Editing Propertius

J. L. Butrica

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EDITING PROPERTIUS

'*Quot editores, tot Propertii*' ('For every editor, a different Propertius') has been a familiar—and much misunderstood—phrase in Propertian scholarship ever since it first appeared in the preface to Phillimore's Oxford Classical Text of 1901. In its original context it described not an existing situation but rather the chaos that Phillimore alleged would result if editors began to adopt significant numbers of transpositions.[1] Such chaos, however, does characterize the current state of Propertian studies; every interpreter seems to create a different Propertius, who in the last twenty-five years has been represented as a feminist,[2] a neurotic traumatized by the siege of Perugia,[3] an anti-Augustan iconoclast,[4] an apostle of love oppressed by a quasi-Stalinist principate,[5] a decadent pre-Raphaelite,[6] and most recently as the 'modernist poet of antiquity'.[7] There is significantly less variation among editors; Barber's 1960 OCT and Fedeli's 1984 Teubner differ only in relatively minor details involving poem-divisions or choices of reading, nearly always in the same places that editors and critics have discussed again and again throughout the past century. This similarity of editorial approach is matched by a prevailing uniformity in views of Propertius' style: he is regularly described as a difficult, idiosyncratic, and uniquely modern poet, a judgement seemingly borne out by these editions, where the text, despite much conspicuous elegance and artistry, is at times awkward almost to the point of unintelligibility and marred by banal couplets, abrupt transitions, and disconcerting shifts in tone or stylistic level. The notion that such a text could represent the work of an Augustan poet has its roots in the early nineteenth century with editors like Karl Lachmann, who consciously tried to free Propertius from an elegance which he thought earlier editors had foisted upon him through conjecture,[8]

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[1] *Sexti Properti Carmina*, ed. J. S. Phillimore (Oxford, 1901). The antepenultimate paragraph of the introduction denounces transpositions of the sort proposed by Housman and introduced by Postgate in his *Corpus Poetarum Latinorum* text, then continues: 'Sed cuinam probari potest nostri archetypum ita dilaniatum et κατακεκερματισμένον ut disticha passim inter se locum mutaverint, omnino superfuturum fuisse? Est profecto ut peccaverint in non nullis librarii; homines enim. At non beluae. Quod si in summa re codicum fidem respuerimus, quo denique stabitur? Vnus quisque enim in quolibet argumento proprium phantasiae tenorem propriam carminis deducendi inventionem sequitur, licet non semper optimam illam nec ceteris maxime arrisuram. Quid enim est aliud ingenium? Sin autem poetae cogitationem suo cuique arbitrio resarcire licet, non interpretari, quot editores tot Propertii.'

[2] J. Hallett, 'The Role of Women in Roman Elegy: Counter-cultural Feminism', *Arethusa* 6 (1973), 103–24.

[3] A. de Sanctis, *Properzio: Saggio d'interpretazione psicologica* (Bibliotheca Biographica 9; Rome, 1973).

[4] This view has been advocated or assumed in a number of articles by a variety of (especially American) scholars, but its chief exponent has perhaps been J. P. Sullivan in *Propertius: An Introduction* (Cambridge, 1976).

[5] H. P. Stahl, *Propertius: Love and War. Individual and State under Augustus* (Berkeley, 1985).

[6] T. Papanghelis, *Propertius: A Hellenistic Poet on Love and Death* (Cambridge, 1987).

[7] D. Thomas Benediktson, *Propertius: Modernist Poet of Antiquity* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, 1989).

[8] On 1.9.9 (I.10. [9.] 9 in his numbering) Lachmann (Leipzig, 1816) says of *ducere* in that line and of *totis* in 21 that 'Immerito obtrusas Propertio elegantias hic ostentant exemplaria', attributing the latter to Jan Dousa the younger, the former to Volscus' edition of 1482; he notes that 'Scripti omnes, ne uno quidem demto' have *dicere* and *totiens*, and concludes, 'Quis jure

but its imposition upon the English-speaking world is largely due to the influence of
J. P. Postgate and the introduction to his 1881 *Select Elegies of Propertius*.[9] Postgate
articulated here a fascinating, even sensationalistic vision of Propertius as a poet
quite unlike anything else the world had seen. He described the poetry in such terms
as 'These contrasts, these extravagancies, these fluctuations and incoherencies, these
half-formed or misshapen thoughts', and he called the poet himself 'no ordinary
phenomenon', a man 'whose natural bent was towards the singular and solitary'
(lxxii). This view received reinforcement when J. P. Sullivan, in discussing Ezra
Pound's *Homage to Sextus Propertius*, claimed that Pound's 'versions' of Propertius
showed an appreciation of a modernity that conventional scholars had missed.[10]

Most Propertian scholars now belong to one of two irreconcilable camps. One
regards many of the phenomena noted by Postgate as textual corruptions to be
removed through conjecture; Postgate himself quickly joined this camp, repudiated
the views expressed in *Select Elegies*,[11] and produced the heavily emended text
criticized by Phillimore which attempted to bring order to what he had once called
'this chaos'. The other camp, the one that prevails today, especially in Italy and the
United States, has responded to Postgate's pre-conversion vision with an 'act of
critical salvation' akin to that described by Gary Taylor in *Reinventing Shakespeare*: 'If
Shakespeare wrote something that appears to be awful, then in fact it must be brilliant,
if only you look at it carefully enough. Blemishes need not be emended, if all
blemishes can be redefined as beauty marks'.[12] In other words, the 'extravagancies'
that Postgate found, which he thought were blemishes due to an immature mind in
which thought was still 'crystallizing', were not flaws at all but 'beauty marks',
according to some the signs of deep psychological penetration or of an especially
inventive approach to Latinity, for others the result of imitating Hellenistic poetry, for
still others the daring flashes of an innovative, modernist genius. The followers of this
camp believe that they see beauty and artistry in what their excessively rational
counterparts of the other camp call clumsy or illogical and corrupt; though most of
them lack first-hand knowledge of the Propertian manuscripts or of textual criticism
in general, they nevertheless declare the Propertian tradition a good one and
pronounce themselves satisfied with Barber's or Fedeli's edition, quite unaware that

impugnet? quis tanti ducat defendere?' Another conjecture that Lachmann rejected in a similar
manner is *furit* at 4.6.56 (which I shall advocate later in this paper), of which he wrote, 'Nempe
critici poetas ubique aut furere aut magna verba aut elegantias effundere volunt. Liceat, quaeso,
Propertio nostro ita loqui, ut eum locutum esse libri veteres testantur'. Here Lachmann's attitude
was anticipated in the commentary of C. Kuinoel (Leipzig, 1805) and apparently in that of
Vulpius as well, which is not available to me; Kuinoel first quoted Burman's note, in which *fuit*
was described as 'languidius', then continued, 'Non nego, *furit* exquisitius esse: neque tamen
scriptores vett. huius generis elegantias quouis loco sectati sunt, et cum vulgaris lectio
commodum sensum pariat: nihil sine codicum auctoritate mutandum. Nec quaerendum, vt ad h.
l. notauit Vulpius, quid scriptor scribere potuerit, vel debuerit, sed quid vere scripserit'. Note that
the unwillingness to alter 'sine codicum auctoritate' limits one effectively to conjectures made
before the age of printing, and that both Kuinoel and Lachmann, instead of maintaining an open
mind, were predisposed to assume without question that what the manuscripts gave was what
Propertius wrote.

[9] J. P. Postgate, *Select Elegies of Propertius* (London, 1881).
[10] J.P. Sullivan, *Ezra Pound and Sextus Propertius* (Austin, 1964).
[11] It seems to have gone unnoticed that every printing of *Select Elegies* from 1894 on contains
the following 'Publishers' Note': 'The present issue is an exact reprint of the edition of 1884, and
the Editor wishes it to be known that the book does not represent his present views on the text
and interpretation of Propertius.'
[12] G. Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare: A Cultural History, From the Restoration to the Present*
(New York, 1989), 408.

even these relatively conservative texts—and one can say 'relatively' only because of editions like Rothstein's and Phillimore's—incorporate hundreds of conjectures. The process of textual criticism and correction that has gone on for at least the six and a half centuries since Petrarch brought Propertius back to Italy has been declared at an end by Giuseppe Giangrande's proclamation that the sole occupation of Propertian textual studies today should be the exercise of critical judgement within the limits of the modern vulgate represented by Barber and Fedeli.[13] But not all minds have closed completely. Margaret Hubbard has demonstrated that ancient estimates of Propertius' style contradict modern ones;[14] Goold's Loeb edition of 1990 has done more than any other since Postgate's full text to restore elegance and polish to Propertius;[15] and critics like Allen, Heyworth, and Morgan continue to propose new conjectures or to revive neglected conjectures of the past.

   This paper has two purposes. It will first offer evidence to show that the discrepancy between these ancient and modern views of Propertius' style is due to the fact that the modern views are based upon a text that has been distorted from its original state by an exceptionally high degree of corruption and that more extensive emendation is therefore needed to restore it to that original state. It will then discuss some of the means through which our texts might be improved by applying sound principles of textual criticism and by acknowledging the particular vicissitudes that have always affected the transmission of poetic texts like Propertius.

I

It is clear that all existing manuscripts of the works of Propertius descend from a single exemplar which can for the most part be reconstructed with relatively little difficulty.[16] Where editors differ is on how far we should trust the text of the

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[13] Reviewing Fedeli's 1984 Teubner text and 1985 commentary on Book 3 at *RFIC* 114 (1986), 212: 'L'opera del critico del testo di Properzio, oggi, non può che consistere nell'esercizio del giudizio critico entro i limiti di quella che si può chiamare la 'volgata moderna' di Properzio.'

[14] M. Hubbard, *Propertius* (New York, 1975), 2–3.

[15] Goold has also discussed the text of Propertius in a series of articles, '*Noctes Propertianae*', *HSCP* 71 (1966), 59–106; 'On Editing Propertius', *Papers in Honour of Otto Skutsch* (*BICS* Supplement 5, 1987), 27–38; 'Problems in Editing Propertius', in J. N. Grant (ed.), *Editing Greek and Latin Texts* (New York, 1989), 97–119; and '*Paralipomena Propertiana*', *HSCP* 94 (1992), 287–320.

[16] J. L. Butrica, *The Manuscript Tradition of Propertius* (*Phoenix* Supplementary Volume 17; Toronto, 1984); S. J. Heyworth, *The Manuscripts of Propertius: Toward a Critical Edition* (diss. Cambridge, 1986). The principal manuscripts that will be discussed in the following pages are N (= Wolfenbüttel Gud. lat. 224, *c.* 1200), A (= Leiden, Voss. lat. O.38, *c.* 1240), F (= Florence, Bibl. Laurenziana pl. 36,49, *c.* 1380), L (= Oxford, Bodleian Library Holkham misc. 36, a. 1421), P (= Paris, Bibl. Nationale lat. 7989, a. 1423), and Z (= Venice, Bibl. Naz. Marciana Fondo antico 443 [1912], a. 1453); FLPZ are known collectively as the Petrarchan manuscripts because they derive from Petrarch's lost copy of A. In addition, a group of fifteenth-century manuscripts appears to derive from the archetype independently of the other primary witnesses (Butrica calls their source X and argues that it shares an intermediate source with N, while Heyworth calls their source *Λ* and thinks now, as he has pointed out to me, that it might have been the archetype itself); these are v (= Vat. lat. 3273, a. 1427), m (= Paris, B.N. lat. 8233, a. 1465), r (= Geneva, Bibl. Bodmeriana Cod. Bod. 141, a. 1466), u (= Urb. lat. 641, *c.* 1465–70), s (= Munich, Universitätsbibliothek Cim 22, *c.* 1460–70), and c (= Rome, Bibl. Casanatense 15, a. 1470 or 1471). (Heyworth's sigla for these six manuscripts are the upper-case equivalents of those given above, except that he uses T for v. In addition, he cites three descendants of a contaminated copy of X [*Λ*]—Parma, Bibl. Palatina 140; Wrocław, Bibl. Uniw. AKC 1948 197 KN; and Bibl. Vaticana Capponianus 196—as J K W, collectively *Γ*, but their value remains to be established; the one case that he cites of an 'apparently true, and not conjectural, reading not found in any other authoritative mss' [92] could

archetype thus reconstructed. The mainstream view, which puts a good deal of faith in that text, is best represented by Paolo Fedeli, whose 1987 article on editing Propertius depicts his approach as a 'cautiously conservative' middle way between the two extremes mentioned in his title, 'the cult of the transmitted text' and 'the hunt for corruption'.[17] He advises that an editor must 'know' his author, i.e. possess not only a sound understanding of the manuscript tradition and history of the text, but also intimate familiarity with the author's style, working method, and technique, as well as his sources, his *topoi*, and the work of his contemporaries.[18] These reasonable-sounding criteria, however, involve a fatal flaw. Whence does the editor acquire his knowledge of Propertius' style and working method? Fedeli has got his from the text, of course, and specifically from editions like Barber's; but that text is the document whose authenticity is supposed to be at issue in the practice of textual criticism. As an editor Fedeli is running in circles, establishing the genuineness of the text before him on the basis of its consistency with—itself, a procedure that works well if the general reliability of the text is guaranteed in advance (in which case there is little for textual criticism to do), but not if the text is seriously compromised by corruption. In a tradition like Propertius', where all copies descend from a deeply corrupted archetype, this is a prescription for disaster: corrupted passages are defended as sound by comparison with other similarly corrupted passages, and scribal errors are thus elevated to the status of authorial traits, with the inevitable result that in Fedeli's edition, as in Barber's, Propertius sometimes writes less like an Augustan poet than like a corrupt and interpolated manuscript of one.

Text and interpretation are inextricably linked, and to edit Propertius one must interpret him; but one cannot produce a reliable text without knowing what sort of poet Propertius was, and one equally cannot know what sort of poet Propertius was without a reliable text. Fortunately the circularity that undermines Fedeli's approach can be avoided, for we have objective evidence, from the poet's own lifetime or shortly after, with which we can answer two questions fundamental not only to editing Propertius but to Propertian studies as a whole: what sort of poet was Propertius, and how reliable is the version of the text transmitted by the manuscripts?

First, the matter of style. As Hubbard has shown, allusions to Propertius' poetry by ancient authors indicate what sort of writing we should expect; without exception they describe qualities that can be summed up as a pleasing elegance. Ovid deemed him *tener* ('soft' or 'tender')[19] and *blandus*,[20] 'a term', in Hubbard's words, 'suggesting an insinuating softness of style rather than the abrupt vigour more recently attributed to him'.[21] Martial called him *facundus*, 'witty' or 'eloquent'.[22] Quintilian offers no explicit description but implies that Propertius, like Tibullus, was *tersus* and *elegans*, 'polished' and 'elegant', or at the very least not *lasciuus* ('undisciplined') like Ovid or

easily be accidental if not in fact conjectural.) The agreement of all or most of the witnesses to the text is here designated by the traditional symbol O.

[17] P. Fedeli, 'Properzio, fra culto del testo tràdito e caccia alla corruttela', *Bulletin de la Faculté des Lettres de Mulhouse* 15 (1987), 107–12. For the phrase 'cautiously conservative', see 108, where Fedeli writes, 'Oggi la tendenza della critica testuale properziana, sopiti ormai i furori di tipo housmaniano, può esser definita 'accortamente conservatrice': è questa una posizione che sostanzialmente condivido'.

[18] Fedeli (above, n. 17), 107.

[19] *A.A.* 3.333 *teneri possis carmen legisse Properti*.

[20] *Tr.* 2.465 *inuenies eadem blandi praecepta Properti*, 5.1.17 *blandique Propertius oris*.

[21] Hubbard (above, n. 14), 2.

[22] 14.184.1 *facundi carmen iuuenale Properti*.

durus ('rough') like Gallus.[23] Pliny the Younger wrote of a poet descended from Propertius that 'If you take up his elegies you will read a work polished, tender and agreeably amusing, one absolutely written in Propertius' family'.[24] To quote Hubbard again, 'Ancient criticism knows no dissent from this verdict; it valued in Propertius not an obscure master of the passions, but a poet of finish, grace and charm' (3). These qualities are in fact evident, or only a few letters away, in far more passages than one might expect of Propertius the proto-Pound; but there is also much that would scarcely have been termed *blandum, elegans, facundum, molle, tenerum*, or *tersum* by an ancient critic.

Modern accounts of Propertius' style, on the other hand, emphasize qualities like abruptness, obscurity, lack of logic or even of clear meaning which are antithetical to those praised by ancient readers.[25] Postgate dealt with the inconsistency between ancient evaluations and the 'chaos' that he observed through the condescending claim that 'the literary criticism of the Romans was essentially superficial. They had not at their disposal the keen scalpel and the polymath terminology of modern analysis. Nor had they the delicate perception and flexibility of expression which might have supplied these deficiencies' (lviii). In other words, they were either too dull-witted to notice that what they were describing as elegant was actually misshapen and incoherent, or else insufficiently articulate to describe their true impressions. Although ancient critics like Quintilian and Longinus and Dionysius of Halicarnassus were inevitably unacquainted with such modern techniques as reader-response theory and instead discussed literature in rhetorical terms (with good reason, since rhetoric formed the basis of their literary culture), their critical judgement was certainly capable of a task so essential to their craft as distinguishing the elegant from the abrupt and the obscure. Postgate went on to argue that 'if the Roman critical resources were thus limited, Propertius must have taxed them severely' (lviii). Indeed he must, if they were so consistently driven to describe his alleged 'extravagancies', 'fluctuations', and 'incoherencies' as 'elegant', 'polished', and 'beguiling'. Quintilian termed Gallus *durior*, a judgement confirmed by the papyrus fragment;[26] but that fragment is still so much more lucid than many stretches in Book 2 of Propertius that, if Propertius really had written as the manuscripts represent him, Quintilian would surely have been forced to employ for him some epithet more severe than *durus*. The real reason for the discrepancy between ancient and modern views of Propertius' style is that 'act of critical salvation' described earlier; the casual scribal errors that created his

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[23] 10.1.93 *elegia quoque Graecos prouocamus, cuius mihi tersus atque elegans maxime uidetur auctor Tibullus. sunt qui Propertium malint. Ouidius utroque lasciuior, sicut durior Gallus.* This important point, that Quintilian in no way implies disparagement of Propertius, was first made by Hubbard.

[24] *Ep.* 9.22.1 *uir est* [sc. Passennus Paullus] *optimus, honestissimus, nostri amantissimus; praeterea in litteris ueteres aemulatur, exprimit, reddit, Propertium in primis, a quo genus ducit, uera suboles eoque simillima illi in quo ille praecipuus. si elegos eius in manum sumpseris, leges opus tersum, molle, iucundum et plane in Properti domo scriptum.* The translation of the last sentence given in the text has been taken from Hubbard, 2–3.

[25] To choose only one example from among many, I append the words of an Italian translator of Propertius: 'Egli rimane un po' come una divinità il cui linguaggio è troppo ermetico per la folla dei fedeli. . . . Egli è in certo modo il precursore dei nostri ermetici. . . . La sua oscurità non è mai fine a se stessa; attraverso le ambagi dello stile, egli mira più a suggerire che a dire: meglio che un'immagine egli vuole destare in noi una sensazione: e crea intorno a sé un alone musicale in cui non sempre si può cercare un significato preciso' (*Sesto Properzio, Elegie*, tr. G. Lipparini [Bologna, 1970], xix).

[26] Note, for example, the hiatus *tum erunt* in 2, the difficulty of ascertaining the precise meaning of *legam* in 5, and the awkward double modifier *fixa . . . deiuitiora* in the same line.

'incoherencies' have been accorded the exalted status of his most distinctive and admirable stylistic traits.

The second category of evidence demonstrates just how seriously our text has been affected by scribal error. Propertius was popular enough to be quoted several times by those who wrote *graffiti* on the walls of Pompeii; thanks to these vandals we have texts of six lines from within a century of the poet's lifetime which permit an instructive comparison between Propertius as he appeared in the first century and Propertius as he appeared 1200 years later in the archetype of our tradition. One thoughtful scribbler wrote out a couplet that is now slightly truncated by damage but is still recognizable as a version of 2.5.9–10 (= *CIL* 4.4491):

> nunc est ira recens nunc est disc[edere tempus
> si dolor afuerit crede redibit [amor.

This correctly gives *afuerit* in 10 rather than the corruption *affuerit* offered by our manuscripts. Another (= *CIL* 4.1894) provided a version of 4.5.47–8, which are given by the manuscripts as

> ianitor ad dantes uigilet si pulset inanis
> surdus in obductam somniet usque seram.

In the *graffito*, however, they appear as

> ianitor ad dantis uigilet si pulsat inanis
> surdus in obductam somniet usque seram.

There are two differences from the version of the manuscripts. One is the *i*-stem accusative plural *dantis* where the manuscripts give *dantes*, the other the indicative form *pulsat* where the manuscripts give *pulset*. The criterion of 'Which reading is more likely to become the other?' suggests that the *graffito* is right in both cases. Medieval manuscripts frequently normalize forms like *dantis*, while *pulset* was perhaps assimilated to the preceeding *uigilet* and to the upcoming *somniet*. Stylistic considerations also favour *pulsat*, which is so much more vigorous than the subjunctive form that, if our manuscripts were divided between *pulsat* and *pulset,* editors would prefer the former without hesitation.

But the anonymous Pompeian to whom we are most indebted is the one who wrote out 3.16.13–14 (= *CIL* 4.1950) as

> quisquis amator erit Scythiae licet ambulet oris
> nemo adeo ut feriat barbarus esse uolet.

The same lines appeared in the archetype as

> quisquis amator erit Scythicis licet ambulat oris
> nemo deo ut noceat barbarus esse uolet.

Two errors, *ambulat* and *deo,* are immediately apparent. A third is probable, for in 14 editors should do as Goold does and print *feriat* rather than *noceat*.[27] One way of accounting for these two readings is to suppose that one of them has been accidentally substituted for the other; since *feriat* is the more vigorous and colourful

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[27] The first advocate of the reading, however, seems to have been Hubbard in '*Propertiana*', *CQ* 18 (1968), 315–19, at 318–19, who correctly terms it 'lively' and suggests that *noceat* might have been interpolated after the corruption of *adeo* to *deo*.

word, we should assume that it represents Propertius' original and that *noceat* is the substitute rather than believe that an anonymous vandal improved Propertius by substituting *feriat* for *noceat*. But a more plausible way of accounting for these readings is to suppose that Propertius' original *feriat* was glossed at some point in the tradition by *noceat* and that the gloss displaced the original reading in the archetype or at some earlier stage. The process is unlikely to have proceded in the other direction. Usually it is the general that glosses the specific, not the other way around (sometimes a glossator will indicate that a general has been used for a particular, but that situation does not apply here). Someone might indeed gloss *feriat* with *noceat* to show that Propertius means that, even in Scythia, no one would harm a lover in any way whatsoever, whereas a strict interpretation of *feriat* would not necessarily exclude the lover being jeered at, robbed, spat upon, etc.; but no one would ever gloss *noceat* with *feriat*, because this would restrict the range of meaning for *noceat* to certain specific forms of harm such as striking and wounding. A helpful parallel is available in the process of corruption that I believe produced the reading of the archetype at 3.11.51, *fugisti tamen in timidi uada flumina Nili*. Emenders usually try to correct *uada*, but I think instead that *uada* is sound and that its epithet has been lost behind *flumina*, which originated as a gloss on *uada (Nili)*. Whatever the process of corruption, it is clear that, while *flumina* can gloss *uada* to show that it means 'river' here rather than some other body of water, *uada* could never gloss *flumina*.

In the case of *Scythiae* in the *graffito* versus *Scythicis* in the manuscripts certainty is impossible, but the other indubitable errors of the manuscripts make it difficult to place much faith in them. In any case this couplet as transmitted by the archetype of our tradition contains two, or three, or four errors, while in all six lines taken together the manuscripts show three or four absolutely certain errors, with another three or four possible, for a total of between three and seven in those six lines. To put it another way, at the most conservative possible estimate, three out of the six lines—50 per cent—contain at least one corruption; at the most extreme estimate, the number of corruptions in our text could surpass the number of lines! By any objective standard a text with a corruption even in every second line has deteriorated significantly; it would seem that there could well be 2000 or so corruptions in our manuscripts rather than the approximately 600 recognized by Fedeli and Barber.[28] Fedeli himself has asked whether an edition which like his own admits hundreds of conjectures can be too conservative; to judge by these *graffiti*, the answer is a resounding 'yes'. The Pompeian *graffiti,* and especially the lines from 3.16, are a virtual textbook on editing Propertius. They confirm the predictable (and frequent) presence of simple scribal errors which, like *ambulat*, offend against grammar or, like *deo*, offend against sense; but they also alert us to others like *noceat* which are not so obviously 'wrong'. If we had only the evidence of the manuscripts for this couplet, 'cautiously conservative' critics would condemn the 'Anglo-Saxon hypercriticism' and 'Housmanitis' of anyone who dared 'improve' Propertius by conjecturing *feriat*.[29]

[28] This figure was arrived at by counting transpositions, *lacunae*, places where an archetypal reading has been replaced by a conjecture, and obelized passages (an entire obelized line was counted as three corruptions, an obelized half-line as two, and, of course, a single obelized word as one).

[29] A comparable, though less extreme, result emerges from the lines cited by ancient grammarians: two or three of those nine lines are corrupt in the entire tradition, while two more were corrupted in one branch. (These are readily accessible in Butrica [above, n. 16], 30–2.) The lines corrupt in the entire tradition are 2.3.24 (*ardidus* for *candidus*), 3.8.37 (*tendisti* for *nexisti*), and perhaps 2.14.1 (*est* added at the end of the line); those corrupt in a single branch are 2.1.2 (*ore* in N) and 2.33.37 (*demissa . . . serta* in the Petrarchan manuscripts).

These then are the criteria that ought to guide the editing and interpretation of Propertius. Ancient testimonia speak unanimously of grace and elegance, ancient *graffiti* confirm that the source of our manuscripts was riddled with minor scribal errors. When faced with awkwardness or weakness in the transmitted text (especially of a kind that can be healed through slight alteration), the editor must ask whether Ovid, Martial, Pliny, and Quintilian were wrong and Propertius wrote clumsy poetry that has been preserved perfectly by those manuscripts, or whether an original elegance has been corrupted in an unreliable transmission; mainstream scholarship has for too long accepted the untested assumption that the first alternative is right.

II

As to the matter of specific suggestions for improvement, a few examples will suffice to illustrate the general principles involved.

In the light of the considerations offered above, it should be clear that editors have good reason to be less tolerant of even slight awkwardness in the transmitted text and to correct more scribal errors; yet there are many places where all editions, not just Barber's and Fedeli's, yield to manuscript authority rather than restore elegance and point by the alteration of a letter or two, a process often denounced as 'rewriting' the author. Dozens and dozens of such passages were corrected by Renaissance scholars so long ago that modern scholars are largely unaware that a corruption was ever present; yet dozens more remain. A characteristic example occurs in 3.14, which purports to argue that Rome should adopt the Spartan custom of requiring women to exercise as well as men, so as to make wives and maidens alike equally accessible to seduction. Such conditions are declared vastly preferable to those at Rome, where women are surrounded in public by crowds of chaperones too dense to get a finger through, so that *nec quae sint facies nec quae sint uerba rogandi/ inuenies: caecum uersat amator iter*, 'You will find neither what are the faces nor what are the words of solicitation; the lover plies a blind road' (31–2). Not only is seduction out of the question; according to the manuscripts, Propertius says that there is no opportunity even to learn the techniques of seduction. In itself this might be an apposite, though extreme, demonstration of the lover's frustration, but there is a difficulty with *facies*. It cannot mean 'what are the faces of Roman women' without something that indicates whose faces are involved, and one is therefore compelled to construe *facies* with *rogandi* and make Propertius talk about 'faces of solicitation', whatever winks, leers, and squints those might be. The case is a typical one: the transmitted text scans and contains no grammatical errors or nonsense words, and a kind of meaning can be extorted from it as long as one takes it for granted that Propertius wrote a peculiar kind of Latin that does not always make sense; it hardly qualifies as something that an ancient critic might have called polished, witty, or elegant. But such qualities are only a few letters away if we follow Enk (*Ad Propertii Carmina Commentarius Criticus* [Zutphen, 1911], *ad loc.*) and adopt Gebhard's *faciles* for *facies*,[30] together with *dent . . . roganti* (Enk's variation of Burman's *det . . . roganti*) for *sint . . . rogandi*; these conjectures add one letter and change three (surely not an unreasonable rate of alteration for a tradition with a corruption in every second line) to produce *nec quae sint faciles nec quae dent uerba roganti/ inuenies*, 'You won't find out which ones are

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[30] Gebhard seems to have derived the correction from his *liber Commelinianus*, which is Paris, BN lat. 8458 (written no earlier than 1474); I have not verified the presence of the reading in that manuscript, but it certainly does appear in Rome, Bibl. Casanatense 3227, copied around 1470 by Franciscus Maturantius.

easy and which ones prove a tease when you chat them up'. An elegant expression of an appropriate sentiment has been achieved with minimal change. Given Propertius' ancient reputation and the demonstrable inaccuracy of the manuscripts, I do not hesitate to accept this as what he wrote; needless to say, no 'cautiously conservative' editor incorporates these corrections, and most do not even mention them in the apparatus (to his credit, however, Fedeli records *faciles* and *det . . . roganti*).

Another example is available elsewhere in 3.14 in the description of the lover's paradise alleged to have existed in ancient Sparta. The supposed advantages of having women exercise include being at a woman's side in public (22), talking to her without a go-between (25–6), getting a good look at her without her clothes (27), and the relative indifference of athletic women to the state of their hair (28); in addition, according to the manuscripts' version of 23–4, *nec timor aut ulla est clausae tutela puellae,/ nec grauis austeri poena cauenda uiri*, 'neither is there fear or any guarding of a secluded girl, nor need one beware the heavy punishment of a severe husband'. To say absolutely that 'there is not fear' is too sweeping and too vague; and if *timor* is parallel to *tutela*, one is left with 'fear of a secluded girl'—but there can be no such fear if there is also no such seclusion. In fact the couplet seems to contrast two kinds of fear (expressed by *timor* and *cauenda*) in two kinds of situation, the seduction of an unmarried citizen girl, or *clausa puella*, and the seduction of a woman married to a *uir austerus*. Broekhuyzen saw the solution that restores balance and contrast: *nec timor est ulli clausae tutela puellae*, 'neither is the guard of a sequestered girl a source of fear to anyone' (*tutela* of course can be either the fact of guarding or the guards themselves).[31] Two possible explanations of the corruption suggest themselves. One is that *ulli* first became *ulla* through anticipation of *tutela*, then *aut* was added and the order of words changed to restore the metre; such a correction, however, must have taken place in antiquity, not in the Middle Ages, because medieval rules of scansion freely admitted the lengthening of short syllables at the principle caesura and no medieval reader would have balked at *nec timor est ulla clausae tutela puellae*. The other is that the order of *est ulli* became reversed (perhaps through the omission and incorrect replacement of one of them), and the consequent loss of a syllable was remedied by adding *aut*.

Earlier in Book 3, at 3.2.7–8, editors do Propertius another disservice by continuing to print *quin etiam, Polypheme, fera Galatea sub Aetna/ ad tua rorantes carmina flexit equos*, 'and indeed, Polyphemus, Galatea at the foot of ferocious Etna turned her dripping steeds toward your songs'. There is no reason for Etna to be *fera* here; it is not erupting, nor are its past or potential eruptions at issue—it is only the backdrop for the pretty picture of Galatea deflecting the course of her chariot to hear the songs of Polyphemus. Now, other ancient accounts of the wooing of Galatea by Polyphemus emphasize the contrast between her loveliness and his monstrous brutishness; rather than believe that Propertius gave his scenery an irrelevant and needlessly dramatic epithet but failed to exploit this natural and traditional contrast, I think that Wakker was right when he proposed to replace *fera*, modifying Etna, with *ferox*, modifying Polyphemus. As well as being more elegant and to the point than the transmitted reading, the correction better suits Propertius' train of thought. The passage as a whole illustrates the power of song: the previous examples have been Orpheus taming beasts and stopping rivers (3–4) and Amphion animating the stones

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[31] Broekhuyzen's own note runs, 'vix apparet quo referri debeat istud *timor*. tentabam ego aliquando, *Nec timor est ulli clausae tutela puellae*, i.e. nec quisquam amator timet custodes dominae suae, quo minus ad eam accedere audeat palam'.

of Cithaeron to create Thebes (5–6). Obviously the power of song is expressed all the more effectively if it can bring a lovely nymph to hear a *hideous* Cyclops. In the other examples it was wild nature that succumbed to the power of song; in Polyphemus' case, wild nature itself wields that power, and it exerts an attraction that is even stronger than the repulsion of his *ferocitas*.

In 3.4.21–2, at the end of a poem in which Propertius wishes success for an Indian campaign while proposing to stay at home and enjoy the eventual triumph from a comfortable vantage, editors continue to print *praeda sit haec illis quorum meruere labores:/ me sat erit Sacra plaudere posse Via*, 'let this booty belong to those whose efforts have earned it: it will be enough that I am able to applaud in the Sacred Way'. Since the accusative *me* can only be construed as subject of the infinitive *posse*, that is indeed what the transmitted text must mean, but it raises the question '*For whom* will it be enough that Propertius can applaud in the Sacred Way?' The answer to that question is embodied in the contrast that Propertius draws between the warriors who will go off and fight and earn their booty—the *illis* of 21—and himself, the one for whom it will suffice to join in the acclaim. But that contrast requires *mi* rather than *me*, as Pontano first saw over five hundred years ago.

Another example of a minor scribal error still uncorrected in our editions can be found in the description of *suttee* in 3.13. When the pyre is set ablaze, the wives compete to see who will follow their spouse, and not being allowed to die is accounted a disgrace. There follows the couplet 21–2, *ardent uictrices et flammae pectora praebent/ imponuntque suis ora perusta uiris*, 'the winners are afire and display their breast to the flame and lay their scorched mouths upon their husbands'. Despite the consensus of editors, *ardent* cannot be right; if it is literal we must take the line as a weak example of hysteron proteron (the women of course are not on fire before they have even rent their garments, much less leapt into the flames), and if it describes the 'ardor' of the victorious wives it is a sick joke thoroughly inappropriate to the context. Here the remedy, which was first seen by Stephanus and Passerat, is to be deduced from the contrast between the disgrace of those who are not permitted to join in the mass suicide (20 *pudor est non licuisse mori*) and the attitude of the *uictrices* who win the competition; the shame of defeat has as its opposite not the zeal of competition but the joy of victory, and therefore the winners do not burn—yet—but rather *gaudent*, 'rejoice', in their right to burn. The first letter of a line is frequently detached in medieval manuscripts of Latin poetry (the corruption of *candidus* in 2.3.24 to *ardidus* involves the same phenomenon), and the proximity to *flammae*, not to mention the context as a whole, could have had a psychological effect in the transformation of *audent* to *ardent*.

Interpreters have spilled much ink over my final examples, where the failure to recognize the presence of a corruption has abetted misinterpretation of the poem as a whole. The context is 4.6, Propertius' second major treatment of the battle of Actium and the centrepiece of Book 4, cast by the poet himself as the culmination of his ambitions toward the imitation of learned Hellenistic elegy but seen by many recent scholars as hopelessly inept or subversively humorous. Propertius has cast Apollo as commander, Augustus as soldier, and the god exhorts the man very much as Augustus exhorts his own troops in Dio's account of the battle. All the fury and slaughter is reduced to 55–6, a miniature tableau of the god and his protégé wielding their weapons side by side, though with the god of course more prominent (he is a god, after all, and the elegy commemorates a temple erected in his honour): *dixerat, et pharetrae pondus consumit in arcus:/ proxima post arcus Caesaris hasta fuit*, 'he had

spoken, and he expends the burden of his quiver upon his bow: next after the bow was Caesar's spear'. Here some have thought that the weak *fuit* deliberately demeans Augustus' participation in the victory,[32] but it should be suspect not only because of its weakness and flatness but because a past tense is anomalous among the present tenses that Propertius uses consistently in this part of the narrative (55 *consumit*, 57 *uincit . . . dat*; 58 *uehuntur*; 59 *miratur*; 61 *prosequitur*; 63 *petit*). We should either follow such distinguished editors of the past as Broekhuyzen and Burman and read *furit*, with Guyet and Heinsius (not elsewhere applied to weapons, but cf. V. Fl. 1.144 *ense furens*), or else read *ruit* (cf. V. Max. 4.7.2 *ruentibus telis*). A later couplet, 59–60, has inspired even more amusement in scholars doubtful of Propertius' serious intentions here: *at pater Idalio miratur Caesar ab astro:/ 'sum deus: est nostri sanguinis ista fides'*, 'but his father Caesar marvels from the Idalian star: "I am a god: this is the honour of our bloodline"'. Julius Caesar's announcement of his divine status is banal (out of harmony with what is otherwise one of Propertius' most ambitious and highly wrought elegies), otiose (the *astrum Idalium* itself recalls both Caesar's descent from Venus and the comet that was supposed to have announced his divinity, and he had officially been *Diuus Iulius* for over a quarter of a century), and stylistically anomalous (the quoted words are not introduced by any formula that signals the quotation). I suggest that the words quoted here were not spoken by Caesar at all but by Apollo, who is otherwise the only figure to speak in the account of Actium, that the words quoted were *est uestri sanguinis ista fides*, 'that is the honour of *your* bloodline', and that they were introduced by the phrase *cui deus*, 'to whom the god [said]' (for a similar introductory formula cf. Stat. *Theb.* 7.294 *cui senior ridens*). The additional alteration that this necessitates in reading *uestri* rather than *nostri* is no barrier to having Apollo commend Augustus to his adoptive father as the hero of Actium; these words are confused frequently, even in texts less corrupted than Propertius. One might also consider reading *haec* rather than *at* as the first word of 59; not only does it identify the object of Caesar's admiration, it also gives *ista* a more specific reference.

Our texts can also be improved through the application of sound principles of textual criticism. Lachmann's method of stemmatic reconstruction works relatively well with Propertius: there is indeed an archetype to reconstruct, and most of the doubts pertaining to its reconstruction tend to involve relatively small details. Yet conservative editors often prefer a shortcut. Instead of reconstructing the archetype first and then judging its correctness, they choose a single so-called 'best' manuscript (in this case N, which is probably the least corrupted and least corrected of surviving witnesses) and print its reading unless obviously defective. Of course 'best' is only a relative term; even the 'best' copy of an extremely corrupt archetype is, ironically, a manuscript 'worse' than its source, and it can be a thoroughly 'bad' manuscript in the quality of its text. In addition, 'cautiously conservative' editors are reluctant to accept emendations unless some glaring error compels it, but they forget that the purpose of classical textual criticism is to restore the author's original, not to correct a medieval copy of it to a merely acceptable level of grammar and syntax.[33] They also fail to

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[32] I had thought that this was an exclusively modern attitude until I consulted the commentary of F. G. Barth (Leipzig, 1777), which remarks sarcastically here, 'Eximia laus fortitudinis Augusti!' (but one can hardly imagine Propertius depicting the officially pious, and not yet officially deified, Augustus as greater than or even equal to a god).

[33] 'Sometimes editors, both of classical and of modern works, argue that the most they are justified in doing is to attempt to purge the copy-text, or archetype, or paradosis, of errors—not to try to restore what the author wrote. But this argument cannot be praised for its respect of

appreciate that all errors do not leave obvious traces; the choice between *noceat* and *feriat* in 3.16.14 is a case in point. The text of Propertius is so corrupt that an editor must indeed suspect everything, and must go 'hunting' for corruptions rather than wait for them to present a calling card.

This optimist approach goes hand in glove with adherence to an unwritten law: if the two branches of a tradition give different readings, one of them will always be right. In fact two branches can err independently, especially when small words of similar appearance are involved, and editors should avoid the trap of accepting an error of this kind that happens to give speciously 'acceptable' sense or syntax when the reading of the other branch does not. A particularly egregious example is 1.20.1, which all editions print as *hoc pro continuo te, Galle, monemus amore*, 'I give you this warning, Gallus, in recognition of your constant affection'. For the first word N and X (*Λ*) give *hoc*, while A has *nec*; the former makes sense, the latter does not, and therefore *hoc*, being found in N, the 'best' manuscript, is assumed to be what Propertius wrote. In fact the poet himself proves otherwise, for he has designed the poem's last hexameter (51) as an echo of its first: *his, o Galle, tuos monitus seruabis amores*, 'Warned by this, Gallus, you will preserve your love'. Nearly every word here has its equivalent in 1: *amores* takes up *amore, monitus* takes up *monemus, tuos* takes up *te, Galle* repeats the earlier vocative, and *his* corresponds to—certainly not *hoc*, unless someone can explain what aesthetic *frisson* we are meant to feel from this inconcinnity between singular and plural forms of a commonplace word, akin I suppose to what a modernist poet might evoke by leading us to expect 'this' and then startling us with 'these'. Of course Propertius wrote *haec*, not *hoc*, in 1, and the readings *hoc* and *nec* are independent corruptions of what the archetype must have offered: *hec*, a medieval spelling of *haec*.[34] It is worth remarking that the correct reading was apparently restored here about 600 years ago by Salutati in his corrections to F, if not by Petrarch himself.[35] To the best of my knowledge, *haec* last appeared in print in the Aldine edition of 1502.

historical evidence; rather, it confuses two kinds of edition, both legitimate, neither of which, when done properly, disregards the evidence. If one is interested in a text as it appeared at a particular time to a particular audience, a diplomatic or facsimile edition of it serves the purpose best; correcting errors in it—editing it critically—would be out of place, for the errors, though unintended, were part of what the contemporary readers saw in the text in front of them. If, on the other hand, one wishes to correct errors—to try to repair the damage done to the text in transmission, however famous or influential its corrupt form may be—then one is producing a text that differs from any now extant (probably from any that ever existed), and the aim of the alterations is obviously not the preservation of a documentary form of the text but the construction of a text as close as possible (as close, that is, as surviving evidence permits) to the one the author intended' (G. Thomas Tanselle, *Textual Criticism and Scholarly Editing* [Charlottesville/London, 1990], 301–2). For a classicist's perspective on the same matter, see the entertaining preface to Hermann Koechly's 1857 Teubner text of Nonnus, especially VI–VIII, where he contrasts fashionably conservative modern editors, who boast that by reconstructing the archetype and removing only the most obvious and most trivial errors they have 'emended, not interpolated' their text, with the practice of men like 'the ancient Hermann', who 'codicis archetypi—si quidem fuit—scripturam pro necessario quidem erigendi aedificii fundamento, sed non pro ipso aedificio habent'.

[34] I would argue that *hoc* here is one of the associative errors demonstrating that N and X shared a common intermediate source; other possible examples of such errors include *obcenis* for *obscenis*, found in N and v at 1.16.10; *fletus* for *flemus*, found in N^{pc} (*fletu* N^{ac}) and v (in the form *fletu^g*) and mru at 2.27.7 (note also *fle* followed by a lacuna in c); *(a)eoi* for *Coi*, found in N^2 and sc at 3.1.1; and *flamine* for *flammae*, found in N and sc at 3.13.21.

[35] F reads *nec*, but *h̄*, apparently representing *haec*, stands in the margin, written by a

Misplaced veneration for a so-called 'best' manuscript has perhaps led editors to foist another error upon Propertius in 3.7.43. Lamenting the death of young Paetus at sea, the poet remarks that he would be alive today, with nothing to mourn but his wealth, had he stayed at home on his ancestral estate. All editions print the line as *quod si contentus patrio boue uerteret agros*, 'But if he were contentedly turning his fields with ancestral ox'. N and X (*Λ*) have *contentus*, the Petrarchan manuscripts have *contentos*; a 'contented' Paetus makes sense, 'contented' fields do not, and therefore *contentus* is assumed to be right. Not necessarily. There is a 50 per cent chance that the archetype read *contentus* and that my next remarks are therefore irrelevant. But there is an equal chance that the archetype read *contentos* and that *contentus* in N and X (*Λ*) is an associative error of those manuscripts (or perhaps a conjecture made independently in the two sources).[36] In medieval orthography forms of *contentus* are interchangeable with those of *contemptus*; *contentos* in the archetype could therefore represent *contemptos* (P in fact reads *contemtos*, probably as a conjecture based upon *contentos*); this gives equally good sense and perhaps superior expression to the universally accepted version of the line. 'But if he were ploughing with ancestral ox the fields he scorned', with *contemptos . . . agros* enclosing *patrio boue*, strikes me as more elegant, more polished, more pointed—and therefore, of course, more Propertian. Some might be tempted to dismiss *contemptos* as an unnecessary conjecture, but it is not even a conjecture, only an interpretation of an authoritative manuscript reading in the light of medieval orthography; ironically, it could be *contentus*—which those who dismiss *contemptos* would regard as an authoritative transmitted reading—that is a conjecture.

All manuscript traditions are unique because all manuscripts are unique, and that is because all manuscripts are products of unique human individuals in unique circumstances; an editor must therefore know as much as possible about the human quirks of the people who copied them. In 3.6.22 Cynthia is complaining, 'Poor me, that man can abandon me, though I've done nothing, and can keep in his house the sort of woman I don't want to name'. The line is now always read as *et qualem nolo dicere habere domi. domi* is Heinsius' idiomatic correction of the universally transmitted *domo*, and *nolo* is a palmary emendation of Palmer for *nulla* of the

correcting hand attributed to Salutati (though it is not always certain which of the four hands present in F has made a particular correction). The possibility that the correction could have been made originally in Petrarch's lost manuscript, the exemplar of F and itself a copy of A (which reads *nec*), arises from the fact that other descendants of Petrarch's copy also read *h(a)ec*. It is certainly the reading of P (whose scribe, however, introduced a substantial number of improvements as he copied). L is lost for this portion of the text, but Naples, Bibl. Nazionale IV.F.19, a descendant of it (or perhaps of its exemplar, as Heyworth has argued [above, n. 16, 30–2]), reads *haec* according to my own collation; Professor Heyworth, however, informs me that according to his own collation that manuscript offers in the text a reading that might be either *Hec* or *Nec*, with *hoc* in the margin. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale 14638, another descendant of L (or of its exemplar), reads *hoc*, but this is surely derived from v (for the suggestion that the Naples and Brussels manuscripts derive from v and L, see Butrica [above, n. 16], 110–12). Thus it remains at least possible that Petrarch had already introduced *h(a)ec* in his own copy and that the careless scribe of F corrupted it back to *nec*, but small words like these are interchanged with such frequency that certainty is impossible.

[36] It needs to be remembered that X (*Λ*) would certainly have been corrected by Poggio and perhaps by Niccoli as well before the first surviving transcript (v) was made, and that half of its descendants were copied by able scholars who surely introduced corrections of their own (Panormita copied v, Poggio's son Jacopo copied s, Pomponio Leto copied c; for speculation that the common source of mru might have been a transcript made by Niccoli, see Butrica [above, n. 16], 70, with n. 16). For possible conjunctive errors of N and X, see n. 34 above.

archetype (N has *nullo*, but this perhaps has been influenced by *nullo* in 21 directly above); *et qualem* comes from N, Fedeli's 'best' manuscript, the other manuscripts having *(a)equalem*. Again one reading makes sense, the other does not, but giving tolerable sense is not the same thing as being what the archetype gave or what the author wrote. The scribe who copied this part of N had an interesting habit. At 1.2.18, where the archetype had *euenit* at the beginning of the line, he wrote *et uenit*, and at 2.1.44, where the archetype had *enumerat* at the beginning of the line, he wrote *et numerat*; in other words, he was prone to turn initial *e* into *et*. Our haste to adopt his speciously acceptable reading here should be tempered by the realization that it could be nothing more than the unconscious result of an ingrained habit; it is entirely possible that the archetype read *equalem*, representing *aequalem*, and that this is a corruption of *ac qualem*. The sense that this gives is precisely the same as that given by *et qualem*, but the ugliness of the clashing *k* sounds seems to me to suit even better the harsh and accusatory context. Even the scribes of 'best' manuscripts have their quirks, and accidents do not always produce ungrammatical nonsense.

The evidence of the Pompeiian *graffiti* shows that the text of Propertius has been extensively affected by verbal corruption; but the editor of Propertius also needs to be more open than recent editors have been to the possibilities of transposition and interpolation.

The first editor to introduce a significant number of transpositions was Scaliger in 1577, and he was followed by several others who reordered the text in even more disruptive ways.[37] The reaction against these drastic interventions has cast the concept of transposition into a disrepute which it does not deserve. Transpositions, of course, are necessitated by dislocations that have occurred in the transmission of a text. One major cause of dislocation is omission, since dislocation often results from the unsuccessful correction of such an omission. Omission is a widespread phenomenon; out of the approximately 150 surviving Propertius manuscripts, at least 112 contain at least one omission before or even after correction.

In addition, the process of transcription itself frequently leads to dislocation, as eyes skip from one occurrence of a word to another or from one word to another of similar appearance, or simply fail from fatigue.

Many of the surviving manuscripts contain dislocations of various kinds within a single poem, some corrected, some not. One common form of dislocation is the reversal of adjacent lines. A number of manuscripts exhibit a single example of the phenomenon:

El Escorial g.iii.12 (3.13.17/16)
Florence, Bibl. Laurenziana pl. 38,37 (2.34.93/92)
Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek I.Lips. F.43 (3.7.36/35^{ac})[38]
Naples, Biblioteca Oratoriana dei Gerolamini M.C.F. 3-15 (4.7.85/84^{ac})
Salamanca, Bibl. Universitaria 245 (3.2.14/13^{ac})
Pal. lat. 910 (2.25.42/41)
Urb. lat. 641 (1.13.15/14^{ac})

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[37] W. R. Smyth, *Thesaurus Criticus ad Sexti Propertii Textum* (*Mnemosyne* Supplement 12; Leiden, 1970) offers in 'Excursus I' a conspectus of the wholesale reorderings of all four books by Gruppe, Carutti, and Richmond.

[38] In these lists of dislocations, corrections made by clearly later hands have been ignored; 'ac' indicates a correction that at least could have been made by the scribe himself, though many even of these were undoubtedly made by later hands as well.

Often these dislocations have obvious palaeographical causes. The reversal of
4.7.84–5, for example, surely occurred because of the presence of *hic* in 83 and 85,
the reversal of 3.1.13–14 because of the presence of *meas* in 12 and *Musas* in 14, the
reversal of 2.25.41–2 because of the repetition of *uidistis* in 41, 42, 43, and 44, and
the reversal of 1.13.14–15 because of the presence of *uidi ego* in 13 and 14. Some
manuscripts offer two examples:

> Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Scrin. 139.4
>   (1.6.16/15 and 2.27.4/3)[39]
> Oxford, Bodleian Library lat. class. e 3 (2.7.3/2; 4.3.53/52)
> Pal. lat. 1652 (3.3.32/31^{ac}; 3.11.35/34^{ac})
> Vat. lat. 5177 (1.5.19/18^{ac}; 4.1.89/88^{ac})

A very few have three or more examples:

> Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Diez B. Sant. 52 (three examples:
>   2.25.36/35^{ac}; 2.28.39/38^{ac}; 4.6.55/54^{ac})
> Venice, Bibl. del Museo Civico Correr 549 (six examples:
>   2.7.3/2^{ac}; 2.13.20/19^{ac}; 2.28.40/39^{ac}; 3.24.9/8^{ac}; 4.3.70/69^{ac}; 4.10.9/8^{ac})

Again palaeographical causes are frequently evident. For example, the reversal of
2.27.3–4 in the source from which Hamburg Scrin. 139.4 inherited it surely arose
from the presence of *quaeritis* in 2 and 3 and of *quae sit* in 4, while the displacement
of 2.25.35–6 arose from the presence of *quod* in 34 and 36, and that of 2.13.19–20
from the presence of *mei* in 18 and 20.

On occasion single lines have been displaced to a new location within the same
elegy. Sometimes this happens because a scribe initially skips a line, then returns to it:

> Brussels, Bibl. Royale 14638 (1.6.14, 16–18, 15, 19^{ac})
> El Escorial g.iii.12 (2.18.17, 19–20, 18^{ac})
> Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Scrin. 139.4
>   (4.7.13, 15–18, 14, 19^{ac})

Sometimes the scribe copies a line both in its proper place and in a later position:

> Rome, Bibl. Casanatense 15 (3.6.33, 24, 34)

Sometimes the line appears out of place through anticipation:

> Florence, Bibl. Laurenziana pl. 33,14 (1.18.2, 5, 3^{ac})
> Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek I.Lips. F.43 (2.21.4, 11, 5^{ac})
> Oxford, Bodleian Library lat. class. e 3 (4.8.73, 80, 74)
> Parma, Bibl. Palatina 716 (4.9.16, 19, 17^{ac})
> Ravenna, Bibl. Classense 277 (4.8.39, 44, 40^{ac})
> Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 224 (1.8.42, 46, 43)
> Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 3153 (2.12.15, 20, 16^{ac})[40]

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[39] Of these two dislocations the second is certainly inherited, either from L or from its source,
and the first may be as well; 1.6.15 was lacking in A and in Petrarch's manuscript, so that the
order 16/15 could have arisen from 15 being restored in an incorrect or unclear manner.

[40] In this case the intrusive line was originally written in an erasure over a version of 16 itself!

Of course whole couplets can be displaced as well. Nearly every case that involves the displacement of adjacent couplets can be explained easily through some palaeographical cause such as homoearchon or homoeoteleuton:

Carpentras, Bibl. Inguimbertine 361 (2.13.19–20 and 21–2 reversed[ac]
[*mei* 18,20])
Florence, Bibl. Laurenziana pl. 33,14 (4.8.69–70 and 71–2 reversed
[*Lygdam*- 68,70])
Florence, Bibl. Riccardiana 633 (4.3.3–4 and 5–6 reversed[ac]
[*meus* 2, *meis* 4])
Padua, Bibl. Capitolare C.77 (3.11.51–2 and 53–4 reversed)
Rome, Bibl. Vallicelliana F.93 (4.2.11–12 and 13–14 reversed[ac]
[*Vertumn*- 10,12])
Venice, Bibl. Marciana 4208 (1.8.23–4 and 25–6 reversed[ac]
[*mea est* 24,26]; 4.9.13–14 and 15–16 reversed[ac] [*boues* 12,16])
Barb. lat. 23 (2.15.25–6 and 27–8 reversed[ac] [*dies* 24,26];
4.11.49–50 and 51–2 reversed[ac] [*metu* 48, *meo* 50])
Pal. lat. 910 (2.8.7–8 and 9–10 reversed[ac] [*est* 6,8])
Vat. lat. 3188 (2.24.37–8 and 39–40 reversed[ac] [*eras* 36,38])
Vat. lat. 5174 (2.14.5–6 and 7–8 reversed)

But displacement can extend beyond contiguous couplets. Sometimes two or more consecutive lines have been displaced to a non-contiguous site within the same elegy. This often happens through anticipation:

Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek Voss. lat. O.13 (2.33.7, 10, 8–9, 11[ac])
London, British Library Egerton 3027 (2.24.30, 33, 31–2, 34[ac])
London, British Library Add. 10387 (3.20.14, 27–8, 15)
Munich, Universitätsbibliothek Cim 22 (4.6.32, 37–8, 33[ac])
Rome, Bibl. Casanatense 15 (3.17.5, 12–13, 6[ac])
Ottob. lat. 2003 (3.2.20, 22–3, 21, 24[ac])

Sometimes larger groups of lines have been displaced elsewhere within the same elegy:

Florence, Bibl. Laurenziana pl. 38,37 (3.11.51, 53–5, 52, 56[ac])
Grenoble, Bibl. Municipale 549 (3.19.11, 14–16, 13[ac])
Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek Voss. lat. Q.117 (2.3.32, 34–6, 33[ac])
Padua, Bibl. Capitolare C.77 (3.1.14, 19–24, 15–18, 25)
Rome, Bibl. Vallicelliana F.93 (4.9.3, 17–18, 13–16, 19–26, 4)[41]

A comparable disturbance in the text of 2.1 in Florence, Bibl. Nazionale Centrale Magliabecchi VII 1162 will be mentioned below.

Sometimes lines or couplets are repeated in the wrong location, presumably because a scribe initially returns to the wrong place in his exemplar:

Genoa, Bibl. Universitaria E.III.29 (2.12.13 repeated after 16)
Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek I.Lips. F.43 (2.13.19 repeated after 20)

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[41] The scribe subsequently deleted this muddled version of 4.9 and began again from scratch.

Paris, Bibl. Nationale lat. 8237 (2.18.28 repeated after 31[ac])
Parma, Bibl. Palatina 716 (3.24.3–4 repeated after 20[ac])
Rome, Bibl. Casanatense 15 (2.16.46–7 repeated after 53[ac])
Wroclaw, Bibl. Uniwersytecka AKC 1948 197 KN (3.13.23–4 repeated after 34)

Sometimes displacement is combined with omission and or repetition.
Displacement combined with omission has occurred in:

London, British Library Harley 2550 (2.30.14–21 = 14, 19–20,
  17–18, 19, 16, 21)
Oxford, Bodleian Library lat. class. e 3 (2.20.20–7 = 20, 25, 21–4, 27)
Venice, Bibl. Marciana 4208 (3.22.27–31 = 27, 30–1, 28[ac])

Displacement and repetition, without omission, are exhibited in:

Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Diez B. Sant. 53 (3.22.39–42 = 39, 41, 40–1, 42)

Repetition and omission, without displacement, are exhibited in:

Barb. lat. 23 (1.9.28–31 = 28, *lacuna*, 30, *lacuna*, 30, 31)
Vat. lat. 3274 (2.10.18–21 = 18–19, 18, 21)

Many of the dislocations mentioned above have been corrected, either by the scribe
himself or by a later hand. Such correction, however, does not guarantee that a copy
of a corrected manuscript would incorporate those corrections, nor does the fact that
a dislocation has been corrected guarantee that it has been corrected 'correctly' or
successfully; botched correction can then lead to further disruption through
additional attempts at correction. Three manuscripts illustrate this phenomenon:

Florence, Bibl. Riccardiana 633:
  2.9.42–7 before correction = 42, 45–6, 43–4, 47
          after correction = 42, 43, 45–6, 44, 47
Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek Voss. lat. Q.117:
  4.1.87–91 before correction = 87, 90, 89, 88, 91;
          after correction = 87, 88, 90, 89, 91
Padua, Bibl. Capitolare C.77:
  2.29.7–13 before correction = 7, 9, 12, 11, 10, 13
          after correction = 7, 10, 9, 12, 11, 10, 13

Sometimes dislocations have occurred between two adjacent poems, presumably
because a scribe returned to the wrong point in his exemplar, missing the correct
location by a folio or two. Most of these involve single couplets. Sometimes the lines
are dislocated through anticipation:

Pal. lat. 910 (3.5.2, 3.6.6–7, 3.5.3[ac])
Vat. lat. 1611 (3.2.7, 3.3.8–9, 3.2.8[ac])
Vat. lat. 5177 (1.16.15, 1.17.15–16, 1.16.16[ac])

Sometimes the lines are accidentally repeated in a new location:

Florence, Bibl. Laurenziana Acquisti e doni 124 (4.9.6, 4.8.59–60, 4.9.7^{ac})
Florence, Bibl. Riccardiana 633 (4.9.6, 4.8.59–60, 4.9.7^{ac})

Rarely the lines appear only in their new location:

Pesaro, Bibl. Oliveriana 1167 (1.9.16, 1.8.43–4, 1.9.17^{ac})

Some migrations between contiguous poems involve chunks of text rather than single couplets. In British Library Add. 23766, copied by the scholar-poet Mattia Canali, lines 2.7.13–20 appear at the end of 2.8. In Florence, Bibl. Laurenziana pl. 38,37 elegies 3.19 and 3.20 have been shuffled together so that after 3.19.19 we find 3.20.1–26, then 3.19.20–8, then 3.20.27–30. In Florence, Bibl. Nazionale Centrale II.IX.125 the order of elegies 2.4 and 2.5 has been reversed.
But dislocations do not always occur between contiguous poems; for example:

Vat. lat. 5177 (3.8.37, 3.11.34–6, 3.8.38, etc.)

The most difficult to explain are the dislocations that have occurred between books; for example:

Florence, Bibl. Nazionale Centrale Magliabecchi VII 1162
  (4.4.1, 3.1.2, 4.4.2^{ac})
Venice, Bibl. del Museo Civico Correr 549 (2.3.26, 1.16.11–13, 2.3.27^{ac})
Naples, Biblioteca Oratoriana dei Gerolamini M.C.F. 3–15
  (1.5.2, 4.9.31 [in the form *huc ruit in siccam comesta puluere*], 1.5.3^{ac})

Dislocations have also taken place over a series of poems within a single book:

Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek Voss. lat. O.81:
  Book 2 = 1.1–14.7, 16.48–18.35, 14.8–16.14, 18.36 *ad fin.*
Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek B.P.L. 133A:
  Book 1 = 1.1–6.11; 8.12–9.28; 6.12–8.11; 11.27–14.2; 9.29–11.26; 14.3 *ad fin.*
Salamanca, Bibl. Universitaria 85:
  Book 1 = 1.1–6.20; 8.25–10.10; 6.21–8.24; 12.17–14.24; 10.11–12.16;
    15.1 *ad fin.*
Florence, Bibl. Laurenziana pl. 33,15^{pc}:
  Book 1 = 1.1–6.20; 7.1–8.24; 12.17–20; 8.27–10.10; 6.21–36; 11.1–14.24;
    10.11–30; 15.1 *ad fin.*
Florence, Bibl. Nazionale Magliabecchi VII 1162:
  Book 2 = 1.1–16, 65–78, 17–64; 2.2.1–6.31; a *lacuna* of one line;
    20.25–22.35; 8.39–20.24; a *lacuna* of one line; 6.32–8.38; 22.39 *ad fin.*
Cambridge, University Library 3394:
  Book 1 = 1.1–3.46; 6.1–7.26; 4.1–5.32; 9.25–11.20; 8.1–9.24 (without 8.7–8,
    25–6, and 43–4^{ac}); 11.21 *ad fin.*
  Book 2 = 1.1–9.52; 13.1–58; 10.1–12.24; 15.29–16.30; 14.1–15.28;
    16.31 *ad fin.*
  Book 4 = 1.1–7.54 (7.55–82 are omitted); 7.83–8.36; 7.31–82; 8.37 *ad fin.*

The first three examples unquestionably involve disruption in the arrangement of folios in the exemplar or its source. In Leiden Voss. lat. O.81 the passage

2.16.48–18.35 totals 64 lines (including two lines as space for two titles), while
2.14.8–16.14 totals 95 (including two lines for two titles); three folios containing
about 32 lines per page apparently became detached in the source of the exemplar
and were restored in the wrong order, while the side containing the 33 lines
2.16.15–47 was somehow missed completely. An exemplar with 32 lines to the page
also lies behind the disruptions in Leiden BPL 133A, where (including single spaces
for titles) four blocks of 64 lines have been shuffled. An exemplar with 33 or 34 lines
to the page lies behind the disruptions in Salamanca Bibl. Universitaria 85, where the
four blocks of lines that have been shuffled respectively represent 68, 68, 66, and 67
lines (including a single space for titles). The disordered arrangement of lines in
Laurenziana pl. 33,15 is unique in that it is not inherited from the exemplar. The
scribe copied the lines in their normal order but used a series of signs and notes in
the margins to indicate the order of lines that I have noted above; he seems to have
found this arrangement in another manuscript, and here we have a scribe 'correcting'
the normal order in accordance with a disordered exemplar—another potential
source of dislocations in a manuscript. The dislocation of folios could lie behind at
least some of the disorder in Magliabecchi VII 1162; lines 2.6.32–8.38 and
2.20.25–22.35 represent blocks of 69 and 72 lines respectively (again allowing for
titles). The same might be true for Cambridge 3394 as well. In Book 4 7.31–82 and
7.83–4.8.36 are equal blocks of 52 lines each if two spaces are allowed for the title
before 4.8.[42] In Book 2 13.1–58, 10.1–12.24, 15.29–16.30, and 14.1–15.28 are,
respectively, blocks of 58, 58, 57, and 61 lines (allowing as always for titles). The
lengths of the blocks in Book 1 are even more irregular but there is a remote
possibility that they could still represent the contents of individual folios; 6.1–7.26,
4.1–5.32, 9.25–11.20, and 8.1–9.24 contain, respectively, 63, 61, 56, and 71 lines
(allowing again a single space for titles).

There is one example of extreme disruption occurring between books.

> Florence, Bibl. Nazionale Centrale Magliabecchi VII 1164:
>   1.1.1–16.38; 2.13.1–15.8; 1.16.39–2.6.16 (with 1.16.46–7 omitted);
>   2.15.9–16.52; 2.6.17–12.24; 2.16.53 *ad fin.*

Here again it is possible that leaves were disrupted in the exemplar or an ancestor, in
this case one with perhaps 25 lines to the page: the two blocks 2.13.1–15.8 and
2.15.9–16.52 represent, respectively, 100 and 99 lines (two pairs of leaves reversed);
1.16.39–2.6.16 and 2.6.17–12.24 are also close to being multiples of 25, at 395 lines
and 201 lines respectively (always allowing one space for each title).

While the vast majority of dislocations are accidental, dislocation by conjecture is
not to be dismissed completely, and indeed seems to have occurred in Oxford,
Bodleian Library Add. B 55. Here a corrector has written the letters 'b' and 'c'
respectively alongside lines 1.20.51 and 52. This apparently means that the lines are to
be moved to after the line marked 'a', namely 1.21.8. In addition, '*vacat*' has been
written in the margin to remove 1.21.9–10 from their usual location, and they have
been added by the same hand after 1.22.8. The resulting arrangement in 1.21 and 22
runs as follows (this version incorporates the scribal errors of the manuscript; 1.21 is

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[42] Heyworth (above, n. 16), 67 makes the interesting observation that 4.7.31–82 occupy a
complete folio in v (his T); it might be added that 4.7.83–8.36 do as well. For the descent of
Cambridge 3394 and other manuscripts from a copy of v, see Butrica (above, n. 16), 100–3; it
would appear, however, that the equivalency in 4.7.31–8.36 is purely coincidental, since the other
blocks of lines shifted in Cambridge 3394 do not match the contents of folios in v.

run on from the end of 1.20, which I have not reproduced):

> Tu qui consortem properas euadere casum,
>   Miles ab Etruscis saucius aggeribus,
> Qui nostro gemitu turgentia lumina torques,
>   Pars ego sum uestrae proxima militiae.
> Sic te seruato ut possint gaudere parentes,
>   Nec soror acta tuis sentiat e lacrimis:
> Gallum per medios ereptum Caesaris enses
>   Effugere ignotas non potuisse manus.
> His, o Galle, tuos monitus seruabis amores,
>   Formosum Nymphis credere uisus Hylan.
>   AD TULLUM
> Qualis et unde genus, qui sint mihi, Tulle, Penates,
>   Quaeris pro nostra semper amicitia.
> Si Perusina tibi patriae sunt nota sepulcra,
>   Italiae duris funera temporibus,
> Cum Romana suos egit discordia ciues,
>   Sit mihi praecipue puluis Etrusca dolor:
> Tu proiecta mei propessa es membra parentis,[43]
>   Tu nullo miseri contigis ossa solo.
> Proxima supposito contingens Vmbria campo
>   Me genuit terris fertilis uberibus,
> Et quaecumque super dispersa inuenerit ossa
>   Montibus Etruscis, haec sciet esse mea.

These dislocations (which incorporate 1.21.1–8 within 1.20 as a single elegy and make the final couplet of 1.21 the final couplet of 1.22) are not found in any extant manuscript and therefore could be conjectural; if that is the case, however, their author has not considered what Gallus' unsuccessful escape has to do with Hylas and the Nymphs, or why Propertius in his *sphragis* to the *Cynthia* should indicate that his bones are scattered over the mountains of Etruria.

Many of the dislocations discussed above have been corrected by the scribes who created them; but the fact that many were not corrected at all, or corrected only by much later hands, shows that such correction was a matter of chance. In addition, the lines that have been displaced sometimes appear in the correct position as well as in the incorrect one, and a corrector would need to know which occurrence should be deleted. In both of these situations correction is easier if other copies are available for consultation, but this would not have been the case for most of the Middle Ages. Thus a variety of circumstances could have conspired to keep a freshly disordered text in that condition.

The dislocations in the surviving manuscripts that I have surveyed in these pages do not of course prove the validity of any of the transpositions proposed by modern critics; but they do show that the related phenomena of omission and dislocation are significantly more common than most imagine. They are so common that transposition can never be rejected out of hand as a possible remedy for a textual difficulty (any proposed transposition, however, should be explicable in terms of recognized types of dislocation), and they are sometimes so violent that even extreme transpositions cannot simply be dismissed as impossible. Some important considertions must be remembered in this regard. One is that, because the Propertian tradition demonstrably depends upon a single archetype, any transpositions effected

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[43] The manuscript originally read *propinqui*, but the hand that has introduced the transpositions discussed here has also introduced *parentis* as a correction.

in that archetype or inherited from its ancestors will be present in all its descendants, so that arguments based upon 'the agreement of all the manuscripts' become meaningless. Moreover, as was noted above, the number of Propertian manuscripts in active existence after late antiquity must have been small indeed; this scarcity of copies would have made it difficult or even impossible for errors in the order of lines to be corrected through collation of other copies. It must also be borne in mind that these data about dislocations derive from partial collations that covered a little more than one half of the text;[44] this means that, while I have recorded all or nearly all of the more drastic dislocations that involve more than one elegy, I have surely missed a number of dislocations within the elegies that I did not collate in full. Those who express confidence in the state of the Propertian text should reflect seriously upon the consequences of these data. Lines do indeed move about within a poem; they can move from one poem to a contiguous one; they can move from one poem to a non-contiguous poem in the same book or in a different book; and whole stretches of text can be shuffled about like a deck of cards, usually within a single book but on occasion between books. Many scribes effect no dislocations at all; many effect at least a few; and some effect a good many. It may well be that one or two stages in the ancestry of our archetype were entrusted to the sort of scribe who is inclined to omit and dislocate. In any case, such dislocations happen so often that it would be naive to assume that none, or even only a few, occurred in the twelve centuries of copying that separate our earliest manuscripts from Propertius himself. It is necessary to face the possibility that the archetype or one or more of its ancestors could have been a manuscript like Cambridge 3394 or Magliabecchi VII 1164. One can only imagine what theories of Propertian composition would arise from interpreting the elegies as these manuscripts arrange them, or the arguments that would be used to refute anyone who tried to restore through transposition the order with which we are familiar.

Since all editions accept at least a handful of transpositions, I shall offer only two examples, both in 3.10. The first is Barber's unduly hesitant proposal to put 17–18, *et pete, qua polles, ut sit tibi forma perennis/ inque meum semper stent tua regna caput*, after 12. In 11 Propertius begins to offer directions to Cynthia on the observance of her birthday. In the order of lines given by the paradosis, he tells her first to rise and pray to the gods (11–12), then to wash her face and arrange her hair (13–14), then to put on the robe in which he first saw her and to cover her head with flowers (15–16), then to 'ask that your beauty, the source of your power, should be enduring and that your dominion should stand forever over my head' (17–18), after which the instructions turn toward the celebration of an intimate *symposion* that night. But how is Cynthia to seek or ask for this enduring beauty and eternal domination over Propertius? It is surely not from the passing beauty of the flowers that are to deck her head, or from dragging out an old dress again and again, or from washing her face and arranging her hair. In fact what she is told to seek could only come from the gods, and 17–18 are surely the continuation of 12, where she is told to entreat the gods but not what she is to ask of them. Here 17–18 were originally omitted because of homoeoteleuton, the similar line-endings *pennis* 11 and *p(er)ennis* 17.

The directions for the evening's festivities also involve a dislocation. Those instructions include sacrifices at the altars that will illuminate the house with their propitious light (19–20), then dinner and a night of drinking and unguents (21–2);

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[44] The poems collated were I.1–2, 11–13, 17, 20–2; II.1–3, 8–13, 19–20, 24–34; III.1–5, 11, 13, 22; IV.1–2, 6-9, 11, representing 2238 lines, or about 55 per cent of the text.

then they take a distinctly raucous turn, with much piping, nocturnal dances, verbal *nequitia*, late-night *conuicia*, and noise spilling out into the alley (23–6), after which the rolling of the dice in 27–8 to see which is more in love with the other seems a distinct anticlimax (*sit sors et nobis talorum interprete iactu/ quem grauius* [Beroaldus: *grauibus* O] *pennis uerberet ille puer*). Surely this activity, and the lines that contain it, belong in the earlier, quieter part of the evening, with the food and drink and unguents, not with the near-riot of 23–6, and the original location of 27–8 was after 21–2: *sit mensae ratio noxque inter pocula currat/ et crocino nares murreus ungat onyx,/ sit sors et nobis talorum interprete iactu,* etc. With the transposition of 27–8, the final eight lines of the elegy run smoothly as well:

> tibia nocturnis succumbat rauca choreis
>   et sint nequitiae libera uerba tuae
> dulciaque ingratos adimant conuiuia somnos:
>   publica uicinae perstrepat aura uiae.
> cum fuerit multis exacta trientibus hora
>   noctis et instituet sacra ministra Venus,
> annua soluamus thalamo sollemnia nostro
>   natalisque tui sic peragamus iter.

The closing section, 'When the hour has been passed with many pints', follows more effectively after the injunction that the party should last long and loud than it did after the suggestion to roll dice. Here it is homoearchon that explains the original omission that led to the dislocation (*sit* begins both 21 and 27).

The concept of interpolation, whose most prominent advocates have been Günther Jachmann and Ulrich Knoche, has fallen—unjustifiably—into equal or even greater disrepute. And yet interpolation has demonstrably taken place in the Propertian tradition at a prearchetypal stage; the evidence is lines 1.2.1–2, which are also printed in editions as 4.5.55–6 because an early reader of Propertius recalled them while reading 4.5 and inscribed them in the margin of a copy from which the archetype derives. Interpolation has also taken place in the Renaissance tradition. Ovid's celebrated lines at *Ars Amatoria* 2.277–8 about gold and the corruption it engenders made their way into Propertius 3.13 not only in manuscripts but even in printed editions.[45] In British Library Harley 2778 they are found after 3.13.46; in Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek Dc 133 they can be found at the bottom of a page, after 3.13.48, awaiting incorporation; and in Grenoble, Bibl. Municipale 549 they are again at the bottom of a page, but the rubricator has marked them for insertion after 3.13.50. Pesaro, Bibl. Oliveriana 1167 has *qui sapit in tacito gaudeat ipse sinu* (= [Tib.] 3.19.8) incorporated between 2.25.29 and 30 (presumably this had originally been adduced as a parallel passage because of its similarity to 30, *in tacito cohibe gaudia clausa sinu*). In addition, Barb. lat. 23 has a spurious couplet of unknown origin marked for insertion between 1.3.33 and 34 (*et subito aduentu palluit illa meo;/ mox, ut erat, neglecta comis et pectore nudo*).[46]

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[45] An amusing reflection of this occurs in the *Patrologia Latina* edition of Petrus Cantor's *Verbum abbreviatum* at section 60 (= *PL* CCV 84–5). Here we find 'Nunc impletum est poetae illud: *aurea nunc vere sunt saecula, plurimus auro/venit honos./auro perficitur, quidquid captatur inique,/ nemoque praetenso munere vana rogat*'. The editor attributes this to 'PROPERT. 1. III, elegia 11', having consulted, it seems, some edition which incorporated the Ovidian lines and numbered 3.13 as 11 (the Delphin edition of 1685 is the most likely candidate; I have not, however, identified the source of *auro perficitur . . . vana rogat*).

[46] Heyworth (above, n. 16), 76 indicates that v (his T) contains 'A spurious couplet, written vertically in the far margin, for insertion between I ix 26 and 27'; the lines are in fact 1.9.27 (with

Perhaps even more significant is the fact that interpolation and dislocation have demonstrably occurred in the medieval tradition of Propertius. Interpolation and dislocation are most likely to happen when an active readership annotates texts. Activity of this sort seemed unlikely so long as it was thought that Propertius was virtually unread in the Middle Ages; but, while it is true that circulation remained quite limited geographically (Orléans and Paris) and that interest was equally limited chronologically (the twelfth and thirteenth centuries), it deserves notice that every medieval witness to the text of Propertius reveals, especially through annotations, precisely the sort of scholarly interest that can lead to transpositions and inter-polations.[47] The most important documentation of this activity is undoubtedly the Propertian extracts found in the thirteenth-century florilegium partially contained in Bibl. Vat. Reg. lat. 2120.[48] Not only have these extracts experienced at least two separate phases of medieval annotation; the nature of the interventions shows quite dramatically how easily transposition and interpolation can occur, and even catches the process itself in action. The interpolation involves an obviously medieval couplet that has been included between two consecutive authentic lines, 2.33.33 and 34, with no indication that it is not by Propertius: *omnis amans cecus, non est amor arbiter equs,/ nam deforme pecus iudicat esse decus*, 'every lover is blind, love is not a fair judge, for it deems an ugly beast to be a beauty'. Presumably these lines are now found here because they were added to the margins during an earlier stage in the transmission of this florilegium in order to confirm or comment upon a sentiment expressed in one or another of the authentic lines. But the interpolated lines also document the phenomenon of dislocation, for they do not occupy their intended position. This can be argued through logical analysis. The lines concern the power of love to warp male vision (making a *deforme pecus* appear to be a *decus*: the oenophile's equivalent of the phenomenon known colloquially in North America as beer-goggles), and therefore they do not belong tucked inside a couplet on the deleterious effects of wine upon women's beauty and sexual judgment (*uino forma perit, uino corrumpitur aetas,/ uino saepe suum nescit amica uirum*, 'through wine beauty withers, through wine youth is spoilt, through wine a girlfriend often doesn't know her man'). More importantly, this logical analysis is confirmed by the physical evidence of the manuscript itself, for at the end of the hexameter of the interpolated couplet the scribe has written ' . **b** . ' This is evidently intended to correspond to the ' . **a** . ' found above at the end of Propertius 2.14.18 *scilicet insano nemo in amore uidet* ('of course no one in a mad love-affair can see'), a line which refers explicitly to the warped vision of those in love. The inescapable conclusion is that, in an earlier stage of transmission, the interpolated couplet originally stood as a comment on 2.14.18, then was displaced in the copying of Reg. lat. 2120 itself. It should be observed, incidentally, that this case shows that an interpolated passage that originated as a gloss need not be found in immediate proximity to the passage that it glossed, only in the general vicinity.

In this instance we have seen an interpolation and a dislocation that have already occurred; but Reg. lat. 2120 also shows several potential interpolations, of words and

tibi rather than *ubi non* and *subcludere* rather than *seducere*, as in the version in the text) and 1.9.30 (with *assuduas* where the text has *assuduas*, corrected to *assiduas*), and it is uncertain whether they were intended as an interpolation or as corrections.

[47] For Propertius in the Middle Ages, see Butrica (above, n. 16), 20–30.

[48] See now the fine facsimile printed in M. Buonocore, *Properzio nei codici della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana* (Assisi, 1995) as pl. XVIII, showing f. 21ᵛ, the first of the two sides containing extracts from Propertius, where all the phenomena discussed here can be observed.

of an entire line, waiting to occur. Propertius 2.15.30 has been glossed with the dactylic pentameter *est in amore modus non habuisse modum*; if Reg. lat. 2120 itself was ever copied, an unwary scribe might well think that this was an additional line of Propertius and incorporate it, just as the scribe of Reg. lat. 2120 incorporated the medieval couplet. Most of the glosses that consist of a single word could not be mistaken for corrections and so would be incorporated only by the most careless or inattentive scribes (and we would detect their presence easily). But a gloss which happens to be metrically equivalent to the word that it glosses is hardly distinguishable from a correction and therefore is not only particularly liable to be incorporated but is also particularly difficult to detect; the substitution of *noceat* for *feriat* in 3.16.14 discussed earlier is a case in point. Reg. lat. 2120 contains one example, *tarde* glossing *sero* in 2.25.28. This process of glossing and citing parallel passages is of course not a medieval innovation but a continuation of a practice rooted in antiquity; if we can detect so much actual and potential interpolation and dislocation in the 43 lines of this thirteenth-century florilegium, we can hardly reject out of hand the possibility of interpolation and dislocation in all of the rolls and codices that constitute the ancestors of the archetype of our tradition.

I believe that such interpolation has substantially affected the text of Propertius only in Book 2 and, to a lesser extent, Book 3 (Book 1 is the least corrupted section of the text in any case, and Book 4, being at the end of the collection, was reached and explored thoroughly by only the hardiest of readers). There is nothing sinister or diabolical about the process, nor does it represent anyone's attempt to 'adulterate' the text of Propertius or to pass off his own work as that of Propertius; the interpolated lines were brought into the text not by those who originally wrote them in the margins but by later copyists unable to distinguish clearly between original and additional material but obviously anxious to preserve whatever might be by Propertius. These interpolations can be classified in two principal categories. One is the kind that R. J. Tarrant has called 'collaborative', in which the interpolator vies with the author by trying his hand at the same or a similar theme or offers a comment upon the content[49] (and it must be remembered that even in the twelfth century any reader educated enough and classically oriented enough to be reading Propertius would have been capable of composing elegiac couplets). The second type comprises quotations of other authors adduced in the margin like the parallel passages of modern commentaries. Since such passages naturally tend to bear some resemblance to the passage that they are glossing, they often blend in easily with their surroundings and can be difficult to detect. The degree of interpolation that I imagine need not involve any more than two stages of substantial annotation, one in antiquity, one in the Middle Ages.

Examples of 'collaborative interpolation' are apparent right from the beginning of Book 2. The opening lines give a breathless account of how everything about Cynthia, even her disordered hair, gives rise to poetry. The couplet that follows, 2.1.15–16, is less a fitting climax than a flat summary: *seu quicquid fecit siue est quodcumque locuta,/ maxima de nihilo nascitur historia*, 'whether she's done anything or whether she's said anything, a great big story is born from nothing'. Moreover, two words in the pentameter cannot have been used by Propertius with the reference apparently intended here. One is *nihilo*; Cynthia's clothes and looks and sleepy eyes are far from

[49] R. J. Tarrant, 'Toward a Typology of Interpolation in Latin Poetry', *TAPA* 117 (1987), 281–98 and 'The Reader as Author: Collaborative Interpolation in Latin Poetry' in J. N. Grant (ed.), *Editing Greek and Latin Texts* (New York, 1989), 121–62.

being 'nothing' to him—they are the source of his poetic talent (2.1.4 *ingenium nobis ipsa puella facit*). This is the perspective of an outsider: Propertius' poetry is simply a big fuss about nothing, a mountain made out of an erotic molehill. The other impossible word is *historia*, which in classical Latin had no meaning that Propertius could have used to define his poetry.[50] W. R. Smyth's *Thesaurus Criticus* (above, n. 37) reports that, according to E. C. H. Heydenreich, the couplet was first deleted by O. F. Gruppe.

Four such couplets, probably all of medieval origin, can be found in 2.3.25–32. Here the chief cause of suspicion is the conspicuous incoherence of the passage. All is reasonably clear as far as 21–2, where Cynthia is said to esteem her own compositions over those of Corinna (and probably those of Erinna as well, if Propertius wrote *carminaque Erinnae non putat aequa suis*[51]). All is still well in 23–4 (which are unquestionably by Propertius since a grammarian named Macrobius cites the pentameter under his name). Here the poet wrote the lines that inspired the interpolators, asserting that Cupid sneezed a favourable omen when Cynthia's life began (*nam* [Naples, BN IV.F.19, Ayrmann: *num* X FP, *non* N] *tibi nascenti primis, mea uita, diebus/ candidus argutum sternuit omen Amor*). The following three couplets then offer three completely different, incompatible, and mutually exclusive elaborations of the themes embodied in this couplet, namely Cynthia, beauty, divinity, and birth. For the author of 25–6, Cynthia's desirability is a gift from the gods and not the legacy of her mother (*haec tibi contulerint caelestia munera diui,/ haec tibi ne matrem forte dedisse putes*, 'the gods conferred these heavenly gifts upon you; don't think that maybe your mother gave them to you'). Not only is the pentameter hopelessly banal; I can imagine no reason why Propertius should want to offend this woman (who is mentioned in the authentic works at 2.6.11 and 2.15.20) and perhaps her daughter as well by pointing out so emphatically that Cynthia's looks were not inherited. The author of 27–8, on the other hand, did not suggest that Cynthia's beauty was a gift of the gods but that it was not the result of normal human gestation, thus implying that her mother had slept with a god (*non, non humani partus sunt talia dona:/ ista decem menses non peperere bona*, 'no, such gifts do not belong to human parentage: ten months did not give birth to that treasure'). Here a medieval origin is suggested by two features, the apparent attempt to rhyme *dona* and *bona* (possible only when classical quantities had been forgotten) and the repeated *non, non*, which reflects the use of the word's descendants in the Romance languages rather than the style of Augustan poetry (commentators offer as parallels only the colloquial Terence, *Phormio* 303 and Catullus 14.16; in both cases the reduplicated *non* modifies *sic*). The author of 29–30 (and probably of 31–2 as well, since the two couplets seem to cohere with each other though not with the context on either side) has yet a third conception, Cynthia as born to be the first Roman 'girl' to sleep with Jupiter (*gloria Romanis una es tu nata puellis:/ Romana accumbes* [*accumbens* O] *prima puella Ioui,/ nec semper nobiscum humana cubilia uises:/ post Helenam haec terris forma secunda redit*, 'you have been born a unique glory to Roman girls: you will be the first Roman girl that sleeps with Jupiter, and you will not always visit human bedrooms with us: this beauty returns to earth second after Helen' [?]). Here the author has not thought through precisely how Cynthia bedding Jupiter will bring 'glory' to the other Roman girls who had not previously and still have not been thought worthy of divine fornication, or how 'this

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[50] The word has a different sense in 1.15.24, *tu quoque uti fieres nobilis historia*, where it means 'legend' or 'myth'.
[51] For this reading, see Butrica (above, n. 16), 77–8.

beauty' of Cynthia's can be said to 'return'; the relevance of Helen, who did not sleep with Jupiter or indeed with any god, leaves me utterly baffled, but she was no doubt suggested to the interpolator by the fact that she is the subject of 35–40.

A similar interpolation in Book 3 is 3.13.23–4, *hoc genus infidum nuptarum, hic nulla puella/ nec fida Euadne nec pia Penelope*, 'this race of brides is faithless, here no girl is neither a faithful Evadne nor a devoted Penelope'. Not only is the writing distinctly flat (and problematic because of the *nec . . . nec* that must be taken as *aut . . . aut*); while it has clearly been suggested by the disappointment with Roman women expressed elsewhere in the elegy, the point that the couplet makes (that there are simply no devoted and faithful brides in Rome) is not really the same as the one that Propertius is making (that luxury has corrupted *all* women and makes them demand money for sexual favours). Moreover, the couplet stands as an irrelevant interruption between the two obviously parallel sections 15–22 and 25ff., both introduced by *felix*.

But some other passages which appear to have been interpolated into the text of Propertius seem to be indisputably ancient and must therefore have been added to an ancient copy. One of these is the much-discussed 'Virgilian' section at 2.34.65–84. But this passage must first be separated into its two component parts, of which one is the celebrated couplet 65–6, *cedite Romani scriptores, cedite Grai:/ nescioquid maius nascitur Iliade*, 'out of the way, writers of Rome and of Greece; something bigger than the *Iliad* is arising'. The lines are unquestionably by Propertius, but they do not seem to have been written to stand here. Donatus, who quotes them in his life of Virgil (and thus provides the source from which they were interpolated into the text, whether in antiquity or in the Middle Ages), implies that they were Propertius' reaction to the tremendous buzz that accompanied Virgil's reported inception of the *Aeneid*: '*Aeneidos uixdum coeptae tanta exstitit fama ut Sextus Propertius non dubitauerit sic praedicare, Cedite,* etc.', 'when the *Aeneid* was scarcely begun, such talk of it arose that Sextus Propertius did not hesitate to proclaim, "Out of the way", etc.' Donatus' *praedicare* (rather than, say, *scribere*) is entirely consistent with the couplet emerging as a spontaneous utterance, no doubt in the context of some banquet or recitation. Since Virgil had only just begun the epic, Propertius could not have been appreciating the greatness or criticising the length of a poem that did not yet exist. Rather, as Donatus says, the words are a reaction to the *fama* that spread as soon as the news was out that Virgil was beginning to write it. Presumably that *fama* predicted the world's greatest masterpiece ever or something close to it, and it is to this advance publicity that Propertius responds: the predictions of its greatness are so exaggerated that, if they are true, it will surpass every work of every writer. The lines, then, are a humorous, perhaps even ironic or sarcastic, reaction to the noise—emanating surely from Maecenas' circle in the first instance and perhaps also from the general direction of the Palatine—that greeted the announcement of Virgil's first work on the *Aeneid*; they have nothing to do with the praise of the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* that follows or with the contrast of Propertius and Virgil that precedes.

But 2.34.67–84, the second component, is another matter entirely. On its own, the passage is relatively unproblematic apart from the corrupt and therefore incomprehensible final couplet:

> tu canis umbrosi subter pineta Galaesi
>   Thyrsin et attritis Daphnin harundinibus
> utque decem possint corrumpere mala puellam
>   missus et impressis haedus ab uberibus.   (70)
> felix qui uiles pomis mercaris amores

> (huic licet ingratae Tityrus ipse [ipsa O] canat),
> felix intactum Corydon qui temptat Alexin
>   agricolae domini carpere delicias:
> quamuis ille sua lassus requiescat auena,   (75)
>   laudatur facilis inter Hamadryadas.
> tu canis Ascraei ueteris praecepta poetae,
>   quo seges in campo, quo uiret uua iugo.
> tale facis carmen docta testudine quale
>   Cynthius impositis temperat articulis.   (80)
> non tamen haec ulli uenient ingrata legenti,
>   siue in amore rudis siue peritus erit.
> nec minor his animis aut sim minor ore canorus
>   anseris indocto carmine cessit olor.

One might paraphrase, 'You sing of rustic lovers, you sing of Hesiod's precepts, you write poetry comparable to Apollo's own song; yet it will not be unpleasing to any reader, however experienced or inexperienced in love'. Virgil (who seems, in contradiction to 65–6, not yet to have begun the *Aeneid* since only the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* are cited) is being complimented in language derived from his own poetry. Though his songs are *Eclogues* and *Georgics* rather than love poetry, they will nevertheless (*tamen* 81) be read with pleasure by lovers, presumably because of their high quality and the erotic element contained in the *Eclogues* at least; the compliment in 79–80, that he sings as skilfully as Apollo, alludes through *Cynthius* to *Eclogue* 6, while the presumed compliment in 83–4 also seems to allude to a Virgilian context, this time *Eclogues* 9.35–6.

In addition, the Propertian context seems to run smoothly enough without these lines (I begin the citation at 55 in order to suggest at least some of the context for the contrast between Propertius and the other poets mentioned):

> aspice me, cui parua domi fortuna relicta est   (55)
>   nullus et antiquo Marte triumphus aui,
> ut regnem mixtas inter conuiua puellas
>   hoc ego quo tibi nunc eleuor ingenio.
> me iuuet hesternis positum languere corollis,
>   quem tetigit iactu certus ad ossa deus: (60)
> Actia Vergilio custodis litora Phoebi
>   Caesaris et fortes dicere posse rates,
> qui nunc Aeneae Troiani suscitat arma
>   iactaque Lauinis moenia litoribus.   (64)
> haec quoque perfecto ludebat Iasone Varro   (85)
>   (Varro Leucadiae maxima flamma suae),
> haec quoque lasciui cantarunt scripta Catulli
>   Lesbia quis ipsa notior est Helena,
> haec etiam docti confessa est pagina Calui
>   cum caneret miserae funera Quintiliae,   (90)
> et modo formosa quam multa Lycoride Gallus
>   mortuus inferna uulnera lauit aqua!
> Cynthia quin etiam uersu laudata Properti
>   hos inter si me ponere Fama uolet.

Here one could paraphrase, 'I'm not from a rich old consular family, but I reign supreme in banquets amid a bevy of girls thanks to this poetic talent for which you disparage me. Let me enjoy this state, since Cupid has shot me full of arrows; Actium I leave to Virgil, who is now starting his *Aeneid*. Varro also wrote this sort of thing, as did Catullus and Calvus and Gallus.' Propertius is addressing someone who seems to be disparaging him on account of the nature of his talent, the *ingenium* that causes

him to write love poetry, symbolized by *puellae mixtae* and *hesternae corollae*. With 59 he begins a six-line passage contrasting his own ambitions and those of Virgil. The unity of this section is apparent in the parallelism that has been devised to emphasize the contrast. Propertius wants to be allowed the pleasure (*me iuuet*) of 'languishing' because the unerring archer Amor has shot him to the marrow (*quem tetigit*). In 61–4 he somehow associates Virgil with a narration of the battle of Actium, and does so because Virgil is now embarked upon the *Aeneid* (*qui nunc . . . suscitat*).[52] The descriptions of the two poets have relative clauses as their second elements. These are certainly parallel in their structure and in their function, which is to explain: first why Propertius should continue 'languishing', then why Virgil would be a good candidate for writing up Actium (a subject that Propertius in 2.1.25–36 said he would essay if he had a talent for epic poetry). One therefore expects a parallelism in the first elements as well; the transmitted text offers none, but 61 seems to be corrupt in any case, and it is probably here that we should seek the parallel to what Propertius says of himself, 'let it be my pleasure' (*me iuuet*). One way of saying 'let it be Virgil's pleasure' would be *Vergilio cordi sit*; *Vergilio*, though usually 'corrected' to *Vergilium* (with *iuuet* to be supplied), is the paradosis, and *cordi sit* perhaps lies behind the transmitted *custodis*: 'let it be dear to Virgil to speak of Apollo's Actian shores and Caesar's brave fleet', since he has now begun his *Aeneid*.[53] The catalogue of poets in 85ff. then provides further justification for Propertius' poetic choice; Varro wrote such poetry after his *Argonautae* was finished (thus the catalogue, appropriately, starts off with another epic poet), so did Catullus, Calvus, and Gallus.

But problems begin once the 'Virgilian' passage is inserted within the Propertian context. First of all, the possibility that the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* might make pleasurable reading for lovers has nothing to do with Propertius' own point here about how Actium is better left to Virgil, who is becoming an epic poet. Second, the present tense *canis* is entirely incompatible with the fact that Virgil has already begun 'singing' his *Aeneid* in 63–4. Third, *tu* in 67 is confusing. An attentive reader will soon figure out that it is Virgil who is being addressed, but Propertius has just spoken of him in the third person only a few lines before (61–4), and another couplet has intervened in which he has addressed all the writers of Greece and Rome; no classical poet would leave readers in such perplexity about the reference of emphatic pronouns. A fourth difficulty involves the repeated *haec quoque* of 85 and 87 and the *haec etiam* of 89. The *quoque* and *etiam* suggest that whatever *haec* refers to in 85–90 has a close connection with something else in the context, while *haec* itself suggests that this ought to be something near at hand. But what has preceded is chiefly a distorted summary of the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*; and Propertius would surely not suggest that Varro and Catullus and Calvus had written *Eclogues* and *Georgics*. Moreover, *haec* has occurred within the 'Virgilian' passage with precisely that reference in 81, *non tamen haec ulli uenient ingrata legenti*. One can hardly imagine that a reader who has seen *haec* in this sense in 81 will see *haec quoque* and *haec etiam* in 85, 87, and 89 and will then look for a reference twenty lines earlier instead of thinking that these phrases are linked with

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[52] It should be noted that, in contrast to the circumstances that (according to Donatus) led to the creation of 65–6, Virgil has by now made sufficient progress in writing the *Aeneid* that Propertius can allude to its opening lines (compare *Troiani . . . arma . . . Lauinis moenia litoribus* in Propertius 2.34.63–4 and *arma . . . Troiae . . . Lauiniaque . . . litora . . . moenia* in *A.* 1.1–7).

[53] A remedy adopted by some editors has been to keep *Vergilio* while altering *me iuuet* to *mi lubet* (Housman); this creates an ungainly and awkwardly long sentence, and leaves the mystifying and irrelevant *custodis* intact.

the first *haec*. To avoid this difficulty, some commentators suggest that *haec* in 81 refers to 'personal love-elegy, and more specifically the personal love-elegy of Propertius himself' (Camps on 2.34.81), but this entails difficulties of its own: even if 81-2 could somehow refer to Propertius' poetry (it seems much more natural to refer *haec* to the *tale . . . carmen* of the previous couplet), 83-4 refer to the *Eclogues* again through the images of the swan and the goose. The 'Virgilian' passage is also suspect here because of its high concentration of pentameters with polysyllabic endings, which make it look as though Propertius at the very end of Book 2 suddenly reverted to his practice in Book 1. While the 18 lines preceding the interpolation offer three scattered examples (48 *laqueis*, 58 *ingenio* and 64 *litoribus*), the 18 lines of the 'Virgilian' passage contain a cluster of five examples (68 *harundinibus*, 70 *uberibus*, 74 *delicias*, 76 *Hamadryadas*, and 80 *articulis*); the eight examples found within these 36 lines actually surpass the frequency found in 1.1, which has seven examples within 38 lines. These polysyllabic endings show that the passage can not be a medieval interpolation; it is only in the Renaissance that one again finds an appreciation of and interest in imitating this practice. There is no reason to think that these lines are Propertian at all, least of all to think that Propertius wrote them for this context, for they reflect a metrical practice that he had already in large part abandoned.[54]

Another interpolation of ancient origin can be detected in 3.13. As noted earlier, this elegy begins with a denunciation of women's venality; it then contrasts this unhappy situation at Rome with, on the one hand, the current felicity of Indian husbands, whose wives display their fidelity by leaping into the pyre, and, on the other hand, the felicity of an imaginary rural golden age of the past (note especially 25 *quondam* and the verbs *erant* [26, 27], *operibat* [35], *circumdabat* [37], *reduxit* [40], and *praebebant* [42]). Propertius returns to his theme of venality in present-day Rome with the emphatic *at nunc* of 47, but before he does, according to the manuscripts, he includes four lines spoken in the *persona* of Pan (43-6, cited here together with 41-2, as read by the archetype, to provide some of the ostensible context):

> dique deaeque omnes quibus est tutela per agros
>   praebebant uestris uerba benigna focis:
> 'et leporem, quicumque uenis, uenaberis, hospes,
>   et si forte meo tramite quaeris auem:
> et me Pana tibi comitem de rupe uocato,
>   siue petes calamo praemia siue cane'.

But apparent lack of relevance is not the only difficulty here; the wording, especially in 45-6, is so close to that of an epigram of Leonidas of Tarentum (*AP* 9.337) that the lines of 'Propertius' can only be called a translation of it:

> Εὐάγρει, λαγόθηρα, καὶ εἰ πετεεινὰ διώκων
>   ἰξευτὴς ἥκεις, τοῦθ' ὑπὸ δισσὸν ὄρος
> κἀμὲ τὸν ὑληωρὸν ἀπὸ κρημνοῖο βόασον
>   Πᾶνα· συναγρεύω καὶ κυσὶ καὶ καλαμοῖς.

For the choice between hare and bird as objects of the hunt (*et leporem uenaberis . . .*

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[54] I do not know on what grounds C. Heimreich, as reported in Smyth's *Thesaurus Criticus* (above, n. 37), proposed the deletion of 61-80 as an interpolation, but that deletion would discard part of the genuine Propertian context (61-4) as well as breaking up the obvious unity of the 'Virgilian' insertion by detaching 81-4. (Smyth also reports that Heimreich proposed to transpose 83-4 to after 78; it is not clear whether this is part of the same proposal to delete 61-80 or a completely independent one.)

et auem) cf. λαγόθηρα, καὶ εἰ πετεεινὰ διώκων; for *uenis* cf. ἥκεις; for *et me Pana* . . . *de rupe uocato* cf. κάμὲ . . . ἀπὸ κρημνοῖο βόασον Πᾶνα (*comitem* was no doubt suggested by the prefix of συναγρεύω); and for *siue* . . . *calamo* . . . *siue cane* cf. καὶ κυσὶ καὶ καλαμοῖς. The only substantial difference is a simple matter of variation, *meo tramite* instead of τοῦθ' ὑπὸ δισσὸν ὄρος. The only thing in Propertius that is remotely comparable is the very close adaptation of *AP* 12.101.1–4 in 1.1.1–4, but that is a freer version than the version of Leonidas in 3.13 (Cynthia replaces Myiscus, for example), there is no difficulty over the lines' relevance, and it is not an entire epigram that has been included but only a part of one. In the case of 3.13 the lines are clearly irrelevant. Propertius has evoked an imaginary rural past in which lovers presented gifts like quinces, flowers, grapes, or birds (25–34), and he develops this into a more general picture of a rustic golden age, where lovers wore skins and slept on natural beds of grass, trees provided shade, goddesses could be seen naked, the sheep looked after themselves, and apparently (there is some corruption in 41–2) all the deities of the countryside had propitious words for their worshippers (35–42). Why Pan should be quoted at this point inviting hunters of birds and rabbits to invoke him in the present is anything but apparent, since hunting has not been mentioned before and is not part of Propertius' theme, the contrast between present corruption in Rome and past felicity in the countryside. In any case the lines that follow, 47–8 *at nunc desertis cessant sacraria lucis:/ aurum omnes uicta iam pietate colunt,* with their reference to worshipping at shrines, follow on much more appropriately from the hearths at which the deities of the countryside are worshipped than from the words of Pan.[55] Thus several anomalies point to interpolation here: the unlikelihood of Propertius including a translation of a complete epigram of Leonidas within his own elegy, the irrelevance of the epigram's content to the themes of the elegy, the disruption of the flow of thought within the elegy caused by the presence of the epigram. Needless to say, a translation of Leonidas can not be a mediaeval interpolation; we must be dealing with an anonymous ancient version that was cited in the margin of some ancient copy of Propertius as an example of *uerba benigna* associated with one of the gods *quibus est tutela per agros*, then incorporated by a later scribe.[56]

In 3.14 we seem to have an ancient and a medieval interpolation side by side. One obvious problem in the poem is how 15–16, and especially their first two words, fit the context: *et modo Taygeti, crines aspersa pruina,/ sectatur patrios per iuga longa canes,* 'and now, her hair sprinkled with frost, she follows her native hounds throughout the long crests of Taygetus'. The difficulty is usually solved by transposing the couplet after 10 (with Housman and Otto) or after 12 (with Canter and Scaliger). But wherever the lines are put, the autumnal hunt fits awkwardly with the athletic and military exercises described in 11–12, which are not specified as occurring in a particular season, and with the elegant simile of bathing Amazons that precedes it in 13–14; nor has any advocate of transposition found a mechanical explanation for the

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[55] Given the contrast between past and present here, emphasized particularly by *at nunc* in 47, one should perhaps emend 42 by reading *ueterum* for *uestris*; i.e. 'all the deities of the countryside offered propitious words at the altars of the folk of old; but now the groves are deserted and the shrines abandoned', etc.

[56] In his *Emendationes Propertianae*, at *JPh* 16 (1888) 11 (= J. Diggle and F. R. D. Goodyear [edd.], *The Classical Papers of A. E. Housman* [Cambridge, 1972], I.36), Housman commented laconically, 'III xiii 43–6 I fear have no business here', but he offered no reasons for his view and apparently accepted Propertian authorship.

dislocation. The lines are thoroughly competent, even elegant, and therefore probably not a reader's comment; in fact *et modo*, which one expects to find co-ordinated with another *modo* at least, suggests that we are dealing with a passage from some ancient author that was cited in the margin of an ancient copy of Propertius because someone was reminded of it by the hardy Spartan women at their training.

But the Amazon simile was probably the chief inspiration for the medieval reader who concocted the inept comparison in 17–20 of the Spartan women at their exercises to Castor and Pollux doing something in the presence of Helen: *qualis et Eurotae Pollux et Castor harenis,/ hic uictor pugnis, ille futurus equis,/ inter quos Helene nudis capere arma papillis/ fertur nec fratres erubuisse deos*, 'just as Pollux and Castor as well in the sands of the Eurotas, the latter destined to be victorious with his fists, the former with horses, between whom Helen is said to take up arms with bare nipples and the brother gods not to have blushed'. The comparison contains no verb. If *qualis et* means that this is a pendant to the Amazon simile, then surely we are entitled to supply the verb used there; in that case the Dioscuri are bathing too (cf. 14 *turba lauatur*), and are doing so in the 'sands of the Eurotas' (*harenis* is a Renaissance conjecture but certainly right; N and X (*Λ*) give *habenis*, while the Petrarchan manuscripts, with scant regard for geography, have *athenis*). The second couplet is additionally suspect for two reasons, first on account of the pointless variation between the present infinitive *capere* and the perfect infinitive *erubuisse*, and second because *fertur*, though initially construed with Helen as its subject, must then be taken impersonally ('it is said that') in order to accommodate the brothers as subject of the indirect statement construction *fratres erubuisse*. It is possible that the interpolator left his work here in an unfinished state, unable to decide how to complete 19. This is suggested by the split in the two branches of the tradition between *capere arma* (NX) and *armata* (FPZ); perhaps he was unable to decide whether he preferred Helen to 'take up arms bare-breasted' or to be 'armed with her bare breasts' (the weapons of course were suggested by the Amazons, while the model for 19 as a whole was 4.3.43 *felix Hippolyte nuda tulit arma papilla*; this establishes, if evidence were necessary, that the interpolator wrote *papillis* and not *capillis*, as given by the Petrarchan manuscripts). It is also possible that the interpolator never got even this far in completing the line and that he wrote only *arma*, without *capere*; L presents the line in exactly this form, and the addition of *capere* in NX and the reading *armata* in FPZ could represent two separate attempts to make the unfinished line scan. The deletion of 17–20 has already been proposed by Knoche, but the deletion of these lines together with 15–16 has a most remarkable effect upon the elegy as a whole. It leaves an elegantly structured poem of 28 lines consisting of two equal parts of 14 lines each, the first describing the exercises, the second their alleged effect upon Spartan sexuality. Both 14-line sections comprise a section of 8 lines followed by one of 6 (1–8, 9–14; 21–8, 29–34), and both are set off by the repetition of key words or concepts at beginning and end (in the first section 2 *uirginei*, 12 *uirgineum*; in the second 21 *lex . . . Spartana*, 33 *iura . . . Laconum*).

Finally, every editor has failed in his duty to question the poem-divisions given by the manuscripts, above all in Book 2.[57] Most critical editions divide about half a dozen elegies here into two or more subsections; though the unreliability of the manuscripts' divisions has long been acknowledged,[58] those who question them are invariably

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[57] This point has been made forcefully and persuasively by S. J. Heyworth in 'Propertius: Division, Transmission, and the Editor's Task', *PLLS* 8 (1995), 165–85 at 171–5.

[58] So, for example, Hubbard (above, n. 14), 44–5, 'The sad result is that of all the poems in a

rebuffed by articles arguing that the poems concerned really do constitute satisfactory unities and should not be divided against the evidence of the manuscripts. Some of these articles brandish magic wands like semiotics; others simply appeal to Propertius' alleged fondness for awkward structures or difficult transitions, arguing in effect that one concatenation of unrelated lines should be read as a unity because our demonstrably unreliable manuscripts also present other groups of unrelated lines as unities, in a classic demonstration of how the corrupt state of the text can be used to victimize it further by keeping it corrupt. In fact the tradition is so unreliable that we simply do not know how many poems Book 2 contained. Editions give 34, but one branch of the tradition recognized only 32, another only 27; one branch made poems 29–32 a single elegy, while the last 138 lines of the book—what we know as poems 33 and 34—were presented by the archetype as a single poem. In the course of the fifteenth century different manuscripts altered these divisions in different ways. Some joined two originally separate poems and so created the elegy that we now know as 2.7;[59] others, by introducing new divisions, created the poems that we now call 32[60] and 34.[61] But other manuscripts introduced other alterations: some formed a new elegy by combining 23 and 24,[62] and others created new poems by introducing breaks at 3.23,[63] 20.21,[64] 20.23,[65] 22.43,[66] 26.29,[67] 29.23,[68] and 34.9,[69] 27,[70] and 61.[71] None of these alterations appeared in a fifteenth-century edition. Both groups of changes are equally conjectural and equally devoid of authority; but the former are now canonical and the latter, like a host of others proposed subsequently, are rejected as mere conjectures, all because of such accidents of history as the nature of the texts chosen for the two

book of 1362 lines there are only eight, amounting in all to 276 lines, which both have a harmonious manuscript tradition about where they begin and end and which have not been linked with others or themselves split into two or more poems by editors from the fifteenth century on.'

[59] The début of 2.7 as a unified poem seems to have occurred in Salamanca, Bibl. Universitaria 85 and Florence, Bibl. Laurenziana pl. 33,15 but only as an accident, to judge by the fact that it was 'corrected' in both places; the earliest occurrence of deliberate unification seems to be in Berlin lat. fol. 500, Pontano's copy.

[60] Some sixteen manuscripts have incorporated this new division, while a number of others have it marked by later correcting hands; its earliest occurrence seems to be among the ε manuscripts of shortly before the middle of the fifteenth century (London, British Library Harley 2574; Brescia, Bibl. Civica Queriniana A.VII.7; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek Voss. lat. O.13); for these manuscripts see Butrica (above, n. 16), 132–5.

[61] This too occurs first in the ε manuscripts (see n. 60 above).

[62] These include Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Scrin. 139.4; Naples, Bibl. Nazionale IV.F.19; Florence, Bibl. Riccardiana 633; and Florence, Bibl. Laurenziana pl. 33,15.

[63] Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek Voss. lat. O.82; Salamanca, Bibl. Universitaria 245.

[64] These also include the ε manuscripts (for which see n. 60 above).

[65] Leiden Voss. lat. O.82.

[66] This division, which seems to appear first in Berlin lat. fol. 500, could be another conjecture of Pontano; it is also found in some manuscripts, including the loosely related Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 3153, Parma, Bibl. Palatina 716, and Pesaro, Bibl. Oliveriana 1167, which are loosely related to Pontano's copy.

[67] Vienna 3153 after correction.

[68] As the original reading of the manuscript in Florence, Bibl. Laurenziana pl. 38,37; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek Voss. lat. O.81; and Oxford, Bodleian Library Canon. class. lat. 31. The commentary of Gaspar Manius in Vat. lat. 1612 has a note arguing against the division.

[69] In the two closely related manuscripts Bergamo, Bibl. Civica Angelo Mai Σ.2.33 and British Library Harley 5246.

[70] In a group of related manuscripts of certain or probable Ferrarese origin, former Abbey 3242; Modena, Bibl. Estense α.T.9.17; and Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Diez B. Sant. 57; also as a late correction in Vienna 3153.

[71] Laurenziana pl. 38,37; Leiden Voss. lat. O.81.

Venetian editions of 1472, from which all the others ultimately derive,[72] and the textual decisions of important early editors like Beroaldus. The poem that we call 2.34, for example, whose unity several scholars have laboured fruitlessly to demonstrate, exists in its current dimensions only because an anonymous Italian scholar working shortly before 1450 marked a new division at the line *cur quisquam faciem dominae iam credat Amori*; ever since Beroaldus introduced this division into his influential 1487 edition and commentary (followed by the equally influential first Aldine edition of 1502), subsequent editors have reproduced it mechanically, apparently unaware that it has not the slightest claim to be authentic or definitive. It is imperative that Book 2 be reread without the influence of traditional poem-breaks in order to determine where the real sense-divisions occur;[73] the next step, in my opinion, should be to identify the extraneous material—the interpolations—by which our text of Book 2 has been bloated to its present Gargantuan proportions.[74]

An analogy can be drawn between the editing of Propertius and the restoration of Michelangelo's paintings on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. As the work was being done, many objected that the techniques applied were improper or dangerous; similar complaints are constantly made about textual criticism itself and about individual conjectures to the text of Propertius. When the restoration was finished, one art historian declared that the result was not Michelangelo; accustomed to the paintings in their uncleaned state, he had interpreted centuries of soot and grime as part of the artist's intention. Similarly, the current mainstream of Propertian scholarship, in making beauty marks of blemishes, has become accustomed to interpret the palaeographical equivalent of soot and grime as defining features of Propertius' style. The chapel's ceiling became soiled from the ordinary burning of candles in their hundreds over the span of centuries and the respiration of thousands of visitors; similarly, the text of Propertius has been affected by the ordinary vicissitudes of copying (though now and again it seems to have gone through the hands of someone more prone to error than most) and by the 'respiration' of interpolators visiting the text, while the lack of copies for comparison probably contributed more than any other circumstance to preventing the removal of those everyday errors. Textual criticism gives us the tools for cleaning, and some will say when the job is finished that the result is not Propertius; but ancient critics and Pompeian *graffiti* confirm that the dirt is there—we only need the will to remove it. Phillimore thought that a sceptical approach to editing Propertius would lead to chaos; but healthy, vigorous, original debate is in fact the only way to achieve in the long term a reliable text and therefore a sound basis for assessing Propertius' achievement as a poet.[75]

Memorial University of Newfoundland   J. L. BUTRICA

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[72] For the affiliations of the incunabula, see Butrica (above, n. 16), 159–69.

[73] Heyworth (above, n. 57), 173–5 records some instances where these divisions have been suspected.

[74] My suspicions are roused particularly by the poems late in Book 2 involving such Greek pseudonyms as Panthus, Demophoon, and Lynceus; why should such names be used only in one part of one book?

[75] Briefer versions of this paper were originally delivered at the annual meeting of the Atlantic Classical Association in St John's, Newfoundland in 1991 and at the annual meeting of the Classical Association of Canada in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island in 1992. I should like to thank Dr Heyworth and the Anonymous Referee for their stimulating and constructive comments upon the original draft.