Propertius 4.8.77f.

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All we can say with confidence is that the Greek game πόλεις may have been the same as, or very like, *LL*[46].

46 I must here express my thanks to Professor Heinz Hofmann, who invited me to read an earlier version of this paper at a celebration on 25th April 1992 in Groningen to mark the retirement of our friend, Dr. H. Schoonhoven; to Professor Margarethe Billerbeck, who secured me photocopies of obscure publications; to the Director of the Beethoven-Gymnasium in Bonn, who provided me with a copy of a paper by A. Schmitt, "Spiele wie die Römer spielten", *Jahresbericht des Beethoven-Gymnasiums* (1977-78) 17-33, which constructs modern games with the information we have on Roman games; and to drs. J. P. Jongejan, who sent me a photograph of a *tabula* for *LL* at Rome. I am obliged to the editors' referees for some useful criticisms and alternative ideas. They suggested I refer readers also to J. Väterlein, *Roma ludens. Kinder und Erwachsene beim Spiel im antiken Rom*, Heuremata 5 (Amsterdam 1976) and the review by H. Herter in *Gnomon* 50 (1978) 675-678.

Propertius 4.8.77f.

By Allan Kershaw, Pennsylvania State University

Cynthia lays down the law:

> *colla cave inflectas ad summum obliqua theatrum,*
> *aut lectica tuae sudet aperta morae.*

Sudet has been most recently, and roundly, condemned by W. S. Watt (*Mus-Helv* 49, 1992, 238): "Editors who defend *sudet* are wasting their effort; it is quite certainly corrupt." Two problems, it seems to me, remain: one concerns the text, the other interpretation.

First, the variant *operta* (V^2Vo) has in modern times been disregarded. This neglect might be the result of Lachmann's comment, "*Operta* scribas an *aperta* nihil interest. Puellae vehebantur in operta lectica, quae aperitur, cum deposita est ad colloquendum." I suggest that the choice of word here is of great importance to the understanding of this couplet. As part of her *formula legis* (4.8.74) Cynthia forbids Propertius to look for other girls under any circumstances; whether they are on *open* view in the theatre (77), or, quite the contrary, they are concealed from view in a *closed* carriage.

This contrast between what is readily visible and what is not appears elsewhere in Propertius (2.15.5f.):

> *nam modo nudatis mecumst luctata papillis,*
> *interdum tunica duxit operta moram.*

A passage not only of interest for the diction, but one which also points to the meaning of *mora* in our present passage. At Propertius 2.15.6 (above), the love-making is real enough, but even if sexual activity is only anticipated the erotic nuance of *mora* is not necessarily precluded; cf. (e.g.) Ovid (*Ars* 3.473f.):

postque brevem rescribe moram: mora semper amantes
incitat, exiguum si modo tempus habet.

Mora in our passage should be understood as a period during which sexual expectations are heightened; it is not so much Propertius' tardiness but the reason for it that bothers Cynthia.

If this interpretation of *mora* is correct, Gruter's *se det* for *sudet* fits nicely, since *dare*, as is well known, also has an erotic sense. Read

aut lectica tuae se det operta morae.

Morae I take to be 'dative of the object for which', with *tuae* replacing the more usual *tibi*. The real import of the line being "don't let a closed litter offer itself to you as a sexually exciting interlude". This sense is very close to that offered by Professor Watt's (tentative) *spem det* (loc. cit. above). *Spem*, however, would take away from the double-entendre; as it is, both *se det* and *morae* are deliberately, and suggestively, open.