

TEXTUAL AND INTERPRETATIVE PROBLEMS IN PROPERTIUS

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1, 8 A, 45:

*nec mihi rivalis certos subducit amores*  
certos : summos v.l.

Propertius states that nobody is going to steal Cynthia from him. I would like to point out that the reading *summos* makes perfect sense. We should translate as follows: “and no rival will steal my excellent (*summos*<sup>1</sup>) beloved (*amores*<sup>2</sup>)”.

1, 20, 17-20:

*namque ferunt olim Pagasae navalibus Argo*  
*egressum longe Phasidos isse viam,*  
*et iam praeteritis labentem Athamantidos undis*  
*Mysorum scopulis applicuisse ratem.*

Line 18 *egressum Ellis*: *egressam* mss.

In line 18 Ellis proposed the alteration *egressum*. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. The Argo is said to have set out long ago from the dockyards of Pagasa. Propertius then adds that the ship (*ratem*, i.e. the Argo) approached (*applicuisse*<sup>3</sup>) the rocks of the Mysians.<sup>4</sup>

2, 3, 3-4:

*vix unum potes, infelix, requiescere mensem,*

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lewis And Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, s.v. *summus* 2, b: “Of rank, etc. ... most distinguished, excellent”.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Lewis And Short, *op. cit.*, s.v. *amor* II, A: “For the beloved object itself”. Note that the poet has employed the poetic plural: cf. my *Studies In The Text Of Propertius* (Athens, 2002), page 142.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Lewis And Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, s.v. *applico* II: “Poet: *quo accedam? quo adplicem?* (Enn. ap. Cic. Tusc. 3, 19, 44)”.

<sup>4</sup> Viarre understands that *egressam* is the correct reading, which I support by explaining the function of *applicuisse*.

*et turpis de te iam liber alter erit.*

Butler translates *liber*, in line 3, as “book”<sup>5</sup>, and assumes that Propertius is referring to the publication of his poetry in separate books. I would like to suggest, however, that Propertius is alluding here to the conjugal laws which Augustus<sup>6</sup> proclaimed at various times after 28 B.C. Propertius states that there will soon be another shameful (*turpis*) law (*liber*<sup>7</sup>).

2, 9, 15-16:

*cum tibi nec Peleus aderat nec caerulea mater,  
Scyria nec viduo Deidamia toro.*

Propertius mentions here the death of Achilles. He states that Peleus and the mother of Achilles were not present, and that “Scyrian Deidamia was not by his widowed corpse-bed” (*viduo ... toro*<sup>8</sup>). Note the employment of adjectival *enallage*<sup>9</sup>. Deidamia was the widow of Achilles.

2, 10, 15-16:

*India quin, Auguste, tuo dat colla triumpho,  
et domus intactae te tremit Arabiae.*

Scholars<sup>10</sup> have been puzzled by the meaning of *intactae* in line 16. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. India is said to bow her neck to Augustus, together with the house (*domus*<sup>11</sup>) of unrifled Arabia (*intactae... Arabiae*). Propertius is referring to the unrifled treasuries of the Arabs. Cf. Horace, *Odes* 3, 24, 1-2: *Intactis opulentior / thesauris Arabum et divitis Indiae*.

2, 12, 5-8:

*idem non frustra ventosas addidit alas,  
fecit et humano corde volare deum:  
scilicet alterna quoniam iactamur in unda,  
nostraque non ullis permanet aura locis.*

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Propertius*, Loeb edition, page IX.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. G. Luck, *The Latin Love Elegy*, London 1969, page 24.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Lewis And Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, s.v. *liber* II, F: “A rescript, decree ... *liber principis severus et tamen moderatus*, Plin. *Ep.* 5, 14, 8”. The existence of the book postulated by Butler (and by Viarre: note 196) is doubtful (cf. Camps *ad loc.* “presumably another book”). *De te* means, of course, “because of you”, i.e. “because of your bad behaviour” (cf. Lewis And Short, s. v. *de* I, 5).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Lewis And Short. *op. cit.*, s. v. *torus* IV: “Of a corpsebed, Ov. *M.* 9, 503”.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. my *Studies*, page 164.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Giardina *ad loc.*

<sup>11</sup> For *domus* cf. my *Studies*, page 169.

Propertius states that *Amor* has wings and flies “due to the human heart” (*humano corde*). He then explains that lovers are tossed about by the breezes on the metaphorical sea of love<sup>12</sup>.

2, 12, 18:

*si pudor est, alio traice duella tua.*  
tua: loco v.l.: cf. Giardina *ad loc.*

I would like to suggest that we should print the reading *loco* instead of *tua*. Propertius tells *Amor* to transfer his warfare “to another place” (*alio ... loco*).

2, 13 A, 25-26:

*sat mihi sit magno si tres sint pompa libelli,*  
*quos ego Persephoniae maxima dona feram.*

Propertius refers here to his funeral. He states that there will be enough pomp (*pompa*<sup>13</sup>) if there are three (*tres*<sup>14</sup>) announcements (*libelli*<sup>15</sup>) of his death.

2, 24, 7-8

*nec sic per totam infamis traducerer urbem,*  
*ururer et quamvis non bene, verba darem.*

Line 8 non bene Housman: nomine mss.

Propertius complains that he has been dishonoured by Cynthia's behaviour. The reader will note that Housman suggested the alteration *non bene* in line 8. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. Propertius states that if Cynthia still favoured him, although he would burn with love, he would cheat (*verba darem*) “due to his reputation” (*nomine*<sup>16</sup>). Propertius means that he would have saved his reputation.

2, 30, 19-20:

*nunc tu, dure, paras Phrygias nunc ire per undas*

<sup>12</sup> Cf. my *Studies*, page 18. *Humano corde* cannot mean “from a man or woman's heart” (Camps: cf. line 15 *evolat ... de pectore*) or “dans le coeur humain” (Viarre, following Butler-Barber: “a bold locative abl.”). *Amor* flies around “on account of the human heart” because the human heart is always tossed around by passion.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Lewis And Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, s.v. *pompa* II, B; “Parade, display, ostentation, pomp”.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Lewis And Short, *op. cit.*, s. v. *tres* II: “To denote a small number”.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Lewis And Short, *op. cit.*, s. v. *libellus* II, 5: “A public notification, announcement, placard, handbill”.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Lewis And Short, *op. cit.*, s. v. *nomen* II, A: “Name, fame, repute, reputation, renown”.

*et petere Hyrcani litora nauta maris?*

Line 20 *nauta Hertzberg*: nota mss.

In line 20 Hertzberg suggested the alteration *nauta*. Textual alteration is, however, not warranted. The poet has employed adjectival *enallage*<sup>17</sup>. Thus the words *Hyrcani litora nota maris* mean the “notorious (*nota*<sup>18</sup>) shores of the Hyrcanian sea”, and refer to the fact that the country of the Hyrcanians<sup>19</sup> was wild and dangerous.

3, 21, 5-6:

*omnia sunt temptata mihi quacumque fugari  
posit: at ex omni me premit ipse deus.*

Scholars<sup>20</sup> have been puzzled by the meaning of line 6. Textual alteration is, however, not warranted. Propertius states that he has tried everything to escape, but *Amor* still oppresses him totally<sup>21</sup>.

3, 21,28:

*librorumque tuos, docte Menandre, sales.  
docte: culte Heinsius: cf. Giardina ad loc.*

Propertius refers in this line to Menander. Butler noted, in his Loeb edition, that “the repetition of *docte* is scarcely defensible” in view of the words *docte Epicure*, in line 26. *Docte* in lines 26 and 28 represents *falsa anaphora*: in line 28 it means not “learned”, as in line 26, but “elegant in poetry”; cf. *O.L.D.* s. v. *doctus*, 3.

3, 22, 15:

*aut si qua Ortygie et visenda est ora Caystri*

*Ortygie et Haupt*: orige mss : si qua et cyncnai *Heinsius*:  
cf. Giardina *ad loc.*

<sup>17</sup> Cf. my *Studies*, page 164.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Lewis And Short, *op. cit.*, s. v. *notus* 2, b: “In a bad sense, notorious”.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Virgil, *Aen.* 4,367 *Hyrcanaeque ... tigres*.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Giardina’s note *ad loc.* Viarre takes *ex omni* to mean “de tout côté”, but “the phrase seems not to be found elsewhere” (Butler-Barber *ad loc.*).

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Forcellini, s. v. *ex*, II, 3 (“*prae*pos. *ex* resolvit adverbia”) and s. v. *omnis*, 1, 2, b. *Ex omni* (= *omnino*), where *ex* governs the nt. Subst. *Omne*, is equivalent to *ex toto* (= *omnino*) where *ex* governs the nt. subst. *totum* (cf. Levis-Short, s.v. *totus* II, B, 1 and Kühner-Stegmann I, p. 506 f.)

The reader will note that Haupt printed the alteration *Ortygie et*. I would like to suggest, however, that the correct reading in this passage has been preserved by Heinsius<sup>22</sup>. Thus Propertius refers to the swans of the Cayster.<sup>23</sup>

3, 22, 25:

*Albanus lacus et foliis Nemorensis abundans*

*foliis ...abundans Housman: socia ... ab unda mss.: cf.*

Giardina *ad loc.*

The reader will note that Housman printed the alteration *foliis... abundans* in this line. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. The text should be printed as follows: *Albanus lacus et socia Nemorensis ab unda*. Translate as follows: “the Alban lake and that of Aricia (*Nemorensis*) due to its kindred water (*socia ... ab<sup>24</sup>unda*)”.

Ovid mentions the nymphs of the Arician lake at *Met.* 15, 490. Aricia was situated close to the Alban lake.

4, 1, 145-146:

*nec mille excubiae nec te signata iuvabunt*

*limina: persuasae fallere rima sat est.*

In this passage Horos tells Propertius that he will be a lover. The reader will note that *limina* is a poetic plural<sup>25</sup>. Translate as follows: “Neither a thousand guards nor a sealed (*signata*) door (*limina*) will help you”.

4, 3, 11-12:

*haecne marita fides et pactae in savia noctes,*

*cum rudis urgenti bracchia victa dedi?*

Line 11 *pactae in savia noctes Haupt: et pacatae mihi noctes mss.*

Arethusa refers here to her wedding. Haupt suggested the alteration *pactae in savia noctes* in line 11. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. Propertius has employed adjectival *enallage*<sup>26</sup>. The words *et pacatae mihi noctes*

<sup>22</sup> For another passage where the correct reading has been preserved for us by Heinsius cf. my *Studies*, page 165.

<sup>23</sup> For the swans of the Cayster cf. Ovid, *Met.* 5,386 f. Cf. also Lewis And Short, *op. cit.*, s. v. *cycneus* (1): Of or belonging to a swans... *plumae*, Ov. *Tr.* 4, 8,1. For the “mouth of the Cayster” (*ora Caystri*) cf. Lewis And Short, *op. cit.*, s. v. *os* II, D: “A mouth, opening, entrance”.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Lewis And Short, *op. cit.*, s. v. *ab* II, b: “In the statement of the motive instead of *ex, propter ...* on account of”.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. my *Studies*, page 142.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. my *Studies*, page 164.

mean “and the subdued (*pacatae*) night (*noctes*<sup>27</sup>)”. Arethusa means that she was tamed by her husband on her wedding night, when she yielded to him<sup>28</sup>.

4, 4, 31-32:

*Ignes castrorum et Tatiae praetoria turmae  
et formosa oculis arma Sabina meis.*

Line 32 *formosa*: *famosa* v. l.

In this passage, Tarpeia refers to her love for Tatius. I would like to point out that the variant reading *famosa* makes perfect sense. Tarpeia states that the Sabine arms are famous due to her beloved (*oculis*<sup>29</sup>), i. e. due to Tatius.

4, 4, 68:

*nescia vae furiis accubuisse novis.  
vae furiis Itali: nefariis mss.*

This line describes Tarpeia. I would like to point out that perfect sense is provided by the reading *nefariis*. Tarpeia was not aware that she had lain with (*accubuisse*<sup>30</sup>) “a nefarious upstart” (*nefariis ... novis*<sup>31</sup>). Propertius is referring to the fact that Tatius betrayed Tarpeia, although she had helped him.

4, 6, 45-46:

*et nimium remis audent prope: turpe Latinos  
principe te fluctus regia vela pati.*

Line 45 *Latinos* *Markland*: *latinis* mss.

These lines refer to the battle of Actium. I would like to point out that the correct reading in line 45 is *Latinis*. Apollo states that it is shameful that, due to the Romans (*Latinis*<sup>32</sup>), the waves should bear the sails of a queen while Augustus is prince.

<sup>27</sup> For the poetic plural cf. my *Studies*, page 142.

<sup>28</sup> Viarre accepts the reading *pacatae iam mihi noctes*, which is *lectio facillior* in that it ignores the *enallage*.

The dative *mihi* is *dativus ethicus* (cf. Lewis-Short, s. v. *ego* III, 1), and, in the interrogative sentence, denotes “Verwunderung und Tadel” (Kühner-Stegmann I, p. 323 f.).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Lewis And Short, *op. cit.*, s. v. *oculus* 1: “As a term of endearment, the apple of my eye, my darling”. Note that *oculis* is a poetic plural: cf. my *Studies*, page 142.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Lewis And Short, *op. cit.*, s. v. *accubo* II, B: “To lie with.”

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Lewis And Short, *op. cit.*, s. v. *novus* I, 3: “*Novus homo ... an upstart*”. Note that Propertius has employed the poetic plural: cf. my *Studies*, page 142.

<sup>32</sup> *Latinis* refers to Anthony and his followers. Note that Propertius has employed the ablative of cause.

4, 7, 65-66:

*haec sua maternis queritur vivere catenis  
bracchia nec meritas frigida saxa manus.*

Line 65 sua maternis: summa aeternis v.l.

Propertius states that Andromeda, the daughter of King Cepheus, complains that her arms are bruised by chains. I would like to point out that the variant reading *summa aeternis* makes perfect sense. We should translate as follows: "The one (Andromeda) complains that her excellent (*summa*<sup>33</sup>) arms are bruised due to eternal (*aeternis*) chains, and that her hands did not deserve cold rocks."

4, 9, 67-70:

*Maxima quae gregibus devota est Ara repertis,  
ara per has "inquit" maxima facta manus,  
haec nullis unquam pateat veneranda puellis,  
Herculis aeternum ne sit inulta sitis."*

Line 70 Herculis aeternum *Housman*: Herculis extremum v. l.: cf.

*Giardina ad loc.*

The reader will note that Housman suggested the alteration *Herculis aeternum* in line 70. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. Hercules states that his altar will never be open to women's worship, so that "finally" (*extremum*<sup>34</sup>) the thirst of Hercules shall not be unavenged.

4, 10, 18:

*qui tulit a prisco frigida castra lare*

This line refers to Romulus. I would like to point out that the mss. reading *prisco*<sup>35</sup> provides good sense. Romulus is said to have endured the cold camp due to his old-fashioned home (*a*<sup>36</sup> *prisco lare*).

4, 10, 39-42:

*Claudius a Rhodano traiectos arcuit hostes,  
Belgica cum vasti parma relata ducis*

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Lewis And Short, *A Latin Dictionary* s. v. *summus* 2, b: "Of rank, etc., ... most distinguished, excellent, or noble".

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Lewis And Short, *op. cit.*, s. v. *extremus* : "Adv.: *extremum* ... : At last, finally" (*Ov. Met.* 14,431).

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Lewis And Short, *op. cit.*, s. v. *priscus* II, B: "Old-fashioned, i. e. strict, severe."

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Lewis And Short, *op. cit.*, s. v. *ab* II, B, 2, 1: "on account of."

Romulus was brought up by a she-wolf in her lair, which was not heated: cf. Lewis-Short, s. v. *lar* 2 B, quoting Ovid, *Fast.* 3,242.

*Virdomari. genus hic Rheno iactabat ab ipso,  
mobilis e rectis fundere gaesa rotis.*

Line 39 a Rhodano Postgate: a Rheno mss.

In this passage Propertius mentions the death of Virdomarus, king of the Insubres. The reader will note that Postgate printed the alteration *a Rhodano* in line 39. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. We should translate as follows: “Claudius beat back the enemy (*hostes*<sup>37</sup>) who had transgressed (*traiectos*<sup>38</sup>) due to the Rhine (*a*<sup>39</sup> *Rheno*), when the Belgian shield of the giant chief Virdomarus was brought back to Rome. He (i. e. Virdomarus) boasted that he was sprung from the Rhine himself, and he was quick (*mobilis e*) to cast spears at the appropriate (*rectis*<sup>40</sup>) chariots (*rotis*)”.

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<sup>37</sup> Note that *hostes* is a poetic plural: cf. my *Studies*, page 142.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Lewis And Short, *op. cit.*, s. v. *traicio* II, C: “Trop., to overstep, transgress”.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Lewis And Short, *op. cit.*, s. v. *ab* B, 2,1: “... on account of”.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Lewis And Short, , s. v. *rectus* B, I: “In gen., right, correct, proper, appropriate.”