

# PROPERTIUS 3. 3. 7–12 AND ENNIUS

Among the difficulties in Propertius is the question whether to retain 'cecinit' in 3. 3. 7 or to adopt the conjecture 'cecini'.<sup>1</sup>

Propertius dreamed that he was reclining upon Helicon in a grove by Hippocrene and that he was able to compose a Roman historical epic:

Visus eram molli recubans Heliconis in umbra,  
 Bellerophonteï qua fluit umor equi,  
 Reges, Alba, tuos et regum facta tuorum  
 (Tantum operis) neruis hiscere posse meis,  
 Paruaque tam magnis admoram fontibus ora 5  
 Vnde pater sitiens Ennius ante bibit,  
 Et cecinit Curios fratres et Horatia pila  
 Regiaque Aemilia uecta tropaea rate  
 Victricesque moras Fabii pugnamque sinistram  
 Cannensem et uersos ad pia uota deos 10  
 Hannibalemque Lares Romana sede fugantes,  
 Anseris et tutum uoce fuisse Iouem,  
 Cum me Castalia speculans ex arbore Phoebus  
 Sic ait...

According to the paradosis 7–12 constitute a summary of Ennius' *Annales*. In that case Propertius' failure to observe historical sequence (the Gaulish attack of 387 coming after the Second Punic War) is peculiar; nor is it defended securely by supposedly parallel passages.<sup>2</sup> More damaging, however, is that 8 must describe the triumph of L. Aemilius Paullus in 167, two years after the accepted date of Ennius' death. Hertzberg and Postgate claimed that it alludes to the defeat of Demetrius of Pharos by a L. Aemilius Paullus in 219 (Polyb. 3. 16. 18, App. *Illyr.* 8); this is unlikely

<sup>1</sup> The following are cited by author's name only: P. J. Enk, *Ad Propertii carmina commentarius criticus* (Zutphen, 1911), A. Kambylis, *Die Dichterweihe und ihre Symbolik* (Heidelberg, 1965), D. R. Shackleton Bailey, *Propertiana* (Cambridge, 1956), O. Skutsch, 'Notes on Ennius, V' *BICS* 27 (1980), 103–8, H. Tränkle, *Die Sprachkunst des Properz* (Wiesbaden, 1960), W. Wimmel, *Kallimachos in Rom* (Wiesbaden, 1960), the commentaries of Butler and Barber (Oxford, 1933), Camps (Book 3, Cambridge, 1966), Hertzberg (Halle, 1843–5), Richardson (Norman, 1977), and Rothstein (Berlin<sup>2</sup>, 1920–4), and the notes by Postgate in *Select Elegies* (London<sup>2</sup>, 1884) and Maltby in *Latin Love Elegy* (Bristol, 1980). Modern authorities overwhelmingly support 'cecinit' (Shackleton Bailey, Butler–Barber, Camps, Enk, Kambylis, Maltby, Tränkle, Wimmel), while 'cecini' has appealed to very conservative editors such as Rothstein, Schuster (Leipzig, 1954), and Tovar (Barcelona, 1963). I wish to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for financial support of research on which this paper is based.

<sup>2</sup> For Polster's transposition of 8 and 12, which corrects the order of events, see below. Scholars most frequently cite 3. 12. 25–36 as a jumbled summary of the *Odyssey*; since it summarizes in fact the wanderings of Odysseus without special reference to Homer, the poet may differ from him however he likes. Tränkle (102 f.) adduces another possible parallel in 3. 9. 49–52, where the death of Remus is mentioned before his youth (one could, however, adopt Peiper's transposition of 49 and 51). He might also have pointed to 3. 9. 53–6, where possible references to Augustus' triumph of 29 (53) and the Parthian settlement (54) come before Pelusium and Antony's suicide (55–6). Arguably, however, the themes of 3. 9. 49–56 are named not as parts of a continuous epic but as subjects for individual compositions and chronological order is therefore not necessary; one could also suggest that 53–4 are general references (cf. 3. 3. 41–6, cited below, where a general statement in 41 f. is followed by specific references in 43–6). Attempts to discern an organizing principle other than chronology in 3. 3. 7–12 read more like descriptions than explanations; cf. Rothstein on 7, J.-P. Boucher, *Études sur Properce* (Paris, 1965), 279.

for some of the same reasons as the rival theory of Butler and Barber, which has found many adherents, that it refers to the victory over Antiochus' navy by L. Aemilius Regillus at Myonnesus in 190. Propertius speaks of 'regal spoils carried on Aemilius' ship'. If this phrase alludes, as on this theory it does, to a particular naval victory, it is excessively vague in contrast to the extremely specific references elsewhere in the catalogue (nothing identifies the victory or the vanquished: how could one establish that it refers to 190 rather than 219?) and excessively oblique as an evocation of combat; nor have we evidence that the transport of the spoils after either battle was in any way notable.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, neither victory was of sufficient magnitude or consequence to rank with the combat of the Horatii and Curiatii, the defence of the Capitol against the Gauls, and the Second Punic War among the pinnacles of Roman legend and history. Had Propertius wished to include an event of c. 190 a more likely choice would have been the triumph, also over Antiochus, celebrated by L. Scipio Asiaticus 'haud ita multo post' (Livy 37. 58. 6). According to Livy (37. 58. 3-4) the loot carried in Regillus' triumph was 'pecunia nequaquam pro specie regii triumphi' (it is doubtful whether Propertius' 'regia' ought to be interpreted in the light of this even if he did refer to Regillus' triumph); it included 49 gold crowns, 34,200 Attic tetradrachms, and 132,300 cistophori. Scipio's triumph displayed 234 gold crowns, 224,000 tetradrachms, and 321,700 cistophori. Thus Regillus' modest achievement was overshadowed within the year; the journey of his disappointing loot to Brindisi is not likely to have formed part of anyone's epic poem. On the other hand L. Aemilius Paullus' victory over the arrogant Perseus was important enough to be included here, and his triumph, to which 'uecta' in 8 alludes, was unique and spectacular: he and the 'regia tropaea' sailed up the Tiber into the heart of the city on a ship which was itself a prize of war<sup>4</sup> (cf. Liv. 45. 35. 3, Plut. *Aem. Paul.* 30. 1, Eutrop. 4. 8).

Some, while conceding that 8 refers to this event of 167, have suggested that Propertius was unsure or ignorant of the contents of the *Annales* or confused one L. Aemilius with another.<sup>5</sup> It is difficult to believe, however, that a poet who joined Virgil in the study of archaic Latin poetry to enrich his own diction<sup>6</sup> was so ill informed

<sup>3</sup> It has been impossible to consult the long article of M. Martina in *Quaderni di filologia classica dell'Università di Trieste* 2 (1979), 14 ff., which, according to Skutsch note 5, advances 'strong reasons' for making 8 refer to the transport of spoils after the victory of 190. I am informed, however, that Martina argues that Ennius sought to glorify L. Aemilius Regillus, the victor of Myonnesus, after the reconciliation of Ennius' patron, M. Fulvius Nobilior, and M. Aemilius Lepidus upon their sharing the censorship in 179; the two Aemilii were on good terms, and Regillus' victory was commemorated during the censorship. This does not survive the objection offered below, that the transport of the spoils after Myonnesus, even if it formed a part of the *Annales*, was too insignificant for enumeration among the highlights of the poem or of Roman history.

<sup>4</sup> Hence 'Aemilia' may be pointed and not simply informative; Enk 209 f. cites Werffe for the curious objection that the ship belonged to Perseus, not Paullus.

<sup>5</sup> Shackleton Bailey (followed by Tränkle, Wimmel, Kambylis, Camps, and Maltby) proposed as the 'least unsatisfactory view' that Propertius confused the naval victory of 190 with Paullus' return; this seems unlikely in view of the disparity in the nature and importance of the two events. M. Hubbard (*Propertius* [London, 1974], 79) suggests that Propertius simply never read to the end of the *Annales*. Others imagine purposeful incompetence, Richardson declaring that 'Propertius is playing fast and loose' with the material, Maltby that he produced a garbled account 'to reflect his own lack of aptitude for epic subjects'.

<sup>6</sup> For archaisms and Virgilian influence see Tränkle 30-57. He well remarks (57) that Propertius does not simply follow Virgil in this but acts independently in the same manner, as is exemplified by 'siluicola' at 3. 11. 34. Virgil applies it to Faunus at *A.* 10. 551 (whence *Ov. F.* 4. 746 applies it to Pales, *Stat. T.* 5. 582 to multiple Fauni; its reference at *A.L.* 682. 6 is uncertain, but some mss. make Pan subject of the poem). His source was perhaps *Acc.* 237R<sup>2</sup> 'et nunc siluicolae ignota inuisentes loca' (from the *Bacchae*, perhaps describing followers of

concerning so fundamental a work; even more difficult to believe that so absurd an error was not corrected at a recitation or after publication. A recent attempt to advance the date of Ennius' death has changed nothing;<sup>7</sup> Propertius is not summarizing the *Annales*.

If Ennius did not sing Paullus' triumph, it appears the somnolent Propertius did. He alludes twice to the contents of his dream epic, first in 3 ('reges, Alba, tuos et regum facta tuorum'), then in 7–12, which bring him to 167. Calliope's warning (39–50) contains a third reference to historical epic:

Nil tibi sit rauco praeconia classica cornu  
Flare nec Aonium cingere<sup>8</sup> Marte nemus,  
Aut quibus in campis Mariano proelia signo  
Stent et Teutonicas Roma refringat opes,  
Barbarus aut Suebo perfusus sanguine Rhenus  
Saucia maerenti corpora uectet aqua. 45

Lines 43 f. allude to Marius' victories over the Teutones and Cimbri in 102 and 101, 45 f. to the recent success of C. Carrinas over the Suebi, Morini, and other tribes.<sup>9</sup> These three references (apart from 8 and 12) both individually and collectively follow chronological order. Frequently in a *recusatio* the poet briefly sketches the rejected subject in an allusive catalogue of themes;<sup>10</sup> here Propertius has distributed the rejected epic themes in three parts (the period before the foundation of Rome in the announcement of his intention, an approximation of the *Annales* in the description of his accomplishment, and the completion of his project to the present in the warning of Calliope) so that together they suggest a continuous historical epic from Aeneas' arrival in Italy to Augustus. It almost goes without saying that, if Propertius is sketching the contents of his own historical epic, then Polster's transposition of 8 and 12 must be accepted to restore historical sequence.<sup>11</sup> Since 5–6 say that Propertius was about to drink from the same spring as Ennius, including the first important event after Ennius' death could suggest that he intends to continue beyond the *Annales*.<sup>12</sup>

Dionysus). The compound is found also in Naev. fr. 21 Morel 'siluicolae homines bellicue inertes', arguably the source of Propertius' 'siluicolis...uiris'. Priority is impossible to establish, but Propertius shows independent awareness of an archaic context; scholarly *aemulatio* in either direction is not to be excluded.

<sup>7</sup> In order to justify 'cecinit' G. d'Anna argued in *Athenaeum* 51 (1973), 355–76 and *RFIC* 107 (1979), 243–51 that the date of Ennius' death (traditionally given after Cic. *Brut.* 78 and *Sen.* 14 as 169) is not necessarily certain and that he might have lived to describe the triumph of 167; his search among the surviving fragments for traces of the campaign preceding the victory cannot be counted a success. For further arguments against d'Anna's theory see Pasoli in *RFIC* 105 (1977) and Skutsch in *BICS* 24 (1977), 6 f. and 27 (1980), 103 f.

<sup>8</sup> For this early conjecture (the archetype read 'ting(u)ere') cf. Postgate 57, Enk 214, Shackleton Bailey 141.

<sup>9</sup> Recorded by Dio 51. 21; the victory was celebrated on the first day of the triple triumph of 29, with Augustus as commander in chief sharing the credit. Postgate and Richardson prefer the more remote defeat of Ariovistus by Julius Caesar in 58 (*BG* 1. 52–3).

<sup>10</sup> For this feature (and Propertius' use of it in 2. 1) cf. Wimmel 30–7.

<sup>11</sup> This transposition is approved by Enk 211 but adopted only in Postgate's *Corpus Poetarum Latinorum* text (London, 1894); it was anticipated by a sixteenth- or seventeenth-century corrector in Bibl. Vat. Chigi H. IV. 123. The dislocation was probably caused by a scribe's eye skipping from 'fratres' in 7 to 'lacles' in 11 ('lacles', no doubt from 'lāces', was in the archetype; N corrupted it to 'lacies', while 'lares' in F is either a lucky slip of a careless scribe or a conjecture of Petrarch). Camps' objection to the transposition – 'there is no evidence that the line-order has become dislocated in the MSS' – involves a circular argument.

<sup>12</sup> Skutsch has made a similar suggestion, noting (103 f.) that the reference to the kings of Alba Longa, who were not included in the *Annales*, suggests that 'possibly...Propertius had the Annals in mind but...would want to add and correct' and proposing that Aemilius' triumph of 167 is such an addition.

Moreover, while Apollo (15–24) speaks against epic in general terms, Calliope (43–6) warns specifically against subjects not from Ennius but from Roman history between Ennius and the present; if in his dream Propertius sings only subjects from the *Annales*, her warning is irrelevant to his expressed ambition. If her warning, though specific, is meant only as another general admonition, then it seems a curious coincidence that her themes follow in chronological order, begin fewer than seventy years after the last subject named, and continue into the poet's lifetime; Calliope, at least, seems to think that Propertius intended to go beyond Ennius. If she is opposed to his continuing, then perhaps Apollo's intervention has the same motivation; in this case the triumph of 167, which implies continuation, must of course come last in the catalogue.

The arguments against 'cecini' are somewhat less substantial than those against the paradosis. According to Shackleton Bailey the conjecture solves nothing 'since in any case a list of Ennius' themes appears to be intended' (139); reasons for including a single non-Ennian theme have been proposed above. Butler and Barber argued that 'cecini' is unacceptable because it makes Propertius well advanced in the composition of his epic, something unlikely even in a dream: 'He did not drink; he merely stooped to do so and was checked in the act by the warning of Apollo' (267). Surely, however, Propertius had as much reason to depict himself with an unfinished epic as Virgil when he wrote 'cum canerem reges et proelia, Cynthus aurem/uellit et admonuit' (*Buc.* 6. 3 f.) or as Ovid when he claimed to have written a *Gigantomachy* (*Am.* 2. 1. 11–14) or to be about to publish an epic (*Am.* 1. 1. 1–4); for Propertius, as for Horace at *C.* 4. 15. 1 f., the desire never reaches effect ('Phoebus uolentem proelia me loqui/ uictas et urbis increpuit lyra'). Bulter and Barber, like Kambylis,<sup>13</sup> appear to believe that Propertius needed a sip of Hippocrene to write about the Alban kings. This is contrary to the obvious sense of 3 f.: he dreamed that he had the capacity to treat the subject before he approached the spring,<sup>14</sup> and the passages of Virgil and Ovid just cited show that in such poems the rejected material requires no 'inspiration'. The spring sought by both Ennius and Propertius is arguably a symbol not of initiation but of genre or subject matter; this could be true as well of the 'fontes' approached by Lucretius (1. 927), Virgil (*G.* 2. 175), and Nemesianus (*Cyn.* 5 f.), and perhaps of the water of Philitas.<sup>15</sup>

Further objections to 'cecini' have been raised by Wimmel 244 f. According to him the conjecture would lead to a 'laughable parallelism' between Propertius and Ennius (why laughable if Propertius dreams of writing a Roman historical epic?), and a 'steigernde Variation' would be lost, since genuinely possible themes for Propertius

<sup>13</sup> Kambylis 131–6 gives this and further objections. He argues that 'cecini' weakens the role of Ennius by making his name only a more precise definition of the kind of poetry which Propertius dreamed of writing. That seems to me an adequate role for him to play; it remains the same with 'cecinit', which reduces 7–12 to a flaccid expansion of a point without special importance in the elegy.

<sup>14</sup> Commentators outdo each other in expounding 'hiscere' (4) as indicating 'incoherent utterance' (Postgate) or as 'a strong word denoting effort' (Butler-Barber); Maltby says that it 'vividly recreates a dreamer's attempt at singing', while Camps suggests connotations like 'I thought that I could dare, with these (poor) powers of mine, to raise my voice (*literally* open my mouth)'. According to Nonius 120, 29, however, 'hiscere est proprie loqui', a statement confirmed by several examples given at *OLD* s.v. 2b. It appears to be an archaic usage revived by the Augustan poets and Livy; Ovid could use it without connotations of incoherence at *M.* 13. 231 'nec Telamoniades etiamnunc hiscere quicquam/audet'. Propertius naturally dreamed that he could compose an epic, not that he could barely squeak one out.

<sup>15</sup> In 47–50 Calliope directs Propertius to become a *praeceptor* and teach others how to gain access to their *puellae*; it has been argued that erotodidaxis was prominent in Philitas' poetry: cf. F. Cairns, *Tibullus: A Hellenistic Poet at Rome* (Cambridge, 1979), 27–9.

are suggested in 41 ff. (why are these more genuinely possible than those in 3 and 7–22?). He argues that it would be bad poetically if Propertius ‘weakened’ his dreamlike attempt at Ennian poetry through detailed enumeration of individual subjects. Surely it is worse poetically if 7–12 only elaborate the name of Ennius.

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