

AMOR IMPROBUS, FELIX QUI, AND TARDUS APOLLO:  
THE *MONOBIBLOS* AND THE *GEORGICS*

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**B**ETWEEN 35 and 25 B.C. the Roman world saw the publication of Horace's *Satires* 1 and 2, Propertius' *Monobiblos* and, probably, Book 2 of his elegies, Horace's *Epodes*, Vergil's *Georgics*, and Tibullus, Book 1. This extraordinary poetic activity stimulated and, no doubt, was stimulated by poetic debates which reflected and shaped these poets' understanding and reception of each other's work. Horace comments on Propertius, Vergil, and Tibullus; Propertius responds to the *Eclogues* and to Horace and Tibullus; Tibullus reworks the *Eclogues*. So far as I know, however, a precise programmatic relationship, explicit or implicit, between Propertius' *Monobiblos* and Vergil's *Georgics* has neither been discussed nor established.<sup>1</sup> Possible influences are noted in the commentaries, but the consequences of these influences are not developed in terms of either publication date or poetic program. The reason may lie in the fact that putatively parallel passages are noted under the rubric of "influence." As long as the similar passages reveal only "influence," nothing precise can be said about the relationship between the poems or poets. In this essay I will establish two precise references by Propertius to the *Georgics* and will explore their implications in terms of Propertius' view of his poetic project. But first a few words about the kind of reference I am discussing.

Lines, words, or poetic devices that may owe something to another poet are not the same as lines or words meant to be read as references. The former may derive from many sources, including public readings and casual discussions; the latter require a fixed text. In terms of the former, it is probable that Vergil and Propertius, as members of Maecenas' circle, would have known each other's work in progress and would have been influenced by each other. This circumstance would inevitably lead to general similarities of poetic vocabulary and practice and to those lines in the *Monobiblos* which commentators have noted may owe something to the *Georgics*.<sup>2</sup> Similarities of this kind do not *as similarities* carry any precise or identifiable meaning but are

1. See P. J. Enk, *Sex. Propertii Elegiarum, Liber Secundus*, vol. 1 (Leyden, 1962), p. 28: "In primo Propertii libro, si I. 12. 15 = Georg. II. 490 excipimus, nulli versus Vergilii versibus similes inveniuntur. . . ." As will be apparent in what follows, I am interested here in precise and programmatic reference, not merely to expressions which may be said to owe something to Vergil.

2. In my opinion, the most likely of the possible echoes and influences are: *G.* 2.10–11 = 2.10; *G.* 1.293 = 3.41; *G.* 2.460 = 19.16; *G.* 4.369 = 20.8.

the product of a shared poetic culture and community. Reference of the kind that interests me here, on the other hand, is a form of that *arte allusiva* first identified by Pasquali in 1942, and since widely employed in the interpretation of Hellenistic and Augustan poetry by a number of critics.<sup>3</sup> It is an allusive reference which is both precise and interpretable. In being precise, the reference brings the original context (sometimes called a "model") into the new context as a contrast or a complement.<sup>4</sup> Thus, a poet like Catullus may correct or improve on Ennius' version of Euripides<sup>5</sup> and Vergil may suggest that as Octavian is equated with Berenice, so the *Georgics* are to be equated with the *Aetia* and he himself with Callimachus.<sup>6</sup>

In the instances I discuss below the references are programmatic, by which I mean that the relationship established by Propertius between his *Monobiblos* and Vergil's *Georgics* is one that reflects in general on Propertius' poetic project and distinguishes that project from the interests of the *Georgics*.<sup>7</sup> It should be said, however, that Propertius' general poetic program must have been developing over the course of writing the *Monobiblos*,<sup>8</sup> and that during all that time Vergil had been laboring over and refining his *Georgics*. In a sense then, Propertius may have been responding to the *Georgics* from the beginning of his poetic career. In this regard, it is possible and desirable to read of his year-long *furor* (1.1.7), with Vergil's *furor* . . . *equarum* (G. 3.260) as well as Gallus' *furor* (E. 10.38) in mind. I propose, however, that as these two poets continued to move in different directions, Propertius took advantage (perhaps in the final stages of composition of the *Monobiblos*) of the publication of the *Georgics* to suggest by precise verbal

3. Most notably in Greek studies by G. Giangrande, beginning with "'Arte Allusiva' and Alexandrian Poetry," *CQ* 17 (1967): 85–97; for Latin literature important studies of allusion can be found in D. O. Ross, *Backgrounds to Augustan Poetry: Gallus, Elegy and Rome* (Cambridge, 1974); W. Clausen, *Virgil's "Aeneid" and the Tradition of Hellenistic Poetry* (Berkeley, 1986); and R. F. Thomas, "Catullus and the Polemics of Poetic Reference (Poem 64. 1–18)," *AJP* 103 (1982): 144–64.

4. R. F. Thomas, "Vergil's *Georgics* and the Art of Reference," *HSCP* 90 (1986): 171–98, offers both practical examples and a theoretical typology of reference. The kind of reference I am exploring here falls in form under the category of "single reference" and in function under the category, "correction" (cf. Giangrande's *oppositio in imitando*, in "Arte Allusiva," pp. 85–97, *passim*). Under "single reference," Thomas notes that the poet (in this case Vergil) "intends that the reader recall the context of the model and apply that context to the new situation; such reference thereby becomes a means of imparting great significance, of making connections or conveying ideas on a level of intense subtlety" ("Art of Reference," p. 177) and that "sometimes a single and apparently unexceptionable word is intended to refer us to the model and to apply its situation to the new context" (p. 181). Under "correction," he says, "this type . . . reveals the polemical attitudes that lie close beneath the surface of much of the best poetry of Rome. The process is quite straightforward, at least in its working principles: the poet provides unmistakable indications of his source, then proceeds to offer detail which contradicts or alters that source" (p. 185). While I accept the basic principles of Thomas' typology, my own reading of reference tends to be more flexible than his and I do not believe Propertius' intention is as much corrective as it is differential.

5. See Thomas, "Catullus and Poetic Reference," pp. 146–48.

6. See Thomas, "Art of Reference," p. 177.

7. Neither my terms "poetic project" and "interests" nor my references to a poetic program should be construed narrowly to refer to "poetics." A poet's program is both substantive and formal; it includes style, technique, subject matter, relationship to tradition, etc. For a similarly broad view of what is entailed in a poet's program, see F. Cairns' discussion of Tibullus 1.1 in *Tibullus: A Hellenistic Poet at Rome* (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 11–35.

8. This would be a period of at least about five years, if the evidence of 2.8.13 is to be taken autobiographically and if 2.3 correctly suggests a short interval between the *Monobiblos* and Book 2.

allusion the relationship of his poetic project to the new and important work of his fellow poet, Vergil. Propertius' allusions to the *Georgics*, then, are a means of articulating a response which would have characterized Propertius' growing sense of his poetic project all along and which does characterize the *Monobiblos* as a whole.

It is in the nature of this kind of precise allusion or reference that the text referred to be fixed. Since the most likely event fixing a text would be its publication, the argument that follows has implications for dating the publication of the *Monobiblos*, and these I explore in an "Appendix" (below, pp. 301–2). The argument itself, however, does not stand or fall on the issue of publication. Many scenarios can be imagined in which Propertius, for his purposes of poetic self-definition, noted and responded directly and precisely to Vergilian lines and effects that define the central issues and tensions of the *Georgics*.

*Improbis et . . .*: In the opening lines of the *Monobiblos*, Propertius describes the powerful, unique, and oxymoronic effect upon him of Cynthia and Amor. He was tortured (4–6):

et caput impositis pressit Amor pedibus  
donec me docuit castas odisse puellas  
improbis, et nullo vivere consilio.

*Improbis* is striking: it is a postponed and unexpected predicative adjective. Separated from its noun by more than an hexameter, it simultaneously falls into the emphatic end position of its own clause and the emphatic first position of its line. Such an emphasis amounts to an appended proposition:<sup>9</sup> "love taught me to hate chaste girls (he was a shameless teacher!) and to live with no providential plan." And this appended proposition crystallizes Propertius' version of the familiar Catullan oxymoron, *odi et amo*.<sup>10</sup> *Improbis* is then followed by a coordinating conjunction, which sets off this formal enjambment, before the continuation of the clause: *improbis et nullo vivere consilio*.<sup>11</sup> Unexpected, emphatic, oxymoronic, and thematically crucial, in all these regards, the

9. For a description of the force of predicative constructions, see E. C. Woodcock, *A New Latin Syntax* (Cambridge, Ma., 1959), pp. 70–71 (#88). That such predication amounts to an appended proposition is clear from the translations and discussion of Woodcock, pp. 72–73 (#91): "The sense can certainly be rendered by a relative clause, but it must be of the co-ordinate or parenthetical type, which is in effect a parenthetical sentence, and is preceded by a comma. . . . The participle or adjective, so used, does not define the subject or object, but extends the statement about the subject."

10. Cf. H.-P. Stahl, *Propertius: "Love" and "War"* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985), p. 34: "Amor's predicate *improbis* is delayed to an emphasized position (first word in the pentameter) which immediately follows the words *castas odisse puellas*: the reader is supposed to realize that Propertius' new teacher here receives an epithet that is apposite to his teachings." This is certainly correct, but overlooks the note of personal complaint.

11. The word *improbis* (and its other forms which fit the hexameter rhythm) would commonly be found only in the first or the fifth dactyl of a line. Of 18 instances, Vergil puts 4 in the first dactyl, 13 in the fifth dactyl and 1 in the fourth dactyl (creating a fairly unusual coincidence of ictus and accent back to the fourth foot). Consequently, the attendant forms of syntactic emphasis mentioned above are as important as line position in determining the special effect of *improbis* in Propertius and Vergil.

*amor improbus* of Propertius 1.1.5–6 recalls the similar but more famous *labor improbus* of Vergil's *Georgics* (1.145–48):<sup>12</sup>

tum variae venere artes. labor omnia vicit  
improbus, et duris urgens in rebus egestas.  
prima Ceres ferro mortales vertere terram  
instituit . . .

Here, we find a syntactically unexpected *improbus*, postponed to emphatic final position in its clause and emphatic first position in its verse, whose enjambment is again set off and emphasized by the following *et*, and whose substantive meaning carries the weight not only of an appended proposition but of that kind of modification that gathers artifice and victory into failure and disapproval. The formal similarity, I believe, is not merely a coincidence; it is a meaningful reference.<sup>13</sup>

In both Vergil and Propertius the contrasting complexes of *labor improbus* and *amor improbus* are central to the substance of their poetic projects. The lines from the *Georgics* are commonly recognized as thematically crucial: they situate the *Georgics* “after the Fall,” they justify and qualify the poem’s didactic project, and they raise the “issues around which the poem moves.”<sup>14</sup> They locate *labor*, *improbus*, and *artes* in a general didactic situation, reflected specifically in *prima Ceres* and *instituit*, and in so doing they also locate Vergil’s task within the traditions of poetic artifice established by Callimachus.<sup>15</sup> The difficulties (or rather the richness) of the *Georgics* passage have been the cause of considerable discussion.<sup>16</sup> That need not detain us here: it can be agreed, I hope, that Vergil offers an account of *labor* which declares simultaneously the success of human invention (beginning *ut varias usus meditando extunderet artis* and ending *tum variae venere artes*, 135–45a) and the oppressive need for endless *labor* (lines 145b–59), beginning *labor omnia vicit / improbus*, passing through *mox et frumentis labor additus*, and ending *heu . . . frustra . . . solabere . . .*<sup>17</sup> Thus, the account of *labor* in the *Georgics* begins as an

12. The description of the syntax as an unexpected continuation is itself an emblem of the meaning, especially in the *Georgics* where Vergil’s point is explicitly that the Jovian dispensation involves unexpected continuations of *labor*: *improbus* = without due measure. The point is more subtle in Propertius where *donec . . . docuit* seems to promise both an end and some didaxis. Propertius’ failure to succeed with Cynthia thwarts the promise of closure and *nullo . . . consilio* undermines the promise of propositional didaxis.

13. Thomas, “Art of Reference,” p. 181, offers evidence that: “Single reference can also occur through the particular positioning of a word, or group of words, within the line, and although the recall may be slight, in such cases it is nevertheless often extremely specific. . . .” Other forms of reference include “the placing of a word at a given line number. . . . [and] imitation of a rhetorical device. . . .”

14. See R. F. Thomas, ed., *Virgil: “Georgics,”* vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1988), p. 17.

15. But with an important variation: the submerged investiture scene here is the Jovian investiture of mortals as agricultural technicians and laborers through his agent Ceres; the poet speaks for both Jupiter and Ceres.

16. H. Altevogt, *Labor improbus: Eine Vergilstudie*, *Orbis Antiquus* 8 (Münster, 1952), pp. 5–15, argued that the adjective, *improbus*, always expresses disapproval. Current commentaries accept the argument; see Thomas, “*Georgics*,” 1:92 and R. A. B. Mynors, ed., *Virgil’s “Georgics”* (Oxford, 1990), p. 30. Agreement, however, about the negative evaluation explicit in the term *improbus* (it means “negative evaluation”; not *probus*) does not resolve the “meaning” of the sentence or the passage; see G. B. Miles, *Virgil’s “Georgics”: A New Interpretation* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1980), p. 82, and M. Putnam, *Virgil’s Poem of the Earth: Studies in the “Georgics”* (Princeton, 1980), pp. 33–35, for contemporary readings of Vergil’s ambivalence.

17. Thomas, “*Georgics*,” 1:17, gives an unnecessarily pessimistic view of the Jovian dispensation, in particular he distorts Vergil’s view by making his own summary of lines 125–32 plus 136 stand for a

aetiology (*pater ipse . . . primus*, 121–22; *prima Ceres*, 147) and issues in *praecepta* (“dicendum et quae sint duris agrestibus arma,” 160, and “possum multi tibi veterum praecepta referre, / ni refugis tenuisque piget cognoscere curas,” 176–77). The promise, even if it is only a promise, that there is or could be some practical and moral direction for our engagement with the world, is never utterly abandoned and is finally the emotional basis for the poet’s cry of sympathy for the farmer who fails to labor assiduously: “quod nisi et assiduus herbam insectabere rastris . . . heu magnum alterius frustra spectabis acervum!” (155–58). *Labor improbus*, then, gathers together an irreducible nexus of need and opportunity, lack and means, hope and failure.

Propertius 1.1, as the first poem in the *Monobiblos*, serves a generally programmatic function,<sup>18</sup> and within this program *amor improbus* is thematically and generically crucial. In fact, the particular passage in which *amor improbus* appears has all the markings of another didactic and poetic investiture, *donec me [Amor] docuit . . .* and *Cynthia prima*,<sup>19</sup> but one whose practical outcome is neither success nor clarity: . . . *castas odisse puellas* (5) is notoriously ambiguous and *nullo vivere consilio* (6) amounts to asserting that the lover lives without a didactic plan. When these lines are read against the text of the *Georgics*, one can see them as an effort to confront from an elegiac perspective the premises of Vergil’s didactic scene. As the implicit comment of a poet working in a different genre with a different subject, Propertius’ reference to Vergil is both revisionary and self-defining: “My subject,” Propertius says, “is not practical didaxis or Ceres who teaches the ways of the world, but Cynthia who teaches the *aporia* of *amor improbus*.”

Beyond the phrasing and the specific and thematic content of *labor . . . improbus et* and *amor . . . improbus et*, the general context of Propertius’ passage recalls the language and concerns of the *Georgics*. In the lines immediately following Propertius’ description of his year-long *furor* and his *adversos deos*, he introduces the Milanion *exemplum* (9–16). This *exemplum*, however, the first overt instance of the *doctus poeta*,<sup>20</sup> turns

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summary of lines 125–44, thereby leaving out more lines than he summarizes. For a more balanced and more literary view of Vergil’s poem overall, see now C. Perkell, *The Poet’s Truth: A Study of the Poet in Virgil’s “Georgics”* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1989), pp. 92–100.

18. See, for instance, M. Rothstein, ed., *Die Elegien des Sextus Propertius*, vol. 1 (Berlin, 1920; reprint ed., New York, 1979), pp. 53–54 (on 1.1.1); P. Fedeli, “Osservazioni sullo stile di Propertio,” *SIFC* 41 (1969): 83; Boucher, *Etudes sur Properce* (Paris, 1965), p. 165; Commager, *A Prolegomenon to Propertius* (Cincinnati, 1974), pp. 21–26; Ross, *Backgrounds*, pp. 59–70; J. K. King, “Propertius’ Programmatic Poetry and the Unity of the *Monobiblos*,” *CJ* 71 (1975–76): 108–24; F. Cairns, “The Melanion/Atalanta *Exemplum* in Propertius, 1, 1: *videre feras* (12) and Greek Models,” in *Hommages à Jozef Veremans*, Collection Latomus 193, ed. F. Decreus and C. Deroux (Brussels, 1986), pp. 29–38; P. Fedeli, “Allusive Technique in Roman Poetry,” *Museum Philologum Londiniense* 7 (1986): 17–30; P. T. Alessi, “Propertius: *Furor*, *Ingenium*, and Callimachus,” *Studies in Latin Literature* 5 (1989): 216–32.

19. On the possible allusion to formulae of poetic initiation in Propertius 1:1, see J. Van Sickle, “*Et Gallus Cantavit*: A Review Article,” *CJ* 72 (1977): 329.

20. “Overt” is important. The opening lines, as has often been noted, rewrite an epigram by Meleager, *Anth. Pal.* 12.101. Significantly, that very elegy relates how Eros trod under foot the poet’s contempt, a contempt that came from σκηπτροφόρου σοφίας, “scepter-bearing *sophia*.” When the poet in Meleager responds in the final lines that Eros overwhelmed even Zeus himself, he retains his poetic *sophia* (by literary allusion) and provides himself with both consolation and a reassertion of his self-importance (the comparison with

out to be a counter-*exemplum*: the tale of a lover's repaid efforts is but bright foil to Propertius' dark situation. Milanion succeeded through his *labores*, a clearly *Georgic* word: *Milanion nullos fugiendo, Tulle, labores . . .*, but for Propertius these successful *labores* only reveal the more extended failures of *amor*. In Vergil, *pater ipse colendi* first (*pater primus*) moved the fields *per artem*, but in Propertius, *Cynthia prima* offers no relief and his *amor improbus* conceives no *artes*: "in me tardus Amor non ullas cogitat artis" (17). The *exemplum* itself is the vehicle both for asserting the poetic uniqueness<sup>21</sup> of Propertius' situation and for marking the limits and application of poetic learning. Tradition, represented in the tale of Milanion, offers neither precept nor consolation. In other words, the scene Propertius develops is a kind of anti-didaxis, a confession of his own failure to know what to do and an implicit proclamation that his elegy is the expression of this failure.

Looking broadly at the shape and movement of Propertius 1.1, we may note that the poem moves from Cynthia's actions and Amor's teachings (*Cynthia prima . . . donec [Amor] me docuit improbus*, 1–6), to the implicit failure of *labores* (9) and the explicit failure of *artes* (17), through the rejection of magical learning (called *labor*, 20)<sup>22</sup> to a final cry of sympathy for the similar failure of other lovers: *Heu referet quanto verba dolore mea!* (38). This general shape and flow of ideas is remarkably reminiscent of the more condensed Vergilian movement from the appearance of *artes* and indomitable *labor* (*G.* 1.145), to the technical learning of Ceres (*Prima Ceres . . . instituit*, 146–47), through the addition of more *labor* and agricultural techniques (150), to the final cry of sympathy for the farmer who fails in his efforts: "heu magnum alterius frustra spectabis acervum / concussaue famem in silvis solabere quercu" (158–59). The practical *labor* of the *Georgics*, rather like the magical *labor* of Propertius, attempts to redress a failure; however, Propertius' subject, *amor improbus*, is that which is constitutive of the failure his poetry expresses.<sup>23</sup>

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Zeus). In Propertius' revision, the *fastus* is erotic and the "question of *sophia*" is silenced. In other words, while the learned allusion implicitly asserts *sophia*, the dramatic narrative redirects the issue of *fastus* to the ethics of Eros and the practicality of action. The uselessness of the Milanion example in Propertius, then, reasserts the overthrow of the merely "scepter-bearing *sophia*" of Meleagrian hauteur. Propertian elegy, thereby, declares itself to be that which has room for learning but which is larger than that learning. This is a twofold claim to originality: a revision of subject claims originality for a truth more personal than the tales of heroes and gods, while extension of technique demonstrates a new place for learned allusion within the new subject. On Propertius as the "Meleager Romanus," see G. Giangrande, "Propertius: 'Callimachus Romanus'?" *Colloq. Prop. II* (Assisi, 1981), especially p. 157.

21. "Poetic uniqueness" is precisely qualified: Propertius' strong claim to originality is not that his experience is unique in itself, for others (he says several times) will repeat his words and *dolor*; rather, his experience is unchronicled.

22. And equated by Ross, *Backgrounds*, pp. 65–66, with "scientific poetry." It will be noted that this argument accepts many of the details of the programmatic interpretation offered by Ross, but applies that program to the *Georgics* rather than to Gallus and "the magical power of neoteric song, of 'scientific poetry.'" See further below, n. 27.

23. I do not overlook the other meaning of *labor*: not the work, but the need for work; i.e., potentially a synonym for failure: *labor improbus*. This meaning plays through Vergil's text; see *mox et frumentis labor additus*, 1.150. Ultimately, it is important to see that Propertius offers his "*amores*" as a response to the failures of *amor improbus*, just as Vergil offers his *praecepta laborum* (or *labores*) as the necessary response to the failures of the world, which failures are sometimes called *labor improbus*. *Labor improbus* is both the failure of *labor* and the need for *labor*.

In other words, *amor improbus* may be defined as the failure of *labores* and the absence of *artes*: “in me tardus Amor non ullas cogitat artis” (17).

In these contexts which address poetic resourcefulness and efficacy it is particularly significant that both passages end with a cry of sympathy. In the *Georgics* it is a cry for the isolated failure of the farmer whose labor slackens, and this situation is the one which justifies the didactic project: Vergil continues, “dicendum est et quae sint duris agrestibus arma . . . si te digna manet divini gloria ruris” (160–68). In Propertius a similar cry marks the point where the addressee, who has succumbed to *amor improbus*,<sup>24</sup> feels his failure and pain (*quanto dolore*) and thereby makes the poet’s words his own words (*referet . . . verba . . . mea*). Thus, one can say that while Vergil’s *praeceptor* is concerned to avert the potential failure of his poetic precepts, the Propertian elegist expects a more general failure. In fact, the universality of erotic failure becomes the grounds for the poet’s expectation of an ironic success: his words will find resonance and repetition in the lives of others.<sup>25</sup>

A further argument both adds to the probability that we have a Propertian revision of the project of the *Georgics* in poem 1.1, and explains further why Propertius chose this particular passage from the *Georgics* (beyond its obvious thematic significance for Vergil’s view of didaxis, poetry, and practical action). We mentioned above that the lines which in Propertius bring in *amor improbus* serve as an introduction to the Milanian *exemplum*. This passage has been shown to reflect a Gallan scene, similarly reflected by Vergil in *Eclogue* 10, and possibly a Gallan style and poetics.<sup>26</sup> All this locates Propertius’ project within the concerns of the post-neoteric generation of poets. When the applicability of the *exemplum* fails, however, we may see that the programmatic function of the *exemplum* is that of a *recusatio*.<sup>27</sup> Gallan poetic interests are shown not to work for Propertius except to the extent that they can be used as foil to the uniqueness of his experience and to the particular extension of Gallan erotic interests which Propertius will make

24. He has also learned to hate *castas puellas*: he has abandoned his own *assuetus amor* (36), and they are no longer in *tuto semper amore pares* (32).

25. For the topos that Propertian elegy depends upon erotic failure, see, for instance, 1.5.29–30 and the connection between *dolor* or *dura queri* and Propertius’ poetic success in 1.7; for *heu* marking the onset of elegiac love, see 1.4.22 and 1.7.16.

26. This aspect of Ross’ provocative interpretation (*Backgrounds*, pp. 59–65) has received mixed reviews. For example, Zetzel (“Gallus, Elegy and Ross,” *CP* 72 [1977]: 249–60), esp. 253–54, accepts the Gallan allusions and adds that “Propertius is not copying Gallus, but parodying him” (p. 254); D. West (*Latomus* 37 [1978]: 209–11), taking an unnecessarily narrow view of Ross’ position, objects that the Milanian *exemplum* is not copied *verbatim*, but alluded to; and K. Quinn (*Phoenix* 30 [1976]: 293–97) objects both to the “alleged imitation of Gallus” and to Ross’ method in general. Without Gallus’ poetry, I do not believe that a sure decision can be made. Without fear of contradiction, one may only say that the *exemplum* is in a different style from the opening lines (Ross, *Backgrounds*, pp. 61–63, following and expanding H. Tränkle, *Die Sprachkunst des Properz*, Hermes Einzelschriften 15 [Wiesbaden, 1960], pp. 12–17), that it is learned and allusive, that it is mythological, and that in the poem it is rejected as grounds for consolation or action. Given the presence of Gallus, however, I have adopted Ross’ view and will refer to the “Gallan” aspects of the *exemplum*. If Ross is incorrect, the argument remains the same *mutatis mutandis*.

27. Ross, *Backgrounds*, pp. 65–67, 69–70, makes the same point but he argues that the *recusatio* applies to the lost Gallan aetiological and scientific poetry. My position is not necessarily a rejection of his, although I am not convinced that Gallus’ “Grynean Grove” was part of his *Amores*. In the historical context it is quite possible that aetiological and magical/scientific poetry were represented by both Gallus and Vergil’s new *Georgics*. The *Monobiblos* begins by rejecting that direction, both by allusion to Gallan precedent and by reference to Vergil.

the subject of his elegy.<sup>28</sup> This focus on and extension of personal or Gallan erotic elegy provides another connection to Vergil, this time to the *Eclogues*, and ultimately lends a more broadly programmatic application to Propertius' much discussed *tardus amor*.<sup>29</sup>

The last line of Gallus' speech in *Eclogue* 10, the same *Eclogue* from which Propertius here may have derived his Milanion *exemplum*, is the famous, *omnia vincit Amor et nos cedamus Amori* (10.69). Not only did Vergil rewrite the first hemistich in the passage of the *Georgics* which we have been discussing and do so to emphasize his own new direction (*labor omnia vici / improbus et . . .*), but the same hemistich provided Propertius with the grounds for his *amor improbus*. The reasoning may be reproduced as follows: if *labor* is *improbus*, that is, has grown beyond all bounds and control to become unconscionably cruel, and by overwhelming everything (*omnia vici*) has gained its epithet and its claim to didactic urgency, then for Propertius *amor*, too, especially the Gallan experience of *amor* (*omnia vincit*, *E.* 10.69, here represented again in terms of victory, *Cynthia prima . . . me cepit*, 1.1.1) makes it *improbus* and establishes its credentials as a poetic subject in the same terms that Vergil claims for his didaxis.<sup>30</sup>

Once the presence of *Eclogue* 10 in the background of Propertius 1.1 is felt and its programmatic function seen, the extent of Propertius' dialogue with Vergil becomes clearer. The last poem of the *Eclogue* book begins by referring to itself as *extremum hunc . . . laborem* (1); Apollo calls Gallus crazy, *quid insanis?* (22) and Pan says, *. . . nec lacrimis crudelis Amor [saturatur]* (29); *furor*<sup>31</sup> is a metonymy for the beloved (38) and Gallus complains of *Amor*, *. . . non illum nostri possunt mutare labores* (64). In this context, as Propertius' *labores* and *artes* fail because of his own *furor*, as the insatiable *Amor* reappears, it is as if Propertius responds to the pastoral closure of Vergil's book (*extremum hunc . . . laborem*, 1; *haec sat erit*, 70)<sup>32</sup> with a return to and revision of Pan's words, "*nec lacrimis improbus Amor saturatur sed plures et lacrimas et labores poscit*."

This collocation of sources suggests that, as both the *Georgics* and the *Eclogues* were on Propertius' mind, it was the *Eclogues* (and Gallus' *Amores*) which recalled more closely the interests of the *Monobiblos*. In fact,

28. See F. M. Dunn, "The Lover Reflected in the *Exemplum*: A Study of Propertius 1.3 and 2.6," *ICS* 10 (1985): 233–59, for a suggestive study of how Propertius uses myth, not so much to refer to or ground his experience in an objective referent, as to reveal the subjective (even solipsistic) experience of the lover.

29. By saying that this "lends a more broadly programmatic application" I mean that it can be taken to refer to Propertius' view of his general poetic project. I do not imply that this programmatic application is the only application. It is, however, an overlooked meaning of the phrase.

30. Cf. Ross, *Backgrounds*, p. 70: "The Gallus of the Tenth *Eclogue* had finally submitted: *omnia vincit Amor: et nos cedamus Amori* (10.69, his last words): from this point Propertius begins his elegies (*Cynthia . . . me cepit*)."

31. On the importance of *furor* in the program of the *Monobiblos*, see Alessi, "Propertius: *Furor*," pp. 216–32.

32. It seems clear that for Vergil the status of Pan's words is problematic. For Pan, the warrant for the claim that *Amor* is insatiable is found in the pastoral parallel, *nec cytiso saturantur apes nec fronde capellae* (30). By the end of *Eclogue* 10, however, the pastoral poet seems to contradict Pan, *ite domum saturae . . . ite capellae* (77). It is also to the point to note that Pan's words participate in the traditional formula for a consolation: *ecquis erit modus?* (28). See Hor. *Carm.* 1.24 and parallels cited by Nisbett and Hubbard; see also Menander Rhetor 2.9.



it had been the *Eclogues* (8.47–50) which first labelled *Amor improbus*<sup>33</sup> in another passage in some ways reminiscent of Propertius 1.1.4–6:

saeuos *Amor* docuit natorum sanguine matrem  
 commaculare manus. crudelis tu quoque, mater.  
 crudelis mater magis, an puer *improbus* ille?  
*improbus* ille puer; crudelis tu quoque, mater.<sup>34</sup>

Damon's song, however, is abstract and general (*nunc scio quid sit Amor*, 43), so that, if one reads Propertius 1.1 with Damon in mind, one finds the Propertian emphasis moves away from the abstract conceptualization of *Amor* to Propertius' personal narrative and his implicit claim to an unchronicled experience. This is the Propertian innovation (and, perhaps, extension of Gallus).

*Felix qui* . . . : Another echo and revision of the *Georgics* confirms Propertius' generic programmatic intention. In poem 1.12 Propertius defends his way of life against those who charge him with *desidia* ("Quid mihi desidiae non cessas fingere crimen? . . ." [12.1]), in other words, with not doing (*labores*) anything. The poem can easily be read as a defense of his poetry and, in fact, seems at certain points to recall the introductory poem: "nunc primum longas solus cognoscere noctes" (12.13) looks back at "in me nostra Venus noctes exercet amaras" (1.33); "aut si despectus potuit mutare calores, / sunt quoque translato gaudia servitio" (12.17–18) is a variation on "hoc, moneo, vitate malum: sua quemque moretur / cura, neque assueto mutet amore locum" (1.35–36); and "Cynthia prima fuit, Cynthia finis erit" (12.20) is an explicit extension of "Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis" (1.1). It is not surprising, therefore, to find that Propertius' generic opposition to the project of the *Georgics* surfaces again in a verbal reminiscence. In lamenting his failure even to be allowed to complain to Cynthia and, thus, in projecting the extremity of his situation, Propertius writes: "felix, qui potuit praesenti flere puellae" (12.15). The line seems clearly to recall *Georgics* 2.490, "felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas."<sup>35</sup> In Book 2 of the *Georgics* Vergil attains a kind of felicity by allowing for the possibility that the *Georgic* goal of understanding nature may be replaced by the more pastoral contentment of rustic piety.<sup>36</sup> *Georgic* didaxis takes as its ideal but problematic, if not impossible, goal

33. Shackleton Bailey's comment (*Propertiana* [Cambridge, 1956], p. 1) on *Amor improbus*, "a stock epithet: Virg. *Ecl.* 8.49, *Aen.* 4.412, *Ov. Fast.* 2.331, *Stat. Silv.* 1.2.75," requires the qualification, "after Vergil and Propertius."

34. Cf. F. Leo, "Vergil und die Ciris," *Hermes* 37 (1902): 20, who argues that there is no essential difference between the subjects of elegiac and of pastoral poetry. See also A. Cartault, *Tibulle et les auteurs du Corpus Tibullianum* (Paris, 1909), p. 117, and C. Fantazzi, "Virgilian Pastoral and Roman Love Poetry," *AJP* 87 (1966): 171–91.

35. F. Dornseiff, *Verschmühtes zu Vergil, Horaz und Properz* (Berlin, 1951), p. 86, cites the parallel as parody; Fedeli "Osservazioni," p. 83, denies any connection on the grounds that *felix qui* is a common expression. Propertius 2.34.71 supports Fedeli as far as he goes; the connection, however, between the passages depends not upon *felix qui* but upon the structure and words of the whole line: *felix qui potuit* modifier—infinite—noun.

36. For an extreme view of these lines see Thomas, "Georgics," 1:253–54. He wants to absolutely segregate the praise of pastoral contentment from the general goal of the *Georgics*, *rerum cognoscere causas*. This seems too absolute. Vergil does follow with about 50 lines in praise of *deos agrestis*.

knowledge of the nature of things, but imagines a more general rustic piety and happiness as a possible alternative. Propertian elegy, on the other hand, here asserts that its own, equally felicitous but problematic, if not impossible, goal, is to weep in the presence of one's *puella*.<sup>37</sup> Surely this is both a witty playing with another poet's struggle, and an ironic presentation of Propertius' own struggle—for these lines, these *querellae*, are far from the transparent, romantic expressiveness imagined for the benefit of the *praesens puella*. As these lines toy with the elegist's profession of desired felicity, they offer the same kind of substitution or revision of the *Georgics* we noted above in the discussion of *amor improbus*. In both cases the investments of the *Georgic*-didaxis (*cognoscere* and *labor*) are coopted by the concerns of Propertian elegy (*flere* and *amor*). In fact, just as *labor* is elegized into *desidia*, so *cognoscere* appears with its appropriate elegiac object, "nunc primum longas solus cognoscere noctes / cogor" (12.13–14),<sup>38</sup> and one seems to hear the muted words of Pan: "non nihil aspersis gaudet Amor lacrimis" (16). The emphases and distinctions amount to a definition of elegy: *querellae*.<sup>39</sup>

Returning to Propertius 1.1, we note that the implication of both references to the *Georgics* requires a modification of the view offered by F. Cairns in 1974: assigning the poem to the genre of "erotodidaxis" he says that "In Propertius I. 1 the source of the poet's *praecepta* is the poet's experience. The erotic teaching is derived from the poet's own sufferings."<sup>40</sup> But teaching does not play a larger role, either in 1.12 where the elegist's explicit desire is not to teach, but to weep, or in 1.1 where the erotic teaching amounts to a single *praeceptum*, expressed in positive and negative form: "hoc, moneo, vitate malum: sua quemque moretur / cura, neque assueto mutet amore locum" (35–36). Furthermore, Propertius himself ends 1.1 with his own view of his words, a view rather different from Cairns': "quod si quis monitis tardas adverterit auris, / heu referet quanto verba dolore mea!" (37–38). Since the imagined lover who repeats Propertius' words will be in the same situation Propertius is in, we are justified in transferring the explicit characterization of that lover's experience to Propertius: the words are imagined not as a set of *praecepta* but as a cry of *dolor*.

In insisting that Propertian elegy takes its position in contrast to didaxis, I do not mean to deny all elements of erotodidaxis. Not only does Propertius toy with such generic expectations, but one must recognize the fact that to know that one is helpless is not to know nothing. Nevertheless, the erotodidactic elements must be seen in relationship to Propertius'

37. In fact the larger structure of the two passages is also parallel: a primary goal (*felix qui potuit*) and an alternative goal (*fortunatus et ille . . .* and *aut si despectus . . .*).

38. Cf. *cognoscere* in other richly programmatic poems: 7.14 *et prosint illi cognita nostra mala* and 18.24 [*curas*] *quae solum tacitis cognita sunt foribus*. See also 2.6.13 *an mihi sit tanti doctas cognoscere Athenas . . .*

39. To which one must always add some sense of the wit so prevalent in Propertius. See further C. Saylor, "Querellae: Propertius' Distinctive, Technical name for his Elegy," *Agon* 1 (1967): 142–49. Cf. 1.1.37–38.

40. "Some Observations on Propertius, I. 1," *CQ* 24 (1974): 107.

larger generic concerns. Didaxis is in the background; but it does not characterize the foregrounded *persona*. Amor teaches, but his lesson offers no *artes*, only *odisse*, *ira*, *amarae noctes*, *mala*, and *dolor*. In the didaxis of the *Georgics*, love is one of many subjects; in the *querellae* of Propertius, *praecepta* are but another mode of complaint. Propertius' elegy is not about accomplishing one's goals through effective action; his elegy is not about conceptual *praecepta*; his words will be repeated not by students who wish to learn, but by fellow sufferers. In fact, Propertius claims that his success in this genre as the aporetic, victimized, complaining lover will leave later poets like Ponticus nothing to say when they too are victimized by love: "et frustra cupies mollem componere versum, / nec tibi subiciet carmina serus amor" (7.19–20). Well, perhaps it is unfair to say that they will have nothing to say; but they will have nothing original to say. Poem 1.1 has already foretold their Propertian fate: *heu referet quanto verba dolore mea!*

*Tardus amor, tardas auris, tardus Apollo*: Amor, like "Cynthia," is a familiar metonymy for the elegist's poetry. *Tardus amor* calls attention to the background narrative, or history, against which and out of which the elegies are written. Traditionally, scholars have looked to the implied narrative of Propertius' elegies in order to understand the puzzling line, "in me tardus Amor non ullas cogitat artis." Given the general self-consciousness of Propertius' poetic project and given that project's relationship to the history of late Republican and early Augustan poetry, it seems possible that Propertius' *tardus amor* is, in part, a self-conscious reflection of his position as love elegist during the important years when Augustan poetry was being invented by himself and others, including Horace and Vergil.

At the time that Propertius composed the programmatic poem for the *Monobiblos*, Vergil had taken a major step into the area of socially responsible and engaged poetry with the *Georgics*.<sup>41</sup> Propertius was unwilling to take this step and by reassigning the general principle constitutive of poetic urgency (*improbus*) back to one of the major topics of the *Eclogues* he indicates that there is more to say about *amor improbus*, that what he has to say about it was left out by the *Eclogues* and is overlooked in the *Georgics*, that his elegy is in competition with *labor improbus*,<sup>42</sup> and that, in extending Gallus, he is unwilling to move either in the direction of didaxis or in the direction of social responsibility.<sup>43</sup> If this is true,

41. See, for instance, M. C. J. Putnam, "Italian Virgil and the Idea of Rome," *Janus: Essays in Ancient and Modern Studies* (Ann Arbor, 1975), pp. 171–99; J. Griffin, "The Fourth *Georgic*, Virgil and Rome," *G&R* 26 (1979): 61–81; E. W. Spofford, *The Social Poetry of the "Georgics"* (New York, 1981); and Miles, *Virgil's "Georgics"*, among many others who discuss the serious political implications of Vergil's *Georgics*.

42. See Propertius 2.34.25–30, where Propertius rejects philosophy, epic, and didaxis as helpful for *seros amores*, and 77–84, where he asserts value, pleasure, and inspiration for his poems despite the grander voice of the *Georgics* ("non tamen haec . . . nec minor hic animis, ut sit minor ore . . .") and allies his poetic project, through allusion to *E.* 9.35–36, with the project of the *Eclogues* ("nec . . . canorus / anseris indocto carmine cessit olor"). A similar contrast may be found in Propertius 2.10.25–26.

43. For the relationship between *amor* in the *Eclogues* and *labor* in the *Georgics*, see Thomas, "*Georgics*," 1:92–93 (on G. 1.145–46).

we have Propertius in his *Monobiblos* claiming that he will return to the concerns of personal elegy, the concerns of Catullus and Gallus, despite the movement by Vergil toward more public and publicly responsible poetry. In this regard, Propertius is a "late-comer" and *tardus amor* is, in part, a recognition of his own belatedness.

To return, then, to *tardus amor*, one may sense a programmatic as well as a biographical dimension. The line that has occasioned most discussion ("in me tardus Amor non ullas cogitat artis . . .") certainly has its own biographical reference.<sup>44</sup> The poet has only lately felt victimized by love's power. The line seems to be a typically dense Propertian conception and expression; it expresses the ideal case (*in me* [Amor] *cogitat artis*: in my case Amor teaches strategems) as not true (in my case, love teaches no strategems) using an ambiguity (*in me* = ablative and accusative) which reconceives Amor's failure to provide strategems as an attack (*in me* [accusative] *Amor non ullas cogitat artis*: against me Amor's plot is "no strategems" [=nullae artes]).<sup>45</sup> The same line, in the context and tradition of Gallus' *amores* with their learned Callimachean *artes* and in opposition to the *artes* of *Georgic* didaxis, may be interpreted to refer both to Propertius' position as a belated elegist and his rejection of typical *exempla* (like Milanion) and typical poetic tactics (like neoteric and magical poetry). He takes his stand without an *ars amatoria*, without an *ars docendi*, and without the security of authoritative and artful *exempla* like Laodamia in Catullus 68 to serve in the expression of significant emotion.<sup>46</sup> Propertius' claim is that his experience of *Amor*, that is, the experience of unexampled and helpless victimization, is both true and universal. The learning of the *doctus poeta* does not offer security or closure before the onslaught of *amor*.<sup>47</sup> This experience, therefore, requires a modification of some typical Callimachean usages,<sup>48</sup> but, as Propertius renegotiates the place of Callimachean learning and

44. Interpreters generally see *tardus amor* wholly within the narrative fiction: E. N. Genovese, "Propertius' Tardus Amor (1.1.17–18)," *CJ* 68 (1973): 138–43, takes the meaning as "slow to help"; C. F. Saylor, "The Meaning of Tardus Amor in Propertius," *Latomus* 36 (1977): 782–93, refers *tardus* to the misfortune that inevitably follows good fortune and its arrogance. I can accept this latter formulation with the important qualification that true *amor* only makes itself known when unfortunate, because only then does it show its power. *Tardus*, then, is less an attributive or predicative adjective, and more an epithet for Propertius. M. Parca, "*Tardus Amor* and *Tardus Apollo* in Propertius' *Monobiblos*," *Latomus* 41 (1982): 584–88, offers a programmatic interpretation based on Ross that sees *tardus amor* as referring to the poet's slow progress in experiencing and writing about love while *tardus Apollo* expresses Apollo's ultimate approval of the poet's *ingenium*.

45. For a defense of *non nullas cogitat artis*, the reading of the older MSS, see Ross, *Backgrounds*, p. 64, n. 1. His argument that *non ullas* requires *mihi* is simply a failure to allow Propertius to conceive of "failure of artifice" as an attack. Such a figure is Propertian and Hellenistic; see G. Giangrande, "Callimachus Romanus," pp. 164–66. On the other hand, if Ross is correct, my argument that the passage revises the *Georgics* still stands: Jupiter and Ceres imposed *labor* on man and made man use *artes*; Cynthia makes *labor* useless and assails the lover with *artis*. With this reading, the reversal of *artes* (from resource to threat) would parallel the reversal of *labor* (from human response and resource to nature's oppressive demand) in the *Georgics*. Rhetorically, however, I find *non nullas* weak: it is not unambiguously a *litotes*.

46. A phrase adapted from C. W. Macleod, "A Use of Myth in Ancient Poetry," *CQ* 24 (1974): 82, who adapted it from T. S. Eliot.

47. See, for instance, the discussion of Dunn, "The Lover," pp. 233–59, who discusses how the opening exempla of 2.6.1–8 dissolve into delusions in 9–14.

48. See, for instance, 12.9 *invidiae fuimus*; 12.14 *cogor et ipse meis auribus esse gravis*; 7.7–8 *nec tantum ingenio quantum servire dolori / cogor*.

allusion, he simultaneously makes his own claim to Callimachean credentials: "... nec meminit notas, ut prius, ire vias." The path less travelled is an erotic necessity which creates his Callimachean poetic identity.

If *tardus amor* has the programmatic resonance I have assigned to it, one may reasonably expect a similar resonance elsewhere. Indeed, in the programmatic poem 7 one finds Propertius warning Ponticus that his efforts as a doomed and belated love poet are bound to fail: "et frustra cupies mollem componere versum, / nec tibi subiciet carmina serus amor" (19–20), and then justifying his advice with a clever and ambiguous proverb, "tu cave nostra tuo contemnas carmina fastu:<sup>49</sup> saepe venit magno faenore tardus amor"<sup>50</sup> (25–26). To paraphrase the programmatic implication, Ponticus is warned that the field of belated elegy will have left him no songs to sing: "heu referet quanto verba dolore mea" (1.1.38); belated elegy comes with a great *faenus* owed to Propertius. In this way Propertius lays his claim not only to a place, albeit late, in the tradition of erotic poetry, but to a place of priority. The uniquely personal experience of the neglected lover is his source of inspiration and will be his claim to fame: "me legat assidue post haec neglectus amator" (7.13).<sup>51</sup> This poem, then, together with the close of poem 1.1 throws down the gauntlet. For Propertius, love elegy came late (*tardus amor*); but for those who come after Propertius and attempt to return to the concerns of Catullus, Gallus, and the *Eclogues*, for those who turn their belated ears to his verse ("si quis monitis tardas adverterit auris") there is the further warning that they will only repeat his words.<sup>52</sup> In exceeding the *exempla* of the past he has become the new *exemplum* of *tardus amor*.

Finally, we come to *tardus Apollo*. Poem 8b of the *Monobiblos* celebrates Propertius' success in keeping Cynthia from straying to places representative of wealth and rich in mythological allusion: *sed potui blandi carminis obsequio [hanc flectere]* (40). *Rumpantur iniqui!* (27), he says. He has his victory, *vicimus* (28); greedy malice has failed: *cupidus deponat gaudia livor* (29). Cynthia has preferred Propertius' narrow bed (*angusto . . . requiescere lecto*, 33)<sup>53</sup> to the ancient realm of dowered Hippodamia and the wealth Elis gathered with horses. The poem ends with the explicit claim that through these songs Propertius has attained immortality, "nunc mihi summa licet contingere sidera plantis" (1.8.43) and that he has done so by exceeding the capacity of rival poets to steal from him, "nec mihi rivalis certos subducit amores"<sup>54</sup> (1.8.45).

The situation as described by Propertius is rich in terms associated with the Callimachean program. It is hard not to read an allegory of Callimachean

49. Cf. 1.1.3.

50. The simplest elucidation of the ambiguity here is to interpret: for Ponticus, *serus amor* comes with a great interest charged; for Propertius, *tardus amor* comes with interest paid. For both, the poetic *faenus* is Propertius' priority as an elegist.

51. This claim is immediately followed by the elegiac version of *cognoscere: et prosint illi cognita nostra mala*, 7.14.

52. The complaint of later lovers will be doubled, including not just the erotic *querellae* which is Propertius' poetry, but the poetic *dolor* of having nothing more to say.

53. Note the echo of Catullus 31.10.

54. The plural, *amores*, is particularly self-referential as regards the elegies.

values into terms redolent of those values in a poem that celebrates Propertius' poetic success over rivals; it is harder to imagine that Propertius himself did not hear his own poem's resonance. In some sense, then, we must recognize that Propertius is toying with his traditional heritage and the language of that tradition. Just as the rival lover's wealth is rejected for Propertius' narrow bed, so the rival poet's impersonal wealth of allusions is measured against Propertian values: *preces*, *obsequium*, *carissima*, and *dulcia regna*. This does not mean that Propertius sets himself against learned poetry, any more than the Milanion *exemplum* of 1.1. meant that Propertius had repudiated learned *exempla*. Rather, it means that this poetic technique is repudiated as an end in itself.

Similarly, another line of the same poem offers an interpretative problem: "destitit ire novas Cynthia nostra vias" (30) as a desirable end seems to contradict the Callimachean values of 1.1.18 "nec meminit notas, ut prius, ire vias" and the usual valence of Callimachean terms. What, then, does it mean for Cynthia not to go down "new paths"? One might refer to Callimachus *Epigram* 28 Pf. and conclude that the poet wants *novae viae* but all lovers want the same thing. But the connection in this poem between poetic success, *dulcia regna*, and *angusto lecto* suggests some self-referential application. That application, at the very least, suggests that the *novae viae* are not the sum of the Propertian achievement. Amor and Cynthia travel roads both new and familiar. Such an attempt to undermine the simplest directive of the Callimachean investiture in a poem which like 1.1 delights in its own neoteric allusiveness sets the "true path" to successful elegy against the wooden precepts of an earlier generation, in much the same way that the true use of an earlier tradition (*imitatio cum aemulatione*) is always at odds with the impulse merely to copy.<sup>55</sup> Propertius here recalls the Callimachean program in contradictory ways in order to complicate the task of our reading with an appeal to the play and subtlety of judgment. The *nec notae viae* of 1 are, in part, the innovative emphases and discontinuous effects that come from taking as his subject the unparalleled *amor* he suffers. In the literary contest of 1.8 the *novae viae* are the strange and richly allusive paths of the neoteric epigone, paths that go by the name of *novae viae*; but in the poem's narrative context the *novae viae* are the unnecessary limitation of his elegy to mere *querellae*. This poem, after all, celebrates the satisfaction of his newly conceived post-neoteric passion, his *dulcia regna* on an *angustus lectus*.

Thus it is that Propertius insists that poetry, real poetry, that is, his poetry, his combination of passionate experience and neoteric learning, has won over Cynthia and with her has won him his crown.<sup>56</sup> Propertius expresses the conceptual substance of his confidence by a reference to Apollo, the Callimachean god of poetry, and the Muses (1.8.41–42):

55. See, for instance, Hor. *Epist.* 1.3 and 1.19. See also the interpretations of Ruth Scodel, "Horace, Lucilius, and Callimachean Polemic," *HSCP* 91 (1987): 214–15 and R. Thomas, "From *Recusatio* to Commitment: The Evolution of the Vergilian Programme," *PLLS* (1985): 67–68.

56. See *Elis* and *equis*, 36; cf. Verg. *G.* 3.202. Note also the language of 43 and the final line suggestive of the winner's crown, *ista meam norit gloria canitiem*, 46.

sunt igitur Musae, neque amanti tardus Apollo,  
quis ego fretus amo: Cynthia rara mea est.

The simple programmatic allegory is that, while *Amor* may have been *tardus* and the poet a late-comer, poetic inspiration was not slow, that there is here the presence of the Muses, and that Apollo himself not only approves but aids this lover-poet. Cynthia, incomparable as she is, has yielded to his equally incomparable song. Cynthia, inspiration of Apollo, is the origin of this new elegy (*Cynthia prima . . . miserum me cepit*, 1.1.1), Cynthia is its *telos*: *Cynthia prima fuit, Cynthia finis erit*, 1.12.20.

#### HISTORICAL APPENDIX

If Propertius' *amor improbus* is contrasted with Vergil's *labor improbus* as a thematic statement of Propertius' specific generic interest and justification for returning to the interests of Catullus and of Vergil's *Eclogues*, then, given the special emphasis on *improbus* produced by enjambment and reinforced by the following *et*, it seems highly unlikely that Propertius' *amor . . . / improbus et . . .* is not a precise reference to Vergil's *labor . . . / improbus et . . .* As I have noted above, a reference requires a fixed text and, while one must grant that more than one scenario may account for Propertius' knowledge of Vergil's text, nevertheless publication remains by far the most likely event which makes such a reference possible. With that in mind, I return now to the historical context and the problem of determining the publication date for the *Monobiblos*. Currently, the possible range accepted by most scholars is fairly broad. Between the latest date in Propertius' *Monobiblos*, the reference to the proconsulship of L. Volcacius Tullus in Asia in 30–29 B.C. (1.6.19–20),<sup>57</sup> and the earliest date represented as contemporary with the writing of Book 3, either 24 B.C. and the quadrennial celebration of Actium (3.11) or 23 B.C. and the death of Marcellus (3.18), we have no clearly contemporary and datable references in Propertius' elegies. Since 2.1 refers back to Octavian's triumphs in August 29 and since 2.10 refers forward to an impending expedition against Arabia (undertaken in 25), it is generally accepted that Book 2, the longest of his books (if it is a single book), belongs to the period of 28–25 B.C. Assuming that Book 2 was generally written after the publication of the *Monobiblos*, this puts a likely *terminus ante quem* for the publication of the *Monobiblos* before Octavian's triumph, or at least when it was a recent event, in late 29 or early 28 B.C. The third elegy of Book 2 suggests a short interval between 1 and 2, which conforms to this chronology. Butler and Barber add the plausible consideration that "the presence of El. xxxi in Bk. II [the opening of the portico of Apollo] makes it probable that Bk. I had appeared before October, 28 B.C., since, if Propertius had published Bk. I after that date, he would surely have included this compliment to Augustus in it."<sup>58</sup> The

57. See W. A. Camps, *Propertius Elegies Book I* (Cambridge, 1961), p. 6; for a summary of the disputes on the date of Tullus' proconsulship, see M. Hubbard, *Propertius* (London, 1974) 42–43.

58. *The Elegies of Propertius* (Oxford, 1933), p. xxvii.

*terminus post quem* is established by 1.6 and the proconsulship of L. Volcarius Tullus mentioned above. Thus, we have a range of dates, generally accepted but imprecise, between spring 30 (or spring 29) and early 28.

During this period but towards the end of it the *Georgics* were also published. The proem to Book 3 refers to Octavian's triple triumph in August 29 and the proem to Book 1 was probably written after the proem to 3.<sup>59</sup> This means that the *Georgics* were probably completed and published around August 29, which agrees with the story in the *Vita Donati*: "Georgica reverso post Actiacam victoriam Augusto atque Atellae reficiendarum faucium causa commoranti per continuum quadriduum legit, suscipiente Maecenate legendi vicem, quotiens interPELLARETUR ipse vocis offensione" (27).

Although the publication dates of both of these poems must remain imprecise, if my interpretation of Propertian echoes of Vergil in the *Monobiblos* is correct, we have a relative relationship between the *Monobiblos* and the *Georgics* which produces at least a narrower range of possible publication dates for the *Monobiblos*. For Propertius to have responded at a precise verbal and programmatic level to the *Georgics* requires their prior publication.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, the period of possible publication is now narrowed to that between August 29 and spring 28.<sup>61</sup>

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59. See Thomas, "*Georgics*," 2.36 and 45, ad 3.30 and 3.32–33 on the date of the proem to 3.

60. Of course revisions were made after the initial publication. I refer not only to the disputed *Laudes Galli*, but to the reference at *G.* 3.31–33 to Augustus' expeditions to the East in 21 and 20.

61. This agrees with the dating offered by Fedeli: "Verso la fine del 29 o nei primi mesi del 28 a. C. Sesto Propertio, un giovane poeta di origine umbra, pubblicò a roma un libro di elegie . . .," (*Il Primo Libro delle Elegie*, ed. P. Fedeli [Firenze, 1980], p. 9).