

# WRITTEN WOMEN: PROPERTIUS' *SCRIPTA PUELLA*\*

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(Plate I)

## I. CONSTRUCTING A REAL CYNTHIA

The narrative organization of Propertius' first poetry-book seems to encourage a practice of reading the characters and events of his love elegy as real. The predominantly autobiographical mode allows the reader to equate the lover of the text with the author Propertius. Direct addresses to a beloved 'Cynthia' who is allocated physical and psychological characteristics suggest that the narrative's female subject has a life outside the text as Propertius' mistress. The illusion of a real world populated by real individuals is then sustained by various other formal mechanisms such as the regular deployment of addresses to the historically verifiable figure of Tullus or occasional references to the landscape of Baiae, Umbria and Rome. Having established a recognizable setting, the poetry-book seems even to account for its own existence as literary discourse with the claim that composition is a method of courtship. Writing is subsumed within and subordinated to an erotic scheme: Propertius writes to woo a woman.

Not all the poems in the first book have narrators who seem identifiable with a love-lorn author. Some do not have a beloved Cynthia as their subject. Several have been found to contain elements of literary polemic, including a Callimachean advocacy of elegy over other writing-practices.<sup>1</sup> But the poetic devices for the production of realism have operated so successfully that, in the history of classical scholarship, their technique has often been taken for truth: the *Monobiblos* has become 'the supreme example of "subjective love-elegy" for modern scholars, and so persuasively has Propertius handled the conventional amatory topics that most have taken the staging for reality'.<sup>2</sup> For example, 1. 3 is structured as the recollection of an occasion when the narrator arrived late at his girl-friend's door. A favoured poem for analysis, it opens with an artful series of mythological parallels for the sleeping Cynthia and closes with Cynthia now awake and talking. The unusual and exceptionally realistic strategy of ascribing direct speech to elegy's female subject seems to end events with a mistress speaking for herself. So the poem has been described as a little drama in which we learn how the author's mythic idealization of his beloved as a Sleeping Beauty was once shattered by the *reality* of her wakeful reproaches;<sup>3</sup> the lover's illusion of a peaceful Cynthia is destroyed by an encounter with the *real-life*, abusive woman.<sup>4</sup> Thus for many critics, faced with a poem presenting elegy's heroine as a physical and active presence which breathes, sleeps, wakes and even speaks, the written woman lives beyond the poetic world as flesh and blood.

The Romantic view that Propertian love-elegy is a true expression of its author's feelings and a realistic representation of an Augustan girl-friend is clearly facilitated by poems in which narrative realism predominates. But realist strategies are not so prominent in Propertius' second poetry-book. There the virtual absence of historically documented or even named addressees, the frequent shifts between second- and third-person reference and the general lack of a well-defined occasion for enunciation prohibit for the reader any easy transition from the text to an extra-textual reality. Now Propertius 'no longer creates the illusion of himself uttering on an occasion outside literature, in life'.<sup>5</sup> The substitution of interior for dramatic monologue leaves

\*A much earlier version of this paper was delivered to seminars at Cambridge and Oxford in 1984. I am most grateful to the participants for the helpful comments and criticisms they made at the time.

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. P. Fedeli, *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar* 3 (1981), 227-42.

<sup>2</sup> D. Ross, *Backgrounds to Augustan Poetry* (1975), 110. For such misunderstandings of Augustan elegy cf.

P. Veyne, *L'Élégie érotique romaine* (1983), 10.

<sup>3</sup> R. O. A. M. Lyne, *The Latin Love Poets* (1980), 114-20. Cf. J. Griffin, *Latin Poets and Roman Life* (1985), 52-3.

<sup>4</sup> H.-P. Stahl, *Propertius: 'Love' and 'War'* (1985), 75. For this use of the words *real* and *reality* cf. e.g. L. C. Curran, *YCLS* 19 (1966), 187-207.

<sup>5</sup> Lyne, *Love Poets*, 125.

the male subject—the Elegiac Man—without a realistically constructed world in which to act. The female subject—the Elegiac Woman—is less frequently articulated as a physical entity with an assumed existence outside the text; her title less frequently employed as if it had the force of a pseudonym. Cynthia is often ‘only a shadowy presence’.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, as the poetic mechanisms for the production of realism are curtailed, so references to Cynthia’s function in literary discourse increase. Hence the beloved’s capacity to captivate begins the first book of Propertian elegies, but the next opens with a consideration of her role in the practice of writing. The Elegiac Man is now explicitly both lover and writer, the Elegiac Woman both beloved and narrative material. In the first poem of the new book a Sleeping Beauty is the starting-point for poetic production: ‘seu cum poscentis somnum declinat ocellos, | inuenio causas mille poeta nouas’.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, at the second book’s close, Cynthia ‘uersu laudata Properti’<sup>8</sup> is the subject-matter which locates the elegiac poet in a Roman tradition for producers of female representations. Thus in poems which frame her second formulation Cynthia is depicted as matter for poetic composition, not as a woman to be wooed through writing.

Since the text no longer encourages a reading of its subjects as flesh-and-blood lovers nor seems to subordinate elegiac writing to an erotic courtship, constructing a real Cynthia out of the characteristics of the second book is a much more difficult enterprise. For example, it is no coincidence that at least one Romantic account of the Propertian corpus has devoted less space to book 2 than to the *Monobiblos*, although it is twice the size of the first book. Oliver Lyne’s *The Latin Love Poets* (1980) favours a practice of reading even the second Cynthia as real, because it highlights only those techniques of the second book which most closely match the realist strategies of the first.<sup>9</sup>

Similarly, in order to safeguard her status as a living Augustan girl-friend, critics have often insulated the second Cynthia from issues of poetic production which the text now raises prominently. The second book is framed by the naming of Callimachus, by extensive borrowings from the Callimachean polemic in favour of writing elegy, and by references to the Elegiac Woman as Propertius’ poetic material.<sup>10</sup> This explicit association of Cynthia with Callimachus might suggest that Cynthia herself is a subject in the Callimachean tradition. But the outer margins of an Augustan poetry-book are not unexpected places to find the expression of such literary concerns. For the most notable and well-documented structural principle of Callimachean poetry is the framing device, often a prologue and epilogue concerned with the text’s status as poetic discourse and its place in the literary tradition.<sup>11</sup> So, since Callimachus is explicitly invoked only in those poems which frame Propertius’ second book, it has been possible to claim that Callimachean material is here employed only in passing, to support the author’s preference for elegy over epic.<sup>12</sup> An inner core of poems then remains relatively undisturbed by issues of Alexandrian artifice or Callimachean apologetics, and is still read as representing the vicissitudes of a poet’s affair with the living Cynthia: Cynthia and Callimachus are kept apart.

Thus, despite his considerable interest in the impact of Hellenistic literary practices on the elegiac text, Jean-Paul Boucher concluded *Études sur Properce* (1965) with a chapter which attempted to construct a plausible portrait of a specific Roman

<sup>6</sup> L. Richardson, *Propertius Elegies I—IV* (1977), 15.

<sup>7</sup> 2. 1. 11–12. References to and quotations from the Propertian corpus follow E. A. Barber, *Sexti Properti Carmina*<sup>2</sup> (1960).

<sup>8</sup> 2. 34. 93.

<sup>9</sup> Lyne, 140, justifies the brevity of his survey of books 3 and 4 on the grounds that they are no longer Cynthia-centred, but does not remark on the discrepancy between his accounts of books 1 and 2. Cf. the priority given to the *Monobiblos* over book 2 in Stahl, *Propertius*.

<sup>10</sup> See W. Wimmel, *Hermes Einzelschriften* 16 (1966); J.-P. Boucher, *Études sur Properce* (1965), 168; H. Juhnke, *Hermes* 99 (1971), 107.

<sup>11</sup> See C. M. Dawson, *YClS* 11 (1950), 1–168; D. L. Clayman, *Hermes* 104 (1976), 29–35; P. Parsons, *ZPE* 25 (1977), 1–50; R. F. Thomas, *CQ* 33 (1983), 92–113. For Callimachus and the Augustan poetry-book see *Arethusa* 13 (1980), *passim*.

<sup>12</sup> Boucher, *Études sur Properce*, 166–7. Cf. Lyne, *Love Poets*, 147.

out of the Elegiac Woman's textual characteristics.<sup>13</sup> More recently, John Sullivan entitled the third chapter of his book on the Augustan elegist '*Cynthia Prima Fuit*' and the fourth chapter 'Roman Callimachus'. In the latter he rejected sincerity as a meaningless Romantic criterion of literary value and examined the author's Alexandrian heritage. Yet in the former, he called for a reassertion of the primacy of life in critical methods and supported Apuleius' identification of Cynthia as a pseudonym for one Hostia.<sup>14</sup>

But Cynthia and Callimachus are inseparable. For, as Walter Wimmel's history of 'die apologetische Form' has established by means of a line-by-line commentary, Callimachus' polemic in favour of the elegiac writing-style is extensively deployed and remodelled not only in the opening and closing poems 2. 1 and 2. 34 but also *within* the book's more realist core, in poem 2. 10.<sup>15</sup> And, at the same time as 2. 10 parades a poetics, it describes the production of epic as dependent on the completion of elegy's heroine—'bella canam, quando scripta puella mea est' (8). It is, therefore, the narrative strategies of 2. 10 which I propose to examine in the course of this paper precisely because, in the pursuit of a 'real' Cynthia, they are frequently overlooked or understated. Against the view that 2. 10 once opened a new book of the corpus, it will be argued that the poem forms part of a group integrated with the second book, which breaks away significantly from the devices of realism and instead associates Cynthia so intimately with the practice of writing elegy as to undermine her identity independently of that practice. From an analysis of Propertius' *scripta puella* it will emerge that to read Cynthia as a pseudonym is to misread or disregard the narrative organization of the second book.

#### II. 2. 10—THE *SCRIPTA PUELLA*

The terrain mapped out at the opening and close of 2. 10 marks the changed narrative mode. For the first time in the Propertian corpus the reader is presented with the topography of a particular literary tradition:

sed tempus lustrare aliis Helicon choreis,  
et campum Haemonio iam dare tempus equo.  
nondum etiam Ascraeos norunt mea carmina fontis,  
sed modo Permessi flumine lauit Amor.<sup>16</sup>

After Hesiod had set his Muses on Mount Helicon in Boeotia at the beginning of the *Theogony*, it became a general literary practice nurtured by Callimachus' *Aetia* to signify Hesiod and the particular tradition of writing with which he was associated by reference to the topography of that area. So 'Helicon', 'Ascraeos ... fontis' and 'Permessi flumine' all chart a Hesiodic practice of writing. The elegiac world changes locale. From the landscape of Italy—with such markers of realistically constructed space as the Rome, Baiae and Umbria of the *Monobiblos*—it is transplanted to the landscape of language itself. The strategically placed references to a geography of poetic inspiration indicate that the intervening narrative has broken away from the devices of realism and is now overtly concerned with its own status as discourse.

The figures who formerly peopled a realistically shaped elegiac world now change to suit their new habitat:

aetas prima canat Ueneres, extrema tumultus:  
bella canam, quando scripta puella mea est.  
nunc uolo subducto grauior procedere uultu,  
nunc aliam citharam me mea Musa docet.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> For such attempts to construct a physique for Cynthia out of her poetic features see M. Wyke in Averil Cameron (ed.), *History as Text* (forthcoming).

<sup>14</sup> J. Sullivan, *Propertius* (1976).

<sup>15</sup> *op. cit.* (n. 10).

<sup>16</sup> 2. 10. 1–2 and 25–6.

<sup>17</sup> 2. 10. 7–10.

The Elegiac Man is not portrayed as a lover compelled to express his love in verse. Instead his role is solely that of poet; a master of discourse who himself chooses between modes of poetic composition and can contemplate the termination of amatory elegy (8). So, when it is argued that the narrator's life should fall into two parts, the stages named—*Ueneres* and *tumultus*—constitute not occupations such as lover and soldier but subjects for elegiac and epic writing-styles. Likewise, the transition between modes of composition, from *Ueneres* to *tumultus*, involves not a change of heart for a lover but a different facial expression for a narrator (9–10); another guise to articulate another literary practice. The substitution of *bella* for a *puella* requires not a change of life-style, but of poetic performance.

Correspondingly, the Elegiac Woman is not portrayed as a beloved receiving or inspiring poetry but as a narrative subject to be continued or abandoned. The role assigned to elegy's *puella* in 2. 10 is that of a fiction which may be finished (8). The subordinate clause 'quando scripta puella mea est' has been variously translated as, for example, 'now that I have set forth all my mistress' charms', 'since I have done with writing of my love', 'da die Geliebte ganz beschrieben ist', or 'since writing about my mistress is done'.<sup>18</sup> But each of these translations restricts unjustifiably the possible meanings of *scribere puellam*. When describing the process of literary composition, *scribere* more often takes as its direct object a word which signifies some aspect of language than one which signifies a person. The *Oxford Latin Dictionary* cites a few instances where the activity of writing poetry about someone is rendered by *scribere* with a personal object: *Odes* 1. 6 begins with an apparent forecast to Agrippa that 'scriberis Vario fortis et hostium | uictor' and goes on to ask 'quis Martem ... | digne scripserit?';<sup>19</sup> Martial 5. 53 begins 'Colchida quid scribis, quid scribis, amice, Thyesten?'. But in the prologue to Terence's *Eunuchus*, for example, 'currentem seruum scribere' parallels 'bonas matronas facere' as a means of describing the activity of creating characters.<sup>20</sup> Some ambiguity may therefore reside in the construction 'scripta puella mea est', which consequently could be rendered 'my girl has been written' as well as 'my girl has been described'. By such techniques as the addition of 'charms', or the employment of 'beschreiben' rather than 'schreiben', commentators have limited the possible senses of the clause and thus safeguarded the Elegiac Woman's status always as flesh and blood, never as fiction.<sup>21</sup>

Yet the parallelism the text evinces at this point between hexameter and pentameter verse demonstrates that the *puella* is to be read here not as a living girlfriend to whom the author has dedicated his life, but as a female fiction which can be discarded. For, in each of the verses 7 and 8, the two mutually exclusive discourses of elegy and epic are assigned a chronological relation. In the first they are signified respectively by *Ueneres* and *tumultus*, in the second—chiastically—by *bella* and *puella*. Since *canere Ueneres* and *scribere puellam* describe the same activity, the juxtaposition of *Ueneres* and *puella* signals their comparable function as signifiers of a form of fiction. The arena of literary eroticism is here circumscribed both by an indefinite plurality of *Ueneres* and by a single, unindividuated *puella*.

The substitution of Helicon and a written woman for Cynthia and Rome at this point in the corpus marks a departure from the strategies of realism. The landscape of language provides a setting in which the poet alone acts, and the only event envisaged is his choice of subject-matter for poetic production: either *bella* or a *puella*.

But the choice which is articulated in 2. 10 between the production of epic and elegiac verse and the withdrawal from epic, with which the poem closes, are set in

<sup>18</sup> Respectively H. E. Butler, *Propertius* (Loeb Reprint 1976), 93; W. A. Camps, *Propertius: Elegies Book II* (1967), 109; G. Luck, *Properz und Tibull Liebeselegien* (1964), 79; Stahl, *Propertius*, 157.

<sup>19</sup> Horace, *Odes* 1. 6. 13–14.

<sup>20</sup> Ter., *Eu.* 36 and 37.

<sup>21</sup> The use of *scribere* elsewhere in the Propertian

corpus supports the argument for ambiguity here. 'Scribitur et uestris Cynthia corticibus' at 1. 18. 22 gives Cynthia momentarily the status of a word not a woman, while the parallelism of 'unde ... scribantur amores' with 'unde meus ueniat liber' at 2. 1. 1–2 marks *amores* there as amatory writings.

both a political and a literary context. The epic opus partially undertaken and then postponed has as its subject the supreme signifier of both literary and political orthodoxy, Augustus:

surge, anime, ex humili; iam, carmina, sumite uires;  
 Pierides, magni nunc erit oris opus.  
 iam negat Euphrates equitem post terga tueri  
 Parthorum et Crassos se tenuisse dolet:  
 India quin, Auguste, tuo dat colla triumpho,  
 et domus intactae te tremit Arabiae;  
 et si qua extremis tellus se subtrahit oris,  
 sentiat illa tuas postmodo capta manus!  
 haec ego castra sequar; uates tua castra canendo  
 magnus ero: seruent hunc mihi fata diem!  
 at caput in magnis ubi non est tangere signis,  
 ponitur haec imos ante corona pedes;  
 sic nos nunc, inopes laudis conscendere carmen,  
 pauperibus sacris uilia tura damus.<sup>22</sup>

The new name appears rarely in the elegiac corpus but is used here in a direct address.<sup>23</sup> It is also embedded in the grandiose language of Eastern conquest and enclosed by poetic markers of the shift in stylistic level which the enunciation 'Auguste' requires—a departure 'ex humili' and a replacement of the *poeta* by a *uates*.<sup>24</sup>

Yet, significantly, the name also establishes a narrative time for the poem after 27 B.C., a period which saw the birth of the Principate and the consolidation of Augustus' political powers.<sup>25</sup> Walter Wimmel had found, in the prologues to Virgil's third book of *Georgics* and Horace's second book of *Satires*, literary precursors and parallels for the movement of 2. 10: from a playful promise to write about Octavian, the poets retreat to an apology for a temporary incapacity to do so.<sup>26</sup> But he did not observe the difference in political significance with which these statements of literary intent are imbued when set in their differing historical contexts. The promise made in the *Georgics* and the advice offered by Trebatius in the *Satires* to write about Octavian were both publicized almost immediately after the victory at Actium and, although not acted upon then, were subsequently fulfilled in some measure by the composition of the *Aeneid* and the *Odes*. A promise withdrawn at a later stage therefore assigns a literary and political unorthodoxy to the love elegy which is to displace the proposed patriotic poem—'Amor' not 'Auguste' is the last, lingering word.<sup>27</sup>

The last couplet supplements the Propertian poetics of unorthodoxy. For it maps out the terrain on which Virgil had constructed a literary initiation for the elegiac poet Gallus:

nondum etiam Ascræos norunt mea carmina fontis,  
 sed modo Permessi flumine lauit Amor.<sup>28</sup>

One particular spot, 'Permessi flumine', is marked out for Propertian elegy within the larger map of Hesiodic literary discourses to differentiate his literary eroticism from the more broadly based narrative modes of his precursor. The detention of the Propertian *carmina* at the foot of Helicon contrasts with the Gallan ascent in *Eclogue* 6

<sup>22</sup> 2. 10. 11–24.

<sup>23</sup> See R. Syme, *History in Ovid* (1978), 183.

<sup>24</sup> For the elevated diction of 2. 10. 11–20 see W. R. Nethercut, *Symbolae Osloenses* 47 (1972), 81–2.

<sup>25</sup> A period around 25 B.C. is offered as a more specific date by some commentators, e.g. Nethercut, 79–80 and Stahl, *Propertius*, 346 n. 42. For a more cautious approach to the poetic depiction of campaigns

see Syme, *History in Ovid*.

<sup>26</sup> Wimmel, op. cit. (n. 10), 193–202.

<sup>27</sup> For 2. 10 as a statement of political unorthodoxy cf. M. Hubbard, *Propertius* (1974), 102–3 and 114; Nethercut, 79–94; J. K. King, *WJA* n. F. 6b (1980), 78. Contrast L. Alfonsi, *L'elegia di Propertio* (1979), 53 and Stahl, *Propertius*, 155–62.

<sup>28</sup> 2. 10. 25–6.

to the composition of an aetiology for the Grynean Grove.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, the retreat by the Propertian narrator from a desire 'fortis memorare ad proelia turmas' (3) parallels the Virgilian withdrawal at *Eclogue* 6. 3 from the production of verse on kings and battles. The Augustan elegist postpones indefinitely the literary development of both Gallus and the later Virgil, and aligns his work with the poetic voice of a politically pessimistic, pre-Actium era.<sup>30</sup> The final retreat back to erotic verse, the return from *bella* to a *scripta puella*, marks the Cynthia of the surrounding poems as an unorthodox way of writing. For 2. 10 reveals that as long as Cynthia is being written, a poem on Augustus is being eternally deferred.

Cynthia's association with a practice of writing has not, however, gone entirely unobserved. Godo Lieberg, for example, noted that during the course of the elegiac corpus the Propertian *puella* is clearly provided with three different relations to poetic production: 'Cynthia ist zugleich Quelle, Gegenstand und Ziel der elegischen Dichtung'.<sup>31</sup> But critics who recognize and highlight this poetic device have centred only on the two relations of the *puella* to literary production which do not appear to deny her an extra-textual status. Presented as an instigator (*Quelle*) or addressee (*Ziel*) of a writing-practice Cynthia may still be read as existing outside its confines. So, despite his identification of three separate roles for Cynthia in relation to poetic composition, Lieberg centred only on that of *Quelle*. The project of his article 'Die Muse des Propertius und seine Dichterweihe' was to demonstrate that in the elegiac text the *puella* was presented as a Muse and that it was to establish this identification that the title Cynthia had been adopted.<sup>32</sup> This narrowed perspective enabled Lieberg to state categorically at the beginning of his article that Cynthia was a pseudonym for a living woman whose real name was Hostia.<sup>33</sup> For, as a Muse, the Elegiac Woman is presumed to be external and prior to the poetry she inspires.

W. Stroh also drew attention to points in the Propertian corpus where Cynthia was linked with the composition of poetry. But he too confined his analysis only to one manner of articulating that relation. His objective was to establish the fundamental contribution of the *Nützlichkeitstopik*—the theme of poetry's sexual utility—to the construction of elegiac discourse. For that reason he favoured a reading of Cynthia as *Ziel*, as the recipient of a literary courtship. He began his case with the claim that poem 1. 8 gives a practical demonstration of elegy as courtship poetry.<sup>34</sup> Faced with the differing textual characteristics of the second Cynthia, Stroh then constructed a more elaborate reading of poem 2. 1 as indirect courtship, with the Elegiac Woman—despite her presentation in the third person—still acting as the living recipient of poetry-books through which she is wooed.<sup>35</sup>

But poem 2. 10 does not readily fit these observations. Here it is no longer the presence or absence of love for a specific woman which is said to govern Propertian discourse, but the poet's own inspiration, made concrete and personified as *mea Musa* or *Amor*. The responsibility for the rejection of amatory elegy is assigned to a Muse (10) who is provided with the conventional paraphernalia of classical poetic composition—one particular musical instrument, one set of divine instructions. After the production of Augustus' *res gestae* has been defined as a project for the future, at the close of 2. 10 the responsibility for the resumption of amatory elegy is not assigned to an Elegiac Woman. 2. 10 ends not with a woman of flesh and blood calling back her lover/poet, but with the abstract term *Amor* confining Propertian *carmina* to the lower

<sup>29</sup> See M. Rothstein, *Propertius Sextus Elegien* 1 (1966), 283–5; P. J. Enk, *Sex. Prop. Elegiarum Liber Secundus* (1962), 153 and 166–7. Cf. Wimmel, *op. cit.* (n. 10), 193–202 and R. Coleman, *Vergil: Eclogues* (1977), 195–6.

<sup>30</sup> See Hubbard, *Propertius*, 114; G. Williams, *Figures of Thought in Roman Poetry* (1980), 222–3; Stahl, *Propertius*, 159–60.

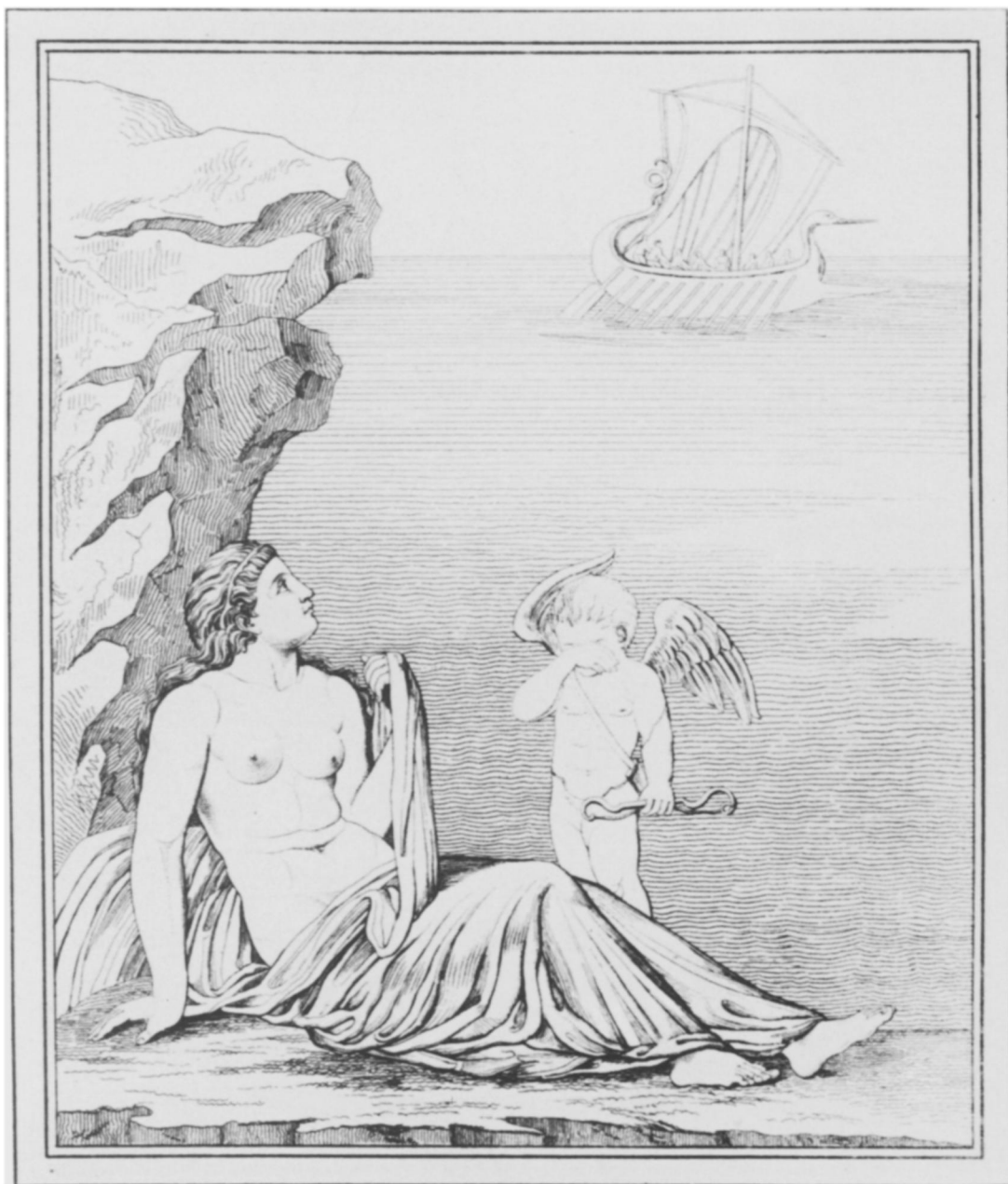
<sup>31</sup> G. Lieberg, *Philologus* 107 (1963), 269.

<sup>32</sup> Lieberg, 118.

<sup>33</sup> Lieberg, 116.

<sup>34</sup> W. Stroh, *Die römische Liebeselegie als werbende Dichtung* (1971), 9–53.

<sup>35</sup> Stroh, 54–64. For J. King the Elegiac Woman must also be well-educated in order to appreciate the learned, Callimachean nature of her lover's poetry; see *op. cit.* (n. 27), 61–84 and *WS* 15 (1981), 169–84.



DRAWING BY H. ROUX AFTER A POMPEIAN WALL PAINTING. *L. Barré*  
Herculanum et Pompéi (1861), II pl. 35.

reaches of the Hesiodic landscape of literary language. Nowhere in this poem is the *puella* Muse.<sup>36</sup>

If elegy's heroine is not *Quelle*, neither is she *Ziel*. The poem is not structured as an erotic event, an act of communication with or persuasion of a living mistress. For the only addressee envisaged, the ostensible First Reader, is not a woman to be wooed but Augustus the patron of letters. The narrative trajectory is from a male writer to a male reader, in which *bella* and a *puella* simply demarcate the boundaries between modes of discourse.

That the project of 2. 10 is to establish an unorthodox position for Propertian elegy within a Hesiodic literary tradition has been well documented. But the role of the Elegiac Woman in this polemic has been overlooked or misunderstood. In 2. 10 the *puella* has no life outside the Propertian writing-practice. She is neither *Quelle* nor *Ziel*, neither Propertius' inspiration nor his courted literary critic.<sup>37</sup> At this point in the corpus no physical or psychological characteristics are ascribed to elegy's female subject; instead the single reference to a *scripta puella* acknowledges her status as a particular form of literary language, a poetic *Gegenstand*. Here elegy's heroine is political fiction, perennially opposed to the topics of patriotic poetry.

### III. 2. 11/12—FICTION AND FLESH

After the literary concerns of poem 2. 10 and its uncomfortable disclosure that elegy's *puella* is a form of poetic production, the narrative strategies of poems 2. 11 and 2. 12 seem to restore to her the status of a living, rather than a written, woman. For a few of the devices of realism now re-enter the text. First of all, poem 2. 11 adopts a narrative format especially favoured in the *Monobiblos*—a dramatic monologue addressed directly and consistently to a beloved. A patterned deployment of personal and possessive pronouns in the second person singular reconstructs for the reader the possibility of a transition from the text to an extra-textual recipient: as if 2. 11 were a fragment of conversation with a living, listening *puella*. Secondly, poem 2. 11 opens with the *puella* no longer presented as the direct object of the practice of writing. The narrator shifts his description of elegiac discourse from 'scripta puella mea est' to 'scribant de te'.<sup>38</sup> A syntactical retreat is made from the Elegiac Woman's earlier, more intimate union with the activity of writing. Finally, elegy's female subject is once again associated with physical and mental attributes. In 2. 11 she is threatened with a denial of her standing as a well-educated mistress ('docta puella');<sup>39</sup> in 2. 12 she is endowed with a physique ('caput et digitos et lumina nigra')<sup>40</sup> and a delicate gait ('molliter ire pedes').<sup>41</sup>

But, within the constraints of their slightly more dramatic articulation, poems 2. 11 and 2. 12 together repeat the movement of 2. 10 from rejection to renewal of literary eroticism. In 2. 11 the narrator appears to be telling a listening *puella* that he has rejected her as the subject of his discourse, while in 2. 12 Love has never left his heart, and the Propertian writing-practice is once again defined as the delineation of a woman's physical attributes. The repetition of rejection and renewal establishes a parallelism between 2. 10 and the pair 2. 11–12 which encourages the reader to recognize that the latter reproduce and rewrite the concerns of the former. Together 2. 11–12 comprise another statement of renewed literary intent.<sup>42</sup>

The emphatic position of 'scribant' as the first word of 2. 11 shows that this poem too has writing as its primary concern. The addition of 'de te alii' broadens that

<sup>36</sup> Contrast Lieberg, *op. cit.* (n. 31), 265. To sustain a role for Cynthia as Muse in 2. 10, he was obliged to reintroduce Cynthia as a *Kreatur Amors*.

<sup>37</sup> These are the only two relations to poetic production the *puella* is allowed by Stahl, *Propertius*, 172.

<sup>38</sup> 2. 11. 1.

<sup>39</sup> 2. 11. 6.

<sup>40</sup> 2. 12. 23.

<sup>41</sup> 2. 12. 24.

<sup>42</sup> For the interrelation of poems in the Propertian corpus including the pairing of 2. 11 with 2. 12 see M. Ites, *De Propertii Elegiis inter se conexas* (1908).



concern into a second rejection of erotic writing. Furthermore, the shape and subject-matter of 2. 11 set its rejected *puella* within Hellenistic poetic conventions:

scribant de te alii uel sis ignota licebit:  
 laudet, qui sterili semina ponit humo.  
 omnia, crede mihi, tecum uno munera lecto  
 auferet extremi funeris atra dies;  
 et tua transibit contemnens ossa uiator,  
 nec dicet 'Cinis hic docta puella fuit'.<sup>43</sup>

The unusual brevity of the poem fits oddly in the Propertian papyrus roll. Its physical shape and format—its patterned six lines—signal its source in an earlier literary form, the Hellenistic epigram.<sup>44</sup> And the enunciation of literary issues within the structure of a sepulchral epigram finds parallels in a number of poems in the Greek Anthology.<sup>45</sup>

Thus two conflicting narrative modes appear to be operating in poem 2. 11. Despite the reintroduction of a few realist techniques, the text clearly follows a conventional pattern in setting out the rejection which precedes poetic renewal. The literariness of the discourse in which the *puella* is now encountered distances the reader from whatever realistic image for the Elegiac Woman poem 2. 11 additionally constructs.

Furthermore, the actual characteristics with which elegy's female figure is here endowed can readily be shown to assist a statement of literary intent. Thus the proposed termination of erotic writing is articulated in the form of an epitaph.<sup>46</sup> The *puella* begins the poem as an apparently living individual directly addressed by the narrator, but ends as bones and ash. At 2. 11's close the grammatical immediacy of a direct address has been retracted, and the *puella* is referred to in the third person and the past tense within the reported speech of a traveller contemptuously passing her grave. No longer to be written by Propertius, she has undertaken a grammatical withdrawal, a retreat from the reader. The cessation of a particular practice of writing will deprive the *puella* of her existence and place her in the past precisely because she is herself a part of that practice, its narrative material.

Similarly, it is in the act of being written by others that the *puella* will be denied a characterization as *docta*. The learning of the Elegiac Woman is dependent on her production by Propertius. But learning is an attribute of texts or their producers in Augustan avowals of Alexandrian *doctrina*.<sup>47</sup> So a *puella* who is *docta* possesses a characteristic of erudite discourse, and a rejection of such discourse necessitates the rejection of that characteristic.<sup>48</sup>

The *puella* is rejected as a subject for elegiac discourse in 2. 11, yet, at the end of 2. 12, reappears as the poet's elegiac material. The brief depiction of a *puella* with which poem 2. 12 closes is, however, immediately preceded by, and interwoven with, a lengthier and recognizably literary depiction of a *puer*. The attribution of concrete characteristics to Amor, with which 2. 12 begins, sets the poem in a Hellenistic fictive tradition for the personification of love:

quicumque ille fuit, puerum qui pinxit Amorem,  
 nonne putas miras hunc habuisse manus?

<sup>43</sup> 2. 11.

<sup>44</sup> Although two of the MSS attach 2. 11 to the previous poem, the consensus of Propertian criticism reads the six lines as an epigram. Boucher, *Études sur Propertius*, 354 notes that in the Propertian corpus epigrammatic poems occur elsewhere only at the ends of books.

<sup>45</sup> Two such poems are attributed to Callimachus (*AP* 7. 415 and 525), and one is concerned with Callimachus' *Aetia* (*AP* 7. 42). See King, *op. cit.*

(n. 27), 79.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> For *doctus* as a term in the Augustan literary-critical vocabulary see P. Fedeli, *Properzio: Il Libro Terzo* (1985), 620 on 'docte Menandre' of Prop. 3. 21. 28.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Veyne, *op. cit.* (n. 2), 73 for this play on *doctus* and the Propertian game of treating his literary creation as a well-lettered girl.

is primum uidit sine sensu uiuere amantis,  
 et leuibus curis magna perire bona.  
 idem non frustra uentosas addidit alas,  
 fecit et humano corde uolare deum:  
 scilicet alterna quoniam iactamur in unda,  
 nostraque non ullis permanet aura locis.  
 et merito hamatis manus est armata sagittis,  
 et pharetra ex umero Cnosia utroque iacet:  
 ante ferit quoniam tuti quam cernimus hostem,  
 nec quisquam ex illo uulnere sanus abit.<sup>49</sup>

Attention has been drawn to precursors and parallels for the delineation of Amor as a boy possessed of wings and arrows ('puer' 1-4, 'alae' 5-8, 'sagittae' 9-12). Hellenistic epigram and school exercises in rhetoric have been provided as models for the enunciation in 2. 12 of the iconography of Love.<sup>50</sup> The poem also locates itself within a Hellenistic literary eroticism by such poetic markers as the reproduction of Greek words and sounds ('pharetra' and 'Cnosia').<sup>51</sup>

Furthermore, the subsequent revision of Amor's iconography, the removal of its wings from the 'puerilis imago', complements the rejection of erotic writing expressed in 2. 11 with a poetic renewal:

in me tela manent, manet et puerilis imago:  
 sed certe pennas perdidit ille suas;  
 euolat heu nostro quoniam de pectore nusquam,  
 assiduousque meo sanguine bella gerit.<sup>52</sup>

Paintings not infrequently provide parallels for Propertius' mythological material,<sup>53</sup> but on this occasion paintings are a poem's explicit concern. 2. 12 thus contrasts conventional depictions of Amor ('puerum qui pinxit Amorem') with a picture more suited to a narrator of love ('puerilis imago'). And in adapting the pictorial representation of Amor to match the requirements of his poetic narrative, Propertius even plays with a technique found also in the visual arts. For example, in the surviving wall-paintings of Pompeii and Herculaneum, Amor's iconography sometimes varies to suit the particular mythic tale depicted: a painting of Ariadne's abandonment by Theseus (Plate I) portrays a tearful Eros holding a limp bow and deprived of his arrows, in order to signify love's defeat.<sup>54</sup> Similarly the illustration of a wingless, tenacious love-god sketched in poem 2. 12 signifies a Propertian discourse ceaselessly concerned with love.

So here the image of a wingless *puer* which never leaves the poor poet's heart acts as a signifier of a renewed poetic practice in the same way as the Amor who washed Propertius' poems in the waters of Permessus at 10. 26. And just like Ovid's Cupid who steals a foot in order to form a pentameter verse in *Amores* 1. 1, so Propertius' Amor humorously plays a troublesome tutelary divinity to the practice of writing love elegies: the tenacity attributed to this disabled form of the love-god playfully demonstrates the impossibility of love-elegy's rejection.

Thus at both stages in poem 2. 12 the *puer* is clearly a conventional or a polemical representation: the able love-god is shaped according to a conventional, Hellenistic

<sup>49</sup> 2. 12. 1-12.

<sup>50</sup> See e.g. Rothstein, *op. cit.* (n. 29), 286-9; Enk, 169-79; Camps, *op. cit.* (n. 18), 112; F. Cairns, *Generic Composition* (1972), 75; K. Quinn, *Latin Explorations* (1963), 170-1.

<sup>51</sup> The reproduction of Greek sound effects has been observed on a larger scale in the Hylas narrative of 1. 20 by L. C. Curran, *GRBS* 5 (1964), 281-93.

<sup>52</sup> 2. 12. 13-16.

<sup>53</sup> See e.g. Boucher, *Etudes sur Properce*, 263-7 and

Lyne, *Love Poets*, 83-6.

<sup>54</sup> For a description see L. Barré, *Herculaneum et Pompéi* vol. 2 (1861), 129 and cf. W. Helbig, *Wandgemälde der vom Vesuv verschütteten Städte Campaniens* (1868), 256 no. 1223. Such visual representations have been thought to lie behind the description of Ariadne abandoned in Prop. 1. 3. 1-2, see e.g. R. Whitaker, *Myth and Personal Experience in Roman Love-Elegy* (1983), 91-2.

iconography; the disabled love-god marks a renewed erotic discourse. But what of the *puella* who is suddenly pictured at the close of the poem? Does the sketch of her physique offer instead a glimpse of a living woman's anatomy?

quid tibi iucundum est siccis habitare medullis?  
 si pudor est, alio traice tela tua!  
 intactos isto satius temptare ueneno:  
 non ego, sed tenuis uapulat umbra mea.  
 quam si perdidideris, quis erit qui talia cantet,  
 (haec mea Musa leuis gloria magna tua est),  
 qui caput et digitos et lumina nigra puellae  
 et canat ut soleant molliter ire pedes?<sup>55</sup>

To sustain Cynthia's apparent status as a woman of flesh and blood, it is necessary to read 2. 12's *puella* differently from its *puer*, to read the poem's female physique as belonging not to a polemical fiction but to a real figure. But the text itself clearly signals that the physical attributes of the *puella* parallel, in a different medium, the iconography of the *puer*. The poem opens with attention focused on one male producer of erotic artistry, the painter (1–6). It closes with another such producer, the writer (21–4). The two composers of erotic artefacts, the painter and the poet, are then linked by the deployment of identical epithets to describe facets of their modes of composition: the 'leuibus' and 'magna' of line 4 reappear as the 'leuis' and 'magna' of line 22. So poem 2. 12 offers twin portraits of a painted boy ('pingere Amorem') and a sung girl ('canere puellam'). And the cohesion of these two sketches encourages the reader to observe that the transition from *puer* to *puella* is one from a visual to a verbal work of erotic art.

Both modes of representation, visual and verbal, then demarcate the arena for erotic discourse. Poem 2. 12 moves from a work of paint to that of a pen, and the polemical function of the head, fingers and dark eyes of the female subject is demonstrated by their position alongside and in opposition to the attributes of the wingless boy-warrior of traditional artistic eroticism. So it is sufficient for the polemical purposes of this poem to provide only the slightest sketch of the physique which forms elegy's subject-matter: 'caput et digitos et lumina nigra puellae' (23). The only adjective which qualifies this brief catalogue of female physical features locates the Propertian *puella* within a literary tradition of Female Beauties.<sup>56</sup> In addition, substantial space is allocated not to the Elegiac Woman's body but to her motion: 'ut soleant molliter ire pedes' (24). Significantly, the phrase employed can equally well describe metrical movement, the rhythm of elegiac feet. For elsewhere in the corpus the process of producing characteristically Propertian verse is defined as 'mollem componere versum',<sup>57</sup> while in an Horatian satire the refining of Lucilius' poetry is said to involve 'uersiculos ... magis factos et euntis | mollius'.<sup>58</sup> The Elegiac Woman's walk may also delineate metrical motion precisely because her body may be read as the anatomy of an elegiac text.<sup>59</sup>

Thus the restoration of flesh to the Elegiac Woman is shown, by its juxtaposition with the depiction of a concrete Elegiac Love, to subserve the poetics of renewal. The wingless *puer* signals the perseverance of Propertian erotic discourse. That discourse is then additionally and more specifically signified by the return of a rhythmical *puella*. She is not to be read as *Quelle* because another source of poetic inspiration is already provided by 'mea Musa' (22). Neither is she *Ziel* because a recipient of poetry has already been identified, although left unindividuated, by the second person address 'putas' (2). Once again the Propertian *puella* is the subject of poetic

<sup>55</sup> 2. 12. 17–24.

<sup>56</sup> Richardson, op. cit. (n. 6), 247 compares Cat. 43. 2 and Horace, *Odes* 1. 32. 11.

<sup>57</sup> 1. 7. 19.

<sup>58</sup> Hor., *Sat.* 1. 10. 58–9.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. *Amores* 3. 1. 8 where the personification *Elegia* is provided with unequal feet to match the unevenness of elegiac verse; and for this polemical use of the female body see Wyke in *History as Text* (forthcoming).

production and her features, however realistically constructed, are shaped to suit the expression of a rejection or a renewal of that production. So poem 2. 11 sketches a female figure dramatically in order that her skeleton—'ossa' (5) and 'cinis' (6)—may mark the Propertian practice of erotic writing as apparently past. The renewal of that practice to which poem 2. 12 gives voice then requires the restoration of flesh to the bones of the *puella*, the return of 'caput et digitos et lumina nigra' (23).

## IV. 2. 13—CYNTHIA AND CALLIMACHUS

The beginning of poem 2. 13 still evinces the same poetic concerns as the earlier poems:

non tot Achaemeniis armatur †etrusca† sagittis,  
 spicula quot nostro pectore fixit Amor.  
 hic me tam gracilis uetuit contemnere Musas,  
 iussit et Ascraeum sic habitare nemus,  
 non ut Pieriae quercus mea uerba sequantur,  
 aut possim Ismaria ducere ualle feras,  
 sed magis ut nostro stupefiat Cynthia uersu:  
 tunc ego sim Inachio notior arte Lino.<sup>60</sup>

The initial description of Amor as a warrior armed with arrows which pierce the poet's heart (1–2) links 2. 13 with the renewal of eroticism expressed in the preceding poem through the quivered but wingless love-god. The subsequent description of Amor as a poetic mentor commanding the poet to dwell on Hesiodic terrain in a particular fashion (3–8) links 2. 13 with the retreat from patriotic poetry expressed in 2. 10 through the love-god who launders Propertian verse in particular Hesiodic waters.

But, at the same time, 2. 13 completes the reconstruction of a fleshly woman out of the female fiction which first emerged in 2. 10, because the title 'Cynthia' now returns to the text and is employed dramatically as if it were the pseudonym for an extra-textual, living recipient of poetic production. Once again the reader appears to be offered a glimpse of a real woman only for her to be overshadowed by literary concerns.

Moreover, when Cynthia re-enters the text as a woman to be wooed through writing, the discourse in which she is encountered is placed within a specifically Hellenistic tradition: Amor plays the part of a Callimachean Apollo guiding his protégé towards a poetic form within the Hesiodic tradition which Callimachus favoured;<sup>61</sup> the Linus who is said to be surpassable in artistic fame also figures in the *Aetia* and a Virgilian version of Callimachus' polemics.<sup>62</sup> But, although the conjunction of Cynthia's dramatic presentation with the statement of a Callimachean aesthetics calls for an analysis of the interrelation between Cynthia and Callimachus, the intimacy imposed by this strategy has not been sufficiently or adequately explored.

Support for the eighteenth-century subdivision of poem 2. 13 would seem to assist the physical separation of Cynthia and Callimachus within the corpus. For, although 2. 13 begins with a brief third-person reference to a Cynthia swamped by issues of poetic production, at verse 17 the *puella* makes an abrupt grammatical advance to the forefront of the text, which is accompanied by the fading of explicit references to fiction. A shift to a second-person address is initiated and a relationship is now posited for Cynthia not with Propertian poetic writing but with the poet's envisaged death. Because of these more comfortable narrative strategies, acceptance

<sup>60</sup> 2. 13. 1–8.

<sup>61</sup> See L. P. Wilkinson, *CR* 16 (1966), 142.

<sup>62</sup> *Aetia* fr. 1. 27; Virgil, *Ecl.* 6. 67. See King, *op. cit.* (n. 27), 83.

of a division of the poem at verse 17 would seem to safeguard a living *puella* from the earlier encroachment of poetic processes and to keep Cynthia and Callimachus apart.<sup>63</sup>

But the *puella* may not be so easily extricated from discourse in which a Propertian version of Callimachus' poetics is enunciated. Not only have many commentators on the text of 2. 13 argued cogently for its unity,<sup>64</sup> but several have sustained their arguments with the observation that, despite the change of subject and addressee at verse 17, Cynthia continues to be entangled—although not so outspokenly—with Callimachean imagery.<sup>65</sup> For example, the *puella* is ordered to provide her poet with a tomb of Callimachean proportions:

deinde, ubi suppositus cinerem me fecerit ardor,  
accipiat Manis paruula testa meos,  
et sit in exiguo laurus super addita busto,  
quae tegat extincti funeris umbra locum.<sup>66</sup>

'Paruula' and 'exiguo' attribute to the poet's funeral arrangements the delicacy Callimachus had recommended for the production of poetry.<sup>67</sup>

Even where writing is the poem's explicit concern, it is through the attributes of a realistically constructed, listening *puella* that a poetic position for Propertius is articulated:

non ego sum formae tantum mirator honestae,  
nec si qua illustris femina iactat auos:  
me iuuet in gremio doctae legisse puellae,  
auribus et puris scripta probasse mea.  
haec ubi contigerint, populi confusa ualeto  
fabula: nam domina iudice tutus ero.<sup>68</sup>

Characteristics of Callimachean discourse—'docta' and 'puris'—are ascribed to the cherished *puella* who can thus express dramatically her author's Callimachean contempt for grandiosity (9–10) and common opinion (13–14).<sup>69</sup>

But if in poem 2. 13 Cynthia is *everywhere* associated with Callimachus, can she still retain a status as an independent agent, as a living woman? In order to resolve the apparent enigma of a real woman's presentation in such unnatural discourse as Callimachean diatribe, heavy reliance has been placed on the claim that elegy's purpose should be to render Cynthia stunned (7). For now the pervasive operation of Callimachean polemic in the Propertian text can be safely disclosed, since an extra-textual, intelligent girl-friend is retained to read it. Thus, according to one critic, the second section of 2. 13 'exercises on Cynthia—or rather seeks to exercise—the type of influence that the poet claims in the first section his poetry aims at: it serves a practical purpose in his love-affair with Cynthia'.<sup>70</sup> And, according to another, the whole of 2. 13 'serves as a courting poem flattering the mistress as a *docta puella* and demonstrating in action how a poet can appeal to a woman in Callimachean-type elegy'.<sup>71</sup>

The text of 2. 13, however, does not encourage such literal readings of 'ut nostro stupefiat Cynthia uersu'. Firstly, in this account of the processes which govern Propertian literary production it is Amor, not a *puella*, who defines the arena for poetic discourse. Grammatically 'stupefiat Cynthia' is subordinate to, and subsequent on, an instruction to dwell in a particular landscape of language. So stunning Cynthia

<sup>63</sup> See e.g. Lyne, *Love Poets*, 137, where he refers to 13B and thus accepts without comment the subdivision attributed to Broekhuysen in Barber, *op. cit.* (n. 7).

<sup>64</sup> As Rothstein, *op. cit.* (n. 29), 289–90; Enk, 179; Camps, *op. cit.* (n. 18), 115.

<sup>65</sup> As Wimmel, *op. cit.* (n. 10), 41 n. 1; Wilkinson, *CR* 16 (1966), 141–4; Ross, *Backgrounds*, 34–5; King,

*op. cit.* (n. 27), 84; Williams, *Figures of Thought*, 125–8.

<sup>66</sup> 2. 13. 31–4.

<sup>67</sup> Wilkinson, 143.

<sup>68</sup> 2. 13. 9–14.

<sup>69</sup> As Wilkinson, 142–3.

<sup>70</sup> Williams, 128.

<sup>71</sup> King, 84.

is an aspect of writing Hesiodic verse. Secondly, verses 3–8 and, therefore, their stunned Cynthia form a part of a Propertian polemic clearly signalled by the reproduction of the terminology and the terrain for poetic texts mapped out in *Eclogue* 6. The Virgilian Gallus was led up Mount Helicon to effect a change from erotic elegy to poetry about nature, the production of which was associated with the activity of 'rigidas deducere montibus ornos'.<sup>72</sup> So, in the Propertian poem, the spellbinding of 'quercus' (5) and 'feras' (6) functions as a means of identifying Gallan elegy. And against it the spellbinding of Cynthia (7) is then ranged. As in 2. 10, the literary task Amor sets Propertius in 2. 13, 'sic habitare nemus ... ut nostro stupefiat Cynthia uersu', serves to differentiate this elegist's continuously amatory discourse from the diversified discourse of Virgil's Gallus.<sup>73</sup> Syntax reinforces the differentiation between the roles of 'quercus', 'feras' and Cynthia in identifying poetic processes: 'non ut' (5) balances 'sed magis ut' (7) as introducing comparable but opposed aspects of Amor's literary instructions. Within a Hesiodic tradition for writing, the rejected Gallan practice is defined as the activity of attracting *natura*, the Propertian as the activity of attracting a *puella*.

Thirdly, each of the terms of Amor's command to write in a particular way, 'stupefiat' and 'Cynthia' do not assist the reader in looking out from the text to a mistress courted in Augustan Rome. For each term constrains the Elegiac Woman within the landscape of literary language mapped out in the *Eclogues* and, therefore, contributes constructively to the statement of a Propertian poetics. Already in the *Eclogues* themselves the verb *stupefacere* had been employed precisely to describe the apparently magical effects of poetry on nature. Introducing the songs of the shepherds Damon and Alpheisboeus in *Eclogue* 8 the narrator had added 'quorum stupefactae carmine lynces'.<sup>74</sup> The spellbinding of Cynthia is expressed in the same vocabulary as the spellbinding of *natura*. But since the activity of attracting wild beasts and trees demarcates in the Propertian corpus a rejected form of Hesiodic discourse, 'stupefiat Cynthia' becomes an analogous yet favoured form of poetic production.

At this point the text even encourages the reader to interpret the title 'Cynthia' as a key Callimachean term in the Propertian poetics which establishes a unique literary terrain for its author's discourse. For the word appears as the last in a list of adjectival forms derived from Greek names for mountains, each of which was variously associated with and signalled literary production; 'Pieriae' (5), 'Ismaria' (6), 'Cynthia' (7). Mount Pierus in Thessaly was associated with poetic processes at the beginning of Hesiod's *Works and Days* and his *Theogony*. The tradition is continued in *Eclogue* 6 where the Muses are called 'Pierides'.<sup>75</sup> Mount Ismarus in Thrace was said to be an abode of Orpheus, a connection which again is highlighted in Propertius' topographical model *Eclogue* 6: 'Ismarus Orphea'.<sup>76</sup> Finally Mount Cynthus on Delos was linked with Apollo as tutelary divinity to the Callimachean writing-style, and that association too is reproduced in *Eclogue* 6 where the god who directs Virgilian discourse is given the cult title 'Cynthius'.<sup>77</sup>

So the adjectival forms of place-names which precede the 'Cynthia' of verse 7 draw attention to the word as itself marking a literary terrain. Similarly the parallelism between the ends of the hexameter and pentameter of the couplet in which it appears—'Cynthia uersu' | and 'arte Lino' |—continues to help identify 'Cynthia' as a polemical signifier of fiction. For in *Eclogue* 6 Linus acted as the god who conducted Gallus up the hierarchical mountain of discourse, while Cynthius imposed limitations on the Virgilian narrator of that poetic progress. Thus it is through the enunciation of

<sup>72</sup> *Ecl.* 6. 71.

<sup>73</sup> See G. D'Anna, *Athenaeum* 59 (1981), 288–9.

<sup>74</sup> *Ecl.* 8. 3. The parallel is observed by Enk, *op. cit.* (n. 29), 182 and R. Hanslik, *Sex. Propertii Elegiarum Libri IV* (1979), 57.

<sup>75</sup> *Ecl.* 6. 13.

<sup>76</sup> *Ecl.* 6. 30.

<sup>77</sup> *Ecl.* 6. 3. For the employment of *Cynthius* as a key Callimachean term by Virgil see W. Clausen, *AJPh* 97 (1976), 245–7, and now *Virgil's 'Aeneid' and the Tradition of Hellenistic Poetry* (1987), 3; for *Cynthia* as a subsequent development see P. Boyancé, *L'influence grecque sur la poésie latine* (1956), 172–5.

the title 'Cynthia' itself that Propertius here, as in 2. 10, aligns his work with the early Virgilian and neo-Callimachean practice of writing.

The correspondence and opposition which the text itself establishes between the 'Cynthia' of verse 7 and the 'Pieriae quercus' and 'Ismaria ... ualle feras' of the preceding couplet do not, therefore, justify the practice of most commentators who are only prepared to translate *natura*, not a *puella*, into literary terms. While verses 5–6 are read symbolically as references to modes of Hesiodic discourse, the next line is still read literally as a reference to a real woman. But the close correspondence between these lines requires either that 'quercus' and 'feras' also be read as living recipients of poetic texts or that *Cynthia* too be decoded as a signifier of fiction! The reader is not actively encouraged to construct out of the terms 'stupefiat' and 'Cynthia' a real woman who reads and is moved by Callimachean verse. For each of the terms and their position in poem 2. 13 disclose that the spellbinding of a *puella* itself categorizes Propertian poetry as Callimachean.

#### V. READING REALISM

Poems 2. 10–13 thus form a group which re-establishes an allegiance to a politically unorthodox, Callimachean poetic practice.<sup>78</sup> Each of the poems then associates the Propertian *puella* so intimately with that practice as to undermine her identity apart from it. From the translation of the *puella* into the terms of literary production in 2. 10, the text gradually moves back to the reinstatement of realism as a narrative mode. But since the features with which Cynthia is realistically shaped in the three later poems clearly subserve the statement of a renewed Callimachean aesthetics, they only help to confirm the initial account of elegy's beloved as a *scripta puella*—a female fiction.

When some of the polemical strategies of this group have been noted, however, they have not been allowed to disturb readings of the more comfortably realist narratives by which the group is surrounded. For poems 2. 10–13 have often been displaced by critics from their position in the body of a poetry-book. For example, Margaret Hubbard's book *Propertius* (1974) allocates one chapter to each of the four Propertian poetry-books and the issues which arise from their examination. The second chapter considers the concept of the poetic unit and its implications for the subdivision of book 2, the third the role of Callimachus and politics in the composition of book 3. The transference of her account of 2. 1, 2. 10 and 2. 34 from the chapter 'Some Problems of Unity' to 'The Quest for Callimachus' then effectively dislocates those poems from their place within the second book and enables them to be read as contributing only to the interpretation of the third.

In particular, the thesis originally put forward by Karl Lachmann, and supported more recently by O. Skutsch, that 2. 10 once began another book of the Propertian corpus has encouraged critics to deny the poem a place within the heart of book 2.<sup>79</sup> Lachmann found the reference to 'tres ... libelli' at 2. 13. 25 disturbing, unless it could be relocated within an original third book. The apparent advocacy of patriotic poetry in 2. 10 he then considered the appropriate prologue to the rediscovered work.<sup>80</sup> But the reference to three books in a second may simply suggest that there existed a long-term plan, however general, for the poetic organization of events into three poetry-books, an acknowledgement of which may be disturbing because it diminishes the possible contribution an affair with a real woman could

<sup>78</sup> The *Zusammenhang* of 2. 10–13 was observed by Ites, *De Propertii Elegiis* (1908), 26–7 and accepted as part of his schema for book 2 by Juhnke, *Hermes* 99 (1971), 104 and 112.

<sup>79</sup> My purpose here will not be to argue a full case for

the unity of book 2 but to offer reasons for the place of poems 2. 10–13 *within* a poetry-book.

<sup>80</sup> K. Lachmann, *Sex. Aurelii Propertii Carmina* (1816), xxi–xxii and cf. O. Skutsch, *HSPH* 79 (1975), 229–33.

make to the sequence of events the books artfully describe.<sup>81</sup> Nor is a sequence of rejection and renewal of love elegy a sufficient criterion for the relocation of poems 2. 10–12 at the opening of another book. For, as Walter Wimmel argued, the appearance of a poetic apologetics in the *Odes* at 1. 6, 2. 12 and 4. 2 and in the Propertian corpus at 3. 3 and 3. 9 demonstrates that it need not function as a prologue or *Buchleinleitung*.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, a similar sequence of renunciation and renewal can be found embedded within another second book of elegies, at *Amores* 2. 9, which also specifically recalls the Propertian poem 2. 12 in its address to personified Love (a Cupid to Propertius' Amor). The parallel position of *Amores* 2. 9 within Ovid's revised edition and its specific reminiscences of Propertius 2. 12 suggest that the Propertian poems of rejection and renewal were read by Ovid as incorporated *within* a second Propertian poetry-book, rather than placed at the margins of a third.<sup>83</sup>

Even the text of 2. 10 itself, despite its break away from the techniques of realism, establishes a close relation between the poem and those which it immediately follows in the second poetry-book. In the first verse, the words 'sed tempus' and 'iam' 'demand imperiously that something should precede them'.<sup>84</sup> 'Haemonio ... equo', in the second verse, recalls both the 'Haemoniis ... equis' of 2. 8. 38 and the story of Haemon and Antigone to which the earlier poem refers.

So poems 2. 10–13 are not only interrelated, they are also integrated with the second Propertian poetry-book; the polemical statement about poetic choices which they contain should not be read as an autonomous motif having nothing to do with the erotic realities apparently expressed elsewhere in the second book. Their focus on Cynthia as a poetic fiction whose features are shaped to suit an avowal of political unorthodoxy suggests that realism is not equivalent to reality nor a realistically constructed beloved equivalent to a real woman. And, occurring within the heart of the second book, this suggestion obstructs and interrupts any attempt to construct a real mistress out of the textual characteristics of the second Cynthia. Thus even the narrative organization of the second poetry-book, far from facilitating a practice of reading Cynthia as real, favours a reading of her as written.

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<sup>81</sup> The existence of such a long-term plan does not necessitate the simultaneous publication of all three volumes as was suggested by G. Williams, *Tradition and Originality* (1968), 480–95.

<sup>82</sup> *op. cit.* (n. 10), 193 and 188 n. 1.

<sup>83</sup> The revised three-book edition of the *Amores* has also been compared for its similarly lengthy middle book by W. R. Nethercut, *ICS* 5 (1980), 94–109.

<sup>84</sup> G. O. Hutchinson, *JRS* 74 (1984), 100.