PROPERTIUS 3.11

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The third book of elegies by Propertius appeared about 23 B.C. The civil wars now past, Octavian had been hailed as "Augustus" and was moving ahead slowly to consolidate Rome's people. To this uncertain and yet more orderly period belong many expressions of caution in Latin literature. Many souls like Vergil, who ended his great epic on a note of darkness and doubt, were too impressed with the violence of which man had again shown himself capable to be able to see the future as radiantly secure. Others, like Horace, might imagine a time when the Princeps would have emerged successfully from combat with the Parthians and Britons: were this ever to come to pass, one could indeed think that Augustus walked as a god among men. Yet Horace was careful to include a proviso: subduing the Parthians and Britons would take a long time. There was no easy acquiescence.[1] Propertius, too, is capable of genuine political comment in a similar vein. In 3.9 he praises Augustus' principal advisor for his restraint when invested with arbitrary authority and contrasts favorably Maecenas' policy with that of Caesar.[2]

[1] A fine example of Horace's caution about is *C.* 1.12. In verses 1–3 he asks the Muse of History what man (*uirum*), what hero (*heroa*), she will sing; he then asks the Muse what god (*quem deum?*) she would mention. This inverts the order of *τίνα θεόν, τίν' ἥρωα, τίνα δ' ἄνδρα κελαδήσομεν*; found in Pindar, O. 2.2. Especially to be noted is the way in which Horace separates *deum* from *uirum* and *heroa*. The god for Horace is Jupiter, ruler ahead of Caesar in the world (*tu secundo / Caesare regnes*, 51–52). Octavian is less than a god. He will rule second to Jupiter so long as he is just, but Jupiter is above even the best of mortal men:

> *Te minor* latum reget aequus orbem:
> *tu* graui curru quaties Olympum,
> *tu* parum castis inimica mittes
> fulmina lucis. (*C.* 1.12.57–60)

[2] Elegy 3.9 begins conventionally with Propertius opposing the shallow water close to shore with the wild ocean, where writers of heroic themes venture. Propertius

Elegy 3.11 is one of the more problematic poems in Propertius' Book 3. Ostensibly it represents a eulogy of Augustus as Savior of the State which is far less qualified than anything written around this time. Such endorsement is the more remarkable coming from Propertius, the most recalcitrant of Maecenas' circle.[3] In particular, it flies in the face of the consistently grim or ironic assessment he

will not imitate Aeneas or Atlas by taking a huge burden on his bent back (3.9.5–6). Maecenas, urging him to do so, is inconsistent, for he himself writes in the "new style" which eschews pompous diction (cf. H. Bardon, *La Littérature Latine Inconnue* [Paris 1956] 2.13–16), and he more importantly makes his philosophy of esthetics his political morality. Maecenas could load his walls with spoils from the triumphs, he could walk into the Forum and plant the axes and compel people to obey him:

> Cum tibi Romano *dominas* in honore *securis*
> et liceat medio ponere iura foro (3.9.23–24)

(*domina*, the noun, is used only here in a political context in Propertius, and its unusual adjectival application, noted by H. Traenkle, *Die Sprachkunst des Properz und die Tradition der lateinischen Dichtersprache = Hermes Einzelschriften* 15 [1960] 78, highlights Propertius' effort to jar the reader; cf. also the tension between *Romano dominas* in 3.9.23). In spite of the opportunities for him to abuse his authority, Maecenas chose to furl his sails, to abstain, even while the wind, metaphorically speaking, favored any further venture. Such conduct will live on men's lips (32) and will stand as a monument (*tropaea*, 34) possessing a special significance (*uera*, 34) that even the *tropaea* to be gained from the long-hated Parthians (3.4.6) can not have:

> Crede mihi, magnos aequabunt ista Camillos
> iudicia, et uenies tu quoque in ora uirum,
> *Caesaris* et famae uestigia iuncta tenebis:
> *Maecenatis* erunt uera tropaea fides. (3.9.31–34)

The two names, standing in exactly the same part of each line, make the difference clear: both will share in *fama*, but it is Maecenas' trophies which are not illusory. The context is purely political, no longer literary. Maecenas is not compared to other writers, but to "heroes like Camillus," and to Caesar, and for political behavior, not for his writings.

[3] When Propertius signed his first work, the *Monobiblos*, he concluded it with two short poems which spoke directly about the sorrow of Italy at Perusia in 41 B.C. (over ten years before the publication of his book on Cynthia), he named Caesar (1.21.7) as the aggressor, and spoke of Romans fighting other Italians. (Cf. 1.22.5, *cum Romana suos egit discordia ciuis*, with Vergil, B. 1.71 f., *en quo discordia ciues / produxit miseros!* Vergil eliminates any specific reference to Rome as the initiator of strife.) Propertius also varied the usual *quis* in the final epigram of Book 1 and substituted *qualis*, bringing to the fore in this way not only his family's rank, but equally if not more his disposition and character as these appear colored by his northern Italian origin. W. Port, "Die Anordnung in Gedichtbüchern augusteischer Zeit," *Philologus* 81 (1925–26) 287, observes Vergil's greater diplomacy in that writer's decision to separate the two Bucolics which dealt with the effects of the civil war in the North, Bucolics 1 and 9, and to conclude the volume with a fantasy on Arcadia.

makes of the triumph at Actium throughout Book 2, published only shortly before (ca. 25 B.C.).

Here it will be useful to review those passages in which Actium receives notice. There are four in Book 2. (1) In 2.1.19–34, he writes that if he were gifted to write epic poetry, he would sing, not of events of the past, but of Octavian and the Triple Triumph. In 2.1.31–34 he changes the order of the different parades as we find them listed in Dio (51.21.5–8), placing the final procession about Egypt *first*, sandwiching in a general reference to enemy chieftains carrying golden chains (the opening day parade in Dio?), and placing at the very climax the beaks of the ships Antony had commanded—thus casting light upon the parade Octavian had wished to underplay by scheduling it on the second, middle day of the Triumph.[4] (2) In 2.15.41–48, Propertius upholds the life and manner of the love poet as productive of peace, and contradicts the suggestion that following Actium there was a Golden Age in Rome: if men could know the joys he experienced upon his reunion with Cynthia, anyone could be a god (2.15.40) and there would be a Golden Age in which no iron (*ferrum crudele*, 43) would exist, nor would any ship of war (*bellica nauis*, 43) cross the sea. Actium would not have happened, nor would Rome be wearied from letting down her hair so often in grief, laid siege to so often by her own triumphs (*nec totiens propriis circum oppugnata triumphis / lassa foret crinis soluere Roma suos*, 2.15.45–46). For Propertius there is not presently a golden time (the subjunctives

[4] The middle procession muted the bitter fact that, once again, Roman had defeated Roman, not only by falling between the "overture" and "finale"—the two moments at which audience expectations would naturally be at their highest—but also by passing as lightly as possible over Antony's participation. No overt allusion was made to the triumvir; only the *rostra* taken from the captured ships under his command appeared. It was not legal for one Roman to celebrate a triumph over a fellow citizen. Yet Propertius seems to come dangerously close to hinting that such was the case, when he contraposes *Actia rostra* with *Sacra Via* in 2.1.34, making the most pointed reference to Rome's venerable past and the one parade in which Antony would have most been brought to mind. There is one more feature of the chronological list in 2.1.17–34 which deserves comment. It is a survey of outstanding events, first in mythological tradition, then from the time of the Punic Wars. The criticism of Actium implied ever so lightly can not be related to the customary preference by the elegiac poet for what is smaller or more moderate and circumscribed. Placed in the historical context of verses 17–31, Propertius' allusion to the darker side of Octavian's triumph should be understood as genuinely political evaluation.

in 41 ff. are imperfect, contrary to fact for present time), and Actium is seen as a civil conflict, not the Great Decision between East and West as current propaganda would have had it. *Roma suos* in 2.15.46 recalls *Romana suos* in 1.22.5. (3) 2.16.39–42 are not at all the compliment many have felt. For one thing, reference to Actium forms no significant part of the elegy. Propertius has chosen to flatter Caesar where his compliment might be missed by a reader eager to return to the main line of thought with *sed* (2.16.43).[5] There is a second matter. Alluding to Antony, Propertius writes how love forced him to turn his back to the battle and flee. The couplet ends on *fugam*. We then read *Caesaris haec uirtus et gloria Caesaris haec est / illa, qua uicit, condidit arma manu* (41–42). In Propertius, *haec* and its different forms refer, over 50% of the time, to what has just preceded. There is therefore ambiguity in this praise, as if the turning back caused by *turpis Amor*, Antony's *fuga*, is all that Caesar has to boast over. *Fuga* provides a feminine antecedent for *haec* in 41–42. Even if we take the demonstratives conventionally as commentators have been accustomed to construe them with a semi-colon and the following pentameter, there is irony. "Caesar is much to be congratulated. It is really remarkable he didn't massacre opponents who indecorously ran from him!" (4) Elegy 2.31 describes the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine and Propertius' reaction to it. A contrast with Horace, *C.* 1.31, is informative. For Horace, the building *per se* is not of primary importance; it is the deity housed in it with whom his verses are concerned. In Propertius' lines, the temple appears massive and impressively wrought, and Apollo is a lifeless statue. Horace stands within the temple in spirit; Propertius enters it only to look through into the center (2.31.9)—emotionally he remains outside, looking *at* it. J.-P. Boucher has argued that Propertius' approach to the shrine derives from the poet's fondness for visual appreciation: Propertius naturally spends his time noting the lavish detail of the statue, rather than in picturing the atmosphere and *numen* in the temple, for it is characteristic of this poet to stand detached, a voyeur, relishing his eyes' impressions (e.g., elegy 1.3, or cf. 2.15.11–12 ff.).[6] There is more to be said. In book 2, Propertius enjoys

[5] K. Berman, "A Note on Propertius 2.16.41–42," *CP* 66 (1971) 111.

[6] J.-P. Boucher, *Études sur Properce. Problèmes d'Inspiration et d'Art* (Paris 1965) 48.

combining pairs of elegies—one thinks of 2.6–7, on morals in contemporary Rome, 2.8–9, on the lover's rejection by his mistress, 2.14–15, their ecstatic reunion. Even so it is possible to read 2.30–31 together. In 2.30.25–40 Propertius enters in spirit, with Cynthia, into the sacred grotto of the Muses; the elegy concludes with the words *nam sine te nostrum non ualet ingenium.* 2.30 sees Cynthia accepted among the Muses as Propertius' special inspiration, and we are reminded by the final line of the poem, just quoted, of Propertius' opening statement in 2.1.3–4:

> Non haec Calliope, non haec mihi cantat Apollo.
> Ingenium nobis ipsa puella facit.

Immediately, in an effective Propertian contrast, we read *Quaeris* (2.31.1) and remember the opening word, *Quaeritis* of elegy 2.1.[7] With Propertius' rejection of Apollo thus fresh in our minds, we find him paying only passing service to the god's temple in 2.31. For Propertius, the important religious participation has already taken place in 2.30.

Traditionally scholars have pointed to the elegies in Books 3–4 as evincing a new sense of identification with and support for the programs and propaganda of Augustus; 3.11 has figured prominently in such appraisals.[8] Yet so startling and uncharacteristic has this elegy's unrestrained praise of the Princeps appeared, that E. Paratore undertook, in 1936, to demonstrate that the poet's antagonism toward the forces of Octavian remains evident even here when he appears to commend Rome's leader.[9] Paratore's thesis won less applause than it deserved. We shall have to pay special attention to his suggestion that Propertius, unlike Horace in *C.* 1.37, degrades Cleopatra in order to cast aspersion on Octavian. Paratore also argued that Propertius includes references to remind the reader of the internecine nature of Augustus' great

[7] These are the only two elegies which open with any form of *quaerere* in Book 2. Only 3.13 begins in this way elsewhere in Propertius.

[8] E.g., B. Romussi, "Lo sviluppo di Properzio verso la concezione di una nuova poesia politica ed etiologica," *Philologus* 94 (1940) and H. Bardon, *Les Empereurs et les Lettres Latines d'Auguste à Hadrien* (Paris 1940). Recently R. J. Baker, "*Miles Annosus:* the Military Motif in Propertius," *Latomus* 27 (1968) 335 has called attention to *nostris armis* in 3.11.29: "Propertius' identification of self with the *arma* of Rome is a new development."

[9] E. Paratore, *L'Elegia III, 11 e gli Atteggiamenti politici di Properzio* (Palermo 1936).

triumph. Beyond the foregoing, J. P. Sullivan's ironic and humorous reading of Propertius the Political Elegist in 4.6 makes a fresh consideration of the poet's attitude in 3.11 the more relevant.[10]

To determine what Propertius is trying to convey is never easy. It is especially difficult in this elegy. Frequent changes of address, with the new speaker or addressee only indirectly implied, make 3.11 a treasure house of examples of this technique. In particular, the problem of verses 58–72 is taxing and critical. Long belabored by constant shuffling, these lines hold the key to our understanding of what 3.11 finally achieves. If one would interpret Propertius more successfully, one must be able to envision what possible connection there may be between couplets; Propertius' favorite method is simply to juxtapose verses without elaboration. Often repetition of an idea by different words will express what he has in mind, but it is not clear in 3.11 how far we may press him.[11] The problem with 58–72 of 3.11 is twofold: how the lines make sense placed consecutively, one after another, and how the section makes sense when we relate it to the other parts of the poem.

I

Let us examine the elegy from the beginning. The first section is eight lines in length:

Quid mirare, meam si uersat femina uitam
et trahit addictum sub sua iura uirum,
criminaque ignaui capitis mihi turpia fingis,
quod nequeam fracto rumpere uincla iugo?
uenturam melius praesagit nauita mortem,
uulneribus didicit miles habere metum.
ista ego praeterita iactaui uerba iuuenta:
tu nunc exemplo disce timere meo. (1–8)

[10] J. P. Sullivan, *Ezra Pound and Sextus Propertius* (Austin 1964).

[11] A good example of how Propertius is led along, we might say, by one word from another, is contained in elegy 1.22. Cf. A. K. Lake Michels, "Propertius I, 22," *CP* 35 (1940) 297–300, for an analysis of the progression of thought in this poem. D. R. Shackleton-Bailey, *Propertiana* (Cambridge 1956) 174–75, employs a similar approach in grouping 3.11.61–64, 69–72 in order: words of memory occur in each couplet (*monumenta*, 61; *testatur*, 63; *memorabit*, 69; *memor*, 72).

Propertius begins by absolving himself from the reproach of cowardice, inactivity, and whatever other opprobrium is connoted by *ignauia*. Such charges are false (*fingis*, 3). The figures of sailor and soldier in no way suggest laziness or worthlessness. On the contrary, they are men of bravery and of action. To be a lover is to be a soldier, and the struggles, strategy, and guard duty in which the lover must engage are every bit as demanding as the assigned duties of the regular military man who was serving Augustus. Throughout Book 3 Propertius has likened men of state to sailors, busily occupied in crossing the sea after gold in the East. One thinks of the opening verses of 3.4 in which Caesar is presented in this posture. Tullus, in 3.22, is compared indirectly to an Argonaut. A champion of elegiac moderation and respect for limit can lament the urge for aggrandizement which led Paetus to follow the example of his leaders in 3.7.[12] Propertius

[12] There is a close connection between Paetus' activity and that of Caesar in 3.4 and Rome in 3.5. Apart from common references to *opes* and the appearance of the verb *parare* (3.4.3, 3.5.6, 3.7.35), verses 3.7.35–36:

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

deserve comparison with 3.5.11:

> *Nunc maris in tantum uento iactamur*, et hostem
> quaerimus, atque armis nectimus arma noua.

Like Paetus, Rome now seeks reward across the sea. The moralization of 3.7.35–36 pertains directly to present plans of Caesar. Propertius makes the point that it was on a triumphant return from the East that one of history's most famous disasters took place:

> Saxa *triumphalis* fregere Capharea puppis,
> naufraga cum uasto Graecia tracta salo est. (3.7.39–40)

About him, Propertius sees many who are truly children of Prometheus:

> *Ite*, rates curuas et leti texite causas:
> ista per humanas mors uenit acta manus.
> Terra parum fuerat, fatis adiecimus undas:
> fortunae miseras auximus arte uias. (3.7.29–32)

Ite occurs twice in Book 3: here, and in 3.4.7, where Propertius, as priest of conquest, exhorts Rome to ready her armada. Both times ships are the subject. The words *texite* and *manus* in 3.7 evoke *fingenti . . . Prometheo* in 3.5.7. *Parum* comes in only two poems in Book 3—in 3.5.8 and 3.7, 31 and 34. Both lines in 3.7 place *terra* beside *parum*, just as 3.5.7–8 do, taken together. Finally, *arte* in 3.7.32 can be found in 3.5.9, used of Prometheus: *Corpora disponens mentem non uidit in* arte.

himself shuns the open waters of the deep (cf. 3.3.21–24; 3.9.3–4). At the same time, to be a lover is to be tossed amidst the waves:

> Scilicet alterna quoniam iactamur in unda,
> nostraque non ullis permanet aura locis (2.12.7–8)

and it is in this sense that Propertius "reaches shore" with a sigh of gratitude, when he declares his freedom from Cynthia and love's torment in 3.24.9–12, 15–17. The elegist and his battles with Cynthia are equated as worthy and weighty counterparts to Augustus' battles abroad, or to whatever other national involvement upright pillars of the community would support.[13]

II

Verses 9–26:

> Colchis flagrantis adamantina sub iuga tauros
> egit et armigera proelia seuit humo,
> custodisque feros clausit serpentis hiatus,
> iret ut Aesonias aurea lana domos.
> ausa ferox ab equo quondam oppugnare sagittis
> Maeotis Danaum Penthesilea ratis;
> aurea cui postquam nudauit cassida frontem,
> uicit uictorem candida forma uirum.
> Omphale in tantum formae processit honorem,
> Lydia Gygaeo tincta puella lacu,
> ut, qui pacato statuisset in orbe columnas,
> tam dura traheret mollia pensa manu.
> Persarum statuit Babylona Semiramis urbem,
> ut solidum cocto tolleret aggere opus,
> et duo in aduersum mitti per moenia currus
> nec possent tacto stringere ab axe latus;
> duxit et Euphraten medium, quam condidit, arcis,
> iussit et imperio subdere Bactra caput.

[13] For this equation, cf. the careful arrangement in parallel of the opening lines of 3.4 and 3.5 (W. R. Nethercut, "Ille Parum Cauti Pectoris Egit Opus," *TAPA* 92 [1961] 394–95) in which many words bring Propertius' rejection of Caesar's posture clearly into the open. *Like* Caesar in 3.4, Propertius is a warrior: *stant mihi cum domina proelia dura mea* (3.5.2). Nevertheless (*tamen*), he will not value what Caesar holds so dear.

Allusions to the figures of the *nauita* and *miles*, to sea and land in 1–8, pass easily into the examples contained above. Jason might be thought to have been primarily a sailor, Achilles and Hercules are soldiers, and 25–26 refer to a woman's power extended over both sea and land. The mythological heroines are all powerful women who prevailed over resolute and famous men. Through witchery Medea (9–12) obtained the golden fleece for Jason, and this witchery proved to be a source of great sorrow for the hero. Through her beauty, Penthesilea (13–16) won a victory over Achilles, even in death. The widely renowned beauty of Omphale (17–20) caused Hercules, that man of toil, to essay yet another labor—to spin soft measures of wool in hands thorny with callouses. And Semiramis, the great queen, led the Euphrates and all of India beneath her sway (21–26). There is a logical progression from Jason, who, after all, was no unusually great warrior, to Achilles, who was, to Hercules, who stood as close to the gods as a mortal could, and, from human beings, to powers which transcend the ability of any one individual—e.g., Euphrates (even Achilles could not overcome a river)—and, yet more, to an entire country, Bactria.

III

Verses 27–46:

Nam quid ego heroas, quid raptem in crimina diuos?
Iuppiter infamat seque suamque domum.
quid, modo quae nostris opprobria uexerit armis,
et famulos inter femina trita suos?
coniugii obsceni pretium Romana poposcit
moenia et addictos in sua regna Patres.
noxia Alexandria, dolis aptissima tellus,
et totiens nostro Memphi cruenta malo,
tris ubi Pompeio detraxit harena triumphos!
tollet nulla dies hanc tibi, Roma, notam.
issent Phlegraeo melius tibi funera campo,
uel tua si socero colla daturus eras.
scilicet incesti meretrix regina Canopi,
una Philippeo sanguine adusta nota.
ausa Ioui nostro latrantem opponere Anubim,
et Tiberim Nili cogere ferre minas,

Romanamque tubam crepitanti pellere sistro,
baridos et contis rostra Liburna sequi,
45 foedaque Tarpeio conopia tendere saxo,
iura dare et statuas inter et arma Mari!

These lines afforded Paratore his best arguments. He called attention to two features: the fact that Propertius pictures Actium as a civil confrontation following in the infamous tradition of Pharsalus, and that Propertius seems to refute Horace, *C.* 1.37, in which Cleopatra takes on nobility in her death.[14] Neither point can be denied.

Open reference is made to Pompey and his death in Egypt after Pharsalus (33–38).[15] The words *totiens nostro . . . cruenta malo* (34) echo the sentiment of 2.15.45: *Nec* totiens propriis *circum oppugnata triumphis.* Further, Propertius describes Cleopatra as: *Una Philippeo sanguine adusta nota* (40), and in this line *Philippeo* seems to stand parallel to *Phlegraeo* in 37, while *nota* recalls *notam* in 36.[16] An equation is established between the civil conflict in Thrace and the Roman victory over Egypt.

In like fashion, Paratore's argument that Propertius treats the figure of Cleopatra in a far less glorious manner than Horace is borne out by the facts. In Horace, the queen is drunk (*ebria, C.* 1.37.12) with sweet fortune, and is readying destruction:

Contaminato cum grege turpium
morbo uirorum. (*C.* 1.37.9–10)

He also describes her mental state: *Mentemque lymphatam Mareotico* (*C.* 1.37.14). Yet when Caesar wakened her to an appreciation of the real danger involved, she thought of honor (*quae generosius perire*

[14] The best treatment of the Cleopatra Ode is that of S. Commager, *The Odes of Horace* (New Haven 1962) 88–98.

[15] *Phlegraeo,* in 37, may or may not contain a specific allusion to Pharsalus: there is equally strong tradition that the battle of the gods and the giants took place near Naples. Paratore (above, note 9) 48–52, maintains in a lengthy note that *Phlegraeo campo* is not Naples, but any area near Thessaly. Thus Servius identifies it, on *A.* 3.578, thus the scholiast on Pindar, *Is.* 6.48 (Drachmann), and the Etymol. Magn. 795.54. But Propertius himself writes of the *Gigantea . . . litoris ora* in 1.20.9. Also, Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* 1.86 and Juvenal 10.283–86—two passages commonly adduced by commentators in discussing Propertius 3.11—lead one to think that the words "Better for you, Pompey, to have died then" may well be taken in association with Pompey's illness in Naples in 50 B.C.

[16] The observations of Paratore (above, note 9) 51–52.

quaerens, *C.* 1.37.21–22), she did not fear the sword as one might have expected of a woman (*nec muliebriter expauit ensem*, *C.* 1.37.22–23), and with serene countenance (*uultu sereno*, *C.* 1.37.26) dared to look upon her palace, lying in ruins, and to handle the asps. The very state to which she was reduced caused her to wax greater in spirit (*ferocior*, *C.* 1.37.29)—*non humilis mulier*. Horace's Ode expresses scorn and horror that such a war could have been undertaken against Rome; yet in his verses Cleopatra, made aware of her predicament by Caesar's gains, changes into a noble opponent, one worthy of Octavian's victory, whose presence could truly grace a triumph.

Propertius, too, is shocked at the daring of the woman (*ausa*, 41), but, unlike Horace who reserves his most abusive lines for Cleopatra's attendants and followers (*contaminato cum grege turpium*), Propertius degrades the queen herself: *et famulos inter femina trita suos* (30), *pretium poposcit* (31), *scilicet incesti meretrix regina Canopi* (39). And he never uses such expressions of praise or respect as *ferocior* or *non humilis mulier*. Also, in 55–56, he chooses the moment of her death to bring in reference to wine, unlike Horace, who makes her suicide rational and glorious.

The vehemence of *meretrix regina* notwithstanding,[17] to emphasize solely this aspect of the poem may be misleading. We can not divorce these lines on Cleopatra from the section which preceded, 9–26. In context, the queen is compared to Medea, Penthesilea, Omphale, and Semiramis, and, to a greater or lesser degree, she combines the qualities of magic power, fateful beauty and ruling ability which have been mentioned in the foregoing section.[18] Degraded Cleopatra may appear, but she is hardly contemptible as a foe. Indeed, the point of the lines which pave the way for mention of her is that a woman's power can be such that a man, even if he is one of bravery and action like Jason, Achilles, or Hercules, will not be able to remain completely

[17] Traenkle (above, note 2) 120 emphasizes that *meretrix* appears only here in Propertius, and comments on the peculiar strength of the expression: "*regina*, Inbegriff der Hoheit, und *meretrix*, Inbegriff der Niedrigkeit, sind in eins zusammengefügt."

[18] This resembles what Propertius does at the beginning of 1.3, in which Cynthia is compared to Ariadne abandoned, Andromeda, and a Bacchante, as she lies asleep. Cf. G. Luck, *The Latin Love Elegy* (London 1959) 115, for an excellent clarification of those verses. Also the first eight verses of 2.14 perform a similar function: collectively, they portray the varied shades of emotion Propertius felt seeing Cynthia once more. On 2.14, see J. Vaio, "The Authenticity and Relevance of Propertius 2.14.29–32," *CP* 57 (1962) 236–38.

in control of his future. Propertius is working in a different literary genre than Horace; his tradition is Callimachean or Theocritean.[19] And within this tradition the onslaught of passion which sweeps everything before it and chains the reason is a positive power for evil, worthy of the most serious consideration. Within this tradition, women like Cleopatra are figures of stature, leading ladies par excellence.

We are reminded, as we shall continue to be in the course of our discussion, that elegy 2.16 contains the germ of 3.11. There, too, Propertius condemns in strong language the lover enmeshed in desire, who is unable to stand up straight like a man before the eyes of society and over whom *turpis Amor* (2.16.36), *infamis Amor* (2.16.39), holds dominion. In 2.16 Propertius compares himself to Antony, whose military strategy was brought to nothing by his indulgence. The comparison has occasioned much comment, in Paratore and by other critics, as to whether Propertius here is commending Antony politically and expressing sympathy for his cause. It appears safer to take the parallel within the bounds of the erotic tradition: Propertius condemns himself and Antony for being slaves to love, but he playfully turns about, at the beginning of 3.11, where he repudiates the application of *turpis* to his deeds in the arena of Love (*Quid mirare . . . criminaque ignaui capitis mihi turpia fingis?*, vv. 1,3). When one has a strong-minded woman to put up with, conventional evaluations of one's life-style count for nothing. There is hardly time to catch the breath before the tempest. There is annoyance, incredible exasperation. There is excitement. The experience, participation in this tension, is unique.

If we are to interpret 3.11 as embodying "sincere" remarks of some kind with respect to Actium, Propertius may be far from seeking to express resentment or opposition to Augustus by putting Cleopatra in a bad light, thereby diminishing the lustre of the victory. To the degree that his abuse of the queen does not depend upon any literary tradition, this antagonism for which Paratore argues must, of course, be allowed to stand. However, if we place the central section of 3.11

[19] L. Alfonsi, *L'Elegia di Properzio* (Milan 1945) 66 n. 2, compares 3.11 to Theocritus 13, which is introduced by the affirmation that Eros does not hold sway over human hearts alone, but even over such a spirit as that of Heracles.

in context with 9–26 and 2.16, it would appear that Propertius chose to make the point that Augustus' victory, coming as it did over a woman capable of subduing heroes and bringing down countries, was indeed significant.

Let us examine the subtle manner in which Propertius creates parallels between the mythological portion (9–26) and that which deals with Roman history (27–46, 47 ff.).

(1) Jason–Antony. It is not to argue *ex silentio* to infer that Propertius has Jason in mind in 9–12. It is true that his name does not appear in the text; neither do the names of the other heroes brought before us by the events in which Propertius' heroines played so significant a role. It is the power of woman which the poet exalts, and before this power masculine identity pales. In the first exemplum, mention of Medea and the transportation of the golden fleece to the home of Jason's father (*Aeonias domos*, 12) pinpoint the occasion and the people involved in it clearly. As Medea seems to have been the more active and effective partner (it was she who gave Jason the magic ointment, she who begged him to take her with him, she who decided to sacrifice a human life in order to insure their escape, she who killed their children, who caused her rival's death—in short, just as, after their meeting, it was Medea whose actions determined the course Jason's future was to follow), so is Jason less directly suggested here than Achilles and Hercules, who appear unequivocally in 15–16, 19–20.

Even so, when we start to consider Cleopatra in 27–46, she is doing the demanding in 30–31. Antony is only implied.[20] In addition, as the marriage of Antony and Cleopatra was ill-starred, unhallowed, so was the union of Medea and Jason without grace: her father never gave his blessing, and when, pursuing, he pressed close behind, she prevented him from overtaking them by strewing the sea with her brother's limbs. Finally, as Jason and Medea are the only "marriage"

[20] The manuscripts at 3.11.31 have *coniugis*; Passerat changed it to *coniugii*. This alteration has been upheld by Butler and Barber, *The Elegies of Propertius* (Oxford 1933) 291, who refer the reader to B. O. Foster's review of Hosius in *AJP* 33 (1912) 341, where it is stated that abuse in Augustan poets was saved for Cleopatra, not heaped directly on Antony. Rothstein, *Die Elegien des Sextus Propertius* (Berlin 1924²) *ad loc.*, keeps *coniugis*, but in his comments agrees that *obscenum* should apply to the liaison of Antony and Cleopatra, not to the Triumvir himself (2.91). W. A. Camps, *Propertius: Elegies Book III* (Cambridge 1966) 107, follows suit.

referred to among the mythological examples in 3.11, so the *coniugium* Propertius disparages in 30–31 is likely to implicate Cleopatra and Antony before any of the other men she entertained from Rome. Jason is the weakest of the triad Jason–Achilles–Hercules, and Antony the least effectual of that group of three men in which his name may be placed (Antony–Julius–Augustus).

One may still have doubts, perhaps, that Jason makes a very good counterpart to Antony. Antony, after all, was supposed to have been a slave to Cleopatra; Jason used Medea. He could take her or leave her, literally. Yet is it not Medea, who, near the end of the story, leaves Jason helpless to do anything against her design? Ultimately, Medea shapes the hero's life. Her power is the greater, which is why Propertius incorporates her in 3.11 to begin with.

(2) Achilles–Julius. Although the figure of Achilles might prompt one to think of Octavian,[21] the situation described in 15–16 excludes any possible allusion to Roman history other than to Julius:

> Aurea cui postquam nudauit cassida frontem
> uicit uictorem candida forma uirum.

After Pharsalus, Caesar had gone to Egypt in pursuit of Pompey. As the winter came on, Julius, perceiving that he would have to spend it within the territory of a people not particularly friendly to him, fought a battle with Ptolemy and won. By the time that spring had come, he had slept with Cleopatra for two months or so, and, bewitched and confused, was persuaded to leave the rule of Egypt in the hands of the queen and her younger brother. In victory he proved susceptible to the charms of the defeated—just as had happened with Achilles and Penthesilea.

[21] E. Bickel, "Caesar Augustus als Achilles bei Vergil Horaz Properz," *RhM* 99 (1956) 359–60, believes, for example, that Achilles in Propertius 2.1.37–38 is an allegory for Augustus. The premise upon which Bickel relies is that Propertius had before him a well-known example of the figure of Achilles used in such a way —B.4.36, *magnus Achilles*. Vergil's use of Achilles to signify Octavian is expounded in an earlier article by Bickel, "Politische Sibylleneklogen," *RhM* 97 (1954) 210–11, 215–16, and 226. Yet to use such an allegory would be curiously jarring, eventually. For what could be stranger than, when Augustus' Rome was supposed to be the fulfillment of the destiny promised the survivors of Troy, to call the ruler of that city by the name of him, who, more than any other man, had brought destruction to Troy? It appears that Vergil in the *Aeneid* exploits this ambiguity effectively.

(3) Hercules–Augustus. Hercules is not praised as a conqueror or warrior like Achilles, but for his peaceful mission in society: *Qui pacato statuisset in orbe columnas* (19). The phrase *pacato . . . in orbe* is absolutely in keeping with the way Augustan propaganda liked to picture the future which awaited Rome. Vergil, in his fourth Bucolic, sang of a miraculous child who would rule the world in peace: Pacatum*que reget patriis uirtutibus* orbem (B. 4.17); and the idea suggested by *statuisset columnas*, viz. the hero who gives structure and support to the world, also calls to mind Augustus as he wished to be known, and in which spirit Propertius writes of him in 49–50, where Rome is *salua* through him; in 55, where he stands about her in all his might;[22] and in 66, where he and Jupiter each lend a shoulder to the support of *Roma* in the visual effect of the verse.[23]

What Propertius has done, then, is to construct two triads in which the weakest, so to speak, comes first, and the most significant last, and in which each member of the first can be seen to correspond to each member of the second. First (9–26) he presents three powerful women, each of whom effectively overcame the strength of a particular Greek hero; opposed to these in the poem's order, drawing to herself the separate power of the mythological heroines named, embodying their role, is the figure of Cleopatra. Alone, she had won her way into the hearts of two great generals and had the chance to influence yet a third. We see the resemblance of Antony to Jason, of Julius to Achilles. This, in 27–46. For a moment there is an imbalance: through 46 we have three men of Greece, warriors who submitted to powerful women, but only two Romans.[24] In the verses which follow, we

[22] Note the word arrangement of *tanto tibi ciue* in 55. Rome appears protected within Augustus' embrace.

[23] The parallel between Augustus and Hercules is felt throughout the *Aeneid*, particularly in Book 8. See D. L. Drew, *The Allegory of the Aeneid* (Oxford 1297) passim. Also, cf. P. Grimal, "Énée à Rome et le Triomphe d'Octave," *REA* 53 (1951) 50–51, and G. K. Galinsky, "The Hercules–Cacus Episode in *Aeneid* VIII," *AJP* 87 (1966) 18–52. For contemporary comparisons of Augustus to Hercules, cf. Horace, *C.* 3.3.9–12, 3.14.1–4, 4.5.29–36. For Cleopatra as Omphale, see Plutarch, *Comparison of Demetrius and Antony* 3.

[24] Although Pompey is named explicitly, I have not attempted to fit him into the system of parallels. It is true that, if we do include his name, we have four women named in 9–26 and four men in 27–46. Yet this is not really true, either, for Marius' name is found in 46. It is best to admit that a strict correspondence of number is difficult to come by. Yet it is not Pompey by himself, but the whole incident involving

find out what Propertius has been leading up to: Rome's Hercules is Augustus! Like Hercules, Augustus is a *columen rerum*; but unlike Hercules and unlike all the other men who appear in the poem, Augustus is able to protect his city from anyone, even from a woman. Within the context of strong men, through no *ignauia*, submitting to yet stronger women, the statement that, with Augustus, Rome had nothing to fear from Cleopatra personally (55) can have nothing to do with her military resources, but with her ability, twice proven, to insinuate herself into the confidence of Rome's greatest men.

What Propertius is celebrating here is not the battle at Actium or Augustus' military victory over the forces of Cleopatra. It is when one assumes that this is the primary interest of the poem that one runs into so many problems. For Propertius did think of Actium as a civil conflict; this is not less true in 3.11 than in 2.15.41–48. He therefore can not have mustered enthusiasm for Rome's military success. Yet 3.11 is all about Augustus, and it seems unlikely that the Princeps ever forced anyone to write about him. Even if we believe that Maecenas was supposed to bring writers over to Augustus' side, we should certainly not think that high pressure tactics were employed, but rather that Maecenas considered it his function gradually and patiently to bring any reluctant member of his group closer to the ideals and program of the New Order.[25] The victory celebrated here is that of Augustus over Cleopatra as over an enchantress, powerful in love.

Pompey and Julius in 48 which Propertius refers to. And Marius does not figure as a personality, nor as connected with any historical event, in 3.11, but is only mentioned in passing. Parallels of situation go deeper than any equality in the number of names mentioned by the two lists. It is Propertius' way to relate his mythological exempla in an illustrative way to the theme of his poems, and I believe that the parallels in situation I have drawn deserve consideration in this light—especially the matter of Julius Caesar and Cleopatra as foreshadowed by Achilles and Penthesilea, and even more so Hercules and Omphale as they adumbrate Augustus and Cleopatra.

[25] So Paratore (above, note 9) 148–49. A. Dalzell, "Maecenas and the Poets," *Phoenix* 10 (1956) 151–62, goes even farther, maintaining that there was no real political "game" involved with Maecenas' group. Patronage was essential in Rome, and so the poets who chose Maecenas did so out of consideration for his contacts (159): "Only in Vergil do we find the consistent encomiast of Augustianism and all it stands for. But Maecenas did not claim him as a convert, since the poet had already written of the 'young god' before he knew his patron."

IV

Verses 47–58:

Quid nunc Tarquinii fractas iuuat esse securis,
nomine quem simili uita superba notat,
si mulier patienda fuit? cape, Roma, triumphum
et longum Augusto salua precare diem!
fugisti tamen in timidi uaga flumina Nili:
accepere tuae Romula uincla manus.
bracchia spectaui sacris admorsa colubris,
et trahere occultum membra soporis iter.
"Non hoc, Roma, fui tanto tibi ciue uerenda!"
dixit et assiduo lingua sepulta mero.
septem urbs alta iugis, toto quae praesidet orbi,
femineas timuit territa Marte minas.

It is a problem to see exactly how Propertius is to be taken at this point. We have, so far, three ways of reading 3.11: it is an earnest elegy in sincere praise of Rome's victory at Actium (the traditional view), it is an earnest or "sincere" work which raises doubts that Octavian's triumph was really a glorious one (Paratore), it is not so much a poem about Actium as it concerns Cleopatra as a heroine in the Alexandrian, elegiac tradition. Seen in the last manner, the queen is indeed a formidable figure, and Augustus' triumph over her appears significant. The literary genre notwithstanding, 3,11 may in truth be a kind of praise of the Princeps. But how is such applause to be understood? It is difficult for the reader, just finishing line 46, not to have identified completely with the poet's scorn for the daring of the Whore of Canopus, who would have stretched out mosquito nets in Rome itself, who would have even held court amidst Marius' statues. What good was it for Rome to have freed herself from a tyrant, if the tyranny of a woman was now to be tolerated? Hail to Augustus, deliverer of Rome!

At the peak of this crescendo it is quite possible for the reader to feel that Propertius is expressing genuine gratitude and warmly congratulating what Octavian has achieved for his state. At the same moment, the switch from Cleopatra, the specific person, to the generalized idea of a female holding sway over men contains within it a reminiscence of the opening lines of this elegy. The elegiac

lover knows best of anyone what *seruitium* means. At the high point of the poem there is less than total identification of the artist with the destiny of Rome with which he is supposedly involved. We view Rome's celebration with a detachment imposed by our more fundamental identification with the poet's personal concern with his own *domina*. What Augustus has done can not touch that other relationship, and so it is that we, no less than the poet, find ourselves unaffected at heart. If we seek to evaluate Propertius' feelings about Augustus, this detachment must be the first fact of weight. Propertius did not care for the man who had cast the shadow of unhappiness over his childhood years, and he differs pointedly with the Princeps, on occasion, in what he writes. But what goes deeper than anything is his sense of removal from the subject of the state slaughter of opponents to a political leader. Propertius' love poetry is a poetry of manner, more than of biographical truth.[26] An elegiac political poem, like 3.11, no less preserves its independence.

Propertius delights in undercutting grandiose illusions. An outstanding example occurs in elegy 2.10, in which, after launching himself into what appears to be an extended passage of praise for Augustus' Eastern campaign against the Parthians, he suddenly changes to the future and promises to continue his song . . . someday. Even so here, in 3.11, we are treated, suddenly, to the sight of Cleopatra running away to the trembling waters of the Nile. *Tamen* (51) can be extraordinarily expressive in Propertius: one thinks of 3.5.3, in which the adversative breaks the parallel between Caesar the god of arms (3.4.1 ff.) and Propertius the priest and warrior (of Love), and allows

[26] Cf. the well-known discussion of Propertius' "sincerity" by A. W. Allen, "Sincerity and the Roman Elegists," *CP* 45 (1950) 151: "There is no plot which orders and determines the order in which they (the Elegies) shall appear. Propertius is not concerned to tell a story, but rather to impart the quality of an experience." Again, see A. La Penna, *Properzio* (Florence 1951) on the "superficiality" of Propertius' love elegy (20): "Vuol dire . . . che l'*io* più profondo non è impegnato e che il sentimento non è vivificato da un travaglio di spontaneità." One remembers, too, Georg Luck's excellent description of the manner in which Propertius the artist ever remains aloof from his artistic work (Luck [above, note 18] 123): "Throughout his career, Propertius gives the impression of flamboyant brilliance and intellectual recklessness. More than any other Latin poet, he experiments with himself. His life seems a series of postures before a mirror. Restlessly he analyses his own brooding, self-tormenting eroticism. Each poem is an attempt to preserve a new experiment in its complexity, without the simplification and order given by analytical thought."

the reader, with the equation fresh in thought, to appreciate the important ways in which Propertius distinguishes his warfare from that of his ruler. In 3.11 *tamen* reverses the tone dramatically, and where, a moment earlier, we saw the alien queen, endowed with the magic of her sex, presuming to defile Roman civilization, we now see her routed into flight, her suicide, and we are reminded of the unheroic qualities of her life.[27]

If the impulse to undercut pretense may be closely tied to the elegiac artist's employment of his special genre and meter, it would be misleading to ignore the role of his personal decision in arranging for the reversal. Only the artist by himself can be credited for the specific result. To the extent that the reader is jarred by the sudden postponement of the *laudes Augusti* in 2.10.20 (*seruent hunc mihi fata diem!*), and feels nonplussed in 3.11.51 at *fugisti tamen*, to this same degree must he confess that Propertius chose to startle his audience. This same realization successfully circumvents the traditional view that 3.11 is pure propaganda—sincere praise of Augustus. Propertius is not so serious.

V

Verses 57–72 (in the manuscripts):

Septem urbs alta iugis, toto quae praesidet orbi,
femineas timuit territa Marte minas.
Hannibalis spolia et uicti †monumenta† Syphacis,
et Pyrrhi ad nostros gloria fracta pedes
Curtius expletis statuit monumenta lacunis,
at Decius misso proelia rupit equo,
Coclitis abscissos testatur semita pontis,

[27] Cf. 3.11.55–56:

"Non hoc, Roma, fui tanto tibi ciue uerenda!"
dixit et assiduo lingua sepulta mero.

A far cry from Horace's Cleopatra who shuns wine at the last and faces death with dignity and resolution. Paratore (above, note 9) especially stressed this couplet in his attempt to show Propertius' denigration of the triumph. Housman suggested *dixerat* for *dixit et* in 56. I take *dixit* in the sense of the verb's common use in Cicero—"finished speaking": "And that tongue, weighted by repeated draughts of unmixed wine, ceased to speak."

est cui cognomen coruus habere dedit—
haec di condiderant, haec di quoque moenia seruant:
uix timeat saluo Caesare Roma Iouem!
nunc ubi Scipiadae classes, ubi signa Camilli,
aut modo Pompeia, Bospore, capta manu?
Leucadius uersas acies memorabit Apollo:
tantum operis belli sustulit una dies.
at tu, siue petes portus seu, nauita, linques,
Caesaris in toto sis memor Ionio.

The chief difficulty with the above arrangement lies in the lack of sense for verses 59–60. They have no obvious connection grammatically with 57–58 or 61–62. Passerat transposed 67–68 to follow 57–58 and to precede 59–60:

57 Septem urbs alta iugis, toto quae praesidet orbi,
58 femineas timuit territa Marte minas.
67 nunc ubi Scipiadae classes, ubi signa Camilli,
68 aut modo Pompeia, Bospore, capta manu?
59 Hannibalis spolia et uicti †monumenta† Syphacis,
60 et Pyrrhi ad nostros gloria fracta pedes?

And Shackleton-Bailey has argued well for a transposition of 65–66 to follow 59–60:

Septem urba alta iugis, toto quae praesidet orbi,
femineas timuit territa Marte minas.
nunc ubi Scipiadae classes, ubi signa Camilli,
aut modo Pompeia, Bospore, capta manu?
59 Hannibalis spolia et uicti †monumenta† Syphacis,
60 et Pyrrhi ad nostros gloria fracta pedes?
65 haec di condiderant, haec di quoque moenia seruant:
66 uix timeat saluo Caesare Rome Iouem!

The second arrangement by Shackleton-Bailey has many virtues.[28] It allows the elegy to fall into a symmetrical division of 8–18–20–18–8. The first part coheres in any event (the opening eight lines), the next eighteen verses do likewise (the mythological section, 9–26), Cleopatra and her relationship to Antony, Julius, and Rome form the central section of twenty lines (27–46). The next section of the poem will be

[28] Shackleton-Bailey (above, note 11) 174–75.

47–58, 67–68, 59–60, 65–66, an eighteen line panel to balance 9–26, with Augustus and Cleopatra as its subjects. The final set of lines will then be 61–64, 69–72:

61 Curtius expletis statuit *monumenta* lacunis,
at Decius misso proelia rupit equo,
Coclitis abscissos *testatur* semita pontis,
64 est cui cognomen coruus habere dedit—
69 Leucadius uersas acies *memorabit* Apollo:
tantum operis belli sustulit una dies.
at tu, siue petes portus seu, nauita, linques,
72 Caesaris in toto sis *memor* Ionio.

This final set of eight lines would balance the opening group of eight verses, and, as Shackleton-Bailey and Camps print it,[29] it stands bound together by the italicized words pertaining to men's memory of great events in the past.

Though there is much to be commended in the rearrangement by Shackleton-Bailey,[30] we can not escape the fact that Propertius seems not to have written these verses in such order. Furthermore, the sense of the passage remains clear even without the reorganization. To put it conversely, if we restore the transposed verses to the location assigned them by the manuscripts' consensus, there will be no difference in the meaning of the elegy. Cleopatra, we have seen, proved inglorious at the end. Yet Rome, ruler of the world, stammered in fear.[31]

[29] Camps (above, note 20) 32.

[30] One is impressed by how his transpositions continually reveal new merits to the scrutiny. The section 47–58, 67–68, 59–60, 65–66, has a clear structure—the chiastic relationship of 47–50 at the first, and 57–58, 67–68, 59–60 at its end. First we are asked what good is Rome's past, if a woman is to be tolerated; after this, we learn that Rome feared a woman: what good is her past now? A second point is that the fourth section of 3.11 will now be tied together by appearances of Caesar: Rome and Augustus occur together in an exclamation near the beginning (49–50), in the exact center of the group (55 is the ninth line in eighteen), and again in the final verse as Shackleton-Bailey arranges them, 66, with its trinity *Caesare Roma Iouem*.

[31] The sound effect in *femineas timuit territa Marte minas*, in which *t* clashes with *t* at the end and beginning of two consecutive words, and in which other *t*'s occur, is highly expressive. *Femineas* (the manuscripts) may well be correct, for the *min*-sound occurs here and in *minas* at the end of the pentameter, and it would appear logical to have the two words in which this sound was echoed also to be the noun and adjective agreeing with a common ending. *Femineas . . . minas* creates a kind of pun which becomes apparent in the first word when we read the last word, the noun. That Propertius employed such sound effects can be verified easily. A good example is the combination

Rome, whose illustrious reputation had known no blot or blemish, trembled in terror. *Nunc ubi*, etc., placed after 57–58, asks "What good does our past do us now?" Rome has been shamed. In Shackleton-Bailey's arrangement, with 65–66 following 59–60, we learn that the gods founded Rome, but that the state would scarcely feel fear of Jupiter himself so long as Caesar should be preserved from evil.

If we remove 65–66 from after 59–60 and return them to their original place, there will be no change in the sense. There will be a gain, actually, for we shall have additional preparation for them with the idea of Rome's ancient victories and her unique past, in 61–64. But there will be no substantive alteration in the sequence of ideas. We shall still be asking how Rome, who fears nothing so long as Augustus be safe, Rome with her illustrious record of triumph, could have feared a drunken slut. One therefore strongly inclines to believe 65–66 belong between 64 and 67. In the order proposed by Shackleton-Bailey and also in the original version *timuit* in 58 seeks a contrast with *uix timeat* in 66. This contrast is not weakened by removing 66 from five verses' distance from 58 to a space of ten verses.

If we return 65–66 to their earlier position (there is nothing added by their presence after 59–60, nor indeed were they set there to begin with), we have 67–68 following 57–58. This transposition owes its being to the need for some sense to emerge in 59–60:

tibi tibia in 2.7.11 where Propertius imagines the wedding pipe piping a song for his marriage; this sound would be sadder to Cynthia than the funeral *tuba*, mentioned shortly after *tibi tibia*, in 2.7.12. Another good instance is to be found in 3.3.31: *et Veneris dominae uolucres, mea turba, columbae*. This is modeled after Vergil, B. 1.57, *tua cura palumbes*, in which the rhythm and cooing of the wood-dove is captured. On this sound effect, cf. W. R. Nethercut, "Vergil's Dove," *CB* 41 (1965) 65–68. [O. Skutsch, "Zu Vergils Eklogen," *RhM* 99 (1956) 198–99, has noted that the application of *cura* to the wood-doves in B. 1.57 is inappropriate: Tityrus will not have reason to *miss* their cooing. Skutsch feels B.10.22, *tua cura Lycoris*, may indicate Gallus was the first to join these words, *tua cura*, and that Vergil is quoting him in B. 1.57. The very fact that Vergil's use of *cura* is inappropriate suggests he wanted to highlight the phrase—to make his readers stop and check. As Skutch proposes, it was Vergil's own idea to include *palumbes*. The point of the combination, *tua cura palumbes*, is the sound accent created by the *u*'s.] Propertius 3.11.58 is lacking in N, but is present in the other manuscripts. F. H. Sandbach has criticized it recently, "Some Problems in Propertius," *CQ* 12 n.s. (1962) 264, precisely on the grounds I have found to praise it—for combining *femineas* with *minas*, and in particular for the "feebleness" of *timuit territa*.

67 Nunc ubi Scipiadae classes, ubi signa Camilli,
68 aut modo Pompeia, Bospore, capta manu?
59 Hannibalis spolia et uicti †monumenta† Syphacis,
60 et Pyrrhi ad nostros gloria fracta pedes?

The apparent purpose of these lines is to query whether Rome's past accomplishments can be respected as they have been. With 67–68 inserted after 57–58, where we find them since Passerat, it is Rome's fear of a woman which introduces *nunc ubi*, and which, therefore, casts doubt on her earlier triumphs. How can the state continue to seem glorious, if she succumbed to the shame of fearing a drunken (*assiduo lingua sepulta mero*) prostitute (*meretrix regina*)?

If Propertius really wrote this sequence, we would have to acknowledge that he is depreciating the victory of Augustus, the occasion of Rome's glory, in the pointed manner that Paratore suggested. Propertius will be providing this development of thought: (1) the timidity, the debauchery of the queen; (2) Rome, ruler of the whole world, fearing such a person; (3) the glorious deeds of the past, 67–68, 59–60; (4) the ancient past of tradition in 61–64; (5) in a city founded with divine sanction, men must before all stand in awe of Augustus (65–66). Why? One thinks of 49–50: *cape, Roma, triumphum / et longum Augusto salua precare diem!* In the context of 3.11, Augustus can be as great as Jupiter, or at least nearly his equal, because of his salvation of Rome. Yet we have seen the enemy flee in fright (*fugisti tamen*) and have just lamented how Rome was disgraced by her fear of one so worthy of scorn. We can not take Rome's "salvation" seriously.

Of course it is also possible to argue that Propertius was apprehensive lest Cleopatra work her way into Octavian's counsel and influence him as she had done before. *Meretrix regina* is a personal revelation and is not owed to the tradition in which Propertius is working. The poet may honestly be praising the Princeps' independence from this woman. Such resolve counts more for Propertius the citizen, or at least as much, as the magnificent deeds of older days. Following this second line of reasoning, there would be no irony in the elegy. A major difficulty here lies in the fact that Propertius has introduced himself at the beginning of 3.11, not as Propertius the Roman citizen, but as Propertius the *lover*. It will not be possible to divorce his verses from this context.

Here it is important to realize that, even if we remove 67–68 (*nunc ubi . . .?*) from after 57–58, the tension between shame, the infamous queen, and the shining past of Rome is still implied by this last couplet (57–58). The lofty position of the capital (*alta iugis*), the fact that Rome sits at the head of the entire globe (the wide hyperbaton in *toto quae praesidet orbi*, in 57, is heavily emphatic), and then the city's fear because of a woman's threats, can not imply anything other than shame and some measure of disgrace. And if we eliminate 67–68 and go directly into 59–60, 61–64 ff., we have a subtle contrast awakened between this shame and the brilliance of renowned heroes of the past. The tension brought out so sharply by *nunc ubi* in 67–68 is no less present, but it is more delicately implied. Propertius never was one to be heavy-handed, and this may be just the justification we need to return 67–68 to the place in which they were formerly found.

If we return 67–68 to follow 65–66:

> Haec di condiderant, haec di quoque moenia seruant:
> uix timeat saluo Caesare Rome Iouem!
> *nunc ubi* Scipiadae classes, ubi signa Camilli,
> aut modo Pompeia, Bospore, capta manu? (65–68)

we are now to value Rome's past triumphs less because they can only be dimmed by the lustre of the Augustan days. The sequence of 65–68 says that even though the gods founded Rome, Caesar matters more to her people; more, even, than the great accomplishments of Roman history. The final couplet of the original arrangement:

> Leucadius uersas acies memorabit Apollo:
> tantum operis belli sustulit una dies.
> *At* tu, siue petes portus seu, nauita, linques,
> Caesaris in toto sis memor Ionio. (69–72)

strengthens this sense. The god Apollo is commemorated for the victory at Actium, but we are to value especially the *man*, Caesar. If *at* is taken with the adversative force it often implies, the contrast between god and man is even stronger. However, it may be more of a connective, as it seems to be in 62 (*at Decius*). If we read 65–72 consecutively, Propertius contrasts Augustus and the other famous Roman generals like the two Scipios, Camillus, Pompey; the deeds of the Princeps eclipse the feats of other famous heroes. These last four

couplets seem to praise Caesar in a manner worthy of a good court panegyricist.

There is good reason to believe that the original sequence from 59–72 flows smoothly. The historical allusions in these lines form a pattern which contains within it a movement back to Rome's beginning and then forward to the present victory at Actium.

Hannibalis spolia et uicti† monumenta† Syphacis,
et Pyrrhi ad nostros gloria fracta pedes—
Curtius expletis statuit monumenta lacunis,
at Decius misso proelia rupit equo,
Coclitis abscissos testatur semita pontis,
est cui cognomen coruus habere dedit:
haec di condiderant, haec di quoque moenia seruant:
uix timeat saluo Caesare Roma Iouem!
nunc ubi Scipiadae classes, ubi signa Camilli,
aut modo Pompeia, Bospore, capta manu?
Leucadius uersas acies memorabit Apollo:
tantum operis belli sustulit una dies.
at tu, siue petes portus seu, nauita, linques,
Caesaris in toto sis memor Ionio.

We are treated to a survey of Roman history, beginning from the present in verses 57–58 (Cleopatra and Actium, 31 B.C.), and touching on the third century B.C. in the next couplet 59–60 (Hannibal and Syphax in the Second Punic War, 218–202 B.C., and Pyrrhus against Italy in 280–278 B.C.), moving on back to the most famous legends of Roman heroism in the early years of the state (Curtius, P. Decius, Horatius Cocles, Corvinus) in verses 61–64, and finally arriving at the founding of Rome itself in 753 B.C. by the gods (verse 65). Augustus is named with Jupiter and Rome in the next breath (66). The following two lines, 67–68, bring us, reversing our course, back to the point of our departure: the fourth, third, and second centuries B.C. are implied by mention of Camillus, the two Scipios (Second and Third Punic Wars, 218–202 B.C. and 149–146 B.C.); and the pentameter speaks of Pompey's defeat of Mithridates, after the last Mithridatic War, near the Crimea (68/67 B.C.). In verses 69–70 we come again to Actium and the temple of Apollo which oversaw the flight of the enemy in 31 B.C. (*Leucadius Apollo*).

A similar arrangement of references to trace the course of history can be found in Propertius 2.1.19–34, as we have pointed out earlier in this paper. The difference is that in the previous poem Propertius used his catalogue to underscore the negative dimensions of Octavian's victories. For example, the dislocation chronologically of Perusia to stress that special sorrow, and the reordering of the parades in the Triple Triumph. Also, he makes no mention in 2.1 of what Octavian might accomplish in the East, had already achieved in Spain, or thought to do in Britain; he dwells instead on the civil wars. In 3.11, by contrast, Augustus appears exalted, present from the founding of Rome—an equal, throughout time, of Jupiter.

The major efforts to change the order of verses in this last part of 3.11, whatever their merits, are unnecessary. The original order is smooth artistically and is genuinely Propertian, as the similar list of historical allusions in 2.1 proves. We may still fail to fathom whatever *monu(i)menta*, the manuscripts' consensus at 59, conceals. *Spolia*, *monumenta*(?), *gloria* can all be nominatives. A comma should follow 59, and a dash may be placed after 60. The nominatives in 59–60 make sense if we understand Propertius simply to be listing famous events in Roman history: "The spoils of Hannibal and the memorial of Syphax's defeat, and the glory of Pyrrhus, broken at our feet." Again, it may be that we are meant to infer *sunt* or *est*: "The spoils of Hannibal, etc., are (part of our past) . . ." Cf. *est cui* in 64. Verses 59–64 are a unit in which, as the direction of the historical references indicates, Propertius travels in his mind back to Rome's founding.

VI

We have a text. How to interpret it? The traditional way has been to see 3.11 as unmitigated propaganda, and we have discussed, in the introduction, how greatly this view clashes with the reality of what other people in Maecenas' circle were writing at this period of Roman history, and also with the expectations encouraged by Propertius' youthful hostility toward Caesar and his negative references to Actium in writings prior to 3.11. Paratore's opposite hypothesis, that 3.11 was written to attack Octavian, does have at least the intestine nature of the conflict at Actium to rely upon—allusions to Octavian's

victory as one over other Romans occur earlier in Propertius' elegies about the decisive battle; and in 3.11 Propertius recounts the disgrace of civil war and Egypt's part in that bloody history.

A third position we considered in the first two-thirds of 3.11 (1–50), and one which is in accord with recent emphasis in the criticism of elegiac literature, is that the elements of Alexandrian art should interest us more than attempts to probe the biographical truths of Propertius the Roman citizen. The opening verses of 3.11 establish clearly an erotic context for the rest of the poem. Nevertheless, 3.11 is concerned with historical events and personages, Propertius was an historical individual with definite personal reactions to the politics of his period which we have shown functioned significantly to influence his artistic decisions within the genre (as in the historical list in 2.1). Were we to concentrate solely upon his Alexandrian technique, we would surely fall short in doing the elegy justice.

As it happens, awareness of the elegiac dimensions here does provide further reason to believe that Propertius was consciously promulgating Augustan propaganda. The list of mythological heroines and the famed warriors who fell prey to their charms finds parallels in the references to Rome's most renowned heroes whom Cleopatra mesmerized before Augustus, and there is reason to feel that the identification of Hercules and Augustus may be implied. However, Augustus is not content to spin wool for "Omphale"! Octavian behaved austerely toward Cleopatra,[32] and the implied comparison therefore may have been included by Propertius to magnify the difference and raise Augustus the higher. The second major feature from Alexandrian art is the massive catalogue in 59–70.[33] The list recalls 2.1.19–34, but it shows Propertius now choosing by his arrangement to set Augustus on a level with Jupiter, placed eternally beside *Roma*. This is very different from the choice to denigrate the Triple Triumph as one over fellow Romans, back in 2.1. We can discern Propertius' choice within his tradition, and we must ask whether he has been

[32] We are told by Die (51.12) that when Octavian first went to meet Cleopatra after Actium, she had attired herself most seductively and had set the stage with a maximum of allure. Octavian stood at the threshold, not entering the room, with his eyes steadfastly averted.

[33] For the catalogue in Hellenistic literature, cf. W. Wimmel, *Kallimachos in Rom* = *Hermes Einzelschriften* 16 (1960) 36–37, 133, 146.

"converted"—as a popular theory has held—to the *signa* of the Princeps.

Here we must keep in mind that 59–72 can not be removed from the context of 3.11 established by the *persona* of the lover whom society reproves for his repudiation of political commitment (3.11.1–8). As a love poet in the Callimachean tradition, Propertius does not write about the battle at Actium itself first and foremost, nor does he dedicate the elegy so much to a celebration of Augustus' arms, as he addresses his thoughts to the male, Octavian, and his success in retaining his independence (and that of Rome) from a personal and political *domina*. This realization allows one to reconcile Propertius' hinted regret that Actium was an unfortunate continuation of the civil wars (Paratore) with the poet's more overt concern with the freedom of men from the tyranny of women. This latter interest is totally consistent with Propertius' posture as the elegiac lover who knows how powerful the sway of a woman can be, and it is the major regard of 3.11.

Now, however, we must face the question of Propertius' biographical personality and ask whether he "sincerely" felt apprehension that Cleopatra might extend her influence as a sinister and un-Roman force into affairs of state. Granted that Propertius adopts different postures as the Lover, which, by their artificiality and affectation, obscure his deepest sentiments; it still may be true that there is some straightforward praise for Augustus in 3.11. Propertius' abuse of the queen stands apart from any conventional motifs; it is not a natural result of the adoption of elegiac form. This, if anything, seems to offer a glimpse into personal reality for the artist. But why does he abuse her? Is it to blacken the victory for Octavian, as Paratore thinks? It can be argued equally that, precisely because he genuinely disliked and repudiated Cleopatra's Egyptian ways, Propertius can wax genuinely enthusiastic for Augustus in 3.11. In this sense, 3.11 is completely in accord with Augustan propaganda: it opposes "our ways" to the effeminate, foul manners of the steaming Nile—*quid, modo quae nostris opprobria uexerit armis?* (29). This is the first time in Propertius where *arma* in a genuine military context are acknowledged by Propertius as his own (*nostra*), as R. J. Baker (above, note 8) has pointed out. Propertius was an Umbrian, from a prosperous, conservative area of Italy. Born here, he would have inclined toward a

more conservatively Republican position, and in particular with respect to matters of peninsular and national identity. If this theory be valid, 3.11 is earnestly an endorsement of Caesar. However, we may not be justified in taking it as a new departure for the *rest* of Propertius' political elegies: one can praise his leader on one account and reserve approval on others. It needs to be stressed, moreover, that the one reference to Cleopatra (*meretrix regina*) is only one feature of a long elegy; we must be cautious in interpreting the whole of 3.11 using but one portion of the elegy as our key.

We have been discussing three different ways to approach 3.11. These are the traditional, the anti-Augustan, and the literary-critical interpretations, of which the last may support the first. There can be a fourth, and we have adumbrated it in our remarks about the sudden reversal of mood which occurs with *fugisti tamen* (51). This reading we might term the ironic or whimsical, and it is suggested in the light of recent studies in Propertian humor, especially with regard to the political poems.[34] The reason why it is so dangerous to assume biographical certainty with Propertius is that he remains detached from what he writes, posturing, as Georg Luck has described it, before a mirror (above, note 26). Propertius is standing off and enjoying the effect, and we must be careful to realize that what we see may be no more than a carefully staged production before which the poet himself sits—completely delighted, and completely removed.

The ironic reading of 3.11 would bring out, first the three major areas of the elegy. A long section, in which we are impressed by the power of women over men (1–50) and the immense significance, therefore, of Augustus' salvation of Rome from a woman, begins the poem. If we favor a humorous reading, we can imagine Propertius chuckling to himself, when, after this elevation of mood, he suddenly switches to the picture of the timid woman in flight (*fugisti tamen in timidi uaga flumina Nili*, 51). Does the image of Horace's dove fleeing

[34] Of especial importance here is J. P. Sullivan's analysis of Propertius 4.6 (above, note 10, 64) in which the very elevation of the poet's tone, extreme as it appears, the inordinate praise of Augustus, the pictures of Apollo standing by, firing arrows, and of Triton and the sea goddesses applauding Octavian's victory, are all "deliberate and ironic playfulness." Also, cf. W. S. Anderson, "*Hercules Exclusus:* Propertius IV, 9," *AJP* 85 (1964) 1–12; and W. R. Nethercut, "Propertius 3.12–14," *CP* 65 (1970) 100–101 on 3.14.

from the taloned bird of war lurk behind this moment? The deflation from Cleopatra as the combined incarnation of Medea, Penthesilea, Omphale, Semiramis (witch, female military commander and warrior, beauty, queen and civilizing force together) to the pursued seeking a timid river, getting away from the open waters off Actium, embodies an important elegiac feature: the conceit which contrasts the sea with the land and with waters bounded by land, like rivers. It brings the reader up short and reminds him of the delightful whimsy that elegiac poets have written about women as tyrants and warriors. Women are, in fact, the weaker sex! Verses 59–70, which appear so impressive as Augustan propaganda, now can be seen to add to the hilarity: a timid woman, Rome's fear, the greatest triumph in the world, worthy to be set beside those over Hannibal and Syphax, and, if we read 67–68 after 65–66 where they rightfully belong, *even greater* (*nunc ubi?*) than what we hear about the heroes of old and the prominent men of four centuries of Roman history (Camillus, the Scipios, Pompey) since the beginning of the Republic! For such a victory over this foul queen, for such a victory over one who ran in trembling fright, remember Caesar before the gods![35]

This ironic reading of 3.11 is favored by the following. First of all, it utilizes fully the alternation of mood in the three major parts of the elegy: the swing from elaborate mythological background and its contemporary historical relevance, to triumph, to flight and debauchery, to this triumph as a great glory of Roman history, and to Caesar's preeminence over Apollo in 71–72 (opposed to 69–70) and his equivalence (at the least) with Jupiter in 66, reveals a pungent wit. We admire Propertius perhaps more than we would if we thought he was earnestly praising Augustus for delivering Italy from Egyptian ways. Of note here is the verb *timere*, introduced in 3.11.8, where it describes Propertius' fear of a mighty woman (Propertius the *Lover's* "fear"), repeated in 58 where it pictures Rome's fear of Cleopatra, and used once again in 66, where we learn that Rome would scarcely fear Jupiter so long as it has Augustus. The original context

[35] Verses 65–66, in which we learn that the gods founded Rome, but that Rome would hardly fear Jupiter so long as Augustus is safe, can not help but ring ambiguously. Rome is shown not respecting whom she should respect, if only one mortal be at her head.

for this verb is an elegiac cliche, and this tone can not be forgotten in the apparently weighty contrast between *timuit* in 58 and *uix timeat* in 66— a contrast which is not itself without ambiguity.

Secondly, there is a precedent for the irony I envision in 3.11. In 2.16.40–42 we find a moment which may underlie the contrast between the flight of Cleopatra and Caesar's Great Triumph in the elegy we are considering:

> At pudeat certe, pudeat!—nisi forte, quod aiunt,
> turpis amor surdis auribus esse solet.
> cerne ducem, modo qui fremitu compleuit inani
> Actia damnatis aequora militibus:
> hunc infamis amor uersis dare terga carinis
> iussit et extremo quaerere in orbe *fugam*.
> Caesaris haec uirtus et gloria Caesaris haec est:
> illa, qua uicit, condidit arma manu.

As observed above in our introduction, the demonstrative *hic* and its variations are used either to refer to and pick up what has just been mentioned (τοῦτο), or to point directly ahead to what will follow (τόδε). In Propertius, there is a slightly greater number of uses of *hic, haec, hoc* in the former manner. There is, accordingly, a second of ambiguity when we have just read *fugam* and then see *Caesaris haec uirtus*. Caesar's fighting excellence was shown primarily by the flight of his enemy. The juxtaposition of glory and the cowardice of the enemy is alluded to in 3.11.49–51, 55–56. In 2.16, it has not been Caesar, but *Amor*, who gained the victory: *hunc . . . amor uersis dare terga carinis / iussit*.

Thirdly, there is the fact that the careful construction of 59–70 serves only to highlight the incongruity between Rome's past history and her Greatest Triumph—over a woman! One thinks of Ovid, *Am.* 1.7.38: *Io, forti uicta puella uiro est!* But more important is the final elegy Propertius composed about Actium, 4.6, and a couplet in it which corroborates the likelihood that Propertius is ironic here in 3.11:

> Di melius! quantus mulier foret una triumphus,
> ductus erat per quas ante Iugurtha uias! (4.6.65–66)

If this ironic reading of 3.11 finds approval, Propertius is no convert

to Augustanism. This is true to the degree that he is seen not to be taking Actium seriously. Inasmuch as the nature of Octavian's conflict with Cleopatra embodied a contest between male and female, a reluctant love poet might come off the bench to exercise his talent; but the artist's amusement in sketching the victory against a conventional background provided by his genre can not really be taken as wholehearted support on the political level. By the same token, since the poet's recognition that this topic was supremely suited for the genre within which he worked is the first fact of 3.11, we must be careful not to assume that his ironic rendering can imply only a bitter attitude toward the events he describes. One should perhaps distinguish between irony and whimsy, the former being more cutting. A contemporary humorist may dine on board the President's yacht or play golf with the President's aides and friends before going home to work out a cartoon about people he actually enjoys. Propertius could have chosen the circle of Messalla, who had refused to accept office under Augustus and who scorned the Republican facade the Princeps preserved, but he chose the people around Maecenas.[36]

And yet, psychology makes it clear that the impulse to diminish or to explode by laughter arises in souls not at all positively inclined, nor even neutral, toward that which they characterize. Wit is born from dislike, from impatience with the pretense which people hold up to enhance their stature. It was this impulse which prompted Propertius, when officials were making much over the victory, to create the contrast between the last words of a besotted tongue and the glorious portrayal of Augustus' place in history (3.11.65–66).

We are still left with the unusual condemnation of Cleopatra—language which far exceeds anything that other writers said about her. Propertius may honestly have felt that she was abominable; but this little strains the humorous interpretation of 3.11. It may even be more a cause for finding the triumph ridiculous, if so degraded a woman was the chief prize. This matter is ancillary and, by itself, can not require the poem to be, in its entirety, straightfaced.

The final couplet deserves a comment:

[36] The analogy with contemporary politics is suggested by Sullivan (above, note 10) 58–59.

At tu, siue petes portus seu, nauita, linques,
Caesaris in toto sis memor Ionio. (71–72)

Nauita in 71 answers to *nauita* in 5,[37] and reminds us, at the conclusion of this elegy, of the literary conceits utilized at its beginning. The poet will stay close to shore, although others may venture out to sea in pursuit of epic themes. *Portus seu, nauita, linques*—Caesar's men cross the waters, and he commands the deep. We are ever mindful of him abroad (cf. 3.4.2). We are also to remember him close to shore (*siue petes portus*), in port, for his own part in the struggle between man and his mistress.

[37] A frequent artistic device in Propertius is the echoing, at the final couplet or near the end of an elegy, of a word or words which occur at the beginning. There are many examples of this: *Baiae* in 1.11.1 and 30, *deserta* in 1.18.1 and 32, *Cynthia* in 2.5.1 and 30, *Cynthia* in 2.7.1 and 19, *nobis* in 2.8.1 and *me* in 2.8.40, *Maecenas* in 3.9.1 and 59, are a few. For additional instances where concluding couplets echo an initial expression, see P. J. Enk, *Sex. Propertii Elegiarum Liber Secundus* (Leiden 1962) 420–21, drawing on D. R. Shackleton-Bailey in *PCPS* (1952–53) 18. Also T. A. Suits' review of Enk in *CP* 60 (1965) 38. Again, Ovid in his charming poem on the Dawn, *Am.* 1.13, 2 and 48, *dies*, and in his description of Cypassis' versatility (which extends to other fields than that of arranging her mistress' coiffure), *Am.* 2.8.1 and 28, *modos-modis*, serves as an example.