

**XXIX. *Ille parum cauti pectoris egit opus***

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## I

It is understandable that scholarly interest has focused on Books 1, 2, and 4 of the Propertian corpus: many beautiful lines, impressive variety of treatment, complex mythological allusions, and, above all, freshness, contribute to the excellence of Book 1; thorny problems of division and unity, as well as new approaches by the poet to his art, engross the reader of Book 2; the truly Roman feeling for destiny, which one encounters in the etiological poems of Book 4, has naturally attracted much attention, inasmuch as the emphasis of these poems seems to mark the complete adherence of the poet to Augustus' program.<sup>1</sup> Yet aside from occasional comments and consideration of individual selections such as numbers 1, 3, 11, 18, 24, and 25, little work has been done with Book 3. In this essay I shall examine the manner in which Propertius handles the motifs of water, war, wealth, triumph, and immortality, which, introduced in the appellation *Pegasides* (3.1.19),<sup>2</sup> join poems 1-5 and appear in numbers 7 and 9. We

<sup>1</sup> E.g. H. Bardon, *Les Empereurs et les lettres latines d'Auguste à Hadrien* (Paris 1940) 76: "le ton des élégies augustéennes prouve sa sincérité politique," and again (page 78): "Plus difficile à obtenir que celle de Virgile, l'adhésion de Properce fut aussi complète."

And so L. Alfonsi, "Nota properziana," *Hermes* 80 (1952) 116-17; P. Grimal, "Les Intentions de Properce et la composition du livre iv," *Latomus* 11 (1952) 192; and W. Eisenhut, "Die Einleitungsverse des Elegie 4.6," *Hermes* 84 (1956) 121.

<sup>2</sup> As pointed out to me by my friend and colleague, Professor Thomas Suits. For remarks on the programmatic nature of Propertius' introductory poems, cf. P. Grimal (above, note 1) 193 and note 3 on that page. Also A. W. Allen, "Elegy and the Classical Attitude Towards Love: Propertius 1.1" *TCIS* 11 (1950) 260. By thus alluding to the origin of Hippocrene, the poet establishes the horse (along with all its military connotations) and water as important themes in Book 3.

In general, Propertius may be said to be fond of words suggestive of moisture. Most striking, perhaps, is his predilection for *flere*, which seems to have recommended itself as particularly relevant to his relations with Cynthia:

Nil moveor lacrimis; ista sum captus ab arte;  
semper ab insidiis, Cynthia flere soles.

Flebo ego discedens, sed fletum iniuria vincit.  
(3.25.5-7)

shall conclude by attempting, in the light of our analysis and in consideration of certain details within the poems, further to clarify our understanding of what Propertius thought of Augustus and Roman policy.

## II

Central to the first poem is the antithesis of war and peace; also present are the themes of triumph and immortality. After invoking the *manes* of Callimachus and the *sacra* of Philitas of Cos by way of general introduction, Propertius begins:

A valeat, Phoebum quicumque moratur in armis! (verse 7)

For Propertius, as for the other Augustan poets, the figure of Apollo possessed dual significance. Here (verse 38) and in 3.13 he appears as the god to whose realm music and poetry belong; yet it was through his *fides* (4.6.57) that Roman arms prevailed at Actium.

This contrast is also contained in the scene presented in verses 9–13 where, in place of the triumphing general, the Muse sprung from Propertius is carried amidst crowned steeds.

Verses 15–20 are more explicit:

15 Multi, Roma, tuas laudes annalibus addent,  
qui finem imperii Bactra futura canent.

As befits a writer of love elegy, his verses are filled with *lacrimae* and *ocelli umidi*; even men friends (1.5.30) enjoy a good cry together. Naturally, too, he frequently refers to various geographic locations by mentioning the name of a river, bay or lake in that same area. Thus it happens that there are many lines in each of the four books in which words such as *liquor*, *lymphæ*, *umor*, *aqua*, *gurgis*, *unda*, *aequor*, or expressions such as *vela dare*, *fluere* and *lavare* appear. One might, therefore, question the tenability of the contention that water, as a motif, figures more prominently in any one book than in any other. I submit the following figures, which, though open to some revision, admit of no significant change:

BOOK	TOTAL LINES	LINES CONTAINING	
		REFERENCE TO WATER	PCT.
1	706	82	11.6%
2	1361	119	8.7%
3	988	142	14.3%
4	950	90	9.4%

It may be argued that mere frequency of occurrence does not prove that a subject is *used* as a motif, i.e. that a motif must be demonstrated *qualitatively* rather than quantitatively. This, of course, we shall try to do. The figures are intended to make our selection of water as an important subject in Book 3 seem less arbitrary than it otherwise might have appeared.

Sed, quod pace legas, opus hoc de monte Sororum  
detulit intacta pagina nostra via.

Mollia, Pegasides, date vestro sertae poetae:  
20 non faciet capiti dura corona meo.

That Propertius has Ennius in mind is a matter of little doubt. *Annalibus* (verse 15) recalls the title of Ennius' work. *Detulit* (verse 18) appears in Lucretius (1.117-19), where Ennius is said to have been "the first to bear down from Helicon a crown of leaves ever fresh to shine brightly throughout the peoples of Italy,"<sup>3</sup> and the last four words of verse 24:

maius ab exsequiis nomen in ora venit,

remind us of Ennius' epitaph. "I", the poet is saying in effect, "shall turn my efforts towards writing the sort of thing one reads in peace (*quod pace legas*), just as he spent his energies in recounting deeds of war."

Wealth and immortality are principal concerns of 3.2; water is a recurrent motif. Three divisions are discernible: (1) vv. 1-10 oppose song to various forces in nature: Orpheus and the beasts and rivers, Amphion and the rocks of Mt. Cithaeron, Polyphemus and Galatea; (2) vv. 11-16 mention wealth as manifested in rich chambers of ivory and gold, carefully tended gardens, and pleasant grottos; (3) vv. 17-26 deal with immortality. Water is a common denominator, appearing twice in the first section, once in the second, and once again in the third.

Song can hold back wild creatures as they run, song can check the rivers' rush (*concitata . . . flumina*, vv. 3-4), and can even interrupt the wildness of the sea, conveyed by the unruly sea nymph, Galatea, racing her horses, slick with briny mist (*rorantis equos*, v. 8), along the coast beneath Mt. Aetna.

Man, too, can impose direction on the course of water and can have it brought to freshen elaborately fashioned grottos.

Yet even the mightiest of his works, designed to assure their builders of immortal fame (e.g. the pyramids and King Mausolus' monument), will gradually lose their beauty through burning and weathering (*imber*, v. 23); and, it may be inferred, the aqueduct of

<sup>3</sup> Lucretius 1.117-19:

Ennius ut noster cecinit, qui primus amoeno  
detulit ex Helicone perenni fronde coronam  
per gentis Italas hominum quae clara clueret.

v. 14 (*Marcus liquor*), symbolic of a temporary triumph by man over water, will itself yield, worn away by the very thing it was created to direct.

Immortality is to be gained not through wealth or imposing construction, but by the products of *ingenium*:

At non ingenio quaesitum nomen ab aevo  
excidet: ingenio stat sine morte decus. (vv. 25–26)

The first two lines of 3.3 keep before the reader the antithesis introduced in 3.1:

Visus eram molli recubans Heliconis in umbra,  
recalls the setting of Vergil's First *Bucolic*:

Tityre, tu patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi.

In both the subject is reclining in the shade, a scene associated with the peace and tranquillity of pastoral life.<sup>4</sup> The second verse,

“Bellerophonteï qua fluit umor equi,”

and those which follow it are suggestive of war. As the horse is a military symbol,<sup>5</sup> so does the flow of water sprung from its hoof give one inspiration to sing of battle.

In addition to this polarity which pervades the *recusatio*, a second distinction may be observed, that implied in *recubans* and *fluit*. This connection of static (*recubans*) with peace and of kinetic (*fluit*) with war is employed in the rest of the poem to draw a second contrast, viz. that between water which is in motion and

<sup>4</sup> E.g. *Bucolic* 1.4–5:

. . . tu, Tityre, lentus in umbra  
formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas,

or, again, in *Bucolic* 10.75 where Vergil, about to undertake more serious work, bids farewell to the composition of pastoral themes with a metaphorical use of *umbra*:

surgamus: solet esse gravis cantantibus umbra.

<sup>5</sup> For the horse in connection with war, cf. 3.3.40:

nec te fortis equi ducet ad arma sonus,

as well as 3.4.8:

et solitum armigeri ducite munus equi.

For the horse in connection with triumphs, cf. 3.1.10:

coronatis . . . triumphat equis,

and 3.4.14:

ad vulgi plausus saepe resistere equos.

water which is comparatively tranquil. The *umor* of verse 2, the *magni fontes* of verse 5, the *flumen* of verse 15 all pertain to the source which stirs one to sing of war; all are flowing. *Mare* is introduced in verse 24; in the middle of this body of water one finds the greatest turmoil and confusion (*maxima turba*). The *barbarus Rhenus* (verse 45) is steeped in the blood of wounded soldiers. The *Gorgoneus lacus*, on the contrary,<sup>6</sup> is a pool or lake quiet enough that even doves may dip their bills therein; and, at the poem's conclusion, Calliope moistens Propertius' lips with water (*Philitea aqua*, verse 52) which is "tame and civilized"<sup>7</sup> by comparison with that water which gushes forth at the spot where Pegasus' hoof struck the earth.

The identifications which follow are, on the one hand, that of motion and moving water with war, and, on the other, that of tranquillity and relatively undisturbed water with peace.

Although flowing water and Roman victory have been related implicitly (from flowing water Ennius drew inspiration to sing of Rome), this connection, important in the poems to follow, is presented more directly in verses 45–46 which describe the Suevian defeat of 29 B.C.

### III

Turning his attention to contemporary political events, Propertius continues to employ the motifs of water, war, wealth, and triumph in 4 and 5. The former pictures Caesar and Rome

<sup>6</sup> Cf. G. Luck, *The Latin Love Elegy* (London 1959) 133: "This pool, as the name suggests, must be connected with Hippocrene, but it is a pool, not a source, possibly a natural cavity in the ground, where the water that gushed forth so powerfully from Hippocrene now forms a quiet little lake, safe even for doves to drink from."

<sup>7</sup> Talia Calliope, lymphisque a fonte petitis  
ora Philitea nostra rigavit aqua. (3.3.51–52)

One might object that, since Calliope brought water from a *fons*, this source must be rushing water just as the *magni fontes* of verse 5. Luck (above, note 6) would have the *fons* of verse 51, from which Propertius tastes the *Philitea aqua*, be the same as the *Gorgoneus lacus* of verse 32: "It (the *Gorgoneus lacus*) is the same water that the epic poet tastes higher up, as it springs from the ground, before it has become tame and civilized, before it becomes the 'water of Philetas.' The pool from which the 'birds of my lady, Venus, my favourite company,' (3.3.31) are drinking, derives its water from Hippocrene, just as the elegy, metrically speaking, is 'derived' from the epic. There is only one source from which all inspiration flows, but there is an easier and a more difficult access to it." *Fons*, then, would refer to the fact that this water provided the poets of love elegy with inspiration; it would not necessarily connote a forceful flow of water.

actively engaged in carrying out great plans, the realization of which will redound to the city's glory and contribute to the fulfillment of her destiny. The latter causes the reader to pause amidst the enthusiasm generated by 4 and to question what value the success of Caesar's plans can have for the individual.

Poem 4 falls into three sections.

Arma deus Caesar dices meditatur ad Indos,  
 et freta gemmiferi findere classe maris.  
 Magna, viri, merces: parat ultima terra triumphos;  
 Tigris et Euphrates sub tua iura fluent;  
 5 sera, sed Ausoniis veniet provincia virgis:  
 assuescent Latio Partha tropaea Iovi.

The contrast in tone with the preceding poem is marked. Propertius had been advised

alter remus aquas alter tibi radat harenas;  
 tutus eris: medio maxima turba mari est (3.3.23-24)

and, at the end, Calliope had sought draughts of clear water from a pool. Now Caesar is about to split the *freta maris* (verse 2), drawn on (*meditatur*, verse 1) by thoughts of rich reward (*dices*, verse 1; *gemmiferi*, verse 2; *merces*, verse 3), magnificent triumphs (verse 3), and extension of empire (verses 3-6). In these lines, as is natural, war (*arma*, verse 1) is closely related with flowing water (*maris*, verse 2; *fluent*, verse 4).

Verses 7-10:

ite agite, expertae bello date lintea prorae  
 et solitum armigeri ducite munus equi!  
 omina fausta cano. Crassos clademque piate!  
 ite et Romanae consulite historiae!

form a vigorous (*ite, agite, date, ducite, piate, ite, consulite!*) statement of national purpose. These lines explain the necessity and desirability of everything mentioned in the first six verses; war, splitting the sea in pursuit of wealth, rewards, triumphs, and extension of empire serve one end, *Romanae consulere historiae*. And once again, in verses 7-8, we notice sea faring (*date lintea prorae*) set together with *bellum* and the *munus armigeri equi*, two elements inextricably bound up with Rome's greatness.

The final section, verses 11-22, consists of a prayer to

Mars pater, et sacrae fatalia lumina Vestae

that the poet may live long enough to view his nation and his *princeps* in triumph over the Parthians, to gaze upon the

spoliis oneratos Caesaris axis (verse 13)

and to see horses rearing back, uneasy with the throng's applause.

Poem 5 is constructed in the sharpest possible contrast with poem 4. The opening words,

Pacis amor deus est, pacem veneramur amantes,

stand in marked opposition to *Arma deus Caesar*, etc. And, as 4 set the *freta maris* against the *Philitea aqua* of 3, so does *veneramur* create an atmosphere more inward and quiet than the noise of the cheering crowds (cf. *plausus*, 4.14; *plaudere* 4.22). In addition, 5 falls into three sections which correspond in function to the divisions of the preceding poem.

As in 4, the first six lines form a group. In these verses the poet rejects the aims of 4.1–6. In verse 3 his *pectus* is not enticed by thoughts of gold (such attraction is implied in the sequence of *dites meditatur* in verse 1 of poem 4), nor does his thirst require a jewelled goblet (with *gemma* in 5.4 compare *gemmaferi* in 4.2; with *divite*, *dites* in 4.1). He has no concern with increasing his land holdings (verse 5; cf. 4.4–6); and, by a second appearance of *parare*:

nec miser aera paro clade, Corinthe, tua, (verse 6)

we are reminded of verse 3 of number 4:

parat ultima terra triumphos.

Furthermore, it seems not unreasonable to point to the parallelism of locale, which we see in verses 5–6 of each group, as a final illustration of the extent to which Propertius sought to heighten the contrast between these poems by similarity of construction. *Ausoniis virgis* (4.5) parallels *Campania* (5.5.) in reference to Italy, and in verse 6 of either selection mention is made of a land lying to the east.

Verses 7–18 play a role in 5 which is similar, structurally speaking, to that played by 7–10 in 4: they express, both implicitly and explicitly, the central message of the poem:

O prima infelix fingenti terra Prometheo!

Ille parum cauti pectoris egit opus.

Corpora disponens mentem non vidit in arte:

- 10 recta animi primum debuit esse via.  
 Nunc maris in tantum vento iactamur et hostem  
 quaerimus, atque armis nectimus arma nova.  
 Haud ullas portabis opes Acherontis ad undas;  
 nudus in inferna, stulte, vehere rate.
- 15 Victor cum victis pariter miscebitur umbris:  
 consule cum Mario, capte Iugurtha, sedes.  
 Lydus Dulichio non distat Croesus ab Iro:  
 optima mors †parca† quae venit acta die.

The concern of 4 was the nation, and in it Propertius prayed that the best might fall to the lot of his country; *historia Romana* was the important thing, and in verse 10 it lay at the heart of the piece. In the second section of 5, on the contrary, we do not find such a concept set amidst timeless imperatives. Note the transition of tenses: *egit* (verse 8), *vidit* (verse 9), *debuit* (verse 10) are past; *iactamur* (verse 11), *quaerimus* and *nectimus* (verse 12) are present; *portabis* (verse 13), *vehere* (verse 14) and *miscebitur* (verse 15) are future; and three presents, *sedes* (verse 16), *non distat* (verse 17), and *venit* (verse 18), conclude these lines in a gnomic vein.<sup>8</sup>

The theme of poem 5 is the *individual*, not the idea of Rome; and the individual, unlike the idea, does not stand apart from time. Thus, taking into consideration the facts of aging and death, he must ask what of ultimate value will he gain by planning wars, by crossing the sea to amass more and more wealth, and by preparing bigger and better triumphs. The answer (verse 13 ff.) is that, however greatly such acquisition of power may redound to the glory of Rome, the individual, even though victorious, will in no wise be able to convey spoils to Acheron (*portabis*—active); he himself will *be* conveyed (*vehere*—passive), stripped of triumphal regalia (*nudus*), in a vessel far different from that in which he crossed the sea to glory—*victor cum victis*.

Whereas verses 11–22 of 4 opened with a prayer to *Mars pater* and expressed the desire that Rome achieve success in her undertakings, the concluding thirty lines of 5 are introduced with the words *me iuvat* (verses 19 and 21) and turn their optative subjunctives to describing a life of philosophic pursuit, engaged in which Propertius would wish to pass his last years. The poem

<sup>8</sup> There can be no doubt but that verses 7–18 form a carefully constructed unity, so arranged as to draw a point. Note the balance of verbs—three past tenses, three present tenses, three futures, and three more presents to point up the lesson to be gained from the preceding lines.



ends with a final rejection of the *arma* (verse 47) which formed the theme of 4.

To summarize briefly: the identifications, made in 3, of flowing water with war and Roman victory, underlie poem 4, in which we have seen the sea equated with triumph (introduced in 1), pursuit of riches (wealth was important in 2), and *historia Romana*. In face of this, 5 asserts the individual's preference for peace and a life of tranquillity and, in verses 13–16:

Haud ullas portabis opes Acherontis ad undas  
nudus in inferna, stulte, vehere rate.  
15 Victor cum victis pariter miscebitur umbris:  
consule cum Mario, capte Iugurtha, sedes.

questions the ultimate validity, for the individual, of a national destiny, which, as Rome's, is to be fulfilled by arms and the acquisition of *opes*, even the mightiest manifestations of which immortality eludes (3.2.19–22):

Nam neque Pyramidum sumptus ad sidera ducti,  
20 nec Iovis Elei caelum imitata domus,  
nec Mausolei dives fortuna sepulcri  
mortis ab extrema condicione vacant.

#### IV

There are good reasons for considering numbers 1–5 together. We have seen how the themes of water, war, wealth, and triumph pervade these poems; immortality, first appearing in 1 and the central issue in 2, is a problem implicit in 4 and 5, and may even be hinted at in 3.<sup>9</sup> In addition, the contrast in tone between the

<sup>9</sup> Contentus niveis semper vectabere cynis (3.3.39).

Perhaps *vectabere* may be considered an echo of Horace, *Odes* 2.20 (*nec usitata . . . pinna*) in which Horace prophesies his own immortality. Frequent reminiscences of Horace in these poems make this probable, e.g.:

a. Propertius 3.1.3. *Sacerdos* reminds us of *Odes* 3.1.3. Cf., too, Propertius 3.9.45, *pueri* and *puellae*, with *Odes* 3.1.4, *virgines* and *pueri*.

b. Propertius 3.2, beginning with *carminis* and emphasizing *carmina* in verse 18, makes one think of *Odes* 3.1.2–3: *carmina non prius audita*.

c. Propertius 3.2.18: "*carmina erunt formae tot monumenta tuac*," recalls the durability of Horace's *monumentum* (*Odes* 3.30.1), more lasting than bronze.

d. Propertius 3.3.23–24 resembles, in the advice Apollo gives, the opening lines of the *Ode* addressed to Licinius (*Odes* 2.10.1–4).

e. Propertius 3.5.7–10 may be using a variation of the Prometheus story which Horace used in *Odes* 1.16.13–22 (note 10, below).

end of 3 and the beginning of 4, the end of 4 and the opening verse of 5, indicates careful arrangement. Finally, as 3.1 opens with a rejection of *arma* (3.1.7), so does 3.5 conclude with a similar rejection (3.5.47–48); and as 3.1 opens with a triumph scene (verses 9–13), so does 3.5 finish with allusion to the triumphant return of the standards of Crassus. This order emphasizes the central antithesis of the group: in 3.1 his Muse is triumphing; in 3.5 he disassociates himself from a triumph obtained by *arma*.

Although the themes we have discussed appear in many other selections of the third book (e.g. war and water, 3.11; *avaritia*, 3.12; *aurum*, 3.13), 7 and 9 recommend themselves to this discussion as being especially pertinent to 5.7–12;

O prima infelix fingenti terra Prometheo!  
*Ille parum cauti pectoris egit opus.*  
 Corpora disponens mentem non vidit in arte:  
 10 recta animi primum debuit esse via.  
 Nunc maris in tantum vento iactamur et hostem  
 quaerimus, atque armis nectimus arma nova.

Three ideas are implicit in the above verses: going beyond certain limits, loss of orientation, continued pursuit after more and more.

Whether because of his desire to befool Zeus, his crafty theft of fire, or because he placed within the human breast the force of anger, upon which

nec saevus ignis nec tremendo  
 Iuppiter ipse tuens tumultu  
 (Horace, *Odes* 1.16.11–12)

can impose limit, the figure of Prometheus suggests passing beyond certain bounds. Now this *mens*<sup>10</sup> of Prometheus, refusing to let man rest content with what he has, causes him to go beyond the

<sup>10</sup> The story of Prometheus moulding human forms occurs in many places; Apollodorus 1.7.1, Horace, *Odes* 1.16.13–22, and Pausanias 10.4.3. I believe that in 3.5.7–10 Propertius has Horace's account in mind. Clearly he thinks that Prometheus, in forming man, put something in his nature that has born unfortunate fruit (*infelix*, verse 7; *parum cauti pectoris*, verse 8). Horace alone of the contemporary authors presents Prometheus as adding something to man's nature; Horace alone mentions the results (*Odes* 1.16.13–22):

fertur Prometheus addere principi  
 limo coactus particulam undique  
 15 desectam et insani leonis  
 vim stomacho apposuisse nostro.

limits presented by the coast line and to cross the sea, where shifting currents and sudden squalls confuse his orientation and rob him of control.<sup>11</sup>

Poem 7, addressed to Paetus, is devoted to the lure of *pecunia* and the dangers inherent in *parare*:

While Paetus, in pursuit of riches, stretched his course towards Alexandria, the wind and the waves overwhelmed his ship. Propertius says that if Paetus had followed his advice, he would be at home right now, eating before his own *penates*; poor, to be sure, but with only wealth to long for. But, as it happened, he was drawn on over the sea, his perspective blunted by the ever rosy vision of further gain, which furnishes *crudelia pabula* to the weaknesses in man's character (*vitia hominum*, verse 3). Thus he does not lie at rest among his kinsmen; in place of a *tumulus*, a vast expanse of sea stands above his head. Therefore (verses 27–28), let the fate of Paetus serve to instill hesitancy in the heart of the *audax* (verse 28); for

Natura insidians pontum substravit avaris (verse 37),

and the Greek fleet, returning in triumph from Troy, met disaster (verses 39–40) no less than that master of guile, Odysseus, whose

irae Thyesten exitio gravi  
stravere et altis urbibus ultimae  
stetere causae, cur perirent  
20 funditus inprimeretque muris

hostile aratrum exercitus insolens.  
Compesce mentem!

However, in context with 3.5.11–12 (*hostem quaerimus, atque armis nectimus arma nova*) the *mens* to which Propertius refers in 3.5.9 is not anger, but avarice. For the *avarus* and *arma*, cf. 3.12.1–6:

Postume, plorantem potuisti linquere Gallam,  
miles et Augusti fortia signa sequi?  
Tantine ulla fuit spoliati gloria Parthi,  
ne faceres Galla multa rogante tua?  
Si fas est, omnes pariter pereatis avari,  
et quisquis fido praetulit arma toro!

<sup>11</sup> For “Nunc maris in tantum vento *iactamur*,” cf. 2.12.6–7 with its description of the effects of love:

Scilicet alterna quoniam *iactamur* in unda,  
nostraque non ullis permanet aura locis.

In either case, the passive indicates absence of control, while the men, rocked from one side to the other, are at a loss beneath the suddenly changing breeze. A third and final appearance of the passive of this verb occurs in 2.26b.43; this also deals with love:

certe isdem nudi pariter *iactabimur* oris.

accustomed devices availed not a whit against the sea (verses 41–42).

Again the sea, a thing which has no gods (*non habet unda deos*, verse 18) and which, therefore, to a certain extent, stands aloof from that order (and with it, those limits with reference to which men orient themselves) of which the gods are an expression, is pictured as the path to greater fortune, whereby men, like Prometheus and Paetus, may essay in their devising (*ars*: 5.9 and 7.32) the work of a *pectus* too little *cautum*.

Ite, rates curvas et leti texite causas:  
ista per humanas mors venit acta manus.  
Terra parum fuerat, fatis adiecimus undas:  
fortunae miseras auximus arte vias. (verses 29–32)

Poem 9, written to Maecenas, is, as 3, a *recusatio*, and thus contains the usual comparison of epic poetry, represented by the sea (*vastum aequor*, verse 3), with less pretentious writing, represented by a quiet stream (*exiguum flumen*, verse 36). Sea faring imagery occurs in verses 21–34:

At tua, Maecenas, vitae praecepta recepi,  
cogor et exemplis te superare tuis.  
Cum tibi Romano dominas in honore securis  
et liceat medio ponere iura foro;  
25 vel tibi Medorum pugnaces ire per hastas,  
atque onerare tuam fixa per arma domum;  
et tibi ad effectum vires det Caesar, et omni  
tempore tam faciles insinuentur opes;  
parcis, et in tenuis humilem te colligis umbras:  
30 velorum plenos subtrahis ipse sinus.  
Crede mihi, magnos aequabunt ista Camillos  
iudicia, et venies tu quoque in ora virum,  
Caesaris et famae vestigia iuncta tenebis:  
Maecenatis erunt vera tropaea fides.

Although Maecenas could exercise authority (verses 23–24), although he had it in his power to accumulate much booty (verse 26), and although Caesar gave him full sway in accomplishing what he wished (verse 27), resource being no problem (verse 28), he nevertheless abstained (*parcis*, verse 29); and, even with the wind favoring his ventures, he furled up his sails. Such conduct will live on men's lips (verse 32) and will stand as a monu-

ment (*tropaea*, verse 34) possessing a special significance (*vera*, verse 34) that even the *tropaea* of the Parthians (3.4.6) cannot have.

At this point let us review the manner in which Propertius has handled his themes.

In the first poem, war and peace formed the central contrast. The poet compared himself to Ennius and said that, as the other wrote stirring verses of battle and heroic deeds, so would *he* write the sort of material which would please in peace. Water was introduced as a second important motif by allusion to Hippocrene in the appellation *Pegasides*. Triumph (of the poet's Muse) and immortality (he expressed the belief that his fame would not only not diminish, but even increase after his death) were also mentioned.

In 2 water appeared as something wild and forceful, which might be made to serve man, but which ultimately would deface even the most wonderful monuments constructed to insure their wealthy builders the immortality of everlasting fame.

Poem 3 distinguished two approaches to the fount of poetic inspiration: the flowing current of Hippocrene from which Ennius drank, and the more tranquil *lacus* from which Calliope brought water to Propertius. Thus the poet associated flowing water and war, tranquil water and peace; and, by referring to the Rhine, flowing with the blood of the conquered Suevi, he not only underlined the connection of flowing water with Roman victory (already present in the mention made of Ennius' source and the subject it inspired him to treat), but also directed the reader's attention from Roman deeds of past days to more recent triumphs, thus setting the stage for the poems to come and their concern with the return of Crassus' standards.

Among the types of flowing water mentioned in 3 was the sea, which in 4 and 5, poems of war and peace, patriotism and individualism, respectively, we saw equated with triumph, extension of empire, acquisition of wealth, and the glory of *historia Romana*. 5 rejected the *arma* of 4 and expressed doubt regarding Rome's policy in two ways: (1) by questioning what value the *opes* gained by conquest can have for a man, who, on the day of his death, must leave them behind to gather dust or to be spent on items, in the physical composition of which no immortality is inherent; (2) by alluding, through the juxtaposition of Prometheus, the sea, and

the conquests to be had by way of it, to the fact that self moderation is not innate in man; least of all when an individual (or a nation) finds no appreciable obstacles to deter him (it) from hot pursuit after goals of which he (it) can never have enough. The sea, then, is at once the path over which Rome's destiny is to be realized, and, at the same time, something vast and unstable which dulls the perspective of those who set forth upon it.

Poems 7 and 9 draw an interesting contrast in consideration of what we have just stated: in the former, the lure of *pecunia* led Paetus, dissatisfied with a life of moderate means, across the boundless deep to his death. Maecenas, on the other hand, has contributed something of particular value; for, although it lay in his power to do everything he wished (while he was in the middle of the sea with full sails, so to speak—cf. *velorum plenos . . . sinus*, 3.9.30), he did not allow himself to be carried too far, but, maintaining perspective, refrained from exercising that power. This action will gain him a measure of *true* immortality (*vera tropaea*, 3.9.34), far more enduring than monuments attesting to affluence (3.2) and the glory of conquest (*Partha tropaea*, 3.4.6).

v

The conventional view of Propertius' attitude towards Augustus is that the poet recognized official policy, but disassociated himself from it.<sup>12</sup> Poems 4 and 5, with their opposition of individual and state, would seem to illustrate the above. But the sharpness with which Propertius contrasts the two, the suggested ambivalence of the path by which Rome's destiny is to be realized (the sea), and the pointed message of verses 7–18 in 3.5 (cf. note 8, above: what happened in the past, its results as they are manifested in the present, the ultimate meaninglessness of this present course of action—all this is summed up in the present tenses of verses 16–18), cause one to ask whether the poet did not, perhaps, give some more positive expression to his views than the phrase, *garder son indépendance*, essentially devoid of action in implication, would seem to indicate. The following evidence, adduced from the poems we have considered, strengthens this impression:

1. 3.1.7:

A valeat, Phoebum quicumque moratur in armis!

<sup>12</sup> Bardon (above, note 1) 76–77: "Le ton des élégies augustéennes prouve sa sincérité politique; mais il est exact qu'il garda longtemps son indépendance."

Apollo was Augustus' personal god. Indeed, he never even had a home inside the city until Octavian began a temple for him on the Palatine in 36 B.C. Apollo had presided over Octavian's victory at Actium, and yet he was also the patron divinity of poets and musicians. Therefore, while *quicumque* does not necessarily refer to Augustus himself, the dual nature of Apollo and the implication that one, detaining him in arms, might keep him from attending to more pacific affairs, surely would have suggested the *princeps* and his power to use the city's resources for either war or peace.

2. Can the opening verse of 4, with its juxtaposition of *deus* and *Caesar*, a combination Propertius uses only once elsewhere<sup>13</sup> and an identification Augustus took every pain to avoid, contain a hint that restraint should mark the policy of one to whom extraordinary powers have been entrusted? We should notice, I think, that both these words are encased between *arma* and *dites*. These are the elements which, in reality as in Propertius' line, surrounded the *princeps*, who, as a result of the constitutional settlement of 23 B.C., was able, if he so elected, to exert tremendous coercive pressure in virtually every sphere of activity. Consideration for them could very conceivably tend to supplant more humane motivation.

3. We have tried to demonstrate that poems 4 and 5, although of unequal length, and, in most instances, admitting no line-to-line thematic correspondence, nevertheless parallel each other in overall structure, thus setting the conflicting ideas of each in more striking contrast. There can be no doubt that this arrangement is intentional. Is the reader, then, intended to apply the term *stulte* in 5.14 *directly* to *deus Caesar* in 4.1, who is pictured in 4 as doing what the *stultus* does in 5? This is possible, of course, although it seems more likely that *stulte* is addressed *generally* to anyone like the *vir*i of 3.4.3 or those mentioned in 3.5.47 (*vos quibus arma grata magis*). Yet even in the latter case, the shoe does fit Caesar's foot.

4. Nor should we overlook the significance of 3.5.47-48:

vos quibus arma  
grata magis, Crassi signa referte domum.

<sup>13</sup> 4.11.60. There are, however, two occasions when Augustus appears in the same couplet with Jupiter. For a discussion of these cf. note 17, below.

That Crassus' standards had so long been allowed to remain in the East, and that the men who had served under him had forgotten their homes and had taken foreign wives was considered a great blot on the Roman escutcheon; e.g. Horace, *Odes* 3.5.5–12:

5 milesne Crassi coniuge barbara  
turpis maritus vixit et hostium  
(pro curia inversique mores!)  
consenuit socerorum in armis

sub rege Medo, Marsus et Apulus  
10 anciliorum et nominis et togae  
oblitus aeternaeque Vestae  
incolumi Iove et urbe Roma?

Augustus, in consideration of *historia Romana*, had a special shrine constructed to house the standards when they finally were returned in 19 B.C. Thus one is able to appreciate how far Propertius stands apart from what we may term the official viewpoint, when he specifically disavows all interest in the *Crassi signa*. On the grounds discussed above (3.4 and 3.5, pages 401–2), he is dismissing an attempt *Romanae consulere historiae*.

5. Finally, there are certain verbal reminiscences between the poems which seem worthy of mention. *Parare*<sup>14</sup> appears in that section of 4 which sets forth Caesar's plans and motivations for a Parthian expedition:

parat ultima terra triumphos. (3.4.3)

Propertius rejects this in 3.5.6:

nec miser aera paro clade, Corinthe, tua,

and, speaking generally of those who cross the sea in pursuit of gain, writes (3.7.35–36):

Ventorum est, quodcumque paras: haud ulla carina  
consenuit, fallit portus et ipse fidem.

<sup>14</sup> Of the eleven occurrences of this verb in Propertius, four have to do with *opes*, either explicitly or implicitly: 1.8b.36, 3.4.3, 3.5.6, 3.7.35. Not entirely unrelated is 4.1.139, which speaks of *victrices palmas*; and 1.17.13 deals with crossing the sea, which in Book 3, is associated with *opes* and *parare*. Twice the verb is used to mean "prepare to, make ready to" (1.15.8 and 2.29a.6), twice to describe a woman as "ready" (1.9.25 and 2.24.48), and once, simply "has made ready, has prepared" (*paravit*, 3.23.16).



In similar fashion, *onerati* describes the condition of Caesar's chariot in the triumph scene in 3.4.13:

videam spoliis oneratos Caesaris axis,

while Maecenas, in 3.9.26, is able to *onerare* the walls of his residence with captured weapons.

In the first instance, the connection of getting and crossing the sea reminds one of 3.5.7–12; but whereas, in those verses, the juxtaposition of Prometheus and the policy of seeking more conquests called attention to that human drive for gain which is wont to acknowledge no limits, the association, here, of getting and the ensuing state of dependency upon the winds (*ventorum est, quodcumque paras*), which we have seen to represent loss of control, underlines the danger of confused perspective, which, combined with pursuit of a goal of which one can never have his fill, can prove disastrous. This is true whether the goal be wealth (3.4.2–3, *praeda* in 3.4.21, and 3.7 *passim*) or territory (3.4.4–6), whether the seeker be an individual, like Paetus, or a nation, such as Caesar's Rome:

Nunc maris in tantum vento iactamur.

In the second case, *onerare* (3.9.26), recalling the *axes onerati* (3.4.13) of Caesar's triumph, points up the similarity of the two situations: both Caesar and Maecenas are capable of accomplishing virtually anything they desire. Moderation and restraint befit such circumstances:

*Parcis et in tenuis humilem te colligis umbras.* (3.9.29)

## VI

To conclude, when we are told that for a long time Propertius remained independent from Augustus, we only know in the most general way that he did not *actively* support his policies. This statement tells us nothing of the degree to which Propertius maintained this aloofness. Did he manifest this independence only by default of eulogy, e.g. by omitting enthusiastic praise of the new order when describing Apollo's new home on the Palatine in

2.31?<sup>15</sup> Did he confine himself to ironic comment, such as 2.7.5–6:

At magnus Caesar—sed magnus Caesar in armis;  
devictae gentes nil in amore valent,

the potential sting of which was considerably softened by the conventional context of the lover who prefers the *castra* of his mistress to the *arma* of his leader?<sup>16</sup> Our discussion of the manner in which Propertius employed the themes of water, war, wealth, triumph, and immortality (particularly striking is the ambivalent nature of water) in poems 1–5, 7, and 9 of Book 3, suggests that, in these selections, the poet was doing something more than in either of the above cases. In questioning the value of *historia Romana* for the individual (since *opes* gained by crossing the sea must be relinquished when crossing the Styx), in expressing doubt regarding the ultimate worth of *tropaea* meant to bear witness to the greatness of Rome (for these, we may infer, not *vera* and far less mighty than the pyramids in 3.2, will be worn away by rain, another form of the water which once afforded access to wealth and triumph), and, in alluding to the spirit Prometheus put in man, which, followed beyond the limits of land out upon the sea, can result in loss of control and disaster, Propertius was not only pointing to the unsure foundations upon which contemporary hope for immortal fame was based, both for individual and state,

<sup>15</sup> Bardon (above note 1,) 76: "Lorsqu'il chante l'inauguration du temple d'Apollon Palatin (2.31), sa poésie s'élève avec enthousiasme, mais dignité; il reste d'ailleurs indépendant."

<sup>16</sup> It is true that the opening line of 3.5 speaks of *amor*; also note verse 2 of that poem:

stant mihi cum domina proelia dura mea.

Thus, in spite of our discussion on pages 403–5 above (points 2–5) and in spite of the parallel structures of 4 and 5, which make Propertius' dismissal of *historia Romana* quite pointed, one might doubt whether the author's expressed preference for peace in 3.5 is, after all, anything more than the desire, common among elegiac poets (e.g. Tibullus 1.1.58, Propertius 3.7.72), to be *iners* and to spend one's days with one's mistress. Although *veneramur* in verse 1 generates a mood more serious than that which frequently surrounds other references to peace (to my knowledge, Propertius uses it only one other time, of the *Ara maxima* in 4.9.69), the first couplet of 3.5 does contain just such a wish. *However*, this does not alter the effect of the passages we have considered (verses 3–6, 7–18); for these are quite removed from the usual context of the two lovers and their relations. "My business is with my mistress," says the poet (verse 2), "*but even so (tamen, verse 3) . . .*" and thus he goes on to comment on the aims described in poem 4. The force of this commentary is in no way lessened by allusion to his mistress. In fact, love enters the poem only once more, in a fleeting reference to old age at verse 23.

but was also calling attention to the danger inherent, in view of human nature, in the present trend of Roman policy.

Furthermore, it would seem, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding,<sup>17</sup> that Propertius never gave himself in whole-hearted support of the new regime; even in that poem which celebrates Augustus as *servator mundi* (4.6.37) he remains dubious, waiting for the light of day (*radios* 4.6.86; *dies* is the final word), far different than that reflected glare of shields beneath which the waters off Actium had trembled (*radii* 4.6.26), to put an end to the strains of triumph<sup>18</sup> with which one might pass the night.

<sup>17</sup> E.g. 3.11.65–66:

Haec di condiderant, haec di quoque moenia servant:  
vix timeat salvo Caesare Roma Iovem,

which Bardon (above, note 1) considers “une éloge direct d’Auguste.” It seems to me that these lines, as well as verses 13–14 of 4.6:

Caesaris in nomen ducuntur carmina: Caesar  
dum canitur, quaeso, Iuppiter ipse vaces,

inasmuch as they contrast rather than liken Caesar and Jupiter, may imply that Augustus, after all, is *not* the same as Jove, nor is it right that Rome should practically lose awe of the latter as long as the former is well, especially in view of the fact that the *gods* founded Rome, not Augustus.

<sup>18</sup> Verses 77–84 of 4.6 are concerned with Roman triumphs over a tribe of Germany (*Sycambri*, verse 77), the Ethiopians (*Meroe*, verse 78), and the Parthians (verse 79 ff.).