more vivid presentation of the country, while Ross 1975.161-162 finds ten invested with "the same kind of reality" in its rural imagery as one, but still a resolution of tensions that cannot be solved in any way other than by a return to the rural milieu.

[35] Ross 1975.153.

PROPERTIUS' THIRD BOOK: PATTERNS OF COHESION

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My purpose is to survey certain means by which Propertius unifies his third book, and to examine how this book in turn coheres with the first book to complete a larger unity. I embrace the general proposition that in the elegies of Propertius, as in any great poetry, design and value, medium and feeling constantly reinforce each other.[1] It is my conviction that, at least from the writing of the *Eclogues,* the Roman poets were aware of the power over the reader of a variety of structural designs even within a single book. I will specifically urge that we read the unity of Propertius' third book through two complementary and inseparable patterns, the concentric and the linear, whose diverse energies play in different ways upon individual poems to enrich our understanding.[2]

We presume linearity in any Roman poetry book to which its author manifestly applied his *ultima manus.* A linear frame of reference leads the studious critic in a logical progress from first poem to last. Propertius is ever the master of an allusiveness that links, and distinguishes, contiguous poems. He also relies constantly in book 3 on flexibility of theme and mood to focus as well as startle the reader's attention. These fluctuations involve not only groups of poems from two to five in number, which stand apart as smaller entities within the whole, but also individual elegies whose interaction with adjacent or more distant poems plots a careful dialectic.

The twenty-five poems press toward a central climax in the thirteenth elegy as Propertius, an Augustan Cassandra, indicts the present moral climate of Rome. On either side of this core the book also extends in opposing directions. The immediately adjacent groupings, elegies 6 and 12 and 14 through 20, offer a varied pattern of poetic fare, alternating grand and limited perspectives, the concrete and the abstract, objective and subjective, between poems and on occasion within them. The final poems return to the book's initial concern with the power of poetry and bring matters full circle. Chiasmus, therefore, proves as important an organizing figure for the book as the line's uni- directional inevitability. It forces on the reader an obligation to reappraise constantly what has preceded in the light of what remains before him.

The excitement of Propertius' third book lies in the confirmation for elegy of a new modality. This intellectual novelty can be gauged, baldly and with only partial justice, by comparison with book 2. We find therein poems on Cynthia's greed, fickleness, faithlessness and promiscuity, on the poet's fidelity, enslavement to love, passion for whores, and death. The subject of

poetry itself forms an occasional counterpoint to this standard elegiac fare, but Propertius' chief concern remains the elegist's subjective world, not any strength or purpose behind its depiction.

This pattern changes dramatically with the opening poems of book 3 which deal with the inherent potential of the poet and his verses. In the book as a whole we contemplate the assured broadening out of the private elegist not only to formalize his place in inherited poetic tradition but to assume a novel, vatic stance in relation to the present. The self-indulgence of the subjective elegist immersed in his personal feelings, often a retrospective and escapist posture however ironically maintained, yields before the broader critical impulses of the poet commenting on his powers and on means of communication between people. We now contemplate the vivid abstractions that rule our lives, the relationship between style and ethics and, generally, social as much as sexual *mores*. This growth of self-consciousness, which renounces the potentially narcissistic complacency of private elegy, is not gained through the detachment or self-parody which often accompanies the artist reduced to delving into his creativity. Rather it helps raise the potential of elegy to compete with the heroic ode, and proves it capable of embracing ethical issues of deep importance on both a personal and a public level.

Perhaps the greatest accomplishment involves Callimachus whose name heads the first poem.[3] Of Propertius' stylistic devotion to his Alexandrian predecessor the initial books offer continuing evidence. The third book furthers the Romanization of Callimachus by making refined style more fully congruent with a wider moral outlook and applicable more generously to society at large. It is no longer merely a vehicle for a poet's personal proclivity for the precise and the modest. A poetics of careful control now complements an ethics of restraint. Books 1 and 2 often announced the poet's preference of elegy over epic or revealed his abhorrence of a Roman soldier's greedy, itinerant lot. Book 3 sees the two attitudes finely merged. Renunciation of epic demands abandonment of the ambition and warring that are its subjects. This means a looking askance at the present Roman political situation. Poem 9 even suggests to Maecenas that the statesman's humility, when self-aggrandizement in economic or social postures might have been his goal, mirrors the poet's own instinctive circumscription in content and in the representation of meaning. Callimachus may be Romanized, and elegy further objectified in this process, but the composite portrait of Rome itself that emerges from the third book is scarcely a complimentary one. The raising of the elegist's consciousness toward the potentiality of language is accompanied by a sharpened awareness of his duty to criticize both self and society at large. That these grander linguistic and ideological schemata ultimately invoke Callimachean reserve as critique for the rhetoric of expression and for patterns of conduct is only momentarily paradoxical.

Propertius claims at the start the posture of priest that he will adopt again in poem 13 when he becomes the scrutinizing *haruspex* of contemporary life. But the whole book is in fact one large intellectual vaticination, one delving after another, as the poet peers behind and beyond the surface of human activity to expound what might be termed the aetiology of motivations, of inspiration and ethics, of gestures public or private, specific or general. Summary overviews must serve as illustration.

The three initial poems form a triad observing poetry from various angles. The first centers explicitly on the poet himself,boasting of his profession as priest of words. If envy is his lot in life, as *augur* he foresees that honor will befall him in death. His mental wizardry surmounts time for himself and his progeny. The second elegy is concerned with the power and eternity of song itself. The *honores* and *nomen* that before were the poet's are now due his works. It is not its creator but *carmen*, song, which is in the position of authority. The immortality of the elegist and the endurance of his verse yield in the third elegy to the content of poems that should occupy Propertius' attention. He contemplates epic themes only to abandon them by order of Calliope who proclaims the need for limitation at the start of her apostrophe (39):

"Contentus niveis semper vectabere cycnis, . . ."

To adopt elegy over epic as one's expressive vehicle is to cling to the personal over the historical, and to espouse a rhetoric of reticence instead of grandiloquence.

Questions of ideology and utterance contemplated at a poet's mythic source of inspiration are replaced in the fourth and fifth poems by more vivid social truths and renunciations. The fourth projects Caesar's accomplishments in war, and the poet's aloof surveillance of them. The fifth declares the corruption war's riches bring and the twisted quality of contemporary man's mind, unaware that in death rich and poor, conqueror and conquered, are united. Propertius intends at the close of his career to turn not to epic, the intellectual equivalent of avarice and earthly dominion, but to examining the nature of things and the problem of life after death. The interaction is clear. It draws on the preceding three poems and expands their hermetic vision of a poet's pride in order to focus on his consciousness of present Roman realities.

The second poem of the book saw Propertius' girl "touched" as he sings, and the fourth found him leaning against her lap as he viewed Caesar's treasure-laden chariots. The sixth now returns to a more strictly inner elegiac environment, while yet revealing the same spirit of inquiry, on this occasion into the causality of immediate emotion. The poet, wishing to find out his mistress' situation, addresses Lygdamus, Cynthia's slave. But what in book 2

might have remained a poem about mere yearning and the vagaries of emotional commitment becomes a scrutiny of the meaning of words as vehicles for expression. Is Lygdamus telling the truth to the poet or only what he thinks the poet wants to hear? Even if Lygdamus is uttering what he really knows, were Cynthia's complaints lying or veracious? Would Cynthia realize that the poet's previous response had stemmed from anger, not deceit?

The sixth elegy initiates a series of poems self-oriented in nature which yet, unlike the manner of books 1 and 2, continually pry beyond the surface of events to examine the processes whereby emotions are caused or made manifest. A complex inner life stands revealed through a critique of the tone in what is spoken and heard. The seventh elegy, expanding outward more in the manner of poem 5, makes personal response to a private grief a matter of public concern. It is the first of two poems in book 3 to begin *ergo*, as if the poet were only summing up his point and giving his last example to prove a case. Money is the reason that Paetus has drowned at sea. It furnishes cruel fodder to the vices of man with the result that Paetus himself is now food for fish. The sixth elegy's world of verbal indirection is succeeded by a manifestation of the suffering a more universal and, as Propertius now sees it, Augustan fault conveys. Paetus' individual grief is only one symptom of a more general malaise. But even here the poet is watching what lies behind human maneuvers. *Pecunia* initiates a *mortis iter* and is the fountainhead of *vitia* and *curae*. It is the cause of a sea voyage leading to death, not gain, and of a poem about causes.

The eighth poem returns to the poet's amatory predicament, but it too is no mere description of a lover's trials and pleasures. It builds from a standard contradiction (that strife with his girl and her inane cursings are "sweet") to ponder the meaning of the *signa* that lie behind any action. Cynthia's doings exhibit differing evidence of love, and the poet is a *verus haruspex*, a true voyeur into the torments of the mind. This visionary's *exposé* ends brilliantly with one last "sign" to a potential rival. If he has stolen a night of love it is really because Cynthia means to hurt the poet, not to be friendly to any competitor![4]

Like elegy 7, poem 9 merges the public and the private. Propertius' probing here consists in seeing his writing of poetry and Maecenas' ethics of personal behavior in complementary terms. Maecenas' economic and political standards serve as model for the poet's life of the mind. For Maecenas to surrender to the temptation of using his fortune and standing with Augustus for opportunistic purposes would be as if the poet were to undertake the writing of epic, the imaginative equivalent of a life of ambition. But the poet, generically and stylistically refined, eschews epic for elegy and Callimachus. Propertius controls his verbal expansiveness, Maecenas marshalls his habits of conduct. The *signa* (58) his patron finally gives the poet "racing" toward political themes are that he follow his own example which we

have already learned was one of moderation. Praise is assumed for the internally heroic espousal of an externally non-heroic role.[5]

Poem 10 leaves behind these heady thoughts and peers once more into the poet's personal world as he celebrates Cynthia's birthday. We begin here with a *signum* (3) as Propertius interprets the appearance of the Camenae at dawn before his bed, a seer imagining his inspiring prophetesses, enliveners of memory and viewers of time to come. The elegy is centered on ritual and prayer, detailing a texture of omens and events to lift the reader out of historical time into elegiac make-believe. After the initial happy sign, the poem prays the day through its wish-fulfilling course with a series of commands and entreaties. Unlike the lover's analysis in poem 8 of yesterday's gestures that often said one thing and meant another, we watch here only the future of a day and of a life. This happy temporal round, a purely symbolic "journey," extends from the reddening sun to the fall of night and a final prayer: *peragamus iter* (32). His hope is that *annua sollemnia* (31), if repeated properly, will assure to Cynthia a *forma perennis* (17), that daily and annual will be fused with eternal time. Since his ceremony of words proposes a stability untouched by temporality, this is the most explicit statement yet of the poet's visionary power and of the potency of his words.

As we continue to follow two parallel and complementary expositions, even in this linear survey, the eleventh elegy again makes a transition from private to public. The theme is the domination of women. Examples of physical, sexual and political might culminate and combine in Cleopatra, the consummate female warrior-politician who is also libidinous enough to seek intercourse with her slaves. As the poem progresses Augustus receives praise as the liberator of Rome from this curse. But there is a counteracting irony. The liberator is at the same time the conqueror. Augustus, on whose safety Rome depends, is the final secure example of power in the poem.

There seems at first a notable differentiation between the emperor and those other possessors of power that the poem has already registered. His girl dominates the elegist's inner life. Cleopatra's sway is both sexual over Antony and political over Rome. Augustus' strength is purely social and historical. But the poem's evolution speaks only a change from figurative to literal bondage, from Cynthia's chains that the poet is unable to break on the one hand, to the fetters that Augustus places on Cleopatra and to the grander dominion of the *pax Augusti* on the other. For Propertius it is not only that Cleopatra is dishonored but that Augustus is brought poetically to the same level as the queen he has subdued. In the hierarchy of strength the poem unfolds, Augustus is at the summit. In the line of *exempla* that evolve at the same time, Augustus is only a further representation of Cynthia.

The shroud of eulogy is brusquely torn aside in poem 12, which forms a doublet with its predecessor. We now observe patently the ruinous effects Augustus' immoral public strategies have on the vulnerable individual lives of

those drawn into his orbit. Although in both poems the force of Caesar's arms touches a woman, otherwise the distinction between Cleopatra and Galla, heroine of 12, is clear. The first is an unprincipled creature bent on enslaving Rome. The second is a symbol of family, and Roman, continuity. In poem 11 Augustus has saved Rome from the unseemly yoke of a degraded nymphomaniac. In its companion piece, by fostering avarice and war abroad he is eroding the moral fabric of the civilization which in historical terms he would seem to have saved. Militarism and love's constancy are ever at odds, but in this Rome-centered world it is a woman who signifies steadfastness. Galla is a Penelope waiting for her wandering Ulysses. Destructive woman and saving man reverse roles into redeeming woman and injurious man. We are drawn to ask what good comes from political salvation through arms if they are then turned (and these poems tell a chronological tale) to the undoing of the society that they supposedly have bolstered.

Once more journey is an important motif. The detailed allusions to Ulysses prove Postumus also a follower of informing sign-posts in search of the final signs – home and wife. These posit the end of wandering and of "fidelity" to Augustus, which is only a type of faithlessness to life's essential stabilities. The gaining of *modus* comes by reevaluation of past, composite *error* (36). Allegiance to the *signa* (2) of Augustus means Parthia and the Araxes, a soldier's reference points. When poem 12, as poem 22 to come, brings the adventuring warrior back to Rome, it does so through a universal myth of husband returning to wife, not of a spoil-laden victor honored at a center of power. For Postumus to emulate Ulysses' course from Troy to Ithaca suggests not merely the topographical change from Parthia to Rome but a metamorphosis from soldier to spouse, from an acquirer of wealth through might to a devotee of a more enduring *fides*.

Propertius makes his prophecy with a secure voice: no other love will entice Galla in Postumus' absence; she will not remember his harshness but will remain steadfast. Poem 12 therefore fits into the sequence of 6, 8, and 10 not only because it deals in part with personal concerns but also because the poet speaks out with an assurance now supported by a strength at interpretation we saw growing in the earlier poems. The poet, who previously has sought to understand, interpret and confirm the meaning of signs, now himself adopts a vatic stance to instruct by direct address. But the poem also follows in the line from elegies 7 and 9 which had dealt with the interrelationships between public ambitions and private needs and limitations. Postumus is a Paetus who will be saved. He likewise serves to remind Maecenas why Propertius accepts the limitations of elegy instead of the expansive pretensions of epic and why, to glance still further back, Propertius will stand on the sidelines at some future Augustan triumph because love is a god of peace.

The poet's posture as instructor in matters that blend public and

private concerns from a Roman vantage-point leads climactically to poem 13 as he surveys the city itself and what is rotten at its core.[6] Postumus' Galla, in spite of her exposure to the tutelage of *luxuriae Roma magistra* (18), remained loyal to her absent wanderer. But luxury is a potent ally of immorality. The evil that flows back into Rome becomes the "arms" that overwhelm propriety. Private licentiousness becomes a matter of universal concern. In Rome there is neither a *fida* Evadne nor a *pia* Penelope, perhaps even, as the juxtaposition hints, no longer a steadfast Galla. Matters were not always thus. At the center of the poem and of Roman myths about its heritage lies a simpler past when youth was at peace and men mingled with gods. But Rome must now be prepared for a divine vendetta aimed against present corruption (59-60):

> proloquar: – atque utinam patriae sim verus haruspex!
> frangitur ipsa suis Roma superba bonis.

The credentials marshalled and inspiration proclaimed from the book's first poems build toward this moment. As *sacerdos* of the Muses become Cassandra *rediviva*, predicting unchastity and avarice as Rome's wooden horse, Propertius becomes an outspoken seer, analyzing not only the signs, gestures and apparitions by which individuals communicate but the ethical foundations on which larger cultural edifices are reared. Rome is made up of many Paetuses who set up mammon as their goal and fail to practice the restraint of a Propertius or a Maecenas. Rome's dominion brings *bona* which prove the greatest bane. Literal acquisitiveness undermines the abstractions on which a principled society must rely. The elegist who voices such truths becomes at last a spokesman for public anger and not merely for private distraction.

It is a brilliant occasion, the most conspicuous example of the new Propertius that emerges completely in the third book. He is now a poet fully conscious of his vatic powers and aware of his importance as critic of public attitudes. Both style and ideology, confirmed by the potency of the writer and his words, merge in this wise scrutiny, more subjective toward those individuals whose emotional lot casts them together with the poet, more objective toward that grander entity called Rome.[7]

After this tirade the poems become more strictly inward, concerned with private feelings but always reaching beyond mere subjective meditation. The idea of journeying, whether literal or figurative, continues to play a prominent part. The fourteenth elegy orients the reader toward Greece by contrasting Spartan discipline and display with Roman deviousness and darkness. The contrast is partly ethical, partly erotic. No luxurious colors and scents corrupt Sparta as the preceding poem shows they have beguiled Rome. Besides, at Rome "the lover turns a darkened road," blind toward the means of eliciting a true response in love.[8] This elegiac truism projects us into the

subsequent poem which is also concerned with an *iter amoris*. The immediate subject is Cynthia's potential jealousy of Lycinna. The poem in fact examines the turmoil which abstractions, *ira* and *saevitia*, cause, and fleshes this out mythically with the tale of Dirce. This expounds a phantasmagoria of violence, of bondage and torture, escape into night's uncertainties, relief from hurt and physical vengeance. The simile remains an elaborate metaphoric proof, in the semblance of myth, of the varying inner torments that love's unease can foster.

Poem 16 transforms a mythic movement illustrating states of mind into another journey to love that starts literally. Cynthia calls Propertius from Rome to Tibur. But the process of the poem documents the sacrosanctity of the poet's person as part of the poet's extended worry over his tomb and the *nomen* it presumes, when he is no longer actively travelling but passively enduring the potential defamation of others skirting past him. No poem of Propertius uses the motif of travel as intensely to demonstrate both the evidential and the figurative. The path of love ends in Tibur. The more distant wayside sepulchre, away from the throng in good Callimachean fashion, posits the end of a more final *via* from life to death to, presumably, immortality.[9]

Elegy 17, by contrast, details a purely symbolic itinerary, away from the sufferings of love and into wine of release and the intellectual effort of singing Bacchus' praises. As with poems 5 and 21 (in this segment of the book three elegies often intervene between parallel poems), journey metaphorizes variations of absorption into differing mental territories. But whereas the fifth poem of the book only documents the chronology of the poet's mental development, elegy 17 evolves from an essential subjective context into concern for a special divinity's *aristeia*. The eighteenth elegy starts more referentially. Poems 14 and 16 use Rome as object of comparison or topographical place of origin but lead us in due course to matters of ethics or poetic style. Pome 18 transports us to Baiae and the dead Marcellus, but Rome stands behind the poem whose theme is one of considerable daring. Propertius first draws our eye to the famous resort and the mortal or divine heroes intimate with it. At the end, separating the youth's body and soul, he divides our attention between Rome (where the body returns) and the stars where his immortal side will join his illustrious ancestors. But the core of the poem not only pronounces the universality of death but indicts the meaninglessness of the trappings that substance and rank assume by offering Marcellus as a highly public example of the vanity of human wishes.

Poem 18 surveys the responsibility of a Caesar's nephew to the ethics of ambition and to death. Its successor, more stringently abstract like 15 and to a degree 17, turns inward to examine the power of *libido* in a woman. The abstract is visualized as an uncontrolled animal, heedless of shame's bridle and goaded by *nequitia*. Its guilt is proved by a list of examples. It animalizes

(Pasiphae) and elementalizes (Tyro). It perverts family relationships to the point where humans become inanimate (Myrrha). Scylla, Propertius' final witness, suffered in retribution a physical tearing apart which, like the fate of Dirce in poem 15, is only the external result of the disruptions her passion had caused.

Poem 19 deals with an aspect of *phusis* that embraces many levels of bestiality. Poem 20 offers a form of *nomos* in counterpoint. From mythic *exempla* of love's perversions, Propertius turns to himself and to what he can offer fresh love. Lust rends those possessed by it. At the start of an affair the poet, by contrast, can manifest the *fides* that restrains and binds instead of the passion that releases all bonds. Following the pattern of much in book 3, the poem is not about love *per se* but about its appurtenances. The poet sees his new intimacy in terms of a house, symbol of family stability blessed by fortune, and of the *iura, pignora* and, above all, *foedera* that assure its functioning. The preceding elegy had been couched in terms of a legal argument which worked out its form as accusation and riposte. Elegy 20, by documenting the socialization of love and bringing it under civilization's constraints, is built around commitment to a pact. It stands as holistic metaphor for the power of its parts – an answer to the disjunction posited in the manner and matter of its predecessor.

The twenty-first poem, varying more literally the spiritual escape poem 17 posited, finds Propertius compelled to travel the long way to Athens for retreat from love's tortures. No shallow ambition drives the poet, only the wish "to emend the mind" by topographical displacement equivalent to an intellectual change from elegy to philosophy and aesthetics. Elegy 22, its careful companion piece yet close in spirit to 20 as well, reverses perspective to redefine Rome. Propertius' friend Tullus is off in Cyzicus contemplating what the poet sees as exotic forms of mythic heroism and of artistry used or misused for bizarre purposes. By comparison, arms and weapons, crime, *pietas*, anger and restraint all bubble in the complex historical melting-pot that Propertius sees as Rome. Rome eschews the abuses of human dignity familiar from Greek myths depicting the relationships of parents and children, mortals and gods, guests and hosts. Yet for Tullus to return home suggests a change not only in the Roman enterprise but in the individual lives it affects. The poet's proposition is that distant warring and the wrath or self-control which humans exercise in its pursuit be altered into less awesome patterns of behavior. Tullus should devote himself to urban and familial endeavors, to rhetoric for the good of his fellow citizens, to *honor* (owed to the *dignitas* of his *gens*) and to *amor* lavished on his future wife, for the continuance of his *gens*. Such a Rome, achieved once again by a leap from one mental topography to another, is neither the ambitious, aggressive wielder of *imperium* in wars foreign or civil, nor is it the implicit setting for the special imaginative workings of an elegiac poet, bent on varying his conventions of

amatory distress. It stands as something of a compromise, not totally political, not totally of the mind, but realistically promoting in the individual virtues operative in any state and essential for its permanence.

Poem 23 finds us established in the elegist's Rome as he worries about the loss of his writing tablets to some covetous soul who uses them to record his monetary transactions. Imaginative creations are replaced by the most prosaic material, as a poet's concern for words and love defers to a miser's inclination for money, and greed. These two protagonists share a concern for time that furthers their differentiation. The miser jots down his literal *rationem* – a concern unimportant to the "seductive wiliness" of the elegist – and his cotidian reckonings, *ephemeridas.* The poet is also interested in days, but from an imaginative, emotional point of view. He is obsessed with yesterday, when his girl delayed, and with today, tonight and the trysting hour. The poem's close finds Propertius ironically playing into the hands of greed. Since money, not mental brilliance, speaks to the *avarus,* the poet offers gold for what is only cheap wax and boxwood. He even proposes a third means of communication, the most public of all, by commanding his slave to post a billboard that he dwells on the Esquiline. Such display someone devoted to the superficial might understand.

There is a special sadness to the poem. His tablets are a visible extension of the poet. Even unsigned they bear his mark. They have now died (*periere* twice over), as if, like their master, they had suffered an appropriately elegiac finale. In life they were always faithful as was the poet. Both learned and enticing, they served as the perfect go-between, tangibly stating the intangible. But decisions about what to write are now of little importance when the means of transmitting information is lost or perversely misused. Abstractly poetry may be immortal and a guarantee of immortality, but words are also signs and in a literate society primarily depend for understanding on being read. Poetry, therefore, has its vulnerable side because its notations must be published on evanescent material, enslaved to the vicissitudes of fortune. Without the written *signa*, author, his inspiration and ideas, the act of composition and audience are all meaningless terms.

Sad notions of farewell and of the passage of time lead us directly into the two brief concluding elegies of the book which form a close-knit duet. We end with stringent, forceful analyses of suffering endured now by the poet, or to be experienced later by his chief figure, Cynthia, as their affair diminishes to the accompaniment of final words.

Propertius' ultimate concern is with *forma,* feminine beauty. Yet, though the word appears in the first line of poem 24 and the last of 25, the two poems offer more than cyclic meditation. The first looks specifically to effects of womanly charm on the poet. We follow his progress from early bouts of praise, when love's passion ignored Cynthia's manifest deceitfulness, to realization of the physical bitterness of his *servitium,* and finally to escape

from the horrors of this voyage into insanity. The second poem makes the transition from eulogy to curse, from Propertius to Cynthia, from Cynthia once upon a time too exalted in the poet's eyes to Cynthia in the future, now *exclusa,* in the place where her lovers had been heretofore, soon to experience the disdain of others. We abandon the poet's own self-critical progress from deception to torture and release, and face not only the emotion of his withdrawal but the metamorphic potency of time's passage and of a poem's power to demean its subject. The poet's final, appropriate pose is as seer and defamer at once.

It is a poem about change, from past to present and future, and hence above all about temporality. We move from the specific five years of Propertius' faithfulness to the "hidden years" by which age presses on Cynthia, wrinkling her features and whitening her hair. She had once been ennobled by his eyes. She is now made old by his words. The poet in his love had once praised her in verse. It is now his page that in the end sings her damnation at the hands of fate.[10]

Though his material is more subjective, Propertius has returned for his finale to essential themes from the book's first two poems, balancing the four elegies in parallel order. In the initial elegy Propertius deals with the stance of the poet, measured against his inheritance and anticipating his worship as Roman hero of the mind. The second sets forth the claims of poetry to lure its contents from the clutches of mortality. The penultimate of the final poems turns this *biographia litteraria* of the mind's life into the poet's personal itinerary of love sought and evaded. The last returns again to the power and intentions of time, surmounted in the second poem but in conclusion exerted explicitly against Cynthia, the foremost character of Propertius' invention.

Verbal echoes draw attention to the parallelisms.[11] Poems 1 and 24, for instance, share the communality of praise. In the first poem the eulogy given by others to Roman *annales* (15) becomes by the poem's end praise that will finally be given the poet by Rome (35). Poem 24 sees laudation twice bestowed by the poet on Cynthia (3, 5). But it is the Propertian addiction to the metaphor of journey that most strengthens unity.[12] The first poem of the book is built around the poetic general's conquering arrival "with horses crowned" (*coronatis equis,* 10). Poem 24 sees Propertius safely landed from the voyage of turbulent love, pointing out his duly garlanded ships *(coronatae carinae,* 15). Each elegy ends with prayers *(vota).* The one set is addressed to Apollo in the hope that his tomb will be honored with glory. The other was once offered vainly to deaf Jupiter, whereas the poet can now dedicate himself to *Mens Bona,* goddess of clear thought. Apollo senses Propertius' proper place in the canon of his art. *Mens Bona* salvages him, in a more physical sense, from love's wrecking cares.

An exclamation central to poem 2 presses its connection with poem 25:

fortunata, meo si qua es celebrata libello!
carmina erunt formae tot monumenta tuae. (3. 2. 17-18)

As the final lines reassure us, both *nomen* and *decus* survive time with the help of *ingenium*. The poet's songs are the eternal "monuments" of his girl's loveliness.[13] Enduring assurance of reputation and true continuance of "grace" are dependent on the benediction of a poet's wit which whisks itself and its subject out of death's precinct. The parallelism exposes poem 25 as bitter and ironic. The valedictory elegy does indeed establish the *nomen* of Cynthia and secure the power of song to immortalize. But what poetic *decus* now freezes in deathless record is the evolving loss of personal *decus*. From a timeless perspective we watch the inroads of human time on a woman's *forma*. Wizened Cynthia's enslavement to mortality is celebrated in immortal words as one "grace" forever preserves the loss of another.

The second poem begins with the hope that the poet's girl, and no doubt his reader, will rejoice in the touch of his verses' wonted music, but the sounds of the final poem are not pleasant. Ribald laughter, mourning, weeping, chiding could not bring much joy. But the harshest alteration takes us from the Orphic voice, bending formidable nature, even the nature of death, through charm heard, to the page singing its creative curse against a piteous creature whose comeliness, like the tenuous substantiality of some elegiac Sibyl, now forever fades. Both the poet and his imagination's most prominent theme are objects of ridicule, the first by the world at large, the second in his mind's eye.

To read linearly is therefore to complete a poetic circle whose center is three poems dealing specifically with Rome. There is reason to see this structuring chiasmus extending inward from the framing poems still further. Poems 3 and 23 deal in diverse ways with the writing of poetry, the first more concerned with the content, the second with the communication, of song. Poems 4 and 22, 5 and 21, all deal with a variety of comings and goings from Rome.[14] The intimacy between the last two is particularly impressive. The first is a spiritual *recusatio*. As age, and a heightening of genre, comes upon the poet, his deeper thought will turn from elegy not to epic and Homer's tradition at Rome but to Hesiod and Lucretius and the problems of physiology and eschatology. The second is a more literal leave-taking, renouncing the torture of passion unrequited for the setting of Plato and Menander. Poems 6 and 20 turn inward and initiate a series of poems which alternate or combine subjective and objective, private and public, personal and historical until we reach Rome at the center. The abstractions that rule our lives, the signs by which we communicate our feelings, and the mental and physical journeyings that symbolize the progressions of our emotional and intellectual lives are salient themes here and throughout the book.

The twenty-fourth poem, however, helps open out a still grander

structural pattern of which the third book becomes only the final segment. Elegy 24 not only varies the autobiographical impulse of the book's first poem, it also carefully alludes to the initial elegies of the first book. The eyes of Cynthia that first seized the poet become now his admiring eyes by which she had been made too haughty. They glance back at time past, first to her, then to himself. Key references in 3. 24 to *forma, amor, figura, color* and *candor* are likewise focal in the second elegy of the *Monobiblos* which is concerned with the difference between what is natural and artifical in human beauty. Culture falsifies natural attractiveness, warns the poet, worried especially when a third party may be involved. The later poem turns presentiment feared into truth experienced. But in 3. 24 we are not merely beholding the distinction between seeming and being or superficiality and depth. What is truly false about Cynthia is not that her beauty is fraudulent enough to dupe the poet, as he now admits that it had, but that her trust in it is misplaced. As the last poem makes clear, the poet too had lived by a form of *fides*, fidelity toward his love and allegiance to the "forms" of elegy. For Cynthia to rely on *forma*, whether spontaneous or not, is to forget where true affection lies.

The suffering and survival of the poet himself are central to what follows (3. 24. 9-14):

quod mihi non patrii poterant avertere amici,
eluere aut vasto Thessala saga mari,
hoc ego non ferro, non igne coactus, et ipsa
naufragus Aegaea – vera fatebor – aqua:
correptus saevo Veneris torrebar aeno;
vinctus eram versas in mea terga manus.

Propertius makes a clear allusion to the prayer for aid in the expanded outburst which begins his collection (1. 1. 25-8):

et vos, qui sero lapsum revocatis, amici,
quaerite non sani pectoris auxilia.
fortiter et ferrum saevos patiemur et ignis,
sit modo libertas quae velit ira loqui.

In the opening elegy sorcerers or friends are beseeched to intercede with help to gain the lover his liberty. Poem 3. 24 still admits that although successful help from witchcraft or from a father's friends was then impossible, now he can at least voice the truth under no form of compulsion. There is no need for instruments of torture. In at last speaking out what was and is, the poet projects his cure. The first poem ends with advice to those unlike the poet "to whom the god has bowed with easy ear." They should remain steadfast. If

they offer "slow ears" to the poet's commendation of stability, much sorrow will be their lot. At the conclusion of 3. 24 the poet in his own person, rejected by deaf Jupiter, offers himself to the shrine of Sanity to complete his escape from the agony that his former constancy ultimately brought. The verbal cycle completed means not the renewal of love's chains but the end of a complex linear strand that began in madness and the "taints of lust" and ends at last in wisdom and a return to health.

It is the penultimate, not the final elegy of the third book that looks back to the initial poems of books 1 and 3. The last poem, though intimate with the second elegy of its book, therefore stands more nearly alone. It receives special stress as a poetic seal. Propertius' initiation of book 3 spoke pridefully of poetry's inheritance and power. His conclusion, a melancholy, bitter vision of life's enchantment withering away, is a more traditional elegy. It bears comparison with the sad specificity of the *sphragis* of book 1 in which the poet defines himself and his birthplace through a cousin's death and the sepulchres of a neighboring land.[15] Elegy 3. 25 is also a petering out, but we have added interest from the poet's patent awareness of his art. Cynthia is the beginning and the end. At the start she rules the poet who smarts under her wiles. At the finale the further dimension of a poet's assured artistry, clinical for all its emotionalism, gains its revenge by cursing with immortality her subjection to time's ravages.

Life and death, imagination and corporeality, are intertwined in the poems that begin and end book three and, in different guises, book one as well. This pattern of concentric balances constructs for the reader a design of mental space which holistically counteracts any linear dwindling. Thematic variety in a series of poems nourished by alternatives or the familiar elegiac pattern of emotions roused and spent are aesthetic servants of a grandly united design.

Several aspects of this balanced structure are confirmed by reference to the patterning of his first three books of *Odes* by Horace, a poet who also lays studied claim to a priestly vocation as he becomes assured of the magnitude of his accomplishment.[16] Meter and careful frame of reference link *Maecenas atavis* (*Odes* 1. 1) with *Exegi monumentum* (3. 30). The latter poem also deliberately echoes the solipsistic assertiveness of *Odi profanum vulgus* which opens a third book of poems as intricate in arrangement as Propertius' parallel accomplishment. Yet *Exegi monumentum* also stands apart. *Odes* 1. 1 and 2. 29, like *Epistles* 1. 1 and 1. 19, are addressed to Maecenas. The last poem no longer offers apostrophe as a pretense at dependence but lays claim to a unique accomplishment through which the poet also stands alone.[17]

In certain respects Propertius' generic accomplishment is also parallel to that of his great contemporary. Horace not only had his models in Sappho and Alcaeus, but could also follow the heritage of Pindar and raise the stature of the ode to the point where lyric could unflinchingly embrace themes of a

public and heroic nature. Propertius in his turn reasserts his inheritance from Greek political elegy to combine a persona which speaks out on ethical and emotional matters with a style of reserve. Unless in the lost poetry of Gallus, the Latin elegy had not before this crucial moment found a voice with which to address society at large on consequential matters. After the publication of Propertius' fourth book it would not discover it again, for the *Amores* of Ovid kills by reversion. Where Propertius desexualizes, moving away from tactile realities to more objective analysis of Roman ideology and its paradoxes, Ovid merely ironizes the genre and its contents out of existence. Fascination with entertainment for its own sake bespeaks a measure of vapidity. In his terms Ovid stops where Propertius also concludes, with the end of love and with bitter renunciation. But whereas Ovid rounds off subjective elegy by leading his reader to the emptiness of erotic play as generic exhaustion, Propertius shifts his emphasis into other spheres, but without losing the contemplative bias that the third book so clearly asserts.

Restricted to the elegiac couplet, Propertius lacks one of Horace's major weapons for diversifying poetic expression. That he succeeds in challenging the reader by a wide-ranging stylistic and ideological breadth is a measure of his triumph. Loyal to his poetic heritage but also to a grander idiosyncratic vocation, he lifts elegy to a level of intent hitherto unexplored. His third book is a worthy companion to those contemporary masterpieces of Augustan Rome, the *Odes* of Horace and Virgil's *Aeneid*. Each has its deeply subjective side, yet at the same time each casts a cautious, not totally dissimilar eye on modern Roman man and his ambiguous success.[18]

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NOTES

[1] Book 3 has not been much admired of late. Miss Hubbard, sensing a tentative tone in the writing, speaks of the loss "of the dramatic power of the love poem in his earlier manner" (1975.89), of "an exhaustion of the genre" *(ibid.)* in the middle poems, and of "the tedium inescapable in the spectacle of a good poet in an impasse" *(ibid.)*. J. P. Sullivan, failing to discover the first book's immediacy in the third, considers poem 15 "the poetic heart of the book" (1976.39) because of its committed eroticism. Though he finds the opening of the third book is "solid and well arranged," he feels "the disposition of the closing poems, uneven in quality, is most disappointing" (*ibid.*, 40).

[2] For a brief summary of recent views on the structure of book 3 see Putnam 1977.253.n.19. Though our interpretations differ over details, I agree with Courtney (1970.48ff.) that linearity is essential to the book's composition. Camps (1966.4) confirms the established view that

the beginning and end of the book are made up of two groupings of five poems but does not press any intimacy, chiastic or otherwise, between them.

The possibility of utilizing chiastic balances among poems within individual books as a poetic tool is dismissed by Williams (1968.480). He writes: ". . . if a book consists of a roll of paper, how can it reasonably occur to a poet to create a significant balance between poems at the beginning and at the end of the same book?" This, one of "the hard realities of the ancient world," would presumably mean that an ancient reader, because he unfolds a roll rather than turns a page, felt no sense of climax or balance as a book progressed other than that engendered by the straightforward movement from one poem to the next (of which Propertius is a brilliant master). I suspect that this *dictum* underestimates the mnemonic aptitude of the Roman mind and the readiness of an author of any age to take multifaceted advantage of his reader's competence.

[3] For precise surveys of the influence of Callimachean aesthetics on Roman poetry from the neoterics on, see Clausen (1964.181ff.) and Ross (1975.5f). Ross (120f.) also discusses the special importance of Callimachus in the third book and (125ff.) Propertius' altering goals therein. He finds the change from the first two books of elegies primarily in terms of a greater historical, more explicitly Roman emphasis in the poet's themes and concerns.

[4] I cannot agree with those commentators (e.g., Camps 1966, *ad loc.*) who interpret lines 35-40 as a separate elegy.

[5] Miss Hubbard (1974.114f.) sees Propertius yielding in poem 9 to pressure from Maecenas that he now write Roman *aitia* (cf. also Ross 1975.126f.). Since the poetic course is already embarked upon (*coeptae*, 57), not merely contemplated, I would urge a different emphasis. Since there is little to praise in Rome, there is, here at least, small reason to write about it – and only then if Maecenas leads the way. The poem reconciles Maecenas to Propertius and offers good reason why he should not take such a stand. It is a *recusatio*, not a preliminary to the fourth book. For a further alternative view cf. Bennett 1968.335ff.

[6] Further connections between poem 13 and its neighbors are enumerated by Nethercut 1970b and Jacobson 1976. Michelfeit also sees poem 13 as the axis of concentric balances but his labelling (poems 9 and 17 are concerned with "poetry"; poems 10 and 16 are "elegies") betrays a certain facility.

For a discussion of the meaning and use of the term *vates* by Propertius with important bearing on his stance as seer in the third book, see Van Sickle 1975.117ff.

[7] In his important article on "Horace and the Elegists" Otis (1945) comes to an opposite conclusion. Though Otis' view of elegy's neoteric inheritance is well taken, my own thesis is otherwise at variance to his. For the very reason that his exposure of contemporary ethical problems is in no way veiled, an exposure initiated in book 1, carried through more openly in book 2 and brought to high polish in the third book, Propertius is securing the Romanization of elegy. To be anti-governmental is of itself to be neither apolitical nor truly anti-Roman.

For perceptive reappraisal of the relationship between Augustus and his poets see Johnson 1974.171ff.

[8] The repetitions of *iura* and *bona* (1-2) in the concluding couplet (33-4) unify the poem while *bona* itself is a careful link with the preceding elegy (3. 13. 60).

[9] The words *via* and *iter* appear five times in the poem, on three occasions ending lines. The participle *amans* ends lines 11, 19 and 27. The "literal" bow to Callimachus' metaphor of poetic fineness (re. *Aetia* 1. 25-28Pf.) may not be unintentional, especially as it follows on the more abstract typology of a poet's invulnerability.

[10] For another interpretation which sees these final poems as Propertius' farewell to his mistress and to the writing of love elegy, see Burck 1959. His interpretation is challenged by Bennett (1969) whose assumptions are in turn questioned by Koniaris (1971).

[11] Flach 1967.113-4 correctly sees the relationship of 1. 1. 1 and 3. 24. 2 and the cycle thus formed by the echo. In order to make his pattern of reverberation fit stringently, poems 3. 24 and 3. 25 must be seen as one. But reasons against such a merger carry greater weight than arguments in favor of union. For the latter it must be said that the combined line numbers of poems 24 and 25 equal the length of 3. 1. But the groupings of five and the pronounced ideological break after what would become line 20 of the poem argue tellingly against unification. The Neapolitanus separates the poems as do the majority of critics, among them Barber, Shackleton Bailey, and Camps.

[12] The appearance of *versus* in book 3 only at 3. 1. 8 and 3. 24. 4 is another small connection between the two poems.

[13] Propertius' only other mentions of *decus* concern strictly physical beauty and occur early in book 1 (1. 2. 5; 1. 4. 13 and, in conjecture, 26). The use of *decus* in 3. 2 seems to imply that sexual "grace" lives on in the "glory" a poet's genius can bestow.

[14] On the interconnection between the first five elegies see Nethercut 1961.389ff. and 1970a *passim;* also Baker 1968.35ff.

For a differing attempt to link poems 3 and 23 see Juhnke 1971.118. Baker 1969.333ff. sees the loss of the tablets as metaphoric for the loss of the elegiac world.

For an alternative interpretation of poem 23 which also places it carefully in the sequence of the final poems see Jacobson 1976.171f.

[15] On 1. 22 and its relationship to book 1 as a whole see Putnam 1976 *passim.*

[16] For various views on the relationship between Propertius and Horace see Flach 1967; Nethercut 1970a; Jozefowicz 1974; Sullivan 1976.12-31. Solmsen (1948) surveys the influence of *Odes* 3. 30 on the initial elegies of book 3.

It is a received assumption in histories of Latin literature that Horace, the older and presumably superior writer, must be the leader and Propertius, the younger, lesser genius, the follower. That influence could in fact run the other way is a thesis rarely, if ever, proposed.

[17] *Epistles* 1. 19, largely an autobiography of the spirit, looks backward to embrace the *Odes* and *Epodes* in its meditation on originality. *Epistles* 1. 20, with its factual reminiscence back to *Satires* 1. 6, seeks to embrace the poet's whole production.

[18] I would like to thank Professors William Nethercut, John Van Sickle and James Zetzel for their helpful criticism.