

PROPERTIUS ON THE PARILIA (4.4.73–8)

The text of the Propertian archetype (in the punctuation of most modern editions) has the poet describe the Parilia as follows in 4.4.73–8:

Urbi festus erat (dixere Parilia patres),
 Hic primus coepit moenibus esse dies,
 Annua pastorum conuiuia, lusus in Vrbe,
 Cum pagana madent fercula diuitiis,
 Cumque super raros faeni flammantis aceruos
 Traicit immundas ebria turba dapes.

75

The necessity of emending *immundas . . . dapes* in 78 to *immundos . . . pedes* has long been recognized,¹ but I argue here that the text is unsatisfactory in three further respects: (1) the difficulties of style, sense, and punctuation in 73–75; (2) *diuitiis* in 76, wrongly retained by most editors and, when emended, wrongly emended to *deliciis*; and (3) *raros* in 77, of which no satisfactory explanation has been offered.

(1) Lines 73–5, however punctuated, seem to be nothing more than a paratactic string of phrases such as one expects in lists and catalogues. It appears that *conuiuia* and *lusus* are in apposition, but to what? The usual punctuation, represented above,² makes them parallel to *dies*, but Propertius could not have said here that the Parilia ‘began’ to be an annual feast of shepherds—presumably at this point in his narration—since there is no indication that *coepit* and *erat* refer to different time-periods; since the Parilia pre-dates the foundation of Rome, Propertius’ perspective requires *coeperat*. But they equally cannot be in apposition to *festus*, since this would require that one take *dixere Parilia patres* and *hic primus coepit moenibus esse dies* as two separate, consecutive parentheses. In addition, earlier scholars were troubled by *hic* in 74, which needlessly reidentifies the subject *festus* a mere one line after it has been stated; hence Phillimore proposed *qui* and Heinsius *hinc* (anticipated by Pomponio

¹ Early editors report *immundos . . . pedes* as the reading of Heinsius’ *liber Colotianus* and *Vaticanus primus*, which were printed editions containing some form of the collations that originate with Franciscus Puccius; cf. J. L. Butrica, ‘Pontanus, Puccius, Pocchus, Petreius, and Propertius’, *Res Publica Litterarum* 3 (1980), 5–9, at n. 16. Hanslik’s edition reports it as read by Venice, Bibl. Marc. 4208, which I am unable to consult; but I can report that the closely related Ottob. lat. 2003 agrees with the archetype.

² The punctuation printed here may fairly be called the modern vulgate, since it appears in both *OCTs*, both Loeb’s, and Fedeli’s Teubner (Hanslik’s Teubner, like Schuster’s, offers a variation in which a colon is placed at the end of 74), not to mention Butler and Barber, and Camps; I have traced it back through Palmer’s 1880 edition to Hertzberg, though in these editions *dixere . . . patres* is set off with dashes rather than with the parentheses that seem to appear first in Phillimore’s *OCT*. Paldam (Halle, 1827) and Carutti (The Hague, 1869) also set off *dixere . . . patres* but began a new sentence at *annua*. Lachmann (Leipzig, 1816) used dashes to set off both *dixere . . . patres* and *hic primus . . . esse* as parenthetical, a highly unnatural punctuation that nevertheless was adopted by Müller, Baehrens, Postgate, and D’Arbela (in his second edition [Berlin, 1829] Lachmann put *dixere . . . esse* within a single parenthesis, with a colon after *patres*). I assume that Lachmann wanted *dies* to be available for *festus* to modify, but *festoque remissus* in 83 shows that *festus* can stand on its own in the sense ‘holiday’—a usage not recognized by the *OLD*. None of the dozen or so systems of punctuation that I have seen manages to avoid the awkwardness of run-on sentences or multiple parentheses.

Leto in Rome, Bibl. Casanatense 15), with *isse*, *ille*, or *ire* for *esse*. Finally, *lusus in urbe* in 75 is also difficult: one can perhaps just see how drunkards leaping over bonfires can be called a kind of 'play', but why should Propertius remind his readers that this occurred *in urbe* less than two lines after writing *Vrbi festus erat*? Hence Richmond emended *Vrbi* in 73 to *urui*, an archaic word signifying 'the curved part of a plough (joining the share-beam to the *temo*)' (*OLD*); this cut the furrow in the ritual for establishing the walls of a new city (cf. Paul. *Fest.* p. 374M, *ab eo sulco qui fit in urbe condenda uruo aratri*; Serv. *A.* 1.12 *ab uruo, parte aratri, quo muri designabantur*; Pompon. *Dig.* 50.16.239.6, quoting Varus to the effect that *uruum appellari curuaturam aratri quod in urbe condenda adhiberi solet*). Goold has advocated *urui* because '*urbi* is quite otiose' and '[t]he conjecture removes a slight harshness by eliminating a repetition of *urbs* in line 75'.³ He explains that 'We are to imagine the foundation of the city . . . as being commemorated by an *Vrui festus*'—and 'imagine' we must, since there is no evidence for such an event. Certainly Ovid's account of the Parilia makes no reference at all to the *uruum*, neither when Romulus (in an evident allusion to the custom mentioned by Festus) *premens stiuam designat moenia sulco* (*Fast.* 4.825; cf. also 819 *moenia signet aratro* and 839 *factam uomere fossam*), nor when he prays to the gods for success (4.827–32). Postgate intruded the same implement in 75, emending in *Vrbe* to *et urui*; it is true that N reads *urbi* here, but that is probably by perseveration from 73, and there is no more evidence for a *lusus urui* than for a *festus urui*. Other unattractive emendations of *in urbe* include *in orbe* (Volscus), *in herba* (Fontein), *in aruis* (Baehrens), and *inermis* (Damsté), while Phillimore rewrote the entire last two feet as *uolgus inibat*.

But there is a qualitative difference between 73 and 76–8 on the one hand and 74–5 on the other that points to a resolution elsewhere than in the so far futile search for a verbal correction. Lines 73 and 76–8 are the work of someone transmitting information in the stylized manner of a sophisticated poet; note, for example, the learned 'footnote' *dixere Parilia patres*,⁴ the tables apparently 'wet' with solid fare (for *madent*

³ G. P. Goold, '*Paralipomena Propertiana*', *HSCP* 94 (1992), 287–320, at 312–13. (I owe this reference to the journal's reader.)

⁴ For these 'naming constructions' and their connection with learned Alexandrian poetry, see J. J. O'Hara, *True Names: Vergil and the Alexandrian Tradition of Etymological Wordplay* (Ann Arbor, 1996), § 2.6, 'Naming Constructions as Etymological Signposts' (cf. 79, 'The naming construction as etymological signpost may be looked on as similar to, or perhaps even part of, another phenomenon: what has been called the "Alexandrian footnote", or "illusory footnote"'). In his treatment of the Virgilian examples, O'Hara does not always detect an etymological allusion, but seems inclined to attribute this to the defective state of our knowledge. If such a 'footnote' is present here, it probably concerns the controversy over Parilia versus Palilia, in which case Propertius (if our manuscripts can be trusted here) is probably asserting that Parilia is the original ancient name (as *dixere patres* implies) and is thus the 'true' or 'correct' form. Festus and Charisius record both Palilia and Parilia and offer a derivation for each, the former from the goddess (or god) Pales, the latter from *partus*, either *de partu Iliae* (as asserted at Solin. 1.19 as well as by Charisius) or because *pro partu pecoris eidem* [i.e. Pales] *sacra fiebant* (Paul. *Fest.* p. 222M; Charis. *GLK* 1.58.21–2). Two other scholars clearly do champion Parilia as the correct form, though in different ways. Marius Victorinus flatly denies the derivation from Pales (and thus the 'correctness' of the form Palilia) and asserts that Parilia is the correct form because the word derives from the fact that *eo tempore omnia sata . . . parturiant pariantque* (6.25.23). The commentary of 'Probus' on V. G. 3.1 offers a 'compromise' position in which Palilia is the correct form but nonetheless derives from Pales and represents an original 'Paliria' altered through metathesis. It is impossible to be certain whether Propertius held either of these views, but it is worth noting that Ovid in his *Fasti* implicitly gives wholehearted support to the derivation from Pales by invoking the goddess and avoiding even a suggestion of the derivation from *partus* (a

cf. *TLL* VII.34.78–35.8), the use of *pagana* for *paganorum*, the intransitive use of *flammans* (confined to poetry; cf. *OLD* s.v.), the allusive reference in the peasants' 'filthy feet', soiled by the soot and ash of successive bonfires. In 74–5, on the other hand, the language is straightforward, even prosaic: 'this day came to be the first for the walls of Rome', 'an annual banquet of shepherds', 'sport in the City'. More suggestively still, the information imparted in 75 duplicates in simplified form the information contained in 73 and 76–8: the *conuiuia* are those described, more elegantly, in 76, and the *lusus* is either the *festus* of 73 or else the leaping described, again more elegantly, in 77–8. In addition, the content of 74 makes a point—that the Parilia came to be celebrated as Rome's birthday—which, though common knowledge, was irrelevant to Propertius' purpose. I suggest therefore that 74–5 are an interpolation of a somewhat unusual kind; their factual content—elementary information of just the sort one finds in manuscript annotations—and their prosaic expression show that they originated in either a single long gloss on *Parilia* in 73 or a series of shorter glosses on 73 and 76–8.⁵ The whole of 74, *hic primus coepit moenibus esse dies*, surely versifies the content of a gloss on *Parilia*; unless it is simply interpolator's padding, *coepit* implies that the note discussed ancient traditions about the founding of Rome (e.g. that the Parilia 'began' to be Rome's birthday when Romulus founded it on that day). In 75, *pastorum conuiuia* might originally have glossed *festus*, but it could also have glossed *pagana* . . . *fercula* in 76 (*conuiuia* glossing *fercula*; *pastorum* glossing *pagana*), while *lusus in urbe* originally glossed either the leaping described in 77–8 or perhaps *Vrbi festus erat* in 73. At some point, whether in Late Antiquity or in the Middle Ages, a reader who found himself confronted by the corrupted remnants of these ancient annotations mistook them for damaged lines by Propertius and undertook to restore their original state; alternatively, he may have composed the lines out of those remnants for his own amusement. In either case, he produced a tautologous supplement that for centuries has passed as part of the description of the Parilia that Propertius really did write.

(2) In 76 *diuitiis* has been retained by an astonishing number of editors, not only conservative ones like Hertzberg, Rothstein, and Phillimore but more adventurous ones like Luck and Camps and Goold. It is difficult both on its own—to quote Broekhuysen, 'unde agrestibus illis *divitiae*, urbe vix nascente?'—and in its *iunctura* with *madent*.

Hertzberg gave the improbable explanation that the country folk had 'riches' because they saved up all year to splurge on the Parilia ('*Rustici enim in huius unius diei lautitiam opibus suis per annum parcent*'), while Rothstein suggested just as improbably that 'riches' is appropriate because the simple fare was all that the Romans of the time had ('*Die einfachen Gerichte, die man bei dieser Feier vorsetzte, waren alles, was die Römer jener Zeit besaßen*'). Like Ramsay before him, Rothstein cited *gaza* . . . *agresti* at *V. A.* 5.40 as a parallel for *diuitiis*; Donatus' commentary might seem to lend support, since his exposition replaces *gaza* with *diuitiae* and glosses Virgil's phrase with *epulae rusticae*, but in Virgil *agresti* clarifies the meaning as nothing in

deliberate choice, surely, given his willingness elsewhere to consider alternative derivations and explanations).

⁵ For a comparable case in which the annotation *non potuit legi exemplar* was combined with the words *uetus est tutela draconis* at Prop. 4.8.3 and turned into a hexameter of sorts in Naples, *Bibl. Naz.* IV.F.20, see J. L. Butrica, *The Manuscript Tradition of Propertius*. *Phoenix* Supplementary volume 17 (Toronto, 1984), 57.

Propertius does. Other defences of *diuitiis* rely upon taking it metaphorically: Fedeli glosses with 'squisitezze, cibi rari' but cites no parallels; for Camps it 'suggests plenty and disregard of expense'; Butler's Loeb translates 'rich fare', Goold's 'rich in plenty'. Editors who have emended have, with one exception, chosen the early correction (or corruption) *deliciis*, an apt word for the context but a rather bland one as well. As the reading of the correcting hand in V (Ottob. lat. 1514), it might once have been thought to possess some authority, but the corrector is now known to be Ludovico Regio, using a manuscript from the η group, which originated in Padua around 1460 and introduced a significant number of new readings, both conjectures and accidental substitutions.⁶

The most plausible emendation, for reasons of both palaeography and sense, is Postgate's *lautitiis*, adopted only by Butler and Barber (who suggested that the corruption arose when *la-* was lost through haplography after *fercula*; simple misreading is at least as plausible). Although *lautitia(e)* does not occur elsewhere in poetry (its by-form *lautities* seems to be attested at Commodianus, *Instr.* 1.26.22), it provides just the right sense here, and it is the *iunctura* with *madent* that makes its use 'poetic'. It means, of course, 'the state of being *lautus*' (in the sense of 'elegant', 'refined'), though with particular reference to the circumstances of dining, and it is defined at Paulus, *Fest.* p. 117M as *epularum magnificentia* (see also the Bembine scholion on *Ad.* 764: *lautitias dicunt mundum victum quod neque abundet sordibus nec squaleat egestate*). While it refers primarily to equipment (cf. Quint. *Decl.* 301.12, where it is exemplified with *greges ministrorum, aurum, and argentum*),⁷ it can also refer to what was served, most obviously in the fragment of Fenestella (quoted at Plin. *Nat.* 35.162) which states that the dish *tripatinium* was called the *summa cenarum lautitia*.⁸ Silver Age moralists like Valerius Maximus and Seneca, for whom *lautitia(e)* represents the same decline from pristine restraint and self-denial as *luxuria*, almost never mention it without implicit or explicit criticism,⁹ but here in Propertius it reflects a humorous and even ironic usage that can be detected in Cicero and Petronius as well. At *Fam.* 9.16.8 (*ante meum aduentum fama ad te de mea noua lautitia ueniet: eam tu extimesces*) Cicero is indulging in a little humour at his own expense, as the comic exaggeration of *extimesces* reveals. In Petronius, on the other hand, the humour is at another's expense. The *TLL* entry for *lautitia*, which otherwise simply distinguishes occurrences of singular forms from plural, groups three of the Petronian examples in a special category, *mera fere vi extollendi de quibuslibet lepide factis vel excogitatis*. This, however, ignores an important nuance: while *lautitiae* is indeed complimentary when spoken by *unus ex conlibertis* at 57.2, it is clearly ironic and uncomplimentary when Encolpius says at 70.7 that 'the ingenious cook equalled' a previous specimen of Trimalchio's *lautitiae* by 'singing in a quavering and most repellent voice' (*tremula taeterrimaque uoce cantauit*).

⁶ *Deliciis* was known to the earliest editors as a reading cited by Beroaldus. For Ottob. lat. 1514 and Regio, see Butrica (n. 5), 125, 137–8; and, for the η mss, 135–8.

⁷ For other examples of 'neutral' *lautitia(e)* cf. Col. 9.1.1; Petr. 21.6, 32.1, 73.5; Ap. *M.* 5.8.4.

⁸ See also Col. 9.1.1, where it is stated that *ferae pecudes . . . modo lautitiis ac uoluptatibus dominorum seruiunt*.

⁹ Cf. Col. 8.16.3 (*lautitiae locupletium maria ipsa Neptunumque clausurunt*); V. Max. 2.4.6 (*crescentibus opibus secuta lautitia est*), 2.6.1 (*lautitiam et immodicos sumptus*), 4.3.2, 9.1.4 (the last two making a contrast with [*prisca*] *continentia*); Sen. *Dial.* 10.12.5, *Ep.* 74.14 (where *epularum lautitia* is counted *ex his hominem inescantibus et uili uoluptate ducentibus*), 114.9; Plin. *Nat.* 36.45 (*nec lautitiae causa—nondum enim ista intelligebatur*); cf. also Suet. *J.C.* 46.1 and *Aug.* 71.1 for the contrast between Julius Caesar, *munditiarum lautitiarumque studiosissimus* (with numerous examples of his extravagance in dining, even while travelling), and Augustus, who displayed *lautitiarum inuidia* in retaining nothing of the Egyptian royal treasure beyond a single murrhine cup.

This ironic 'edge' that *lautitia(e)* can have is perhaps even more evident at 27.4, where the *lautitiae* are earlier called *res nouae* and involve such curiosities as a eunuch with a silver chamber-pot and counting balls that fall to the floor; it probably appears at 34.8 as well in reference to Trimalchio's 'hundred-year-old Opimian Falernian' and his sententious (and slightly insulting) '*uinum uita est*' speech (these last two passages both use *miror* to describe the narrator's reaction, no doubt one of astonishment at garish bad taste rather than admiration). The Ciceronian and Petronian examples show that *lautitia(e)* could be used humorously or ironically, while the latter examples in particular show that it could be used of something that constitutes *lautitia(e)* in the eyes of another but not in the eyes of the speaker. In proximity to *pagana* here, it suggests, in effect, 'what passed for elegance among the rustics of the age'.

The specific meaning of *lautitiis* here is suggested by the *iunctura* with *madent*, which has caused difficulties of its own since neither *diuitiae* nor *deliciae* are inherently moist, while *madere* almost always conveys literal wetness.¹⁰ The only exact parallel for *madent fercula* is Propertius' own *madeat* . . . *mensa* at 2.33.39, but there the table is wet with Falernian (perhaps for the obvious reason that wine has been spilled, perhaps simply because vessels containing wine sit upon it). The combination of the literal *madere* with the abstract *lautitiae* demands that the latter be understood not in its more usual sense of the apparatus of banqueting but as a liquid consumed on the occasion. Our sources for the Parilia even report an appropriate beverage: *burranica*, a combination of milk and *sapa* (wine boiled down to one-third its volume) that was consumed on this occasion but not, it seems, on any other, since it does not figure in any of our numerous accounts of Roman dining.¹¹ Hence it seems just the sort of thing that a sophisticated city-dweller of the Augustan Age might single out in slightly bemused or condescending fashion as constituting the 'elegance' of his primitive ancestors—a special treat for them, but for him an absurd combination of two liquids that he never drank.¹²

(3) Finally, the description of the flaming piles in 77 as *raros* . . . *aceruos* should have caused more concern than it has; the only attempt at emendation so far has been Passerat's *sacros*, weakly commended by *flammas* . . . *sacras* at Tib. 2.5.90 in another

¹⁰ Like *diuitiis*, *madent* is often explained metaphorically, usually as equivalent to *abundant* or a similar word, while translators often have the tables 'flow' (Goold; cf. Camps ad loc.) with rich fare. Earlier scholars offered bolder explanations. 'The food is cooked, not dry' according to Butler and Barber, as though Propertius might have thought it necessary to indicate that Roman peasants did not eat their dinners raw. Paley thought that it meant 'with more oil in them than usual', while Ramsay thought of 'the richer dishes and dainties of the feast-day, which to meet the Italian taste would be well soured in oil'.

¹¹ For *burranica* see Paul. *Fest.* p. 37M, *burranica potio appellatur lacte mixtum sapa, a rufo colore, quem burrum uocant*; and for the consumption at the Parilia of a combination of these ingredients (presumably *burranica*) see Ov. *Fast.* 4.780 *lac niueum potes purpureamque sapani* (where *purpuream* alludes to the source of the *color rufus* which gave *burranica* its name). Propertius' choice of *lautitiae* in reference to something wet perhaps hints at its derivation from *lautus* or at the derivation from *lauatio* mentioned at Paul. *Fest.* p. 117M.

¹² Varro apparently recorded in his *De Vita Populi Romani* that *sapa*, like other sweet wine derivatives, was favoured by the elderly ladies of early Rome, but in the late Republic and early Empire its chief uses were in preserving or storing food and as the 'spoonful of sugar' that helped medicine go down; nor does it figure in the recipes of Apicius. The closest that anything in our sources comes to the flavour of *burranica* is probably the *caseus mollis ex sapa* served by Trimalchio (Petr. 66.7), though even here the *sapa* seems to be a preservative vehicle, not an ingredient.

description of the Parilia (in the previous line, Tibullus calls the heaps of straw *sollemnes*). *Rarus* has two principal meanings that might be thought applicable here—one referring to structure or texture (*OLD* s.v. 1*b*, ‘having an open texture’, or 1*c*, ‘having its members or elements widely spaced’), the other to distribution in space (*OLD* s.v. 2*a*, ‘Spaced thinly or at intervals, sparse’, or 2*e*, ‘widely-spaced’)—but neither really fits. The first can be excluded because any bonfire ‘having an open texture’ or with ‘elements widely spaced’ is unlikely to be a successful one; it could also be too ‘widely spaced’ even for sober men to leap. The second can be excluded because Romulan Rome was a city of shepherds, and such fires would be found everywhere, not merely in ‘rare’ cases. English-speaking commentators gloss *raros* with ‘placed at intervals’ (cf. also Fedeli’s ‘posti qua e là’), a phrase used first by Paley (London, 1859), then repeated by Butler (1905) and by Butler and Barber, but this ignores the element of ‘sparseness’ that *rarus* comports. Rothstein saw something like an obstacle course (‘Mit *raros* kann nur gemeint sein, daß die Heuhaufen hingelegt wurden und, wie die Hindernisse bei einem Rennen, mehrere der Reihe nach übersprungen werden mußten’), but *rarus* does not imply a regular series.

The solution is to be found in Ovid’s account of the Parilia, in the affirmation that he leapt the burning straw himself (*Fast.* 4.727):

Certe ego transilui positas ter in ordine flammas.

Ovidian scholars offer two interpretations. J. G. Frazer, in his commentary ad loc. (London, 1929, repr. Hildesheim/New York, 1973) and again in his Loeb translation, took Ovid to mean that celebrants leapt over three bonfires in succession (‘I have leaped over the flames ranged three in a row’), an interpretation offered in Warde Fowler’s *The Roman Festivals* as well. On the other hand, H. J. Rose, in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*², s.v. ‘Parilia’, asserts that ‘bonfires [were] lighted through which the celebrants jumped three times’, which seems to imply that they jumped three times through at least one bonfire and perhaps more. Fantham’s commentary on *Fasti* IV (Cambridge, 1998) glosses 727 with ‘I have leapt three times over the flames’, then (probably inspired by Rothstein’s commentary on Propertius) cites Propertius 4.4.77 as suggesting ‘heaps spaced at intervals for citizens to jump like a hurdle race’, with the comment that ‘each man would then run the course three times’. But *rarus* then would surely imply that these ‘hurdles’ were ‘spaced thinly’ and thus set further apart than one expects for a race; these intoxicated men have not only to leap bonfires but to do a considerable amount of running in between. But this second interpretation is decisively eliminated in any case by its failure to respect the natural order of Ovid’s words, which shows that *ter* is to be taken with *positas in ordine*, not with *transilui*.

It appears, then, that celebrants at the Parilia probably jumped once over three piles of burning straw in succession, not thrice over a single pile or over a series. This anthropological ‘fact’ provides one more argument showing that *raros* in Propertius is impossible; the piles were set *in ordine*, not randomly at indefinite intervals. Furthermore, the information that one leapt over three fires in a row—attested in no other source but entirely consistent with the magical associations of the number three—is just the sort of precious antiquarian knowledge that one would expect to find adduced by Propertius when playing *Callimachus Romanus*. I suggest therefore that he wrote not *raros* but *ternos*, easily corrupted through a misreading of the abbreviated form *t²nos*.

This, then, is how Propertius described the Parilia before the disfigurement that accrued during 1200 years of transmission:

Vrbi festus erat—dixere Parilia patres—
Cum pagana madent fercula lautitiis
Cumque super ternos faeni flammantis acervos
Traicit immundos ebria turba pedes.

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