

OBSERVATIONS ON THE TEXT OF PROPERTIUS

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1.2. 9 *Aspice quot summittat humus formosa colores,*

Scholars¹ have been puzzled by the meaning of this line. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. We are faced here with an example of adjectival *enallage*.² The earth is said to be beautiful (*formosa*) because it produces flowers which have beautiful colours.³

1.2. 13 *litora nativis persuadent picta lapillis*
 persuadent: collucent v. l. Cf. Hanslik's apparatus ad loc.

Scholars⁴ have been puzzled by the meaning of this line. I have recently explained, however, that perfect sense can be restored to the text if we print the variant reading *collucent*.⁵ Propertius states that the shores gleam with natural (*nativis*) gems. It was commonly believed that in the east the beaches were strewn with jewels and pearls which had been cast up by the sea.

1.3. 7 *talis visa mihi mollem spirare quietem*
 Cynthia non certis nixa caput manibus.

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¹ Cf. G. P. Goold, *Paralipomena Propertiana*, Harvard Studies In Classical Philology, vol. 94, 1992, page 289. I have used George Goold's learned and interesting article as the starting point of my research.

² Cf. my *Studies In The Text Of Propertius* (Athens 2002), page 164.

³ Cf. *O.L.D.*, s. v. *formosus*, d.

⁴ Cf. Goold, page 289.

⁵ Cf. my *Studies*, page 11.

Scholars⁶ have been puzzled by the meaning of line 8. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. We are faced here with another example of adjectival *enallage*⁷. Cynthia is said to rest her head on hands which are not faithful (*non certis*⁸...*manibus*). Propertius means that Cynthia is not a faithful mistress.

1.9. 30 *quisquis es, assiduas aufuge blanditias!*
Aufuge : effuge v. l. Cf. Hanslik's *apparatus ad loc.*

Scholars⁹ have been puzzled by the meaning of the verb *aufuge*. I would like to point out that perfect sense is provided by the variant reading *effuge*, which was printed by Burmannus.¹⁰ Cf. Ovid, *Met.* 13,745 *amorem/ effugere* and A.A. 3,563 *effuge rivalem*.

1.13. 13s. *haec ego non rumore malo, non augure doctus;*
vidi ego.

Scholars¹¹ have been puzzled by the meaning of line 13. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. We should translate as follows:

“I am not learned in these things due to spiteful rumour or a soothsayer.”
We are faced here with an ellipsis of the *verbum substantivum*.¹²

1.15. 29 *multa prius vasto labentur flumina ponto*

Goold¹³ noted that “*multa* is corrupt”. I have recently argued that the correct reading in this passage is *muta*¹⁴, which was printed by Muretus and

⁶ Cf. Goold, page 290.

⁷ Cf. my *Studies*, page 164.

⁸ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *certus* II, A, 2.

⁹ Cf. Goold, page 290.

¹⁰ Cf. my *Studies*, page 18.

¹¹ Cf. Goold, page 291.

¹² Cf. my *Studies*, page 67.

¹³ *Op. cit.*, page 291.

¹⁴ Cf. my *Studies*, page 26, for details.

Markland¹⁵. Propertius states that silent (*muta*) rivers will flow upward from the vast sea before his love will alter.¹⁶

1.20. 48-50 *tum sonitum raptō corpore fecit Hylas.*
 cui procul Alcides iterat responsa: sed illi
 nomen ab extremis fontibus aura refert.
 Line 50 fontibus : montibus *Heinsius*

This passage concerns the rape of Hylas. Goold¹⁷ argued that we should print *montibus* in line 50. It should be noted, however, that the mss. reading *fontibus* provides perfect sense. We should translate as follows: “Hercules replied to him from a distance; but his breath (*aura*) brought him fame (*nomen*¹⁸) from the remote fountain (*extremis fontibus*¹⁹).

Propertius is referring to the fact that Hylas shouted loudly when he was dragged into the fountain. Hylas became famous because of this incident.²⁰

1.21. 3 *quid nostro gemitu turgentia lumina torques?*

Goold noted that this poem concerns a dying man. The sense is (cf. Butler – Barber *ad loc.*) “why do you avert your eyes at the sound of my groaning?” Goold (page 295) is puzzled by the epithet *turgentia* (“bulging”). The epithet means “swollen with tears” (*O.L.D.*, s. v. *turgeo*, 1; “*turgentia lumina fletu*” Forcellini, s. v. *turgeo*). I wish to indicate that a perfect parallel is in Tib. 1, 8, 68 *fletu lumina tument*.

2.5. 27-30 *scribam igitur, quod non umquam tua deleat aetas:*
 'Cynthia, forma potens: Cynthia, verba levis'
 crede mihi, quamvis contemnas murmura famae,
 hic tibi pallori, Cynthia, versus erit.

¹⁵ Markland used manuscripts in order to correct the text of Propertius: cf. my *Studies*, page 71 (note 3).

¹⁶ Cf. *flumina minimo sono labi* Curt. 7, 4, 13, and *Araxes labitur silens* Mela 3,40 (quoted in *O.L.D.*, s. v. *Labor* 3,b).

¹⁷ *Op. cit.*, page 294.

¹⁸ Cf. Lewis- Short, s. v. *nomen* II, A : “Name, fame, repute.”

¹⁹ Note the use of the poetic plural: cf. my *Studies*, page 142.

²⁰ For *aura* (v. 50) cf. 2, 27, 15 *clamantis revocaverit aura puellae*.

line 28 *verba: forma* v. l. : cf. Hanslik's apparatus
ad loc.

Scholars²¹ have been puzzled by the meaning of line 28. I would like to suggest that we should print the line as follows:

Cynthia forma potens: Cynthia forma levis.

“Cynthia your beauty is powerful; Cynthia your beauty (*forma*²²) is fickle.” Note the employment of adjectival *enallage*. Cynthia is a fickle mistress. Note also the ellipse of the *verbum substantivum*.²³

2. 6. 31-32 *ah gemat, in terris ista qui protulit arte*
turpia sub tacita condita laetitia!

Line 32 *turpia Herwerden: iurgia* mss.

Scholars²⁴ have been puzzled by the meaning of this passage. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. We should translate as follows:

“May that man weep on earth who by his art produced divorce (*iurgia*²⁵) caused by (*condita*²⁶) secret joy.”

The contemplation of erotic works of art may cause people to commit adultery and consequently to be divorced.

2.18. 7-10 *at non Tithoni spernens Aurora senectam*
desertum Eoa passa iacere domost :
illum saepe suis decedens fovit in ulnis,
quam prius abiunctos sedula lavit equos;

Goold²⁷ noted that scholars have been puzzled by the meaning of these verses. I would like to suggest that *decedens*²⁸ refers to the setting of a heavenly

²¹ Cf. Goold, page 295 f.

²² For repetition of *forma* cf. my *Studies*, page 53.

²³ Cf. my *Studies*, page 67.

²⁴ Cf. Goold, page 296.

²⁵ Cf. Lewis- Short, s. v. *jurgium* II: “Law t.t. A legal dispute, a separation between husband and wife.”

²⁶ Cf. Lewis- Short, s. v. *condo* I, B: “Trop., to establish... produce, make”.

²⁷ *Op. cit.*, page 300.

body. Aurora spent the night with Tithonus when she set (*decedens*). At evening Aurora sets, i. e. she leaves the sky and visits Tithonus.

2.18. 35-36 *ipse tuus semper tibi sit custodia lectus,
nec nimis ornata fronte sedere velis.*

Goold²⁹ noted that scholars have been puzzled by the meaning of line 35. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. We should translate as follows:

“let your chosen man (*tuus... lectus*³⁰) always keep guard over you himself.”

Cynthia has chosen Propertius to be her lover³¹.

2.20. 7-8 *nec tantum Niobe bis sex ad busta superba,
sollicito lacrimans defluit a Sipylo.*

Line 8 lacrimas: lacrimans v. *l*. Cf. Hanslik’s *apparatus ad loc.*

Goold³² explained that Niobe is said to be proud “to the point of causing twelve deaths.” I would like to add that the variant reading *lacrimans*³³ makes perfect sense. Niobe cried so much that she turned into a stream which flowed from sorrowing Sipylos (*sollicito... a Sipylo*). Note that Mount Sipylos is personified.³⁴

2. 25. 25-26 *aut prius infecto deponit praemia cursu,
septima quam metam triverit ante rota?*

Line 26 ante: arte v. *l*.

²⁸ Cf. Lewis- Short, s. v. *decedo* I, B, 3, b: “In the Aug. poets sometimes of the heavenly bodies, to go down, set.”

²⁹ *Op. cit.*, page 301, with a good discussion of the problem.

³⁰ Cf. Lewis- Short, s. v. *lego* II, 2, C: “chosen, picked out, selected.”

³¹ Esther *tuus* jeans here “lover” (cf. O. L. D., s. v. *tuus*, 2, d), or *lectus* is a substantivized participle (cf. Kühner- Stegmann I, page 223 f.) the sense being “your chosen one”.

³² *Op. cit.*, page 302.

³³ Cf. Virgil, *Aen.* 7, 358 *multa super natae lacrimans*.

³⁴ Cf. my *Studies*, page 157. Goold was puzzled by “the inelegant *lacrimans*.”

Goold³⁵ noted that scholars have been puzzled by the meaning of these lines. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. We should translate as follows: “Or in former times (*prius*³⁶) did a man demand (*deposcit*³⁷) a prize for an unfinished course, before the wheel grazed the turning- post for the seventh time?”³⁸

2.32. 5-6 *cur tua te Herculeum deportant esseda Tibur?*

Appia cur totiens te via ducit anus?

line 5 *cur tua te*: *Baehrens*: *cur autem v. l.* cf. Hanslik’s *apparatus ad loc.* Line 6 *Lanuvium Jortin*: *via ducit anum v. l.*; *anus v.l.*

Goold,³⁹ puzzled by these lines, accepts the “brilliant emendation” *Lanuvium*, which is also supported by Viarre (ad loc.). Both these scholars have forgotten that, as Hanslik notes in his *apparatus*, Verdière has explained the words *Appia... via ducit anus* by referring to Statius, *Silvae* 4, 163 *annosa magis Appia senescat*⁴⁰ (for *anus* of inanimate things such as *via* cf. *O.L.D.*, s. v. 2, c).

However, the reading *anum* (cf. Schuster’s and Hanslik’s *apparatus crit.*) is more satisfactory, in that it indicates whom Cynthia is going to see. *Anum* denotes here a *lena* (cf. *lena...anus* Ovid, *Amores* 3, 5, 40); for the accusative *anum* denoting a “lebendes Wesen” cf. Kühner-Stegmann I, page 487. Cf. also Virgil, *Ecl.* I, 65 and Lewis- Short, s. v. *eo* I, 1. We should therefore print these lines as follows:

Cur autem Herculeum deportant esseda Tibur?

Appia cur totiens te via ducit anum?

“Why does a chariot take you to Herculean Tibur? Why does the Appian Way take you so often to an old woman (*anum*)?”

2.34. 53 *nec si post Stygias aliquid restaverit undas*

³⁵ *Op. cit.*, page 303.

³⁶ Cf. Lewis- Short, s. v. *prius* B: “In gen., formerly, in former times... Prop. I, 1, 18.

³⁷ Note that the poet has employed the historical present: cf. my *Studies*, page 69.

³⁸ Note that here *quam*, in line 26, is placed before *ante* (cf. *O.L.D.*, s. v. *antequam*, 3 b). The variant *axe*, recommended by Burmannus and Goold, was created by someone who took *prius* to refer to *quam*.

³⁹ *Op. cit.*, page 304.

⁴⁰ Cf. Forcellini, *Onomasticon*, s. v. *Appius*, where Statius’ passage is quoted.

restabimus undas *Wassenberg*: restabit erumnas v. l. cf. Hanslik's *apparatus ad loc.*

Goold⁴¹ noted that *Wassenberg* printed the alteration *restabimus undas*. I have recently pointed out, however, that the mss. reading *restabit erumnas* provides perfect sense. Propertius states that girls do not wish to discuss whether anything will await us after the Stygian cares, i. e. after death.⁴²

3.6. 1 *Dic mihi de nostra quae sentis vera puella:*

Scholars⁴³ have been puzzled by the meaning of this line. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. We should translate as follows:

“Tell me what you think is true about my girl.”

Propertius wants to learn the truth about Cynthia. Note that the poet has once again employed an ellipse of the *verbum substantivum*⁴⁴ (= *vera esse*).

4.1. 69 *sacra diesque canam et cognomina prisca locorum:*
has meus ad metas sudet oportet equus.

Goold⁴⁵ noted that scholars have been puzzled by the meaning of line 69. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. Propertius intends to sing of holy rites and their days. Cf. 4. 4. 73-74:

urbi festus erat (dixere Parilia patres),
hic primus coepit moenibus esse dies.

Translation by Goold:

“The city had a festival (the Fathers named it the Feast of Pales): it was the birthday of Rome's walls.”

Note the repetition⁴⁶ *urbi* (4.4.73) and *urbe* (4.4.75).⁴⁷

⁴¹ *Op. cit.*, page 304.

⁴² Cf. my *Studies*, page 78.

⁴³ Cf. Goold, page 305.

⁴⁴ Cf. my *Studies*, page 67. *Vera* is emphatic and pointed: Goold has forgotten that the poet is addressing a slave: slaves were notoriously *mendaces*.

⁴⁵ *Op. cit.*, page 308.

⁴⁶ For repetition cf. my *Studies*, page 53.

⁴⁷ Goold would like to alter *diesque* into *deosque*, but he has forgotten that the *Parilia* were celebrated on special days (cf. Lewis-Short, s. v. *Parilia*).

4.3. 7 *te modo viderunt iteratos Bactra per ortus*

Arethusa addresses her husband Lycotas. I would like to point out that the mss reading *iteratos...per ortus* makes perfect sense. We should translate as follows:

“Bactra saw you during a repeated (i. e. second) birth (*ortus*⁴⁸)”.
Lycotas was in Bactra when Arethusa gave birth for the second time.⁴⁹

4. 3. 33-34 *noctibus hibernis castrensia pensa laboro
et Tyria in gladios vellera secta suo.*

Line 34 gladios: radios v.l.

Goold⁵⁰ commented as follows on line 34: “*chlamydas* Barber... *suo* Rossberg”. I would like to point out that better sense can be made of this passage if we print line 34 as follows:

Et Tyria in radios vellera secta tuos.

We should translate as follows: “During the nights of winter I work on wool for your life in camp, and purple cloth which has been cut for your *membrum virile* (*in radios*⁵¹... *tuos*⁵²). Arethusa means that she is making warm underwear for Lycotas.

⁴⁸ Cf. Lewis- Short, s. v. *ortus* II: *materno ortu*, Ovid, *Met.* 13, 148.

⁴⁹ Goold (op. cit., page 310) cannot understand this line: he quotes unnecessary alterations proposed by Housman and others. However, the text is sound.

⁵⁰ *Op. cit.*, page 311.

⁵¹ Cf. Lewis- Short, *radius* I, B, 7: “*Radius virilis* = “*membrum virile*”. Note that *radios* is a poetic plural: cf. my *Studies*, page 142.

⁵² The reading *tuos* was preserved for us by Passerat. For the fact that Passerat used manuscripts in order to correct the text of Propertius cf. P. Fedeli, *Corolla Londiniensis*, vol. 3, 1983, page 53. Cf. also Simone Viarre, “Réflexions Sur Les Tendances Actuelles De L’ Édition De Propertius”, Collection Caesarodunum 36-37, Clermont Ferrand 2005, page 492. Cf. moreover, Prop. 3,24,12 *vera* v. l., Passerat: cf. Hanslik’s *apparatus ad loc.* Cf. the *vellera secta* = “leathern thong” which covered the *membrum virile* of the *Luperci*, quoted by Butler- Barber on page 340. Prof. Giangrande makes me observe that, since the *vellera* were traditionally used to cover the *membrum virile*, the reading *suos* is correct: cf. Lewis- Short, s. v. *suus*, D = “*suus* in the place of *eius*” ; Kühner- Stegmann, I, page 603, 4, quoting Forbiger *ad Virg. Georg. IV*, 190; *O.L.D.* s. v. *suus*, 12: “due or allotted to him”.

4.6. 74 *perque lavet nostras spica Cilissa comas.*

perque : *terque* v. l. Cf. Hanslik's *apparatus ad loc.*

Scholars⁵³ have been puzzled by the meaning of this line. It should be noted, however, that the mss. reading *terque* makes perfect sense. Propertius hopes that perfume will frequently (*terque*⁵⁴) wet his hair when he is drinking at a symposium.

4.7. 4 *murmur ad extremae nuper humata viae*

murmur: *marmor* v. l. cf. Hanslik's *apparatus ad loc.*

Scholars⁵⁵ have been puzzled by the meaning of this line, because they only considered the reading *murmur*. Housman, applauded by Goold, went as far as to violently alter *viae* into *tubae*. I would like to point out that the correct reading in this passage is *marmor*. Cynthia is said to have been buried under a tomb stone⁵⁶ placed along a remote road (*extremae...viae*).

4.8. 19-22

*Appia, dic quaeso, quantum te teste triumphum
egerit effusis per tua saxa rotis!
spectaculum ipsa sedens primo temone pependit,
ausa per impuros frenas movere locos.*

line 22 *locos*: *iocos* v. l.

Scholars⁵⁷ have been puzzled by the meaning of line 22. I would like to point out that the correct reading in this passage is *iocos*. Cynthia is said to have

⁵³ Cf. Goold, page 314.

⁵⁴ Cf. my *Studies*, page 154.

⁵⁵ Cf. Goold, page 314.

⁵⁶ For *marmor* = "tomb stone" cf. *O.L.D.* s. v. , 3, b; Ovid, *Fasti* 3, 547. Tomb stones were often placed along roads, far from the town.

⁵⁷ Cf. Goold, page 315 f.

dared to excite (*movere*⁵⁸) foreskins (*frena*⁵⁹) through her rude jokes (*per impuros... iocos*).

CONCLUSION. I hope that I have demonstrated that textual alteration is often not necessary if we have sufficient knowledge of the poet's *Sprachgebrauch*.

⁵⁸ Cf. Lewis- Short, s. v. *moveo* I, B: "Trop., to move, affect, excite."

⁵⁹ Cf. Lewis- Short, s. v. *frenum* II, C, 2: "In anatomy: *frenum*, the ligament which attached the inside of the foreskin to the glans, Cels. 7, 25, 2."

On erotic *joci* cf. Horace, *Epist.* I, 6, 65-66.