

# Propertiana

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## Propertiana

By W. S. Watt, Aberdeen

1, 11, 17f.    *non quia perspecta non es mihi cognita fama,  
sed quod in hac omnis parte timetur amor.*

Propertius gives his reasons for wishing that Cynthia should spend her time at Baiae in the pleasures of boating and swimming rather than in the company of other men.

“No plausible explanation of *in hac parte timetur* has been forthcoming”, S.B. (p. 35), who proceeds to reject the commonly held view that *in hac parte* = *in ista regione*, i.e. *Bais*; the natural meaning of the phrase is ‘in this matter’ or ‘in this respect’, which yields no clear sense in the context. Some have wished to alter *timetur* (e.g. to *ueretur* or *tenetur*), but *timetur* seems to be guaranteed by 20 *culpa timoris erit*. No one has suspected *parte*, but this may be the corrupt word. I suggest *sorte*, “in my present circumstances, separated as I am here in Rome from you in Baiae, any love-affair, even an innocent one, arouses apprehension”. For this meaning of *sors* (in effect, a synonym of *fortuna*) see the passages listed in OLD sense 8b, e.g. Sil. 11, 56 *nulla sorte*, ‘under no circumstances’. *Parte* and *sorte* are variants at Sen. Ag. 104; and at Ov. epist. 8, 101 *pars haec una mihi* e.q.s. I think that *pars* should be *sors*.

1, 13, 7ff.    *perditus in quadam tardis pallescere curis  
incipis, et primo lapsus abire gradu.  
haec erit illarum contempti poena doloris:  
10        multarum miseras exiget una uices.  
haec tibi uulgares istos compescet amores,  
nec noua quaerendo semper amicus eris.*

Gallus, the persistent philanderer, has at last fallen in love with a girl.

In 10 *multarum miseras uices* has sometimes been taken as the equivalent of *multarum miserarum uices*, but S.B. (p. 39) is justified in calling this ‘a monstrous enallage’. As an epithet of *uices* editors give *miseras* the sense of ‘pitiable’, ‘grievous’, ‘lamentable’. This cannot be ruled out, but it seems to me to be feeble by contrast with Markland’s undervalued emendation *seras*, which very appropriately carries on the idea of *tardis* in 7 (the philandering has been

\* The following modern editions are referred to: H. E. Butler and E. A. Barber (Oxford 1933); W. A. Camps (Cambridge 1961–67); G. P. Goold (Loeb edition, London 1990). Page references are given to A. E. Housman, *Classical Papers* (Cambridge 1972) and to S.B. = D. R. Shackleton Bailey, *Propertiana* (Cambridge 1956).

going on for a long time); Markland adduced 3, 6, 32 *poena erit ante meos sera sed ampla pedes*. For the confusion of the two words cf. Sil. 4, 399, where *seros* (preceded, as here, by a word ending in *m*) has been corrupted to *miseros*; Val. Fl. 2, 294, where *serum* and *miserum* are variants; and [Quint.] Decl. mai. 19, 7 (p. 378, 17 H.) *seria* Schulting: *misera* codd.

In 12 editors have been almost unanimous in retaining *amicus*, but they have shown no unanimity about the meaning of the line. Some take *semper* with *amicus*, others with *quaerendo*; with *amicus* some supply *illi* (the girl called *haec* in the previous line), others construe *amicus* with *quaerendo* (dative). Here are two translations: 'and no longer will you always be on the hunt for new adventures' (Camps); 'nor, when you are for ever seeking new attachments, will you be her friend' (Goold). Since neither of these (nor any other) follows on convincingly from the hexameter I conclude that *amicus* is corrupt. The conjecture most often reported is Guyet's *iniquus*, which would presumably mean 'unfair', almost 'caddish'. This loses any attractions it may have when compared with what I regard as the true emendation, *inultus*, carrying on the idea of *poena* in 9; 'you will not go on for ever philandering with impunity' makes an excellent counterpart to the preceding hexameter. Propertius uses *inultus* once elsewhere (4, 9, 70), but in a different sense; *inult* and *amic* each consists of 7 minims.

2, 18, 35f.     *ipse tuus semper tibi sit custodia lectus,*  
                  *nec nimis ornata fronte sedere uelis.*

Cynthia should avoid excessive adornment.

How a bed could be a woman's 'guardian' is far from clear, and the same can be said about the connection between the hexameter and the pentameter. Goold alone shows dissatisfaction with *lectus*, which he emends to *uultus*. This I regard as being on the right lines but not quite the right word. I would read *cultus*, 'adornment', which Propertius uses at 1, 2, 5 and 16. Corruption due to the inversion of three letters (*cul* > *luc*) is abundantly illustrated by Housman, Manilius i, pp. lvi–lvii.

2, 25, 1ff.     *unica nata meo pulcherrima cura dolori,*  
                  *excludit quoniam sors mea saepe ueni,*  
                  *ista meis fiet notissima forma libellis.*

2 ueni ex uenit N

The transmitted reading *excludit* must be taken as the equivalent of *prohibet*, with 'ueni' or 'saepe ueni' (in quotation marks) as its object. This improbable construction is rendered still less probable by a consideration of Propertius's use of *excludere*: of its five occurrences, three (1, 5, 20; 1, 16, 8; 3, 25, 15) refer to an 'exclusus amator' and two (2, 16, 27; 3, 16, 20) are corrupt. There is

no doubt that Scaliger's *excludi*, which was supported by both Madvig and Housman (p. 242), is right (although Goold is apparently the only modern editor to adopt it); the only question is what to read at the end of the line. Scaliger and Madvig were content with *uenit*, to which however Housman (like Baehrens before him) objected that one would then expect *mihi* rather than *mea*; he therefore decided in favour of Lachmann's *uehit* (here too he has been followed by Goold), although the use of *uehere* with an infinitive for object might well arouse suspicion. There is a much better solution: *fuit*. For the confusion of forms of *esse* and *uenire* cf. Cic. Att. 4, 4 *Cincius fuit/uenit*, 8, 11 D, 4 *Corfini fuissent/uenissent*, 10, 16, 1 *Dionysius fuit/uenit*; Ov. Trist. 2, 126 *ut fuerit/uenerit ut*; Sil. 8, 604 *superfuit/superuenit*; Mart. 3, 50, 6 *uenit/fuit*.

2, 33, 23f.     *non audis et uerba sinis mea ludere, cum iam  
flectant Icarii sidera tarda boues.*

"There seems to be no exact parallel for *ludere* of speech, 'play idly in the air'", S.B. (p. 129). This is perhaps not surprising; it seems a fantastic idea. Camps paraphrases 'you let me talk on unheeded'; I suggest that the Latin for this is *uerba sinis me* (so codd. dett.) *fundere* or *me effundere*. The letters *f* and *l* are easily confused; and there may be a very similar corruption at 3, 18, 1, where Baehrens's *tundit* for *ludit* is very attractive. For a distinction between *fundere* and *effundere* (the former implying greater control) see Sen. Epp. 100, 2 *non effundere orationem sed fundere*.

3, 4, 1ff.     *arma deus Caesar dices meditatur ad Indos,  
et freta gemmiferi findere classe maris.  
magna, uiri, merces: parat ultima terra triumphos;  
Tigris et Euphrates sub tua iura fluent.*

Several expedients have been suggested to eliminate the vocative *uiri* in 3, which cannot consist with *tua* (= *Caesaris*) in 4. Of these quite the most bizarre is that adopted by Goold, Wistrand's *Quiris* (put forward in his *Miscellanea Propertiana*, Göteborg 1977, 9ff.); this is never found as a vocative, and even as a nominative it is attested only in one archaic formula. I should read <q>*uidem*, comparing two lines of similar structure to ours, one of which actually occupies the same position (line 3) in its poem: 2, 3, 39 *digna quidem facies pro qua uel obiret Achilles*; 3, 13, 3 *certa quidem tantis causa et manifesta ruinis*. A somewhat similar corruption has occurred at Liv. 21, 54, 2, where *quibus* has become *uiribus* in the paradosis; at Mart. 11, 79, 3 *quidem* and *uia* are variants.

The change from the third person *Caesar* in 1 to the second person *tua* in 4 can be paralleled by 2, 34, 61 *Vergilio ... 67 tu* and by 3, 11, 35 *Pompeio ... 38 tibi*. Other examples of the phenomenon in Propertius, listed in Butler-Barber's note on 2, 9, 15–16, have been emended away by one editor or another.

3, 13, 39f.    *corniger †atque dei† uacuam pastoris in aulam  
dux aries saturas ipse reduxit oues.*

These lines occur in a "picture of the primitive pastoral life of mankind" (Housman, p. 370). Livestock returned home of their own accord (*ipse*) at the end of the day (Verg. Ecl. 4, 21; Georg. 3, 316; Hor. Epod. 16, 49f.).

To replace *atque dei* a very large number of conjectures have been proposed. The two most favoured have been *Arcadii* (perhaps with a suggestion of the god Pan) and *Idaei* (the reference being to Paris); neither of these can be accepted without misgivings. I think that the answer may possibly be one which involves a minimal change, *atque adeo*. This combination is found once in Augustan poetry (Ov. Trist. 3, 1, 77) and fairly frequently in post-Augustan epic; it is less prosaic than *atque etiam*, which Propertius uses at 2, 34, 35.

Little attention has recently been paid to *uacuam*; according to Camps, it suggests 'unguarded', the age being one of innocence and security. I think that it should be construed with *pastoris* (for *uacuu*s with a genitive see OLD sense 3c); in those days sheep required no supervision from human beings. So Baehrens, but he unnecessarily changed *uacuam* to *uacuas*.

3, 16, 11f.    *nec tamen est quisquam sacros qui laedat amantes:  
Scironis media scilicet ire uia.*

The manuscripts vary between *scilicet* and *si licet*. It is usual to adopt the old emendation *sic licet*, where *sic* means 'si quis amat'. Goold, with some justification, finds this awkward, and prefers to adopt Heinsius's conjecture *his licet*, even though this requires the further, otherwise unnecessary, change of *media uia* to *medias uias*. This change can be avoided, and the advantage of a plural retained, by reading *quis licet*; Propertius uses *quis* three times elsewhere.

3, 17, 27f.    *... et tibi per mediam bene olentia flumina Naxon,  
unde tuum potant Naxia turba merum.*

One of the legends about Bacchus (*tibi*) which the poet will relate.

The repetition of the proper name has aroused suspicion. Modern editors who feel such suspicion generally change *Naxon* to *Diam* (the former being regarded as a gloss on the latter), but S.B. (p. 192) says "I am rather inclined to think that *Naxon* is sound and has produced *Naxia* in the pentameter"; he suggests that the ousted word may have been *Bacchica* or *Euia* or *Nysia*. Perhaps it was not a proper name at all; in that case *ebria turba* (as at 4, 4, 78 and Ov. Ib. 610) may be a possibility.



4, 1, 13f.     *bucina cogebat priscos ad uerba Quirites:*  
                   *centum illi in prato saepe senatus erat.*

«*Saepe* ('often') is rather pointless, but not intolerably so for Propertius. Conjectures which make it abl. of *saepes* are not attractive", S.B. (p. 216). I take it to be an unusual way of saying 'per multos annos'.

4, 3, 11f.     *haecne marita fides et †parce auia noctes†,*  
                   *cum rudis urgenti bracchia uicta dedi?*

*parce* N: *pac(a)t(a)e* cett.

Arethusa reproves her husband for his prolonged absence on military service.

Of the many attempts to restore sense in line 11 most have adopted some form of the participle *pactus*. Not so Housman (p. 267): he conjectured *et <primae> praemia noctis*, and his *praemia* has enjoyed much more favour than it deserves; it has now been decisively rejected by J. D. Morgan in CQ 36 (1986) 193. Another important step towards the reconstruction of the passage was taken by G. P. Goold in BICS Suppl. 51 (1988) 34f.: he is the first "to perceive with some clarity the discordant note struck by the whole connotation of *nox, noctes*"; in fact, some form of *nox* has bedevilled every previous reconstruction. Goold would substitute *nuptae*, reading *et pacta haec praemia nuptae*, 'the bridal gifts you pledged'; this I find still unconvincing, and not merely because it retains *praemia*. The word with which I would replace *noctes* is *nobis* (similarly at Lucr. 3, 321 Lachmann earned the plaudits of his successors by emending *noctis* or *noctes* to *nobis*); I suggest *et pacta haec foedera nobis*. Both *foedera* and *pignora* are mentioned as possibilities by Morgan (l.c.), and both are used in the description of a love-contract at 3, 20, 15–26. At line 69 below Arethusa again reminds her husband of their marriage *foedera*; even more relevant would be 4, 7, 21 *foederis heu pacti* if Palmer's *pacti* (for *taciti*) is right, as I think it is.

4, 4, 47ff.     *cras, ut rumor ait, tota pugnabitur urbe:*  
                   *tum cape spinosi rorida terga iugi.*  
                   *lubrica tota uia est et perfida: quippe latentis*  
                   *fallaci celat limite semper aquas.*

Tarpeia, addressing Tatius in her imagination, makes the point that next day's celebration of the Parilia would present him with a good opportunity to launch a surprise assault on Rome.

In 47 *pugnabitur* is "indefensible, as the hypothetical plan which follows is relevant only to a *surprise* attack", J. L. Marr, CQ 20 (1970) 171. Of the half-dozen replacements which have been suggested the two most favoured have been: (a) *pigrabitur* ('people will be lazy'), proposed by Housman (p. 38);

the sense is not particularly appropriate in the context, and the word is an archaic one which should not lightly be introduced by conjecture; (b) *potabitur*, proposed by Rossberg; in support of this one could adduce 78 below, where *ebria turba* shows that at the celebration the drink did indeed flow freely. However that phrase suggests another possibility, *turbabitur*; for the impersonal use one could adduce Verg. Ecl. 1, 12 *turbatur*, and for the corruption of *turba* to *pugna* Sil. 17, 410 (confusion of *t* and *p* is very frequent).

In 48–49 Goold is amply justified in adopting Rossberg's *tum* for *tu* and his *latentis* for the transmitted *tacentis*; see his article in HSCP 71 (1966) 88, where he also argues convincingly for replacing the irrelevant *semper* with a noun which can be the subject of *celat*. He champions Palmer's *caespes* on the strength of Ov. Fast. 6, 702 *excipit abiectam caespite ripa suo*. I do not believe that *caespes* could have been corrupted to *semper*. Much more credible would be *semita* (once more the confusion of *t* and *p* will have played a part); the word is used six times by Propertius. Elision at this point of the pentameter is found at 3, 4, 14 and 3, 11, 22.

4, 8, 77f.      *colla caue inflectas ad summum obliqua theatrum,*  
                    *aut lectica tuae sudet aperta morae.*

Cynthia forbids the poet to seek out other girls.

Editors who defend *sudet* are wasting their effort; it is quite certainly corrupt. The most favoured emendation has been Gruter's *se det*, 'see to it that no open litter offers itself to your tarrying self', *lectica* standing for its occupant. This may be right, but I wonder whether *spem det* should be considered: 'see to it that no open litter arouses hope (of making a conquest) in you as you slacken your pace'. For the *p/u* variation see Housman, p. 102.