Platner-Ashby, *Topogr. Dict.*, 203, 269.

²⁸ See Plut., *Rom.* 17, H. Lloyd-Jones and P. J. Parsons, *Supplementum Hellenisticum* (1983), no. 724; *RE* IV A 2331 ff., M. Hubbard, *Propertius*, 119 f.

²⁹ *WS* LXXIX (1966), 422 f.; the contrast had been noted by L. Celentano, *Univ. di Napoli, Annali della fac. di lett. e filos.* v (1956), 55.

³⁰ Dieterich, *Kl. Schr.*, 191, etc.

³¹ With Heinsius's *avis*, generally and rightly accepted. The 'honoratis . . . aquis' of the MSS is incredible.

³² The most important discussion of the poem is Macleod's, loc. cit. (n. 15), 141 ff.

³³ We have long forgotten the *hospes* of the opening, who, as has often been realized, is simply a bold extension of the device used in epigrams on objects seen (cf. Alcaeus, *A. P.* IX 588 = *HE* 106 ff., Theocr.,

Ep. 17 Gow). Catullus 4 exploits the same device. The first section of our poem does not read like a tour.

³⁴ Camps sees the reproof of Horos in 1. 71 f. as applying only to 87 f., which he places with Marcilius after 68, and which he interprets as a proposal to write 'poetic prophecies' (p. 62 of his edition). It would seem that these prophecies are actually to be uttered by other people (so that 'dicere fata' in 71 has an unexpected sense); and in any case the second line of the couplet cannot refer to them. I find it a very artificial notion that Horos can be understood to censure one part (one line) only of the programme, and to leave the rest intact. Besides, the tone of the couplet is quite out of place in the section 57–70—indeed, there is no niche for the lines anywhere in the poem.

More puzzling, and deliberately more puzzling, is the speech made by Apollo at the beginning of the poet's career. Here the god commands the poet to write elegies, rather than martial epic (the usual genre to be renounced).³⁵ The poet's war will be love; one girl, Cynthia, will always have mastery over him. It is plainly implied—though not stated—that what Propertius must write is love-poetry. The reader will not be expecting what follows: five poems (2–6), only one of which (poem 5) could even possibly make reference to Cynthia. Poem 7 finally explains. Cynthia has died: her reign over his earthly life, and over his poetry, has ceased (93, 50). She commands him (77 f.):

et quoscumque meo fecisti nomine versus,
ure mihi: laudes desine habere meas.

The course marked out for the poet in his youth has been ended; he has been obliged to turn to other subjects.

This view of the book, it is hoped, springs naturally from what is emphasized in the book itself, accommodates without violence every poem, and makes sense of poem 1, which on any other view is a baffling production.³⁶ If it is correct, the book acquires the coherence which it leads the reader to expect, and each poem acquires a new force and point. The poet does not adopt, half-heartedly, the role of an ingenuous antiquarian and patriot. He remains piquant and unpredictable; but the poems on Augustus and Cornelia have especial weight, and form an integral part of the book, not merely in architecture but in theme.

There would be no difficulty in seeing Book 1 as a unity, were it not for the last three poems (20–2). The rest are strongly bound together, not only by various explicit or palpable connections, but by the theme of them all. Poems 1–19 all have the love of Propertius for Cynthia as a primary or secondary subject; where it is secondary, Propertius is treating the loves, actual or potential, of his friends. Poem 20 certainly begins with the love of his friend Gallus, for a boy, but the body of it narrates the myth of Hylas' abduction by nymphs. Poem 21 is an epigram put into the mouth of a Gallus who has died fleeing from Perugia (besieged by Octavian in 41 B.C.). Poem 22 gives the origin of the poet: he comes from near Perugia, and his *propinquus* perished as a result of the fighting there. This sudden variety and heterogeneity should surprise. There is no reason to suppose that the poems in the first column of the Gallus papyrus³⁷ wanted connection with the other poems in the book, and so to make them a precedent for Propertius' filling out an otherwise unified book with extraneous matter. This is the feature of the book which requires explanation.

In the main part of the book, the love which engrosses our interest is given a well-defined setting. The world is that of the reader's own time and place. The incidents purport to be historical; but in themselves they have no significance to the reader outside the book, and the chief characters are given no name (the poet) or a false one (Cynthia). Poem 20, and poems 21–2, break out of this sphere in opposite directions. We may look first at 21–2. It is generally conceded that the two poems must be connected, that the kinsman of the poet who died by Perugia must be the speaker of poem 21.³⁸ I shall argue presently that that speaker, named Gallus, is a relative of the Gallus whom Propertius has addressed in four earlier poems; and that hitherto the Gallus addressed there, the poet's chief associate in love, had meant nothing to the reader outside the work. These two poems remove both characters from the world of love and connect them harshly with historical events not merely familiar to the reader but politically sensitive and disturbing. The poet does not fail to remind us that the siege was the work of Caesar (21. 7); he parades his emotional involvement in the death of his kinsman (22. 6); and he heightens the sense of

³⁵ 'at tu finge elegos' (135) shows that epic is in question. I do not agree with Macleod that 'the poem Propertius risked writing would have included, as lines 45–8 indicate, bellicose material'; and in fact poems 6 and 10 do treat of war.

³⁶ Macleod sufficiently refutes the contention that 1. 71–150 form a new poem (F. H. Sandbach, *CQ* N.S. XII (1962), 264 ff.). If they did, the problems

they raise would not be sensibly diminished.

³⁷ R. D. Anderson, P. J. Parsons, R. G. M. Nisbet, *JRS* LXIX (1979), 125 ff.

³⁸ See, for example, Williams, *Tradition and Originality*, 177 f. He allows that the interrelation of the two poems must constitute an exception to what 'it is reasonable to assume' about most Roman poems.

audacity by withholding his own name.³⁹ The poems effect a sudden change of atmosphere from that of the rest of the book while maintaining contact with its characters. The poems also share with two poems closely preceding them the impressive theme of death. In 17 and 19 the lover had contemplated death with fantasies nostalgic or passionate. Here, appropriately, death becomes brutal fact. 17. 11 f. and 22. 6–8 give a very different colour to the subject of unburied bones. We shall see further reason to accept this connection when we consider the sequence of poems from 17 to the end.

The change of feeling in 21 and 22 is heightened by the opposite change in the poem before. The poem is addressed to Gallus. 'pro continuo . . . amore' in the first line refers us back to the earlier poems, and as in poem 10 the poet gives Gallus advice. But the advice given here removes us from reality: Gallus is to take care that the boy he loves is not snatched away by amorous nymphs.⁴⁰ The myth puts love itself in a fantastic setting and alters its atmosphere. The Boreadae sweep down to kiss the lovely Hylas (25–30);⁴¹ fired with his beauty, the nymphs pull him into the water. The object of their passion is not an imperious and irascible mistress but a boy, who had rather pick flowers, *pueriliter*, than draw water, and dallies with his own reflection (39–42).⁴² This idyllic poem is modelled on Theocritus, the model of the *Eclogues*, and at several points the *Eclogues* themselves are imitated.⁴³ The poem before last had been based on the *Eclogues*. In both 18 and 20 the lover (Propertius or Gallus) is placed in the deserted countryside: compare especially 18. 27 '†divini† montes (fontes *codd.*) et frigida rupes' and 20. 13 'duros montes et frigida saxa'. This locale is the more striking since in poems 1–16 Propertius has been in Rome; Cynthia has actually left Rome only to visit the decadence of Baiæ (poem 11). The reader will surely connect the two poems, 18 and 20, and contrast their mood. In 18 Propertius puts himself into the pastoral world, as Virgil had put the poet Gallus in *Eclogue* 10; but he does not appear to find the countryside pleasing. He has come to the waste to complain out loud of the harshness of Cynthia. Here love is not transmuted into tranquil and airy fantasy.

Poems 17–22 may in some respects be regarded as a group. Poems 17 and 19 are both concerned with the imagined death of the lover, and the reaction of the beloved. 'Non . . . nunc' in the first line of 19 is most naturally seen as taking up poem 17. At any rate, the reader can hardly avoid connecting the two poems. It seems probable that the three poems at the end of the book continue the pattern of alternation. 20 is connected in theme with 18, 21–2 with 17 and 19. The connections give force and particularity to the divergence of 20–2 from the world of 1–19. In the case of 20, 18 to some degree prepares for the divergence by its quasi-pastoral character; but nonetheless 18, and 17 and 19, bring out the contrasts of tone. The characters of 20 and 21–2 link them not only to the rest of the book but to each other: 21–2, as I shall contend, throw light on the Gallus addressed in 20. Once again the link heightens the contrast, which is extreme, and which produces one of the most powerful effects in the book.⁴⁴ Gallus is suddenly abstracted from reality, and then as suddenly located in a reality more concrete than before. The surprises and deviations of the last three poems are not aimless or fortuitous but calculated. The ending of the book may be compared with the ending of Catullus 64. There, likewise, the reader is abruptly and surprisingly transported into a sombre present reality;⁴⁵ the preceding section (the

³⁹ This reticence is startling in a *sphragis* which opens as this one does. It is notable also that the poet has not named himself hitherto. His name appears in the other books eight times, and Catullus, Tibullus, Sulpicia, and Ovid in his *Amores*, allow or compel their own names to enter. Rothstein (in his first edition) and Butler and Barber suppose that the disclosure of the name might be left to the title of the book; but the excuse is palpably unconvincing.

⁴⁰ A friend quoted by Camps thinks that the poet means by the nymphs ordinary Roman girls. Propertius gives us no reason to think this, and lines 7–10 (especially 7 and 10) are scarcely to be reconciled with this hypothesis.

⁴¹ This picture is not found in Theocritus 13, Propertius' model. The Boreadae have a very different role in the story at A. R. 1. 1300 ff.

⁴² Again, there is nothing of this in Theocritus or Apollonius.

⁴³ Compare 20. 7–10 with *Ecl.* 8. 6 f., 20. 36 with *Ecl.* 8. 37, 20. 45 with *Ecl.* 5. 59—and possibly 20. 49 f. with *Ecl.* 6. 43 f.

⁴⁴ Among the other effects in the book one may include the surprises of discovering that Cynthia will remain in Rome (8b), that Gallus is deeply in love (10), that a poem in this book is being spoken by an ancient door (16).

⁴⁵ The sins described in 64. 399 ff. are all at home in Catullus' own day: compare with 399 *Lucr.* III. 72 ('sanguine civili' 70), contrast *Hes., Op.* 184; compare with 401 f. the allegations at *Cic., Chu.* 27 f. and *Sall., Cat.* 15, contrast *Hes., Op.* 182; compare with 403 f. the allegation in *Cat.* 88, 89, and 90.

song of the Parcae) makes this one seem the stranger. But the themes of this last section connect it with other parts of the poem, and the connections cause the surprise to seem forceful rather than odd. In both passages contemporary readers will have felt the poet's material to acquire a new and exciting immediacy. We may easily recapture this response.

I must now defend my view of the Galli. The Gallus of 21 is normally assumed to have nothing to do with the homonym who appears in four other poems, the last directly preceding this one. But surely the poet was not so negligent of his readers? Anyone who read the book continuously would naturally connect the two. Yet since Book 1 was not published before 30 B.C., and the second Gallus dies in 41 B.C., the reader cannot have supposed them to be the same. He would assume that the Gallus of 21 was an elder relative of the Gallus of 5, 10, 13, and 20—presumably his father. This connection is welcome for another, though slighter, reason. Propertius gathered the bones of his own father, who must have perished at much the same time (IV. 1. 127 f.). If his object in poem 22 were simply to connect himself, through his family, with the victims of Octavian, it might have seemed more pointed in itself, and more natural as an answer to 'unde genus, qui sint mihi . . . Penates', if he had mentioned his father instead of a more distant relation. His proceeding is easier to understand if he positively wanted to touch on his associate Gallus.⁴⁶

If the Gallus of poems 5, 10, 13, and 20 is related to Propertius, it becomes interesting to ponder on his identity; and to do so will prove germane to our wider concerns. We might be tempted to imagine that we had found support for a conjecture of Syme's: that this Gallus was a noble Aelius Gallus. The family had on other grounds been thought to be related to the poet's.⁴⁷ On reflection, however, one sees difficulties. This Aelius Gallus must be possessed of an eminence in society at least equal to that of Tullus, to whom several poems are also addressed (1, 6, 14, 22). Nothing is said of Tullus that does not do him honour. Even of the much obscurer Bassus and Ponticus,⁴⁸ addressed in poems 4, and 7 and 9, nothing is said that would cause embarrassment. To Gallus is addressed poem 13, which assumes that Gallus will enjoy the misfortunes of the poet, speaks of his notorious promiscuity, and describes with lavish fullness his physical union with his beloved. This description is malicious, as Lyne has argued persuasively of poem 10:⁴⁹ there too Propertius exults in the sight he has obtained of his former rival's embraces (for their rivalry see poem 5). 'Hoc pro continuo te, Galle, monemus amore' (20. 1) will sound less convincing than ironical. Would Propertius really write in this way of a distinguished *amicus*? It is not plausible to see all this as a hearty joke. I suspect that the poet has taken an obscure relation, unknown to the public, and has developed him as a foil without strict regard to veracity. The reference to his *nobilitas* and his ancient family in 5. 23 f. will appear in order to preclude confusion with Gallus the poet,⁵⁰ and to make a point about love. Even in prose dialogues Cicero can alter at will the philosophical allegiances of his brother (a figure not unknown to the public).⁵¹ Gallus will stand as a historical being somewhere between Ponticus and (I imagine) Lygdamus. The poet can involve this half-fictional personage more freely in the world of love. He can thus play a major part in unifying the book.

Each of the books we have considered, then, should be seen as an artistic creation. Each forms a whole more organic and more interesting than a collection of wholly independent poems or a geometrical construction. The books themselves urge us to read them through in order, and not to restrict our view to the confines of each separate poem. On the other hand, we are not encouraged to search for devious and tangential connections. It now

⁴⁶ It would require a curious view of the poet to suppose that he had already written 21 before he contemplated collecting his poems, but could not bear to leave it out, and therefore wrote 22 to explain it for the general public (cf. Williams, loc. cit. (n. 38)). On 22 the article of F. Leo, *Ausgewählte Kl. Schr.* II, 169 ff., is still worth consulting, for it brings out effectively the strangeness of the poem. At his conclusion—that we have only the beginning of the poem—one shudders.

⁴⁷ Syme, *History in Ovid*, 101 f. On the Aelii Galli see also Nisbet and Hubbard II, 223 f. The grounds for relating Propertius to the Aelii Galli are that the

Postumus of III. 12, who is married to an Aelia Galla, may be the Propertius Postumus of *ILS* 914 (Rome). To the innocent outsider these grounds seem highly speculative.

⁴⁸ See Syme, *History in Ovid*, 98 (Ov., *Tr.* IV. 10. 47).

⁴⁹ R. O. A. M. Lyne, *The Latin Love Poets* (1980), 112 ff.

⁵⁰ cf. *ZPE* XLI (1981), 39.

⁵¹ Compare Pease in his edition of the *De Divinatione* 1, 17, 20. On Quintus' career and writings, see D. R. Shackleton Bailey, *Cicero: Epistulae ad Quintum Fratrem et M. Brutum* (1980), 3 ff.

appears not unreasonable to suppose that relations within the book which are important to the poet will be natural, pointed, and striking. The assessment of particular cases will to some degree vary with the assessor; but a certain element of subjectivity does not mean that the whole matter is irredeemably arbitrary. It will seem to be so only if we permit the forced and the tenuous to obscure the significant.

This approach will, I believe, help to illuminate other books of Latin poetry. But even the two examples we have considered may serve to indicate that every book has its own kind of unity. Our conclusions about those two books invite us to look similarly at the other two books of Propertius; if we do so, we shall find them to be no less individual. A picture of each may be hazarded. Book II, which I hold to be one book,⁵² is large and essentially homogeneous; it is bound together by continual and forceful variation of a number of themes. For example, the *Iliad* and its characters form a prominent concern which repays analysis. In Book III, the subject-matter is expanded in a way which the prologue (poems 1-3) renders somewhat surprising; this leads to a renunciation of love as a way of life and as a serious theme for poetry. The book is not a disjointed miscellany of experiments. The poems which do not concern Cynthia are all linked with the prologue or with the connected pair of poems which opens the book proper (4 and 5, on the Parthian campaign); the last part of the book (poems 17-25) distorts the themes of the rest.

These suggestions about Books II and III would show further the variety of structure which a single poet may attain in a single medium. Different poets will diverge still further. This aspect of their art is no less personal than any other. The piquancy, the paradox, the dramatic surprises which we observed in the construction of Propertius' first and fourth books find ready parallels within his individual poems. The organization and design of a poet's books can form an integral part of his artistry and his meaning: that is why we should study them, and how.⁵³

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⁵² The contention that it is two, made popular again by Skutsch (*HSCP* LXXIX (1975), 228 ff.), rests on shaky foundations. The mention of 'tres libelli' in II. 13. 25 may be met by the hypothesis—which could be supported on other grounds—that Books II and III were published together. The absence of Book I from the grammarians need have no significance in the light of the nature, and the paucity, of their citations from Propertius. The *De Natura Deorum* and the *Ad Herennium* are quoted a similar number of times by the grammarians, and

their first books do not appear. For the nature of the quotations from Propertius, cf. E. P. Menes, *CP* LXXVIII (1983), 136 ff. It may also be noted that Book II. 1a-9 (supposedly the original Book I) is quoted less often than Book III or the original Book II: Skutsch illegitimately heaps together the figures for what on his hypothesis is two books.

⁵³ I am grateful to Mr. Jasper Griffin, Professor Hugh Lloyd-Jones, and Mr. R. B. Rutherford for their encouragement, to the Editorial Committee for their comments and advice.