

# **Elegiac Ascent**

## **Plotting a Path through Propertius' Poetic Landscape**

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# Abstract

This thesis argues that Propertius' poetic development and growing Callimacheanism can be charted through a programmatic reading of his landscapes. It examines Propertius' evolution as a poet from the beginning of book two onwards as he begins to move away from the intensely personal poetry of book one on his journey to becoming the Roman Callimachus as he presents himself in book four. It focuses on four poems – 2.10, 3.1, 3.3 and 4.9 – and argues that the landscapes depicted therein reveal a poet continually re-evaluating the status of elegy and the hierarchy of genres and ever increasing in confidence as he engages and aligns more explicitly with Callimachean ideals. It shows that Propertius constructs and responds to programmatic landscapes in a more self-aware fashion than has previously been demonstrated with a greater level of complexity than has been observed.

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# Introduction

Propertius' poetry is remarkable not least for its breadth, diversity and development. From the immediate and personal love poetry of the first book with *Cynthia* as its first word and focal point, through the increasing sophistication and range of the second and third books with the waning influence of Cynthia and matters of love, and growing interest and engagement with more literary and overtly poetic concerns, to the final book of ostensibly aetiological poetry, Propertius transforms from the elegiac poet-*amator* to the self-styled *Romanus Callimachus*.<sup>1</sup>

Accompanying Propertius' poetic evolution and a vital element of his development as a poet is his growing Callimacheanism. Although an influence in the first book,<sup>2</sup> Callimachus is first named in the opening poem of the second book (2.1.40) when Propertius invokes Callimachus' non-martial style as justification for declining to sing of the military accomplishments of Augustus (2.1.25-42), appears as the first word of book three (thereby supplanting Cynthia's primacy in symbolic terms) when Propertius hopes to enter Callimachus' (and Philetas') sacred grove (3.1.1-6), and is the aetiological model *par excellence* and something of an *alter ego* for Propertius in his fourth and final book.

It is my thesis that Propertius' poetic development and growing Callimacheanism can be charted through a programmatic reading of his landscapes.<sup>3</sup> Propertius employs landscapes or landscape features throughout his work as symbols and metaphors for poetry, and the most important of these landscapes involve Mount Helicon and its associated waters. Mount Helicon and its waters feature as poetic metaphors, for example, in 2.10, and 2.13 involves a scene of poetic initiation on the slopes of the mountain. The mountain and its hidden paths symbolise Propertius' poetry in 3.1, and 3.3

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<sup>1</sup> As he calls himself at 4.1.64.

<sup>2</sup> Callimachus' influence is notable in 1.3 and 1.18, for example – 1.18 is discussed below and 1.3 in chapter two.

<sup>3</sup> I consider programmatic landscapes to be those that set out, reflect upon, reassess or evaluate literary, poetic and/or generic programmes or hierarchies.

develops an extended metaphor with the poet imagining himself writing at Helicon's most famous spring, the Hippocrene.

Mount Helicon has a long-standing, symbolic association with poetry stretching at least as far back as Hesiod, who lived, it seems, as his father did (*Op.* 639-40), in the town of Ascra at the foot of the mountain (*Certamen Homeri et Hesiodi*, 323) and encountered upon the mountain's slopes the Muses who taught him his poetic art (*Th.* 1-23). Ennius dreams of meeting Homer on (what is likely) Mount Helicon, whereupon Homer informs him that his soul has passed into Ennius (*Ann.* 1.1-10 Sk.), and Propertius imagines in a dream of his own that he emulates Ennius when he drinks from the inspirational waters of the Hippocrene (3.3.1.-6).<sup>4</sup> Virgil tells of Gallus wandering alongside the River Permessus and being led up from the foothills towards the summit by one of the Muses (*Ecl.* 6.64-73) and Callimachus, too, when recalling Hesiod's earlier encounter, dreams of meeting the Muses on the mountain (*Aet.* 1, fr. 2.1-2; *Schol. Flor. ad Aet.* 1, fr. 2).<sup>5</sup>

In fact, Callimachus makes a number of programmatic statements through the metaphor of landscape. A poet of Callimachus' preferred style should tread the path less-travelled and prefer a narrow track to a broad road (*Aet.* 1, fr. 1.25-28). The lengthy, cyclic poem should be shunned and, thus, the road that carries much traffic must be avoided (*Epigr.* 28.1-2). One should not drink from the public well (for Callimachus hates all things common) (*Epigr.* 28.3-4), nor sing as large as the sea (*Ap.* 105-06) and pure, clear and sacred springs are far superior to the filthy, rubbish-laden flow of large rivers (*Ap.* 108-12). These statements are consistent with what is, perhaps, the most famous of Callimachean poetic metaphors: Victims should be fat, but a Muse slender (*Aet.* 1, fr. 1.23-24). Metaphors such as these can be read against Callimachus' more explicit poetic announcements. He does not like lengthy works of heroic poetry (*Aet.* 1, fr. 1.1-5) and a poet's skill should be judged on

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<sup>4</sup> For Ennius, I adopt Skutsch's numbering – see Skutsch, O. (1985), *The Annals of Q. Ennius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press). It is unclear due to the fragmentary nature of the text exactly where Ennius' poetic initiation takes place, although it is usually set on Mount Helicon – see, for example, Lyne, R. O. A. M. (1998), 'Propertius 2.10 and 11 and the Structure of Books "2A" and "2B"', *JRS*, 88, p.26, and Tatum, W. J. (2000), 'Aspirations and Divagations: The Poetics of Place in Propertius 2.10', *TAPA*, 130, p.403.

<sup>5</sup> I follow Pfeiffer's numbering in all references to Callimachus – see Pfeiffer, R. (1949a), *Callimachus*, 2 vols. (1; Oxford: Clarendon Press), and Pfeiffer, R. (1949b), *Callimachus*, 2 vols. (2; Oxford: Clarendon Press).



artistry not length (Aet. 1, fr. 1.17-18). Callimachus does not thunder on loudly in grandiose style (Aet. 1, fr. 1.19-20).

Both Propertius and Callimachus, then, employ as poetic symbols and metaphors landscapes and their aquatic and terrestrial features. Given that Propertius' development as a poet culminates in his claim to be the Roman incarnation of Callimachus, analysis of Propertius' programmatic landscapes and comparison with those of Callimachus afford an opportunity to track his poetic evolution and test the validity of his claim to have metamorphosed into a Roman version of his Hellenistic predecessor.

Who or, perhaps, more accurately, what Callimachus was for Propertius needs some discussion. Callimachus as a champion of highly polished and refined poetry was much admired by Roman neoteric poets such as Catullus.<sup>6</sup> For the Roman elegists and for Propertius in particular, Callimachus' chosen style of composition and his avowed dislike of (lengthy) martial poetry saw him become something of a poster boy.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, for Propertius, Callimachus came to represent his choice of love elegy and corresponding rejection of the epic poetry that Propertius refuses, or pleads an inability, to write.

Callimachus, however, considered the foremost Hellenistic elegist (Quintilian, *Inst.* 10.1.58), was no love poet in the fashion of the Roman elegists, although he did write some poetry dealing with

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<sup>6</sup> Catullus in poem 66, for example, translates and adapts Callimachus' *Coma Berenices* (Aet. 4, fr. 110) into Latin – this is (almost certainly) the translation mentioned in the previous poem sent by Catullus to his friend, Hortalus (*Hortale, mitto / haec expressa tibi carmina Battiadae*, 'Hortalus, I am sending you these translated verses of the son of Battus [Callimachus]', *Catul.* 65.15-16). Indeed, in the lines that follow (*Catul.* 65.17-24), Catullus excuses his forgetfulness, real or imagined, with a simile drawn, apparently, from Callimachus' Acontius and Cydippe episode (Aet. 3, fr. 67-75) – see, Hunter, R. L. (2006), *The Shadow of Callimachus: Studies in the Reception of Hellenistic Poetry at Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.88.

<sup>7</sup> The development of the Roman *recusatio*, in response, perhaps, to pressure to produce political panegyric, saw an appropriation and adaption of Callimachus' programmatic statements and motifs – see Wimmel, W. (1960), *Kallimachos in Rom. Die Nachfolge seines apologetischen Dichtens in der Augusteerzeit* (Hermes Einzelschriften, 16; Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner), pp.1-12, and Thomas, R. F. (1993), 'Callimachus Back in Rome', in M. A. Harder, R. F. Regtuit, and G. C. Wakker (eds.), *Callimachus* (Hellenistica Groningana, 1; Groningen: Egbert Forsten), pp.199-204. For the employment of Callimachus in antithetical responses to epic poetry, see Klein, T. M. (1974), 'The Role of Callimachus in the Development of the Concept of the Counter-Genre', *Latomus*, 33, pp.217-31.

amatory concerns.<sup>8</sup> Nor did Callimachus confine himself to elegiacs or short poetry. He composed on a range of thematic concerns in hexameters, elegiacs and a variety of lyric metres and wrote verse ranging in length from very short epigrams, through the longer *Hymns*, to the lengthy *Aetia* composed in four books. So, what Callimachus wrote and the way Propertius represents Callimachus, his style and aesthetic are very often quite different things, for Propertius (and other Roman poets) manipulates, even misrepresents, Callimachus and his statements on poetry for his own thematic purposes until, in the end, Callimachus, for Propertius, becomes the exemplar of elegiac poetry and the antithesis of epic verse. Indeed, in this sense, Callimachus is reduced to a small and select series of programmatic passages.<sup>9</sup>

Accordingly, when I refer to Callimachus and particularly his style and aesthetic, unless it is clear that I mean Callimachus the man and poet, I am, in much the same way as Propertius, employing this artificially constructed, rather distorted and particularly Roman concept of 'Callimachus',<sup>10</sup> for in order to analyse and evaluate Propertius' transformation into the *Callimachus Romanus*, we must measure his poetry against his conception of 'Callimachus'. All that matters from our perspective is what Propertius has made 'Callimachus' mean, and given that Propertius' 'Callimachus' is a particularly elastic concept, our view of Propertius' 'Callimachus' must by necessity be similarly flexible.

Although I am interested primarily in Propertius' development from the beginning of book two onwards, when his poetry begins to move away from the intensely personal poetry of book one, the first book, too, shows evidence of Callimachean influence and landscapes that might be considered programmatic. In fact, 1.18 provides a useful introduction for my analysis, for here we can see, perhaps for the first time, Propertius employing landscapes in a sustained programmatic manner.

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<sup>8</sup> His tale of Acontius and Cydippe (*Aet.* 3, fr. 67-75), for example, is a 'love story'. Indeed, Propertius models 1.18 on some of Callimachus' account – see Cairns, F. (1969), 'Propertius 1.18 and Callimachus, Acontius and Cydippe', *CR*, 19 (2), pp.131-34.

<sup>9</sup> As Hunter (2006), pp.1-2, remarks.

<sup>10</sup> Perhaps something of this idea is contained in Propertius' phrase *Callimachus Romanus*, which we might interpret as a nod to this particularly Roman concept of 'Callimachus'.

Moreover, elements of these landscapes can be associated with Callimachus. When Propertius laments of declaring his love for Cynthia with only trees as witnesses and carving her name into their bark (*a quotiens teneras resonant mea uerba sub umbras, / scribitur et uestris Cynthia corticibus!*, ‘ah, how often beneath your tender shade my words resound and “Cynthia” is written in your bark!’, 1.18.21-22), there seems to be allusion to a surviving fragment of Callimachus (ἀλλ’ ἐνὶ δῇ φλοιοῖσι κεκομμένα τόσσα φέροιτε γράμματα, / Κυδίππην ὅσος ἑρέουσι καλήν, ‘but carved in your bark may you bear such writing as will proclaim “Cydisippe is beautiful”’, Aet. 3, fg. 73).<sup>11</sup> Propertius almost certainly has Virgil in mind, however, as a more immediate model, for Virgil in lament for Gallus, Propertius’ elegiac predecessor, (no doubt) alluding to a poem of Gallus, has Gallus make a similar claim (*certum est in siluis inter spelaea ferarum / malle pati tenerisque meos incidere amores / arboribus*, ‘certainly in the woods amid the dens of wild beasts it is better to suffer and to carve my love on tender trees’, *Ecl.* 10.52-54). Indeed, Propertius’ poem captures something of Virgil’s pastoral setting.<sup>12</sup> Nonetheless, we can trace the allusion back through Virgil, via Gallus, to Callimachus.<sup>13</sup>

Propertius decorates the scene of his lament with familiar Callimachean motifs and in doing so suggests the influence of Callimachean poetics. In return for enduring Cynthia’s disdain (*omnia consueui timidus perferre superbae / iussa*, ‘I am accustomed to endure timidly all of your arrogant demands’, 1.18.25-26), he must suffer a harsh existence (*pro quo diuini fontes et frigida rupes / et datur inculto tramite dura quies*, ‘in return for which I receive sacred springs and a cold cliff and hard rest on an overgrown track’, 1.18.27-28).<sup>14</sup> The *diuini fontes* recall Callimachus’ preference for the

<sup>11</sup> Cairns (1969), pp.131-34, details a number of other possible connections between Propertius 1.18 and Callimachus. See, too, Fedeli, P. (1980), *Sesto Propertio. Il primo libro delle elegie* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki), pp.418-19.

<sup>12</sup> There are other points of contact between the *Eclogues* and Propertius 1.18. For a brief discussion, see Camps, W. A. (1961), *Propertius: Elegies Book I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.89; Fedeli (1980), pp.417-18; Heyworth, S. J. (2007b), *Cynthia: A Companion to the Text of Propertius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp.81-84, n.19-22, n.27-28.

<sup>13</sup> This is an illustration of the difficulty in tracing Propertius’ allusions, due to their depth and multilayered nature.

<sup>14</sup> Note that Heyworth, S. J. (2007a), *Sexti Properti Elegi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.28, reads *dumosi montes* in place of the transmitted *diuini fontes* (1.18.27), citing the need for the features of the landscape to

pure and clear waters of a sacred spring, rather than the large, dirty flow of bigger rivers (*Ap.* 108-12), and the overgrown track reflects Callimachus' instructions for a poet of his style to favour the path less-travelled (*Aet.* 1, fr. 1.25-28; *Epig.* 28.1-2). So, the writing of Cynthia's name in the bark (1.18.22), symbolising Propertius' writing of love elegy (and, perhaps, his love for Cynthia expressed through the publication of book one), takes place in a setting that employs two (of the most famous) important Callimachean poetic metaphors. Propertius, thus, defines his poetry with a programmatic landscape in which, by way of metaphor, he acknowledges the influence of Callimachus (and Gallus) with his incorporation and reworking of familiar Callimachean motifs.

What we find here in book one, however, is only a beginning. I am interested in what happens next. In his later books, we find Propertius presenting more developed programmatic landscapes that reflect increasingly upon the status of love elegy and the elegist and it is Propertius' poetic development in these subsequent books that is my focus.

I choose four poems upon which to concentrate: 2.10; 3.1; 3.3; and 4.9 – although I treat many others in the course of my analysis – and my selections are based upon the following attributes: these poems depict (Heliconian) landscapes or elements thereof; they are concerned with poetry and the poetic process and are programmatic in nature or contain programmatic elements; and the landscapes therein by way of metaphor engage with, elucidate and/or develop programmatic themes. The first three selections need little explanation in this regard; they are concerned explicitly with poetic composition and inspiration and depict typically poetic landscapes.

In chapter one, my investigation focuses on 2.10, a poem that has received extensive critical analysis, with the most important specific treatments to date of the elegy's poetic geography those

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accord with the *locus amoenus* that provides Corydon with respite from the summer heat in *Eclogue* seven – see Heyworth (2007b), pp.83-84, n.27-28. Heyworth's reading seems to me to ignore the significance of the Callimachean allusion contained in the transmitted text and the significance of springs as symbols of poetic inspiration. Heyworth (2007b), p.155, n.25-26, argues, again, wrongly, I think, for *montes* in place of the transmitted *fontes* at 2.10.25 (and elsewhere in Propertius). This point is discussed later in detail. Other editors are troubled in varying degrees by *diuini* – see, for example, Camps (1961), p.90, n.27, who thinks it 'seems a little odd', and Richardson (1977), p.198, n.27, who calls it 'highly inappropriate' – but, again, if we read here Callimachean allusion, the sacred nature of the spring seems acceptable.

of Nethercut and Tatum (although most examinations include some discussion of the generic symbolism of the final couplet).<sup>15</sup> I begin, after Nethercut and Tatum, by exploring models for the poetics of the elegy's final couplet and the metaphorical significance of the River Permessus and Mount Helicon's famed Ascræan Springs. I argue that it is clear that the River Permessus represents love elegy, but that Propertius' Heliconian scene recalls such a range of potential influences from Hesiod to Virgil that is not possible to determine clearly through this approach the generic symbolism of the Ascræan Springs.<sup>16</sup> I then consider the poetics of place in 2.10 in the broader context of Propertius' relationship with Cynthia and propose that 2.10 is indeed a *recusatio*, as most consider it,<sup>17</sup> but one that is better understood as a genuine but failed attempt at rejecting Cynthia rather than an insincere rejection of more serious poetic themes, and in doing so, I offer a fresh interpretation of Propertius' newly adopted, and largely misinterpreted, skyward gaze (*nunc uolo subducto grauior procedere uultu*, 'now, more serious, I want to proceed with face upfitted', 2.10.9). This approach, I suggest, produces a more satisfactory reading of the elegy's final couplet. I conclude by considering Propertius' programmatic setting in relation to Callimachus' statements of poetics and argue that Propertius, at this stage in his poetic evolution, despite citing influence and inspiration from Callimachus, offers a poetic landscape at odds with the Callimachean aesthetic.

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<sup>15</sup> Nethercut, W. R. (1972), 'Propertius: Elegy 2.10', *SO*, 47, pp.79-94; Tatum (2000), pp.393-410, especially pp.399-410.

<sup>16</sup> For an overview of the metaphorical significance of water in Augustan poetry, see Wimmel (1960), pp.222-33. For the development of water imagery as a poetic symbol from Hesiod to Propertius, see Kambylis, A. (1965), *Die Dichterweihe und ihre Symbolik; Untersuchungen zu Hesiodos, Kallimachos, Properz und Ennius* (Bibliothek der klassischen Altertumswissenschaften. Neue Folge. 2. Reihe; Heidelberg: C. Winter), pp.23-30, 66-68, 98-99, 183-88.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example: Nethercut (1972), pp.80, 92; Ross, D. O. (1975), *Backgrounds to Augustan Poetry: Gallus, Elegy and Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.32; Richardson, L. (1977), *Propertius: Elegies I-IV* (Norman: University of Oklahoma), p.241; Stahl, H.-P. (1985), *Propertius: 'Love' and 'War': Individual and State Under Augustus* (Berkeley: University of California Press), pp.160-61; Lyne (1998), p.25; Tatum (2000), p.393; Bowditch, L. (2003), 'Propertius 2.10 and the Eros of Empire', in P. Thibodeau and H. Haskell (eds.), *Being There Together: Essays in Honour of Michael C. J. Putnam on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* (Afton, MN: Afton Historical Society Press), p.165; Debroun, J. B. (2003), *Roman Propertius and the Reinvention of Elegy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press), p.198; Mader, G. (2003), 'Aetas prima canat venter: Propertius and the Poetics of Age', *WS*, 116, p.116; Cairns, F. (2006), *Sextus Propertius: The Augustan Elegist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp.326, 329.

I subject 3.1 and 3.3 to detailed examination in chapter two, with my analysis focusing, firstly, on whether Propertius can or should be seen at this point as a Hellenistic poet in the Alexandrian tradition and the extent to which the opening of the book, with its invocation of Callimachus and Philetas (3.1.1), signals a transition to a more learned Alexandrian style of elegy and/or a claim by Propertius to deserve the same degree of fame conferred upon his Hellenistic predecessors. Secondly, I consider the programmatic nature of Propertius' Heliconian scene in 3.3 and analyse the poem's interaction with, and response to, the questions posed in 3.1 (*dicite, quo pariter carmen tenuastis in antro? / quoue pede ingressi? quamue bibistis aquam?*, 'tell me [Callimachus and Philetas], in what grotto did you both refine your song? With what foot did you enter? What water did you drink?', 3.1.5-6).<sup>18</sup> I argue that Propertius is not only concerned with fame and his posthumous reputation as such, but rather in raising the status of elegy and, thus, the elegist to at least a par with other poetic genres, and that in doing so, Propertius is forced to reassess the evaluation of genre with which he concluded 2.10. Propertius, I suggest, prosecutes a case at the start of his third book for the elevation of elegy in order to dispel the misconception, as he sees it, that elegy is an inferior, a lowlier genre than others. Finally, I propose that the landscapes depicted at the beginning of book three show a poet moving closer to Callimachean ideals.

In the final chapter, I examine 4.9 and Propertius' version of Hercules' arrival at Rome, his battle with Cacus and the subsequent tale of his encounter with the worshippers of Bona Dea. My

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<sup>18</sup> A transition to a more learned style of elegy after the fashion of Callimachus and Philetas is suggested, for example, by Luck, G. (1957), 'The Cave and the Source: On the Imagery of Propertius 3.1.1-6', *CQ*, 7 (3/4), p.177; Hubbard, M. (1974), *Propertius* (London: Duckworth), p.71; Ross (1975), pp.125-29; D'Anna, G. (1986), 'L'evoluzione della poetica properziana', in G. Catanzaro and F. Santucci (eds.), *Bimillenario della morte di Propertio. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi properziani*. (Assisi: Accademia properziana del Subasio), pp.64-66; Della Corte, F. (1986), 'Propertio, l'elegiaco della trasgressione', in G. Catanzaro and F. Santucci (eds.), *Bimillenario della morte di Propertio. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi properziani* (Assisi: Accademia properziana del Subasio), p.27; Butrica, J. L. (1996), 'The *Amores* of Propertius: Unity and Structure in Books 2-4', *JCS*, 21, pp.131-32. For Propertius' Hellenism and, more specifically, his Callimacheanism in book three, see Hubbard (1974), pp.68-115, especially, pp.71-83; Butrica (1996), pp.131-45; Arkins, B. (2005), *An Interpretation of the Poetry of Propertius (c. 50-15 B.C.)* (Studies in Classics, 30; Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press), pp.26-30; Keith, A. M. (2008), *Propertius: Poet of Love and Leisure*, ed. D. Taylor (Classical Literature and Society; London: Duckworth), pp.77-83. The pursuit of fame and immortality in the beginning of book three is detected as an overarching theme by Lonie, I. M. (1959), 'Propertius and the Alexandrians', *AUMLA*, 11, pp.17-22; Baker, R. J. (1968), 'Propertius III 1, 1-6 Again. Intimations of Immortality?', *Mnemosyne*, 21, pp.35-39; Nethercut, W. R. (1975), 'Propertius III 1, 1-6 Again', *Mnemosyne*, 28, pp.73-75.

selection of 4.9 requires some explanation, for it is unconcerned ostensibly with poetry or the poet's art, contains no explicitly programmatic statements and depicts a landscape far from Mount Helicon. My analysis, however, shows that this elegy, too, is very much concerned with poetic composition and inspiration, contains a number of programmatic elements and, moreover, depicts a Roman recreation of a Heliconian setting by reworking the landscape of 3.3. Previous analyses have detected Callimachean elements, with Debrohun providing the most detailed Callimachean reading of Hercules' actions at the grove of Bona Dea and of the grove itself.<sup>19</sup> I develop Debrohun's analysis and consider the programmatic nature of Propertius' vision of the proto-Roman landscape and Hercules' actions therein more broadly. Indeed, there has been to date no comprehensive analysis of the programmatic nature of the entire scene. I argue that considered exploration of Propertius' carefully constructed setting affords insight into the poet's view of generic hierarchies and his own poetic evolution. I end by claiming that the setting of 4.9 offers a programmatic landscape reflecting Propertius' realisation of his claim to be the *Romanus Callimachus*.

I conclude my thesis by considering Propertius' poetic journey and development from the elegiac poet-*amator* to the Roman Callimachus in the context of his programmatic landscapes. I argue that the poems that I treat in my analysis reveal a poet continually re-evaluating the status of elegy and the hierarchy of genres and ever increasing in confidence as he engages and aligns more explicitly with Callimachean ideals.

Poetic evolution is a prominent theme in Propertius' poetry – although it is a theme almost always subordinate to 'love') and my investigation of Propertius' programmatic landscapes affords a valuable insight into Propertius' poetic development by concentrating not on the poet's evolving (and declining) relationship with Cynthia or the increasing prominence of varied subject matter and non-amatory themes (although I deal with such issues as a matter of course), but rather focusing on

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<sup>19</sup> Debrohun (2003), pp.201-09. For Callimachean elements in 4.9, see also Pillinger, H. E. (1969), 'Some Callimachean Influences on Propertius, Book 4', *HSCPh*, 73, pp.182-89, and Pinotti, P. (1977), 'Propert. IV 9: Alessandrinismo e Arte Allusiva', *GIF*, 29, pp.50-71.

Propertius' use of landscape as a means of charting his poetic evolution. Although the landscapes of individual poems have received some attention in programmatic terms, most have not been subjected to detailed analysis in this regard and, to my knowledge, there has not been any comprehensive examination of Propertius' poetic evolution undertaken from this perspective.

Propertius' poetic landscapes offer a rich source for analysis and prove an apposite tool for such an investigation given the long-standing tradition of such settings as poetic metaphors or symbols and the fact that these landscapes and their associated motifs are refashioned in different configurations at various points in the text and are constructed at different times in Propertius' career, thereby displaying continuity while affording the opportunity for comparison. Thus, this thesis aims not for an exhaustive analysis of Propertius' programmatic or poetic evolution *per se*, but rather, through careful analysis of clearly defined (programmatic landscape) moments within the text, offers contribution or reinforcement to the broader study of Propertian poetics.

The idea of poetic evolution carries with it for both reader and poet consequences for the (re)analysis and (re)interpretation of a poet's earlier work (relative to the poem or poems under consideration). Indeed, 'evolution' or 'progression' implies negative implications for a poet's earlier work. This is, however, a natural consequence of any type of evolution and we should not view our (or any) poet's earlier works as inferior in this regard; we should consider these thematic rather than qualitative concerns.

As always in Propertian scholarship, the text is an ever present concern.<sup>20</sup> The generally conservative approaches of Barber, Camps, Richardson and Fedeli,<sup>21</sup> for example, are challenged by the work of

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<sup>20</sup> For treatments of the text, transmission, editing and historical scholarship, see Heyworth, S. J. (1995), 'Propertius: Division, Transmission, and the Editor's Task', in R. Brock and A. J. Woodman (eds.), *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar* (8; Leeds: Francis Cairns), pp.165-85; Butrica (1996), pp.87-158; Fedeli, P. (2006), 'The History of Propertian Scholarship', in H.-C. Günther (ed.), *Brill's Companion to Propertius* (Leiden: Brill), pp.3-24; Butrica, J. L. (2006), 'The Transmission of the Text of Propertius', in Hans-Christian Günther (ed.), *Brill's Companion to Propertius* (Leiden: Brill), pp.25-43; Tarrant, R. (2006), 'Propertian Textual Criticism and Editing', in Hans-Christian Günther (ed.), *Brill's Companion to Propertius* (Leiden: Brill), pp.45-65; Heyworth (2007a), pp.vii-lxv.



Butrica and Heyworth<sup>22</sup> and the revisionist editions of, among others, Goold, Giardina and Heyworth.<sup>23</sup> The issue of the text has been reenergised of late, particularly by the publication of Heyworth's two volume text and commentary.<sup>24</sup> I have consulted many texts<sup>25</sup> and have chosen not to follow any one in particular, although I have given extensive consideration to textual variants, emendations and conjectures where they occur, and I argue for my particular readings where relevant. In general, I favour a conservative approach. For Callimachus, I follow the text of Pfeiffer.<sup>26</sup> All translations are my own.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Barber, E. A. (1960), *Sexti Properti Carmina* (2nd edn.; Oxford: Oxford University Press); Camps (1961); Camps, W. A. (1965), *Propertius: Elegies Book IV* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); Camps, W. A. (1966), *Propertius: Elegies Book III* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); Camps, W. A. (1967), *Propertius: Elegies Book II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); Richardson (1977); Fedeli (1980); Fedeli, P. (1985), *Il Libro Terzo delle Elegie* (Bari: Adriatica Editrice); Fedeli, P. (1994), *Sexti Properti Elegiarum Libri IV* (Stuttgart: Teubner); Fedeli, P. (2005), *Properzio: Elegie Libro II* (ARCA: Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs; Cambridge: Francis Cairns).

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, Heyworth, S. J. (1986), 'Notes on Propertius, Books III and IV', *CQ*, 36 (1), pp.199-211; Heyworth (1995), pp.165-85; Butrica (1996), pp.87-158; Butrica, J. L. (1997), 'Editing Propertius', *CQ*, 47 (1), 176-208.

<sup>23</sup> Goold, G. P. (1990), *Propertius: Elegies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press); Giardina, G. (2005), *Properzio. Elegie* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo); Heyworth (2007a).

<sup>24</sup> Heyworth (2007a), and Heyworth (2007b).

<sup>25</sup> Texts of Propertius consulted include (in chronological order): Lachmann, K. (1816), *Sex. Aurelii Propertii Carmina* (Leipzig: Gerhard Fleischer); Hertzberg, W. A. B. (1843-45), *Sex. Aurelii Propertii Elegiarum Libri Quattuor*, 4 vols. (Halle: I.F. Lipperti); Paley, F. A. (1872), *Sex. Aurelii Propertii Carmina* (London: Bell and Daldy); Postgate, J. P. (1884), *Select Elegies of Propertius* (London: Macmillan and Co.); Phillimore, J. S. (1901), *Sexti Properti Carmina* (Oxford: Clarendon Press); Butler, H. E. (1905), *Sexti Properti Opera Omnia* (London: Archibald Constable and Co.); Butler, H. E. (1912), *Propertius* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press); Richmond, O. L. (1928), *Sexti Properti Quae Supersunt Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); Butler, H. E. and Barber, E. A. (1933), *The Elegies of Propertius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press); Barber, E. A. (1960), *Sexti Properti Carmina* (2nd edn.; Oxford: Oxford University Press); Camps, W. A. (1961), *Propertius: Elegies Book I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); Enk, P. J. (1962), *Sex. Propertii Elegiarum Liber Secundus*, 2 vols. (2; Leiden: A. W. Sythoff); Camps, W. A. (1965), *Propertius: Elegies Book IV* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); Camps, W. A. (1966), *Propertius: Elegies Book III* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); Camps, W. A. (1967), *Propertius: Elegies Book II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); Richardson, L. (1977), *Propertius: Elegies I-IV* (Norman: University of Oklahoma); Fedeli, P. (1980), *Sesto Properzio. Il primo libro delle elegie* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki); Fedeli, P. (1985), *Il Libro Terzo delle Elegie* (Bari: Adriatica Editrice); Goold, G. P. (1990), *Propertius: Elegies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press); Fedeli, P. (1994), *Sexti Properti Elegiarum Libri IV* (Stuttgart: Teubner); Fedeli, P. (2005), *Properzio: Elegie Libro II* (ARCA: Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs; Cambridge: Francis Cairns); Giardina, G. (2005), *Properzio. Elegie* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo); Viarre, S. (2005), *Properce. Élégies* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres); Hutchinson, G. O. (2006), *Propertius: Elegies Book IV* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); Heyworth, S. J. (2007a), *Sexti Properti Elegi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

<sup>26</sup> Pfeiffer (1949a), *Callimachus*, 2 vols. (1; Oxford: Clarendon Press) and (1949b), *Callimachus*, 2 vols. (2; Oxford: Clarendon Press).

<sup>27</sup> I provide a translation for passages when they appear for the first time in a chapter. Further translation is offered only if a new reading or re-interpretation of a previously quoted passage requires translation in order to make the reading clear.

# Propertius 2.10: Gazing Skyward, Lost in Allusion

## Introduction

Propertius 2.10 finds the Propertian *amator* declaring his (written) love affair with Cynthia over (*quando scripta puella mea est*, ‘since my girl has been written up’, 2.10.8)<sup>1</sup> and professing his willingness to write of more serious, patriotic themes:

iam libet et fortis memorare ad proelia turmas  
et Romana mei dicere castra ducis. (2.10.3-4)

Now I want to tell of troops brave for battle  
And to speak of the Roman camp(aign)s of my leader.

And, indeed, he does just this, cataloguing a list of Augustus’ (future) campaigns all the way from the East to Britain (2.10.13-18).<sup>2</sup> Yet, his enthusiasm for the project is tempered by pre-emptive confessions of inadequacy and self doubt (*quod si deficient uires*, ‘but if my strength should be lacking’, 2.10.5) and, in the end, he declares an inability to rise to the task, claiming that his poetry languishes in the lowly waters of the River Permessus, unable to ascend to the lofty heights of Mount Helicon’s Ascrean Springs:

ut caput in magnis ubi non est tangere signis,  
ponitur his imos ante corona pedes;  
sic nos nunc, inopes laudis conscendere carmen,  
pauperibus sacris uilia tura damus.  
nondum etiam Ascreos norunt mea carmina fontes;  
sed modo Permessi flumine lauit Amor. (2.10.21-26)<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The causal reading of *quando* is defended later.

<sup>2</sup> The *tellus* at 2.10.17 (*et si qua extremis tellus se subtrahit oris*, ‘and if some land withdraws itself to the furthest shores’) is understood generally as Britain – see, for example, Postgate, J. P. (1884), *Select Elegies of Propertius* (London: Macmillan and Co.), p.120, n.17; Butler, H. E. (1905), *Sexti Properti Opera Omnia* (London: Archibald Constable and Co.), p.191, n.17; Enk, P. J. (1962), *Sex. Propertii Elegiarum Liber Secundus*, 2 vols. (2; Leiden: A. W. Sythoff), p.161, n.17; Camps, W. A. (1967), *Propertius: Elegies Book II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.110, n.17 – ‘probably Britain’; Richardson, L. (1977), *Propertius: Elegies I-IV* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press), p.243, n.17.

<sup>3</sup> The transmitted *carmen* (2.10.23) is disputed with some editors adopting the conjectured *currum* or *culmen*. Reading *carmen*, for example, are: Paley, F. A. (1872), *Sex. Aurelii Propertii Carmina* (London: Bell and Daldy),

As, when it is impossible to touch the head on big statues,  
 A garland is placed at the very bottom of their feet;  
 So now I, unable to mount the song of praise,  
 Offer cheap incense in humble rites.  
 Not yet have my songs known the Ascræan Springs;  
 But Love has just washed them in the River Permessus.<sup>4</sup>

This elegy – labelled ‘one of the oddest of all of Propertius’ poems’<sup>5</sup> – has generated a polyphony of critical voices. Most consider the elegy an example of Propertian *recusatio*, or even a rejection of ‘court poetry’ that Propertius was under ‘considerable pressure’ to produce; although not all agree,

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p.76; Postgate (1884), p.16 – note that Postgate and Paley divide book two and consider 2.10 the first elegy in a third book; Butler (1905), p.191, n.23; Butler, H. E. and Barber, E. A. (1933), *The Elegies of Propertius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), p.209, n.23 – ‘[it] is barely possible as the object of *conscendere*’; Barber, E. A. (1960), *Sexti Properti Carmina* (2nd edn.; Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.45; Nethercut, W. R. (1972), ‘Propertius: Elegy 2.10’, *SO*, 47, p.81; Richardson (1977), p.244, n.23. Reading *currum*, for example, are: Camps (1967), p.110, n.23; Goold, G. P. (1990), *Propertius: Elegies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), p.150; Lee, G. (1994), *Propertius: The Poems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), p.38; Tatum, W. J. (2000), ‘Aspirations and Divagations: The Poetics of Place in Propertius 2.10’, *TAPA*, 130, p.396; Giardina, G. (2005), *Properzio. Elegie* (Rome: Edizioni dell’Ateneo), p.130 (who capitalises and, thus, personifies *laudis*) – note that Giardina divides 2.10 after line twenty; Viarre, S. (2005), *Properce. Élégies* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres), p.45. Reading *culmen* are: Stahl, H.-P. (1985), *Propertius: ‘Love’ and ‘War’: Individual and State Under Augustus* (Berkeley: University of California Press) p.156; Fedeli, P. (2005), *Properzio: Elegie Libro II* (ARCA: Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs; Cambridge: Francis Cairns), pp.327-30, n.21-24; Heyworth, S. J. (2007a), *Sexti Properti Elegi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.52 and (2007b), *Cynthia: A Companion to the Text of Propertius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp.153-55, n.21-24 – Heyworth rejects *carmen* as ‘unparalleled’ (and claims that it is a conjecture from *carmina* at 2.10.25) and *currum* because, as he sees it, it is not difficult to mount a chariot. Shackleton-Bailey, D. R. (1967), *Propertiana* (Cambridge Classical Studies; Amsterdam: A. M. Hakker), p.84, claims that *culmen* is ‘plausible’, but notes that there is nothing wrong with *carmen*. Lyne, R. O. A. M. (1998), ‘Propertius 2.10 and 11 and the Structure of Books “2A” and “2B”’, *JRS*, 88, p.24, states, ‘I am confident *currum* is wrong’. Enk (1962), pp.163-64, n.23, remarks, ‘sed, quidquid id est, *conscendere carmen* sanum non est’ – he prefers *culmen*. I retain *carmen*, for, although the image is rather bold, I remain unconvinced of the need for emendation by the arguments for *culmen* or *currum*. The reading, here, however, little affects our argument; the image we are to imagine, clearly, is one of contrasting heights, just as it is at 2.10.25-26. Butrica, J. L. (1996), ‘The *Amores* of Propertius: Unity and Structure in Books 2-4’, *ICS*, 21, p.124, and Heyworth (2007b), p.155, n.25-26 (after Butrica) emend (unreasonably in my opinion) *fontes* to *montes* – the point is discussed later. I take *carmina* (2.10.25) as the object of *lauit* (26). It is possible that *lauit* is used intransitively and that, accordingly, Love, himself, bathes in the river. For a brief discussion, see Heyworth (2007b), p.155, n.25-26.

<sup>4</sup> Here, of course, *modo* (2.10.26) can convey exclusivity (‘only’, q.v. *O.L.D.*, 1) or temporality (‘recently/just now’, q.v. *O.L.D.*, 5), or perhaps both – see Berry, M. J. (2005), ‘Propertian Ambiguity and the Elegiac Alibi’, in Carl Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History XII* (Collection Latomus; Brussels: Latomus), pp.199-200. I have attempted to preserve the ambiguity in translation. Some critics – Stahl (1985), p.161, for example – prefer to take *modo* as temporal and argue, accordingly, that Propertius locates his poetry in 2.10 at some undisclosed location between the Ascræan Springs and the River Permessus; his songs do not yet know, but are making their way towards, the heights of Mount Helicon because Love has only just finished bathing them in the lowly river – for discussion, see Tatum (2000), pp.406-07.

<sup>5</sup> Richardson (1977), p.241.

and it has been claimed that Propertius, here, sings the praises of Augustus.<sup>6</sup> Some suggest that the proposed transition to panegyric poetry represents an artistic crisis generated by the poet meeting Virgil and Horace.<sup>7</sup> The poem, too, has received detailed analysis as part of broader treatments of the unity (or division) of the second book.<sup>8</sup> It has been read as a rejection of the poetic reality of Cynthia – through interpretation of the phrase *scripta puella* (8) – while at the same time ‘reaffirm[ing] his [Propertius’] commitment to elegiac poetics’.<sup>9</sup> It has even been viewed as a bawdy, parodic send-up of Augustus’ (future) campaigns.<sup>10</sup> The elegy has also formed a basis for an exploration of Gallus’ poetry and his influence on Propertius.<sup>11</sup> Other studies have attempted to explain the poetic landscape of the elegy and determine the type of poetry symbolised by the respective water sources<sup>12</sup> and it is upon these studies that my analysis builds. Propertius’

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<sup>6</sup> For 2.10 as a *recusatio*, see, for example: Nethercut (1972), pp.80, 92; Ross, D. O. (1975), *Backgrounds to Augustan Poetry: Gallus, Elegy and Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.32; Richardson (1977), p.241; Tatum (2000), p.393; Debroun, J. B. (2003), *Roman Propertius and the Reinvention of Elegy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press), p.198; Mader, G. (2003), ‘*Aetas prima canat veneres*: Propertius and the Poetics of Age’, *WS*, 116, p.116; Cairns, F. (2006), *Sextus Propertius: The Augustan Elegist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp.326, 329. The quotes are from Stahl (1985), pp.160-61. Butler (1905), p.190, considers it praise of Augustus. Lyne (1998), p.25, states that it ‘is slightly misleading’ to call it a *recusatio*. Bowditch, L. (2003), ‘Propertius 2.10 and the Eros of Empire’, in P. Thibodeau and H. Haskell (eds.), *Being There Together: Essays in Honour of Michael C. J. Putnam on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* (Afton, MN: Afton Historical Society Press), p.165, claims that 2.10 is not a proper *recusatio*. The recusative nature is discussed in detail later.

<sup>7</sup> Álvarez-Hernández, A. (1997), *La Poética de Propertio. Autobiografía Artística del ‘Calimaco Romano’* (Assisi: Tipolitografia Porziuncola), pp.115-16; Fedeli (2005), pp.310-11.

<sup>8</sup> Lyne (1998), p.22, uses the term ‘closural’ to describe 2.10 and 2.11, which he sees as a united ending to a second book (pp.29-30); Heyworth (2007b), p.153, agrees. For detailed discussion of the division or unity of book two, see: Heyworth, S. J. (1995), ‘Propertius: Division, Transmission, and the Editor's Task’, in R. Brock and A. J. Woodman (eds.), *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar* (8; Leeds: Francis Cairns), pp.167-85 – who thinks the book should be divided after 2.10; Butrica (1996), pp.115-28 – who argues for the unity of book two based on perceived development of Propertius’ relationship with Cynthia; Lyne (1998), pp.21-36. Note, however, that Paley (1872), p.74, n.1, considers 2.10 inceptive and the first poem in the third book (of five).

<sup>9</sup> Wyke, M. (1987), ‘Written Women: Propertius’ *Scripta Puella*’, *JRS*, 77, pp.47-61; Mader (2003), pp.122-23. The quote is from Mader.

<sup>10</sup> Bowditch (2003), pp.163-80, claims that the elegy is steeped in erotic language and sexual punning in order to make fun of Augustus’ military campaigns – the point is discussed in greater detail later.

<sup>11</sup> Ross (1975), pp.32-34, 99-120. For a detailed yet highly speculative examination of (possible) Gallan influence on Propertius, see Cairns (2006), pp.70-218. The final couplet of 2.10 alludes clearly, I think, to Virgil’s *Eclogue* 6.64-73, where Gallus is found wandering alongside the River Permessus before being led into the Aonian Hills by one of the Muses – the allusion is discussed in detail later.

<sup>12</sup> Nethercut (1972), pp.79-94, and Tatum (2000), pp.393-410 – especially pp.399-410 – offer the most important specific treatments, although most critical examinations include some discussion of the poetic geography of the elegy’s final couplet.

programmatic landscaping and the resulting poetic topography of Mount Helicon and its associated waters of poetic inspiration are the focus of this chapter.

My examination takes a tripartite approach. I begin with an exploration of the final couplet and attempt to make sense of the poetic significance of the River Permessus and Ascræan Springs and allusion to a variety of influences from Hesiod to Virgil. I argue that it is difficult to determine through this approach a poetic model for Propertius' Heliconian landscape<sup>13</sup> – Virgil, perhaps, emerges as the most significant influence – for, although Propertius clearly presents the River Permessus as a metaphor for love elegy, it is impossible to determine the generic symbolism of the Ascræan Springs. Secondly, however, I argue that the quest to determine a poetic model is somewhat misguided and that to understand properly the poetics of place in 2.10 a wider examination of the poetic reality of the Propertian poet-lover's relationship with Cynthia is necessary – an approach which has so far been underdeveloped in examinations of this elegy.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, I propose that 2.10 is indeed a *recusatio*, but one that is better understood as a (failed attempt at the) rejection of Cynthia, rather than a rejection of more serious, patriotic themes and I argue that it is not, in fact, what type of poetry the Ascræan Springs represent, but what they do not, that is the important point. This approach, I claim, helps to resolve the complexities of final couplet's poetic landscape. Finally, I explore the relationship between the programmatic landscape of 2.10 and the Callimachean aesthetic and I argue that Propertius at this time in his poetic career, despite citing influence and inspiration from Callimachus and despite his suggested commitment to Callimachean poetics – as we noted in 1.18 – offers a poetic landscape at odds with Callimachus'

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<sup>13</sup> Debate has hitherto focused on this point. The various claims and conclusions are examined in detail later.

<sup>14</sup> This approach has been taken in a more general sense by Butrica (1996), pp.100-28, and Wyke (1987), pp.49-60, in attempts to argue for the poetic unity of the surrounding elegies in order, in Butrica's case, to argue for the unity of book two and, in Wyke's case, to argue that the surrounding sequence of poems shows that Propertius is moving away from the personal poetry and poetic reality of his relationship with Cynthia that typify his first book. I argue that reading 2.10 in relation to the sequence of preceding elegies assists our interpretation of the poetics of the final couplet.

statements of poetics and, accordingly, I claim that we should not yet see him as the *Callimachus Romanus* (4.1.64) he so proudly proclaims himself in the programmatic opening of his fourth book.<sup>15</sup>

Propertius 2.10 provides an apposite and important starting point for our examination of Propertius' programmatic landscaping largely because it affords such an explicit example of the art. There is explicit mention of poetry (*carmen*, 2.10.11, 23, 25; *canere*, 2.10.7, 8, 19; *scripta puella*, 2.10.8) and poetic topography (Mount Helicon, 2.10.1; and its surrounds, 2.10.25-26) and clear correlation between the two (2.10.1-4, 25-26).

In order to begin to make sense of the poetic symbolism of the final couplet, we must take note of the elegy's main driving themes: the poet-lover's (professed) willingness to engage in a more serious style of poetry; and the 'motif of (failed) ascent'.<sup>16</sup> Clearly, a change of poetics is a central theme of the elegy; a fact that is proclaimed in the very first line (*sed tempus lustrare aliis Helicon choreis*, 'but it is time to traverse Helicon in other dances', 2.10.1).<sup>17</sup> The movement (*lustrare*) is, in itself, suggestive of a change of poetic focus and, indeed, this is confirmed by the fact that Mount Helicon is to bear witness to a different style of dancing (*aliis ... choreis*).<sup>18</sup> Propertius will be singing also to a different tune (*nunc aliam citharam me mea Musa docet*, 'now my Muse teaches me a different cithara', 2.10.10); and this is the tune of more serious poetry (*nunc uolo ... grauior procedere*, 'now I want to proceed in more serious fashion', 2.10.9), specifically the patriotic tune of Augustus' (future) military conquests (2.10.13-18).

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<sup>15</sup> I will, as much as possible, confine my examination at this point to elegies in books one and two (with occasional exception), as my focus is on what stage Propertius' poetry is at in programmatic terms at this point of his poetic evolution. Propertius' claim to be the 'Roman Callimachus' is discussed further in chapter three.

<sup>16</sup> The phrase was first used by Lyne (1998), p.25.

<sup>17</sup> Heyworth, S. J. (2010), 'An Elegist's Career: from Cynthia to Cornelia', in P. Hardie and H. Moore (eds.), *Classical Literary Careers and their Reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.96, notes that 2.10.1 is a 'clear announcement of an immediate change of style'.

<sup>18</sup> Note, however, that Ross (1975), p.32, maintains (wrongly, in my opinion) that *lustrare* means 'to celebrate' and implies no movement of poetic focus or genre in the generic topography of Mount Helicon. When coupled with the motif of ascent prominent throughout 2.10 and the apparent spatial opposition of the final couplet, this seems a difficult position to maintain. Indeed, *sed* (2.10.1) opposes this elegy to the previous poems – although not all agree with this claim. The point is discussed later.

The motif of (failed) poetic ascent also is prominent. Propertius exhorts himself – or more accurately, his spirit/breath – to rise to the task (*surge, anima, ex humili iam carmine*, ‘rise, spirit/breath, from now lowly song’, 2.10.11)<sup>19</sup> and he wishes to tackle his new poetic endeavour with face uplifted (*subducto ... uultu*, 2.10.9).<sup>20</sup> He is unable to reach the heights of lofty statues (*caput in magnis ... non est tangere signis*, 2.10.21), just as he is incapable of mounting the poem of praise (*inopes laudis conscendere carmen*, 2.10.23).<sup>21</sup>

The final couplet of 2.10 offers an image of a poetic landscape that reflects these central themes. A change of poetic focus towards a more serious style of poetry is defined in terms of an ascent of Mount Helicon. Accordingly, the reader is invited to consider the generic symbolism of the respective water courses – the River Permessus and the Ascræan Springs. What is the nature of this poetic hierarchy, and what style(s) of poetry does each water metaphorise?

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<sup>19</sup> A much disputed line in terms of punctuation and transmitted text. The better attested readings are *anima* and *carmine* – see Heyworth (2007b), p.153, n.11-12, for discussion. Some punctuate with a semi-colon after *humili* and read the vocative, *carmine* – see, for example, Postgate (1884), p.15; Butler (1905), p.191, n.11; Butler and Barber (1933), p.208, n.11; Barber (1960), p.45; Enk (1962), pp.159-60, n.11; Camps (1967), pp.109-10, n.11 – who acknowledges that *humili* could go with *carmine*; Nethercut (1972), p.81; Richardson (1977), p.242, n.11; Lyne (1988), p.24; Goold (1990), p.150; Fedeli (2005), pp.320-22, n.11-12; Giardina (2005), p.130; Viarre (2005), p.44 – or whether to read *humili ... carmine* (as I do) – see, for example, Paley (1872), p.75, n.11; Butrica (1996), p.116, n.60; Heyworth (2007b), p.153, n.11-12. Most reject *anima* in favour of Heinsius’ *anime* – see, for example, Barber (1960), p.45; Enk (1962), pp.159-60, n.11; Richardson (1977), p.242, n.11; Goold (1990), p.150; Fedeli (2005), p.321, n.11-12; Giardina (2005), p.130; Viarre (2005), p.44; Heyworth (2007a), p.51. Accepting *anima* are Paley (1872), p.75, n.11; Postgate (1884), pp.119-20, n.11; Butler (1905), p.191, n.11; Butler and Barber (1933), p.208, n.11 – “‘my spirit’, the source of life and energy’. I see no reason to reject the better attested *anima* (and argue further for its acceptance later). Indeed, *anima* can be synonymous with *animus* (‘soul/spirit’; q.v. *O.L.D.*, 5-8) – as Postgate (1884), pp.119-20, n.11 notes (‘a rare but not unexampled use’) and Butler and Barber (1933), p.203, suggest (‘my spirit’) – so there seems little point in emendation on this ground. Moreover, the more common meaning (‘breath’; q.v. *O.L.D.*, 1-2) fits well with the need for a *magnum os* in the following line. Heyworth (2007b), p.153, n.11-12, claims that ‘there is no reason for rejecting the better attested reading [*carmine*]’, yet (wrongly, I think) rejects *anima*, because ‘it would have the nuance “breath” in this context; but that does not fit well with *surge ex humili*.’ In disagreement with Heyworth, I think that ‘the nuance “breath”’ does fit well with the need for a big voice (2.10.12). Either of these arguments seems to me justification for retaining *anima*. Moreover, to accept *carmine* as the better attested reading, yet to reject the manuscripts’ *anima* because it ‘does not fit well’, seems an arbitrary judgement. For detailed discussion, see Fedeli (2005), pp.320-22, n.11-12.

<sup>20</sup> The meaning of *subducto ... uultu* has troubled editors and critics. Most claim that it is indicative of a serious expression or frown and see the phrase (wrongly, I think) as akin to *subductis superciliis* (‘with raised eyebrows’). This point is discussed in detail later.

<sup>21</sup> Perhaps, also, there is a suggestion of the motif of ascent in *tumultus* (‘uprisings’, 2.10.7). Might there also be a pun on *tumulus* (‘a rising/hill’)? Both words have the same root – q.v. *O.L.D.*, *tumeo*, *tumulus*, *tumultus*.

## Potential Models

The River Permessus is situated at the foot of Mount Helicon, so the springs – the Hippocrene (and possibly the Aganippe) – should be located higher up.<sup>22</sup> Despite the obvious logic of such a claim, it has been stated rightly that ‘it is useless to bring into this discussion the [actual] topography of Mount Helicon’,<sup>23</sup> for it is highly unlikely that Propertius is concerned with geographical accuracy. Nonetheless, the final couplet antithesizes the Ascræan Springs and the River Permessus and the image, presented as the climax of the motif of (failed) ascent, suggests a vertical hierarchy of poetic sources. Furthermore, *sed modo* (2.10.26) indicates a clear contrast with the preceding line; so there must be a distinction between the two waters.<sup>24</sup>

That there is clear contrast between the Heliconian water sources in 2.10 is not, however, universally accepted. So let us first address these claims. It has been argued that there is no real distinction between the River Permessus and the Ascræan Springs because ‘it is difficult to see what real contrast can exist ...; since the Permessus occupies the same mountain as Hippocrene and Aganippe, it is a *fons Ascræus* no less than they are’.<sup>25</sup> Further, it has been claimed that although *nondum etiam* (2.10.25) means ‘not yet’, ‘the phrasing of the rest of the couplet does not provide a satisfactory antithesis to be distinguished by “not yet ...; but only ...”’: Permessus is itself a Hesiodic stream’.<sup>26</sup> Propertius, according to proponents of these claims, intended strong antithesis between the respective locales in 2.10.25-26; an antithesis simply not provided by the water sources named. He must have written *montes*, they argue, citing (assumed) parallels in Hesiod and Virgil, not *fontes*;

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<sup>22</sup> Lyne (1998), pp.35-36, provides an appendix on the actual geography of Mount Helicon and its waterways. Pausanias, 9.29.5, 30.8, 31.3, 31.7, offers a description(s) of the various waters of Mount Helicon. There can be little doubt that Propertius’ *Ascræos ... fontes* (2.10.25) refers to, or at least includes, the Hippocrene, as D’Anna, G. (1986), ‘L’evoluzione della poetica properziana’, in G. Catanzaro and F. Santucci (eds.), *Bimillenario della morte di Propertio. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi properziani*. (Assisi: Accademia properziana del Subasio), p.61, notes.

<sup>23</sup> Luck, G. (1959), *The Latin Love Elegy* (London: Methuen and Co.), p.132.

<sup>24</sup> See Luck (1959), p.132; Butrica (1996), p.121, n.76; Heyworth, S. J. (1992), ‘Propertius 2.13’, *Mnemosyne*, 45, p.52.

<sup>25</sup> Butrica (1996), p.121.

<sup>26</sup> Heyworth (2007b), p.155, n.25-26, cites Propertius 1.3.11 and 1.4.17 to support the claim that *nondum etiam* means ‘not yet’ and Hesiod *Theog.* 5 as evidence that the Permessus is a Hesiodic stream.



and, thus, they emend accordingly.<sup>27</sup> It is true that the antithesis might not be one of ‘strict and polar dichotomy’,<sup>28</sup> yet the problem here is not textual, but rather one of interpretation. The image offered of Mount Helicon’s poetic topography is, on the one hand, quite straightforward – the Ascræan Springs represent a loftier, more serious style of poetry than that symbolised by the lowlier River Permessus – but when pressed in an attempt to define more accurately the respective poetics of each water source, the picture, as we shall see, becomes rather more convoluted.<sup>29</sup> Yet, difficulty of interpretation alone is, in my opinion, no justification for emendation. Furthermore, Propertius often cites or suggests rivers, springs, and fonts as sources of poetic inspiration; so, two waters representing two different styles of poetry are entirely appropriate.<sup>30</sup> The fact that both the springs and the river, here, are Hesiodic waters – that is, waters that are associated with Hesiod and/or his poetry, whether by Hesiod, himself, or later poets – occupying the same mountain does not negate the antithesis of the final couplet, which *nondum etiam ... / sed modo ...* (‘not yet ... but only ...’),

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<sup>27</sup> Butrica (1996), p.124; Heyworth (2007b), p.155, n.25-26. Heyworth follows Butrica in accepting *montes* after what he calls ‘the culmination of some impressive argumentation’. Butrica (1996), pp.121-24, noting that Hesiod (*Theog.* 1-8) and Virgil (*Ecl.* 6.64-65) contrast the Permessus with ‘the heights of Helicon’, not with other water sources, dismisses *fontes*. Heyworth (2007b), p.155, n.25-26, asserts – in support of the emendation – that the manuscripts have *fontes* for *montes* at 1.8.27 and 1.20.50, but this is not universally accepted, as a survey of critical editions shows. Furthermore, Butrica’s ‘Virgilian’ argument – that because Virgil contrasts the Permessus with ‘the heights of Helicon’ Propertius’ model should offer the same antithesis – seems to me unconvincing. First, Virgil makes only one mention of the Permessus (*Ecl.* 6.64) and it would, thus, be dangerous to make too much of it. Secondly, Virgil does equate Hesiodic poetry and his own *Georgics* with poetic springs – by implication, the Ascræan Springs – *sanctos ausus recludere fontis, / Ascræumque cano Romana per oppida carmen* (‘I have dared to reopen the sacred springs, and I sing an Ascræan song throughout Roman towns’, *G.* 2.175-76). I see no justification for emendation, here. Nor do I see how this emendation produces a more satisfactory antithesis. Butrica’s claim (1996), p.123, that Propertius obscures the vertical hierarchy in 2.10 by substituting springs for Virgil’s mountains (*Ecl.* 6.65) is also not persuasive; the recurring motif of ascent in 2.10 makes the vertical hierarchy clear. Ross (1975), pp.119-20, sees no distinction between the Hesiodic fountains and the River Permessus, yet acknowledges that some opposition is implied by *sed* (2.10.26) – note, however, that this is the conclusion of his analysis of what poetic style/genre is represented by each water, not a statement about the antithetical (or otherwise) construction of 2.10.25-26. Wyke (1987), p.51, again in relation to the poetic symbolism of the respective water courses, claims that the River Permessus marks Propertian elegy within the larger map of Hesiodic discourses, thereby suggesting alignment, rather than contrast.

<sup>28</sup> As Tatum (2000), p.401, describes it. Note that Tatum is not advocating emendation, but describing, simply, the difficulty in attempting to categorise the respective water courses in poetic terms.

<sup>29</sup> I say ‘more serious’ because Propertius tells us that he ‘hopes to proceed more seriously’ (*uolo ... grauior procedere*, 2.10.9) in his new (but, in the end, unrealised) poetic endeavour.

<sup>30</sup> For example, see Propertius 3.1.1-6, 3.3.1-7, 3.3.15-16 – the poetic symbolism of the different water sources in these elegies is discussed in detail in chapter two – and 4.6.1-4. Virgil, too, does so at *G.* 2.175-76.

2.10.25-26) unequivocally constructs.<sup>31</sup> The difficulties of 2.10's final couplet deserve thoughtful interpretation, not emendation.

If we turn our attention to the generic symbolism of the water sources, we find that, ostensibly, the contrast between the Ascræan Springs and the River Permessus represents the antithesis of epic and amatory elegiac poetry; Propertius wants to write of Augustus' military exploits now that he has finished writing about Cynthia. He will follow the armies (*haec ego castra sequar*, 'these are the camps I shall follow', 2.10.19) and write of wars and battles (*bella*, 2.10.8; *proelia*, 2.10.3), brave troops (*fortis ... turmas*, 2.10.3) and military campaigns (*castra*, 2.10.4, 19) – typical epic subject matters<sup>32</sup> – and he imagines Augustus' (future) fortunes in war:

iam negat Euphrates equitem post terga tueri  
Parthorum et Crassos se tenuisse dolet.  
India quin, Auguste, tuo dat colla triumpho,  
et domus intactae te tremit Arabiae;  
et si qua extremis tellus se subtrahit oris,  
sentiat illa tuas postmodo capta manus! (2.10.13-18)

Now the Euphrates refuses to protect behind its back the horse  
Of the Parthians and grieves that it held the Crassi.  
Even India, Augustus, offers its neck for your triumph,  
And the home of untouched Arabia trembles before you;  
And if some land withdraws itself to the furthest shores,  
Later, when captured, let it feel your hands!<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Discussion of the Hesiodic nature of Mount Helicon's water sources follows.

<sup>32</sup> Cairns (2006), p.327, states that Propertius wants to write epic – *bella* (2.10.8) 'can hardly refer to anything else'. According to Tatum (2000), p.401, it is 'common and sensible' to regard the Ascræan Springs as representative of epic given the thrust of 2.10.1-25; but he notes, too, that this assumption can reasonably be disputed. The latter point is discussed later.

<sup>33</sup> The exact sense of the phrase *iam negat Euphrates equitem post terga tueri* / *Parthorum* (2.10.13-14) remains somewhat elusive. In addition to the interpretation offered above, some see a reference to the Parthian battle tactic of firing arrows rearward while retreating – 'now the Euphrates refuses to allow the Parthian horse to look [and shoot arrows] behind their backs' – see, for example, Paley (1872), p.75, n.13; Postgate (1884), p.120, n.13-18; Butler (1905), p.91, n.13; Butler and Barber (1933), pp.208-09, n.13-14. Lee (1994), p.146, n.13, states that the reference 'must glance at Parthian tactics'. Heyworth (2007b), p.541, offers both interpretations as alternative translations. Giardina (2005), pp.130-31, goes so far as to alter the text (with his own conjectures at 2.10.13) in order to convey such a meaning (*iam negat Euphrates mitti post terga sagittas* / *Parthorum et Crassos detinuisse dolet*, 'l'Eufrate, ormai, nega che le frecce dei Parti siano scoccate dietro le loro schiene e si rammarica di aver tenuto prigioniera le salme dei Crassi', 2.10.13-14) – note his changes to 2.10.14 also. Enk (1962), p.13, however, states emphatically that it is *not* a reference to the

Again, this is typical epic material.

The image of the Haemonian horse on the field of battle (*et campum Haemonio iam dare tempus equo*, 'and it is time now to give the Haemonian horse the plain', 2.10.2)<sup>34</sup> further enhances the epic tone of the poem, for, as many critics note, Thessalian horses, famed in antiquity for their quality and breeding, made fine warhorses.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, Propertius employs elsewhere the adjective 'Haemonian' in explicitly martial contexts (*fortem illum Haemoniis Hectora traxit equis*, 'he [Achilles] dragged that brave Hector with Haemonian horses', 2.8.38)<sup>36</sup> and, on occasion, to mean simply 'of Achilles' or even 'Achilles' (*Mysus et Haemonia iuuenis qua cuspide uulnus / senserat*, 'and the Mysian youth [Telephus] had felt the wound from the Haemonian [Achilles'] spear', 2.1.63-64; *nam quis equo pulsas abiegno nosceret arces, / fluminaque Haemonio comminus isse uiro?*, 'for who would know that citadels were battered by the wooden horse, or that rivers went toe-to-toe with the Haemonian man [Achilles]?', 3.1.25-26).<sup>37</sup> The claim that 'Haemonian' is a pun on the Greek αἷμα ('blood') is attractive, because in this context, too, 'Haemonian' might well be interpreted as 'warlike' and, thus, 'epic': Hector would be dragged by blood-stained horses (2.8.38); Telephus wounded by a bloody spear (2.1.63-64); and it would be a blood-spattered Achilles fighting at Troy

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Parthian battle tactic. Richardson (1977), p.242, n.13-14, agrees – to take *negat* as the equivalent of *uetat* 'tortures the Latin'. For discussions of the complexities, see Camps (1967), p.110, n.13-14; Lyne (1998), p.24; Bowditch (2003), p.168. For a discussion of the references to Parthia and Britain in 2.10, see Boucher, J.-P. (1965), *Études sur Propertius: Problèmes d'Inspiration et d'Art* (Paris: E. de Boccard), pp.113-16. Parthia and Britain are mentioned as enemies in war again at 2.27.5, as Boucher (1965), p.115, n.3, notes. *The domus ... Arabiae* (16) is a probable allusion to *G.* 2.115 – see Enk (1962), p.161, n.16; Postgate (1884), p.120, n.16; Richardson (1977), p.243, n.16: 'which Propertius is probably deliberately imitating'. Note that Giardina (2005), p.130, reads *nemus ... Hercyniae* in preference to *domus ... Arabiae*. Of course, *manus* could be translated as 'forces' (q.v. *O.L.D.*, 22), yet 'hands', I think, offers a more appropriate image of Augustus personally extending control over the empire.

<sup>34</sup> Giardina (2005), pp.130-31, reads *est campum Aonia iam dare tempus equo*, 'è tempo di cedere il campo a Pegaso, il cavallo beotico delle Muse', 2.10.2. His text alters significantly the sense of the line, as his translation shows.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, Paley (1872), p.74, n.1; Postgate (1884), p.118, n.2; Butler (1905), pp.190-91, n.2; Butler and Barber (1933), p.208, n.2; Enk (1962), p.153, n.2; Camps (1967), p.109, n.2; Richardson (1977), p.241, n.2.

<sup>36</sup> The manuscripts transmit *illum* (2.8.38) but some editors prefer the conjectured *ille* or Müller's *idem* – the latter is adopted, for example, by Heyworth (2007a), p.48. The sense of the line, however, remains unchanged. Those who reject *illum* are, presumably, troubled by the lack of a stated subject at 2.10.38. For a brief discussion, see Fedeli (2005), p.270, n.37-38. Lyne (1998), p.24, argues that 2.8.38 provides the key to understanding 'Haemonian' at 2.10.2 and that the image at the beginning of 2.10 is, thus, a metaphor for 'giving the field of literature to the horse of epic'.

<sup>37</sup> For the textual difficulties at 2.1.63 and 3.1.25-26, see, respectively, Heyworth (2007b), p.113, n.63-64, pp.283-84, n.25-28.

(3.1.25-26).<sup>38</sup> The Haemonion horse in the very first couplet, then, suggests that Propertius wishes to turn his hand to martial poetry and that, accordingly, the Ascræan Springs symbolise epic verse or subject matter.<sup>39</sup>

The poetic symbolism of the River Permessus in 2.10 seems quite clear<sup>40</sup> (yet, it too becomes more complex on closer scrutiny); although the exact nature of the image is less so. Regardless of whether we take *carmina* as the object of *lauit* – *Amor* bathes Propertius' poetry in the river – or interpret *lauit* intransitively – *Amor* washes himself in the river – the image is rather strange.<sup>41</sup> Nonetheless, in 2.10, the river is associated clearly with the love poetry that Propertius has so far produced – his *Veneres* (2.10.7) and writing about his girl (2.10.8) – as opposed to the poetry that he claims a desire to produce in the future – symbolised by the Ascræan Springs. In 2.10, the River Permessus is the domain of *Amor* and, whether Love bathes himself or Propertius' *carmina* in its waters, it is Love's association with the river that confirms its status as a metaphor for erotic poetry.<sup>42</sup>

On first examination, then, the Ascræan Springs appear to represent martial epic and the River Permessus the erotic elegy that Propertius hitherto has composed. Yet, when the imagery of the final couplet is scrutinised more closely, the poetic symbolism of the respective water sources proves more elusive, for the range of poetic allusions in Propertius' portrayal of Mount Helicon's programmatic landscape does not support the simple dichotomy of martial epic versus amatory elegy that 2.10's final couplet seems at first to offer. That the River Permessus symbolises amatory

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<sup>38</sup> Hendry, M. (1997), 'Three Propertian Puns', *CQ*, 47 (2), p.601, makes the claim in relation to the *Haemonius equus* of 2.10.2 and, pp.599-602, offers these examples of the pun along with Virgil, *G.* 1.492, 2.488, and Horace, *Odes* 1.37.20.

<sup>39</sup> I am not suggesting that Propertius (the poet, as opposed to the Propertian *amator*) seriously considered composing (martial or any) poetry in hexameters. His persona, however, within the fictional construct clearly contemplates such a move.

<sup>40</sup> As Tatum (2000), p.400, puts it: 'It is obvious that the Permessus represents erotic elegy'.

<sup>41</sup> Richardson (1977), p.244, n.25-26, notes the strangeness.

<sup>42</sup> Cairns (2006), p.330, notes that it is because Love does the bathing in 2.10 that the River Permessus is associated with Propertius' elegy. Before Propertius, we find the River Permessus named only once among the surviving works of Roman poetry – Virgil, *Ecl.* 6.64. This reference proves especially important for our examination of 2.10. Detailed discussion follows. The only other occurrence is Statius, *Theb.* 7.283. Another form, *Permessis* ('the nymph of the River Permessus; the spring presided over by her', q.v. *O.L.D.*), occurs in Martial (1.76.11, 8.70.3). Heyworth (1992), p.52, claims that for Virgil, in his portrayal of Gallus' poetics (*Ecl.* 6.64-73), and for Propertius, too, the River Permessus symbolised love elegy – this point is discussed later.

elegy cannot seriously be doubted. But, in an allusive context, determining the style of poetry that the Ascræan Springs represent is rather more difficult. The problem is that Propertius, throughout 2.10, sets the Ascræan Springs up as a metaphor for martial poetry – this is the kind of poetry that he says he is going to write – but the style of poetry traditionally associated with the Ascræan Springs does not provide much support for its use as such a metaphor. It is clear from the motif of ascent prominent in 2.10 that the Ascræan Springs represent some form of higher poetry, but if we pursue the allusiveness of Propertius' Ascræan Springs, we find it difficult to find a suitable model for the martial symbolism that Propertius, here, seems to attribute to them.<sup>43</sup>

In fact, Propertius' presentation of the Ascræan Springs in 2.10 evokes many poetic models, none of which seems an especially good fit, and this is an important point, for as we shall see later, I think that the significance of the Ascræan Springs lies not in what sort of poetry they represent, but in the style that they do not. At first glance, despite the fact that he does not write the kind of poetry that Propertius proposes in 2.10, the Ascræan Springs' most obvious poetic association must be with Hesiod. Hesiod tells us that his father settled in Ascræ (νάσσατο δ' ἄγχ' Ἑλικῶνος οἰζυρῇ ἐνὶ κόμῃ, / Ἄσκη, 'he lived near Mount Helicon in a miserable town, Ascræ', *Op.* 639-40) and the author of the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod* informs us that Hesiod, himself, lived there (Ἄσκη μὲν πατρίς, 'Ascræ was his fatherland', 323).<sup>44</sup> Roman poets commonly refer to Hesiod as the man or poet of Ascræ. Propertius does so in his summary of Virgil's poetic achievements (2.34.61-80) when he compares the *Georgics* with Hesiod's *Works and Days*:<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Richardson (1997), p.244, n.25-26, remarks that Propertius must mean that the Hippocrene and the Aganippe – the Ascræan Springs – symbolise higher poetry.

<sup>44</sup> The reference is to Goettling's page numbers – see Evelyn-White, H. G. (1936), *Hesiod, The Homeric Hymns and Homeric* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), p.589. Jones, P. J. (2005), *Reading Rivers in Roman Literature and Culture* (Roman Studies: Interdisciplinary Approaches; Lanham: Lexington Books), p.55, claims that 'presumably the springs on the mountain [Helicon] were the source of his [Hesiod's] drinking water'.

<sup>45</sup> The references to agriculture show that it is Hesiod's *Works and Days* and Virgil's *Georgics* that Propertius has in mind – see, for example, Camps (1967), p.232, n.77-80, n.77, and Richardson (1977), p.316, n.77. Propertius is addressing Virgil, here, and not the main addressee of the elegy, Lynceus (9) – see Camps (1967), p.231, n.67, and Heyworth (2007b), pp.276-77, n.67-84. Lines 77-80 may be displaced and perhaps stood between lines 66 and 67, as Heyworth (2007a), p.99, has them. For a brief discussion, see Camps (1967), p.232, n.77-80. For more detailed analysis, see Heyworth (2007b), pp.276-77, n.67-84.

tu canis Ascraei ueteris praecepta poetae,  
quo seges in campo, quo uiret uua iugo. (2.34.77-78)

You [Virgil] sing the teachings of the old Ascraean poet,  
In which field grain thrives, on which ridge the grape.

Varro, in his catalogue of Greek writers addressing agricultural concerns, calls him *Hesiodus Ascraeus* ('Ascraean Hesiod/Hesiod of Ascra', *R.* 1.1.9). Virgil refers to him as 'the old Ascraean/the old man of Ascra' (*Ascraeo ... seni*, *Ecl.* 6.70). Ovid identifies him simply as *Ascraeus* ('the Ascraean', *Am.* 1.15.11).<sup>46</sup> Mere mention of Ascra (or its derivative adjectives) is suggestive of Hesiod and/or his poetry.<sup>47</sup>

Further references to Hesiod can be found in Propertius' portrait of Mount Helicon and its surrounding topography, for both 2.10 and Hesiod's *Theogony* begin with scenes upon Mount Helicon involving descriptions of poetry or poetic inspiration/initiation. Propertius begins and finishes his elegy, as we have seen, by mapping his poetry, and poetic aims and aspirations onto the topography of Mount Helicon; Hesiod finds poetic inspiration in the same location:

Μουσάων Ἑλικωνιάδων ἀρχώμεθ' αἰεῖδεν,  
αἴθ' Ἑλικῶνος ἔχουσιν ὄρος μέγα τε ζαθέον τε  
καί τε περὶ κρήνην ἰοειδέα πόσσ' ἀπαλοῖσιν  
ὀρχεῦνται καὶ βωμὸν ἐρισθενέος Κρονίωνος.  
καί τε λοεσσάμεναι τέρενα χροά Περμηησοῖο  
ἢ Ἴππου κρήνης ἢ Ὀλμειοῦ ζαθέοιο  
ἀκροτάτῳ Ἑλικῶνι χοροὺς ἐνεποιήσαντο  
καλοῦς, ἱμερόεντας. (Th. 1-8)

αἴ νύ ποθ' Ἡσίοδον καλὴν ἐδίδαξαν ἀοιδὴν,  
ἄρνας ποιμαίνονθ' Ἑλικῶνος ὑπο ζαθέοιο. (Th. 22-23)

Let us begin to sing of the Heliconian Muses  
Who hold the great and sacred mountain of Helicon  
And who about the deep-blue spring on soft feet  
Dance and about the altar of the almighty son of Kronos.

<sup>46</sup> He is called 'the old Ascraean' or 'Ascraean old man' by Ovid (*Ascraeo ... seni*, *Ars.* 2.4), Statius (*Ascraeumque senem*, *Silv.* 5.3.26; *Ascraeus ... senex*, *Silv.* 5.3.151) and Silius Italicus (*Ascraeo ... seni*, 12.413).

<sup>47</sup> For the claim that the Ascraean Springs must be closely associated with Hesiodic poetry, see, for example, Ross (1975), pp.32-33; Butrica (1996), p.121; Lyne (1998), p.27; Fedeli (2005), pp.330-32, n.25-26; Jones (2005), p.56. Wyke (1987), p.49, states that 2.10 charts 'a Hesiodic practice of writing'.

And having washed their tender skin in the Permessus  
Or the Hippocrene or the sacred Olmeius  
They make on the summit of Helicon dances  
Beautiful and alluring.

One day they taught Hesiod fine song,  
While he shepherded his lambs beneath sacred Helicon.

There are, of course, obvious similarities between the two accounts:<sup>48</sup> the Muses dance on Mount Helicon in Hesiod's tale (*Th.* 3-4, 7-8); while Propertius at the very beginning of 2.10 imagines similar revelry (2.10.1). Hesiod's Muses bathe in the River Permessus or Mount Helicon's famed (Ascraean) springs (*Th.* 5-6); Propertius concludes his poem, too, with mention of Helicon's springs and bathing in the River Permessus (2.10.25-26). Hesiod learns his craft in the same place that Propertius hopes to practise his and it is the Muses that instruct both poets (*Th.* 22; 2.10.10). Propertius' depiction of the poetic geography of Mount Helicon owes much to Hesiod.

The fact that Propertius' landscape is indebted to Hesiod does not, however, clarify the poetics of 2.10's final couplet or the symbolism of the Ascraean Springs, for, as we have seen, Propertius declares his willingness to write on patriotic, martial themes, he narrates the (future) military successes of Augustus and he seemingly equates the Ascraean Springs with this kind of poetry. Yet, Hesiod wrote didactic and aetiological poetry, not heroic or martial epic.<sup>49</sup>

Perhaps, Propertius is guilty simply of being overly general in his equation of Hesiodic poetry and the martial themes he proposes to tackle in 2.10. Hesiod was, of course, an epic poet – he wrote in hexameters – and possibly this fact alone justifies Propertius' choice of poetic exemplar.<sup>50</sup> Hesiod

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<sup>48</sup> Lyne (1998), p.26, and Tatum (2000), p.404, for example, note Propertius' allusion to Hesiod's *Theogony*.

<sup>49</sup> As Tatum (2000), p.402, notes. I consider *Theogony* an aetiological poem – perhaps 'genealogical' is more accurate – and *Works and Days* didactic.

<sup>50</sup> Tatum (2000), p.402, suggests that this might be Propertius' reasoning. Cairns (2006), p.332, states that Hesiod wrote in hexameters and is, therefore, an 'epicist'. Lee (1994), p.146, n.25, remarks: 'Ascra: Hesiod's home; its fountain stands for poetry in epic hexameters'. Enk (1962), pp.165-66, n.25-26, states that for Propertius the Ascraean Springs were the *fontes carminum epicorum* ('springs of epic poetry'). Tatum (2000), p.402, claims that ancient authors considered epic poetry to consist of two distinct forms: didactic (Hesiod); and heroic (Homer). For a detailed discussion of classical genres, see Farrell, J. (2003), 'Classical Genre in Theory and Practice', *New Literary History*, 34 (3), pp.383-408.

wrote epic; thus, the Ascræan Springs symbolise epic poetry and themes. Accordingly, Propertius is ‘not yet a Hesiod’ and he is, therefore, unable to write epic poetry or tackle epic themes.<sup>51</sup>

Perhaps, Hesiod represents some sort of middle-ground for Propertius between the kind of poetry that he has so far composed and the sort of martial epic that he proposes.<sup>52</sup> The Ascræan Springs, according to this logic, represent a kind of Hesiodic (didactic or aetiological) stepping stone to Homeric (martial and heroic) epic poetry. Thus, it is argued that Propertius suggests ‘that he cannot undertake the promised (Homeric) epic on Augustus’ campaigns because his poetry, far from knowing Homer’s spring, does not yet know even (*etiam*) Hesiod’s (the “middle ground” between epic and the lower genres)’.<sup>53</sup>

Others claim that Hesiod (and thus the Ascræan Springs) is not truly representative of the epic genre (as they define it). His poetry, they argue, is (or is seen as) didactic or aetiological and should not, therefore, be seen as (true) epic poetry: the Ascræan Springs can ‘by no stretch of the imagination be made to refer to epic inspiration’; ‘it is clear that the Ascræan Springs cannot stand for epic’.<sup>54</sup>

Ingenious argument is required to equate Propertius’ martial material and patriotic aims with Hesiod’s didactic and aetiological poetry<sup>55</sup> and, thus, the Hesiodic model is not one that fits well with Propertius’ presentation of the Ascræan Springs as a metaphor for martial epic. Nonetheless, there is obvious allusion to Hesiod in 2.10.

Another association is with Callimachus, for he too narrates a tale of the Heliconian Muses, an account that begins with recollection of Hesiod’s earlier encounter:<sup>56</sup>

ποιμ]ένι μῆλα νέμ[οντι παρ’ ἔχνοιον ὀξέος ἵππου

<sup>51</sup> The quote is from Paley (1884), p.76, n.25-26. Fedeli (2005), pp.330-32, n.25-26, advances this claim.

<sup>52</sup> This is the argument of Butrica (1996), p.121.

<sup>53</sup> Butrica (1996), p.122 – the emphasis is his.

<sup>54</sup> The quotes are from, respectively, Lyne (1998), pp.27-28 – note that he qualifies this statement with ‘although that would superficially fit the poem’s logic better’ – and Ross (1975), p.119. Heyworth (1992), p.52, claims that for Propertius (and Virgil) Hesiod symbolised aetiological elegy.

<sup>55</sup> Such as that of Butrica (1996), p.122 – see above.

<sup>56</sup> Cairns (2006), p.326, claims that 2.10 draws on Callimachean imagery. Hubbard, M. (1974), *Propertius* (London: Duckworth), pp.74-75, states that 2.10 clearly alludes to Callimachus and his dream scene.



Ἡσιόδῳ Μουσέων ἐσμὸς ὅτ' ἠγντίασεν ...

(Aet. 1, fr. 2.1-2)<sup>57</sup>

Grazing his sheep by the footprint of the swift horse, the shepherd,  
Hesiod, when the crowd of Muses met him ...

From this point, unfortunately, the text is either missing or (even more) highly fragmented. Scholia, however, provide some details of the story, from which we know that Callimachus – presumably comparing his own version to that found in the beginning of the Hesiod's *Theogony*<sup>58</sup> – had a dream that he too encountered the Muses (ὥς κ]ατ' ὄναρ σ(υμ)μείζας ταῖς Μούσ[αις ἐν Ἑλ]ικῶνι, 'when during a dream he [Callimachus] met the Muses on Mount Helicon', *Schol. Flor. ad Aet. 1, fr. 2*).<sup>59</sup>

Callimachus, here, apparently, associates Mount Helicon with his own poetry (and Hesiod's) and while he makes explicit equation of Hesiod's poetry with one of the Ascrean Springs, the Hippocrene (ἵππινον ὀξέος ἵππου, Aet. 1, fr. 2.1), we simply do not know if he aligned his own poetry similarly. Callimachus was a major influence upon the Roman neoteric and elegiac poets and Propertius cites him as an influence on a number of occasions,<sup>60</sup> yet, Propertius, as we noted in the introduction and as we shall see in the coming chapters, invokes Callimachus and his poetry to justify his choice of love elegy. He does not invoke Callimachus as an exemplar of the type of martial poetry with which he associates the Ascrean Springs in 2.10. Callimachus was, perhaps, most notably an aetiological poet and Propertius does, of course, write aetiological elegies – his fourth book, in particular, contains a number of examples<sup>61</sup> – but, again, here in 2.10, he is not proposing to write this kind of poetry. And although Callimachus composed some of his verse in hexameters and addressed a number of themes in his work, he did not, as far as we know, tackle martial themes of the kind that Propertius imagines himself writing in 2.10. So, a Callimachean model does not fit well

<sup>57</sup> The text is, of course, notoriously fragmented. For detailed information on textual matters in the *Aetia*, see the relevant sections in Pfeiffer, R. (1949b), *Callimachus*, 2 vols. (2; Oxford: Clarendon Press), pp.1-160.

<sup>58</sup> See Hunter, R. L. (2006), *The Shadow of Callimachus: Studies in the Reception of Hellenistic Poetry at Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.17.

<sup>59</sup> See Pfeiffer (1949b), p.11.

<sup>60</sup> See, for example, 2.1.39-42, 3.1.1-2. Detailed discussion of the influence of Callimachus on Propertius' poetry follows.

<sup>61</sup> Addressing aetiological concerns, for example, are 4.2, 4.4, 4.6, 4.9 and 4.10.

with the poetry which Propertius associates with the Ascræan Springs.<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, the Heliconian setting of 2.10 recalls Callimachus.

Ennius, too, is invoked, for he also has a dream sequence involving Muses, a mountain and (probably) poetic initiation:<sup>63</sup>

Musae, quae pedibus magnum pulsatis Olympum  
... somno leni placidoque reuinctus  
... uisus Homerus adesse poeta (Ann. 1.1-2 Sk.)<sup>64</sup>  
  
Muses, who strike great Olympus with your feet  
... I, held fast by a gentle and peaceful sleep  
... the poet Homer seemed to be present

This Homer then tells how it is that his soul has passed into Ennius (Ann. 1.3-10 Sk.). The text is, like Callimachus' *Aetia*, substantially fragmented and the above lines are not consecutive, so, it is impossible to know the precise details of the story, whether the scene on Mount Olympus is connected to the poet's encounter with Homer, or even whether Ennius, himself, met with, or was initiated by, the Muses.<sup>65</sup> One detail that we do know, however, is that it is not upon Mount Helicon that the Muses dance, but Mount Olympus.

Propertius, in a later elegy, however, does, in his own poetic dream scene, locate Ennius and his poetry securely at one of the Ascræan Springs:

uisus eram molli recubans Heliconis in umbra,  
Bellerophontei qua fluit umor equi,  
reges, Alba, tuos et regum facta tuorum,  
tantum operis, neruis hiscere posse meis;

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<sup>62</sup> So, I cannot agree with Lyne (1998), p.27, who suggests that Propertius, in 2.10, is pleading an inability to write in a Callimachean style. I think that it is possible to conclude that at this time in his poetic career Propertius is not yet able to write the sort of Callimachean poetry that he later produces and, thus, that the Ascræan Springs might be shown to represent Callimachean aetiology. This claim, however, requires an entirely different argument (discussed in detail later) and one that is not dependent upon linking any specific Heliconian springs with Callimachus' poetry. It is on this basis – linking by allusion the Ascræan Springs, specifically, with Callimachean style aetiology – that I reject the claim at this point.

<sup>63</sup> See Lyne (1998), p.26, and Tatum (2000), p.403 – 'Ennius' initiation must also be entitled to a share of Helicon's turf'.

<sup>64</sup> The numbering is that of Skutsch, O. (1985), *The Annals of Q. Ennius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

<sup>65</sup> For further discussion, see Tatum (2000), p.403.

paruaque tam magnis admoram fontibus ora  
unde pater sitiens Ennius ante bibit ... (3.3.1-6)

cum me Castalia specularans ex arbore Phoebus  
sic ait aurata nixus ad antra lyra:  
'quid tibi cum tali, demens, est flumine? quis te  
carminis heroi tangere iussit opus?' (3.3.13-16)

I had dreamed that I was reclining in Helicon's soft shade,  
Where the water of Bellerophon's horse flows,  
And that your kings and your kings' deeds, Alba,  
I was able to mouth – such a task – with my powers;  
And I had just put my puny lips to the great spring,  
Whence thirsty father Ennius once drank ...

When looking at me from the Castalian tree Phoebus  
Spoke thus leaning on his golden lyre near a cave:  
'What right have you, madman, to such a stream? Who  
Ordered you to touch the task of heroic poetry?'<sup>66</sup>

Clearly, here, Ennius and heroic poetry are associated with the Hippocrene – one of the Ascræan Springs – and the genre in question must be epic, given the references to kings, their deeds and heroic poetry. Moreover, Ennius' most famous work, the *Annales*, narrates the history of Rome including its wars and conquests and this would seem to accord well with Propertius' proposal to sing of the campaigns of Augustus. Ennius, too, then, is a potential model for the type of poetry that Propertius proposes in 2.10 and associates with the Ascræan Springs.

A more contemporary and, I think, a more influential poetic model, is found in Virgil's description of the poetic evolution of Cornelius Gallus:

tum canit errantem Permessi ad flumina Gallum  
Aonas in montis ut duxerit una sororum,  
utque uiro Phoebi chorus adsurrexerit omnis;  
ut Linus haec illi diuino carmine pastor,  
floribus atque apio crinis ornatus amaro,  
dixerit: 'hos tibi dant calamos (en accipe) Musae,  
Ascraeo quos ante seni; quibus ille solebat  
cantando rigidas deducere montibus ornos.

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<sup>66</sup> 'What right have you', after Richardson (1977), p.327, n.15. This elegy is, of course, discussed in detail in chapter two.

his tibi Grynei nemoris dicatur origo,  
ne quis sit lucus quo se plus iactet Apollo.' (Ecl. 6.64-73)

Then he sings of Gallus wandering next to the Permessus,  
How one of sisters led him into the Aonian Hills,  
And how for this man Phoebus' whole chorus stood up;  
How these things to him, Linus, the shepherd of divine song,  
His hair decorated with flowers and bitter parsley,  
Said: 'These reeds the Muses give to you (look, take them),  
Which once they gave to the old Ascrean; with which he used  
To lead down from the mountains the rigid ash with his song.  
With these tell of the origin of the Grynean Wood,  
So that there is no grove in which Apollo takes more pride.'

Here, we can find a number of similarities with the poetic geography of 2.10. Both Propertius and Gallus begin their poetic journeys (or proposed poetic journey in the former's case) at the the River Permessus and both, too, head (or hope to head) towards Mount Helicon, for although Virgil does not mention it by name, the link with Hesiod and mention of the Muses suggest that we should interpret 'Aonian Hills' as a synonym for Mount Helicon and, thus, take *Aonas* ('Boeotian', q.v. *O.L.D.*), here, as the equivalent of *Aonias* ('of Helicon/Heliconian', q.v. *O.L.D.*, 2b, 3).<sup>67</sup> And while, too, there is no explicit mention of ascent in Virgil's account, the movement into the Aonian Hills and the fact that Gallus' poetic exemplar on this occasion, Hesiod, led trees in a downward direction from the mountains suggest that we are to envisage an upwardly mobile Gallus.

Virgil's description of Gallus' poetic journey has been viewed as an allusion to a now lost Gallan poem on the aetiology of Apollo's Grynean Grove in which Gallus is thought to have described his own poetic initiation at the hands of the Muses and in doing so employed (or perhaps even invented) the poetic metaphor of ascent.<sup>68</sup> Servius (*ad Ecl.* 6.72) informs us that Gallus did, indeed,

<sup>67</sup> Camps (1967), p.111, n.25-26, (in comparing the accounts of Propertius and Virgil) claims that the Aonian Hills are synonymous with Mount Helicon; so too does Boyle, A. J. (1976), *The Eclogues of Virgil* (Melbourne: The Hawthorn Press), p.125, n.65.

<sup>68</sup> See, for example, Ross (1975), pp.119-20, who sees explicit comparison by Propertius in 2.10.25-26 of his own poetry with that of Gallus; Anderson, R. D., Parsons, P. J. and Nisbet, R. G. M. (1979), 'Elegiacs by Gallus from Qasir Ibrim', *JRS*, 69, p.151, who claim that Gallus 'must have described his initiation by the Muses of Helicon'; Miller, J. F. (1982), 'Callimachus and the Augustan Aetiological Elegy', in Wolfgang Haase (ed.), *ANRW* (30.1; Berlin: Walter De Gruyter), p.378; Lyne (1998), p.28, who claims that the 'ascent of Helicon imagery [in

produce an aetiological poem on the origins of the Grynean Grove – in fact, according to Servius, he translated into Latin Euphorion’s account of a soothsaying contest between Calchas and Mopsus that took place in this location<sup>69</sup> – yet, despite the suggestion in Virgil’s (and Propertius’) account, we have no firm evidence to confirm that Gallus’ poem included an initiation scene. Nonetheless, the ascent of Helicon that Propertius has yet to make in 2.10 has a clear parallel in Gallus’ own journey (as described by Virgil) from the River Permessus up into the Aonian Hills.<sup>70</sup>

It is likely, then, that Propertius had Gallus in mind as a poetic model. It seems clear enough that the Aonian hills represent aetiological poetry in Virgil’s account – Gallus is led there in order to write on the origin (*origo*, *Ecl.* 6.64) of the Grynean Grove and he receives the reeds of Hesiod in a passage that alludes to the opening of the *Theogony*, Hesiod’s famed aetiological poem<sup>71</sup> – and there is no doubt that Gallus wrote erotic elegy. Quintilian (*Inst.* 10.1.93) includes Gallus among the Roman elegists who composed erotic verse – along with Tibullus, Propertius and Ovid – without any mention of special status or different subject matter – he simply says that Gallus is ‘rather harsh’ (*durior*). Ovid notes Gallus’ talent for erotic poetry (*Tr.* 5.1.17) and names Tibullus and Propertius as his elegiac successors (*Tr.* 4.10.53). Servius (*ad Ecl.* 10.1) tells us that Gallus composed four books of *Amores* about a girl called Lycoris<sup>72</sup> and in 1978 fragments of Gallus’ poetry written in elegiac couplets and erotic in content were discovered in Egypt.<sup>73</sup> So, it seems apparent that Gallus’ poetic

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2.10] derives most immediately from Cornelius Gallus’; Cairns (2006), pp.120-21, 326, who claims (pp.120-21) that *Eclogue* 6.64-73 makes it clear that Gallus treated the theme of his own poetic initiation.

<sup>69</sup> Servius (*ad Ecl.* 10.1) tells us again that Gallus translated Euphorion into Latin.

<sup>70</sup> Cairns (2006), p.330, sees Propertius’ Ascræan Springs as the equivalent of Virgil’s Aonian Mountains.

<sup>71</sup> The allusion to Hesiod is noted, for example, by Boyle (1976), p.125, n.64-73; Williams, R. D. (1979), *Virgil: The Eclogues and Georgics* (Classical Series; London: Macmillan Education), p.117, n.69-70; Cairns (2006), p.330, who states that this confirms that Gallus made the transition to aetiological poetry.

<sup>72</sup> Servius tells us also (*ad Ecl.* 10.1) that ‘Lycoris’ was a pseudonym for a freedwoman and *meretrix* called Cytheris. Ovid (*Am.* 1.15.30; *Tr.* 2.1.445) notes that Gallus writes erotic verse about Lycoris.

<sup>73</sup> For details of the discovery, together with the text and commentary, see Anderson et al. (1979), pp.125-55. Despite the brevity of the discovered fragment, it names Lycoris (1), mentions a *domina* (‘mistress’, 7) and states that the Muses have helped him compose poetry worthy of his mistress (6-7).

ascent from the River Permessus into the Aonian Hills represents his (probable) transition from love elegy to aetiological poetry.<sup>74</sup>

Both (Virgil's) Gallus and Propertius, then, commence their poetic journeys at the River Permessus' lowly waters of amatory elegy<sup>75</sup> and, although Gallus' metamorphosis into an aetiological poet is not a model that seems to fit well with the martial material that Propertius proposes in 2.10 and Gallus was not (as far as we can tell) a composer of heroic or martial epic,<sup>76</sup> Gallus may well have managed to integrate such material into his aetiological poetry and Propertius, thus, may be following Gallus and proposing to write Gallan style aetiological poetry.<sup>77</sup> We simply do not know enough about Gallus' poetry, however, to confirm such a claim.<sup>78</sup> Nonetheless, Gallus is another potential model for the poetry that Propertius imagines himself writing in 2.10.

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<sup>74</sup> Despite the cogency of this reading, Ross (1975), p.32, disputes that the River Permessus in Virgil's account represents love elegy and claims that its identification as such is entirely dependent on Propertius' description in the final couplet of 2.10. Lyne (1998), p.27, states that 2.10 confirms that the Permessus represents love poetry in *Eclogue* 6. It is tempting to see Gallus' wandering (*errantem*, *Ecl.* 6.64) as an erotic elegiac trope equivalent to Propertius' *nullo uiuere consilio* ('to live with no plan', 1.1.6) and Milanion's love-struck wandering (*errabat*, 1.1.11), thereby creating an erotic context for Gallus' association with the River Permessus. Nonetheless, Ross (1975), pp.31-34, 108-10, asserts that Gallus was not primarily a love poet, but an aetiological one, and that in Virgil's account, Gallus is not leaving elegy behind for some higher form of poetry. Virgil, Ross claims, when he associates Gallus with both the River Permessus and Mount Helicon, means simply that Gallus wrote aetiological (elegiac) poetry in the style of both Hesiod and Callimachus, for neither of these poets makes the River Permessus distinct, either poetically or geographically, from Mount Helicon. It is impossible, Ross claims (pp.33-34), that Virgil intended the River Permessus as a symbol for 'subjective love elegy' as opposed to aetiological elegy. Although Ross' argument was advanced before the discovery of the Gallus papyrus, Gallus' status as an amatory elegist does not and did not depend on it; details aside, it simply confirms what we already know. Gallus was, as we have seen, first and foremost a composer of erotic elegy; Propertius (2.34.91-92) includes him among his catalogue of Roman love poets (2.34.85-94) and Propertius 1.10 involves possibly a scene with Propertius reading Gallus' love poetry – see Benjamin, A. S. (1965), 'A Note on Propertius 1.10: *O lucunda Quies*', *CPh*, 60 (3), p.178. Virgil, too, in his *Eclogues* presents Gallus as an erotic poet (*Ecl.* 10) and refers to Gallus' poetry as his *Amores* on four separate occasions (*Ecl.* 10.6, 34, 53, 54). So we can, I think, discount Ross' line of reasoning and state with some confidence that Virgil portrays Gallus as making the transition from erotic elegy to aetiological poetry.

<sup>75</sup> Cairns (2006), p.330, notes that the River Permessus is on a 'lower geographical level' where 'by implication' Gallus was composing his *Amores*.

<sup>76</sup> As Stahl (1985), p.160, and Tatum (2000), p.402, note. Enk (1962), pp.165-66, n.25-26, Butler and Barber (1933), p.209, n.25-26, and Goold (1990), p.151, however, disagree, and see Gallus, here, transforming into an epic poet.

<sup>77</sup> See Butrica (1996), pp.121-22; Lyne (1998), pp.27-28; Tatum (2000), p.402.

<sup>78</sup> For extensive discussion of the relationship between Gallus – both the man and his poetry – and Propertius and for an attempt to recover Gallus' poetry through a range of approaches, see Cairns (2006), pp.70-249. Despite the title *Sextus Propertius*, Cairns gives over almost half of his book to discussion of Gallus and his poetry.

Propertius' Heliconian setting recalls Virgil, too.<sup>79</sup> Virgil underwent his own poetic transformation, of course, from the bucolic poetry of the *Eclogues* to the didactic verses of the *Georgics* and finally to the full-blown heroic epic of the *Aeneid*.<sup>80</sup> Propertius' allusion to *Eclogue 6*, then, might have more to do with Virgil than Gallus and, indeed, the relationship between the two works does not depend entirely on Gallus' poetic ascent from the banks of the River Permessus, for both *Eclogue 6* and 2.10 are recusative.<sup>81</sup> Propertius professes an inability to write of the military achievements of Augustus, while Virgil begins with a refusal to write of the martial deeds of Varus:

cum canerem reges et proelia, Cynthus aurem  
 uellit et admonuit: 'pastorem, Tityre, pinguis  
 pascere oportet ouis, deductum dicere carmen.'  
 nunc ego (namque super tibi erunt qui dicere laudes,  
 Vare, tuas cupiant et tristia condere bella)  
 agrestam tenui meditabor harundine Musam. (Ecl. 6.3-8)

When I sang of kings and battles, my ear Cynthus  
 Tugged and warned: 'A shepherd, Tityrus, should fatten  
 Sheep with his grazing, but tell a fine-spun song.'  
 Now I (for there will be plenty who will speak in praise  
 Of you, Varus, and wish to record your grim wars)  
 Will concentrate on a rustic Muse with a slender reed.

Apollo warns Virgil against singing of battles and wars (*proelia*, Ecl. 6.2; *bella*, Ecl. 6.7), while Propertius is unable (despite his professed willingness) to speak on the same subjects (*proelia*, 2.10.3; *bella*, 2.10.8); and while Virgil declines to sing of kings (*reges*, Ecl. 6.1), Propertius wishes to speak of his leader (*ducis*, 2.10.4).<sup>82</sup> Martial material is not suitable subject matter for Virgil's *Eclogues* or for Propertius' amatory poetry. So, both poems are versions of *recusationes* that refuse

<sup>79</sup> For the influence of Virgil on Propertius and allusions to Virgil's poetry in Propertius' elegies, see Boucher (1965), pp.279-97. Tatum (2000), p.395, claims that Virgil is the biggest influence on Propertius in 2.10.

<sup>80</sup> For Virgil's poetic career, see Putnam, M. C. J. (2010), 'Some Virgilian Unities', in P. Hardie and H. Moore (eds.), *Classical Literary Careers and their Reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp.17-38.

<sup>81</sup> For *Eclogue 6* as a *recusatio*, see Stahl (1985), p.160.

<sup>82</sup> Both poems, too, contain Callimachean motifs. Apollo's warning in *Eclogue 6* is modelled on his meeting with Callimachus in the *Aetia* (1, fr. 1.21-24). Propertius' need for a big mouth (*magni ... oris opus*, 2.10.12) to tackle a big subject (*magnis*, 2.10.6) can, as we shall see later, be viewed as an anti-Callimachean motif. Tatum (2000), pp.395-96, notes the allusion to the beginning of *Eclogue 6* and the recusative nature of both poems.

or fail to tell of battles and both poems, too, include an initiation (or failed initiation) scene involving Mount Helicon and the River Permessus.

*Eclogue* 6 is not the only work of Virgil, however, that Propertius references in 2.10; Propertius' catalogue of Augustus' (future) campaigns (2.10.13-18) contains echoes of *Georgics* 3, where Virgil, too, speaks of Augustus' pending conquests in an ecphrastic passage describing an imagined celebration in honour of Augustus including a stage set decorated with images of Britons (*intexti ... Britanni*, 'embroidered Britons', *G.* 3.25) and temple doors carved with triumphant battle scenes:<sup>83</sup>

in foribus pugnam ex auro solidoque elephanto  
Gangaridum faciam uictorisque arma Quirini ... (G. 3.26-27)

addam urbes Asiae domitas pulsumque Niphaten  
fidentemque fuga Parthum uersisque sagittis,  
et duo rapta manu diuerso ex hoste tropaea  
bisque triumphatas utroque ab litore gentis. (G. 3.30-33)

On the doors, from solid gold and ivory, the battle  
Of the Ganges I shall fashion and the arms of victorious Quirinus ...

I shall add Asia's conquered cities and defeated Niphates  
And the Parthian trusting in flight and arrows reversed;  
Two trophies, too, seized by force from enemies far separated,  
And two triumphed over nations from both shores.

Parthia, India, Arabia and Britain are listed by Propertius as future conquests for Augustus and each of these nations is found also in Virgil's catalogue: Parthia, Arabia and Britain (or the people who live there) are mentioned by name; India is indicated by the inhabitants of the Ganges; and the reference to far flung peoples on both shores is generally accepted as a further allusion to Britain and India. What is noteworthy from our perspective – in addition to the obvious similarities between the two accounts – is that Virgil includes this kind of martial material – albeit in an ecphrasis – in a work of didactic poetry, a work that is clearly not heroic epic. For, as yet, we have been unable to square this kind of military subject matter – the kind of material that Propertius wishes to write of –

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<sup>83</sup> For the phrase *intexti ... Britanni*, see Page, T. E. (1898), *P. Vergili Maronis Bucolica et Georgica* (Classical series; London: Macmillan), p.293, n.25. For comparison of the 'epic' material of 2.10.13-18 and *G.* 3.13-26, see Tatum (2000), p.396.



with the other non-heroic poetic models that we have examined. Important, also, is the fact that in *Georgics* 3 Virgil promises to, and does to a certain extent, sing the praises of Augustus (G. 3.10-33) much like Propertius does, but then postpones the endeavour (G. 3.40-48), again, much like Propertius in 2.10.<sup>84</sup> One more point, too, is relevant to our discussion; just prior to the passage above, Virgil, when seemingly about to tell of Augustus' victories, claims inspiration from the Aonian Muses (*Aonio ... deducam uertice Musas*, 'I shall lead the Muses down from the Aonian mountain top', G. 3.11). As in *Eclogue* 6, where we noted that the Aonian Hills were synonymous with Mount Helicon, here, too, for the same reasons, we should interpret the Aonian mountain top similarly. Accordingly, Virgil appears to associate the lofty heights of Mount Helicon with singing of Augustus' military successes.

Traces of *Georgics* 2 can be found also in Propertius' passage – for example, both Propertius and Virgil use the phrase 'Arabian homes' to mean, simply, 'Arabia' (*domus ... Arabiae*, 2.10.16; *domos Arabiae*, G. 2.115) – and the following passage offers another example of a link between the Ascræan Springs and narration of the military campaigns of Augustus.<sup>85</sup> When listing the famous sons of Italy, Virgil concludes with the praises of Augustus:

... et te, maxime Caesar,  
qui nunc extremis Asiae iam uictor in oris  
imbellem auertis Romanis arcibus Indum.  
salue, magna parens frugum, Saturnia tellus,  
magna uirum: tibi res antiquae laudis et artis  
ingredior sanctos ausus recludere fontis,  
Ascræumque cano Romana per oppida carmen. (G. 2.170-76)

... and you, greatest Caesar,  
Who now, already a victor on Asia's furthest shores,  
Turn back the unwarlike Indian from Roman citadels.  
Hail, Saturnian land, great mother of fruits,  
Great mother of men: for you a task of ancient praise and skill

<sup>84</sup> Tatum (2000), p.396, cites G. 3.1-41 as a major influence on Propertius because, he argues, epic is not rejected, but postponed. He claims that Propertius does much the same thing.

<sup>85</sup> For the allusion to G. 2.115, see, for example, Shackleton-Bailey (1967), p.83, and Richardson (1977), p.243. The relevance of G. 2.170-76 for the interpretation of Propertius' Ascræan Springs in 2.10 seems to have been overlooked.

I begin, having dared to reopen the sacred springs,  
And I sing an Ascraean song throughout Roman towns.

Again, conquests of Asia and India are styled as imminent military successes for Augustus. Furthermore, the phrase 'furthest shores' (*extremis ... oris*, G. 2.171) is exactly that which occurs in Propertius' catalogue at 2.10.17, where it occupies precisely the same position in the line – although, here, it is applied to Asia, whereas Propertius uses it to indicate Britain. Most important, however, is that Virgil considers this type of material suitable for an 'Ascraean song' (G. 2.176) and he draws clear comparison between waters of poetic inspiration – sacred springs (G. 2.175) – and Hesiodic style poetry and between his *Georgics* and Hesiod's *Works and Days*; indeed, both works are concerned, ostensibly, with the precepts of farming. In doing so, Virgil suggests that the sacred springs, here, are the Ascraean Springs. So, Propertius, as we have seen, connects the singing of Augustus' campaigns with the Ascraean Springs in 2.10 and, here, we have Virgil making a similar association.

So, Propertius professes an inability (or unwillingness) to compose poetry on the wars and victories of Augustus because, he says, his poetry is familiar only – in a metaphorical sense – with the River Permessus. Virgil in *Eclogue* 6 begins, too, with a refusal to write of wars – this time they are the wars of Varus – and later includes a scene involving a poetically metaphorised River Permessus. In Propertius' account, the Ascraean Springs symbolise poetry that includes or addresses martial material. Virgil, too, includes martial material in praise of Augustus – in passages to which Propertius alludes and, in the case of *Georgics* 3, in a recusatory context – in his *Georgics*, a work that draws inspiration from the Ascraean Springs and the heights of Mount Helicon and is named by Virgil, himself, an Ascraean song. And there are more specific points of linguistic contact between 2.10 and Virgil's poems – such as the lists of military targets and the repetition of particular words and phrases. Virgil, then, is another model for Propertius in 2.10 and one that seems to fit well with Propertius' Heliconian landscape.

The final elegy of Propertius' second book offers further evidence of Virgil's influence. Here, Propertius, as we noted earlier, provides a summary of Virgil's poetic achievements and development.<sup>86</sup> Although it is still some years before its publication (as a whole), Propertius knows of Virgil's composition of (what was to become) the *Aeneid*:

me iuuet hesternis positum languere corollis,  
 quem tetigit iactu certus ad ossa deus;  
 Actia Vergilium custodis litora Phoebi,  
 Caesaris et fortis dicere posse ratis,  
 qui nunc Aeneae Troiani suscitāt arma  
 iactaque Lauinis moenia litoribus.  
 cedite, Romani scriptores, cedite, Grai!  
 nescio quid maius nascitur Iliade. (2.34.59-66)

Happy am I to languish placed among yesterday's garlands,  
 I whom a god sure in his aim has touched to the bone;  
 The Actian shores of Phoebus the protector Virgil  
 Is happy he can speak of and Caesar's brave ships,  
 He who now rouses the arms of Trojan Aeneas  
 And the walls built on Lavinian shores.  
 Make way, Roman writers, make way, Greeks!  
 Something greater than the *Iliad* is born.<sup>87</sup>

He compares, as we have seen, the *Georgics* to Hesiod's *Works and Days*:

tu canis Asdraei veteris praecepta poetae,  
 quo seges in campo, quo viret uva iugo. (2.34.77-78)

The fact that Propertius – just like Virgil – equates the *Georgics* with Asdraean Hesiod, suggests that the Asdraean Springs in 2.10 symbolise the *Georgics*. But what is especially interesting and particularly important from our perspective is that Propertius seems to think of the *Eclogues* as a type of love elegy:

<sup>86</sup> Mader (2003), pp.129-30, discusses briefly the respective poetic developments of Propertius and Virgil in relation to 2.10 and 2.34. He is little concerned with the details of Helicon's poetic landscape, however, but rather with the suitability of poetic genres for various stages in the life and career of poets.

<sup>87</sup> We might also see 2.1.41-42 as a reference to the *Aeneid* (*nec mea conueniunt duro praecordia uersu / Caesaris in Phrygios condere*, 'my heart is not suited to found in hard verse the name of Caesar upon Phrygian ancestors').

tu canis umbrosi subter pineta Galaesi  
 Thyrsin et attritis Daphnin harundinibus,  
 utque decem possint corrumpere mala puellas  
 missus et impressis haedus ab uberibus.  
 felix, qui uilis pomis mercaris amores;  
 huic licet ingratae Tityrus ipse canat!  
 felix intactum Corydon qui temptat Alexin  
 agricolae domini carpere delicias!  
 quamuis ille sua lassus requiescat auena,  
 laudatur facilis inter Hamadryadas. (2.34.67-76)

You sing beneath the pinewoods of shady Galaesus  
 Of Thyrsis and Daphnis with well-worn reeds,  
 And how ten apples can seduce girls  
 And a kid sent from a still suckled udder.  
 Lucky the man who buys love cheaply with apples;  
 Although Tityrus, himself, could sing to this ungrateful girl!  
 Lucky is Corydon who tries to pluck untouched Alexis,  
 The delight of his master the farmer!  
 Although he rests tired from his pipe,  
 He is praised among the easy Hamadryads.

In 2.10, Propertius associates his own amatory poetry with the River Permessus and employs the river as an allusion to *Eclogue* 6. In both poems, too, poetic development is symbolised by an ascent of Mount Helicon. Propertius sings of the future military successes of Augustus in 2.10; Virgil does the same in *Georgics* 2 and 3. In 2.10, Propertius links narration of these successes with the Ascrean Springs; in *Georgics* 2, Virgil connects this type of military material with the same springs and calls his poem an Ascrean song and, in *Georgics* 3, he associates narrating Augustus' military successes with the summit of Mount Helicon. Furthermore, Propertius, in 2.34, equates Virgil's *Georgics* with Ascrea and, thus, Mount Helicon. Propertius appears to be comparing his own poetic development with the poetic career of Virgil. He claims that his poetry at this time is at its earliest stage of development, just as the *Eclogues* were for Virgil the first stage of his poetic progression. And while Virgil made the transition to a more serious and weightier style of composition in his *Georgics*, Propertius has not yet the skills to produce such poetry and match Virgil's poetic development. Propertius' writing is not yet at the equivalent stage of Virgil's second poetic phase – represented by

the *Georgics* – never mind the third stage that produced the *Aeneid* – a work of which Propertius is obviously cognisant and a work that is truly suitable for singing the praises of Augustus.<sup>88</sup> Propertius can at this time only write love poetry as Virgil does – according to Propertius – in his *Eclogues*; he is not yet able to write poems like the *Georgics*, let alone compose anything of the ilk of the *Aeneid*. Propertius does not want to be like Virgil – and I am sure that he did not consider his early amatory poetry to be at all like the *Eclogues* – but he seems to want to use the Virgilian precedent to make a statement about his own poetic development. In this sense, Virgil appears, perhaps, the most influential poetic model behind Propertius’ programmatic landscape in 2.10.

There is another elegy, however, in Propertius’ second book involving a scene of poetic inspiration/initiation on Mount Helicon that seems to complicate the issue. This time, the initiate is Propertius:

non tot Achaemeniis armantur Susa sagittis  
 spicula quot nostro pectore fixit Amor.  
 hic me tam gracilis uetuit contemnere Musas,  
 iussit et Ascræum sic habitare nemus;  
 non ut Pieriae quercus mea uerba sequantur,  
 aut possim Ismaria ducere ualle feras,  
 sed magis ut nostro stupefiat Cynthia uersu. (2.13.1-7)<sup>89</sup>

Susa is not armed with as many Archaemenid arrows  
 As the darts Amor has fixed into my chest.  
 He forbade me to shun such slender Muses,  
 And ordered me thus to dwell in the Ascræan Grove,  
 Not so that Pierian oaks might follow my words,  
 Or that I might lead down beasts into the Ismarian valley,  
 But rather that Cynthia be dumbstruck by my verse.

<sup>88</sup> Stahl (1985), pp.160-61, advances this model – although with little detailed argument – for Propertius’ poetic development and claims that Propertius is demonstrating how far away he is from writing an epic on Augustus’ feats. Cairns (2006), pp.331-32, however, denies the cogency of this three tiered Virgilian model.

<sup>89</sup> It is generally accepted that the attested *Etrusca* (2.13.1) is not what Propertius wrote. A lesser codex has *Susa*, the capital of the Achaemenids (q.v. *O.L.D.*). The plural subject demands *armantur*; the better manuscripts have *armatur*. Obviously, what is needed is a person, a people, or a nation famed for archery. For discussion, see Richardson (1977), p.248, n.1, and Heyworth (2007b), p.161, n.1-2. The reading has no bearing on the argument offered here.

Propertius is compelled by love/Love to write amatory elegy – symbolised, here, by the slender Muses<sup>90</sup> – and as a love poet (*sic*, 2.13.4) he is ordered to take up residence in Ascræ's grove – the grove of the Muses on Mount Helicon, the equivalent of the Aonian Hills or the Ascræan Springs.<sup>91</sup> There can be little doubt that love elegy – it is written at Love's behest to win the affections of Cynthia (2.13.7) – is, here, associated with the heights of Helicon. The problem from our perspective is that this is precisely the sort of poetry that in 2.10 Propertius deemed unsuitable for the Ascræan Springs and unworthy of the label 'Ascræan'.

This passage, obviously, creates interpretive difficulty for our understanding of the poetics of the final couplet of 2.10. Propertius' erotic poetry appears to have been transported from the lowly waters of the River Permessus to the lofty heights of Mount Helicon, thereby, apparently, contradicting Propertius' earlier topographical arrangement.<sup>92</sup> Perhaps, as has been suggested, Propertius is simply undermining his promises in 2.10 to write in a more serious style<sup>93</sup> – he has, after all, completed the journey he suggests in 2.10 without any discernible change in poetics – or, maybe, he is guilty simply of inconsistency and, here, the Ascræan Grove holds not the special generic significance carried by the Ascræan Springs in 2.10.<sup>94</sup> It is quite possible that Mount Helicon in 2.13 symbolises poetic composition in a more general sense.<sup>95</sup> In 3.1, Propertius employs Mount Helicon as a symbol of both epic and elegiac poetry:

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<sup>90</sup> Although a slender muse need not necessarily symbolise love elegy, in this instance we must, I think, take it this way as it stands clearly for the type of poetry that Love has so far ordered Propertius to write.

<sup>91</sup> For the reading of *sic* (2.13.4), see Camps (1967), p.116, n.4; Richardson (1977), p.248, n.4; Heyworth (2007b), p.162, n.3-8.

<sup>92</sup> Camps (1967), p.116, n.4, and Butrica (1996), p.120, for example, recognise the problem.

<sup>93</sup> Heyworth (1992), p.52, makes the claim when noting the apparent contradiction. Book division between 2.10 and 2.13 – he advocates division after 2.10 – would, he states (pp.52-53), lessen the impact of the contradiction by distancing the poems; but he concludes that 'Propertius does not contradict himself for any profound programmatic reason'.

<sup>94</sup> Butler and Barber (1933), p.209, n.25-26, in discussing the final couplet of 2.10, note that Ascræ seems to hold no particular significance for Propertius in 2.13. Ross (1975), pp.32-33, sees no opposition between the Ascræan Springs of 2.10 and the Ascræan Grove of 2.13 – they are, he claims, both Hesiodic. Cairns (2006), pp.330-31, states that there is no problem with Hesiod standing for different sorts of poetry in different contexts. D'Anna (1986), p.63, claims that the *Ascræum nemus*, here, in 2.13 might represent poetry in a very general sense, although it can be used, too, to refer to specific types of poetry such as love elegy.

<sup>95</sup> Butler (1905), p.192, n.25, n.26, argues that 2.13 shows that Ascræ had no fixed poetic significance.

multi, Roma, tuas laudes annalibus addent,  
 qui finem imperii Bactra futura canent.  
 sed, quod pace legas, opus hoc de monte Sororum  
 detulit intacta pagina nostra uia.  
 mollia, Pegasides, date uestroserta poetae:  
 non faciet capiti dura corona meo. (3.1.15-20)

Many, Rome, will include your praises in their *Annals*,  
 And sing that Bactra will be the limit of the empire.  
 But this work, which you can read in peace, from the Sister's mount  
 My page has brought down by an untouched path.  
 Daughters of Pegasus, give a soft wreath to your poet:  
 A hard garland will not suit my head.<sup>96</sup>

Here, either Propertius contrasts poetry with historical prose – reading *annalibus* (3.1.15) as a reference to annalists and their historical writings on the topics of Roman expansion and power – or he opposes his love elegy to epic poetry in the style of Ennius' *Annales* – reading *annalibus* as a reference to poetry after the style of Ennius. Regardless, Mount Helicon and the Muses (*monte Sororum*, 3.1.17; *Pegasides*, 3.1.19) must represent poetic composition in a broad sense because they are Muses of both elegy – symbolised by the soft wreath – and epic poetry – as the hard garland denotes.

Propertius seems to present Mount Helicon and the Muses similarly on another occasion:

me iuuat in prima coluisse Heliconaiuuenta  
 Musarumque choris implicuisse manus. (3.5.19-20)

atque ubi iam Venerem grauis interceperit aetas  
 sparserit et nigras alba senecta comas,  
 tum mihi naturae libeat perdiscere mores,  
 quis deus hanc mundi temperet arte domum,  
 qua uenit exoriens, qua deficit, unde coactis  
 cornibus in plenum menstrua luna redit ... (3.5.23-28)

I am happy to have cultivated Helicon in first youth  
 And entwined hands in dances with the Muses.

<sup>96</sup> I follow Nethercut, W. R. (1961), '*Ille parum cauti pectoris egit opus*', *TAPA*, 92, p.391, Lee (1994), p.163, n.15-16, and Butrica (1996), p.135, in reading *annalibus* (3.1.15) as a reference to epic poetry in the style, for example, of Ennius' *Annales*.

But when heavy time has interrupted Venus,  
 And white old age has speckled my black hair,  
 Then may it please me to learn the ways of nature,  
 Which god governs this home of the world with his art,  
 How the rising moon comes, how it wanes, why with joined  
 Horns the moon returns each month in full ...<sup>97</sup>

A long list follows of subjects concerned with the workings of nature and the gods. Although Propertius, here, seems to propose leaving behind the composition of love poetry (*Venerem*, 3.5.23) for scientific writing, perhaps in the style of Lucretius, it seems more sensible to see the contrast in terms of poetry and prose, for writing on the topics listed is contrasted with poetic inspiration.<sup>98</sup> What is clear at least is that on this occasion the heights of Mount Helicon do not represent specifically the composition of more serious styles of poetry. Propertius seems to use Mount Helicon as a generic symbol for poetic composition when it suits.

Another approach is to view 2.13 as response to 2.10. From this perspective, we might envisage a disgruntled Love, unhappy with the lowly position of the River Permessus assigned to him in the final couplet of 2.10 and jealous of the higher poetic status granted to other poetic genres.<sup>99</sup> Love, accordingly, forces Propertius to grant his (and thus Love's/love) poetry equal standing with the genres inhabiting the Ascræan Grove. In this way, Propertius would be asserting the worth of erotic elegy by equating it with the higher poetic genres.

The apparent contradiction in 2.13 of the Heliconian poetic hierarchy found in 2.10 need not present any great difficulty for our understanding of Propertius' programmatic landscaping. The Ascræan Grove of 2.13 might represent poetic composition in a general sense and, accordingly, Propertius may simply be stating simply that his love for Cynthia forces him to write poetry in order to win her

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<sup>97</sup> That it is the moon rising and waning in line 27 is disputed. Some see it as a reference to the rising sun and emend *deficit* to *decidit* to suit this interpretation – for contrasting views, see Richardson (1977) pp.335-36, n.27-28, and Heyworth (2007b), pp.301-302, n.25-28.

<sup>98</sup> Richardson (1977), p.333, notes that although one is reminded of Lucretius, Propertius seems to have the general topics of natural philosophy in mind.

<sup>99</sup> It has been argued that 2.13.3-14 is, like the poetic landscape of 2.10, Gallan in origin because of *Eclogue* 6 and that, accordingly, Propertius in 2.13 says 'whatever Gallus may have thought, *my* poetry does scale the heights' – see Anderson et al. (1979), pp.150-51.



affection. We might see it, too, as Love's response to his lowly status in 2.10. What we can be sure of, is that in 2.10 Propertius is not employing the topography of Mount Helicon in any general way, but is being quite specific about the respective locations. So while 2.13 might seem to contradict the poetic landscape of 2.10, it need not undermine the poetic hierarchy that 2.10.25-26 so carefully and unmistakably constructs. Thus, we need not revise our earlier assessment of 2.10.

Callimachus and Gallus seem to have composed versions of their own poetic initiations at the hands of the Heliconian Muses and their accounts must to some extent have influenced Propertius' own initiation scene, but we simply cannot say with any certainty that they mapped their own poetry onto the landscape of Mount Helicon as Propertius does, nor can we gauge with any real accuracy the power of their influence. Most probably, a wide range of poetic models from Hesiod to Virgil informed to a greater or lesser degree Propertius' version of Mount Helicon's poetic landscape in the final couplet of 2.10 and we can, therefore, agree with the claim that 'the summit of Helicon is a crowded neighbourhood'.<sup>100</sup> Perhaps, however, Virgil's poetic development seems to be the model that best fits (based, at least, on the surviving evidence).

The Virgilian model (just like the others that we have identified), however, despite its merits, still does not really explain the generic significance of the River Permessus and the Ascrean Springs. We can be sure that Propertius was not planning to write poetry in the style of Virgil's *Georgics* and that he did not consider his elegies to date to be in the style of the *Eclogues*. It seems, therefore, that it is the poetic transformation of Virgil that might be important, not the particular symbolism of the respective water sources. Accordingly, we might see the River Permessus as a metaphorical first stage and the Ascrean Springs as a second, or, perhaps, just a later, stage in a more general picture of poetic evolution. So, in some senses, we are no closer to determining the precise symbolism of Mount Helicon's poetic hierarchy. We know that the River Permessus in 2.10 must symbolise

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<sup>100</sup> The quote is from Tatum (2000), p.405. Tatum claims (p.400) that *Ascreos fontes* (2.10.25) is a 'significant plural' in the sense that it represents a range of poetic influences. In line with this argument, we might also, I suggest, treat *aliis choreis* (2.10.1) similarly. Others see the plural as a reference to both the Hippocrene and the Aganippe – see, for example, Richardson (1977), p.244, n.25.

amatory elegy of the kind that Propertius has so far composed, but we cannot with any surety assign a particular generic significance to the Ascræan Springs and can only say – as we said at the beginning of our examination – that they must represent some form of higher poetry which Propertius sees as more suitable for singing the achievements of Augustus.

Although, then, we have identified a range of poetic influences for Propertius' Heliconian landscape, this approach can only take us so far. The problem with the methodology so far employed is that it is easy to lose sight of the poem as a whole and become lost in allusion.<sup>101</sup> A wider examination of the elegy within the context of the fictional construct of the Propertian poet-lover's relationship with Cynthia is needed.

### (Failed) Rejection of Cynthia: Looking Elsewhere

Most critics are agreed that 2.10 is an example in some form or another of Propertian *recusatio*, in which the poet declines to write more patriotic poetry in praise of Augustus.<sup>102</sup> And while the elegy's recusative tone is not seriously disputed it has been noted that Propertius does not actually refuse to write on the subject – indeed, he does narrate briefly the (future) campaigns of Augustus (2.10.13-18) – but rather pleads an inability to do so.<sup>103</sup> His sincerity in wishing to write of Augustus' achievements has also been doubted and it is claimed that a 'subversive temporal structure' undermines his proposal to make the transition to a higher style of poetic composition: he consigns the task to a later stage of life (*aetas prima canat Veneres, extrema tumultus*, 'let the first age sing of Venus, the last of discord', 2.10.7); he postpones the endeavour until he has finished writing about Cynthia (*bella canam, quando scripta puella mea est*, 'I shall sing of wars, when my girl has been written up', 2.10.8); and he defers the project to another day (*uates tua castra canendo / magnus*

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<sup>101</sup> For a detailed study of intertextuality as an interpretive tool and its benefits and shortcomings, see Hinds, S. (1998), *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (Roman Literature and its Contexts; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

<sup>102</sup> See, for example, Nethercut (1972), pp.80, 92; Ross (1975), pp.32, 118-19; Tatum (2000), p.393 – '2.10 is unquestionably a *recusatio*'; Debroun (2003), p.198.

<sup>103</sup> See Lyne (1998), p.25 – to call it a *recusatio* is 'slightly misleading'; Propertius does not 'refuse', but 'demurs'; Bowditch (2003), p.165; Mader (2003), p.116 – it is a *recusatio* but the 'subjective *non uelle* is cleverly cast as an objective *non posse*'.

*ero: seruent hunc mihi fata diem*, ‘by singing of your camps [Augustus] I will become a great poet: may the Fates preserve this day for me’, 2.10.19-20).<sup>104</sup> But such views are the result of interpreting the poem as a disingenuous proposal to address weightier themes and sing the praises of Augustus. I propose that 2.10 is not a refusal to write of Augustus and his achievements – for, indeed, it is not actually a refusal at all in this sense – but rather an attempted and ultimately failed rejection of Cynthia; that is, an unsuccessful but sincere attempt at leaving behind erotic elegy, rather than an insincere proposal to write a more serious style of poetry. This approach, I argue, produces a more satisfactory reading.

It is important, first, to consider 2.10 in the context of the surrounding elegies; we should not base an interpretation of the poem’s poetics upon the final couplet alone.<sup>105</sup> Indeed, the fact that 2.10 begins with *sed tempus ... / ... iam* (‘but it is now time’, 2.10.1-2) suggests close connection with the poems that it immediately follows.<sup>106</sup> Let us briefly put it into context. The second book begins with Propertius expressing infatuation for Cynthia and compulsion to write about her (2.1.1-16); he is not at all minded to sing of Augustus’ exploits (2.1.17-46). In the following elegy, however, he seems to have attempted unsuccessfully to end the affair with Cynthia, but love/Love has prevented him from doing so (2.2.1-2). Next, the infatuation with Cynthia returns (2.3.9-44), despite his attempts to break free (2.3.1-8) – girls, he tells us, are cruel in matters of love (2.4). Two elegies follow (2.5, 2.6),

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<sup>104</sup> Stahl (1985), p.156, and Mader (2003), pp.124-25, suggest the ‘subversive temporal structure’; the phrase is Mader’s (p.125). Mader (p.125), thus, concludes that 2.10 is ‘a feigned gesture of deference to a poetic *iter* that Propertius never seriously contemplated.’ Note that I am not suggesting that these lines should be read in this way, only that they can be if one wishes to argue for the ‘subversive temporal structure’. In fact, later, I argue for different interpretations of the first two examples. The final example, I would argue, is simply an acknowledgement from Propertius that it will take some time for him to develop his skills as a war poet.

<sup>105</sup> Butrica (1996), pp.100-01, 128, sees 2.10 to 2.14 as a contextual unit and argues that they form a sequence in which Propertius attempts to reject Cynthia. Note, however, that his argument is not concerned with examination of the poetic landscape of 2.10, but rather with demonstrating the unity of the second book; he is arguing, here, against division in this range (2.10-2.14). Mader (2003), p.122, claims that 2.10 is a ‘response to his [Propertius’] declining amatory fortunes as documented in the surrounding poems’. Wyke (1987), pp.49, 60, sees 2.10 as part of an integrated group of poems, but in the context of a group of elegies in which Propertius breaks away from realism of Cynthia.

<sup>106</sup> As Richardson (1977), p.241, n.1, notes. I do not agree with those editors who insert a lacuna before the beginning of 2.10 and argue that the conjunction *sed* cannot start the poem – see, for example, Goold (1990), p.148; Viarre (2005), p.44; Heyworth (2007a), p.51 and (2007b), p.153. Camps (1967), p.109, n.1, provides examples of other elegies of Propertius that start with conjunctions. Giardina (2005), p.130, accepts Heinsius’ *est* in place of manuscripts’ *sed*.

in which he bemoans Cynthia's infidelity and acknowledges his unhealthy obsession with her (2.6.7-14). A (momentarily) joyful reconciliation and reaffirmation of his love for Cynthia are the subjects of 2.7; but 2.8 finds Propertius, once again, railing against her disloyalty (2.8.12-16), apparently considering suicide and even contemplating her murder (2.8.17-28). These themes are continued in 2.9, where Cynthia's infidelity continues to cause him anguish (2.9.1-30) and he wants to die, or at least be single once more (2.9.37-52). And that brings us to 2.10.

Now, in this context, it should come as little surprise that Propertius proclaims his writing of Cynthia at an end and wants to make the transition to a different style of poetry. He is seeking relief from love's/Love's endless torment and wishes no more to write on the matter.<sup>107</sup> Indeed, there are a number of clues within 2.10 to suggest that Propertius – within the poetic reality of his affair with Cynthia – is genuine in his desire to leave behind amatory elegy and pursue other poetic endeavours. Unlike in 2.1, when he suggests a poem on Augustus' achievements (2.1.25-38), but claims indifference to the subject (2.1.41-42) and that the task is not his lot (2.1.17), in 2.10, he states clearly his willingness to produce more serious (panegyric) poetry:<sup>108</sup> he wants to sing of battles and Augustus' campaigns (*iam libet et fortis memorare ad proelia turmas / et Romana mei dicere castra ducis*, 2.10.3-4); and he wants to compose in a more serious style (*nunc uolo subducto grauior procedere uultu*, 2.10.9-10). And when he claims that he might not be up to the task of composing panegyric (2.10.5-6), he suggests also, implicitly, that he might be.<sup>109</sup>

I think that we should accept as genuine Propertius' statement that he is finished with, and writing about, Cynthia (*bella canam, quando scripta puella mea est*, 2.10.8 ); or rather we should see the statement as indicative of his genuine resolve to break with her and his determination to move

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<sup>107</sup> Richardson (1977), p.241, claims that 2.10 provides relief after the climax of 2.8 and 2.9. Butrica (1996), pp.117-18, states that Propertius is 'frustrated by her [Cynthia's] attitude ... [and] will no longer write about her' (p.117), and that 'he is after all, a poet-lover trying to be out of love with the source of his poetic inspiration' (p.118). Camps (1967), p.108, notes that 2.10 assumes (like 2.9) that Propertius has ended his affair with Cynthia.

<sup>108</sup> Nethercut (1972), p.80, notes that Propertius in 2.1 does not mention any possibility that he will actually sing of the wars and achievements of Augustus.

<sup>109</sup> Nethercut (1972), p.80.

on.<sup>110</sup> This line is often interpreted as an indefinite postponement of the proposed war narrative; yet, it is better (and easier) to take *quando*, here, as causal ('since', q.v. *O.L.D.*, 3) rather than temporal ('when', q.v. *O.L.D.*, 2).<sup>111</sup> Not only does the context of the preceding elegies suggest this interpretation; the following elegy, which finds Propertius firm in his resolve (although, of course, still writing of Cynthia), seems to offer confirmation.<sup>112</sup> It is now up to others to write of her if they wish:

scribant de te alii uel sis ignota licebit:  
 laudet, qui sterili semina ponit humo.  
 omnia, crede mihi, tecum uno munera lecto  
 auferet extremi funeris atra dies;  
 et tua transibit contemnens ossa uiator,  
 nec dicet 'cinis hic docta puella fuit'. (2.11.1-6)

Others can write about you, or you can stay unknown:  
 Let the man be praised who plants seeds in barren soil.  
 All those gifts along with you, believe me, on a single bier  
 Death's black day will carry off in the end;  
 And the traveller will pass by ignoring your bones,  
 And will not say, 'This ash was once a learned girl'.

Propertius' position in relation to Cynthia remains the same as it was in the previous elegy; here, he reiterates his determination to no longer write of her. And although he has yet to leave her behind completely – which should come as no surprise – we should not doubt his resolve at this point in the fictional world of the relationship. He seems to be maintaining the defiant stance of 2.10.8 and, thus, we should, indeed, read *quando*, there, as 'since'.

The newly upward gaze of the poet also reflects a genuine desire to leave behind Cynthia and erotic elegy. The description of Propertius' new demeanour, however, has largely been misinterpreted.

<sup>110</sup> I am reminded of Catullus (8) urging himself to be firm in his resolve to break with Lesbia.

<sup>111</sup> The line, strictly speaking, would require the future-perfect, *scripta erit*, for *quando* to be temporal – see, for example, Camps (1967), p.109, n.8; Butrica (1996), p.116, n.61; Fedeli (2005), pp.317-19, n.7-8. Most who take it as temporal or as a typical example of Propertian ambiguity acknowledge the possibility that it can also be causal or note the grammatical difficulty – see, for example, Nethercut (1972), pp.87-88; Lee (1985), p.146, n.8. Cairns (2006), pp.327-29, however, claims that it must be temporal – citing examples of Latin's use of the present for the future – and that those who see it as causal interpret the couplet incorrectly.

<sup>112</sup> It is claimed, variously, that 2.11 is a short poem in its own right, the actual end of 2.10, or a displaced fragment – for details, see Heyworth (2007b), pp.156-58.

Most critics claim that the facial expression indicates seriousness (mock or otherwise) and the phrase *subducto ... uultu* (2.10.9) is, accordingly, assumed to indicate a frown, furrowed brow, or some other similarly stern visage, for the phrase is understood as a variation of *subductis superciliis* ('with eyebrows raised') and is, thus, taken as indicative of a serious expression (q.v. *subduco*, *O.L.D.*, 1c).<sup>113</sup> Although, perhaps, Propertius was aware that the phrase would carry the suggestion of seriousness for some readers at least, it is a mistake to understand the expression *subducto ... uultu*, here, (only) in this sense; the suggested parallel *subductis superciliis* is simply not analogous. Seriousness, in any case, is indicated by the remainder of the line (*nunc uolo ... grauior procedere*). Other interpretations have come closer to the mark, such as 'with countenance uplifted'; although this is qualified by 'with the head thrown back, the attitude characteristic of one singing a loud song to the cithara'.<sup>114</sup> The same expression, *subducto ... uultu*, is used by Manilius to describe the head of the constellation of Orion (*per tria subducto signatur lumina uultu*, 'it [Orion's head] is marked out by three stars with the face receding from view', 1.393).<sup>115</sup> Housman tells us that *subducere*, here, must be understood in this way (q.v. *subduco*, *O.L.D.*, 7b); but this is of little help in determining how we are to interpret Propertius' new demeanour in 2.10.<sup>116</sup>

The key to understanding the poet's upturned face is to compare it to the typical expression of the Propertian *amator*. Immediately following his captivation by Cynthia and the commencement of the affair, Love forces Propertius to assume a dejected expression:

tum mihi constantis deiecit lumina fastus  
et caput impositis pressit Amor pedibus. (1.1.3-4)

<sup>113</sup> See, for example, Postgate (1884), p.119, n.9, who compares the expression to *subducere supercilia*; Butler (1905), p.191, n.9, 'drawn into a frown'; Butler and Barber (1933), p.208, n.9, who take *uultu* as a variation on *superciliis*; Enk (1962), p.158, n.9, who cites parallels for the phrase, but all include *supercilia*; Camps (1967), p.109, n.9, "'with furrowed brow", expressive of concern with serious things'; Goold (1990), p.151, 'with serious mien'; Lee (1994), p.38, 'with eyebrows raised'; Fedeli (2005), pp.319-20, n.9-10, '*con la fronte aggrottata*', claims it is a variation of *supercilium subducere*; Giardina (2005), p.131, '*con il volto accigliato*'; Viarre (2005), p.44, '*le front haut*'; Heyworth (2007b), p.541, 'with a frown on my face'. Paley (1872), p.75, n.9, suggests that the expression means 'withdrawn into itself' – 'sober', 'demure'.

<sup>114</sup> Richardson (1977), p.242, n.9.

<sup>115</sup> Richardson (1977), p.242, n.9, cites Manilius, here, in order to support his own interpretation.

<sup>116</sup> Housman, A. E. (1903), *M. Manilii Astronomicon: Liber Primus* (London: Grant Richards), p.39, n.392.

Then forcing down my look of stubborn pride  
Love put his feet on top and pressed down my head.

This is the habit of the elegiac lover subjugated to the will of Love/love. We find Propertius assuming a similar bearing when later he recalls Cynthia's indifference towards him:

at dum demissis supplex ceruicibus ibam  
dicebar sicco uilior esse lacu. (2.14.11-12)

But while I went about as a suppliant with my neck bowed down  
I was said to be worth less than a dried-up pool.

On another occasion, too, the downcast expression of the lover is reiterated:<sup>117</sup>

instat semper Amor supra caput, instat amanti,  
et grauis ipse super libera colla sedet.  
excubat ille acer custos et tollere numquam  
te patietur humo lumina capta semel. (2.30.7-10)<sup>118</sup>

Love always presses, presses on the lover's head,  
And settles himself heavily on the once free neck.  
As a guard he keeps watch fiercely, and never to lift  
Your eyes from the ground, once captured, will he allow you.

So, typically, Propertius the *amator* and composer of erotic love poems carries a downcast look with his face pointing towards the ground as an expression of his burdens and his submission.

If a downcast expression is appropriate for one who is subservient to love/Love, then I think we should understand Propertius' upward gaze in 2.10 as indicative of his new independent status. His demeanour suggests that he no longer wants to be subjugated to love (although, in fact, as it turns out, he still is) and that the image we should imagine is that of the poet-lover with head held high in (doomed) defiance of Cynthia, indicating a resolve to be strong and to leave her behind. The newly

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<sup>117</sup> Richardson (1977), p.297, n.2.30.9-10, compares the description with that at 1.1.3 – note that he incorporates 2.30.1-12 into 2.29 after line 10; see pp.294-97. Fedeli (2005), pp.848-49, n.7-8, draws comparison with 1.1.4.

<sup>118</sup> Heyworth (2007a), p.88, and (2007b), pp.243-44, 559-60, is troubled, among other things, by the repetition of *instat*; he emends line 7 to read: *semper Amor supra caput improbus instat amanti*, 'Love, the rogue, looms over the lover, always above his head' (his translation).

adopted gaze accords well with the poem's motif of ascent. His gaze is averted from the lowly waters of the River Permessus and, thus, away from erotic elegy and is now aimed skyward in the direction of the Ascræan Springs and toward some higher form of poetry.<sup>119</sup>

Propertius' gaze, here, can also reveal something of the poem's poetics and the symbolism of Mount Helicon's water sources. His upturned face is the antithesis of the usual habit of the Propertian *amator*. So, if he has turned away or looked up from amatory elegy – the River Permessus – and no longer has the look of love, but has, instead, adopted the opposite expression and is looking toward a new source of poetic inspiration – the Ascræan Springs – then we can assume that the new source represents the opposite of love elegy; that is, anti-elegy or anti-love elegy. For Propertius, it seems, the poetic significance of the Ascræan Springs lies not in what style of poetry they represent, but in the style that they do not. His newly upturned gaze, then, symbolises his determination to move away from Cynthia and the composition of amatory elegy. The kind of poetry he wishes to write is poetry not about Cynthia; that is, anything but love elegy. His expression suggests that he is sincere in his desire to compose a different style of poetry.

Propertius' protestations of inadequacy, too, seem sincere when the elegy is viewed as an honest attempt to compose in a more serious style; he might really not have the talent to move away from amatory poetry, despite a genuine determination to do so.<sup>120</sup> Although it has been seen to undermine the sincerity of Propertius' promise to panegyryze the deeds of Augustus, the fact that his account of Augustus' (future) military successes in 2.10 – that is, an example of the kind of non-erotic poetry he hopes now to write – is steeped in the language of erotic elegy might be seen as an indication of genuine inability on Propertius' behalf to compose in this new, weightier style in spite of his acknowledged willingness to try (*quod si deficient uires, audacia certe / laus erit: in magnis et*

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<sup>119</sup> Fedeli (2005), pp.319-20, n.9-10, suggests that the expression (*subducto ... uultu*) defines the attitude of the epic poet from the viewpoint of love.

<sup>120</sup> Butrica (1996), p.100.



*uoluisse sat est*, ‘but if my strength should be lacking, my determination surely will be praised: in big matters even to be willing is enough’, 2.10.5-6).<sup>121</sup>

The refusal of the Euphrates to protect the Parthian cavalry (*iam negat Euphrates equitem post terga tueri / Parthorum*, 2.10.13-14) employs an erotic motif, for Propertius’ elegiac *puella* refuses (*negare*) her lover(s) in this way. When bemoaning Cynthia’s fickleness, Propertius remarks, ‘thus today she will come, although she said no yesterday’ (*sic hodie ueniet, si qua negauerit heri*, 2.14.20) and, ‘scarcely, however, does she let me in, or once, when she has often said no’ (*uix tamen aut semel admittit, cum saepe negarit*, 3.21.7).<sup>122</sup> The image of a regretful Euphrates grieving over its detention of the Crassi (*Crassos se tenuisse dolet*, 2.10.14) incorporates erotic diction, for *dolor/dolere* is used of the pains of love: when locked out on Cynthia’s doorstep, Propertius laments his fate (*nullane finis erit nostro concessa dolori, / turpis et in tepido limine somnus erit?*, ‘will there be no end granted to my pain, and will mine be a shameful sleep on this lukewarm threshold?’, 1.16.21-22); he refuses to become angry, although Cynthia causes him much pain (*quamuis multa tibi dolor hic meus aspera debet, / non ita saeua tamen uenerit ira mea*, ‘although this pain of mine may owe you many an act of cruelty, such savage anger, however, will not come over me’, 1.18.13-14); and he has learnt to carry his pain in silence (*omnia consueui timidus perferre superbae / iussa neque arguto facta dolore queri*, ‘I have grown accustomed to bear all of your arrogant orders and to not complain in shrill pain about what you have done’, 1.18.25-26).<sup>123</sup> When India offers its neck for Augustus’ triumph (*India quin, Auguste, tuo dat colla triumpho*, 2.10.15), we might, too, recall an erotic setting, for, as we have seen, a suppliant neck is a symbol of the subservient *amator* (2.14.11; 2.30.8) – yet the motif occurs elsewhere: a captive neck is a sign of being in love (*nec femina post te / ulla dedit collo dulcia uincla meo*, ‘no woman since you has put sweet chains around my neck’,

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<sup>121</sup> For 2.10’s erotic language, see Bowditch (2003), pp.163-80. Note that he views 2.10 as ‘a comic send-up [of Augustus and his achievements] that pulls out all the stops of sexual double-entendre’ (p.166). I see it quite differently.

<sup>122</sup> See Bowditch (2003), p.171.

<sup>123</sup> Bowditch (2003), pp.171-72, in addition to these examples, offers also 1.16.25, 35 and 1.18.3.

3.15.9-10).<sup>124</sup> The reference to the untouched Arabian home (*domus intactae te tremit Arabiae*, 2.10.16) might also evoke an erotic context.<sup>125</sup> Propertius uses the same adjective when describing the rape of the Sabine women (*tu rapere intactas docuisti impune Sabinas*, 'you [Romulus] taught to rape Sabine virgins without punishment', 2.6.21) and Corydon's pursuit of Alexis (*felix intactum Corydon qui temptat Alexin / ... carpere*, 'lucky is Corydon who tries to pluck virgin Alexis'). In these contexts, the adjective must mean 'virgin' (q.v. *O.L.D.*, 3c). When we are told, too, that a far off land will feel Augustus' hands (*sentiat illa tuas postmodo capta manus*, 2.10.18) we might, perhaps, envisage an amatory setting, for Propertius employs a similar expression when announcing his violent passion for Cynthia (*quod si pertendens animo uestita cubaris, / scissa ueste meas experire manus*, 'but if you persist in going to bed clothed, you will feel my hands when I have torn your dress', 2.15.17-18).<sup>126</sup>

If we accept, then, that Propertius' narration of Augustus' (future) military successes incorporates many examples of the erotic language that he elsewhere employs in amatory contexts, then we can take his protestations of self-doubt (2.10.5-6) and inadequacy (2.10.21-26) as genuine. Propertius is simply writing in the only way he knows and is, therefore, speaking the truth when he claims that his poetry is steeped only in the (River Permessus') waters of elegy (2.10.26). Elegiac diction is all he knows as this is the limit of his experience.

I would like to consider one more question before we move on. If Propertius is unable to treat the deeds and future military successes of Augustus in a suitably reverential fashion and he wishes to

<sup>124</sup> Bowditch (2003), p.169, offers 2.14 as an example of this motif and, less convincingly, 1.1 and 1.9.3-4. For the neck in erotic contexts in Propertius, see: 1.13.15 (Gallus is in love with his whole neck bound fast); 4.3.26, 4.5.39, 4.8.65 (teeth marks upon a lover's neck); 4.7.18 (landing on the neck of lover when escaping from a window).

<sup>125</sup> As Bowditch (2003), p.170, suggests – although he supplies no evidence. He suggests also that Arabia trembling (*tremet*) before Augustus further sexualises the image.

<sup>126</sup> See Bowditch (2003), pp.169-70. Further examples of 2.10's erotic language are offered by Bowditch. For example, he considers *deficient uires* ('lacking strength', 2.10.5), *sumere uires* ('to take strength', 2.10.11) and *surge* ('rise', 2.10.11) as puns on getting, or failing to get, an erection (pp.172-73). Propertius, thus, he claims, 'fails to "get it up"' for Augustus (p.166).

write anti-love elegy, anything other than erotic verse, why does he choose to incorporate this material into 2.10? The answer, I argue, lies in the first elegy of Propertius' second book.

When asked why he writes only love elegy, Propertius responds that he could write of the exploits of Augustus, but he is not minded to do so:

quaeritis, unde mihi totiens scribantur amores,  
unde meus ueniat mollis in ora liber.  
non haec Calliope, non haec mihi cantat Apollo:  
ingenium nobis ipsa puella facit. (2.1.1-4)

quod mihi si tantum, Maecenas, fata dedissent,  
ut possem heroas ducere in arma manus ... (2.1.17-18)

bellaque resque tui memorarem Caesaris ... (2.1.25)

nec mea conueniunt duro praecordia uersu  
Caesaris in Phrygios condere nomen auos. (2.1.41-42)

You ask where it comes from, the love poetry written so often by me,  
Where it comes from, the book going softly upon the mouth.  
Not these things Calliope, not these things Apollo sings to me:  
My girl, herself, makes my talent.

But if only, Maecenas, the fates had granted to me  
that I might lead bands of heroes into arms ...

I would tell of the wars and deeds of your Caesar ...

[But] my heart is not willing in hard verse  
To found Caesar's name upon Phrygian ancestors.

If he were not forced by love/Love to write erotic elegy, to write about Cynthia, he would write of the deeds and wars of Augustus. Here, of course, Propertius assumes the opposite stance to that which he declares in 2.10. In 2.1, he could write about Augustus, but he does not wish to; Cynthia will remain his only inspiration (*huic misero fatum dura puella fuit*, 'a harsh girlfriend was the fate for this wretched man', 2.1.78). He wants to continue to explore his infatuation with Cynthia. In 2.10, however, there is a reversal of this situation; he has had enough of Cynthia and writing about her and he expresses, it seems, genuine desire to sing of Augustus' exploits (*iam libet et fortis memorare*

*ad proelia turmas / et Romana mei dicere castra ducis*, 2.10.3-4; *quando scripta puella mea est*, 2.10.8). It is as if Propertius is saying, 'Alright, alright, I will write about Augustus then; anything, as long as it not about her!'. This constitutes a neat reversal of his earlier position and completes in tidy fashion a collection of poems (2.1-2.10).<sup>127</sup> It is for reasons of closure, I suggest, that Propertius includes material on the deeds and wars of Augustus.

This approach – that 2.10 reflects a sincere but failed attempt at rejecting Cynthia and amatory elegy – also helps understand the poet's self exhortation when preparing to tackle his new poetic endeavour:

surge, anima, ex humili iam carmine; sumite uires,  
Pierides; magni nunc erit oris opus. (2.10.11-12)

Rise, my breath, from song now humble; take strength,  
Pierides; now there will be a need for a big voice.

As we have briefly noted, this couplet is much disputed in terms of text and punctuation. Some editors place semi-colons after *humili* and *uires*, emend *anima* to *anime* and reject the better attested *carmine* in favour of *carmina* (*surge, anime, ex humili; iam, carmina, sumite uires; / Pierides, magni nunc erit oris opus*, 'rise, my spirit, from what is humble; now, songs, take strength; Pierides, now there will be a need for a big voice').<sup>128</sup> But what is important from our perspective is that the manuscripts have *anima*; and this is the reading that we should accept. Although *anima* can be synonymous with *animus* ('soul/spirit'; q.v. *O.L.D.*, 5-8) – so, I cannot see why those who prefer the sense 'soul/spirit' emend *anima* for *anime* – here, the more usual meaning 'breath' (q.v. *O.L.D.*, 1-2) seems more appropriate. For if we accept *anime*, or interpret *anima* as 'spirit', then there is the suggestion that Propertius is reluctant to attempt more serious poetry; his heart is not in it. If, however, we accept *anima*, then not only does this fit better with the need for a big voice (2.10.12) –

<sup>127</sup> Such a collection, with the addition of 2.11, which constitutes something of a postscript to 2.10, can be used to argue for division of book two after 2.11, as Lyne (1998), p.22, suggests. For 2.11 as a separate elegy, see Butrica (1996), p.117. For detailed discussion of the division of Propertius' second book, see Heyworth (1992), pp.45-59; Butrica (1996), pp.115-58; Lyne (1998), pp.21-36; Murgia, C. E. (2000), 'The Division of Propertius 2', *MD*, 45, pp.147-242.

<sup>128</sup> Other punctuational options are possible.

a big voice, of course, requires lots of breath – it also fits well with the image of a willing but ill-equipped poet. It is not enthusiasm or willingness for the task at hand that is lacking; Propertius is simply concerned that his voice – his poetry – will not have the required force.

Some critics consider that Propertius undermines his promise to produce a more serious style of poetry when, apparently, he defers the task to the latter stages of life (*aetas prima canat Veneres, extrema tumultus*, ‘let the first age sing of Venus, the last of discord’, 2.10.7).<sup>129</sup> But if Propertius was at least attempting to preserve some semblance of sincerity at this stage in a poem that many interpret as a promise to sing of the deeds of Augustus, then surely the strategy to consign the task to old age is far too obvious; Propertius, of course, is not near the end of his life. Most critics, therefore, claim that *aetas ... extrema* must refer to the time of life following the *aetas prima* – a more mature age, or just the rest of his life.<sup>130</sup> Propertius is not serious, they claim; he simply ‘sacrifices accuracy to antithesis’, or ‘the antithesis has run away with [him]’.<sup>131</sup> This seems a sensible position and support for such a stance can be found not far away. When Propertius contemplates death in the face of Cynthia’s constant infidelity, he wonders if he will die while still young (*sic igitur prima moriere aetate, Properti?*, ‘so, Propertius, will you die like this in your first youth?’, 2.8.17). This question is posed during the period of great turmoil and distress (2.8, 2.9) that immediately precedes his contemplation in 2.10 of breaking with Cynthia and erotic elegy. If he was in his *prima aetas* before he decided to end the affair with Cynthia and compose in a new and more serious style, then having left her and amatory poetry behind, it seems entirely appropriate that he should describe his new situation as another phase in his life; and this may, indeed, be all that is meant by *aetas extrema*.

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<sup>129</sup> See Stahl (1985), p.156, and Mader (2003), pp.124-25, who suggest that this is part of a wider ‘subversive temporal structure’.

<sup>130</sup> See, for example, Butler and Barber (1933), p.208, n.7-8; Camps (1967), p.109, n.7; Fedeli (2005), pp.317-19, n.7-8.

<sup>131</sup> Butler (1905), p.191, n.7; Postgate (1884), p.119, n.7.

But this still does not really explain *extrema*. We stated earlier that Propertius was not near the end of his life. Well, perhaps he is, or at least thinks he is. For, as we noted previously, 2.8 and 2.9 find Propertius contemplating death. In 2.8, he seems to be preparing for suicide:

exagitet nostros manes, sectetur et umbras  
insultetque rogis, calcet et ossa mea!  
quid? non Antigoniae tumulo Boeotius Haemon  
corrui ipse suo saucius ense latus? (2.8.19-22)

Let her harass my ghost, and pursue my shade  
And let her dance on my pyre, and trample on my bones!  
What? On Antigone's tomb did not Boeotian Haemon  
Himself come to grief, his side wounded by his own sword?

In 2.9, once more bemoaning Cynthia's infidelity, he pleads for death:

nunc, quoniam ista tibi placuit sententia, cedam:  
tela, precor, pueri, promite acuta magis,  
figite certantes atque hanc mihi soluite uitam!  
sanguis erit uobis maxima palma meus. (2.9.37-40)<sup>132</sup>

Now, since you [Cynthia] are happy with your decision, I give up:  
I pray, boys, bring out sharper arrows,  
Compete to shoot me and take away this life of mine!  
My blood will be your greatest prize.

Now, if Propertius considers himself near the end – as he clearly does in 2.8 and 2.9 – and 2.10 is a desperate last attempt to free himself from Cynthia and write on a different topic, then he might well think of himself as in the *aetas extrema* in a real sense. He might very well imagine himself on death's door. This seems to be the best explanation for the apparently hyperbolic statement in 2.10. So, whether we consider that Propertius simply exaggerates when he consigns writing of *tumultus* to the *aetas extrema*, or whether we think that he is accurately reflecting his state of mind at the time, the statement need not be seen to undermine his sincerity when he proposes to compose in a more serious style.

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<sup>132</sup> Note that Heyworth (2007a), p.50, and (2007b), p.151, n.37-40, considers these lines to belong elsewhere, perhaps in 2.8. He places them as a fragment at the end of 2.9 in his text.

Our hypothesis, then, that 2.10 is a genuine but failed attempt at rejecting Cynthia and erotic elegy, rather than an insincere proposal to sing the praises of Augustus in a more serious poetic style, and that our analysis must include examination of the surrounding elegies in order to put 2.10 into context, produces a more convincing and comprehensive reading, helps to address some of the problematic aspects of the text and its interpretation and advances further our understanding of the poetics of the final couplet. And while I do not wish to deny the manifold allusiveness of Mount Helicon's Ascræan Springs, we should remember that for Propertius, as we have seen, it is not what sort of poetry the Ascræan Springs represent that it is most important, but rather what they do not.

### An Un-Callimachean Scene

I would like to finish by examining the programmatic landscape of 2.10 in relation to the Callimachean aesthetic, for, as I explained in the introduction to this thesis, I think that it is possible to chart Propertius' poetic development from the almost exclusively erotic material of his first book through to his transformation into the *Romanus Callimachus* (4.1.64) of his fourth book and the aetiological poetry that we find there by examining his poetic landscapes and comparing them to Callimachus' own carefully crafted programmatic landscaping.<sup>133</sup>

Callimachus is a champion of refined, highly polished poetry and dislikes long works on a single continuous theme (*Aet.* 1, fr. 1.1-20). His poetry does not thunder in grand style (μηδ' ἄπ' ἐμεῦ διφᾶ]τε μέγα ψοφέουσιν αἰοιδὴν τίκτεσθαι / βροντᾶ]ν οὐκ ἐμόν, [ἀλλὰ] Διός, 'do not expect big sounding song from me; it is not my job to thunder, but Zeus', *Aet.* 1, fr. 1.19-20). In a metaphor for poetic composition, Apollo tells him, 'poet, feed a victim as fat as possible, but keep a slender Muse' (ἀοιδέ, τὸ μὲν θύος ὅττι πάχιστον / θρέψαι, τῇ]ν Μοῦσαν δ' ὦγαθὲ λεπταλέην, *Aet.* 1, fr. 1.23-24), and in another metaphor:

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<sup>133</sup> For a comprehensive analysis of Callimachus and his poetics, see Cameron, A. (1995), *Callimachus and His Critics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press). For the influence of Callimachus on Propertius and other Roman poets, see Clausen, W. (1964), 'Callimachus and Latin Poetry', *GRBS*, 5, pp.181-96; Hunter (2006); Wimmel, W. (1960), *Kallimachos in Rom. Die Nachfolge seines apologetischen Dichtens in der Augusteerzeit* (Hermes Einzelschriften, 16; Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner), pp.1-12.

... τὰ μὴ πατέουσιν ἄμαξαι  
τὰ στείβε]ιν, ἐτέρων δ' ἵχνια μὴ καθ' ὁμά  
δίφρον ἐλ]ῆν μηδ' οἶμον ἀνὰ πλατύν, ἀλλὰ κελεύθους  
ἀτρίπτο]υς, εἰ καὶ στε[ι]γοτέρην ἐλάσεις. (Aet. 1, fr. 1.25-28)

... the tracks which wagons trample do not  
Walk on; on the common tracks of others do not  
Drive your chariot, nor on a broad road, but on ways  
Unworn, even if you drive a narrower road.

Callimachus tells us that he 'hates the cyclic poem, and does not enjoy the road which carries many here and there' (ἐχθαίρω τὸ ποίημα τὸ κυκλικόν, οὐδὲ κελεύθω / χαίρω τίς πολλοὺς ὧδε καὶ ὧδε φέρει, *Epigr.* 28.1-2), that he 'drinks not from the [public] well' (οὐδ' ἀπὸ κρήνης / πίνω, *Epigr.* 28.3-4),<sup>134</sup> and that he 'loathes all things common' (σικχαίνω πάντα τὰ δημόσια, *Epigr.* 28.4). In the Hymn to Apollo, Callimachus has Apollo rebuke Envy in an argument about poetry:

Ἀσσυρίου ποταμοῖο μέγας ῥόος, ἀλλὰ τὰ πολλὰ  
λύματα γῆς καὶ πολλὸν ἐφ' ὕδατι συρφετὸν ἐλκει.  
Δηοῖ δ' οὐκ ἀπὸ παντὸς ὕδωρ φορέουσι μέλισσαι,  
ἀλλ' ἥτις καθαρὴ τε καὶ ἀχράαντος ἀνέρπει  
πίδακος ἐξ ἱερῆς ὀλίγη λιβὰς ἄκρον ἄωτον. (Ap. 108-12)

The stream of the Assyrian River is great, but much  
Filth of earth and much rubbish it pushes along on its water.  
The Melissae do not of any water carry to Deo,  
But of a little stream which springs up clear and pure  
From a sacred font, the very best of waters.

So, poetry according to the Callimachus should be refined, slender, free from excess and exclusive; poetry for an appreciative elite, not for the common herd. It is typified by the pure, clear spring, in contrast to the muddy waters of the cyclical epic and other overly ponderous, ill-refined poetic compositions. It is not concerned with a particular metre – Callimachus composed in a variety of metres – nor, necessarily, with any particular genre; it is the style of composition that is all important - although, as we noted in the introduction, Propertius manipulates and misrepresents

<sup>134</sup> For κρήνης (*Epigr.* 28.3) as 'public well', here, see Gow and Page (1965b), p.156, who note that Callimachus means 'the source at which others drink'.



Callimachus' statements and presents him as a champion of love elegy and the antithesis of epic verse.

Callimachean influence is evident in the opening elegy of Propertius' second book and, indeed, it is in this elegy that Propertius first mentions Callimachus by name, employing as he does a Callimachean metaphor for poetic composition.<sup>135</sup> When declining on this occasion to sing of the achievements of Augustus, Propertius invokes Callimachus as an exemplar in order to justify his refusal:

sed neque Phlegraeos Iouis Enceladique tumultus  
intonet angusto pectore Callimachus,  
nec mea conueniunt duro praecordia uersu  
Caesaris in Phrygios condere nomen auos. (2.1.39-42)

But not the Phlegraeian uprisings of Jove and Enceladus  
Does Callimachus thunder in his narrow breast,  
Nor is my heart willing in hard verse  
To found Caesar's name upon Phrygian ancestors.

Propertius, here, evokes Callimachus' maxim that it is not a refined poet's job to thunder; that job should be left to Zeus (*Aet.* 1, fr. 1.19-20).

The final elegy of book two finds Callimachus, again, presented as poetic model. In an elegy that champions the worth of amatory poetry, Propertius advises Lynceus that in order to win a girl's heart he should compose in a Callimachean style:

quid tua Socraticis tibi nunc sapientia libris  
proderit, aut rerum dicere posse uias?  
aut quid Erecthei tibi prosunt carmina lecta?  
nil iuuat in magno uester amore senex.  
tu satius memorem Musis imitere Philitan

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<sup>135</sup> Debrohun (2003), pp.5-6, claims that the end of 2.1 is particularly Callimachean. King, J. K. (1980), 'Propertius 2.1-12: His Callimachean Second Libellus', *WJA*, 6, pp.61-84, notes various aspects of Callimachean influence in book two. I do not mean to suggest that book one is devoid of Callimachean influence – far from it – but merely that it is in the second book that Callimachus is named as a guiding influence and begins to assume a more prominent role as a poetic exemplar.

et non inflati somnia Callimachi.

(2.34.27-32)<sup>136</sup>

Your wisdom from Socratic books is to you now of what  
Use, or your ability to speak of the ways of things?  
Or what use poems from the couch of Erectheus?  
Your old man is no help in a great love.  
You had better imitate with your Muses unforgetting Philetas  
And the dreams of not inflated Callimachus.

Here, in a reference to its dream scene(s), the *Aetia* is presented as an example of Callimachus' refined and restrained style; Callimachus is not a composer of overblown poetry. Propertius' second book, then, begins and ends with poems that invoke Callimachus as an ideal model for Propertius' style of poetic composition.

In 2.10, also, we can find Callimachean imagery and motifs. When preparing to sing of the military exploits of Augustus, Propertius declares the need for a big voice (*magni nunc erit oris opus*, 2.10.12) to sing of big matters (*in magnis*, 2.10.6). We can contrast this image with Callimachus' assertion that a poet of his preferred style should not thunder on about things – that is, there is no need for a big voice – and that a refined, restrained style is best – not a great big work on military conquest. When Propertius plans to sing of *tumultus* (2.10.7), we might recall that this is precisely the type of material that Propertius said Callimachus would not intone in book two's opening elegy (*neque ... tumultus / intonet angusto pectore Callimachus*, 2.1.39-40).<sup>137</sup> And when Propertius commences to sing of the (future) military successes of Augustus (2.10.13) and begins with an image of the Euphrates, we might remember that this is the same Assyrian river that Callimachus employs as a symbol of overblown, common, unrefined poetry, with its waters full of dirt and rubbish (Ἀσσυρίου

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<sup>136</sup> The text is corrupt. Heyworth (2007a), p.97, attempts to remedy the situation with *aut quid Cretaei tibi prosunt carmina plectri?* (2.34.29) and *potius* for *satius* (2.34.31). For discussion, see Fedeli (2005), pp.964-70, n.25-30, n.31-32, and Heyworth (2007b), pp.268-69, n.27-30, n.31-32.

<sup>137</sup> Butrica (1996), p.116, notes that Propertius writes in 2.10 (for a while at least) the sort of poetry proposed in 2.1.17-38 that he later rejects.

ποταμοῖο μέγας ῥόος, ἀλλὰ τὰ πολλὰ / λύματα γῆς καὶ πολλὸν ἐφ' ὕδατι συρφετὸν ἔλκει, *Ap.* 108-09).<sup>138</sup>

So, Propertius invokes Callimachus by name as an ideal model for poetic composition in the style that he hopes to imitate in the programmatic elegies that begin and end his second book and 2.10, the subject of our analysis, contains allusion to the works of Callimachus and employs Callimachean motifs.<sup>139</sup> The type of poetry that Propertius proposes to write in 2.10 – a panegyric of Augustus in a more serious style – is presented as the antithesis of the Callimachean style; it requires a great big voice, is to treat great big matters, is concerned with *tumultus* and is associated with the mud and filth of a great big river.

Now, we know that Propertius associates this type of poetry – in 2.10 it is poetry on the military deeds of Augustus – with the Ascræan Springs in the final couplet of 2.10 and we know, too, that he connects his hitherto amatory poetry – the poetry that he suggests he is ready to leave behind in 2.10 – with the River Permessus. How does this poetic landscape compare to the Callimachean aesthetic? Given that Propertius invokes Callimachus as an ideal model for his usual style of erotic elegy, we might expect in a programmatic (aquatic) landscape of Propertius' creation, onto which he maps his own amatory poetry, written in self-confessed Callimachean manner, that he would connect his own style with the typically pure, clean, exclusive spring-water of Callimachean inspiration. We might expect, too, that the military themed panegyric he proposes and briefly attempts in 2.10, which he presents as the antithesis of Callimachean style, would be associated with a typically big, flowing river. But, in fact, Propertius gives us the opposite. His erotic elegy is associated with the lowland River Permessus, while he situates the proposed panegyric on the military achievements of Augustus at the pure, clean, exclusive waters of the Ascræan Springs. While the River Permessus is no mere common, dirty river and is associated with poetic composition

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<sup>138</sup> The Assyrian river, here, is accepted generally to be the Euphrates – see, for example, Jones (2005), p.74, n.11.

<sup>139</sup> Newman, J. K. (1997), *Augustan Propertius: The Recapitulation of a Genre* (Spudasmata; Zurich: Georg Olms), pp.182-83, offers, also, 2.13 and 2.33 as examples of Callimachean imagery in book two.

and the Heliconian Muses – we noted earlier that Hesiod has the Muses bathe in the River Permessus before making their way to the summit of Mount Helicon to perform their dances (*Th.* 1-8) – we cannot escape the hierarchy that Propertius constructs in his Heliconian landscape.<sup>140</sup> His refined and restrained erotic elegiacs languish in the lowly River Permessus, while the great big, windy panegyric sits on the exclusive heights of Mount Helicon alongside the Hippocrene. Clearly, there is a contradiction here.<sup>141</sup> Now, while we must be careful not to simply retroject his status as the *Callimachus Romanus* from book four onto earlier elegies, Propertius does in book two invoke specifically Callimachus as an ideal poetic model and our elegy, 2.10, displays strong Callimachean influence; so, I think we must conclude from an examination of his programmatic landscaping on this occasion that Propertius, despite citing Callimachus as a guiding influence, is not yet the Roman Callimachus that he later claims to be.<sup>142</sup>

## Conclusion

In conclusion, then, we have seen from detailed examination of the allusive nature of the programmatic landscape of 2.10's final couplet, that despite the identification of a number of possible and varying probable poetic models ranging from Hesiod to Virgil, it is Virgil's poetic development and in particular his evolution from the bucolic poetry of the *Eclogues* to the didactic verses of the *Georgics* that seems to best fit Propertius' proposed transition from erotic elegy to a more serious style of poetry. Yet, we noted, also, that this conclusion is somewhat unsatisfactory, because although Virgil's poetic progression, in itself, seems an apposite model, alignment of the *Eclogues* with the poetry that Propertius has hitherto produced and the *Georgics* with the kind of poetry that he proposes to produce in 2.10 is less convincing. We are still unable from this approach to say with any real accuracy what particular style of poetry the Ascrean Springs represent.

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<sup>140</sup> Richardson (1977), p.244, n.25-26, notes that the lower River Permessus is easier of access.

<sup>141</sup> And thus I cannot agree with Jones (1995), p.55, when he states that river analogies in both poetry and prose have a consistent relationship to genre.

<sup>142</sup> Butrica (1996), pp.101-07, cautions against seeing everything as Callimachean and the retrojection of the title *Callimachus Romanus*. Hubbard (1974), pp.68-81, explores the increasing Callimacheanism of Propertius. Propertius, I think, later figures landscapes as fully realised symbols of Callimachean poetics – but not yet.

Accordingly, we determined the need for a wider assessment of 2.10 within the context of the surrounding elegies, paying particular attention to the fictional construct of the poet's relationship with Cynthia. I proposed that 2.10 was, indeed, a *recusatio*, but one that is better understood as a (failed attempt at the) rejection of Cynthia and poetry written about her, rather than a disingenuous proposal to sing the praises of Augustus. Through this approach, we produced a more convincing and comprehensive reading, we addressed some of the more problematic aspects of the text and its interpretation, and we determined that for Propertius the symbolic significance of the Ascrean Springs lies not in the style of poetry they represent, but in the style they do not. Propertius wants to abandon Cynthia and the erotic elegy he has so far produced, and which the River Permessus in 2.10 symbolises, in favour of some higher, non-erotic, more serious style, as represented by the Ascrean Springs. So, while the poetic landscape at the end of 2.10 alludes to a number of potential poetic models, we can only say with surety that Propertius' amatory elegy, at this time, is securely located at the River Permessus, and that the type of poetry that he hopes to write in the future, and imagines situated at the Ascrean Springs, is anti-amatory elegy.<sup>143</sup>

We then completed our examination of the programmatic landscape of 2.10 by comparing Propertius' picture of the poetic hierarchy of Mount Helicon's waters with Callimachus' own poetic landscapes. We concluded that, although Propertius cites Callimachus as a poetic model in the programmatic elegies that begin and end his second book and despite 2.10 displaying obvious Callimachean influence, Propertius contradicts the Callimachean aesthetic with his depiction of Mount Helicon's poetic landscape.

Although it is easy to become lost in allusion when one considers the complex allusiveness of 2.10's poetic topography, careful examination of the elegy's poetic reality within the context of the

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<sup>143</sup> I disagree with Tatum (2000), pp.394-95, that '2.10 itself eludes fixed installation in Helicon's geography' and that this elusiveness 'constitutes a commentary on the resistance to generic stability and definition that is generally regarded as an essential quality of the *recusatio*'. I also cannot agree with Tatum (p.407) that Propertius in 2.10 points out the impossibility of locating *recusationes* in generic terms. Such conclusions are the product of interpreting 2.10 as a rejection of Augustan panegyric, rather than an attempted rejection of Cynthia and erotic elegy. When viewed from this latter perspective, 2.10 is, indeed, located at the River Permessus, because here, as we have seen, lies the limit of the poet's experience.

surrounding poems and recognition of the influence of Callimachus and the Callimachean aesthetic at this stage in Propertius' poetic development produce a better and more complete understanding of Propertius depiction of Mount Helicon's programmatic landscape.

# Upwardly Mobile: Elevating the Status of Elegy in Propertius 3.1 and 3.3

## Introduction

The first poem of Propertius' third book of elegies finds the poet invoking the spirits of the famed Hellenistic writers Callimachus and Philetas and asking them a series of programmatic questions concerned with poetry and poetic inspiration posed in metaphorical terms by way of reference to landscape features familiar as poetic symbols:

Callimachi Manes et Coi sacra Philitae,  
in uestrum, quaeso, me sinite ire nemus.  
primus ego ingredior puro de fonte sacerdos  
Itala per Graios orgia ferre choros.  
dicite, quo pariter carmen tenuastis in antro?  
quoue pede ingressi? quamue bibistis aquam? (3.1.1-6)

Shades of Callimachus and sacrifices of Coan Philetas,  
Into your grove, I pray, allow me to come.  
First I enter from a pure spring as a priest  
To bring Italian mysteries in Greek rhythms.  
Tell me, in what grotto did you both refine your song?  
With what foot did you enter? What water did you drink?<sup>1</sup>

The invocation of the long-dead poets, Callimachus and Philetas (3.1.1), the mention of poetic song (*carmen*, 3.1.5) and the (thinly disguised) reference to metrical feet (*pede*, 3.1.6) make it clear that this passage is concerned with poetic composition and inspiration, while the style of poetry and the nature of the inspiration is indicated metaphorically, rather less clearly, by the particular topographical features – features which we shall examine later more closely – of the scene: the grove (*nemus*, 3.1.2); the pure spring (*puro ... fonte*, 3.1.3); the cave (*antro*, 3.1.5); and the water (*aquam*, 3.1.6).

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<sup>1</sup> Lines 3.1.3-4, here, are difficult. The translation offered maintains the order of Propertius' Latin as much as possible. These lines and their interpretation are discussed later in greater detail.

In the third elegy of his third book, we find the poet dreaming that he is atop Mount Helicon, alongside the Hippocrene, apparently endowed with the power to tackle historical themes in a fashion after Ennius:

uisus eram molli recubans Heliconis in umbra,  
Bellerophontei qua fluit umor equi,  
reges, Alba, tuos et regum facta tuorum,  
tantum operis, neruis hiscere posse meis;  
paruaque tam magnis admoram fontibus ora  
unde pater sitiens Ennius ante bibit ... (3.3.1-6)

I had dreamed that I was reclining in Helicon's soft shade,  
Where the water of Bellerophon's horse flows,  
And that your kings and your kings' deeds, Alba,  
I was able to mouth – such a task – with my powers;  
And I had just put my puny lips to the great spring,  
Whence thirsty father Ennius once drank ...

Almost immediately, however, he is rebuked by Apollo for his lofty ambitions:

cum me Castalia speculans ex arbore Phoebus  
sic ait aurata nixus ad antra lyra:  
'quid tibi cum tali, demens, est flumine? quis te  
carminis heroi tangere iussit opus?' (3.3.13-16)

When looking at me from the Castalian tree Phoebus  
Spoke thus leaning on his golden lyre near a cave:  
'What right have you, madman, to such a stream? Who  
Ordered you to touch the task of heroic poetry?'<sup>2</sup>

Here, too, we find a poet concerned with programmatic considerations reflecting on questions of poetic inspiration and genre – Propertius, having imbibed of the inspiration of the great springs (*paruaque tam magnis admoram fontibus ora*, 3.3.5) from which he imagines Ennius, himself, once drank (*unde pater sitiens Ennius ante bibit*, 3.3.6), is, almost miraculously, able to (dream that he can) write what appears to be historical epic (*reges, Alba, tuos et regum facta tuorum, / tantum operis, neruis hiscere posse meis*, 3.3.3-4) – and, again, these considerations are mapped onto a

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<sup>2</sup> 'What right have you', after Richardson, L. (1977), *Propertius: Elegies I-IV* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press), p.327, n.15.



scene staged in a poetic landscape, this time clearly located alongside the Hippocrene (*Bellerophonteï ... umor*, 3.3.2) atop Mount Helicon (3.3.1), the most famous poetic spring in the most renowned of all poetic locations. Apollo's rebuke also relies on the poetic symbolism of the scene's water, as the stream which he deems unsuitable for Propertius' style of poetry (*quid tibi cum tali, demens, est flumine?*, 3.3.15) clearly functions as a metaphor for epic poetry, for 'heroic verse' (*quis te / carminis heroi tangere iussit opus?*, 3.3.16).

Following his admonition, Apollo directs Propertius towards a new, more suitable setting for his style of poetry:

dixerat, et plectro sedem mihi monstrat eburno  
quo noua muscoso semita facta solo est. (3.3.25-26)<sup>3</sup>

He had spoken, and with ivory plectrum he pointed out to me a place  
Where a fresh path had been made in the mossy ground.

There, in an impressively decorated grotto (*hic erat affixis uiridis spelunca lapillis*, 'here was a verdant grotto embellished with mosaics', 3.3.27), a grotto, as we shall see, replete with poetic symbols – such as, for example, Venus' birds (*Veneris ... uolucres*, 3.3.31) and a Gorgonean pool (*Gorgoneo ... lacu*, 3.3.32) – Propertius is met by Calliope – or so he thinks (*ut reor a facie, Calliopea fuit*, 'as I imagine from her face, it was Calliope', 3.3.38) – who instructs him to stick with his usual erotic style (*quippe coronatos alienum ad limen amantes / nocturnaeque canes ebria signa fugae*, 'for of garlanded lovers at another's threshold and drunken signs of nocturnal escapades, you will sing', 3.3.47-48), before formalising the arrangement by anointing him with water sacred to Philetas (*talìa Calliope, lymphisque a fonte petitis / ora Philetea nostra rigauit aqua*, 'such things Calliope spoke, and with liquid drawn from the spring she wet my lips with water of Philetas', 3.3.51-52). This final act reinforces the poetic nature of the grotto and its water, as the poet's lips are moistened by a Muse with water taken from a spring devoted to the poet Philetas.

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<sup>3</sup> The fact that a new path (*noua ... semita*, 3.3.26) is a well-know Callimachean motif further enhances the poetic and programmatic nature of the landscape – this point is discussed later.

There can be no mistake, too, that it is the nature of Propertius' own poetry and poetic inspiration that the reader is invited to consider in these elegies. This is made clear by the first person announcements (*quaeso*, 3.1.2; *ingredior*, 3.1.3; *uisus eram*, 3.3.1; *admoram*, 3.3.5), pronouns (*me sinite ire*, 3.1.2; *me Fama leuat*, 'Fame lifts me', 3.1.9; *mecum ... vectantur Amores*, 'Loves ride with me', 3.1.11; *quid ... in me certatis*, 'why do you strive against me', 3.1.13; *mihi monstrat*, 'he pointed out to me', 3.3.25) and possessive adjectives (*pagina nostra*, 'my page', 3.1.18; *non faciet capiti dura corona meo*, 'a hard garland will not suit my head', 3.1.20; *mea turba*, 'my crowd', 3.3.31).<sup>4</sup> Indeed, in 3.3, Calliope addresses Propertius by name (*Properti*, 3.3.17).

Propertius, in the beginning of his third book, again expresses his generic concerns and programmatic aims and ambitions through programmatic landscapes. The first and third elegies depict poetic landscapes somewhere on Mount Helicon – the mountain is so named in 3.3 (*uisus eram molli recubans Heliconis in umbra*, 3.3.1) and by one of its aliases (*mons Sororum*) in 3.1 (*opus hoc de monte Sororum / detulit intacta pagina nostra uia*, 'this work from the Sisters' mountain my page has brought down by an untouched path, 3.1.17-18).<sup>5</sup> Just like 2.10, as we saw in the previous chapter, both 3.1 and 3.3 offer the reader unmistakably poetic and programmatic landscapes, with Propertius, himself, cast in the role of lead character. The landscapes, here, though, and 3.3 in particular, are more developed in programmatic terms than those we find in book two. Moreover, they afford an opportunity for us to assess Propertius' poetic development in the time since the publication of his second book.

The elegies beginning book three have been subjected to a range of analyses. Interaction with, and allusion to, the 'Roman poems' introducing Horace's third book of odes has attracted the attention

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<sup>4</sup> These are but some examples.

<sup>5</sup> That the *mons Sororum* is Mount Helicon is universally accepted – see, for example, Fedeli, P. (1985), *Il Libro Terzo delle Elegie* (Bari: Adriatica Editrice), p.67, n.17; Richardson (1977), p.320, n.17 – 'in P[roper]tius the mount of the Muses is always Helicon'; Viarre, S. (2005), *Properce. Élégies* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres), p.200, n.461.

of some scholars.<sup>6</sup> Whether Propertius can or should be seen as a Hellenistic poet in the Alexandrian tradition and the extent to which the opening of book three signals a transition to a more learned Alexandrian style of elegy have informed a range of critical responses, particularly in relation to 3.1 and 3.3 where the renowned Alexandrian poets, Callimachus and Philetas, are named or suggested.<sup>7</sup> An oracular and religious tone has been detected and explored in relation to the first elegy of book three.<sup>8</sup> Fame and the posthumous immortality of the poet have been identified as overarching themes in the opening poems.<sup>9</sup>

My analysis interacts with much of this scholarship and addresses many of these themes, but develops especially the notion that Propertius is a keen seeker of fame and immortality as we find him at the beginning of book three. I argue, however, that Propertius is not only concerned with fame and his posthumous reputation as such, but also in raising the status of elegy and, thus, the

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<sup>6</sup> For Propertius' interaction with Horace's *Odes* 3.1-6 (and book three of the *Odes* more generally), see Nethercut, W. R. (1970), 'The Ironic Priest', *AJP*, 91 (4), pp.385-407 (who also discusses allusions to Virgil in Propertius 3.1-5), and Keith A. M. (2008), *Propertius: Poet of Love and Leisure*, ed. D. Taylor (Classical Literature and Society; London: Duckworth), pp.56-63.

<sup>7</sup> For Propertius' Hellenism and, more specifically, his Callimacheanism in book three, see Hubbard, M. (1974), *Propertius* (London: Duckworth), pp.68-115, especially, pp.71-83; Butrica, J. L. (1996), 'The *Amores* of Propertius: Unity and Structure in Books 2-4', *JCS*, 21, pp.131-45; Keith (2008), pp.77-83. For the Callimachean elements in the beginning of book three and in 3.1 and 3.3 in particular, see Arkins, B. (2005), *An Interpretation of the Poetry of Propertius (c. 50-15 B.C.)* (Studies in Classics, 30; Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press), pp.26-30. For Propertius' Hellenism more generally, see Lonie, I. M. (1959), 'Propertius and the Alexandrians', *AUMLA*, 11, pp.22-34, and Hollis, A. S. (2006), 'Propertius and Hellenistic Poetry', in H.-C. Günther (ed.), *Brill's Companion to Propertius* (Leiden: Brill), pp.97-125. For Philetas, see Spanoudakis, K. (2002), *Philetas of Cos* (Leiden: Brill). For Philetas and his influence on Roman poetry, see Knox, P. E. (1993), 'Philetas and Roman Poetry', in F. Cairns and M. Heath (eds.), *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar* (7; Leeds: Francis Cairns), pp.61-83, and Hollis, A. S. (1996), 'Heroic Honours for Philetas?', *ZPE*, 110, pp.56-62. For the transition to a more learned style of elegy after the fashion of Callimachus and Philetas, see Hubbard (1974), p.71; D'Anna, G. (1986), 'L'evoluzione della poetica properziana', in G. Catanzaro and F. Santucci (eds.), *Bimillenario della morte di Propertio. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi properziani*. (Assisi: Accademia properziana del Subasio), pp.64-66; Butrica (1996), pp.131-32. For Callimachus and his influence upon Roman poetry in a general sense, see Hunter, R. L. (2006), *The Shadow of Callimachus: Studies in the Reception of Hellenistic Poetry at Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), and Wimmel, W. (1960), *Kallimachos in Rom. Die Nachfolge seines apologetischen Dichtens in der Augusteerzeit* (Hermes Einzelschriften, 16; Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner).

<sup>8</sup> For the oracular and/or religious tone of the beginning of 3.1, see Luck, G. (1957), 'The Cave and the Source: On the Imagery of Propertius 3.1.1-6', *CQ*, 7 (3/4), pp.175-79. For such themes in 3.1 and, more generally, in the first five elegies of book three, see Harmon, D. P. (1979), 'The Poet's Initiation and Sacerdotal Imagery of Propertius 3.1-5', in C. Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History I* (Collection Latomus; Brussels: Latomus), pp.317-34.

<sup>9</sup> For the pursuit of fame and immortality in the beginning of book three, see Lonie (1959), pp.17-22; Baker, R. J. (1968), 'Propertius III 1, 1-6 Again. Intimations of Immortality?', *Mnemosyne*, 21, pp.35-39; Nethercut, W. R. (1975), 'Propertius III 1, 1-6 Again', *Mnemosyne*, 28, pp.73-75.

elegist to at least a par with other poetic genres. Propertius, I claim, prosecutes a case at the start of his third book for the elevation of elegy in order to dispel the misconception, as he sees it (and, indeed, perpetuates in 2.10) that elegy is an inferior, a lowlier genre than others. He is particularly concerned to counter the claim that epic poetry deserves pride of place as the preeminent generic style (in Propertian Rome). Propertius, here at the start of book three, sets out to reassess his previous hierarchical evaluation of poetic genre in 2.10, where he left elegiac poetry languishing at the base of Mount Helicon, unable to reach the lofty heights of the summit. I shall examine the elegies and programmatic landscapes depicted at the start of book three and argue that they chart the elevation of (love) elegy's status and the development of Propertius' poetic aims and ambitions at this point in his poetic evolution.

I begin my analysis by examining the claim that the beginning of book three and the programmatic landscapes presented therein suggest that Propertius proposes some new form or style of poetic composition for the book.<sup>10</sup> I argue that, although there is a suggestion of a change of poetic style, Propertius offers in book three a collection of poems that display development rather than departure from the elegies of the previous book. I argue further that the beginning of book three, then, does not find Propertius seriously considering a change of poetic style, but rather reinforcing his commitment to erotic love elegy. I then consider the claim that Propertius is preoccupied with the pursuit of (posthumous) fame and argue that the landscapes of 3.1 and, in particular, 3.3 reveal

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<sup>10</sup> Luck (1957), p.177, claims that Propertius is 'hesitating between epic and elegy' – that is, he is contemplating a change of poetic style (and perhaps even metre) – and thus asks the ghosts of Callimachus and Philetas for advice. Hubbard (1974), p.71, speaks of 'an investigative air' to the poetry of book three and claims in relation to the poems therein that 'their content ... was profoundly modified, and so was their style'. Ross, D. O. (1975), *Backgrounds to Augustan Poetry: Gallus, Elegy and Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp.125-29, states that, although Propertius' poetic programme remains largely unchanged, book three sees a change of content as he begins to abandon love-elegy and turn to the Augustan themes of book four. Della Corte, F. (1986), 'Properzio, l'elegiaco della trasgressione', in G. Catanzaro and F. Santucci (ed.), *Bimillenario della morte di Propertio. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi properziani* (Assisi: Accademia properziana del Subasio), p.27, claims that the start of book three announces that Propertius will retain erotic elements in the book, while preparing the way for the aetiological poetry of book four. According to Butrica (1996), pp.131-32, Propertius in 3.1 seeks advice on how to become a Callimachean poet as he now hopes to alter his style to imitate 'formally' the poetry of Callimachus and Philetas. D'Anna (1986), pp.64-66, claims that the beginning of book three marks a significant change for Propertius and closer alignment with Callimachus' poetry. Camps, W. A. (1966), *Propertius: Elegies Book III* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.53, n.3-4, claims that *ingredior* (3.1.3) suggests a poet commencing 'a new enterprise'.

that the elevation of the status of elegy is the driving theme at the beginning of book three.<sup>11</sup> Next, I examine Propertius' poetic evolution through a comparative analysis of the programmatic landscapes of 2.10 – addressed in detail in the previous chapter – and 3.3, thereby revealing a re-evaluation of the status and standing of love elegy on Propertius' behalf and, consequently, a more self-confident poet. Finally, I argue that in 3.3 Propertius offers a programmatic landscape that presents his poetry and poetics as closer to Callimachean ideals in accordance with his growing Callimacheanism and continuing transformation that will eventually see him becoming the Roman Callimachus as he styles himself at the start of book four (4.1.64).

### A New Style?

Propertius at the beginning of book three seems unsure of his artistic direction, asking the ghosts of Callimachus and Philetas for guidance, it seems, in an apparently new poetic endeavour (*dicite, quo pariter carmen tenuastis in antro? / quoue pede ingressi? quamue bibistis aquam?*, 3.1.5-6). Understood in this way, the questions asked of Callimachus and Philetas may be interpreted paraphrastically as such: How did you master your craft? What provided you with inspiration? What was your subject matter, your style and metre? Following this line of reasoning, Callimachus and Philetas appear to represent an alternative or, perhaps, a better style of elegy than that which Propertius has so far managed. The third elegy of the book, as we know, finds Propertius dreaming of writing a different style of (epic) poetry and taking on historical themes in the style of Ennius (*uisus eram ... / reges, Alba, tuos et regum facta tuorum, / tantum operis, neruis hiscere posse meis*, 3.3.1, 3-4). The beginnings of these two programmatic elegies appear, accordingly, to suggest a new focus for Propertius' elegiac poetry. What further encouragement can be found for this suggestion? Do we get a different style of poetry in book three from that which we find in book two?

I shall begin by examining the evidence for the view that Propertius is planning to alter his style of elegy. The fact that book three begins with 'Callimachus' (*Callimachi*, 3.1.1) and that the first line is

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<sup>11</sup> Both Baker (1968), pp.35-39, and Nethercut (1975), pp.73-75, argue that 3.1 reveals a poet concerned with fame and posthumous immortality.

framed by the name of Callimachus and his (near) contemporary, Philetas (*Callimachi Manes et Coi sacra Philitae*, 3.1.1), recalls the very beginning of Propertius' first book where we find 'Cynthia' as the first word (*Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis*, 'Cynthia first captured wretched me with her eyes', 1.1.1). If 'Cynthia' is programmatically significant, as it clearly is – Cynthia (and Propertius' love for her and all the associated trials and tribulations) is the central theme of the first book – then it might be assumed, reasonably, that 'Callimachus' (and 'Philetas')<sup>12</sup> is similarly programmatic and thus implies a change of poetic style from what has preceded, a change, perhaps, to a more learned Hellenistic style of poetry made famous by Callimachus and Philetas. The questions posed in 3.1 might in this way seem to enquire how Propertius can become a poet in the style of his Hellenistic predecessors.<sup>13</sup>

Propertius finds inspiration and receives guidance, too, at the beginning of book three from Apollo and Calliope. In 3.1, he dismisses martial poetry with reference to Apollo (as the god of poetic inspiration) (*a ualeat, Phoebum quicumque moratur in armis!*, 'ah, farewell, whoever detains Phoebus in arms!', 3.1.7), before concluding the poem, after a series of Callimachean allusions (*exactus tenui pumice uersus eat*, 'let my verse go finished with fine pumice', 3.1.8; *non datur ad Musas currere lata uia*, 'a broad path is not given to run to the Muses', 3.1.14; *opus hoc de monte Sororum / detulit intacta pagina nostra uia*, 3.1.17-18, for example),<sup>14</sup> by again invoking Apollo – who in 3.1 is 'Lycian' (*Lycio ... deo*, 3.1.38), just as he is in Callimachus' *Aetia* (Ἀ[πό]λλων ... Λύκιος,

<sup>12</sup> The extent of Philetas' influence on Propertius' poetry is difficult to determine because of the loss of almost all of his work. Clearly, he was an important model. With the exception of 4.1.62, where Propertius claims to be the 'Roman Callimachus', Callimachus is mentioned by name only once without Philetas (2.1.40). They are mentioned together in all other instances (2.34.31-32; 3.1.1; 3.9.43-44; 4.6.3-4 – assuming that Beroaldus' conjectured *Coe poeta* (3.9.44) – a geographical epithet for Philetas – restores the correct sense to the clearly corrupt *dure poeta* of the manuscripts). Philetas is mentioned alone at 3.3.52, but in the context of Propertius' Callimachean inspired dream. Cynthia's fondness for fine Coan fabric (1.2.2; 2.1.5-6; 4.5.57) recalls Philetas' epithet and is quite probably an allusion to Philetas' fine style. Cynthia and, thus, Propertius' elegy is dressed in Philetan finery – see Heyworth, S. J. (2007b), *Cynthia: A Companion to the Text of Propertius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp.12, n.2, 105-06, n.5-8; Heyworth, S. J. (1986), 'Notes on Propertius, Books III and IV', *CQ*, 36 (1), pp.209-10; Mitchell, R. N. (1985), 'Propertius on Poetry and Poets: Tradition and the Individual Erotic Talent', *Ramus*, 14 (1), pp.55-56.

<sup>13</sup> Butrica (1996), p.131, claims that Propertius is not yet a Callimachean poet and, thus, wishes to become one. The questions that begin 3.1, according to Butrica, make no sense if interpreted otherwise.

<sup>14</sup> For the allusions to Callimachus, here, see, for example, Camps (1966), pp.51-58. The allusions are discussed later.

Aet. 1, fr. 1.23) – this time, however, as a happy recipient of the poet’s request for posthumous (poetic) immortality:

ne mea contempto lapis indicet ossa sepulcro  
prouisum est Lycio uota probante deo. (3.1.37-38)<sup>15</sup>

That in no neglected grave will a tombstone mark my bones  
Has been assured with the Lycian god approving my prayers.

In 3.2, Propertius, again, claims Apollo (*nobis ... Apolline dextro*, ‘with Apollo showing favour to me’, 3.2.9) and Calliope (*et defessa choris Calliope meis*, ‘and Calliope has grown tired [thanks] to my dances’, 3.2.16)<sup>16</sup> as benevolent guiding influences and inspirations for his poetry.

In 3.3, as we have seen, Apollo warns Propertius against epic poetry (*quis te / carminis heroï tangere iussit opus?*, 3.3.15-16) and directs him (suffering from delusions of grandeur as he imagines himself an epic poet in the style of Ennius) to a place more befitting of his style of poetry (*plectro sedem mihi monstrat eburno / quo noua muscoso semita facta solo est*, 3.3.25-26); and within this hitherto unnoticed poetic grotto, Calliope advises Propertius to continue with his erotic elegy (*amantes / ... canes*, 3.3.47-48) and anoints him with water from a font sacred to Philetas (*talìa Calliope, lymphisque a fonte petitis / ora Philetea nostra rigauit aqua*, 3.3.51-52).

At the beginning of his second book, however, Propertius states unambiguously that he receives no poetic guidance or inspiration from either Apollo or Calliope and that it is his girlfriend alone who inspires his poetic talent:

quaeritis, unde mihi totiens scribantur amores,  
unde meus ueniat mollis in ora liber.  
non haec Calliope, non haec mihi cantat Apollo:  
ingenium nobis ipsa puella facit. (2.1.1-4)

<sup>15</sup> That Apollo is ‘Lycian’ is another reference to Callimachus (Aet. 1, fr. 1.22), as Hunter (2006), pp.7-8, notes.

<sup>16</sup> Most editors accept Baehrens’ *nec* in preference to the transmitted *et* (*nec defessa choris Calliope meis*, ‘Calliope is unwearied by my dances’, 3.12.16), but as Heyworth (2007b), pp.288-89, n.15-16, notes, the line as transmitted can be read non-pejoratively (as context dictates it must be); Calliope is happily tired from much dancing to Propertius’ poetic song. I have used Heyworth’s (2007b), p.566, translation here – the brackets are mine – to convey this positive sense.

You ask where it comes from, the love poetry written so often by me,  
 Where it comes from, the book going softly upon the mouth.  
 Not these things Calliope, not these things Apollo sings to me:  
 My girl, herself, makes my talent.

The fact that Propertius denies inspiration from Apollo and Calliope here in 2.1 only to claim inspiration and guidance from the very same sources at the start of his next book invites the reader to expect a change of poetics; a new source of inspiration suggests a different style of poetry, and given the invocation of Callimachus and Philetas in these opening elegies the suggested style appears to be a more overtly artistic type of elegy fashioned after his predecessors.<sup>17</sup> Strengthening this suggestion is the fact that in 3.3 Apollo appears as a guiding influence to the poet and directs him along a new, unseen (poetic) path in a scene strongly reminiscent of Callimachus' *Aetia* prologue (Aet. 1, fr. 1.21-28) where Apollo makes a similar appearance and warns Callimachus to avoid well-travelled paths:

... τὰ μὴ πατέουσιν ἄμαξαι  
 τὰ στείβε]ιν, ἑτέρων δ' ἵχνια μὴ καθ' ὁμά  
 δίφρον ἐλ]ῃ μὴδ' οἴμον ἀνὰ πλατύν, ἀλλὰ κελεύθους  
 ἀτρίπτο]υς, εἰ καὶ στε]ι]γοτέρην ἐλάσεις. (Aet. 1, fr. 1.25-28)<sup>18</sup>

... the tracks which wagons trample do not  
 Walk on; on the common tracks of others do not  
 Drive your chariot, nor on a broad road, but on ways  
 Unworn, even if you drive a narrower road.

Indeed, 3.3 is modelled on Callimachus' own dream scene on Mount Helicon at the Hippocrene where Callimachus, too, later followed by Propertius (*diuersaeque nouem sortitae iura Puellae / exercent teneras in sua dona manus*, 'and a mix of girls allotted nine realms, busy tender hands on their own gifts', 3.3.33-34), encountered the muses (as a scholiast tells us: ὥς κ]ατ' ὄναρ σ(υμ)μείξας

<sup>17</sup> Ross (1975), p.121, states that the dismissal of Calliope and Apollo as inspirations in 2.1 only to find them in 3.3 named as guiding influences constitutes 'a rather remarkable *volte face*'.

<sup>18</sup> For textual concerns in this passage, see Pfeiffer, Rudolf (1949b), *Callimachus*, 2 vols. (2; Oxford: Clarendon Press), pp.5-6.



ταῖς Μούσ[αις ἐν Ἑλικῶνι, ‘when during a dream he met the Muses on Mount Helicon’, *Schol. Flor. ad Aet. 1, fr. 2*).<sup>19</sup>

Encouragement for the view that Propertius is proposing a change of poetic style can be found at the start of 3.1 when he asks for permission to enter the grove of Callimachus and Philetas (*Callimachi Manes et Coi sacra Philitae, / in uestrum, quaeso, me sinite ire nemus*, 3.1.1-2). Propertius, clearly, is outside the grove at this point and the request to enter a new grove inhabited by the ghosts of Callimachus and Philetas, a grove that is dedicated to their poetic talents, can be seen as suggestive of a change of poetics and indicate that Propertius hopes to compose in a new style. Different groves, as we see in 3.3, symbolise different types of poetry.

Propertius’ presentation of himself as a poet-priest (*primus ego ingredior ... sacerdos*, 3.1.3) at the beginning of his book suggests a new direction, too, for it recalls the beginning of Horaces’ third book of odes where Horace, too, assumes the same role and promises to sing a new style of song:

... carmina non prius  
audita Musarum sacerdos  
virginibus puerisque canto. (Carm. 3.1.2-4)

... songs not previously  
Heard as a priest of the Muses  
I sing to girls and boys.

Further suggestion of a new poetic phase can be found also in the final elegy of book two, which, as we might expect, has a strong suggestion of closure. Propertius hopes to be counted among famous Roman poets and proclaims that should this be the case Cynthia, too, will become famous:

Cynthia quin uiuet uersu laudata Properti,

<sup>19</sup> See Pfeiffer (1949b), p.11. Callimachus’ dream scene is, in turn, modelled on Hesiod’s meeting with the Muses on the summit of Mount Helicon as told in his *Theogony*. Propertius’ account borrows heavily also from Ennius’ dream – indeed there is specific mention of Ennius’ tale in 3.3 (*paruaque tam magnis admoram fontibus ora / unde pater sitiens Ennius ante bibit*, 3.3.1-6) – involving the muses atop Mount Helicon when he was visited by the soul of Homer (*Musae, quae pedibus magnum pulsatis Olympus / ... somno leni placidoque reuinctus / ... uisus Homerus adesse poeta*, ‘Muses, who strike great Olympus with your feet ... I, held fast by a gentle and peaceful sleep ... the poet Homer seemed to be present’, *Ann. 1.1-2 Sk.*). The numbering is that of Skutsch, O. (1985), *The Annals of Q. Ennius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

hos inter si me ponere Fama uolet. (2.34.93-94)<sup>20</sup>

Cynthia, too, will live praised in Propertius' verse,  
If Fame wishes to place me among these [poets].

This final couplet of the second book reads much like an epitaph for Cynthia; we might imagine it written on her tombstone. Indeed, the previous two couplets, both of which are concerned with death, encourage this interpretation. Propertius tells us that Calvus sung of the death of Quintilia and that Gallus died from his love for Lycoris:

haec etiam docti confessa est pagina Calui,  
cum caneret miserae funera Quintiliae.  
et modo formosa quam multa Lycoride Gallus  
mortuus inferna uulnera lauit aqua! (2.34.89-92)<sup>21</sup>

These [erotic themes] the page of learned Calvus confessed  
When he sang the death of wretched Quintilia.  
And lately, dead for beautiful Lycoris, how many  
Wounds did Gallus bathe in the infernal water!

When we read the names of Callimachus and Philetas in the first line of the elegy that begins book three, we are tempted (retrospectively) to view the final couplet of the previous book as a farewell to Cynthia and interpret 3.1 as a signal of a beginning not only of a new book but of a new style of poetry.

The second elegy of book three in particular encourages this view as it signals a return to Propertius' usual style of erotic poetry with the focus of his attention and choice of subject once more a girl:

carminis interea nostri redeamus in orbem,  
gaudeat in solito tacta puella sono. (3.2.1-2)

fortunata, meo si qua est celebrata libello!

<sup>20</sup> The manuscripts' *etiam* (*Cynthia quin etiam uersu laudata Properti*, 2.34.93) is rejected by most editors in favour of Barber's *uiuēt* – Barber, E. A. (1957), 'Sex coniecturae Propertianae', *Miscellanea Propertiana* (Assisi: Atti dell' Accademia Propertiana del Subasio), p.22. For discussions, see Camps, W. A. (1967), *Propertius: Elegies Book II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.234, n.93; Richardson (1977), p.317, n.93; Fedeli, P. (2005), *Propertius: Elegie Libro II* (ARCA: Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs; Cambridge: Francis Cairns), pp.1008-09, n.85-94. Butrica (1996), p.131, n.92, however, claims that Barber's *uiuēt* is 'lame'.

<sup>21</sup> The ablative *formosa ... Lycoride* (2.34.91) is difficult; some attach it to *uulnera*, others to *mortuus*. For a brief discussion, see Heyworth (2007b), pp.279-80, n.85-92.

carmina erunt formae tot monumenta tuae. (3.2.17-18)<sup>22</sup>

Meanwhile, let us return to the sphere of our song,  
Let my girl be moved and rejoice in the familiar sound.

Fortunate is the girl celebrated in my little book!  
Each poem will be a monument to your beauty.

If 3.2 is a return to his usual style of erotic love elegy, then 3.1 clearly invites the reader to consider that Propertius, there, proposes to write in a different style and, perhaps, on another subject. For Propertius to return to his accustomed poetic sphere, he must, surely, have been on a different poetic path in 3.1.<sup>23</sup>

The first three elegies of book three, then, suggest a poet proposing or at least contemplating a different style of poetry to his hitherto erotic elegy. The opening elegy begins with the invocation of the names of the famed Hellenistic poets, Callimachus and Philetas, renowned composers of learned style, Alexandrian poetry, contains a number of allusions to Callimachus' poetry (and, presumably, that of Philetas) and asks a series of questions of both poets seemingly in the interests of poetic guidance. The second poem signals a return to Propertius' usual erotic style of elegy with a girl once more the focus of the poet's attention, thereby reinforcing the view that 3.1 is suggestive of a change of poetics (while at the same time deflating expectations of change). And 3.3 finds the poet imagining that he is able to compose poetry on historical themes. Together, these elegies suggest an uncertain poet contemplating a new direction at the start of his third book.

Is Propertius proposing seriously a change of poetic style? Does book three offer poetry in a markedly different style to that which has gone before, or a more learned Hellenistic style after the

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<sup>22</sup> The better manuscripts have *est* (3.2.17), although many editors prefer *es* (an anonymous conjecture). For a brief discussion, see Heyworth (2007b), p.289, n.17-18, and Fedeli (1985), pp.101-02, n.17. The sense of the line amounts to much the same regardless of the reading; whatever girl we are to imagine – whether she is directly addressed by the poet (reading *es*) or is rather more vague and indefinite (reading *est*) – Propertius' poetry will immortalise her. Propertius hints at least, here, that more than one girl might be celebrated in his book, but Cynthia has hitherto been the object of his celebration. Heyworth (2007b), p.289, n.17-18, argues that *tuae* (3.2.18) clashes with the reading *est*. While not disagreeing with this claim, I am not compelled to reject *est* of the better manuscripts.

<sup>23</sup> Butrica (1996), p.133, claims that that 3.2.1-2 confirms Propertius' proposal for new poetry in 3.1 and that he 'gets back on track' in 3.2. Nethercut (1970), p.385, notes the contrasting moods of 3.1 and 3.2.

fashion of Callimachus and Philetas?<sup>24</sup> In book four, Propertius as the Roman Callimachus (4.1.64) offers an ostensibly aetiological collection of poems and, accordingly, it is tempting to consider the invocation of Callimachus at the start of book three – the very first word, in fact – as signalling a transition towards this style of poetry. What we find upon closer inspection, however, is that the alternative choice of poetic style proposed in the beginning of book three is not a more learned or aetiological type of elegy in the style of Callimachus and Philetas, but, in fact, epic. The antithesis is a familiar one to readers of Propertius; a choice between epic and elegy. Let us look again at 3.1.

The first elegy of book three contrasts epic and elegiac poetry with Propertius rejecting the former and reinforcing his commitment to the latter. Martial poetry is specifically dismissed (*a ualeat, Phoebum quicumque moratur in armis!*, 3.1.7), as is historical, annalistic verse (*multi, Roma, tuas laudes annalibus addent, / qui finem imperii Bactra futura canent*, ‘many, Rome, will include your praises in their *Annals*, and sing that Bactra will be the limit of the empire’, 3.1.15-16),<sup>25</sup> in favour of a more polished style of poetry (*exactus tenui pumice uersus eat*, 3.1.8). And that this more refined style is the kind of love elegy that Propertius has always written is made clear by his description of the mock triumph that follows:

quo me Fama leuat terra sublimis, et a me  
nata coronatis Musa triumphat equis,  
et mecum in curru parui uectantur Amores,  
scriptorumque meas turba secuta rotas. (3.1.9-12)

For which [polished verse] lofty Fame raises me from the earth, and from me  
The Muse born triumphs with garlanded horses,  
And with me in the chariot little Loves ride,  
And a crowd of writers follows my wheels.

Propertius, as a poetic *triumphator*, champions the worth of love elegy, represented in this instance by his and his poetry’s (*a me / nata ... Musa*, 3.1.9-10) triumphal procession and the little Cupids

<sup>24</sup> Butrica (1996), p.132, claims that Propertius for the first time desires to ‘imitate them [Callimachus and Philetas] formerly’ as an ‘aspirational imitator of Hellenistic Greek elegy’ (p.107).

<sup>25</sup> I follow Nethercut, W. R. (1961), ‘*Ille parum cauti pectoris egit opus*’, *TAPA*, 92, p.391, Lee (1994), p.163, n.15-16, and Butrica (1996), p.135, in reading *annalibus* (3.1.15) as a reference to Ennius’ *Annales*.

(*parui ... Amores*, 3.1.11) that accompany him. Epic poetry is again rejected in favour of erotic verse when he implores the Muses to crown him with the soft wreath of elegy in preference to the harsh garland of epic poetry (*mollia, Pegasides, date uestro serta poetae: / non faciet capiti dura corona meo*, 'daughters of Pegasus, give a soft wreath to your poet: a hard garland will not suit my head', 3.1.19-20).

In 3.3, too, where we noted a suggestion of a change of poetics, the alternative poetic style proposed is epic. This is made clear not only by Propertius' drinking from the same poetic fount as Ennius (*paruaque tam magnis admoram fontibus ora / unde pater sitiens Ennius ante bibit*, 3.3.1-6), but by the material he imagines himself writing (*reges, Alba, tuos et regum facta tuorum*, 3.3.3) and the Ennian subject matter that follows.<sup>26</sup>

et cecinit Curios fratres et Horatia pila,  
 regiaque Aemilia uecta tropaea rate,  
 uicticisque moras Fabii pugnamque sinistram  
 Cannensem et uersos ad pia uota deos,  
 Hannibalemque Lares Romana sede fugantis,  
 anseris et tutum uoce fuisse louem. (3.3.7-12)<sup>27</sup>

And he [Ennius] sang of Curian brothers and Horatian javelins,  
 And Aemilian trophies carried on the royal boat,  
 And the delays of victorious Fabius and the ill-omened fight  
 Of Cannae and gods turned toward pious offerings,  
 And the Lares driving Hannibal from their Roman home,  
 And Jove saved by the voice of the goose.

<sup>26</sup> For Propertius' summary of Ennius' writings and problems of correspondence and coincidence in this passage, see Camps (1966), pp.64-65, n.7-12; Richardson (1977), pp.325-26, n.7-12; Heyworth (1986), pp.200-02.

<sup>27</sup> Note that Butrica (1996), pp.136-37, reads *cecini* (found in the inferior manuscripts) in preference to *cecinit* (3.3.7), thus making Propertius, not Ennius, the singer of the lines that follow. Butrica, J. L. (1983b), 'Propertius 3.3.7-12 and Ennius', *CQ*, 33 (2), pp.464-68, seeking a solution to chronological inconsistencies in the passage, as he sees them, reads *cecini* and concludes that Propertius is the author of these subjects and is proposing to bring Ennius up to date. Fedeli (1985), pp.123-25, n.7, outlines the arguments for both *cecinit* and *cecini*. Cairns, F. (2002), 'Propertius the Historian (3.3.1-12)?', in D. S. Levene and D. P. Nelis (eds.), *Clio and the Poets: Augustan Poetry and the Traditions of Augustan Historiography* (Mnemosyne Suppl., 224; Leiden: Brill), pp.26-35, defends the chronology of events attributed to Ennius' writings as presented by Propertius, and (pp.35-44) gives a spirited defence of *cecinit*. Our point remains, however, regardless of the reading; the subject matter is Ennian, whether it be a paraphrase of Ennius' own writing, or whether Propertius is proposing (as Butrica suggests) to update Ennius' writing.

Moreover, Apollo confirms that Propertius is, indeed, contemplating (in his dream, at least) composing epic poetry, when he rebukes him for attempting ‘heroic verse’ (*quis te / carminis heroï tangere iussit opus?*, 3.3.16).

Yet, Apollo then directs Propertius to another setting atop Mount Helicon that is more suitable for the type of poetry he should, according to Apollo’s reckoning, write. And when he arrives at this new location, he is greeted by Calliope who dismisses epic themes as unsuitable material for Propertius’ verse:

‘contentus niueis semper uectabere cynis,  
nec te fortis equi ducet ad arma sonus.  
nil tibi sit rauco praeconia classica cornu  
flare, nec Aonium tingere Marte nemus;  
aut quibus in campis Mariano proelia signo  
stent et Teutonicas Roma refringat opes,  
barbarus aut Suebo perfusus sanguine Rhenus  
saucia maerenti corpora uectet aqua.’ (3.3.39-46)<sup>28</sup>

‘Always you will be content to ride with snow-white swans,  
And the sound of the warhorse will not lead you to arms.  
Let the martial summons on a noisy trumpet be not yours  
To blow, nor to stain the Aonian grove with Mars;  
Or on what fields with Marius’ standards battles  
Are staged and Rome breaks Teutonic power,  
Or the barbarous Rhine awash with Suebian blood  
Conveying wounded bodies upon its grieving water.’<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Editors adopt Fruter’s *flare* in place of the transmitted *flere* (3.3.42). Some editors read *cingere* found in some manuscripts in preference to *tingere* – see, for example, Paley, F. A. (1872), *Sex. Aurelii Propertii Carmina* (London: Bell and Daldy), p.149, n.41. Note that Giardina, G. (2005), *Properzio. Elegie* (Rome: Edizioni dell’Ateneo), p.242, adopts his own *tangere*. For a brief discussion of both issues, see Fedeli (1985), pp.148-49, n.42.

<sup>29</sup> I take, after Camps (1966), p.67, n.40, *fortis equi* (3.3.40) to mean ‘warhorse’ – see also Richardson (1977), p.329, n.40, and Fedeli (1985), p.146, n.40. As Frost, C. P. (1991), ‘Propertius 3.3.45-46: Don’t Go near the Water’, *AJP*, 112 (2), p.252, notes, the subjects that Calliope tells Propertius not to address in his poetry are ‘entirely martial in character’. Frost (1991), pp.256-59, claims that 3.3.45-46 is an allusion to Virgil’s *Aeneid* (*contra autem magno maerentem corpore Nilum / pandentemque sinus et tota ueste uocantem / caeruleum in gremium latebrosaue flumina uictos*, ‘but against [Cleopatra on the shield of Aeneas, Vulcan had fashioned] the Nile, with its great body, grieving and opening his folds and with his whole dress calling the conquered into his sea-blue lap and sheltering rivers’, 8.711-13) and (p.259) that, thus, Calliope is telling Propertius that he is not another Virgil, not another epic poet.

Calliope then informs Propertius that there should be no change to the erotic style that he has so far composed:

‘quippe coronatos alienum ad limen amantis  
nocturnaeque canes ebria signa fugae,  
ut per te clausas sciat excantare puellas,  
qui uolet austeros arte ferire uiros.’ (3.3.47-50)

‘For of garlanded lovers at another’s threshold  
And drunken signs of nocturnal escapades, you will sing,  
So through you he may learn to charm out locked away girls,  
Whoever wants to artfully outwit strict men.’

So, in fact, the alternative style of poetry that Propertius seems to suggest that he may compose is not a more learned Hellenistic or even aetiological style as first intimated by the invocation of Callimachus and Philetas at the very beginning of the book, but rather martial and historical epic.

Moreover, far from signalling a change of poetics and a transition to a different style of elegy, further analysis reveals that Propertius presents Callimachus and Philetas as champions of elegy, and not just elegy in general, but Propertius’ own particular style of erotic elegy. In 3.3, as we have seen, Calliope offers Propertius water from a spring that is devoted to Philetas (*talia Calliope, lymphisque a fonte petitis / ora Philetea nostra rigauit aqua*, 3.3.51-52). Furthermore, this Philetan water with which she moistens the poet’s lips symbolises specifically erotic love elegy, for Calliope anoints Propertius with this water immediately following her instructions to the poet to continue writing the love elegy that he has so far produced. She uses the water to formalise their arrangement and provide Propertius with the necessary inspiration to continue with his erotic poetry. Equating Philetas with water that provides inspiration for love elegy suggests that for Propertius (and for Calliope who chooses the Philetan water), Philetas is a model, a champion, for the composition of this type of erotic verse (perhaps, in Philetan style).

The fact that this encounter takes place in a particularly Callimachean setting suggests that Callimachus, too, can function as a symbol or exemplar of love elegy for Propertius. The grotto in 3.3

is located along a new, little-travelled path, a path apparently unseen by Propertius before it is pointed out to him by Apollo, thereby recalling Callimachus' own encounter with Apollo in his *Aetia* (Aet. 1, fr. 1.21-28) when the god also warns the poet against well-travelled paths (as a symbol of cyclical epic poetry) and to follow instead new and unworn ways (Aet. 1, fr. 1.25-28) – Propertius' meeting with Apollo, here in 3.3, might recall, too, a lost work of Philetas where Philetas also met with the god and championed, perhaps, the composition of short, highly refined poetry.<sup>30</sup> Callimachus is again recalled by Propertius' encounter with the Muses in this grotto atop Mount Helicon (*diuersaeque nouem sortitae iura Puellae / exercent teneras in sua dona manus*, 3.3.33-34), for Callimachus, too, as we know, had in a dream his own meeting with the Muses in the same location (ὥς κατ' ὄναρ σ(υ)μείξας ταῖς Μούσ[αις ἐν Ἑλικῶνι, *Schol. Flor. ad Aet. 1, fr. 2*).

Indeed, in the final elegy of Propertius' second book, an elegy that champions the worth of erotic love elegy, both Callimachus and Philetas are presented as models for this particular style of poetry.<sup>31</sup> Propertius proclaims the power of love elegy and thus the love elegist over girls (*ut regnem mixtas inter conuiuia puellas / hoc ego, quo tibi nunc eleuor, ingenio!*, '[see] how I reign among many girls at parties because of the talent for which I am now belittled by you [Lynceus]', 2.34.57-58) when he warns Lynceus that to win the affections of the girl he desires he must abandon his usual subject matter and compose poetry in a fashion after Philetas and Callimachus:

Lynceus ipse meus seros insanit amores!  
solum te nostros laetor adire deos.  
quid tua Socraticis tibi nunc sapientia libris  
proderit, aut rerum dicere posse uias?  
aut quid Erecthei tibi prosunt carmina lecta?  
nil iuuat in magno uester amore senex.  
tu satius memorem Musis imitere Philitan

<sup>30</sup> See Bowie E. L. (1985), 'Theocritus' Seventh Idyll, Philetas and Longus', *CQ*, 35 (1), pp.83-84, who makes this claim based on a connection, as he sees it, between Propertius 3.3, Theocritus' *Idyll 7* and Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe* – the connection, however, must remain speculative.

<sup>31</sup> Perhaps, this fact lessens the expectation that the invocation of Callimachus and Philetas at the start of book three indicates a movement away from Propertius' usual erotic style.



et non inflati somnia Callimachi. (2.34.25-32)<sup>32</sup>

My Lynceus himself is driven mad by love at last!  
I am happy that you in particular approach our gods.  
Your wisdom from Socratic books is to you now of what  
Avail, or your ability to speak of the ways of things?  
Or what use poems from the couch of Erectheus?  
Your old man is no help in a great love.  
You had better imitate with your Muses unforgetting Philetas  
And the dreams of not inflated Callimachus.<sup>33</sup>

It is by imitating the poetry of Callimachus and Philetas that Lynceus will be able to compose the kind of erotic love elegy that attracts girls, the kind of poetry that Propertius, himself, writes.

In a *recusatio* addressed to Maecenas, 3.9, Propertius again champions love elegy and suggests that his hitherto erotic elegy invites comparison with Callimachus and Philetas:

inter Callimachi sat erit placuisse libellos  
et cecinisse modis, Coe poeta, tuis.  
haec urant pueros, haec urant scripta puellas,  
meque deum clament et mihi sacra ferant! (3.9.43-46)<sup>34</sup>

It will be enough to have pleased among the books of Callimachus  
And to have sung in your metres, poet of Cos.

<sup>32</sup> The text is corrupt. Heyworth, S. J. (2007a), *Sexti Properti Elegi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.97, attempts to remedy the situation with *aut quid Cretaei tibi prosunt carmina plectri* (2.34.29) and *potius for satius* (2.34.31). For discussions, see Fedeli (2005), pp.964-70, n.25-30, n.31-32, and Heyworth (2007b), pp.268-69, n.27-30, n.31-2. Many editors adopt Bergk's *serum* for the transmitted *solum* (2.34.26), although Barber, E. A. (1960), *Sexti Properti Carmina* (2nd edn.; Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.84, Camps (1966), p.224, n.26, Richardson (1977), p.90, and Lee (1994), p.69, for example, do not. Giardina (2005), p.226, adopts his own *tandem*. For discussions, see Camps, p.224, n.26; Fedeli (2005), p.965, n.25-30; Heyworth (2007b), p.268, n.25-26.

<sup>33</sup> I have borrowed Lee's (1994), p.25, 'at last' for *seros* (2.34.25).

<sup>34</sup> The invocation of Philetas in this passage is dependent upon *Coe poeta* (3.9.44) (see text below), Beroaldus' conjecture for the manuscripts' almost certainly corrupt *dure poeta*, which surely cannot be right given that the *poeta* in question must be a writer of elegiacs, as Propertius is comparing his own elegiac couplets to those of this poet, and that a *durus poeta* is a writer of epic or hexametric poetry. Most editors adopt this conjecture. Another conjecture, *Dore*, has been proposed (by Scriverius), but this introduces ambiguity – just exactly who is the 'Dorian poet'? Is it Philetas or Callimachus? And *Dorus* is an unattested form, presumably of *Dorius*, and is, thus, doubtful – as Housman, A. E. (1972), *The Classical Papers of A. E. Housman*, eds. J. Diggle and F. R. D Goodyear, 3 vols. (2; London: Cambridge University Press), p.635, puts it: '*Dore* is not Latin for Dorian, nor Greek either; and "O Dorian poet" can no more mean Philetas than "O Scotch poet" means Alexander Smith'. Richardson (1977), p.353, n.44, suggests *diue* and a reference to Callimachus rather than Philetas. Given the frequency of their mention together, it seems that some form of reference to Philetas is required. Giardina (2005), p.266, adopts his own suggestion, *culte Philita*. For discussions, see Butler, H. E. and Barber, E. A. (1933), *The Elegies of Propertius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), p.286, n.44, and Fedeli (1985), pp.325-26, n.43-44.

May these writings inflame boys and inflame girls,  
And may they proclaim me a god and bring me sacred offerings.

Here, too, then, Propertius suggests that the erotic love elegy that he has so far composed compares favourably and sits comfortably with the poetry of Callimachus and Philetas.

So, the opening elegies of book three, it seems, do not signal a transition to a new more learned style of Hellenistic elegy in the style of Callimachus and Philetas, for, in fact, Propertius considers that he is already a poet working in the Hellenistic tradition of his Alexandrian predecessors. The beginning of book three does not find the poet seriously considering a change of poetic style, but rather reinforcing his commitment to erotic love elegy. Propertius' continued development as poet is evident in book three, with its increasing sophistication and incorporation of overtly literary concerns and poetry that is noticeably less personal and subjective in nature, but it is a book still very much in the Propertian style – a style typified in the first three books and particularly in books two and three by highly varied poetry and subject matter connected in varying degrees with and by erotic themes. Indeed, the vast majority of poems are concerned to some extent with love and/or love poetry and its machinations and implications; an indication that Propertius considers his poetry at this stage a development of, rather than a departure from, what has gone before.<sup>35</sup> In fact, only

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<sup>35</sup> In 3.1 and 3.3, as we know, Propertius champions the composition of erotic elegy and dismisses epic as a suitable genre for his talents. The second elegy advertises the power of love and love elegy (*quin etiam, Polypheme, fera Galatea sub Aetna / ad tua rorantis carmina flexit equos: / miremur, nobis et Baccho et Apolline dextro, / turba puellarum si mea uerba colit?*, 'indeed, Polyphemus, Galatea, too, beneath wild Etna turned her spray-scattering horses towards your songs: why wonder, with Bacchus and Apollo showing me favour, if a crowd of girls worships my words?', 3.2.7-10). In 3.1, we find the lover's familiar aversion to war and paradoxical engagement in *militia amoris* (*pacis Amor deus est, pacem ueneramur amantes: stant mihi cum domina proelia dura mea*, 'Love is the god of peace, we lovers venerate peace: harsh battles occur between me and my mistress', 3.5.1-2). In 3.6, Propertius solicits Lygdamus, a slave, for information about Cynthia (*dic mihi de nostra, quae sentis, uera puella*, 'tell me what you feel is true about my girl(friend)', 3.6.1) – note that some editors adopt Butrica's *sensti* for the transmitted *sentis* – Butrica, J. L. (1983a), 'Propertius III vi', *EMC*, 2, p.19, n.5. Goold, G. P. (1992), 'Paralipomena Propertiana', *HSCP*, 94, pp.305-06, outlines the case in support of Butrica's emendation, while Camps (1996), p.79, n.1, argues (before Butrica proposed his emendation) for an interpretation of *sentis* that produces a similar sense to Butrica's *sensti*. In 3.8, Propertius recalls fondly Cynthia's violent affections (*dulchis ad hesternas fuerat mihi rixa lucernes, / ... nimirum ueri dantur mihi signa caloris*, 'sweet for me was our fight by yesterday's lamplight ... without doubt, signs of true passion are given to me', 3.8.1, 9). Propertius addresses Maecenas in 3.9 and reaffirms his commitment to love elegy (*haec urant pueros, haec urant scripta puellas*, 3.9.45). In 3.10, Propertius offers a birthday poem to his girlfriend (*natalis nostrae signum misere puellae*, 'they [the Muses] sent me a sign that it was my girlfriend's birthday, 3.10.3) and proposes a night of lovemaking as a fitting celebration (*annua soluamus thalamo*

four of the twenty-five elegies are at least ostensibly unconcerned with typical erotic themes or the composition of love elegy.<sup>36</sup>

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*sollemnia nostro, natalisque tui sic peragamus iter*, 'let us perform the annual ceremony in our bedroom, and thus complete the journey of your birthday 3.10.31-32). In 3.11, Propertius, employing the typical elegiac trope of *seruitium amoris*, declares his subservience to his mistress (*quid mirare meum si uersat femina uitam / et trahit addictum sub sua iura uirum?*, 'why do you wonder that a woman controls my life and drags her man captive beneath her laws?', 3.11.1-2) and offer precedents for such subservience (3.11.9-26) culminating in the example of Antony and Cleopatra and their defeat at the hands of Augustus at Actium (3.11.29-72). In 3.12, Propertius reproaches a certain Postumus for leaving his love, Galla, behind while away on military duties (*Postume, plorantem potuisti linquere Gallam, / miles et Augusti fortia signa sequi?*, 'Postumus, how could you leave Galla weeping, and as a soldier follow the brave standards of Augustus?', 3.12.1-2) and champions love in the face of greed (*si fas est, omnes partier pereatis auari, / et quisquis fido praetulit arma toro*, 'if it be right, may all of you greedy men perish together, and whoever prefers arms to a faithful bed', 3.12.5-6). In 3.13, Propertius bemoans the greed of girlfriends (*quaeritis unde audis nox sit pretiosa puellis*, 'you ask why a night is so expensive and girls so greedy', 3.13.1), before pursuing a more general complaint about the moral disintegration of contemporary Roman society (3.13.3-66). In 3.14, he marvels at Spartan girls who exercise naked among the men (*quod non infamis exercet corpore ludos / inter luctantis nuda puella uiros*, '[I marvel] that without reproach a naked girl practices physical games amid wrestling men', 3.14.3-4) and admires the sexual and moral freedom of Spartan society (3.14.21-24). In 3.15, Propertius apparently denies (to Cynthia?) rumours about his first love, Lycinna (3.15.1-8) and declares his faithfulness in the face of such rumours (*cuncta tuus sepeliuit amor, nec femina post te / ulla dedit collo dulcia uincla meo*, 'your love has buried everything, nor after you has any woman placed sweet chains about my neck', 3.15.9-10). A midnight summons from his mistress is the subject of 3.16 (*nox media, et dominae mihi uenit epistula nostrae: / Tibure me missa iussit adesse mora*, 'midnight, and a letter has come for me from my mistress: she orders me to be at Tibur without delay', 3.16.1-2). In 3.17, we find Propertius tormented by a sober night alone (*semper enim uacuos nox sobria torquet amantis*, 'for always does a sober night torment lonely lovers', 3.17.11). Propertius proclaims the lusts of women greater than men in 3.19 (*obicitur totiens a te mihi nostra libido: / crede mihi, uobis imperat ista magis*, 'so often by you our lust is laid as a charge against me: believe me, it controls you women more', 3.19.1-2). The pursuit of love is the subject of 3.20 (*fidus ero: in nostros curre, puella, toros!*, 'I shall be faithful: rush, girl, to my bed!', 3.20.10). In 3.21, we find Propertius proposing to travel abroad to escape his deteriorating love affair with Cynthia (*unum erit auxilium: mutatis Cynthia terris / quantum oculis, animo tam procul ibit amor*, 'there will be only one remedy: with countries changed, Cynthia will go from my eyes as far as love from my mind', 3.21.9-10). In 3.13, Propertius laments the loss of his writing tablets (*ergo tam doctae nobis periire tabellae*, 'my writing tablets so learned are lost then', 3.23.1-2) that had served him so faithfully as messengers of love (*mihi semper mansere fideles, / semper et effectus promeruerunt bonos*, 'they always remained faithful to me, and always earned good results', 3.23.9-10).

<sup>36</sup> Some erotic elements can be found even in these poems. In 3.4, a farewell to Caesar Augustus who is planning, apparently, a war with Parthia (*arma deus Caesar dices meditatur ad Indos, / ... assuescent Latio Partha tropaea Ioui*, 'Caesar the god plans war against rich India ... Parthian trophies will grow accustomed to Latium Jove', 3.4.1, 6), the invocation of Venus, the goddess of erotic love, as a kind of patron deity of Augustus undercuts the serious tone and adds a touch of elegiac humour (*tuam serua prolem, Venus*, 'Venus, save your offspring', 3.4.19), as does the description of the vantage point from which Propertius imagines himself watching Augustus' triumphant return (*inque sinu carae nixus spectare puellae / incipiam et titulis oppida capta legam!*, 'and leaning on the breast of my dear girl I shall begin to watch and read off the captured towns from the titles!', 3.4.15-16). A eulogy for Paetus, lost at sea in the pursuit of his fortune, is the subject of 3.7, yet Propertius ends the poem with his commitment to his mistress, symbolised by his inhabitation of her *limen* and aversion to toil and adventure of the mercantile kind (*at tu, saeue Aquilo, numquam mea uela uidebis: / ante fores dominae condar oportet iners*, 'but you, cruel North Wind, will never see my sails: before the doors of my mistress may I, ever unadventurous, be laid down', 3.7.71-72). In 3.18, we find a lament for M. Claudius Marcellus (*occidit, et misero steterat uicesimus annus*, 'he is dead, and for the poor boy his twentieth year stopped short', 3.18.15), the son of Augustus' sister, Octavia, and husband of his daughter, Julia. An ode to Rome and Italy in 3.22 finds Propertius declaring his love for Tullus and imploring his friend to return to his

Moreover, Propertius clearly thinks that in book three he has been writing erotic, Cynthia-based poetry, for the final two elegies of the book are farewells to Cynthia and mark the end, it seems, of the affair.<sup>37</sup> Cynthia, Propertius declares in 3.24, is not the beauty he has made her out to be (*falsa est ista tuae, mulier, fiducia formae, / olim oculis nimium facta superba meis*, ‘false, woman, is that faith in your beauty; you have long since been made overly arrogant by my eyes’, 3.24.1-2),<sup>38</sup> and he signals the end of his love and return to his senses with a sailing (and a medical) metaphor:

ecce coronatae portum tetigere carinae,  
 traiectae Syrtes, ancora iacta mihi est.  
 nunc demum uasto fessi resipiscimus aestu,  
 uulneraque ad sanum nunc coiere mea. (3.24.15-18)

Look, my garlanded ship has reached harbour,  
 The Syrtes have been passed and I have dropped anchor.  
 Now tired of the endless surge, I am coming to my senses,  
 And my wounds have knitted and healed.

The final elegy is a bitter send-off with a farewell to Cynthia’s *limen*, the scene of Propertius’ *paraclausithyra*, and a wish for Cynthia’s beauty to desert her:

limina iam nostris ualeant lacrimantia uerbis,  
 nec tamen irata ianua fracta manu.  
 at te celatis aetas grauis urgeat annis,  
 et ueniat formae ruga sinistra tuae! (3.25.9-12)

Farewell now, threshold, weeping at my words,  
 And door not broken by my hand despite its anger.  
 But may old age oppress you heavy with the years concealed,

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homeland (*haec tibi, Tulle, parens, haec est pulcherrima sedes, / hic tibi pro digna gente petendus honos*, ‘this [land] is your mother, Tullus, this your most beautiful home, here you should seek honour befitting your worthy family’, 3.22.39-40). Camps (1966), p.1, claims that of the elegies in book three ‘all but two (the *epicedia* vii and xviii) are in fact related somehow or other to the love-theme’.

<sup>37</sup> Most manuscripts unite these final two elegies. For discussions, see Richardson (1977), pp.409-10, 412; Fedeli (1985), pp.672-74; Heyworth (2007b), p.412, n.xxiv 19-xxv 2. I favour (slightly) Richardson’s argument and agree that separation causes the final elegy (3.25) to have more impact.

<sup>38</sup> Heyworth (2007a), p.144, reads Schrader’s conjecture, *elegis* (3.24.2), in place of the transmitted *oculis*; as does Giardina (2005), p.320. Heyworth (2007b), p.409, n.1-2, outlines the case for *elegis*, while admitting that *oculis* may well be correct.

And may an ugly wrinkle come upon your beauty!<sup>39</sup>

Given the continuation of erotic themes and the compositional style and arrangement of the elegies, book three constitutes a development of, rather than a departure from, the poetics of book two. Propertius, in book three, demonstrates his growing skill and range as a poet rather than any real change of style.<sup>40</sup>

How, then, are we able to account for 3.2 and Propertius' announcement therein that it is time to return to the familiar poetry of his usual style (*carminis interea nostri redeamus in orbem, / gaudeat in solito tacta puella sono*, 3.2.1-2)? We noted earlier that these lines provide encouragement for the view that Propertius is proposing a change of poetic style in the first elegy of book three. While a departure in 3.1 from his usual form of poetry is suggested by *redeamus* ('let us return', 3.2.1), in general terms, we can take *redeamus* and Propertius' statement more broadly to mean, simply, that it is time to stop talking of poetry and poetic composition and generic and programmatic concerns and get back to the business of writing of his love for his girlfriend and his love of writing of his love for her.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> The phrase *celatis ... annis* (3.25.11) is a little opaque. For discussions, see Camps (1966), p.170, n.11; Richardson (1977), p.412, n.11; Fedeli (1985), p.692, n.31-32 – Fedeli's numbering reflects his treatment of 3.24 and 3.25 as one long poem he considers to be 3.24, the final elegy of the book.

<sup>40</sup> Lonie (1959), p.19, notes that there is 'no real evidence that in III, 1 Propertius is moving towards a new kind of poetry, or looking forward to the aetiological poetry of Book IV'. Nethercut (1975), pp.74-75, noting continuity of theme(s) and style in Propertius' first three books and in books two and three in particular claims that 'book III ... develop[s] easily out of book II' (p.74). Newman, J. K. (2006), 'The Third Book: Defining a Poetic Self', in H.-C. Günther (ed.), *Brill's Companion to Propertius* (Leiden: Brill), p.322, claims that book three 'does not ... signal any fundamental alteration in Propertius' literary stance'. Heyworth, S. J. (2010), 'An Elegist's Career: from Cynthia to Cornelia', in P. Hardie and H. Moore (eds.), *Classical Literary Careers and their Reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp.95-96, argues that the 'love elegist's voice dominates' books two and three.

<sup>41</sup> Heyworth (2007b), p.285, claims that 'III i is concerned with his [Propertius'] theoretical position and literary history; ii with his personal success as the singer of Cynthia'. Another approach to 3.1 and 3.2 is to note the similarity of their theme of poetic immortality. If approached in this way, there is no need to see 3.2 as a break or departure from the previous elegy. In fact, some editors, such as Lachmann, K. (1816), *Sex. Aurelii Propertii Carmina* (Leipzig: Gerhard Fleischer), pp.230-35, treat these elegies as a single poem – note that Lachmann considers this single elegy the first in Propertius' fourth book (of five). But seeing these elegies as a single poem does not do away with the issues raised by *redeamus* and *interea*. Others attach 3.2.1-2 to the end of the previous poem and make them lines 39-40 of that elegy – see for example, Paley (1872), p.145. Again, however, this does not resolve the noted difficulties. For a discussion, see Heyworth (2007b), pp.285-86.

In addition to *redeamus*, a break from what has gone before in the previous elegy is suggested also by *interea* ('meanwhile', 3.2.1), as it implies that 3.2 is something of a temporary detour from the main narrative thrust and poetics of the book.<sup>42</sup> But *interea* can be a connective rather than a temporal adverb and this is, I suggest, how we should take it in this instance. In this case, it indicates a movement to another subject, not necessarily a momentary divergence from the topic at hand.<sup>43</sup> When we take 3.2 in this way, it need not suggest any real change of poetic focus for our poet at the start of book three. He has announced his poetics in the programmatic opening of the book and now it is time to get on with the business of his erotic love elegy. We need not then see the beginning of book three as suggestive of a change of poetic style or focus on Propertius' behalf.

In fact, book three does not display a transition to a more Hellenistic or Alexandrian style of elegy, because Propertius invokes Callimachus and Philetas at the beginning of the book as champions of his own style of erotic love elegy and considers that he has been writing in this vein all along. Indeed, Hellenistic influences are found throughout Propertius' work beginning with the first lines in the first elegy of the first book and their echo of the Hellenistic poet, Meleager:<sup>44</sup>

τόν με Πόθοις ἄτρωτον ὑπὸ στέρνοισι Μυῖσκος  
 ὄμμασι τοξεύσας τοῦτ' ἐβόησεν ἔπος·  
 'τὸν θρασὺν εἶλον ἐγὼ· τὸ δ' ἐπ' ὀφρύσι κεῖνο φρύαγμα  
 σκηπτροφόρου σοφίας ἦνίδε ποσσὶ πατῶ.' (AP 12.101.1-4)

Me, unwounded by Desires, in the heart Myiscos  
 Shot with his eyes and cried out these words:  
 'I have captured the bold one. And that pride on his brows  
 Of sceptre-bearing wisdom – look! – I trample with my feet.'

<sup>42</sup> This is much how Richardson (1977), p.322, n.1, takes it. He translates *interea* as 'from time to time' and argues that Propertius has stated his intention to compose after the style of Callimachus and Philetas (in 3.1) but this does not mean that he will abandon love elegy altogether; he will return to this kind of poetry from time to time. It will be clear that this is not my view as I am arguing that the composition of erotic love elegy and the Hellenistic style of Callimachus and Philetas are not mutually exclusive concepts for Propertius. As we have seen, Propertius presents Callimachus and Philetas as exemplars of his own particular form of love elegy.

<sup>43</sup> As Heyworth (2007b), pp.285-86, and Camps (1966), p.59, n.1, note – q.v. *O.L.D.*, 1c. Lonie (1959), p.19, cautions that *interea* 'should not mislead us' as it announces, simply, a movement from the literary concerns of poetic immortality and fame to the usual subject of his love elegy, his beloved.

<sup>44</sup> For Propertius' Hellenism and Callimachean influences, see Lonie (1959), pp.22-34; Hollis (2006), pp.97-125; Keith (2008), pp.45-85. For a detailed analysis of Hellenistic poetry and its main exponents, see Hutchinson, G. O. (1988), *Hellenistic Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), especially chapter one on Callimachus, pp.40-84.

If we compare this to the beginning of Propertius 1.1, we find a number of striking similarities:

Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis,  
contactum nullis ante cupidinibus.  
tum mihi constantis deiecit lumina fastus  
et caput impositis pressit Amor pedibus. (1.1.1-4)

Cynthia first captured wretched me with her eyes,  
Me touched before by no desires.  
Then forcing down my look of stubborn pride  
Love put his feet on top and pressed down my head.

The lover is named in the first line (*Cynthia*, 1.1.1; Μυῖσκος, AP 12.101.1) in an emphatic position; *Cynthia* as the first word and Μυῖσκος as the last. Both Propertius and Meleager until now have been unaffected by love or desire (*contactum nullis ante cupidinibus*, 1.1.2; τόν με Πόθοις ἄτρωτον, AP 12.101.1). The agents of capture or wounding in each account are the eyes of the new lover (*me cepit ocellis*, 1.1.1; ὄμμασι τοξεύσας, AP 12.101.2). Myiscos boasts of trampling Meleager's proud expression (τὸ δ' ἐπ' ὀφρύσι κέϊνο φρύαγμα / σκηπτροφόρου σοφίας ἡνίδε ποσὶ πατῶ, AP 12.101.3-4) in much the same way as Love forces Propertius to drop his haughty gaze by forcing down his head (*tum mihi constantis deiecit lumina fastus / et caput impositis pressit Amor pedibus*, 1.1.3-4).<sup>45</sup> A number of familiar tropes of Latin love elegy, found here in 1.1, such as captivation by the eyes of a lover, a lover's pride and suffering at the hands of Love, are also conventional motifs of Hellenistic poetry.<sup>46</sup>

Callimachean influence and allusion, too, can be found in book one (as we saw when we examined 1.18 in the introduction to this thesis). In 1.3, a drunkenly amorous Propertius is compelled to approach the sleeping Cynthia:

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<sup>45</sup> The points of correspondence are noted by Keith (2008), pp.45-46. For the allusions to and reworking of Meleager in Propertius 1.1, see Booth, J. (2001), 'Problems and Programmatics in Propertius 1.1', *Hermes*, 129, pp.63-74, and Hollis (2006), pp.107-08. For a brief overview of Meleager and his poetry, see Gow, A. S. F. and Page, D. L. (1965a), *The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic Epigrams*, 2 vols. (1; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp.xiv-xv and (1965b), *The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic Epigrams*, 2 vols. (2; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp.606-07.

<sup>46</sup> For a summary of the shared motifs, see Keith (2008), p.46. For more detailed treatments, see Giangrande, G. (1974), 'Los Topicos Helenisticos en la Elegia Latina', *Emerita*, 42, pp.1-14, and Fedeli, P. (1980), *Sesto Propertio. Il primo libro delle elegie* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki), p.60, and notes to 1.1, pp.62-88.

hanc ego, nondum etiam sensus deperditus omnis,  
 molliter impresso conor adire toro;  
 et quamuis duplici correptum ardore iuberent  
 hac Amor hac Liber, durus uterque deus,  
 subiecto leuiter positam temptare lacerto  
 osculaque admota sumere et arma manu,  
 non tamen ausus eram dominae turbare quietem  
 expertae metuens iurgia saeuitiae. (1.3.11-18)

Her I, not yet deprived of all my senses,  
 Try to approach, pressing gently the bed;  
 And me, seized by a double passion, they order,  
 On this side, Amor, on that, Liber, each a harsh god,  
 To touch her, with my arm slid beneath, as she lies calmly,  
 And, with my hand on the move, steal kisses and take up arms;  
 Yet I had not dared to disturb my mistress' sleep,  
 Fearing the savage abuse of past experience.<sup>47</sup>

Love and Bacchus, here, drive Propertius' actions (although he is apparently able to resist their influence on this occasion), just as they do those of Callimachus in a similarly erotic context; on this occasion, Callimachus remembers his role in a drunken paraclausithyron upon a (potential?) lover's doorstep.<sup>48</sup>

εἰ μὲν ἐκὼν, Ἀρχῖν', ἐπεκώμασα, μυρία μέμφου·  
 εἰ δ' ἄκων ἦκω, τὴν προπέτειαν ἔα.  
 ἄκρητος καὶ Ἔρως μ' ἠνάγκασαν ὧν ὁ μὲν αὐτῶν  
 εἴλκεν, ὁ δ' οὐκ εἶα σώφρονα θυμὸν ἔχειν.  
 ἐλθὼν δ' οὐκ ἐβόησα, τίς ἦ τίνοος, ἀλλ' ἐφίλησα  
 τὴν φλὴν· εἰ τοῦτ' ἔστ' ἀδίκημ', ἀδικῶ. (Epigr. 42.1-6)<sup>49</sup>

If I was a willing komast, Archinus, blame me ten-thousand times;  
 But if I came unwillingly, dismiss rashness.  
 Wine and Eros compelled me; of which the one  
 Drew me on, the other did not allow me to control my desire.

<sup>47</sup> I translate *osculaue ... sumere et arma* (1.3.16) as 'steal kisses and take up arms' after Heyworth (2007b), p.518. A number of editors adopt conjectures in place of the difficult *et arma*, which Barber (1960), p.4, obelises. See, for example, Butler, H. E. (1912), *Propertius* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), p.8, who adopts Baehrens' *auara*; Goold, G. P. (1990), *Propertius: Elegies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), p.50, who opts for Scaliger's *tarda*; Giardina (2005), p.38, who prefers Gronovius' *ad ora*. For discussions, see Camps, W. A. (1961), *Propertius: Elegies Book I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp.49-50, n.16; Fedeli (1980), pp.122-23, n.16; and Heyworth (2007b), p.17, n.16.

<sup>48</sup> Keith (2008), pp.47-48, notes the allusion to Callimachus in Propertius 1.3 and outlines many of the similarities. See also Fedeli (1980), p.120, n.13.

<sup>49</sup> For textual concerns, see Pfeiffer, R. (1949a), *Callimachus*, 2 vols. (1; Oxford: Clarendon Press), p.92.



When I arrived, I did not shout out who or whose son I was, but I kissed  
Your doorpost. If this was wrong, I acted wrongly.<sup>50</sup>

Love and Wine cause Propertius and Callimachus to act rashly. Both come to their lovers' homes after a night of drinking – only one, however, is admitted – and while Propertius is at least in a position to kiss his lover, Callimachus must settle for kissing his lover's doorpost.

A number of elegies in Propertius' second book, as we noted briefly in the previous chapter, contain Callimachean motifs and allusions. Propertius employs a well-known Callimachean metaphor for poetic composition in the first elegy, 2.1, when he invokes Callimachus by name for the first time as he states his commitment to love elegy:

sed neque Phlegraeos Iouis Enceladique tumultus  
intonet angusto pectore Callimachus,  
nec mea conueniunt duro praecordia uersu  
Caesaris in Phrygios condere nomen auos.  
nauita de uentis, de tauris narrat arator,  
enumerat miles uulnera, pastor ouis;  
nos contra angusto uersantes proelia lecto:  
qua pote quisque, in ea conterat arte diem. (2.1.39-46)<sup>51</sup>

But not the Phlegraeian uprisings of Jove and Enceladus  
Does Callimachus thunder in his narrow breast,  
Nor is my heart willing in hard verse  
To found Caesar's name upon Phrygian ancestors.  
The sailor talks about winds, the ploughman about oxen;  
The soldier counts wounds, the shepherd sheep;  
We, on the other hand, talk of those conducting battles on a narrow bed:

<sup>50</sup> For τίς ἢ τίνοϛ (42.5) as a formal request for entry, see Gow and Page (1965b), p.163, n.5, and Nisetich, F. (2001), *The Poems of Callimachus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.297, n.5.

<sup>51</sup> The manuscript tradition transmits *uersantes* (2.1.45), but Volscus' conjecture, *uersamus*, is favoured by many editors – see, for example, Camps (1967), p.12; Goold (1990), p.120; Fedeli (2005), p.38; Viarre (2005), p.32; Heyworth (2007a), p.35 – and *uersamus* certainly, I think, is easier and yields the required sense. But *uersantes* remains the transmitted form and with a verb such as *narramus* supplied – carrying over *narrat* from line 2.1.43 – is not so difficult as to warrant rejection. Taking *uersantes* as accusative, the line refers to poetry about lovers' battles, rather than Propertius engaging in the battles themselves – the sense if *uersamus* is read ('we, on the other hand, conduct battles on a narrow bed'); although this latter interpretation is implied in the former, I think, for we are to understand that Propertius writes about lovers' battles, including those in which he, himself, engages. Reading *uersantes* as nominative (as Butler and Barber (1933), p.191, n.45, recommend) accommodates, to an extent, both interpretations ('I, waging my own wars, tell of these wars of mine', after Camps (1967), p.72, n.45), but is more difficult. Despite the difficulties we should retain the transmitted *uersantes*, for this, to quote Paley (1872), p.52, n.45, 'is better than cutting the knot by reading *uersamus*'. For discussions, see Camps (1967), p.72, n.45; Richardson (1977), p.215, n.45; Fedeli (2005), pp.82-83, n.43-46.

In the art that he is able let each while away the day.

Propertius, here, rejects martial and typical epic themes in preference for the continued composition of love elegy and he does so by employing the elegiac conceit of *militia amoris* and invoking Callimachus, by name, as a role model and exemplar of the type of poetry that Propertius writes and proposes to continue writing. Callimachus' narrow breast (*angusto pectore*, 2.1.40) and the narrow bed (*angusto ... lecto*, 2.1.45) upon which lovers conduct their battles symbolise the refined Hellenistic style of composition favoured by Callimachus and now Propertius, and the former's narrow breast contrasts well with the need for a big voice (*magni nunc erit oris opus*, 'now there will be a need for a big voice', 2.10.12), as Propertius claims is necessary when proposing to tackle traditional epic themes and sing of real troops and the wars of Augustus (*iam libet et fortis memorare ad proelia turmas / et Romana mei dicere castra ducis*, 'now I want to tell of troops brave for battle and to speak of the Roman camp(aign)s of my leader', 2.10.3-4), and with Apollo's instructions to Callimachus that a poet of his style, a style that Propertius favours, should shun overblown poetic techniques and favour a slender Muse (ᾠοιδέ, τὸ μὲν θύος ὅττι πάχιστον / θρέψαι, τὴν Μοῦσαν δ' ὠγαθὲ λεπταλέην, 'poet, feed a victim as fat as possible, but keep a slender Muse', Aet. 1, fr. 1.23-24) and avoid travel upon broad and busy highways:

... τὰ μὴ πατέουσιν ἄμαξαι  
τὰ στεῖβε]ιν, ἑτέρων δ' ἵχνια μὴ καθ' ὁμά  
δίφρον ἐλ]ᾱν μὴδ' οἴμον ἀνὰ πλατύν, ἀλλὰ κελεύθους  
ἀτρίπτο]υς, εἰ καὶ στε[ι]γυτέρην ἐλάσεις. (Aet. 1, fr. 1.25-28)

Indeed, when Propertius notes that Callimachus does not thunder in his narrow breast (*neque ... / intonet angusto pectore Callimachus*, 2.1.40-41), he alludes specifically to Callimachus' programmatic announcement that he does not write overblown, thunderous poetry (μὴδ' ἅπ' ἐμεῦ διφᾱ]τε μέγα ψοφέουσιν ᾠοιδὴν τίκτεσθαι / βροντᾱ]ν οὐκ ἐμόν, [ἀλλὰ] Διός, 'do not expect big sounding song from me; it is not my job to thunder, but Zeus', Aet. 1, fr. 1.19-20).

The final elegy of book two, 2.34, as we noted earlier in this chapter, finds Propertius advising Lynceus in matters of love and love poetry by invoking Callimachus and Philetas as models for Lynceus to follow (*tu satius memorem Musis imitere Philitan / et non inflati somnia Callimachi*, 2.34.31-32). Moreover, the description of Callimachus as ‘not inflated’ (*non inflati*, 2.34.32) recalls Callimachus’ refined style and programmatic statements. Invocation of Callimachus and allusion to his work, together with the employment of Hellenistic motifs, frame Propertius’ second book.

We have seen earlier in this chapter, too, that the beginning of book three contains invocations of Callimachus and Philetas as exemplars of Propertius’ poetic style and a number of allusions to the poetry of Callimachus and, presumably, if we had more of Philetas’ poetry, to Philetas’ work as well. In 3.1, Propertius associates himself and his poetry with a pure spring (*puro ... fonte*, 3.1.3), thereby recalling Callimachus’ *Hymn to Apollo* where Apollo in an argument about poetry with Envy likens cyclical epic to great big, filthy rivers and poetry in Callimachus’ refined style to a pure and clear spring:

Ἀσσυρίου ποταμοῖο μέγας ῥόος, ἀλλὰ τὰ πολλὰ  
 λύματα γῆς καὶ πολλὸν ἐφ’ ὕδατι συρφετὸν ἔλκει.  
 Διοῖ δ’ οὐκ ἀπὸ παντὸς ὕδωρ φορέουσι μέλισσαι,  
 ἀλλ’ ἥτις καθαρὴ τε καὶ ἀχράαντος ἀνέρπει  
 πίδακος ἐξ ἱερῆς ὀλίγη λιβάς ἄκρον ἄωτον. (Ap. 108-12)

The stream of the Assyrian River is great, but much  
 Filth of earth and much rubbish it pushes along on its water.  
 The Melissae do not of any water carry to Deo,  
 But of a little stream which springs up clear and pure  
 From a sacred font, the very best of waters.

We have seen, too, that when Apollo, in 3.3, directs Propertius along a new, as yet unseen path to the grotto deemed suitable for his style of poetry (3.3.25-26), the reader is invited to recall Callimachus’ assertion that a poet of refined style should avoid well-travelled paths (*Aet. 1, fr. 1.25-28*). In 3.1, too, we find allusions to the same passage (*non datur ad Musas currere lata uia*, 3.1.14; *opus hoc de monte Sororum / detulit intacta pagina nostra uia*, 3.1.17-18).

So, the invocation of Callimachus and Philetas at the beginning of book three does not indicate a change of poetic style on Propertius' behalf to a more Hellenistic style of elegy, for, in fact, Propertius considers Callimachus and Philetas as exemplars and champions of the erotic love elegy that has so far occupied him.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, when we recall that Propertius states that his work comes down from Mount Helicon via an untouched path (3.1.17-18), we should notice that he tells us that his poetry *has* made its way down (*detulit*, 3.1.18), not that it *will* do so.<sup>53</sup> As a poet, he has already travelled and will continue to travel the Callimachean path. He may not tackle seriously aetiological poetry of the kind made famous by Callimachus in his *Aetia* until his fourth and final book, where Propertius declares himself the Roman Callimachus (4.1.64), but this need not mean that he does not already consider himself a poet in a fashion after Callimachus, who, after all, did not treat only aetiological themes in his work. Moreover, Propertius has employed Hellenistic motifs from the very beginning of his first book and throughout his work he has displayed Hellenistic influence and a range of Callimachean allusions. In book three, he does not depart from this kind of elegy; he continues to develop it. Propertius, then, has ever been a careful student of Hellenistic poetry.

If the invocation of Callimachus and Philetas does not indicate a significant change of poetics for Propertius and the questions posed at the start of 3.1 do not, thus, seek guidance from them for the pursuit of a new form of elegiac composition after their style, what is the nature and point of these questions? To what end is Propertius seeking their advice?

### Fame and the Status of Elegy

At the end of book two, Propertius considers his place among his fellow Roman poets. He begins by confirming his commitment to elegiac poetics by contrasting his poetry with Virgil's (as yet unpublished) *Aeneid*:

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<sup>52</sup> That Propertius considers them exemplars of this style is the key point, regardless of the extent to which their poetry actually exhibited this kind of erotic poetry. Lonie (1959), p.19, claims that Propertius considers the kind of love poetry that he has so far produced to be very much in the tradition of Callimachus and Philetas: 'Alexandrian poetry is for Propertius one and the same with his love elegy'. Lonie (1959), p.21, notes, too, that Propertius associates Callimachus and Philetas with love elegy.

<sup>53</sup> Lonie (1959), p.18, notes that Propertius' work already has made its way down from Mount Helicon.

me iuuet hesternis positum languere corollis,  
 quem tetigit iactu certus ad ossa deus;  
 Actia Vergilium custodis litora Phoebi,  
 Caesaris et fortis dicere posse ratis,  
 qui nunc Aeneae Troiani suscitāt arma  
 iactaque Lauinis moenia litoribus. (2.34.59-64)

Happy am I to languish placed among yesterday's garlands,  
 I whom a god sure in his aim has touched to the bone;  
 The Actian shores of Phoebus the protector, Virgil  
 Is happy he can speak of, and Caesar's brave ships,  
 He who now rouses the arms of Trojan Aeneas  
 And the walls built on Lavinian shores.

He then moves on, after considering Virgil's *Eclogues* (2.34.67-76), which he presents (not entirely unreasonably) as a kind of love poetry, to situate himself within the canon of Roman love poets (in a passage some of which we considered briefly when noting the closural nature of 2.34):

haec quoque perfecto ludebat lasone Varro,  
 Varro Leucadiae maxima flamma suae;  
 haec quoque lasciui cantarunt scripta Catulli,  
 Lesbia quis ipsa notior est Helena;  
 haec etiam docti confessa est pagina Calui,  
 cum caneret miserae funera Quintiliae.  
 et modo formosa quam multa Lycoride Gallus  
 mortuus inferna uulnera lauit aqua!  
 Cynthia quin uiuet uersu laudata Properti,  
 hos inter si me ponere Fama uolet. (2.34.85-94)<sup>54</sup>

These [erotic themes] also Varro toyed at, with his 'Jason' finished,  
 Varro, the greatest flame of his Leucadia;  
 These also the writings of lascivious Catullus sang,  
 Through which Lesbia is more famous than Helen herself;  
 These too the page of learned Calvus confessed,  
 When he sang the death of wretched Quintilia.  
 And lately, dead for beautiful Lycoris, how many  
 Wounds did Gallus bathe in the infernal water!  
 Cynthia, too, will live praised in Propertius' verse,  
 If Fame is willing to place me among these [poets].

<sup>54</sup> Heyworth (2007b), p.279, n.85-92, argues for his own conjecture, *sic*, in place of the transmitted *haec* (2.34.85, 87, 89) as he sees disconnection between *haec* at 2.34.81 and these three later repetitions.

Book two concludes, therefore, with Propertius announcing the power of love poetry to immortalise not only the object of a poet's affection, but also the poet himself, and contemplating his own reputation and fame. It is this latter point that is important from our perspective because book three begins with the poet occupied still with the same concerns.

The first three elegies of book three, in fact, find Propertius announcing the fame and immortality conferred by the poet and poetry. In the second elegy, 3.2, Propertius claims his poetry to be an everlasting monument to his/a girl's beauty (*fortunata, meo si qua est celebrata libello! / carmina erunt formae tot monumenta tuae*, 3.2.17-18); even the pyramids and other great monuments (3.2.19-24) will not outlast the fame achieved through a poet's talent (*at non ingenio quaesitum nomen ab aeuo / excidet: ingenio stat sine morte decus*, 'but a name gained by talent will not perish with age: with talent glory stands without death', 3.2.25-26).<sup>55</sup> In 3.3, when Propertius dreams of writing epic, or at least tackling epic themes, in the style of Ennius, Apollo tells him that he will not win fame through this type of poetry (*non hic ulla tibi speranda est fama, Properti*, 'not here must you hope for any fame, Propertius', 3.3.17).<sup>56</sup> Apollo's advice suggests that Propertius is actively seeking a reputation as a great poet.

The very first elegy of book three offers a lengthier treatment of fame won through poetry. After telling us that he finds Fame/fame through finely polished love poetry (*exactus tenui pumice uersus eat, / quo me Fama leuat terra sublimis*, 3.1.8-9), Propertius considers the power of verse to bestow greater fame upon a poet after death (3.1.21-38). Although his detractors may criticise his poetry while he is alive, he will win his deserved fame after he has died (*at mihi quod uiuo detraxerit inuida*

<sup>55</sup> At 3.2.26, as Camps (1966), p.62, n.26, points out, *ingenio* may be dative ('glory [gained] from talent will not perish') or ablative ('glory will not perish because of talent'). Richardson (1977), p.324, n.25-26, states that *ingenio* at 3.2.26 'is most naturally taken as dative, but in order to make the line support 3.2.17-18, it must be read as ablative'. In this interpretation, Richardson, I assume, understands *decus* (3.2.26) as 'beauty' (q.v. *O.L.D.* 5) and thus a reference to *formae* at 3.2.18.

<sup>56</sup> The manuscript tradition transmits *hic* at 3.3.17. Many editors, however, adopt Volscus' conjecture, *hinc* – see, for example, Camps (1966), pp.16, 64, n.17 (who, it should be noted, seems to have some reservations – 'a probable though not indispensable emendation'); Goold (1990), p.260; Giardina (2005), p.240; Viarre (2005), p.90; Heyworth (2007a), p.104. The transmitted *hic* delivers the required sense; Propertius is alongside the Hippocrene when addressed by Apollo who tells him that he will not find the fame he seeks here (*hic*) at this location, as Richardson (1977), p.327, n.17, notes. Fedeli (1985), p.131, n.17, too, offers a defence of *hic*.

*turba, / post obitum duplici faenore reddet Honos*, ‘but what the envious crowd has deprived me of while I live, Glory will return to me with double interest after my death’, 3.1.21-22); death and the passage of time, he claims, enhance the fame and reputation of all things, even the names of men (*omnia post obitum fingit maiora uetustas: / maius ab exsequiis nomen in ora uenit*, ‘time makes everything greater after death: from the time of the funeral a name goes greater upon the mouth’, 3.1.23-24). Propertius then offers us the great reputation of Homer (and Troy) as an example of such posthumous fame:

exiguo sermone fores nunc, Ilion, et tu  
Troia bis Oetaei numine capta dei.  
nec non ille tui casus memorator Homerus  
posteritate suum crescere sensit opus. (3.1.31-34)

Small-talk would you be now, Ilium, and you,  
Troy, twice captured by the power of the Oetaean god.  
That recorder, too, of your misfortune, Homer,  
With posterity has felt his work grow.

Propertius then tells us in the elegy’s closing address, when prophesising his own posthumous reputation and fame, that he too will be praised (as a great poet) by Rome’s future generations:

meque inter seros laudabit Roma nepotes:  
illum post cineres auguror ipse diem. (3.1.35-36)

Me, too, Rome will praise among its later grandsons:  
I myself foretell that day after the funeral ashes.

Although Propertius may not gain when alive the reputation he clearly thinks that he deserves, a reputation denied him, he claims, by jealousy (3.1.21), he hopes and predicts that he will receive his due after his death (3.1.35-36), just like Homer (3.1.33-34).

But it is not only Homer that Propertius calls to mind in his musings on envy and reputation; there is allusion to Callimachus in Propertius’ *inuida turba* (3.1.21), for Callimachus, too, bemoaned the undermining of his reputation by jealous rivals. He begins his *Aetia* by reproaching the Telchines for their criticism of his poetic style:

.....]ι μοι Τελχῖνες ἐπιτρύζουσιν ἀ|οιδῇ,  
 νήιδε]ς οἱ Μούσης οὐκ ἐγένοντο φίλοι,  
 εἵνεκε]ν οὐχ ἐν ᾄεσμα διηνεκὲς ἢ βασιλ[η  
 .....]ας ἐν πολλαῖς ἤνυσα χιλιάσιν  
 ἦ.....].ους ἦρωας ... (Aet. 1, fr. 1.1-5)<sup>57</sup>

The Telchines are muttering about my poetry,  
 They who know nothing and are no friends of the Muses,  
 Because not one continuous poem either on kings  
 In many thousands of lines have I produced  
 Or heroes ...

He then dismisses their criticism as the jealousy of those who are unable to appreciate the finery of his art:

ἔλλετε Βασκανίης ὀλοὸν γένο[ς]· αὖθι δὲ τέχνη  
 κρίνετε,][μὴ σχοίν]ῳ Περσίδι τῇ[ν] σοφίην. (Aet. 1, fr. 1.17-18)<sup>58</sup>

Be gone, destructive breed of Jealousy; and by art  
 Judge [a poet's] skill, not by measure of length.<sup>59</sup>

In Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo*, criticism of Callimachus' slender, refined style of composition comes in a discussion on poetic styles between Apollo and Envy (Ap. 105-13). Envy, by equating epic verse with the vastness of the open sea, champions lengthy epic by dismissing those who do not write such poetry:

ὁ Φθόνος Ἀπόλλωνος ἐπ' οὐατα λάθριος εἶπεν·  
 'οὐκ ἄγαμαι τὸν ἀοιδὸν ὃς οὐδ' ὅσα πόντος ἀεῖδει.' (Ap. 105-06)

Envy spoke secretly into Apollo's ear:  
 'I do not admire the poet who does not sing as large as the sea.'

<sup>57</sup> The text is highly fragmented – see Pfeiffer (1949b), pp.1-2.

<sup>58</sup> For textual issues, see Pfeiffer (1949b), p.4.

<sup>59</sup> Callimachus dictates a particular Persian unit of measurement (σχοίν]ῳ Περσίδι, Aet. 1, fr. 1.18), the precise nature and length of which is irrelevant for our purposes; although it is, apparently, a reference to the Persian chain, the *schoenus*, the length of which seems to be from thirty to sixty stades – see Trypanis, C. A. (1968), *Callimachus: Aetia, Iambi, Hecale and other Fragments* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), p.7. I have omitted direct translation of Περσίδι.



Apollo, as we saw earlier, rejects Envy's criticism by pointing out that big waters carry a lot of rubbish along in their flow (*Ap.* 107-12). Propertius, then, just like Callimachus, feels that he has been criticised unjustly by jealous rivals.

Propertius in 3.1, then, is very much concerned with his fame and reputation as a poet, both while alive and after his death. He feels that he and his poetry have not the reputation they deserve; a fact that he ascribes to jealousy. In this regard, he feels allegiance with Callimachus, who, too, felt that his poetry was maligned unfairly by his detractors. Callimachus, however (and Philetas, too, if we take Propertius' repeated mentions of the two together), went on to have a reputation as a poet of the greatest skill and receive great acclaim, particularly among the neoteric and elegiac poets of Rome. Propertius, accordingly, seems to be saying: 'I write in your style, Callimachus and Philetas, I am your equal in poetic talent, so why do I not receive the same acclaim as you and why is my elegy considered a lowly poetic style' – as Propertius, himself, presents it (2.10) – 'yet your poetry receives such acclaim?' It is for the sake of reputation, then, that Propertius hopes in 3.1 to enter the grove of his famous poetic predecessors (*Callimachi manes et Coi Philetae, / in uestrum, quaeso, me sinite ire nemus*, 3.1.1-2). He hopes, after his death, to share the same level of posthumous fame as Callimachus and Philetas, and this acquisition of fame is symbolised by admission to their grove.<sup>60</sup>

Propertius, after the invocation of its inhabitants, presents his credentials for entry to the grove (*primus ego ingredior puro de fonte sacerdos / Itala per Graios orgia ferre choros*, 3.1.3-4). These are difficult lines and not easily understood. I take them to mean: I, Propertius, propose entry (*ingredior*) based on the fact that I am the first (and/or foremost) poet (*primus ego ... sacerdos*) to write Roman poetry (*Itala ... orgia ferre*) after the Greek fashion (*per Graios ... choros*) symbolised by a pure spring (*de puro fonte*) – that is: I am the first Roman poet to write elegy which is fashioned explicitly after

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<sup>60</sup> Lonie (1959), pp.17-18, claims that Propertius' request to enter the grove at 3.1.1-2 should be interpreted to mean 'permit me to share your fame after my death'. Baker (1968), pp.35-39, offers a defence of Lonie's reading and presents further arguments to support the case.

the style of Callimachus (and Philetas).<sup>61</sup> I do not mean to ignore entirely the religious symbolism of these lines by way of paraphrase, for that symbolism, clearly, is present in the elegy's opening lines.<sup>62</sup> It is the poetic significance, however, that concerns us and, I think, Propertius most of all and it is clear that Propertius thinks that his credentials are sufficient to allow him entry.

Following his request for admission, Propertius, as we have seen, asks a series of questions concerned with poetry (*quo pariter carmen tenuastis in antro? / quoue pede ingressi? quam bibistis aquam?*). Rather than interpreting these questions as requests for guidance in becoming a poet after the style of Callimachus and Philetas – for this makes little sense given that we have seen that Propertius has long been a poet of Hellenistic and Callimachean influence and considers himself already to be a poet after the fashion of his predecessors – we should take them as questions inquiring how they achieved their great fame and reputation, achievements that Propertius hopes to emulate. In this context, we can interpret the first question thus: How did you write poetry that gained for you such great fame?<sup>63</sup> Definitive interpretation of the second question remains

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<sup>61</sup> For *sacerdos* as 'poet', q.v. *O.L.D.*, c. See Butrica (1996), p.132, n.98, for examples of poet as priest. For *orgia* as 'poetry', see Lonie (1959), p.18, who claims that *Itala ... orgia* 'probably means no more than poetry written in Latin'. I follow, to an extent, Camps (1966), pp.52-53, who considers that *orgia* refers to Propertius' writing of poetry as an act of worship, Italian worship (*Itala ... orgia*). We have seen in this chapter (and the previous one), that for Propertius a pure, clear spring (much as it did for Callimachus) symbolises his refined love elegy in the style of Callimachus. There is some difficulty in taking *primus* as 'first' given that other Roman poets before Propertius – Catullus and Gallus (as far as we can tell in the latter's case), for example – wrote love (and other kinds of highly polished) poetry displaying strong Hellenistic influence. Camps (1966), p.53, n.3-4, claims that *primus*, thus, may mean that Propertius' poetic achievement is 'greater than or ... different from that of Catullus and Gallus and Tibullus', or, and more likely, he thinks, Propertius 'is simply rejoicing in his own originality and achievement'. I am in general agreement with Camps (1966), p.53, that 3.1.3-4 find Propertius claiming his poetry to be a Roman expression of the Greek tradition in the style of Callimachus and Philetas. Paley (1872), p.142, n.3, translates 3.1.3-4 as 'I am the first who have entered that grove for the purpose of introducing Roman poetry, from a source not yet made turbid by the crowd of ordinary poets, to take its place among Greek compositions'. For *primus* in other poetic contexts, see Hinds, S. (1998), *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (Roman Literature and its Contexts; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp.52-55. Keith (2008), p.56, translates *puro de fonte* as 'from your pure spring'; although she does not say who the spring belongs to. If we assume that she intends that it belongs to Callimachus and Philetas, then this supports our argument that the pure spring symbolises specifically the poetry of Callimachus and Philetas. I take *puro de fonte* with *ferre* rather than with *sacerdos* – see Butrica (1996), pp.132-33, who translates thus: 'I am the first priest to attempt to bring Italian rites through Greek dances from the pure spring'. Camps (1966), p.52, n.3-4, to judge from his translation, takes *puro de fonte* with *sacerdos*: 'see, first (of my race) I come, a priest (with water) from a spring that is pure and clear, to join Greek measures with Italian rites'. For a detailed discussion of 3.1.3-4, see Fedeli (1985), pp.45-52, n.3, n.4.

<sup>62</sup> See Luck (1957), pp.175-79, for a religious interpretation of 3.1.1-6.

<sup>63</sup> This is much the same way as Baker (1968), pp.38-39, interprets this question.

somewhat elusive. The foot in question may symbolise favourable conditions or an omen of good fortune under which Callimachus and Philetas began their poetic endeavours (notwithstanding the obvious allusion to the metre(s) of their compositions).<sup>64</sup> The third question we may paraphrase in much the same way as the first: What was your inspiration for producing poetry of such great acclaim? Let us look more closely at these claims.

It is clear that Propertius wishes to enter the grove of Callimachus and Philetas when he addresses the former's *manes* and the latter's *sacra*; indeed, the question itself (3.1.2) is perfectly straightforward. But precisely why he wants to gain entry is less straightforward and has been the subject of some debate concerning two basic interpretations of Propertius' appeal: his wish to enter the grove demonstrates his desire to offer worship to the spirits of Callimachus and Philetas and amounts to a request, elaborated by the questions at 3.1.5-6, for instruction on becoming a poet after the style of his Alexandrian predecessors; or he is enquiring how he might gain the (posthumous) reputation enjoyed by Callimachus and Philetas.<sup>65</sup> As we have noted, the former interpretation defies Propertius' self presentation as a poet already well-versed and experienced in their style, but there are other indications that we should accept the latter interpretation.

Propertius, clearly, as we noted earlier, is concerned with reputation and fame at the end of book two and book three begins with the poet voicing similar considerations. He seems, too, at the start of book three, a poet confident in his approach and direction. He does not present himself as a poet hesitating over a choice of poetic styles when we read the start of book three in this way; rather, his

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<sup>64</sup> See Baker (1968), p.39.

<sup>65</sup> Lonie (1959), pp.17-18, posed these questions, worded somewhat differently, after Luck (1957), p.175, claimed that 'it cannot be determined whether Propertius wanted to enter the grove in order to offer worship or to receive it'. Baker (1968), pp.35-39, offers a reading in support of Lonie's claims. Shackleton-Bailey, D. R. (1967), *Propertiana* (Cambridge Classical Studies; Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert), p.136, dismisses Lonie's questions as unimportant (without attributing the questions to Lonie, it should be noted; but we can assume, I think, that he has Lonie in mind in his dismissal) with a quote from Servius (*in carminibus quaedam nec ad subtilitatem nec ueritatem exigenda sunt*, 'in poetry, some things cannot be forced to absolute clarity or fact', *ad Aen.* 9.74). Nethercut (1975), pp.73-75, finds Baker's arguments attractive and persuasive and claims that Baker's approach means that 'we can view Propertius' work with greater continuity than has been supposed' (p.74). Butrica (1996), pp.131-32, however, claims that Propertius is not yet a Callimachean poet and is asking how to become one; the questions that begin 3.1, he claims, make no sense if interpreted otherwise.

is a confident and assertive justification of love elegy and its place within the Alexandrian tradition of Callimachus and Philetas.<sup>66</sup>

Support, too, for our interpretation of the beginning of 3.1 can be found through closer examination of the *sacra Philetas* (3.1.1). Just what are these *sacra* in this context? Clearly, Propertius' choice of word, *sacra*, continues the religious metaphor of the elegy's opening lines, but there is more to it than this. We examined the following passage earlier when examining Propertius' presentation of Callimachus and Philetas as exemplars of the kind of love poetry written by Propertius:

inter Callimachi sat erit placuisse libellos  
et cecinisse modis, Coe poeta, tuis.  
haec urant pueros, haec urant scripta puellas,  
meque deum clament et mihi sacra ferant! (3.9.43-46)

Here, too, it can assist our investigation. Propertius will be happy if the poetry he has so far produced will find a place among the writings of Callimachus and Philetas (3.9.43-44). He hopes that his love elegy will be compared (in terms of reputation and quality) to the verse of his Alexandrian predecessors. This wish is expressed in a poem that justifies and affirms Propertius' commitment to love elegy, thereby suggesting that his erotic poetry is in the tradition of Callimachus and Philetas. Most significant from our perspective is Propertius' second wish (3.9.45-46): that his writings might fire the hearts of boys and girls who in turn will proclaim him a god and offer him worship (*mihi sacra ferant*, 3.9.46).<sup>67</sup> We have seen him make a similar claim in a previous poem in regard to the power of his love elegy (*miremur, nobis et Baccho et Apolline dextro, / turba puellarum si mea uerba colit?*, 3.2.9-10). So, for Propertius, worship is received for the composition of the love elegy that he styles after the poetry of Callimachus and Philetas, and in 3.9, he receives specifically *sacra*.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Baker (1968), p.37, finds Propertius unhesitant and confident in his approach. Nethercut (1975), p.75, notes that 3.1.3-4 reveals a confident presentation of Propertius' credentials.

<sup>67</sup> Ross (1975), pp.126-27, claims, unconvincingly in my opinion, that 3.9.45 does not refer to the composition of love elegy, but rather to the audience of his new poetic endeavour which finds him tackling 'Augustan themes' (p.127) in the style of Horace's Roman odes.

<sup>68</sup> Baker (1968), pp.37-38, draws our attention to Propertius' receiving of *sacra* in 3.9 and draws comparison with the *sacra Philetas* of 3.1. Fedeli (1985), p.326, n.46, notes the link, as does Hollis (1996), p.56.

Support for linking the *sacra* with elegy can be found in the following poem (3.10) which finds Propertius advocating a suitably erotic conclusion to the celebration of his girlfriend's birthday (*natalis nostrae ... puellae*, 3.10.3):

cum fuerit multis exacta trientibus hora,  
noctis et instituet sacra ministra Venus,  
annua soluamus thalamo sollemnia nostro,  
natalisque tui sic peragamus iter. (3.10.29-32)

When the time has passed with many cups,  
And an attending Venus organises the rites of the night,  
Let us perform the annual ceremony in our bedroom,  
And thus complete the journey of your birthday.

Here, the *sacra* refer specifically to Propertius' hoped for end to the day's celebrations: a night of passion with his mistress. This is made clear not only by the coupling of *sacra* with *noctis* – which suggests the familiar night-time ritual – but also by the attendant of these rights, Venus, the goddess of love(-making). The *sacra*, here too, are a form of elegiac worship.

When Propertius, then, requests entry to the grove of his poetic role models based on the claim that he is a poet after their fashion, it seems that he hopes to receive the *sacra* (of the poetic kind) offered to them just as he, himself, has received already from the readers of his work. Our aspirational poet, who hopes that his work will be compared to that of Callimachus and Philetas, hopes, also, to receive the same acclaim (*sacra*) conferred upon them, and the questions that he poses following their invocation enquire how he, as a follower of theirs, might gain such a reputation.

We can look for answers to these questions by moving on to consider my argument that the landscapes of 3.1 and, in particular, 3.3 reveal that the elevation of the status of elegy is a driving theme and guiding principle for our poet at the beginning of book three.<sup>69</sup> One short answer to how Propertius might gain admission to the grove of Callimachus and Philetas and, thus, receive the level

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<sup>69</sup> Fedeli (1985), p.27, notes that Propertius is concerned with his status as a love poet in book three.

of fame bestowed upon them, a fame that he, too, thinks that he deserves, is found in the lines that immediately follow the questions that we have just explored (*a ualeat, Phoebum quicumque moratur in armis! / exactus tenui pumice uersus eat* (3.1.7-8). By dismissing the poet and poetry of lengthy martial epic (3.1.7) and championing the composition of finely polished elegiac verse (3.1.8) – *tenuis*, here, is a particularly apposite adjective; it refers not only to the light weight of pumice and in turn the lightness of Propertius’ elegiac verse, but also to the fine-grained qualities that suit it for polishing parchment and, metaphorically speaking, poetry itself to a finely finished, refined product, as well as corresponding with its programmatically significant Greek equivalent, λεπτός or λεπταλέος, such as we find in Apollo’s instruction to Callimachus at the beginning of his *Aetia* (τῇ]ν Μοῦσαν δ’ ὠγαθὲ λεπταλέην, *Aet.* 1, fr. 1.24)<sup>70</sup> – Propertius claims to be following the example of his Alexandrian predecessors and, accordingly, fulfilling what would appear to be a necessary requirement for admission to their grove.<sup>71</sup> But, as we know, Propertius has long been a poet in this tradition, yet it appears not to have afforded him entry to the grove of his illustrious poetic role models or, so far, gained him the reputation that they receive. So, 3.1 poses a series of questions concerned with poetry and it does so by employing a number of features of poetic landscapes as metaphors for poetic composition and inspiration: the grove (*nemus*, 3.1.2); the pure spring (*puro ... fonte*, 3.1.3); the grotto (*antro*, 3.1.5); and the water (*aquam*, 3.1.6). These same features reappear or are recalled in 3.3: Calliope warns Propertius that it is not for him to bring martial epic into Mount Helicon’s Aonian grove (*tibi sit ... / ... nec Aonium tingere Marte nemus*, 3.3.41-42) and we should imagine, although it is not labelled as such, that Propertius is reclining in the shade of the (same?) grove at the beginning of the elegy (*molli recubans Heliconis in umbra*, 3.3.1) – perhaps, too, the grotto of the Muses is sheltered within a grove, given that there, it seems, the Muses pick ivy and weave roses (*haec hederas legit in thyrsos ... / ... illa manu texit utraque rosam*, ‘this [Muse] picks ivy

<sup>70</sup> Camps (1966), pp.54-55, n.7-8, makes some of these observations. Lonie (1959), p.18, notes the equivalence of *tenuis* and λεπτός.

<sup>71</sup> That the poetry of 3.1.7 is martial epic is indicated by the weapons (*armis*) and the poetry’s ability to delay (*moratur*) Apollo with its length. Propertius, neatly, employs the hexameter, the metre of epic, for his dismissal of epic and the pentameter that distinguishes epic from elegiac metre for his championing of elegiac poetry. Baker (1968), p.39, offers this couplet as an answer to the questions of the previous lines.

for thyrsi ... that one plaits roses with each hand', 3.3.35-36); the Hippocrene (*magnis ... fontibus*, 3.3.5) and the font within the grotto (*fonte*, 3.3.51) provide inspirational spring water; the grotto of 3.1 reappears as the domain of the Muses (*spelunca*, 3.3.27); and poetic waters abound (*umor*, 3.3.2; *fontibus*, 3.3.5; *flumine*, 3.3.15; *aquas*, 3.3.23; *mari*, 3.3.24; *lacu*, 3.3.32; *aqua*, 3.3.46; *lymphisque*, 3.3.51; *fonte*, 3.3.51; *aqua*, 3.3.52).<sup>72</sup> It should come as no surprise, then, that Propertius finds answers to his questions and sets about elevating the status of love elegy and, in doing so, the reputation of the Roman elegist.<sup>73</sup> We must now examine the programmatic landscape of 3.3 in more detail.

Propertius' elevation of the status of elegy in 3.3 is foreshadowed in 3.1 when he claims that Fame gained from his finely polished poetry lifts him high off the ground (*quo me Fama leuat terra sublimis*, 3.1.8) and that his work has come down from the mountain of the Muses (*opus hoc de monte Sororum / detulit intacta pagina nostra uia*, 3.1.17-18), implying obviously in the latter case that his work had in fact been located at the summit, or at least some way up the mountain, of Mount Helicon. In 3.3, Propertius realises, physically, albeit in a dream, these earlier statements when we find him transported to the summit of Mount Helicon, reclining by the most famous of all poetic founts, the Hippocrene (*molli recubans Heliconis in umbra, / Bellerophontei qua fluit umor equi*, 3.3.1-2), which in Propertius' account is, as we have seen, the seat of Roman epic, styled specifically after Ennius' *Annales*. Yet, as we know, Propertius is no epicist and clearly he is misplaced in this poetic landscape – he is deceived, perhaps, by the elegiac softness of the setting (*molli recubans Heliconis in umbra*, 3.3.1)<sup>74</sup> – as Apollo soon informs him (*quid tibi cum tali, demens, est flumine?*, 3.3.15; *non hic ulla tibi speranda est fama, Properti*, 3.3.17). Apollo then guides our poet to a hidden location better suited to his love elegy (*et plectro sedem mihi monstrat eburno, / quo noua muscosa semita facta solo est*, 3.3.25-26) where Calliope advises him, similarly, to concentrate on

<sup>72</sup> The water of the Rhine (*aqua*, 3.3.46) can be seen as a metaphor for epic poetry. The point is discussed later.

<sup>73</sup> Luck (1957), p.176, claims that 3.3 provides the answers to the questions of 3.1. Luck's interpretation of the questions of 3.1 and answers of 3.3 differs from mine.

<sup>74</sup> As Heyworth, S. J. and Morwood, J. H. W. (2011), *A Commentary on Propertius Book 3* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.32, suggest.

erotic verse (*coronatos alienum ad limen amantis / nocturnaeque canes ebria signa fugae*, 3.3.47-48) and offers him water of Philetas as inspiration (*lymphisque a fonte petitis / ora Philetea nostra rigauit aqua*, 3.3.51-52). So much we know. But let us look at the two locations, the Hippocrene and the grotto of the Muses, in more detail.

There can be little doubt that Propertius presents the Hippocrene as the seat of epic poetry and locates elegy in the grotto of the Muses. Ennius found his inspiration in the waters of the Hippocrene (3.3.6) to compose on a range of epic themes (3.3.7-12) and Apollo links it specifically with 'heroic verse' (3.3.16). It is a great spring (*magnis ... fontibus*, 3.3.5), unsuited to Propertius' tiny elegiac mouth (*paruaque ... ora*, 3.3.5), and it, or presumably its surrounds, does not provide the necessary fields of elegy to be travelled by Propertius' little elegiac wheels (*mollia sunt paruis prata terenda rotis*, 'soft meadows must be travelled by your little wheels', 3.3.18). With maritime metaphors, Apollo warns Propertius away from the Hippocrene and epic poetry by proclaiming that Propertius' little boat of elegy is not suited to the heavy load of epic (*non est ingenii cumba grauanda tui*, 'the skiff of your talent must not be overloaded', 3.3.22) and tells him, in what I take to be an allusion to the hexameter and pentameter of elegiac couplets, that he must steer a course with one oar sweeping the sea and the other the sands of the shore (*alter remus aquas alter tibi radat harenas*, 'let one of your oars skim the water, the other the sand', 3.3.23).<sup>75</sup>

The grotto of the Muses lies hidden along a new and unseen (by Propertius at least) path, still mossy from lack of use (3.3.25-26) – its off-track location a Callimachean motif appropriated for Propertius' description – and is richly decorated with mosaics, musical instruments and sacred objects:

hic erat affixis uiridis spelunca lapillis,  
pendebantque cauis tympana pumicibus,

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<sup>75</sup> Richardson (1977), p.327, n.23-24, notes the allusion to 'the limping metre' of elegy in what will 'inevitably be a limping course' of Propertius' boat if he follows Apollo's instructions, but he does not make mention specifically of the sweep of the oars symbolising, respectively, the hexameter and pentameter of elegiac couplets. Fedeli (1985), p.135, n.23-24, developing Richardson's interpretation, notes the allusion to elegy's hexameter and pentameter: 'L'immagine di Apollo, dunque, simboleggia il metro elegiaco: il remo che spinge la barca verso il periglioso mare aperto è l'esametro; quello, invece, che rasenta la riva e mantiene al sicuro il poeta – sottolineando al tempo stesso la sua peculiarità di elegiaco - è il pentametro'.



orgia Musarum et Sileni patris imago  
 fictilis et calami, Pan Tegeae, tui;  
 et Veneris dominae uolucres, mea turba, columbae  
 tingunt Gorgoneo punica rostra lacu. (3.3.27-32)<sup>76</sup>

Here was a verdant grotto embellished with mosaics,  
 And hanging from the vaulted pumice were tambourines,  
 Instruments of the Muses and an image of father Silenus  
 In clay and your reed pipes, Tegean Pan;  
 And Lady Venus' birds, my crowd, doves,  
 Dip red beaks in the Gorgonean pool.

The ornate nature of the grotto and its decorations reflect the highly worked and decorative nature of Propertius' elegy and there is marked contrast between the elaborately embellished grotto as an elegiac metaphor and the unadorned, almost rustic, setting of the Hippocrene symbolising epic poetry. In fact, the grotto is carved – whether by nature or by man is unclear – from pumice (*cauis ... pumicibus*, 3.3.28), precisely the same material used literally to polish parchment or books (q.v. *O.L.D.*, b) – as Catullus tells us: *cui dono lepidum nouum libellum / arido modo pumice expolitum?*, Catul. 1.1-2) – but also metaphorically to polish poetry itself to a high finish such as we find in Propertius' elegies.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, Propertius uses *pumex* in just this context in the first poem of book three (*exactus tenui pumice uersus eat*, 3.1.8). We noted earlier that 3.1.8 provides something of an answer to the question(s) of how Propertius might gain admission to the grove of Callimachus and Philetas. In 3.1, pumice provides a means of polishing Propertius' poetry to the required high finish to warrant entry; here, in 3.3, the entire grove, a metaphor for the inspiration and production of love elegy, is crafted from pumice in an elaborate physical manifestation of Propertius' earlier announcement in 3.1.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Heinsius' *orgia* (3.3.29) is usually adopted by editors in place of the transmitted *ergo*. Richardson (1977), pp.95, 328, n.29, prefers Hetzel's *oraeque*. Shackleton-Bailey (1967), p.141, seems to favour *orgia* over other proposals.

<sup>77</sup> Catullus, clearly, intended his lines to be read metaphorically also in this way. Ovid, later, refers to his *Tristia* as unpolished by pumice (*nec fragili geminae poliantur pumice frontes, / hirsutus sparsis ut uideare comis*, 'your twin sides are not polished with fragile pumice, so you seem unkempt with straggling hairs, *Tr.* 1.1.11-12) when it makes its journey, without its writer, to Rome (*parue – nec inuideo – sine me, liber, ibis in Urbem: / ei mihi, quo domino non licet ire tuo!*, 'little book – I am not envious – you will go to Rome without me: alas for me, it is not permitted to your master to go with you!', *Tr.* 1.1.1-2).

<sup>78</sup> Nethercut (1975), p.75, notes the connection between the pumice at 3.1.8 and 3.3.28.

The grotto's elegiac credentials are advertised, too, by the presence of Venus' birds, doves – here described as Propertius' crowd (*mea turba*, 3.3.31) in contrast to the crowd/turmoil that we find in the middle of the sea of epic poetry (*medio maxima turba mari est*, 'there is the greatest crowd/turmoil in the middle of the sea', 3.3.24)<sup>79</sup> – with the goddess of love, herself, described as an elegiac *domina* (3.3.31). The Muses, also, are present in this grotto (*diuersaeque nouem sortitae iura Puellae / exercent teneras in sua dona manus*, 3.3.33-34) and are named, apparently, after elegiac *puellae*. One of these Muses, Calliope, addresses Propertius, dismisses epic themes as suitable subjects for his poetry (3.3.39-46)<sup>80</sup> – culminating in a description of the Rhine carrying dead bodies along on its waters (*barbarus aut Suebo perfusus sanguine Rhenus / saucia maerenti corpora uectet aqua*, 3.3.45-46), which recalls Callimachus' description (placed into the mouth of Apollo) of the filth and rubbish carried along by the big river of epic poetry (Ἀσσυρίου ποταμοῖο μέγας ῥόος, ἀλλὰ τὰ πολλὰ / λύματα γῆς καὶ πολλὸν ἐφ' ὕδατι συρφετὸν ἔλκει, *Ap.* 108-09) – and instructs him to continue with his love elegy (3.3.47-50).

Propertius, then, in his presentation of the programmatic landscape atop Mount Helicon, describes two distinct and separate locations: the Hippocrene, the seat of epic poetry and inspiration; and the grotto of the Muses, the domain of love elegy. This much is clear. But what of the respective water sources of these two settings: the Hippocrene from which Ennius once drank; and the water within the grotto into which Venus' doves dip their beaks and from which Calliope draws Philetan water before offering it to Propertius? Are these separate waters or does the water in each location flow from the same source? These are important questions with regard to a programmatic reading of Propertius' landscape.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Camps (1966), p.66, n.24, notes the double meaning inherent in *turba* at 3.3.24 and remarks that the interpretation of *maxima turba* as 'the crowd is largest' recalls the motif of 'Callimachean exclusiveness'.

<sup>80</sup> Presumably, Calliope as the Muse of epic poetry is all too aware of Propertius' lack of suitability for epic poetry. The fact that Calliope offers Propertius elegiac water symbolises or reinforces, perhaps, the presence of both epic and elegy atop Mount Helicon at the Ascrean Springs.

<sup>81</sup> Nethercut (1961), pp.389-90, n.2, argues, based upon the frequency of its occurrence, that water functions as a significant motif in Propertius' elegies, particularly in book three. Lyne, R. O. A. M. (1998), 'Propertius 2.10 and 11 and the Structure of Books "2A" and "2B"', *JRS*, 88, pp.35-36, provides an appendix on the actual

At first inspection, the waters appear to be unconnected and self-contained. Apollo warns Propertius away from one source (*quid tibi cum tali, demens, est flumine?*, 3.3.15) and directs him elsewhere (3.3.25-26) to the grotto where Propertius, seemingly, finds other water(s) (*lacu*, 3.3.32; *fonte*, 3.3.51). But Propertius makes little distinction between the waters in the terminology he applies. The Hippocrene is labelled, variously, in this way: *Bellerophontei ... umor equi* (3.3.2); *magnis fontibus* (3.3.5); and *tali ... flumine* (3.3.15). The water(s) within the grotto of the Muses is labelled as follows: *Gorgoneo ... lacu* (3.3.32); *lymphis* (3.3.51); *fonte* (3.3.51); and *Philitea ... aqua* (3.3.52). Indeed, both waters are called ‘springs’ (3.3.5, 51), with the epic status of the Hippocrene marked by the adjective (*magnis*, 3.3.5). But we know from 2.10 that Propertius envisages more than one spring at the summit of Mount Helicon (*nondum etiam Ascraeos norunt mea carmina fontes*, ‘not yet have my songs known the Ascraean Springs’, 2.10.25), so, perhaps, this detail need not concern us much.

Confusing the separate status of the waters particularly, however, is Propertius’ description of the pool within the grotto of the Muses as ‘Gorgonean’ (3.3.32). This adjective, in this instance, must refer to Gorgon Medusa, from whose blood Pegasus was born (τῆς ὅτε δὴ Περσεὺς κεφαλὴν ἀπεδειροτόμησεν, / ἐξέθορε ... Πήγασος ἵππος, ‘when Perseus cut off her [Medusa’s] head, the horse, Pegasus, sprang forth’, *Theog.* 280-81), the horse ridden by Bellerophon (*Bellerophontei ... equi*, 3.3.2), which with a strike of its foot created the Hippocrene (as the etymology of ‘Hippocrene’ explains) (ἔστιν ἡ τοῦ Ἴππου καλουμένη κρήνη· ταύτην τὸν Βελλεροφόντου ποιῆσαι φασιν ἵππον ἐπιψάσαντα ὀπλῇ τῆς γῆς, ‘it is called the spring of the horse; they say that the horse of Bellerophon created this by touching the ground with its hoof’, *Paus.* 9.31.3). Thus, ‘Gorgonean’ can only refer to the Hippocrene and Propertius in labelling the pool in the grotto as such connects it

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geography of Mount Helicon and its waterways. Pausanias, 9.29.5, 30.8, 31.3, 31.7, offers descriptions of the various waters of Mount Helicon. The geographical reality of Mount Helicon’s waterways, however, is of little use in our analysis given that Propertius in his presentation of the setting has manipulated the landscape according to his generic and artistic requirements.

with the source of epic poetry, the Hippocrene, that we find at the start of the elegy.<sup>82</sup> So, is the *lacus* within the grotto of the Muses (as the name suggests) simply a pool where water that flows from the Hippocrene gathers?<sup>83</sup> Is the pool's water the same as that to which Propertius puts his lips at the beginning of the poem?<sup>84</sup>

Confusing the matter further is the fact that the water with which Calliope anoints Propertius as an elegiac poet is drawn from a spring (*lymphisque a fonte petitis / ora Philetea nostra rigauit aqua*, 3.3.51-52). Here, the water is described as coming from a flowing source, a *fons*, not a calm pool, a *lacus*. Yet, sense dictates that there is only one body/source of water in the grotto of the Muses and, accordingly, that the water of the pool and the spring therein are one and the same. Perhaps, the pool is relabelled a *fons* when providing 'water of Philetas' in order to stress its status as an inspirational source, without the need for it to indicate a different water to the pool.<sup>85</sup> Perhaps, water from the *fons* flows into the *lacus* and is at the same time both different from the *lacus* and yet the same. Perhaps, Apollo has redirected Propertius along the unseen path on a circuitous route that delivers him back at the Hippocrene, this time, however, populated by the figures and decorations of elegy – the whole adventure takes place in a dream, after all – and that the *fons* from which Calliope draws water is the same as the 'great spring' of the Hippocrene.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Luck, G. (1959), *The Latin Love Elegy* (London: Methuen and Co.), p.133, remarks on the connection with the Hippocrene implicit in Propertius' description of the pool. Camps (1966), p.67, n.32, points out that 'we seem to be back at the Hippocrene'. Nethercut (1970), p.393, claims that Propertius stresses deliberately the connection between the *lacus* and the Hippocrene.

<sup>83</sup> As Luck (1959), p.133, claims.

<sup>84</sup> Again, as Luck (1959), p.133, claims: 'There is only one source from which all inspiration flows, but there is an easier and a more difficult access to it'. Wimmel, W. (1960), *Kallimachos in Rom. Die Nachfolge seines apologetischen Dichtens in der Augusteerzeit* (Hermes Einzelschriften, 16; Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner), pp.242-43, determines that the water of the pool in the grotto is, in fact, the same water that flows from the Hippocrene (and he takes this as a reflection of Propertius' desire to blend elegiac and epic themes, a view that I do not share at this stage of Propertius' poetic development). Heyworth (2007b), p.291, n.31-32, too, concludes that the waters of Helicon in 3.3 are all part of one stream, differentiated only by the form of the water, whether it is a pool or spring, and the epithets.

<sup>85</sup> This is the suggestion of Nethercut (1961), p.93, n.7, who offers it in anticipation of objections to his argument that flowing waters are associated in 3.3 (and elsewhere) with war and calm waters with peace (pp.392-93, 401).

<sup>86</sup> We might see as confusing, too, the fact that Apollo looks at Propertius in 3.3 from the 'Castalian tree' (*me specularans ex arbore Phoebus*, 3.3.13), for this would appear to be a reference to Mount Parnassus, the location of the Castalian Spring, and not Mount Helicon. Perhaps, as Heyworth and Morwood (2011), p.118, n.13-14,

Indeed, in 3.1, Propertius does link the Hippocrene with elegiac inspiration and composition. Having just dismissed epic poetry and themes and having reaffirmed his commitment to elegiac poetics, Propertius tells us that his work comes down from the summit of Mount Helicon (*opus hoc de monte Sororum / detulit intacta pagina nostra uia*, 3.1.17-18) and he implores the Muses to crown him with the wreath of elegy and not the hard garland of epic poetry (*mollia, Pegasides, date uestroserta poetae: / non faciet capiti dura corona meo*, 3.1.19-20). What is important from our perspective, however, is the form of address with which Propertius entreats the Muses. *Pegasides*, used substantively, here, as an alternative to *Musae* (q.v. *O.L.D.*, 1b), is the adjectival form of the horse's name, *Pegasus*, and is used to refer to the Hippocrene (q.v. *O.L.D.*, 1). Propertius may be using it synecdochically ('Heliconian'), but there can be little doubt that the vocative, *Pegasides*, in this instance, connects the Muses whom Propertius begs to bestow upon him the wreath of elegy with the Hippocrene.

Propertius, then, in his description of the setting atop Mount Helicon, confuses the aquatic elements and renders unclear the relationship and respective locations of the various waters. He conflates, it seems, not only the spring from which Calliope draws water to inspire our poet (3.3.51-52) with the pool within the grotto of the Muses (3.3.32) – which is consistent with his antithesis of elegy and epic – but also both of these waters with the Hippocrene from which Ennius drank and next to which Propertius imagines himself at the start of the elegy (3.3.1-2) – thereby confusing his antithesis. Propertius may have envisaged in his depiction of the scene waters entirely independent and unconnected and is guilty simply of imprecision, even carelessness, perhaps, in the details of the arrangements – although surely he was aware of the implications of labelling the doves' pool 'Gorgonean' (3.3.32). He may have imagined the spring and the pool in the grotto as one and the same water, with the Hippocrene an entirely different source – and this, it seems to me, is the easiest way to interpret the scene. He may still have pictured all the waters, as some claim, to be

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claim, 'Apolline associations ... take precedence over geography'. Camps (1961), p.65, n.13, notes that 'the dream blends images that are properly distinct'.

derived from the same source, the Hippocrene. Notwithstanding these elements of confusion and conflation, however, it is clear that Propertius antithesizes epic and elegiac poetry in his depiction of the landscape and does at least present as distinct the locations of the waters of epic and elegiac inspiration, however connected the waters, themselves, may be in respect of their original source and flow; the precise details of which cannot be resolved with any certainty.

The fact remains, nevertheless, and this is the important point from our perspective, that Propertius locates both epic and elegiac poetry atop Mount Helicon very near to one another and connected by a path (and quite possibly, depending on the interpretation of the scene, the flow of water). Although antithesis is an inherent element in Propertius' Heliconian landscape(s) – here, in 3.3, but also, as we have seen, in 2.10 – on this occasion the equation of the respective generic elements is equally important and significant. By locating the inspirational water(s) of erotic love elegy alongside (or even at, depending on one's interpretation) the Hippocrene, the font of epic poetry, as it is presented at the beginning of 3.3, Propertius suggests that elegiac and epic poetry and, thus, elegiac and epic poets deserve equal standing. If we imagine that elegiac and epic poetry flow from separate springs, the former from that within the grotto of the Muses and the latter from the Hippocrene, then we have independent sources of equal status in terms of vertical hierarchy for the respective generic forms. If we imagine, however, that the spring from which Calliope draws the water of elegiac inspiration and the Hippocrene are one and the same *fons*, then, again, we must conclude that Propertius presents both elegiac and epic poetry as equally inspired and of equal status. Even if we argue that the pool in the grotto gathers water flowing from the spring – whatever spring that might be – and, thus, conclude that there is some degree of vertical hierarchy (however small) present in the setting – we should imagine in such a scenario that water flows downhill from the source to pool in the *lacus* – this need not undermine our interpretation, for it is not from the pool directly that Propertius has Calliope draw the elegiac water, but from the spring.<sup>87</sup> It remains the

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<sup>87</sup> Luck (1959), p.133, claims that the pool is a derivative of the Hippocrene just as elegy is a derivative of epic (in metrical terms). His analysis seems to suggest that epic is thus somewhat superior to elegy. I think, in

case that there are either two separate springs located atop Mount Helicon, one of which feeds a pool, with not any suggestion of vertical hierarchy between them, or there is only one spring, the Hippocrene, which with its flow creates a *lacus*. Whatever view we take of the aquatic arrangement of Propertius' Mount Helicon in 3.3, we must conclude that he presents the waters of elegiac and epic inspiration as equals in terms of status.

By elevating the status of Roman elegy – and it is Roman elegy (and Roman poetry in general), albeit in the Alexandrian tradition, that is to the fore at the start of book three: Propertius makes it clear in 3.1 that he is writing Roman elegy (*primus ego ingredior puro de fonte sacerdos / Itala per Graios orgia ferre choras*, 3.1.4) and he rejects, specifically, Roman epic and Rome's military concerns (*multi, Roma, tuas laudes annalibus addent, / qui finem imperii Bactra futura canent*, 3.1.15-16); and, in 3.3, the Hippocrene inspires Ennius to write a Roman epic about Roman battles (3.3.5-12), Propertius envisages himself, similarly inspired, tackling Roman themes (*reges, Alba, tuos et regum facta tuorum, / tantum operis, nervis hiscere posse meis*, 3.3.3-4) and the epic subjects dismissed by Calliope as unsuitable for Propertius' poetry are particularly Roman (3.3.43-46) – Propertius hopes to elevate his status and fame as an elegiac poet. He, too, is worthy of a place on the summit of Mount Helicon and worthy of inspiration from its water(s). It is by elevating the status of his love elegy that he finds and enters the grove of Callimachus and Philetas which he pleads to enter and asks after at the beginning of 3.1, the grove that Propertius realises atop Mount Helicon in 3.3. It is the elevation of the status of love elegy that drives Propertius' programmatic landscaping at the beginning of book three, particularly in 3.3; if his poetry receives the status which, in his opinion, it merits, the status which he gives it in 3.3, then Propertius, perhaps, will be afforded his wish – a wish that he repeats later in book three (*inter Callimachi sat erit placuisse libellos / et cecinisse modis, Coe poeta, tuis*, 3.9.43-44) – and receive the reputation and fame which he thinks he deserves and which was bestowed upon his Hellenistic predecessors, Callimachus and Philetas.

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contrast to Luck's view, if, in fact, I have presented his view fairly, that Propertius is concerned in 3.3 with presenting elegy as equal to, and in no way inferior, to epic.

## Elevation: A Change of Scene

The elevation of Propertius' love elegy becomes all the more clear if we consider the landscape of 3.3 in relation to the Heliconian setting of 2.10, where we left our poet in the previous chapter. In 2.10, as we have seen, he proposes to tackle epic themes and sing of the military campaigns of Augustus (*iam libet et fortis memorare ad proelia turmas / et Romana mei dicere castra ducis*, 'now I want to tell of troops brave for battle and to speak of the Roman camp(aign)s of my leader', 2.10.3-4). In the end, as we know, he pleads inability for the task by claiming, metaphorically, that just as one is unable to touch the head of big statues and must place instead a garland at the base of its feet, so too is he unable to rise to the task of singing the praises of Augustus (2.10.21-24). He then illustrates his inability for the task by antithesizing the waterways of Mount Helicon, just as he does in 3.3, as metaphors for epic or, at least in the case of 2.10, non-erotic poetry and his own love elegy:

nondum etiam Ascraeos norunt mea carmina fontes;  
sed modo Permessi flumine lauit Amor. (2.10.25-26)

Not yet have my songs known the Ascraean Springs;  
But Love has just washed them in the River Permessus.

There is in 2.10, as we noted in our analysis of the elegy, a recurring motif of ascent: Propertius raises his gaze towards the summit of Mount Helicon (2.10.9); he urges his voice to rise to the occasion (2.10.11); he is unable to reach the top of a tall statue (2.10.21); unable to climb aboard the chariot of epic themes (2.10.23); and unable to make a poetic ascent of Mount Helicon (2.10.25). The motif, accordingly, is more accurately one of failed ascent. Indeed, the elegy ends with Propertius' love elegy languishing in the (relatively) lowly waters of the River Permessus.

The motif of ascent is prevalent in 3.1, too: poetic Fame raises Propertius high above the ground (*me Fama leuat terra sublimis*, 3.1.9); he has managed to climb aboard a chariot – although this time it is



a chariot of elegiac poetry (*mecum in curru parui uectantur Amores*, 3.1.11);<sup>88</sup> and his poetry has managed an ascent of Mount Helicon from where he portrays it coming down to its audience (*opus hoc de monte Sororum / detulit intacta pagina nostra uia*, 3.1.17-18). Moreover, in 3.3, as we have seen, Propertius and his elegiac poetry are firmly located on top of the very mountain at the very springs (*Ascraeos ... fontes*, 2.10.25) that he (and his poetry) were incapable of reaching in 2.10.

Whereas, then, the motif in 2.10 is one of failed ascent, in 3.3, Propertius' summit bid is very much a success. His erotic verse no longer languishes in the lowland River Permessus; it has been elevated to the Ascraean Springs atop Mount Helicon and, in this way, Propertius completes the journey he was unable to make in 2.10. The generic vertical hierarchy present in 2.10 is absent in the programmatic landscape of 3.3. He no longer presents his love elegy as inferior to other forms of poetry.

Given that there is, as we have argued, no real departure in book three from the poetics of book two, we must ask what prompts the elevation of love elegy at the start of Propertius' third book. A desire for the fame bestowed upon his poetic models, Callimachus and Philetas, is the ostensible reason. But a more contemplative and considered reevaluation of the status and standing of love elegy is, I think, the real motivation. Propertius' reaffirmation of his commitment to love elegy and the reassessment of the vertical hierarchy of poetic genres he presents in 2.10 reveals a more self-confident poet no longer restrained by self-doubt and perceived inadequacy of poetic talent or love elegy's generic worth.

### Closer to Callimachean Ideals

We can consider now my final hypothesis: that Propertius, in 3.3, crafts a programmatic landscape that presents his poetry and poetics as closer to Callimachean ideals in accordance with his development into the *Callimachus Romanus* of his fourth and final book. Callimachus' programmatic

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<sup>88</sup> Perhaps the fact that Propertius, here, has managed to climb aboard a triumphal chariot, a chariot of (elegiac) praise, is an argument in favour of retaining the transmitted *currum* at 2.10.23.

aesthetic is a particularly apt model against which to measure Propertius' own poetic landscaping here, at the start of book three, given that 'Callimachus' is the very first word of the book, that 3.3 recalls Callimachus' own dream of initiation on Mount Helicon and that the elegies beginning book three contain a number of Callimachean motifs and metaphors.

Propertius has long been an imitator and innovator of Hellenistic poetry after the fashion of Callimachus (and, no doubt, Philetas). Yet, the programmatic landscape of 2.10 does not reflect such ideals. Our poet's lack of confidence and the perceived inferiority of elegy, quite probably informed by the particular stance of the elegiac poet/*amator* in opposition to the prevailing morality and the generic superiority, as Propertius presents it at least, of epic or panegyric (or almost any other form of non-erotic) poetry results in 2.10 in a generic scene on Mount Helicon that by most measures conflicts with the ideals and statements expressed in Callimachus' programmatic announcements. Propertius, in 3.3, offers a rather different picture of Mount Helicon and its poetic waters.

Epic poetry, or poetry addressing themes best suited to martial epic, remains in 3.3 much where Propertius left it in 2.10. The Hippocrene, the most famous of the Ascrean Springs, inspires epic verse in 3.3, just as the Ascrean Springs provide such inspiration in 2.10. The war-horse symbolises epic poetry in 2.10 (*et campus Haemonio iam dare tempus equo*, 'and it is time now to give the Haemonian horse the plain', 2.10.2), inspires Propertius to propose singing of martial themes (*iam libet et fortis memorare ad proelia turmas / et Romana mei dicere castra ducis*, 2.10.3-4), which he does, in fact, do to some extent (2.10.13-18), and is associated by implication with the Ascrean Springs of the elegy's final couplet. In 3.3, the Hippocrene, the font of the horse, the seat of epic verse, inspires both Propertius and Ennius to write martial epic (3.3.1-12). Little change here, then. Propertius and his elegy, however, have travelled some distance from the River Permessus (presumably) at the base of Mount Helicon to the grotto of the Muses and the (Ascrean) spring therein.

Callimachus, as we know, associates poetry after his style, a style which Propertius emulates in his own assessment, with pure, clear springs (Δηοῖ δ' οὐκ ἀπὸ παντὸς ὕδωρ φορέουσι μέλισσαι, / ἀλλ' ἥτις καθαρὴ τε καὶ ἀχράαντος ἀνέρπει / πίδακος ἐξ ἱερῆς ὀλίγη λιβάς ἄκρον ἄωτον, *Ap.* 110-12; οὐδ' ἀπὸ κρήνης / πίνω, 'I drink not from the [public] well', *Epigr.* 28.3-4)<sup>89</sup> and lengthy epic verse with a river's muddy, dirty waters (Ἀσσυρίου ποταμοῖο μέγας ῥόος, ἀλλὰ τὰ πολλὰ / λύματα γῆς καὶ πολλὸν ἐφ' ὕδατι συρφετὸν ἔλκει, *Ap.* 108-09). We concluded, therefore, in the previous chapter that the landscape of 2.10, where Propertius associates epic verse with the pure, clear Ascrean Springs and love elegy with the lowland River Permessus, largely contradicts Callimachus' aesthetic. In 3.3, this situation has changed.

By elevating elegy in 3.3 from the lowland river to the pure spring in the grotto of the Muses from which Calliope draws the water of Philetas, Propertius, as he continues to develop his elegy in book three, has moved closer to the Callimachean ideal. His love elegy has now found its rightful place in the clear Callimachean waters of Mount Helicon's summit spring(s). Epic verse, however, still in contrast to Callimachus' vision, remains in the similarly pure waters of the Hippocrene.

Propertius' Heliconian landscape(s) at the start of book three, appropriately for a book and a poet that advertise their Callimachean credentials more openly, shows development from the scene offered in 2.10 and has moved closer in correlation with Callimachus' programmatic landscapes and poetics. There is still some way to go, however, for our poet on his journey to becoming the Roman Callimachus as we find him in book four, as, unlike Callimachus, whom Roman poets present as portraying elegy as a superior genre to epic poetry, Propertius in the programmic landscape of 3.3 depicts elegy as the equal of epic verse.

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<sup>89</sup> For κρήνης (*Epigr.* 28.3) as 'public well', here, see Gow and Page (1965b), p.156, who note that Callimachus means 'the source at which others drink'.

## Conclusion

We began our investigation by examining the suggestion that Propertius in the elegies that begin his third book proposes a more learned Hellenistic style of elegy after the fashion of his Alexandrian predecessors, Callimachus and Philetas, compared to the erotic love elegy he has so far produced. We found, however, that book three displays no real departure from the poetics or style of book two and that Propertius has ever been a keen student of Hellenistic poetry with his poetry displaying a range of Hellenistic motifs and Callimachean (and, presumably, Philetan) influence and allusion. We concluded, accordingly, that the invocation of Callimachus and Philetas and the questions asked of them that begin the third book do not indicate a change of poetic style on behalf of our poet. Propertius is not asking, here, how to become a Callimachean poet; he is already such a poet.

A closer examination of the elegies that begin book three revealed that the power of poetry to bestow fame and posthumous immortality upon the poet is a central theme. Accordingly, we determined that Propertius with the questions of 3.1 asks how he might acquire something of the fame and reputation for poetry that was bestowed upon Callimachus and Philetas. In 3.3, we noted that he finds answers to his questions and determines that elevating the status of love elegy will gain him the reputation and fame that he thinks that he deserves and has, unfairly, been denied.

When we compared the programmatic landscapes of Mount Helicon as Propertius presents them in 2.10 and 3.3, we found that the elevation of elegy becomes all the clearer. No longer does elegy languish in the (relatively) lowly River Permessus at the base of Mount Helicon as it does at the conclusion of 2.10; it has managed the journey that it was unable to make in that elegy and now resides alongside the pure, clear (Ascraean) spring within the grove of the Muses atop Mount Helicon alongside the Hippocrene. No longer is love elegy presented as inferior to epic verse (or any other type of poetry).

This elevation of elegy is a further example of Propertius' poetic development in book three. Rather than a significant change from the poetics of the previous book, Propertius increases book three's

range by mixing novelty with continuity. Book three incorporates new themes and directions into a very familiar framework. Part of the 'point' of book three is precisely this kind of ambiguity.

Lastly, we noted that the elevation of love elegy to the clear springs of Mount Helicon's summit reveals a poet moving closer to his Callimachean ideals. No longer is his erotic verse associated with the lowland river, as it was in 2.10, in contradiction of Callimachus' poetic aesthetic; instead, it has found its rightful place in the pure Callimachean waters of the spring within the grotto of the Muses. Yet we noted, too, that the association of epic poetry with the clear waters of the Hippocrene remains unchanged and that this association continues to be at odds with Callimachus' programmatic announcements.

In conclusion, then, the elegies that begin the third book, far from exposing a poet uncertain of his poetic direction, reveal Propertius confidently affirming his commitment to love elegy and seeking a share of the fame and poetic immortality bestowed upon Callimachus and Philetas. By elevating the status of his erotic verse through a poetic ascent of Mount Helicon, Propertius aims to enhance his reputation and prove himself worthy of the mantle of his Alexandrian predecessors.

# Propertius 4.9: 'Water, Water, Everywhere, Nor Any Drop to Drink'

(Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, 1798)

## Introduction

Propertius 4.9, one of the most complex and fascinating of Propertius' elegies, affords a remarkable account of Hercules' arrival at the site of future Rome when the monster-slaying hero seeks rest after his successful mission to capture the cattle of Geryon:<sup>1</sup>

Amphitryoniades qua tempestate iuuenos  
egerat a stabulis, o Erythea, tuis,  
uenit ad inuictos pecorosa Palatia montis,  
et statuit fessos fessus et ipse boues,  
qua Velabra suo stagnabant flumine quoque  
nauta per urbanas uelificabat aquas. (4.9.1-6)

What time the steers Amphitryoniades  
Had driven from your fold, O Erythea,  
He came to the sheepy Palatine, an unconquered hill,  
And settled his weary cattle, himself also weary,  
Where the Velabrum used to pool with its own flow and where  
The sailor used to glide through urban waters.

This serene pastoral setting is disturbed by the monstrous Cacus, who, reprising his role in the *Aeneid* (8.190-267), steals some of (what are now) Hercules' cattle and is, accordingly, slain for his efforts when Hercules hears the cattle lowing from within Cacus' lair:

sed non infido manserunt hospite Caco  
incolumes: furto polluit ille louem.  
incola Cacus erat, metuendo raptor ab antro,  
per tria partitos qui dabat ora sonos.  
hic, ne certa forent manifestae signa rapinae,  
auersos cauda traxit in antra boues,  
nec sine teste deo: furem sonuere iuueni,  
furis et implacidas diruit ira fores.  
Maenalio iacuit pulsus tria tempora ramo

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<sup>1</sup> Some sections of this chapter developed out of parts of my M.A. thesis where, with a different focus and a very different reading of 4.9, I argued that Hercules functions as an Augustan paradigm.

Cacus ...

(4.9.7-16)

But with Cacus a treacherous host, they did not remain  
Safe: that man dishonoured Jove with his theft.  
Cacus was the resident, a robber from a fearful cave,  
Who uttered sounds shared between three mouths.  
He, lest there be sure signs of the flagrant theft,  
Dragged the cows backwards by the tail into the cave,  
Not without a god as witness: the cattle cried 'Thief!'  
And anger smashed down the thief's hostile doors.  
He lies dead, his tri-brows smote by the Maenalian branch,  
Cacus ...<sup>2</sup>

Following a quaintly bucolic address to the recovered herd (4.9.16-20) (*ite boues, / Herculis ite boues*, 'go cattle, / go cattle of Hercules', 4.9.16-17), Hercules is stricken by a great thirst (*sicco torquet sitis ora palato*, 'with dry palate thirst tortures his mouth', 4.9.21) and, seemingly ignoring the nearby waters of the Tiber and the Velabrum (*terraque non nullas feta ministrat aquas*, 'and the teeming earth offers no little water', 4.9.22),<sup>3</sup> he hears the sound of far off laughter and heads in that direction supposedly in search of a drink, whereupon he discovers the grove of Bona Dea and a sacred spring:<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The description of the lowing cattle (*furem sonuere iuuenti*, 4.9.13) is somewhat problematic. I favour the translation 'the cattle cried "Thief!"', as if Jupiter, as witness to the theft (*nec sine teste deo*, 4.9.13), has armed them with the power of speech – as Richardson, L. (1977), *Propertius: Elegies I-IV* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press), p.472, n.13, notes. If this seems to attribute too much power to the cattle (or Jupiter, for that matter) then we might translate *sonare*, here, as 'revealed by their lowing'. For a brief discussion, see Hutchinson, G. O. (2006), *Propertius: Elegies Book IV* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.209, n.13.

<sup>3</sup> Note that I read *non nullas*. This is discussed in detail later.

<sup>4</sup> Although the goddess remains unnamed and Propertius simply calls her *feminea dea* ('female goddess', 4.9.25), Macrobius, 1.12.27-28, identifies her as Bona Dea, and it is almost certain that Bona Dea is intended – see, for example, Paley, F. A. (1872), *Sex. Aurelii Propertii Carmina* (London: Bell and Daldy), p.271, n.26 – note that Paley considers 4.9 the ninth elegy in a fifth book; Butler, H. E. and Barber, E. A. (1933), *The Elegies of Propertius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), p.372, n.25; Camps, W. A. (1965), *Propertius: Elegies Book IV* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.138, n.25; Richardson (1977), p.473, n.23-26; Galinsky, K. (1972), *The Herakles Theme. The Adaptations of the Hero in Literature from Homer to the Twentieth Century* (New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield), p.153; Hutchinson (2006), pp.205-06, 210-11, n.23, 211, n.25-26. Cicero (*Har. Res.* 37) states that men were forbidden to know her name; perhaps explaining why Propertius does not name her as *Bona Dea*. The strongest hint to her identity is the fact that the rites of the goddess' worship, here in 4.9, are forbidden to men (*impune et nullis sacra relecta uiris*, 'and sacred rites revealed to no man with impunity', 4.9.26); this was an essential aspect of Bona Dea's worship. For a comprehensive treatment of the worship of Bona Dea and Propertius 4.9, see Holleman, A. W. J. (1977), 'Propertius IV 9: An Augustan View of Roman Religion', *RBPh*, 55, pp.79-92. For the cult of Bona Dea, see Brouwer, H. H. J. (1989), *Bona Dea. The Sources and a Description of the Cult* (EPRO, 110; Leiden: E. J. Brill). Additionally, Bona Dea was known as Fauna and was thought to be the wife or daughter of Faunus, a deity associated primarily with the forest and particularly

sed procul inclusas audit ridere puellas,  
lucus ubi umbroso fecerat orbe nemus,  
femineae loca clausa deae fontisque piandos ... (4.9.23-25)<sup>5</sup>

But far off he hears hidden girls laughing,  
Where a sacred grove had made a wood in a shady ring,  
An enclosed place of the female goddess and a reverend spring ...

When refused entry to the grove on the grounds that men are forbidden to witness the rites of Bona Dea (*impune et nullis sacra relecta uiris*, 'and sacred rites revealed to no man with impunity', 4.9.26), trespass upon the enclosed altar (*interdicta uiris metuenda lege piatur / quae se summota uindicat ara casa*, 'forbidden to men and hallowed by a fearful law is the altar which protects itself in a secluded hut', 4.9.55-56) or access the grove's spring (*di tibi dent alios fontis: haec lympa puellas / auia secreti limitis una fluit*, 'may the gods grant you other springs: this water flows for girls alone, remote with secret channel', 4.9.59-60), he pleads for water and attempts to gain entry by recounting the tale of his time spent in servitude to the Lydian Queen, Omphale, when he dressed as a woman and performed women's work:

'uos precor, o luci sacro quae luditis antro,  
pandite defessis hospita fana uiris.  
fontis egens erro circaque sonantia lymphis;  
et caua succepto flumine palma sat est.' (4.9.33-36)

'idem ego Sidonia feci seruilia palla  
officia et Lydo pensa diurna colo,  
mollis et hirsutum cepit mihi fascia pectus,  
et manibus duris apta puella fui.' (4.9.47-50)<sup>6</sup>

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the sounds heard within them – for a brief overview of the attributes of Faunus and Fauna/Bona Dea, see entries in Hornblower, S. and Spawforth, A. (2003), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (3rd edn.; Oxford: Oxford University Press). The goddess in 4.9 seems to have similar associations: the woodland setting is stressed with the almost tautological *lucus* and *nemus* (4.9.24); and the sound of the forest is, perhaps, provided by the laughter of the girls hidden within the grove (4.9.23). Dancing and merriment, too, were associated with the worship of Faunus and Bona Dea and the girls within the grove, here, seem engaged in playful revelry (4.9.23, 33).

<sup>5</sup> Just what picture of the grove/wood we are to imagine at 4.9.24 is not entirely clear. Warden, J. (1980), *Fallax Opus: Poet and Reader in the Elegies of Propertius* (Phoenix. Supplementary Volume; 14; Toronto: University of Toronto Press), gives a clear explanation and translation, p.106. For a summation of the difficulties, see Hutchinson (2006), p.211, n.24, n.25-26, and Heyworth, S. J. (2007b), *Cynthia: A Companion to the Text of Propertius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp.487-88, n.23-26.

<sup>6</sup> The phrase *apta puella* is difficult. For possible interpretations of *apta*, see Debrohun (1994), pp.49-51.



‘I beg you, O you who play in the sacred hollow of the grove,  
Open your hospitable shrine to a weary man.  
I wander lacking a spring and around is the sound of water;  
Even a cupped palm caught from the stream is enough.’

‘I, too, in a Sidonian robe, carried out a slave’s  
Duties and the daily burden upon a Lydian distaff  
And a soft bra bound my hairy chest,  
And with hard hands I was a fitting girl.’

The priestess, however, is unmoved by his pleas, whereupon Hercules, ignoring her warning (*parce oculis, hospes, lucoque abscede uerendo; / cede agedum et tuta limina linque fuga*, ‘spare your eyes, stranger, and depart this reverend grove; / come on, go, and leave the threshold in safe flight’, 4.9.53-54), shoulders aside the door, enters the sacred grove and drains the spring dry:

... ille umeris postis concussit opacos,  
nec tulit iratam ianua clausa sitim.  
at postquam exhausto iam flumine uicerat aestum ... (4.9.61-63)

... he forced the shady posts with his shoulder;  
The closed door bore not his angry thirst.  
But after he had subdued his heat with the stream now drained ...

Finally, in retaliation for being refused water, he excludes women from worship at the Ara Maxima:

‘Maxima quae gregibus deuota est Ara repertis,  
ara per has’ inquit ‘maxima facta manus,  
haec nullis umquam pateat ueneranda puellis,  
Herculis aeternum ne sit inulta sitis.’ (4.9.67-70)

‘The Ara Maxima, which was vowed for my herd recovered,  
Was’, he said, ‘made the greatest altar through these hands;  
This must never be open to be worshipped by any girl,  
Lest Hercules’ thirst be forever unavenged.’

This elegy, although ostensibly an αἴτιον of the founding of the Ara Maxima in commemoration of the rescue of the cattle – it contains also (supposed) αἴτια of the naming of the Palatine and the

Velabrum (4.9.1-6) and the Forum Bouarium (4.9.19-20)<sup>7</sup> – subordinates the aetiological theme to Hercules' encounter with the worshippers of Bona Dea and his actions at the grove. In fact, the speech proclaiming the foundation of the altar does not follow, as one would expect, the recovery of the herd and Hercules' address to the cattle:

... Alcides sic ait: 'Ite boues,  
Herculis ite boues, nostrae labor ultime clauae,  
bis mihi quaesitae, bis mea praeda, boues,  
aruaque mugitu sancite Bouaria longo:  
nobile erit Romae pascua uestra Forum.'

(4.9.16-20)

... Alcides spoke thus: 'Go cattle,  
Go cattle of Hercules, final labour of my club,  
Twice sought by me, twice my booty, cattle,  
Hallow the Bovarian fields with a long low:  
Your pasture will be Rome's noble Forum.'

Rather, the commemorative speech is postponed until the end of the elegy following Hercules' final violation of the goddess' rites. The Bona Dea episode, accounting for two-thirds of the elegy, is thus framed by the aetiological tale of the killing of Cacus and the foundation of the Ara Maxima. Propertius 4.9, accordingly, divides into two distinct sections: Hercules' arrival at the site of (future) Rome and his ensuing conflict with Cacus (4.9.1-20); and the lesser known story of Hercules' attempts to assuage his thirst – a consequence of his exertions – by gaining admission to the celebration of the rites of Bona Dea (4.9.21-72).

Although the elegy divides neatly into these two sections and the battle between Hercules and Cacus acts as a prelude of sorts for Hercules' encounter with the worshippers of Bona Dea, it is important to take note of the significant connections between the two episodes and consider the poem as a whole. The theme of exclusion is prominent throughout and there are a number of specific points of contact and comparison between the respective descriptions of Cacus' lair and the

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<sup>7</sup> For the additional etymologies, see Paley (1872), pp.269-70, n.5, 270, n.19; Camps (1965), p.136, n.5; Richardson (1977), p.472, n.3, n.5; Warden (1980), p.106; Welch, T. S. (2005), *The Elegiac Cityscape: Propertius and the Meaning of Monuments* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press), p.121; Hutchinson (2006), pp.207-08, n.3, 208, n.5-6, 210, n.19-20.

grove of Bona Dea; for example, both are called grottos (*antro*, 4.9.9, 33) and both, despite being natural features of the landscape, are furnished with doors (4.9.14, 61-62).<sup>8</sup>

While Hercules' encounter with Cacus offers a treatment of a well-known Roman foundation legend – most famously told by Virgil in his *Aeneid* (8.190-267)<sup>9</sup> – the Bona Dea episode is almost without precedent.<sup>10</sup> Macrobius in his *Saturnalia* (1.12.27-28), seemingly citing Varro's (now lost) account as his source, offers the only other extant narrative and his version can be considered perfunctory at best, contains little detail, and is composed some four centuries later. The complexities of the elegy and the absence of other accounts of Hercules' encounter with the worshippers of Bona Dea – and thus the opportunity for comparative analysis – have encouraged many diverse interpretations.

W. S. Anderson was the first to appreciate fully the intricacies when he noted the elegy's strong (thematically) elegiac context and, in particular, Hercules' resemblance to the *exclusus amator*.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, he remarked upon the juxtaposition and incongruity of elegiac and epic themes within the elegy and, henceforth, issues of genre and generic influence have figured prominently in other readings.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, analysis of the poem has focused on the similarities and divergences between Propertius' account of Hercules' conflict with Cacus and that offered by Virgil in *Aeneid* 8.<sup>13</sup> Hercules' cross-dressing, his desecration of the rites of Bona Dea and his subsequent prohibition of female worship at the Ara Maxima have been seen as indicative of the elegy's concern with gender

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<sup>8</sup> Detailed discussion of similarities and links between the two episodes follows.

<sup>9</sup> For Virgil's account, see, for example, Galinsky, K. (1966), 'The Hercules-Cacus Episode in Aeneid VIII', *AJP*, 87, pp.18-51; Morgan, L. (1998), 'Assimilation and Civil War: Hercules and Cacus', in H.-P. Stahl (ed.), *Vergil's Aeneid: Augustan Epic and Political Context* (London: Duckworth), pp.175-97; Boyle, A. J. (1999), 'Aeneid 8: Images of Rome', in C. G. Perkell (ed.), *Reading Vergil's Aeneid: An Interpretive Guide* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press), pp.148-61. For Propertius' reworking of the battle between Hercules and Cacus found in *Aeneid* 8, see Warden, J. (1982), 'Epic into Elegy: Propertius 4.9.70f.' *Hermes*, 110, pp.228-42.

<sup>10</sup> I say 'almost without precedent' because, presumably, Varro's account was extant when Propertius composed his elegy.

<sup>11</sup> Anderson, W. S. (1964), 'Hercules Exclusus: Propertius, IV, 9', *AJP*, 85, pp.1-12.

<sup>12</sup> Anderson, W. S. (1964), pp.1-12; Cairns, F. (1992), 'Propertius 4.9: "Hercules Exclusus" and the Dimensions of Genre', in K. Galinsky (ed.), *The Interpretation of Roman Poetry: Empiricism or Hermeneutics?* (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang), pp.65-95; Anderson, W. S. (1992), 'The Limits of Genre: A Response to Francis Cairns', in K. Galinsky (ed.), *The Interpretation of Roman Poetry: Empiricism or Hermeneutics?* (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang), pp.96-103. Cairns (1992), pp.70-77, cites Pindar (among others) as an influence on Propertius in 4.9; a claim dismissed by Anderson, W. S. (1992), pp.97-100. Cairns (1992), p.86, argues, also, that 4.9 is probably based on a lost passage of Callimachus.

<sup>13</sup> See, most notably, Warden (1982), pp.228-42.

politics and sexual segregation.<sup>14</sup> More recently, there has been focus on fixed categories and definitions of gender and the unstable nature of gender identity in this elegy.<sup>15</sup> Concepts of binarisms (most notably in relation to gender and genre), oppositional classification and the limits of such categorisations have also been explored.<sup>16</sup> There have been attempts to historicise the poem, with focus on the political appropriation of Hercules' arrival at Rome, the sexual segregation of religious institutions, restoration of shrines and religious and moral programmes.<sup>17</sup> More specifically, there has been attention given to the origin and nature of the celebration of rites at the Ara Maxima and within the cult of Bona Dea.<sup>18</sup> The elegy has been seen as a critique of Augustan promotion of definitive or privileged versions of mythology and the mythmaking process in more general terms.<sup>19</sup> Other analyses have explored Callimachean and Alexandrian themes and offered a Callimachean reading of aspects of the poem and its poetics.<sup>20</sup> My analysis develops the Callimachean readings,

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<sup>14</sup> Fox, M. (1998), 'Transvestite Hercules at Rome', in R. Cleminson and M. Allison (eds.), *In/visibility: Gender and Representation in a European Context* (Bradford: University of Bradford Press), pp.1-21, offers a general analysis of literary representations of Hercules together with specific treatment of Hercules' cross-dressing in Propertius 4.9 (pp.13-17).

<sup>15</sup> See Lindheim, S. H. (1998), 'Hercules Cross-Dressed, Hercules Undressed: Unmasking the Construction of the Propertian Amator in Elegy 4.9', *AJP*, 119, pp.43-66, and Janan, M. (1998), 'Refashioning Hercules: Propertius 4.9', *Helios*, 25, pp.65-77.

<sup>16</sup> See Debrohun, J. B. (1994), 'Redressing Elegy's Puella: Propertius IV and the Rhetoric of Fashion', *JRS*, 84, pp.41-63 – this article is based on her PhD dissertation, Debrohun, J. B. (1992), 'Hercules Belabored: Propertius 4.9 and the Discourses of Elegy', (unpublished PhD thesis; University of Michigan) and appears, largely unchanged as chapter four in Debrohun, J. B. (2003), *Roman Propertius and the Reinvention of Elegy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press), pp.156-200, and Janan (1998), pp.65-77, and chapter eight 'Hercules in Rome' in Janan, M. (2001), *The Politics of Desire: Propertius IV* (Berkeley: University of California Press), pp.129-45.

<sup>17</sup> See Rothwell, K. S. (1996), 'Propertius on the Site of Rome', *Latomus*, 55, pp.829-54, especially pp.842-54; Fox, M. (1996), *Roman Historical Myths. The Regal Period in Augustan Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), pp.169-75; Fox, M. (1999), 'Propertius 4.9 and the Toils of Historicism', *MD*, 43, pp.157-76; Welch, T. S. (2004), 'Masculinity and Monuments in Propertius 4.9', *AJP*, 125, pp.61-90 (largely reprinted in Welch (2005), pp.113-32); Harrison, S. J. (2005), 'Hercules and Augustus in Propertius 4.9', in F. Cairns (ed.), *Papers of the Langford Latin Seminar 12: Greek and Roman Poetry, Greek and Roman Historiography* (Cambridge: Francis Cairns), pp.117-31; Berry, M. J. (2011), 'Political Poetics: The Bona Dea Episode in Propertius 4.9', *Latomus*, 70 (2), pp.391-404 – parts of this article are reproduced in this thesis. Cairns (1992), p.88, too, argues that 4.9 might constitute a serious treatment of religion.

<sup>18</sup> See Holleman (1977), pp.79-92.

<sup>19</sup> See Spencer, D. (2001), 'Propertius, Hercules, and the Dynamics of Mythic Space in *Elegy 4.9*', *Arethusa*, 34 (3), pp.259-84.

<sup>20</sup> With particular regard to 4.9, see Pillinger, H. E. (1969), 'Some Callimachean Influences on Propertius, Book 4', *HSCPh*, 73, pp.182-89; Pinotti, P. (1977), 'Propert. IV 9: Alessandrinismo e Arte Allusiva', *GIF*, 29, pp.50-71; Debrohun (2003), pp.201-09. For a general treatment of Propertius' Callimacheanism, see Arkins, B. (2005), *An Interpretation of the Poetry of Propertius (c. 50-15 B.C.)* (Studies in Classics, 30; Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press), pp.19-34, and Keith, A. M. (2008), *Propertius: Poet of Love and Leisure*, ed. D. Taylor (Classical Literature and

particularly that of Debrohun,<sup>21</sup> and focuses on the poetics of the elegy and the programmatic elements of the landscapes.

While the elegy has received from Debrohun a detailed reading of the Callimachean aspects of the grove of Bona Dea and Hercules' actions therein, there has to date been no analysis of the programmatic nature of the landscape as a whole.<sup>22</sup> My analysis offers a comprehensive reading of the entire landscape of 4.9 by considering the scene of Hercules' battle with Cacus in programmatic terms, as well as the setting of the Bona Dea episode, and examining the relationship between the two locations. I argue that Propertius constructs carefully a poetic landscape according to his view of poetic and generic hierarchies and that 4.9, thus, affords insight into Propertius' poetic development.

I begin by arguing that 4.9 in general and its landscapes in particular are constructed to reflect something of Propertius' poetics. I focus upon the nature of water, especially that within the grove of Bona Dea, and contend that it is no ordinary water but rather a metaphor for Propertius' poetry and poetic inspiration. I suggest that the waters of the Tiber and the Velabrum symbolise epic poetry, while the spring within the grove represents erotic love elegy. I then move on to examine the programmatic nature of the landscape and Hercules' actions within it. I argue that Propertius presents epic themes as incompatible with love elegy and that Hercules' actions represent the elegiac conceit of the overpowering force of epic poetry and the elegist's inability to tackle (successfully) epic themes and poetry. Finally, I consider the landscape of 4.9 in relation to Callimachus' programmatic statements. I suggest that Propertius presents a landscape that differs in programmatic terms from the ones we have so far examined and that here in 4.9 his landscape is in

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Society; London: Duckworth), pp.45-85. For discussions of Callimachean influence on Propertius' fourth book, see Pillinger (1969), pp.171-99.

<sup>21</sup> Debrohun (2003), pp.201-09.

<sup>22</sup> The reading of Debrohun (2003), pp.201-09, titled 'Excursus', is the most important Callimachean reading of the poem to date. Debrohun gives a fine analysis of the Callimachean elements of Hercules' actions at the grove of Bona Dea and of the grove itself, and shows the poem's association with Callimachean poetics, but (and this is not a failing) she does not offer a comprehensive analysis of the programmatic nature of the landscape of the entire elegy nor draw conclusions about what Propertius might be stating about his own poetics in this regard.

agreement with Callimachus' aesthetic. I argue that Propertius has once again reevaluated his assessment of the generic hierarchy of elegiac and epic poetry and that, in contrast to 2.10 where he presented elegy as inferior to epic and in development of 3.3 where he presented elegy and epic as poetic equals, here in 4.9 he portrays elegy as a superior genre to epic, thereby reflecting his realisation of his claim to be the *Romanus Callimachus*.

### A Poetic Subtext

Propertius 4.9, unlike 2.10, 3.1, or 3.3, contains no explicit mention of poetic composition – save, perhaps, for the final couplet<sup>23</sup> – or makes particular reference to the employment of landscapes as metaphors for poetry. We must, therefore, rely on circumstantial and contextual evidence to the make the case for a metapoetic reading. Nonetheless, the final couplet of the poem offers some encouragement for the reading of a poetic subtext:<sup>24</sup>

sancte pater, salve, cui iam fauet aspera luno:  
 Sance, uelis libro dexter inesse meo. (4.9.71-72)<sup>25</sup>

Hail, Holy Father, to whom cruel Juno now shows favour:  
 Sancus, may you wish to dwell favourably in my book.

Although the precise sense and tone of the elegy's final lines (which raise a number of textual and translatory difficulties)<sup>26</sup> remain elusive, the important point from our perspective is that there is mention of Propertius' book of poetry (4.9.72). Thus, the intrusion of the Propertius' own voice with

<sup>23</sup> The reference to literature and poetic composition, here, is mentioned by McParland, E. (1970), 'Propertius 4.9', *TAPA*, 101, p.349, and Warden (1980), p.106.

<sup>24</sup> As Debrohun (2003), p.201, notes.

<sup>25</sup> I print, here, the text of Heyworth, S. J. (2007a), *Sexti Properti Elegi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.183, for the text and placement of this couplet as transmitted raise a number of concerns for which no satisfactory solutions have been, or are likely to be, found. For a brief discussion of the difficulties, see Heyworth (2007b), pp.492-93, n.71-74. The reference to Propertius' book (4.9.72) and, thus, the claim that the reader is invited to consider a poetic subtext remain unaffected by the textual concerns.

<sup>26</sup> The manuscripts have 4.9.71-72 as the penultimate couplet. Most editors, however, place it after 4.9.73-74 or excise lines 73-74, making it the final couplet. Paley (1872), p.274, and Butler, H. E. (1905), *Sexti Properti Opera Omnia* (London: Archibald Constable and Co.), pp.119-20, however, leave lines 71-74 as they appear in the manuscripts – although Butler (1905), p.388, n.71-74, expresses some reservations about the existing order. Richmond, O. L. (1928), *Sexti Properti Quae Supersunt Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp.373-78, opts for a more radical solution and begins the poem with lines 71-72. For discussion of the difficulties, see, for example, Camps (1965), pp.145-46, n.73ff; Richardson (1977), p.70, n.73-74; Hutchinson (2006), p.219, n.73-74; Heyworth (2007b), pp.492-93, n.71-74.

his invocation of Hercules concludes the poem by interrupting the narrative and reminding the reader of the poet and the creative process. We can turn now to the poetic elements of the landscape and what they reveal of the elegy's concern with poetry and poetics.

The key to the poetic nature of the landscape is found in Propertius' depiction of water and, in particular, Hercules' especial keenness for the water within the grove of Bona Dea; for this must be very special water given that Hercules goes to extraordinary lengths to gain access to it in preference to the abundance of available drinking water in his immediate surrounds.<sup>27</sup> Following the recovery of his cattle and bucolic speech to the recovered herd (4.9.16-20) (*ite boues, / Herculis ite boues*, 4.9.16-17), a thirst-stricken Hercules is overcome by desire for water (*dixerat, et sicco torquet sitis ora palato, / terraque non nullas feta ministrat aquas*, 4.9.21-22). Yet, instead of drinking from the nearby and, thus, easily accessible waters of the Tiber or the Velabrum, he is distracted by the sound of laughing girls some way off (*sed procul inclusas audit ridere puellas, / lucus ubi umbroso fecerat orbe nemus*, 4.9.23-24) and decides to hurry in that direction in search of a drink (*huc ruit in siccam congesta puluere barbam*, 'he rushes here with dust caked upon his dry beard', 4.9.31).

The nearest place of worship of Bona Dea that we know of is her temple to the south-east of the Ara Maxima on the other side of the Circus Maximus, the temple of Bona Dea Subsaxana.<sup>28</sup> If, as seems likely, we are to assume that Hercules has just given his speech to the recovered cattle in dedication of the founding of the Ara Maxima, which, we are told, he established to commemorate the rescue of the herd (*'Maxima quae gregibus deuota est Ara repertis, / ara per has' inquit 'maxima facta manus'*, 4.9.67-68), then we should locate him at the site of the Ara Maxima at the southern end of the Forum Bouarium when he is seized by his tremendous thirst.<sup>29</sup> If this be the case, then Hercules has gone to great lengths, quite literally, in search of a drink; for, if we suppose that the grove of Bona Dea is some pre-existing place of worship upon or near which the temple of Bona Dea

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<sup>27</sup> The special nature of this water is noted by DeBrohun (2003), p.203.

<sup>28</sup> We know of no grove or sacred spring, here, associated with the goddess.

<sup>29</sup> No degree of geographical accuracy or coherence on Propertius' behalf is implied – nor should it be expected. Nevertheless, the elegy suggests a link between the two locations.

Subsaxana is later built, the grove is a kilometre or so away when (remarkably) he hears the sound of the laughing girls (4.9.23).<sup>30</sup>

If such precise locations seem a little conjectural – indeed, we cannot locate the grove of Bona Dea with any certainty – we can at least locate Hercules somewhere within the vicinity of the Forum Bouarium, Velabrum and Ara Maxima and we know, for Propertius tells us so, that the girls are some considerable distance away (*procul*, 4.9.23).<sup>31</sup> The secluded and isolated nature of the grove and its contents is also stressed: it contains an altar which is protected by a hut that is set apart (*quae se summota uindicat ara casa*, 4.9.56); the spring inside the grove is (literally) off track (*auia*) (*haec lympa puellis / auia secreti limitis una fluit*, 4.9.59-60); and the entrance to the grove is similarly trackless (*deuia*) and remote (*deuia puniceae uelabant limina uitae*, ‘purple fillets were covering the isolated threshold’, 4.9.27). Despite the uncertainty of the position of the grove of Bona Dea and, to a lesser extent, the location of Hercules when thirst strikes him, we must conclude that the grove is in some secluded, out-of-the-way place, far from travelled paths, and that Hercules, ignoring water in closer proximity, travels some distance to arrive there.

Almost from the very beginning of the poem, the reader is invited to consider the accuracy or mutability of Propertius’ setting, as the scene of Hercules’ arrival is the Palatine Hill (4.9.3); and, although he does not specifically locate Cacus’ lair on the Palatine, there is no mention at all of the Aventine, the usual location (at least in the literary tradition) of the monster’s cave, where both Virgil and Ovid locate Cacus’ abode (*ter totum feruidus ira / lustrat Auentini montem*, ‘thrice, burning with rage, the whole Aventine mount [Hercules] scours [seeking access to Cacus’ lair]’, *Aen.* 8.230-

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<sup>30</sup> For basic mapping of the sites in 4.9, see Richardson, L. (1992), *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press), p.263; Favro, D. G. (1996), *The Urban Image of Augustan Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.279; the ‘Main Map’ and associated entries in Haselberger, L., Romano, D. G. and Dumser, E. A. (2002), *Mapping Augustan Rome* (Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series, 50; Portsmouth, R.I.: Journal of Roman Archaeology); Welch (2005), p.113. Anderson, W. S. (1992), p.102, notes that Hercules has to travel some distance from the Ara Maxima to the grove of Bona Dea via the Circus Maximus. Perhaps *ruit* (4.9.31) references this journey with Hercules ‘racing’ through the area where races were later held. Richardson (1992), p.47, fig.14, has the distance at approximately 900m. Welch (2005), p.121, claims Hercules travels more than half a mile.

<sup>31</sup> For a discussion of, and an attempt to unravel, the geographical and topographical complexities in 4.9, see Holleman (1977), pp.79-84.



31; *Cacus, Auentinae timor atque infamia siluae*, ‘Cacus, the terror and disgrace of the Aventine wood’, *Fasti* 1.551; *Cacus Auentinam sanguine tinxit humum*, ‘Cacus stained the Aventine earth with his blood’, *Fasti* 6.82).<sup>32</sup> Perhaps, Propertius enjoyed the alliterative *pecorosa Palatia* (4.9.3) too much to leave it alone; perhaps, the Palatine is simply synecdochical. Nonetheless, the reader might question Propertius’ geographical accuracy. Indeed, Propertius has created a stylised landscape of proto-Rome where distances and locations have been manipulated in order to cause non-essential topographical features to fade into the background and reduce and condense the setting to two separate and distinct locations with the intervening distance and the isolated nature of the grove stressed.<sup>33</sup>

Hercules, then, travels some distance (not to mention displaying extraordinary sensory perception) to the grove of Bona Dea to try and secure access to its spring while ignoring the water offered by the Tiber and Velabrum.<sup>34</sup> Why does he not drink from these more readily accessible sources of water?

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<sup>32</sup> Ovid situates the temple of Bona Dea on the same hill (*Fasti* 5.148-152). Diodorus Siculus locates the scene of Hercules’ encounter with a Cacus and the inhabitants of proto-Rome upon the Palatine and the inhabitants who greet Hercules at the time of his arrival have their dwellings there (τινες τῶν ἐγχωρίων κατῴκουσιν ἐν τῷ νῦν καλουμένῳ Παλατίῳ, ‘some of the inhabitants lived upon what is now called the Palatine’, 4.21.1). According to Diodorus, the *scalae Caci*, situated on the Palatine, are named after the Cacus who dwelt there and welcomed Hercules (τοῦ δὲ Κακίου ἐν τῷ Παλατίῳ κατάβασίς ἐστὶν ἔχουσα λιθίνην κλίμακα τὴν ὀνομαζομένην ἅπ’ ἐκείνου Κακίαν, οὗσαν πλησίον τῆς τότε γενομένης οἰκίας τοῦ Κακίου, ‘as for Cacus: on the Palatine there is a descent with a stone stairway named ‘Cacius’ [stairs]’ after him, which is near to Cacus’ original house’, 4.21.2). For the location of the steps and the general view that the steps are named after the monstrous Cacus, see Claridge, A. (1998), *Rome. An Oxford Archaeological Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.125. Diodorus’ account, however, draws from a different tradition and is somewhat irrelevant to the argument offered here.

<sup>33</sup> Fantham, E. (1997), ‘Images of the City: Propertius’ New-old Rome’, in T. Habinek and A. Schiesaro (eds.), *The Roman Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp.131-32, notes the claims that Propertius has set the Bona Dea episode in an imaginary secluded location. She claims, however, that there is no generic pressure behind the enhancement of the landscape – a point on which I disagree, as we shall see later. Welch (2005), p.121, claims that the landscape is ‘fanciful and contrived’.

<sup>34</sup> As Welch (2005), p.121, states: Hercules demonstrates ‘remarkable sensory feats’ in hearing the sound of the girls’ laughter, given the lengthy distance between them, the fact that the girls are shut away inside some sort of enclosed space, and the noise of the lowing of the cattle.

Although the superior manuscripts have *non nullas ... aquas*, most editors, critics and commentators read *non ullas ... aquas* (4.9.22) (an emendation) and argue that Hercules is, accordingly, unable to source a drink in his immediate surrounds.<sup>35</sup>

dixerat, et sicco torquet sitis ora palato,  
terraque non ullas feta ministrat aquas. (4.9.21-22)

He spoke, and with dry palate thirst tortures his mouth,  
And the teeming earth offers no water at all.

This reading, of course, necessitates a rather different interpretation of the passage; if *non ullas* is accepted, then Hercules, stricken by thirst and unable to find water, understandably heads towards the sound of people and thus the likelihood of a drink.

Yet to accept *non ullas* produces, I think, a more problematic reading.<sup>36</sup> That the earth should now offer not a single source of water makes little sense given the description of the elegy's opening scene where we find a well-watered landscape (4.9.4-6).

et statuit fessos fessus et ipse boues,  
qua Velabra suo stagnabant flumine quoque  
nauta per urbanas uelificabat aquas. (4.9.4-6)

<sup>35</sup> Emendation of the manuscripts' *non nullas* is based on the fact that Propertius uses *non nullus* nowhere else – see Heyworth (2007b), pp.486-87, n.21-22. Reading *non ullas*, for example, are Hertzberg, W. A. B. (1844), *Sex. Aurelii Propertii Elegiarum Libri Quattuor*, 4 vols. (2; Halle: I.F. Lipperti), p.156; Paley (1872), p.20; Butler (1905), p.118; Butler and Barber (1933), p.143; Barber, E. A. (1960), *Sexti Propertii Carmina* (2nd edn.; Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.161; Anderson, W. S. (1964), p.5; Camps (1965), p.37; Pinotti (1977), p.59; Enk, P. J. (1978), *Ad Propertii Carmina Commentarius Criticus* (Garland Library of Latin poetry; New York: Garland Publishing), p.343; Goold, G. P. (1990), *Propertius: Elegies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), p.428; Cairns (1992), p.68; Rothwell (1996), p.849; Debrohun (2003), pp.134-35; Welch (2004), p.74; Giardina, G. (2005), *Properzio. Elegie* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo), p.378; Viarre, S. (2005), *Properce. Élégies* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres), p.157; Hutchinson (2006), p.51; Heyworth (2007a), p.180. Reading *non nullas*, for example, are Richardson (1977), p.139; Lee, G. (1994), *Propertius: The Poems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press) pp.124, 196, n.22; Fox (1996), p.173. Fedeli, P. (1994), *Sexti Propertii Elegiarum Libri IV* (Stuttgart: Teubner), p.267, reads *non [n]ullas*. Note that Debrohun (2003), p.209 (who prints *non [n]ullas*, but clearly reads *ullas*), and Hutchinson (2006), p.210, n.22, despite reading *ullas*, both acknowledge that Hercules seems to have ignored other potential sources of water nearby. Anderson, W. S. (1964), p.5, despite reading *non ullas*, notes that the lack of water is 'inexplicable'. Richmond (1928) reads *non uiuas ... aquas*. Heyworth (2007b), pp.486-87, n.21-22, has a detailed discussion in which he acknowledges a reasonable argument exists for *nullas*.

<sup>36</sup> Although Propertius uses *non nullus* nowhere else and uses *non ullus* on fifteen occasions (not counting 4.9.22), this need not undermine the argument offered here. The description of a well-watered riverside landscape with no actual sources of water remains reasonably irreconcilable.

Clearly, here, the Velabrum, an area prone to flooding in Rome's early days and providing sailing opportunities, offers plenty of water for a thirsty Hercules.<sup>37</sup> In fact, earlier in book four, Vertumnus, from his vantage point near the Velabrum, recalls also the Tiber's propensity for flooding in this area and remembers the boats upon its waters:

hac quondam Tiberinus iter faciebat, et aiunt  
remorum auditos per uada pulsa sonos. (4.2.7-8)

Once the Tiber used to make its journey this way, and they say  
The sound of oars was heard striking the shallows.

Given the abundance of water in the surrounding area, to describe the earth as *feta* (4.9.22) yet affording no water seems odd and, indeed, explanations of this incongruous mixture of aquatic abundance and aridity are, in the end, contrived. Some argue that *feta terra* must refer to terrain full of underground water yet devoid of any on the surface; water that provides pasture for Hercules' cattle by virtue of nourishing the grass, but fails to appear above ground.<sup>38</sup> Others claim that 'the landscape is aquatically fickle' and that 'for some inexplicable reason, the fertile earth affords no water'.<sup>39</sup> We might argue further that in this same *terra* the spring within the grove of Bona Dea offers water and, thus, if we read *non ullas* we must conclude on the one hand that the land offers no water, yet on the other that it does. From where, too, does Hercules mean the cattle to drink if not from the Velabrum alongside which he pastures them? Or are they able to drink from the Velabrum when Hercules is not?<sup>40</sup>

Accepting *non ullas* creates unnecessary difficulties and requires the understanding of some unstated, additional qualification(s) in order to make sense. We need to understand, for example,

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<sup>37</sup> Noting the contradiction of the lack of water for a thirsty Hercules and the watery landscape at the beginning of the elegy are Anderson, W. S. (1964), p.11; Pinotti (1977), p.59; Richardson (1977), p.473, n.22; Lee (1994), p.124, n.22. See Propertius 4.2.7-8; Ovid, *Fasti* 6.405-08; Tibullus 2.5.33-34, for the Tiber's flooding of the Velabrum. It was later drained by the construction of the Cloaca Maxima – see Claridge (1998), p.62.

<sup>38</sup> Butler (1905), p.386, n.22; Butler and Barber (1933), p.372, n. 22; Paley (1872), p.270, n.22.

<sup>39</sup> The first quote is from Welch (2004), p.74; the second from Anderson, W. S. (1964), p.5. Hutchinson (2006), p.210, n.22, claims that Propertius 'momentarily transforms Rome'. Pinotti (1977), p.59, despite reading *non ullas*, claims that Hercules' lack of water is absurd ('*la situazione di Ercole si fa qui decisamente assurda ...*').

<sup>40</sup> Macrobius cannot help us here because although his account accords with the version offered by Propertius, with Hercules refused drink by worshippers of Bona Dea, he tells us nothing about an arid landscape.

that although there is clearly water available in the immediate surrounds, it is not the kind of water that Hercules can drink, or that the lack of water so described is just confined to a particular unnamed area. Furthermore, this reading diminishes the particular importance of the water within the grove of Bona Dea, for if there are no drinking opportunities for Hercules in the immediate surrounds of the Tiber and the Velabrum and he is, accordingly, forced to seek water from the spring inside the grove of Bona Dea, then the spring does not offer a preferable source, but, apparently, the only source of water. Yet if the setting affords a number of water sources, as it apparently does in the opening scene of the elegy, then Hercules makes a deliberate choice to eschew the waters of the Tiber and the Velabrum in favour of the spring within the grove and, in doing so, he confirms the special quality, the exclusive nature, of the goddess' spring. It seems to me that the transmitted *non nullas* is easier and produces a better reading.

It has been suggested that Hercules heads towards the grove not for water but for the girls hidden within,<sup>41</sup> yet this cannot explain his disregard for the waters of the Tiber and the Velabrum, for when he forces his way into the grove, he heads not for the girls – in fact, no more mention is made of them – but the spring itself, which he proceeds to drink dry (*exhausto iam flumine uicerat aestum*, 4.9.63).<sup>42</sup> So, although the sound of the girls' laughter first attracts Hercules to the grove (*sed procul inclusas audit ridere puellas*, 4.9.23) and his resemblance to the *exclusus amator* and the delivery of his (peculiar) *paraclausithyron* clearly suggest an erotic context – indeed, his *sitis* ('thirst', 4.9.21, 62, 70), in such a context, might well be interpreted as erotic desire<sup>43</sup> – the real object of his desire remains the water.

Water is a prominent thematic element throughout the elegy, with its importance advertised on a number of occasions. Hercules settles his cattle at the Velabrum, where the River Tiber in Rome's early days formed a shallow lake (*qua Velabra suo stagnabant flumine*, 4.9.5) suitable for boating

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<sup>41</sup> The first to make such a claim was Anderson, W. S. (1964), p.12.

<sup>42</sup> Debrohun (2003), p.139, states that 'somewhat unexpectedly, however, he does not go after the *puellae*'.

<sup>43</sup> As does the conquering of his heat (*uicerat aestum*, 4.9.63) – see Anderson W. S. (1964), p.12. Hercules' resemblance to the elegiac *exclusus amator* and his *paraclausithyron* are discussed later in greater detail.

(*quoque / nauta per urbanas uelificabat aquas*, 4.9.5-6). The language (*stagnabant, flumine, nauta, uelificabat, aquas*) evokes a particularly aquatic setting. Following the recapture of his cattle, a parched Hercules is stricken by thirst (*et sicco torquet sitis ora palato*, 4.9.21) – his beard, too, is similarly desiccated (*siccam congesta puluere barbam*, 4.9.31) – and there seems to be an abundance of water sources nearby (*terraque non nullas feta ministrat aquas*, 4.9.22). The grove of Bona Dea contains a reverend spring (*fontisque piandos*, 4.9.25) and Hercules, professedly lacking water (*fontis egens erro*, 4.9.35), hears the sound of its waters (*circaque sonantia lymphis*, ‘around is the sound of water’, 4.9.35) and requests a handful to drink (*caua suscepto flumine palma sat est*, 4.9.36). Even his divine nemesis, Juno, he says, would not begrudge him a drink (*non clausisset aquas ipsa nouerca suas*, ‘my very stepmother would not have closed her waters’, 4.9.44). The priestess’ cautionary advice to Hercules when refusing him access to the grove also makes specific mention of water. Tiresias suffered much – he was made blind – she says, when he saw Athena bathing (*magno Tiresias aspexit Pallada uates, / fortia dum ... membra lauat*, ‘at great cost did the seer, Tiresias, look upon Pallas while she bathed her brave limbs’, 4.9.57-58). He must seek other springs, she tells him, because girls alone are permitted access to these waters (*di tibi dent alios fontis: haec lympa puellis / auia secreti limitis una fluit*, 4.9.59-60). Ignoring her warnings, Hercules, unable to control his thirst any longer (*nec tulit iratam ianua clausa sitim*, 4.9.62), drains the spring (*exhausto iam flumine uicerat aestum*, 4.9.63) and forbids women to worship at the Ara Maxima lest his thirst be unavenged (*ne sit inulta sitis*, 4.9.70). Water figures prominently in this elegy, thereby indicating its thematic importance.

The fact that Hercules chooses to ignore the opportunity to quench his thirst at first avail from the nearby water of the Tiber and the Velabrum (if we read *non nullas aquas*) suggests that his desire for the water within the grove overrides any pressing need to assuage his thirst and/or that it is not actual or literal thirst that compels him to approach the grove and request water, but rather access to the grove and the spring within that is his real interest. Although he does plead a lack of water (*fontis egens erro, circaque sonantia lymphis*, 4.9.35), we should see this as no more than a

(unsuccessful) strategic ploy to persuade the priestess to allow him admittance, rather than confirmation of any general aridity of the landscape beyond the grove. Indeed, the priestess encourages him to find other springs (*di tibi dent alios fontis: haec lympa puellis / auia secreti limitis una fluit*, 4.9.59-60), suggesting that there are other water sources at his disposal. Correctly interpreting the nature of Hercules' thirst and of the water to which he seeks access is crucial to understanding his actions.

Given that water is the object of Hercules' desire, yet he ignores the water around him in favour of that within the grove of Bona Dea, this must be no ordinary water. Indeed, I shall argue that it is the poetic nature of this water which gives it its special status.<sup>44</sup> Water, as we have seen in previous chapters, functions as a source of poetic inspiration or represents poetry in elegies throughout the Propertian corpus. In 2.10, as we know, Propertius antithesizes love elegy and other more serious styles of poetry by employing as metaphors the waterways of Mount Helicon (2.10.25-26). In 3.3, Mount Helicon and its waters symbolise poetry, genre and poetic inspiration, with the Hippocrene representing epic verse (3.3.1-16) and the spring within the grove of the Muses symbolising love elegy (3.3.25-52). Most important from our perspective are the similarities between the grove of Bona Dea in 4.9 and the elegiac grove in 3.3, which we examined in detail in the previous chapter (3.3.25-34).

Each setting is situated off the beaten path; the freshly made and seemingly unnoticed track (*noua muscoso semita facta solo est*, 'a fresh path had been made in the mossy ground') corresponding with the off-track and secluded location of the grove and its spring (*deuia ... limina*, 4.9.27; *lympa ... / auia secreti limitis*, 4.9.60).<sup>45</sup> Both places are called grottos (*spelunca*, 3.3.27; *antro*, 4.9.33) and both are seemingly covered by verdant greenery (*uiridis spelunca*, 'verdant grotto', 3.3.27; *lucus*,

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<sup>44</sup> The most comprehensive treatment to date of the poetics of water in this elegy is found in Debrohun (2003), pp.201-09. For a synopsis of the association of various water sources with their corresponding poetic genres (offered as part of a discussion on Propertius 2.10), see Tatum, W. J. (2000), 'Aspirations and Divagations: The Poetics of Place in Propertius 2.10', *TAPA*, 130, pp.393-410.

<sup>45</sup> Debrohun (2003), p.207, n.21, notes that both settings are off-track.

‘grove’, 4.9.24; *nemus*, ‘wood’, 4.9.24; *populus et longis ornabat frondibus aedem*, ‘poplar adorned the shrine with its long foliage’, 4.9.29). The tambourines hanging (*pendebant*, 3.3.28) from the roof recall the purple fillets hanging over the threshold (*puniceae uelabant limina uitae*, 4.9.27) and the colour of the fillets (*puniceae ... uitae*, 4.9.27) matches the hue of the birds’ beaks (*punica rostra*, ‘red beaks’, 3.3.32). Indeed, the presence of birds is a feature of both settings; doves (*columbae*) inhabit the one grotto (3.3.31-32), while (unnamed) birds sing in the other (*multaque cantantis umbra tegebat auis*, ‘and much shade covered singing birds’, 4.9.30). The Gorgonean pool into which the birds dip their beaks (*Gorgoneo ... lacu*, 3.3.32) is echoed in the cautionary tale of Tiresias’ spying upon a bathing Athena told to Hercules by the aged priestess (*magno Tiresias aspexit Pallada uates, / fortia dum posita Gorgone membra lauat*, ‘at great cost did the seer, Tiresias, look upon Pallas, while she bathed her brave limbs with the Gorgon set aside’, 4.9.57-58).<sup>46</sup> The most telling correspondence between the two settings is the presence within both grottos of *puellae* (3.3.33; 4.9.23); and in 3.3, one of these girls/Muses, Calliope, commands Propertius to write elegiac poetry and not epic (3.3.39-50) – more specifically, she commands him to write erotic elegy (*quippe coronatos alienum ad limen amantes / nocturnaeque canes ebria signa fugae*, ‘for of garlanded lovers at another’s threshold and drunken signs of nocturnal escapades, you will sing’, 3.3.47-48) – and draws water from a spring inside the grotto and offers it to Propertius (*talia Calliope, lymphisque a fonte petitis / ora Philetea nostra rigauit aqua*, ‘such things Calliope spoke, and with liquid drawn from the spring she wet my lips with water of Philetas’, 3.3.51-52).<sup>47</sup> So, here, the spring within the grove represents (elegiac) poetic inspiration and the grove and the fount bear a strong resemblance to the grove and fount of Bona Dea.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>46</sup> The echo of *Gorgoneo* in *Gorgone* is noted by Debrohun (2003), p.203.

<sup>47</sup> Debrohun (2003), p.207, and Cairns, F. (2006), *Sextus Propertius: The Augustan Elegist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp.126-27, note the similarity of the *puellae* in 3.3 and 4.9. Debrohun (2003), p.203, claims that the occurrence of both *lymphe* (3.3.51, 4.9.35) and *fontes* (3.3.51, 4.9.25) in the respective descriptions of the grove and spring in 3.3 and 4.9 links the two settings, as does (p.207) the fact that water wets the lips of Propertius at 3.3.51-52 and Hercules at 4.9.63-64).

<sup>48</sup> The similarity of the respective springs is remarked upon by Debrohun (2003), p.207. Debrohun, however, is more concerned with the alignment of Propertius’ poetry with the principles of Callimachean poetics, than the programmatic implications of the generic landscapes in which the two grottos are situated.

The cautionary reference to Tiresias' blinding (4.9.57-58) provides another suggestion of the poetic nature of the spring. Callimachus (*Lav. Pall.* 68-82) tells us that a thirsty Tiresias happened upon a spring where he saw Athena (and his mother, Chariclo) bathing – a sight forbidden to him – and was, therefore, blinded in accordance with the laws of Kronos (Κρόνιοι δ' ὧδε λέγοντι νόμοι, 'the laws of Kronos order thus', *Lau. Pall.* 100):

δὴ ποκα γὰρ πέπλων λυσαμένα περόνας  
 ἵππῳ ἐπὶ κράνῃ Ἑλικωνίδι καλὰ ῥεοῖσα  
 λῶντο· μεσαμβρινὰ δ' εἶχ' ὄρος ἀσυχία.  
 ἀμφοτέραι λῶοντο, μεσαμβριναὶ δ' ἔσαν ὦραι,  
 πολλὰ δ' ἀσυχία τῆνο κατεῖχεν ὄρος.  
 Τειρεσίας δ' ἔτι μῶνος ἀμὰ κυσὶν ἄρτι γένεια  
 περκάζων ἱερὸν χῶρον ἀνεστρέφετο·  
 διψάσας δ' ἄφατόν τι ποτὶ ῥόον ἦλυθε κράνας,  
 σχέτλιος· οὐκ ἐθέλων δ' εἶδε τὰ μὴ θεμιτά.  
 τὸν δὲ χολωσαμένα περ ὅμως προσέφασεν Ἀθάνᾳ·  
 'τίς σε, τὸν ὀφθαλμῶς οὐκέτ' ἀποισόμενον,  
 ὦ Εὐηρείδα, χαλεπὴν ὁδὸν ἄγαγε δαίμων;'·  
 ἃ μὲν ἔφα, παιδὸς δ' ὄμματα νύξ ἔλαβεν. (Lav. Pall. 70-82)

One day, [Athena and Chariclo] unbuckled their robes  
 At the fair-flowing fount of the horse on Mt Helicon  
 And bathed: and midday quiet held the hill.  
 Both were bathing, and it was the midday hour,  
 And a great quiet gripped that hill.  
 Only Tiresias still, with his dogs, his beard just now  
 Darkening, was roaming the holy place.  
 Thirsting unspeakably he arrived at the spring's stream,  
 Wretched man: unwillingly he saw what was not permitted.  
 To him, angered as she was, nonetheless spoke Athena:  
 'You, no longer about to take home your eyes, which  
 God led, O son of Everes, on this grievous path?'  
 She spoke, and night seized the child's eyes.

The fact that Hercules in 4.9, stricken by a huge thirst, a thirst that affected Tiresias similarly (*Lav. Pall.* 77), arrives at a holy spring that he is forbidden to access, a spring belonging to a goddess, whereupon he is offered the cautionary tale of Tiresias' blinding, suggests a strong link with



Callimachus' tale.<sup>49</sup> This comes as no surprise, perhaps, given that Propertius declares himself the Roman Callimachus in this his final book (4.1.64). The salient point for us, however, is that the setting of Tiresias' blinding is the Fount of the Horse on Mount Helicon, the Hippocrene (*Lav. Pall.* 71), the same spring where Propertius in 3.3 dreamed of turning his hand to more serious poetry (*Bellorophonte qua fluit umor equi*, 3.3.2). When the aged priestess offers in warning the example of Tiresias' blinding at the most famous of poetic founts, we are encouraged to see the spring in 4.9 as similarly poetic.<sup>50</sup>

The grove in 4.9 also recalls another grove, one we discussed in the previous chapter. In 3.1, Propertius employs landscape features as metaphors for poetry and poetic inspiration when he seeks the advice of Callimachus and Philetas on how he might emulate their success and refine (and elevate) the art of elegiac poetry (3.1.1-6). Although the deconstructed geographical elements, the spring (*fonte*, 3.1.3), water (*aquam*, 3.1.6), grove (*nemus*, 3.1.2) and grotto (*antro*, 3.1.6), might not form a single coherent landscape, they combine, nonetheless, into a more or less singular poetic metaphor. Indeed, this grove is unmistakably representative of poetry given that it is the domain of two famous poets, there is specific mention of poetry (*carmen*, 3.1.5) and references to metre (*Graios choro*s, 'Greek rhythms', 3.1.4) and (metrical) feet (*pede*, 3.1.6). The grove of Bona Dea in 4.9 shares a number of these characteristics: it, too, is described as a grotto (*antro*, 4.9.33) and grove (*lucus*; *nemus*, 4.9.24) and contains spring water (*fontes*, 4.9.25). Moreover, presiding over the grove in 4.9 is a priestess (*sacerdos*, 4.9.51), recalling Propertius' claim to be a priest of poetry when he requests admission to the grove in 3.1 (*in uestrum, quaeso, me sinite ire nemus. / primus ego ingredior puro de fonte sacerdos / Itala per Graios orgia ferre choro*s, 'into your grove, I pray, allow

<sup>49</sup> The allusion to Callimachus in 4.9.57-58 is noted by Pascucci, G. (1986), 'Il callimachismo stilistico di Propertio', in G. Catanzaro and F. Santucci (eds.), *Bimillenario della morte di Propertio. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi properziani* (Assisi: Accademia properziana del Subasio), p.202. Debrohun (2003), pp.203-04, notes that in each account Hercules and Tiresias are thirsty, both places are holy, both men look upon what they should not and blinding (actual or threatened) occurs in both tales.

<sup>50</sup> See Debrohun (2003), pp.202-03. The fact that in 3.3 the Hippocrene represents epic poetry and the spring within the grove of Bona Dea symbolises elegiac verse, as we shall see, need not concern us at this point. It is the poetic nature of water in general that we are concerned with at the moment.

me to come. First I enter from a pure spring as a priest to bring Italian mysteries in Greek rhythms', 3.1.2-4). The similarities between the two groves suggest that the grove in 4.9 is similarly poetic.

So, water, springs, groves and grottos symbolise poetry, poetic genre and inspiration in other poems within the Propertian corpus and the grove and spring of Bona Dea share a number of similarities with these recognised poetic features and locations. The most famous of these poetic settings is Mount Helicon, upon which are located the Hippocrene – the most celebrated of all poetic waters – and other Ascrean Springs. In particular, the grove, spring and the *puellae* in 4.9 recall the scene in 3.3 and its Heliconian setting. Furthermore, the priestess of Bona Dea offers the tale of Tiresias' blinding at the Hippocrene as a warning to Hercules not to enter the grove and in doing so suggests that the grove and spring of Bona Dea are similarly poetic. In fact, we might wonder if the grove of Bona Dea has been relocated from Mount Helicon to Propertius' proto-Rome. By carefully manipulating the landscape to conform to a poetic aesthetic, Propertius invites a reading of a poetic subtext and the conclusion that the grove of Bona Dea and the spring within function as a poetic metaphors.

Now I want to turn to the crucial links between the two sections of the poem that I mentioned at the start of this chapter. Indeed, Propertius advertises the relationship between the two episodes with linguistic and thematic connections.<sup>51</sup> The prominence of water provides a link between the two settings. Hercules arrives in the first episode into a particularly aquatic scene. The Tiber and the Velabrum provide sailing opportunities (4.9.5-6) and a thirsty Hercules finds himself in watery surrounds (4.9.21-22). In the Bona Dea episode, a still thirsty Hercules seeks access to the spring that flows within the grove (4.9.25, 35-36, 59-60) which he then proceeds to drain (4.9.63-63). Both Cacus' cave and the grove of Bona Dea are called *antra* (4.9.9, 33) and both places have frightful reputations. Cacus is the inhabitant of a fearsome cave (*incola Cacus erat, metuendo raptor ab antro*, 4.9.9) and the priestess warns Hercules that violation of the altar hidden within the grove

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<sup>51</sup> The points of correspondence between the two episodes were first explained in detail by Anderson, W. S. (1964), p.4.

carries the penalty of a similarly fearsome law (*interdicta uiris metuenda lege piatur / quae se summota uindicat ara casa*, 4.9.55-56).<sup>52</sup> The theme of exclusion is prominent in both episodes, with Hercules forced to gain entry to both locations by breaking down doors (*furis et implacidas diruit ira fores*, 4.9.14; *ille umeris postis concussit opacos, / nec tulit iratam ianua clausa sitis*, 4.9.61-62).<sup>53</sup> Reinforcing the connection in this instance is the personification or materialisation of Hercules' anger (*ira*, 4.9.14; *irata sitis*, 4.9.62); his temper and aggressive need for water are the agents of destruction. A sonic association is evident, as it is the voices of those hidden within the grove that betray their presence on each occasion. The sound of the lowing cattle announces their theft (*furem sonuere iuuenci*, 4.9.13) and Hercules is drawn to the grove by the sound of the laughing girls (*sed procul inclusas audit ridere puellas, / lucus ubi umbroso fecerat orbe nemus*, 4.9.23-24).<sup>54</sup>

We find the hero weary, too, in each episode, with the connection reinforced by the repetition of *fessus* (4.9.4; 4.9.66).<sup>55</sup> A tired Hercules pastures his (also tired) cattle (*et statuit fessos fessus et ipse boues*, 4.9.4) and later, when attempting (in vain) to persuade the priestess to allow him entry to the grove, he laments his fate and makes particular mention of his fatigue:<sup>56</sup>

‘angulus hic mundi nunc me mea fata trahentem  
accipit: haec fesso uix mihi terra patet.’ (4.9.65-66)

‘Me dragging my fate this corner of the world now  
Receives: this land scarcely welcomes me, tired as I am.’<sup>57</sup>

His plea for the shrine to be opened for a weary man (*uos precor, o luci sacro quae luditis antro, / pandite defessis hospita fana uiris*, 4.9.33-34) adds a further connection, with *defessus* recalling

<sup>52</sup> The repetition of *metuendus* links the two locations – as noted by Anderson, W. S. (1964), p.4.

<sup>53</sup> McParland (1970), p.350, notes the theme of exclusion in both episodes.

<sup>54</sup> Warden (1982), p.235, points out this connection.

<sup>55</sup> A point observed by Anderson, W. S. (1964), p.4.

<sup>56</sup> He laments his fate when trying to enter the grove if 4.9.65-66 are transposed to follow a proposed lacuna at 4.9.42. This seems the best solution to the almost certainly corrupt repetition of 4.9.66 at 4.9.42. The alternative is that these lines follow his draining of the spring in their numbered place. See Camps (1965), pp.142-43, n. 42, n.65-66, and Heyworth (2007b), pp.489, n.41-42/65-66, for explanation of the problem and solution.

<sup>57</sup> ‘Tired as I am’, after Richardson (1977), p.475, n.66.

*fessus*.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, when Hercules at the entrance to the grove bemoans dragging his fate (*mea fata trahentem*, 4.9.65) we are reminded of Cacus dragging the cattle into his lair (*traxit in antra boues*, 4.9.12).<sup>59</sup>

The notion of hospitality also links the two episodes.<sup>60</sup> The fact that Cacus is a *hospes* ('host', 4.9.7) suggests that he was obliged to offer hospitality to Hercules upon his arrival at Rome, hospitality that he betrayed with his theft of the cattle (*sed non infido manserunt hospite Caco, / incolumes*, 4.9.7-8).<sup>61</sup> Later, when the priestess warns Hercules against entering and desecrating the rites performed within, she addresses him with the same title (*parce oculis, hospes, lucoque abscede uerendo*, 4.9.53), although on this occasion we should understand *hospes* as 'guest' or 'stranger' (q.v. *O.L.D.*, 4). A further resonance of *hospes* can be found in Hercules' plea for access to the grove (*uos precor, o luci sacro quae luditis antro, / pandite defessis hospita fana uiris*, 4.9.33-34), when he hopes that the shrine will prove hospitable (*hospita fana*).

There are, as well, less obvious links.<sup>62</sup> For example, the doors of Cacus' lair (*fores*, 4.9.14) and the announcement of his death (*iacuit*, 'he lies dead', 4.9.15) are recalled in Hercules' speech at the entrance to the grove (*et iacit ante fores uerba minora deo*, 'and he hurls before the doors words demeaning a god', 4.9.32).<sup>63</sup> The repetition of *fores* and the echo of *iacuit* in *iacit* remind us –

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<sup>58</sup> As Anderson, W. S. (1964), p.4, notes.

<sup>59</sup> Although, perhaps, we are to understand *mea fata trahentem* (4.9.65) as something like 'dragging out my destiny' – as Shackleton-Bailey, D. R. (1967), *Propertiana* (Cambridge Classical Studies; Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert), p.260, suggests – we might see an oblique reference to the cattle themselves, for Hercules' fate does, in fact, rest upon his successful completion of his present labour – that is, dragging the cattle back to King Eurystheus. Just as Hercules dragged his cattle to Rome (and beyond), so Cacus dragged them into his lair.

<sup>60</sup> Anderson, W. S. (1964), p.4, makes this observation.

<sup>61</sup> This must be how we are to take *hospes*, here – q.v. *O.L.D.*, 2b.

<sup>62</sup> McParland (1970), p.351, suggests another connection can be found in Hercules dismissal of the cows (*ite boues, / Herculis ite boues*, 4.9.16-17) and the subsequent prohibition of women from the Ara Maxima (*haec nullis umquam pateat ueneranda puellis*, 4.9.69), when women are subjected to a kind of dismissal. She notes that the cows are addressed in the feminine (*bis mihi quaesitae, bis mea praeda, boues*, 4.9.18), thus reinforcing the link with the girls within the grove, who are presumably dismissed (or run away) when Hercules smashes his way through the doors. Warden (1982), p.229, however, dismisses this connection as implausible. Warden (1982), p.236, suggests that the purple/blood red fillets (*puniceae vittae*, 4.9.27) and the weathered/decaying hut (*putris casa*, 4.9.28) of the grove of Bona Dea might be allusions to the bloody and decaying corpses hung at the entrance to Cacus' cave in the *Aeneid* (8.195-97), thus drawing a link between the Cacus and Bona Dea episodes.

<sup>63</sup> Fox (1996), p.173, makes this claim.

perhaps, as a portent of Hercules' next move – of Cacus lying dead before the doors of his cave. So, if we are invited to consider the water within the grove of Bona Dea as a metaphor for poetry and poetic inspiration, then, given the links between the two episodes, we should consider similarly the waters of the Tiber and the Velabrum.

Perhaps the strongest suggestion that the Tiber and the Velabrum are poetic waters is found at the end of the Cacus episode in the description of the watery landscape (*terraque non nullas feta ministrat aquas*, 4.9.22). The phrase *ministrat aquas* recalls a previous passage in book four when Propertius – again seeking inspiration from Callimachus and Philetas – prepares to explain the origin of the temple of Palatine Apollo and present his version of the battle of Actium:

sacra facit uates: sint ora fauentia sacris,  
et cadat ante meos icta iuuenca focos.  
cera Philiteis certet Romana corymbis,  
et Cyrenaeas urna ministret aquas. (4.6.1-4)<sup>64</sup>

The poet makes sacrifices: let mouths favour the sacrifices,  
And let a stricken heifer fall before my altar.  
Let Roman wax compete with Philetas' ivy-clusters,  
And let the urn offer Cyrenean waters.

The important point from our perspective is the similarity of the phrases *ministret aquas* (4.6.4) and *ministrat aquas* (4.9.22). Both phrases occupy the same position in the pentameter and are the only occurrences of *ministrare* in book four. If the urn offers waters of poetic inspiration in 4.6, then, given the near repetition of the phrase in 4.9, we are invited to consider the waters of the Tiber and the Velabrum as similarly poetic.

### Metapoetics: The Waters of Rome

I want to turn now to the particular metapoetic significance of the different water sources and begin by examining the spring within the grove of Bona Dea. We have noted that the grove of Bona Dea in 4.9 and the grotto of the Muses in 3.3 share a number of characteristics and we know from the

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<sup>64</sup> Many editors adopt Scaliger's *serta* in place of the transmitted *cera* (4.6.3) – see Heyworth (2007b), p.457, n.3, for the reasoning. I agree with Richardson (1977), p.447, n.3, that we should retain *cera*.

previous chapter that the grotto in 3.3 represents, specifically, love elegy. Here, too, in 4.9, there are strong reasons for reading the water within the grove of Bona Dea as similarly elegiac.

Immediately following the commemoration of his defeat of Cacus and the recovery of his cattle (4.9.15-20), Hercules is stricken by a torturous thirst (*et sicco torquet sitis ora palato*, 4.9.21). It is the onset of this tremendous thirst that triggers a remarkable transformation in the all-conquering Hercules. As has long been observed, Hercules (temporarily, at least) abandons his epically styled heroic persona and assumes, instead, a role remarkably similar to that of the elegiac *exclusus amator* and offers a paraclausithyron (of sorts) before the entrance to the grove of Bona Dea (*et iacit ante fores uerba minora deo*, 4.9.32).<sup>65</sup> The fact that Hercules' plea for entry takes place right in front of the door (*ante fores*) draws particular attention to the elegiac setting of the scene.<sup>66</sup>

The entrance to the grove, despite its natural woodland setting, is equipped with a door (*ille umeris postis concussit opacos, / nec tulit iratam ianua clausa sitim*, 4.9.61-62) and, importantly from our perspective, a *limen* (*deuia puniceae uelabant limina uititae*, 4.9.27; *cede aegedum et tuta limina linque fuga*, 4.9.54); for the *limen* in Propertius' elegies functions typically as a barrier or boundary between the *exclusus amator* and the *inclusa puella* by dividing the would-be lover and the public, exterior space from the private interior and the girl within.<sup>67</sup> In 4.9, in fact, the exclusive status and private and restricted nature of the grove are made explicit:

sed procul inclusas audit ridere puellas,  
lucus ubi umbroso fecerat orbe nemus,  
femineae loca clausa deae fontisque piandos. (4.9.23-25)

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<sup>65</sup> The resemblance to the elegiac *exclusus amator* was first noted by Anderson, W. S. (1964), 'Hercules Exclusus: Propertius, IV, 9', *AJP*, 85, pp.1-12. For a detailed discussion of Hercules' paraclausithyron, see, also, Pinotti (1977), pp.61-70.

<sup>66</sup> As Anderson, W. S. (1964), p.6, states, a Roman reader, after reading *ante fores*, might well have expected a paraclausithyron. Indeed, as Anderson, W. S. (1964), p.6, n.12, notes, paraclausithyrons are introduced in this very way by other Roman writers – see, for example, Tibullus 1.1.56, 1.5.74, and Ovid, *Ars* 3.581, *Met.* 14.717.

<sup>67</sup> Or some variation on this theme. For a detailed discussion of the role of the *limen* in love elegy, see Debroun (2003), pp.118-55. Welch (2005), p.122, contends that the threshold of the grove of Bona Dea is typically erotic with its decorative *uititae* (4.9.27) and whiff of incense (*odorato ... igne*, 4.9.28).

Those within the grove are shut away (*inclusas*, 4.9.23) from view and the enclosed (*clausa*, 4.9.25) nature of the grove is made clear. The proximity of *inclusas* and *clausa* (in the same sentence) stresses the seclusion. Moreover, the *limen*, itself, is secluded and remote (*deuium*, 4.9.27) and its water off track (*lympa ... auia*, 4.9.59-60).

Throughout Propertius' elegies, the *limen* represents or even defines the trials and experiences of the elegiac lover by signifying the boundary between fidelity and infidelity, faithfulness and promiscuity, appropriate and inappropriate sexual behaviour and (sexual) satisfaction and denial. In 1.8, Propertius uses the *limen* as a symbol of his faithfulness in the face of Cynthia's potential infidelity:

nam me non ullae poterunt corrumpere, de te  
quin ego, uita, tuo limine uera querar. (1.8.21-22)<sup>68</sup>

For no other women will seduce me, so that about you,  
My life, I will not protest justly at your threshold.

When protesting his innocence to Cynthia in 1.18, Propertius invokes the *limen* as a symbol of his fidelity:

sic mihi te referas, leuis, ut non altera nostro  
limine formosos intulit ulla pedes. (1.18.11-12)

So may you come back to me, fickle one, as no other  
Girl has carried her pretty feet across my threshold.

Jealous of Cynthia's friends and acquaintances (2.6.1-14) and bemoaning infidelity and promiscuity among the inhabitants of Rome (2.6.20-22), Propertius uses the *limen* to recall the famed fidelity of Alcestis and Penelope:

felix Admeti coniunx et lectus Vlixis,  
et quaecumque uiri femina limen amat! (2.6.23-24)

Lucky Admetus' wife and Ulysses' bed,

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<sup>68</sup> There are a number of problems with this couplet as it stands in the manuscripts, yet they have no bearing upon the argument offered here. For a discussion, see Heyworth (2007b), pp.35-37, n.21-22.

And every woman who loves her man's threshold!

Later in the same elegy, by way of contrast, Propertius questions Cynthia's faithfulness, again with the *limen* symbolising the boundary between fidelity and infidelity:

quos igitur tibi custodes, quae limina ponam,  
quae numquam supra pes inimicus eat? (2.6.37-38)

What guards, therefore, could I place for you, what thresholds,  
That an enemy foot could never pass over?

In 3.3, when Calliope tells Propertius he must continue to write erotic elegy (3.3.37-50), the *limen* defines the boundary between loyalty and betrayal:

'quippe coronatos alienum ad limen amantis  
nocturnaeque canes ebria signa fugae,  
ut per te clausas sciat excantare puellas,  
qui uolet austeros arte ferire uiros.' (3.3.47-50)

'For of garlanded lovers at another's threshold  
And drunken signs of nocturnal escapades, you will sing,  
So through you he may learn to charm out locked away girls,  
Whoever wants to artfully outwit strict men.'

In the first elegy of Propertius' final book, Horos speaks of the futility of attempting to lock away a girl determined to escape:

'nec mille excubiae nec te signata iuuabunt  
limina: persuasae fallere rima sat est.' (4.1.145-46)

'A thousand guards will not help you, nor a sealed  
Threshold: a crack is enough for a girl convinced to cheat.'

Here, too, the *limen* defines the boundary between fidelity and transgression.

Indeed, the elegy that immediately precedes 4.9 ends with a scene involving a *limen*. With Cynthia having travelled to Lanuvium on an erotic dalliance under the pretence of attending the rites of Juno Sospita (*causa fuit Iuno, sed magis causa Venus*, 'the excuse was Juno, but the real reason Venus',



4.8.16), Propertius decides upon his own amorous excursion with girls named Phyllis and Teia (4.8.27-34) (*his ego constitui noctem lenire uocatis, / et Venere ignota furta nouare mea*, 'I decided to ease the night by inviting them, and to freshen my love life with unknown Venus', 4.8.33-34). But when Cynthia returns unexpectedly and catches him with them (4.8.47-52) (*nec mora, cum totas resupinat Cynthia ualuas*, 'without delay, Cynthia flattens entirely the folding doors', 4.8.51), she puts the girls to flight, berates Propertius, and enacts some sort of ritual purification:

dein quemcumque locum externae tetigere puellae,  
suffiit, ac pura limina tergit aqua. (4.8.83-84)

Then, every place those girl intruders touched  
She fumigates, and she scrubs the threshold with pure water.

Propertius, here, playfully adapts the usual roles of the elegiac cast. The girls are the invading lovers – they are *externae puellae* (4.8.83) rather than the typical *inclusae puellae* – and Propertius plays the part of the *inclusus amator* instead of the more usual role of *exclusus amator*, with Cynthia assuming the latter role. Nonetheless, the *limen* functions as a signifier of sexual (in)fidelity and defines the elegiac relationship. Propertius, with one exception (3.13.51-52), depicts *limina* only in erotic contexts.<sup>69</sup> The *limen* of the grove of Bona Dea, then, will inevitably for the reader designate the grove as a particularly elegiac space.

The fact that Hercules takes on the most stereotypical of elegiac roles and as *exclusus amator* delivers a pseudo-paracausithyron on the doorstep of the grove in an attempt to gain access, it

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<sup>69</sup> Fourteen of the seventeen occurrences of *limen* (not including the two in 4.9) signify the boundary between fidelity and infidelity, faithfulness and promiscuity, and appropriate and inappropriate sexual behaviour: 1.4.22; 1.8.22; 1.13.34; 1.14.19; 1.16.3; 1.16.22; 1.18.12; 2.6.24; 2.6.37; 2.7.9; 3.3.47; 3.25.9; 4.1.146; and 4.8.84. The other occurrences in erotic contexts are: 1.5.13 – Propertius' *limen* offers respite for Gallus from the toils of unrequited love; and 4.4.1 – Tarpeia betrays the threshold of the temple of Jupiter Feretrius (4.4.1-2) due to her infatuated love for Tatius. On one occasion only does Propertius employ a *limen* in a non-erotic context, when briefly recalling the Gallic king Brennus' attack upon the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi in 278 BC (3.13.51-52). The symbolism is not consistent in terms of which side of the *limen* represents fidelity and which side represents infidelity. Nevertheless, the distinction remains. Although some manuscripts have *sub limine* at 2.25.17, others have *sublimine* and *sub lumine*. Given the discrepancies and the fact that many editors adopt Langermann's *crimine* for *limine* – see, for example, Camps (1967), p.172, n.17, and Heyworth (2007b), pp.218-19, n.15-18 – I have chosen to disregard this (possible) occurrence of *limen* in my synopsis. Nonetheless, if *limen* is accepted at 2.25.17, it functions as a boundary between fidelity and infidelity.

seems, to the *inclusae puellae* (4.9.63) – although, as we know, unlike the girls within the grove, it is actually the water from the spring that is his real target – suggests also that we are to imagine an amatory scenario or, at the very least, a parody of one.<sup>70</sup> The presence of the *puellae* is particularly telling (4.9.23, 59, 70).<sup>71</sup> Moreover, these girls do not seem to be engaged in solemn worship of the goddess, but are amusing themselves in play (*luci sacro quae luditis antro*, 4.9.33) and laughter (*audit ridere puellas*, 4.9.23), behaviour usually associated with the typical elegiac *puella*. When recalling fondly a particularly satisfying night of lovemaking with Cynthia (2.15.1-10), Propertius bemoans the fact that she is now more resistant to his advances (2.15.17-18) and reproaches her for her bashfulness using *ludere* as a euphemism for sex:

necdum inclinatae prohibent te ludere mammae:  
uiderit haec, si quam iam peperisse pudet. (2.15.21-20)

Not yet do saggy breasts forbid you to play:  
Let this worry one ashamed to have given birth already.

When Propertius catches Gallus in the arms of his lover (1.10.5-6) and is unable to tear himself from the sight, despite the late hour, he employs *lusus* in the same context:

quamuis labentes premeret mihi somnus ocellos  
et mediis caelo Luna ruberet equis,  
non tamen a uestro potui secedere lusu:  
tantus in alternis uocibus ardor erat. (1.10.7-10)

Although sleep weighed down my poor tired eyes  
And the moon blushed with her horses in mid heaven,  
I could not, however, turn away from your game:  
So great was the passion in your vocal exchanges.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>70</sup> The fact that we get a parody of stereotypical erotic scene suggests, perhaps, that Propertius is focused more on poetics than erotics.

<sup>71</sup> The girls are indirectly referred to as *puellae*, also, when Hercules attempts to secure entry to the grove by claiming that he, himself, was once a (very strange sort of) girl (*mollis et hirsutum cepit mihi fascia pectus, / et manibus duris apta puella fui*, 4.9.49-50).

<sup>72</sup> Other examples of *ludere/lusus* in erotic contexts can be found at 2.32.29-32, where *lusus* (2.32.29) refers to an amorous encounter or sex, and 2.6.1-4, where *ludere* seems to be a metaphor for sex, although there is some ambiguity – see Richardson (1977), p.227, n.4. *Ludere* is found in an amorous context at 2.25.27, when winds are a metaphor for the deceptive power of love. In a less amorous context, Propertius tells us that

For Propertius, *ludere/lusus* is part of the vocabulary of erotic elegy and carries with it a particular symbolism. The description of the girls at play within the grove suggests an amatory setting, even though they are not the typical girls of love elegy and are, in fact, religious figures engaged in worship of Bona Dea.<sup>73</sup>

The girls' laughter (*audit ridere puellas*, 4.9.23) indicates and enhances their elegiac status. When a rival replaces him as Cynthia's lover (2.9.1), Propertius is angered at her lack of loyalty (2.9.19-20) and particularly annoyed by the fact that when Cynthia and her lover are together they seem to laugh at him and make jokes at his expense:

quin etiam multo duxistis pocula risu:  
forsitan et de me uerba fuere mala. (2.9.21-22)

And, moreover, you downed your glasses with much laughter:  
Perhaps, too, there were unkind words about me.<sup>74</sup>

In the final elegy of book three, Propertius suffers similar ignominy when he is mocked for his years of devoted subjugation (3.25.3) to Cynthia:

risus eram positus inter conuiuia mensis,  
et de me poterat quilibet esse loquax. (3.25.1-2)

I have been mocked at tables set for feasts,  
And about me anyone could gossip freely.

In 4.8, we find Cynthia laying down the law in response to Propertius' plea for forgiveness (4.8.73-74) and laughing at his submission:

indixit legem: respondi ego 'legibus utar.'  
riserat imperio facta superba dato. (4.8.81-82)

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Cynthia's skill at playing (*ludere*) the lyre is one of her most attractive qualities (2.3.19-20). In 2.34, we find *ludere* used to suggest the composition of (Varro's) amatory elegy (2.34.85-86).

<sup>73</sup> Anderson, W. S. (1964), p.7, notes that the playing lends the girls a typically elegiac quality. Welch (2005), p.122, claims that Propertius presents the grove with its laughing girls as a 'realm of erotic sport'.

<sup>74</sup> I think we are to imagine Cynthia and her lover making disparaging, perhaps taunting, remarks (*uerba ... mala*, 2.9.22) about Propertius, rather than cursing him. It is the fact that she has another lover and that they are having a good time together at his expense that he finds especially annoying, as Richardson (1977), p.238, n.22, notes.

She spelt out the law: I replied, 'I shall accept the law.'  
She laughed, exultant in the power I had granted her.

Laughter, then, symbolises the playful interaction of lovers and the chastisement and mockery of the Propertian *amator*.<sup>75</sup>

Propertius depicts playfulness and laughter almost always in amorous or erotic contexts. *Ludere* and *lusus* and *ridere* and *risus* are part of the lexicon of amatory elegy and the girls within the grove are styled after the typical elegiac *puella*.<sup>76</sup> The behaviour of the girls within the grove of Bona Dea enhances the elegiac setting in which Hercules finds himself.

Propertius adds one more character to enhance the amatory atmosphere. The elderly priestess (4.9.51, 61) assumes the role of guardian or a door-keeper preventing access for the *exclusus amator* to the girls within the grove. When she comes between Hercules and the girls, tells him to go away and orders him to leave the doorstep (*cede agedum et tuta limina linque fuga*, 4.9.54), we are reminded of the role of the *custos* ('guardian'), the *ianitor* ('doorkeeper'), or, perhaps, even the *lena* ('madam') in preventing or hindering access to the *inclusae puellae*. In 1.11, it is precisely the lack of a *custos* that gives license to Cynthia's (supposed) dalliance (1.11.7-8) with a rival lover (*solet amoto labi custode puella / perfida*, 'when a guardian is absent, a girl is accustomed to slide into unfaithfulness', 1.11.15-16).<sup>77</sup> Guards (*custodes*) are employed specifically to prevent a lover from entering the house of a *puella*:

quos igitur tibi custodes, quae limina ponam,

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<sup>75</sup> On one occasion only is the laughter not directed at the Propertian *amator*; although the example is, nonetheless, found in an amorous context. With Propertius still injured by Cynthia's rejection of him in favour of the rich Illyrian *praetor*, he warns her that Jupiter does not always laugh at lovers' infidelities (*non semper placidus periuros ridet amantes / Iuppiter*, 'not always does Jupiter laugh calmly at the perjuries of lovers', 2.16.47).

<sup>76</sup> Anderson, W. S. (1964), pp.6-7, notes that the *puellae* are the type of girls we normally associate with elegy. Debroun (2003), p.207, claims that the girls in 4.9 are elegiac *puellae*. Welch (2005), p.122, claims that Propertius presents the grove of Bona Dea as though it were an 'elegiac house' with its laughing and playing girls.

<sup>77</sup> Note that some editors – Goold (1990), p.76; Viarre (2005), p.16; Heyworth (2007a), p.17, for example – transpose 1.11.15-16 to follow 1.11.7-8 and punctuate differently. For a brief discussion, see Richardson (1977), pp.177-78, n.15-16, and Heyworth (2007b), pp.53-54, n.9-18. This does not affect my point.

quae numquam supra pes inimicus eat? (2.6.37-38)

The *ianitor*, too, is charged with controlling would-be lovers' access to the *puella*. When advising Cynthia to entertain only rich lovers (4.5.21-62), Acanthis – a *lena*, as Propertius calls her (4.5.1, 75) – advises Cynthia to instruct the doorman to admit only those bringing presents:

'ianitor ad dantis uigilet: si pulsat inanis,  
surdus in obductam somniet usque seram.' (4.5.47-48)

'Let the doorkeeper look for gift-bearers: if he knocks empty-handed,  
Let him sleep deafly hard against the bolted bar [of the door].'

The *ianitor* and, indirectly, the *lena* regulate access to the girl.

The girls laughing and playing within the grove and the priestess controlling entry assume typical elegiac roles. Propertius' casting in this regard enhances the amatory setting and encourages us to see the the spring within the grove of Bona Dea as a metaphor for love elegy.

If we turn our attention to Hercules, we find that his speech develops the erotic theme. Propertius, who mischievously casts Hercules in his role as *exclusus amator*, foreshadows the unusual and unexpected nature of the speech with his precursory description of the hero's words (*iacit ante fores uerba minora deo*, 4.9.32). Although we are, thus, forewarned not to expect a typical heroic speech, we might still be surprised by the content and the line of argument that Hercules pursues when attempting to persuade the priestess to allow him admission to the grove.

The speech begins in what seems to be a rather formulaic and typical fashion; Hercules politely requests entry (*uos precor ... / pandite*, 4.9.33-34), explains his business (*fontis egens erro*, 4.9.35) and states – albeit in a somewhat boastful tone – his identity and credentials:<sup>78</sup>

'audistisne aliquem, tergo qui sustulit orbem?  
ille ego sum: Alciden terra recepta uocat.  
quis facta Herculeae non audit fortia clauae  
et numquam ad uastas irrita tela feras,

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<sup>78</sup> Anderson, W.S. (1964), p.8, claims that Hercules' boasting is yet another characteristic of the elegiac *amator*.

atque uni Stygias homini luxisse tenebras?' (4.9.37-41)

'You have heard of one who bore the globe on his back?  
I am he: the world I carried calls me Alcides.  
Who has not heard of the brave deeds of Hercules' club  
And of arrows never shot in vain at huge beasts,  
And how the Stygian darkness lit up for one man alone?'

Yet, when Hercules' *curriculum vitae* fails to impress the priestess and he, presumably, senses the futility of stressing his manly achievements, he wonders if his terrifying appearance might be preventing him access to the grove and rather desperately and very optimistically he tries a different approach and relates the tale of his time spent as a slave of the Lydian queen, Omphale, when, remarkably, he dressed as a woman and engaged in women's work:<sup>79</sup>

'sin aliquem uultusque meus saetaeque leonis  
terrent et Libyco sole perusta coma,  
idem ego Sidonia feci seruilia palla  
officia et Lydo pensa diurna colo,  
mollis et hirsutum cepit mihi fascia pectus,  
et manibus duris apta puella fui.' (4.9.45-50)

'But if any of you my appearance and lion's mane  
Terrifies and my hair bleached by the Libyan sun,  
I, too, in a Sidonian robe, performed servile  
Duties and the daily spinning upon a Lydian distaff,  
And a soft bra bound my hairy chest  
And with hard hands I was a fitting girl.'

Despite Hercules' bold appeal to female solidarity, the priestess remains unmoved and refuses, steadfastly, to allow him entry (*abscede ... / cede agedum ... linque*, 4.9.53-54).

The important point for us is that Hercules' speech mentions his enslavement to Omphale when, in typical elegiac fashion, he was quite literally in *seruitium amoris* ('love's servitude', 'a slave to love'). In 3.11, Propertius claims that Hercules endured his enslavement because of his love for Omphale; an example that Propertius uses to justify his own subjugation to Cynthia:

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<sup>79</sup> For other versions of the Hercules and Omphale story, see Ovid, *Fast.* 2.305-56; *Ep.* 9.53-118. For a discussion of Hercules' female attire, see Debroun (1994), pp.45-51.

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? (3.11.1-4)

Omphale in tantum formae processit honorem,  
 Lydia Gygaeo tincta puella lacu,  
 ut, qui pacato statuisset in orbe columnas,  
 tam dura traheret mollia pensa manu. (3.11.17-20)

Why be amazed if a woman directs my life  
 And drags a man enslaved under her rule?  
 And why fashion shameful charges of cowardice against me,  
 Because I cannot sever my chains and break my yoke?

Omphale grew to such renown of beauty,  
 The Lydian girl bathed in Gyges' lake,  
 That he, who had set up pillars in the world he made peaceful,  
 Drew out the soft weight of wool with hard hand.

Hercules' speech, by recalling his own and Propertius' *seruitium amoris*, enhances the amatory nature of the scene and lends further credibility to his performance in the role of *exclusus amator*.<sup>80</sup>

When Hercules takes on his new role as *exclusus amator*, he attempts to soften his image by claiming honorary status as a *puella* because he once dressed as a woman. Moreover, the description of his appearance in women's dress (*mollis et hirsutum cepit mihi fascia pectus, / et manibus duris apta puella fui*, 4.9.49-50) symbolises his change of character from monster-slaying hero to *amator* in terms of elegiac poetics, for when Hercules describes the visual details of the outfit he once wore, in an attempt to disguise (so to speak) his rough (*durus, hirsutus*) appearance by recalling his wearing of softer, feminine (*mollis*) clothing, he employs terms that Propertius uses elsewhere to describe elegiac poetry.<sup>81</sup>

In the programmatic opening of the second book, Propertius describes his amatory elegy as *mollis* (*quaeritis, unde mihi totiens scribantur amores, / unde meus ueniat mollis in ora liber*, 'you ask

<sup>80</sup> Debrohun (1994), p.49, states that the allusion to 3.11 'places Hercules firmly in the world of *seruitium amoris*'.

<sup>81</sup> Debrohun (1994), p.48, uses the term 'softens' in relation to Hercules' appearance, here, and regards his transformation as part of an alignment with Callimachean poetics.

where it comes from, the love poetry written so often by me, where it comes from, the book going softly upon the mouth,’ 2.1.1-2), while more serious poetry, poetry about Caesar’s Trojan ancestors – presumably, a reference to Virgil’s forthcoming *Aeneid* – is *durus* (*nec mea conueniunt duro praecordia uersu / Caesaris in Phrygios condere nomen auos*, ‘my heart is unwilling in hard verse to found Caesar’s name upon Phrygian ancestors’, 2.1.41-42).<sup>82</sup> In the first elegy of book three, Propertius, when seeking elegiac inspiration from the Muses, employs these same terms to refer (metaphorically) to the composition of amatory elegy (*mecum in curru parui uectantur Amores*, ‘little Love rides with me in the chariot’, 3.1.11) and poetry – presumably, epic poetry – about war and Roman history (*a ualeat, Phoebum quicumque moratur in armis*, ‘ah farewell, whoever, delays Phoebus in arms’, 3.1.7; *multi, Roma, tuas laudes annalibus addent*, ‘many, Rome, will include your praises in their *Annals*’, 3.1.15).<sup>83</sup>

mollia, Pegasides, date uestro serta poetae:

non faciet capiti dura corona meo.

(3.1.19-20)

Daughters of Pegasus, give a soft wreath to your poet:

A hard garland will not suit my head.

In the first elegy of Propertius’ last book, the hard garland (*dura corona*) of epic is replaced by a rough, shaggy one (*Ennius hirsuta cingat sua dicta corona*, ‘let Ennius crown his poetry with a rough garland’, 4.1.61). Hercules’ rough appearance – his shaggy chest (*hirsutum pectus*, 4.9.49) and hard hands (*manibus duris*, 4.9.50) – reminds us of his more usual epic role as all-conquering hero; his soft bra (*mollis ... fascia*, 4.9.49), on the other hand, symbolises his new elegiac role and advertises the grove’s elegiac context.

In fact, the opposition of *mollitia* and *duritia* epitomises, in many respects, the relationship between the elegiac *amator* and the object of his affection. The *puella* is characteristically harsh and hard

<sup>82</sup> Propertius (2.34.61-66), when composing his second book, is, apparently, aware of Virgil’s forthcoming epic.

<sup>83</sup> I follow Nethercut, W. R. (1961), ‘*Ille parum cauti pectoris egit opus*’, *TAPA*, 92, p.391, Lee (1994), p.163, n.15-16, and Butrica, J. L. (1996), ‘The *Amores* of Propertius: Unity and Structure in Books 2-4’, *ICS*, 21, p.135, in reading *annalibus* (3.1.15) as a reference to Ennius’ *Annales*.



hearted, while the poet/*amator* and his poetry are softer, weaker and more effeminate. To be subject to the forces of love is to suffer a harsh mistress and harsh times (*aliquid durum quaerimus in dominam*, 'I seek something [of use] against my harsh mistress', 1.7.6; *cogor et aetatis tempora dura queri*, 'I am forced to complain about the harsh times of youth', 1.7.8). Harshness is as much a quality of the *puella* as her beauty (*quamuis dura, tamen rara puella fuit*, 'although harsh, she was, however, a peerless girl', 1.17.16). Indeed, when Propertius dies, people might, he tells us, pass comment at his tomb on the harshness of his girl (*huic misero fatum dura puella fuit*, 'a harsh girlfriend was the fate for this wretched man', 2.1.78). Harshness (*duritia*) is a defining characteristic of the elegiac *puella*; she displays little *mollitia* (*molliter irasci non solet illa tibi*, 'she is not accustomed to get angry with you in a moderate way', 1.5.8). Propertius' subjugated *amator*, however, is softer in nature (*quaeris, Demophoon, cur sim tam mollis in omnis*, 'you ask, Demophoon, why I am so soft for all girls', 2.22a.13). A lover, Propertius warns the epic poet, Ponticus, must write soft poetry (*te quoque si certo puer hic concusserit arcu / ... cupies mollem componere uersum*, 'you too, if the boy [Cupid] should strike you with his unerring bow ... will desire to compose soft verse', 1.7.15, 19). When Hercules, then, tries to disguise his harsh features with soft clothing, he attempts to take on the characteristic effeminacy of the *amator* – albeit, a little too literally, by wearing a bra – and strengthen his elegiac credentials.<sup>84</sup>

The fact that Hercules recounts his wearing of female dress when attempting to access the grove of Bona Dea recalls a particular incident, which, by way of allusion, further enhances the grove's erotic setting. Indeed, cross-dressing and worship of Bona Dea cannot pass without mention of the events in 62 BC when Publius Clodius Pulcher disguised himself as a woman and entered the house of Julius Caesar, the then Pontifex Maximus, where the Vestal Virgins, as was the custom, were performing sacrifices to the goddess during the celebration of her rites – a ceremony that was forbidden to

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<sup>84</sup> Richardson (1977), p.475, n.49, remarks that *mollis*, in this instance, is more applicable to the wearer than the garment. Debrohun (1994), p.60, claims that Hercules' hard hands are not appropriate for the elegiac Hercules as *duritia* is an attribute of the elegiac *puella*, not the *amator*.

men.<sup>85</sup> Far from having an interest in the rites themselves, Clodius is said to have acted thus in order to seduce Caesar's wife, Pompeia, who, as wife of the Pontifex Maximus, was the leader of the celebrations. His actions caused such a scandal that the senate ordered an investigation into the desecration of the rites and Caesar thought it necessary to divorce Pompeia, claiming that it was essential for the wife of Caesar to be above suspicion, regardless of guilt.<sup>86</sup>

Clearly, there is similarity between this incident and Hercules' actions in our elegy.<sup>87</sup> Clodius dressed as a woman in order to enter the rites of Bona Dea; Hercules, when pleading with the priestess of Bona Dea at the entrance to the goddess' grove, recalls his own cross-dressing in an attempt to secure access. Furthermore, just as Clodius is said to have infiltrated the rites driven by his desire to meet a girl, so Hercules is cast in a similarly amorous role. Hercules seems to be advancing his own

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<sup>85</sup> For a fuller account of events, see Plutarch, *Vit. Caes.* 9-10. For a detailed discussion of the incident, see Tatum, W. J. (1999), *The Patrician Tribune: Publius Clodius Pulcher* (Studies in the History of Greece and Rome; Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press), pp.62-86. For a discussion of the relationship between the Clodius affair and Hercules' actions in 4.9, see Fox (1999), pp.165-67.

<sup>86</sup> See Suetonius, *Iul.* 6 and 74; Cicero, *Dom.* 104f.; Cicero, *Har. Res.* 37f.; Plutarch, *Vit. Caes.* 10. Barrett, A. A. (2002), *Livia: First Lady of Imperial Rome* (New Haven: Yale University Press), pp.204-05, has a brief discussion. Caesar, himself, seems to have shown little ill will towards Clodius. Indeed, he refused to speak against Clodius at the trial (Suet. *Iul.* 74). Clodius, in fact, seems to have acted as a kind of agent for Caesar in expelling Cicero from Rome. It seems that becoming a plebeian assisted him to this end and thus Caesar granted his wish to transfer to this rank and gave permission for him to be adopted by a man younger than Clodius himself (59 BC), despite Cicero being involved in the prosecution of Clodius for the Bona Dea scandal. Clearly, political motivations were to the fore (see Suet. *Iul.* 20, *Tib.* 2). Furthermore, Clodius was then elected tribune in 58 BC. A further political element is detected by some who see references to the worship of Bona Dea in this elegy as allusions to Livia's restoration of the goddess' temple – see Holleman (1977), p.90, who claims that 4.9 'is not unrelated to Livia's restoration of the Bona Dea temple'; Spencer (2001), pp.272-73, who states that it is 'unlikely that an Augustan audience for this poem could be unaware of a further layer of connexion between Hercules, Augustus, the Ara Maxima, and the temple of Bona Dea ... Livia chose to echo Augustus' temple restoration programme by renovating the temple of Bona Dea'; Fox (1996), pp.169-70, who asserts that 4.9 addresses a subject that was 'close to Augustus' heart', the restoration of the temple of Bona Dea by Livia; Fox (1999), pp.164-65, who claims that one of the 'contextual factors ... at play ... is the involvement of Livia in the restoration of the shrine of the Bona Dea'. There is only a single extant reference, found in Ovid's *Fasti*, evidencing Livia's restoration (*Livia restituit, ne non imitata maritum / esset et ex omni parte secuta suum*, 'Livia restored it [the temple of Bona Dea], so that she might imitate her husband and follow him in every respect', *Fasti* 5.157-58). We thus know that the restoration had taken place by 8 AD – Ovid tells us (*Tristia* 2.549-52) that his banishment to Tomis in 8 AD disrupted the composition of *Fasti* – but this date is some twenty-four years later than the publication of Propertius' fourth book. So, any claims that a contemporary audience would see allusion to Livia's restoration in Propertius' account must be treated with scepticism. The restoration might well have occurred some years earlier – indeed, Propertius stresses the dilapidated condition of the goddess' place of worship (*putris casa*, 'dilapidated hut', 4.9.28) in a possible contrast to its restored state – yet, there simply is no evidence to date that Livia's restoration had occurred prior to the composition or publication of Propertius' fourth book.

<sup>87</sup> The similarity between Hercules' cross-dressing and the Clodius affair of 62 BC, that we know occurred at the celebration of the rites of the Bona Dea, might be called upon as circumstantial evidence to help identify the unnamed goddess in 4.9.

claim to entry based on the (temporally impossible) precedent of Clodius' successful infiltration of the rites of the goddess.<sup>88</sup>

Propertius, then, has carefully modelled the setting of the grove of Bona Dea to resemble the backdrop of a typical elegiac scene. The grove is furnished with a *limen* – a typical elegiac symbol – and bears a strong resemblance to the grove in 3.3 to which Apollo directs Propertius, a grove that is especially suitable for the composition of erotic elegy. Hercules at the entrance to the grove takes on the role of elegiac *amator* and delivers a paraclausithyron in which he enhances his elegiac credentials by reminiscing about his time spent in *seruitium amoris* to Omphale and, in turn, recalling, by mention of cross-dressing, the Clodius affair of 62 BC. In addition to Hercules' lead role as *exclusus amator*, the girls hidden away inside the grove take on the roles of *inclusae puellae*, complete with the usual play and laughter of the elegiac mistress, and the aged priestess plays the *ianitor/custos/lena* character with her stern rebukes and summary dismissals of the would-be lover. Given that water in this elegy functions as a poetic metaphor, it seems clear that the water within the grove of Bona Dea must represent erotic elegy.

I now want to turn to the waters in the opening episode of the elegy and argue that the water of the River Tiber and the Velabrum – which is, after all, practically the same water – is a symbol for epic poetry. We have seen that the role that Hercules assumes at the threshold of the grove helps to determine the generic significance of that setting and the spring water within the grove. The role of Hercules in the first part of the elegy is equally significant. Hercules, in his conflict with Cacus, gives a familiar performance as monster-slaying hero, replete with lion-skin (*saetaeque leonis*, 4.9.45) and club (*Maenalia ... ramo*, 4.9.15; *clauae*, 4.9.17; *Herculeae ... clauae*, 4.9.39), thirsty (*et sicco torque sitis ora palato*, 4.9.21; *fontis egens erro*, 4.9.35; *Herculis ... sitis*, 4.9.70), dirty (*in siccam congesta*

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<sup>88</sup> Although the scandal of Clodius' actions took place almost half a century before the publication of Propertius' fourth book and thus must have slipped to a degree from the public consciousness, the sacrilege of Clodius' actions probably remained undiminished. Galinsky (1972), p.155, claims that the scandal of Clodius 'did not diminish with the passing of time.' Note that Galinsky (1972), p.155, dates the scandal to 55 BC. Pompeia, however, was divorced by Caesar in 61 BC. For dating, see Fox (1999), p.165.

*puluere barbam*, 4.9.31), tanned (*Libyco sole perusta coma*, 4.9.46) and tired (*fessus*, 4.9.4; 66) from his heroic deeds.

This is a very epic, Virgilian Hercules recapitulating his role in the *Aeneid* where he is portrayed as the model of a civilising hero. Virgil's account of the battle between Hercules and Cacus (*Aen.* 8.193-267) presents Hercules in arguably his most famous battle – at least in a Roman context – in the most renowned and celebrated of all Roman epics. Propertius carefully models his account on Virgil's version of the tale. Subject matter alone is evidence enough to suggest correlation, yet there are more specific points of contact.<sup>89</sup> In both versions, Hercules arrives at Rome with the cattle of Geryon, having defeated the triple headed monster:

... nam maximus ultor,  
tergemini nece Geryonae spoliisque superbus,  
Alcides aderat taurosque hac uictor agebat  
ingentis, uallemque boues amnemque tenebant. (*Aen.* 8.201-04)

... For the greatest avenger,  
Exultant in the death and spoils of triple Geryon,  
Alcides, came and as a victor led this way his bulls  
Of great size, and his cattle occupied the river-valley.

Amphitryoniades qua tempestate iuuencos  
egerat a stabulis, o Erythea, tuis,  
uenit ad inuictos pecorosa Palatia montis,  
et statuit fessos fessus et ipse boues,  
qua Velabra suo stagnabant flumine quoque  
nauta per urbanas uelificabat aquas. (4.9.1-6)

In both accounts, the paronymously named Cacus steals a few cattle from Hercules' herd and drags them by their tails into his lair, thinking that this will foil attempts to discover their whereabouts:

quattuor a stabulis praestanti corpore tauros  
auertit, totidem forma superante iuuencas.  
atque hos, ne qua forent pedibus uestigia rectis,  
cauda in speluncam tractos ... (*Aen.* 8.207-10)

Four bulls, with outstanding form, from their stalls

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<sup>89</sup> For similarities (and contrasts) between the two versions, see Warden (1982), pp.228-242.

He stole, and as many cows with surpassing beauty.  
And these, lest there be tracks from feet pointing forward,  
He dragged by the tail into the cave ...

hic, ne certa forent manifestae signa rapinae,  
auersos cauda traxit in antra boues. (4.9.11-12)

Propertius' description of the theft provides a number of specific linguistic connections to Virgil's account: the demonstrative *hos* (*Aen.* 8.209) is picked up by Propertius' *hic* (4.9.11); the purpose clause is introduced in precisely the same manner (*ne ... forent*, *Aen.* 8.209; 4.9.11); Virgil's *cauda in speluncam tractos* (*Aen.* 8.210) is mirrored by Propertius' *cauda traxit in antra* (4.9.12); and the theft (*auertit*, *Aen.* 8.208) is echoed in Propertius' description (*auersos*, 4.9.12).

Another point of contact is found in the description of the stalls. In Virgil's tale, Cacus steals the cattle from, presumably, some kind of makeshift shelter (*a stabulis*, *Aen.* 8.207); in Propertius' version, the stables from which Hercules steals Geryon's cattle are described in the same language (*a stabulis*, 4.9.2). On each occasion, Hercules is alerted to the stolen cattle's hidden location by their lowing. In Virgil's account, a single cow raises the alarm:

reddidit una boum uocem uastoque sub antro  
mugit et Caci spem custodita fefellit. (Aen. 8.217-18)

One cow returned the call and from the vast cave  
Lowled and, although imprisoned, cheated the hopes of Cacus.

In Propertius' version, the cattle cry out in unison (*furem sonuere iuuenci*, 4.9.13).

In the *Aeneid*, the cattle are rescued when the doors of Cacus' lair are ripped off:

panditur extemplo foribus domus atra reuolsis  
abstractaeque boues abiurataeque rapinae  
caelo ostenduntur ... (Aen. 8.262-64)

At once, with the doors torn off, the black home is exposed  
And the stolen cattle and the plunder denied  
Are revealed to the heavens ...

In 4.9, they are rescued when Cacus' doors are demolished (*furis et implacidas diruit ira fores*, 4.9.14). The theft in Virgil's version (*rapinae*, *Aen.* 8.263) is similarly labelled in Propertius' account (*rapinae*, 4.9.11).

On both occasions, too, the rescue of the cattle is marked by the foundation of the Ara Maxima:

hanc aram luco statuit, quae Maxima semper  
dicetur nobis et erit quae maxima semper. (Aen. 8.271-72)

In the grove he set this altar; 'Greatest' always  
Will it be called by us and greatest will it always be.

'Maxima quae gregibus deuota est Ara repertis,  
ara per has' inquit 'maxima facta manus.' (4.9.67-68)

In a specific echo of Virgil's account, Propertius, just like Virgil, repeats *maxima* in both lines.<sup>90</sup>

Virgil's Hercules, struck by fatigue (*fessus*, *Aen.* 8.232) during his battle with Cacus, rests in the valley (*ter fessus ualle resedit*, 'three times he fell back to the valley, exhausted', *Aen.* 8.232) where the River Tiber runs.<sup>91</sup> Propertius' Hercules, similarly tired (*fessus*, 4.9.4) upon his arrival at Rome and, again, following his battle with Cacus (*fessus*, 4.9.66), seeks respite in the same location alongside the Tiber. Propertius' choice of language, here, reinforces the association – even the poor cattle are *tired* (*fessi*, 4.9.4). Propertius carefully aligns his account with that of Virgil.<sup>92</sup>

The connection, in fact, between the two accounts is signalled from the very beginning of Propertius' tale by the opening word, *Amphitryoniades* ('son of Amphitryon', 4.9.1). Only three prior uses of this impressive patronymic are recorded and two of these are found in *Aeneid* 8: when Evander and his followers are celebrating Hercules' defeat of Cacus and founding of the Ara maxima (*forte die*

<sup>90</sup> As noted by Eden, P. T. (1975), *A Commentary on Virgil: Aeneid VIII* (Mnemosyne, Bibliotheca Classica Batava. Supplementum 35; Leiden: Brill), p.118, n.271-72.

<sup>91</sup> That the River Tiber runs through the valley is clear from the earlier description (*uallumque boues amnemque tenebant*, *Aen.* 8.204).

<sup>92</sup> Further allusion can be found, according to Warden (1982), p.237, in Hercules' boastful enquiry of the worshippers in the grove of the Bona Dea (*audistisne aliquem, tergo qui sustulit orbem?*, 4.9.37) and Aeneas' description of Atlas supporting the world (*aetherios umero qui sustinet orbis*, 'he who sustains the heavenly globe on his shoulder', *Aen.* 8.137), with *qui sustulit orbem* echoing *qui sustinet orbis*.

*sollemnem illo rex Arcas honorem / Amphitryoniadae magno diuisque ferebat*, ‘by chance, on that day, the Arcadian king was paying solemn respect to that great son of Amphitryon and the gods’, *Aen.* 8.102-33); and when Hercules is preparing to leave Rome, just before he discovers Cacus’ theft of the cattle (*iam stabulis saturata moueret / Amphitryoniades armenta abitumque pararet*, ‘now the son of Amphitryon was moving his satisfied herd from the stalls and preparing for departure’, *Aen.* 8.213-14).<sup>93</sup> The first word of 4.9 immediately captures the reader’s attention and invites comparison with Virgil’s telling of the tale.<sup>94</sup>

Indeed, the epically flavoured patronymic in a striking four word hexameter introduces a lengthy opening sentence that establishes an epic tone from the very beginning,<sup>95</sup> with the tone maintained by the archaic *tempestate* (4.9.1) and the apostrophe of *o Erythea* (4.9.2).<sup>96</sup> The recollection of an earlier heroic age adds a further epic overtone. Past tenses dominate the Cacus episode and the final couplet of the first sentence (*qua Velabra suo stagnabant flumine quoque / nauta per urbanas uelificabat aquas*, 4.9.5-6) with its iterative imperfects *stagnabant* and *uelificabat* casts the reader’s mind back to earlier times and recalls the beginnings of the city. The early foundation of the city, its mythical and heroic origins and its founders, Romulus and Remus, are recalled, too, by mention of the Palatine and the unconquered hills (*uenit ad inuictos pecorosa Palatia montes*, 4.9.3) and the Velabrum, the area where the twins were washed ashore and rescued in Rome’s early days.

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<sup>93</sup> The other is Catullus 68b.112.

<sup>94</sup> As noted by Debroun (2003), p.120, and Lindheim (1998), p.54. This is the primary function of *Amphitryoniades*, according to Effe, B. (2002), ‘Hercules Fervidus Ira: Ein Motiv der “Aeneis” und seine Rezeption bei Properz und Ovid’, *Hermes*, 130 (2), p.170.

<sup>95</sup> As noted by Warden (1980), p.106. Richardson (1977), p.472, n.1, describes ‘the richly, rolling, elevated tone of the first several couplets of the poem’. Although we might agree with Pinotti (1977), pp.54-55, that the opening patronymic, the associations with the *Aeneid* and the archaic tone of the language signal Alexandrianisms, an epic and Alexandrian flavour need not be mutually exclusive. Indeed, the incorporation of epic material and language in an elevated tone into a work of elegy, particularly one concerned with aetiology, might be considered particularly Alexandrian. But it is the epic tone of the material, I think, that lends it this quality.

<sup>96</sup> See Warden (1980), p.106. Note that Warden (1980), p.106, considers *inuictos ... montes* an oblique reference to Hercules’ epithet *inuictus*, thereby adding to the epic tone with the typically epic addition of an epithet. Note, too, that Warden (1980), p.106, considers *Amphitryoniades* to lend an epic flavour because, according to Warden, it is Ennian in origin.

So, the Hercules that Propertius portrays in the first part of 4.9 is the archetypal epic hero recapitulating his role in one of his most notable battles, most famously portrayed by Virgil in the most celebrated of Roman epics. Propertius meticulously models his account on that of Virgil in order to enhance the epic stature of Hercules and the epic status of the battle and to add a suitably epic flavour to proceedings. This first episode in 4.9 serves as a prelude for the Bona Dea episode by setting the scene and by presenting Hercules in his traditional guise so as to make the transformation of the landscape and the hero more remarkable and unexpected. Indeed, without the touchstone of the *Aeneid*, Propertius' version of the tale would remain the mere briefest of introductory summaries (that it is). But the omnipresence of Virgil's account ensures that Propertius' depiction of the encounter is much weightier than might otherwise be the ten lines he offers. Hercules' transformation and accompanying change of focus from the water of the Tiber and Velabrum to the spring within the grove suggest that the landscape and water of the opening scene of the elegy symbolise a quite different type of poetry than that symbolised by the spring and grove. Just as the characterisation of Hercules and the elegiac setting of the scene before the entrance to the grove designate the water within the grove as representative of elegiac inspiration, the portrayal of Hercules in his battle with Cacus and the epic nature of the backdrop – cleverly enhanced by Propertius' alignment with Virgil's account – mark the water of the Tiber and the Velabrum as a symbol for epic poetry.

### Reflections on a Programme

With the symbolism of the respective water sources established, I would like to turn our attention to the programmatic overtones of the landscape and Hercules' actions within it and argue that Propertius offers in 4.9 a metapoetic reflection on his poetic programme and development as a poet through his presentation of epic themes as incompatible with love elegy and Hercules' actions as representative of the overpowering nature of epic poetry and the elegist's inability to take on epic themes. Propertius embeds Hercules, a paradigm of epic heroism, into an elegiac scenario and, in



this sense, Hercules embodies something of Propertius' literary endeavour in book four.<sup>97</sup> Propertius defines his project in the final lines of his programmatic speech that begins the book as a work on rituals and nomenclature (*sacra diesque canam et cognomina prisca locorum*, 'I shall sing of sacred rites and days and the ancient names of places', 4.1.69), although what precedes this statement is more of a summary of the (mythological) origins of Rome from the earliest times, rather than, in a strict sense, an etymological or aetiological tale. Nonetheless, Propertius appears to want to combine accounts of Rome's historical and mythological past with his more customary amatory and elegiac themes – he wishes, if you like, to combine the palindromic *Roma* and *amor*; themes that hitherto for Propertius had appeared rather incompatible.<sup>98</sup> In this respect, Hercules embodies this project. In the guise of epic, civilising hero, he represents well the *Roma* theme, with his despatching of the cattle-rustling Cacus and foundation of one of the city's earliest monuments, the Ara Maxima, one of Rome's important foundation myths. By introducing this Hercules into his elegiac scenario, as the *exclusus amator*, no less, Propertius has forced the juxtaposition of *Roma* and *amor*, or, even, forced *Roma* into *amor*.

Hercules' (recollected) appearance in women's clothing and his embodiment of generic labels also symbolises Propertius' poetic experiment. He forces his epic, shaggy chest into the elegiac, soft bra (*mollis et hirsutum cepit mihi fascia pectus*, 4.9.49) and claims that he became an elegiac *puella* despite his epic, hard hands (*et manibus duris apta puella fui*, 4.9.50).

But, in fact, Hercules does not so easily marry these two generic concerns. Just as his appearance in women's clothing fails to disguise the epic hero, so too his tale of cross-dressing fails to disguise his epic, manly status and, accordingly, the priestess of Bona Dea refuses him entry to the grove. Indeed, the incongruity of Hercules' appearance, with the masculine, hard-handed, hirsute hero dressed in a woman's soft bra, highlights, in a metaphorical sense, generic incompatibility or tension,

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<sup>97</sup> As Debrohun (1994), p.61, notes. Lindheim (1998), p.48, claims that Hercules symbolises Propertius' fourth book because, like the book, Hercules defies attempts to read him as a unified character.

<sup>98</sup> Debrohun (1994), p.62, notes that Propertius' Hercules embraces these competing themes. Such themes are presented as incompatible in, for example, 2.10 and 3.1.

rather than symbolising a harmonious amalgamation of elegiac and epic themes. Hercules has been miscast and is out of place in the elegiac setting of the grove; he is more suited to the epic setting of the elegy's opening scene. He is simply too big, too manly, too epic a character for the elegiac scenario in which he finds himself. On one hand, then, Hercules might be seen to embody or personify Propertius' poetic project by symbolising the generic tension of his new poetic endeavour, yet, on the other hand, his character draws attention to the incompatibility of the generic juxtaposition.

Hercules' incompatibility with his new characterisation and surroundings is suggested on a number of occasions. When he delivers his *paraclausithyron* in the guise of *exclusus amator*, his speech, we are told, is unsuitable for a hero of Hercules' status (*uerba minora deo*, 4.9.32). Hercules, himself, recognises that his usual attire and appearance are unsuitable for his new elegiac role (*sin aliquem uultusque meus saetaeque leonis / terrent et Libyco sole perusta coma*, 4.9.45-46) and the priestess of the grove, in a clear indication of Hercules' generic incompatibility with his new surrounds, tells him to find other sources of water (*di tibi dent alios fontes*, 4.9.59).

When the priestess orders Hercules from the grove and instructs him to seek other more suitable water sources, we are reminded of Apollo's instructions to Propertius in 3.3 when he finds himself in the wrong part of the programmatic landscape alongside the fount of epic poetry (suffering delusions of epic grandeur) (*quid tibi cum tali, demens, est flumine? quis te / carminis heroï tangere iussit opus?*, 'what right have you, madman, to such a stream? Who ordered you to touch the task of heroic poetry?', 3.3.15-16) and Apollo directs him along a new path to another grove (*plectro sedem mihi monstrat eburno / quo noua muscoso semita facta solo est*, 'with ivory plectrum he pointed out to me a place where a fresh path had been made in the mossy ground', 3.3.25-26) more suitable for his elegiac poetry (*quippe coronatos alienum ad limen amantes / nocturnaeque canes ebria signa fugae*, 3.3.47-48), with which the grove of Bona Dea shares a number of characteristics. Particularly interesting from our point of view is the fact that Hercules appears to have followed a very similar

route to arrive at the grove of Bona Dea. Propertius seems to have modelled the landscape of early Rome in 4.9 on the generic setting of Mount Helicon in 3.3; and, in 4.9, Hercules is apparently following in Propertius' footsteps as if he is tracking down elegy and the elegiac poet. Just like Propertius in 3.3, Hercules has left the epic part of the landscape and followed an apparently little-travelled path to arrive at the secluded grove and spring. But the grove and spring of Bona Dea, as we know, do not represent a generically suitable location for Hercules. So, when the priestess orders Hercules away from the grove (4.9.53-54) and encourages him to seek other more suitable sources of water (4.9.59), she is, in fact, reversing the instructions that Apollo gave to Propertius in 3.3.<sup>99</sup> Just as Propertius follows the new path in 3.3 at Apollo's bidding to arrive at the grove and spring of elegiac poetry, so Hercules must retrace his steps and return to the epic setting of the Tiber and Velabrum, a scene befitting his epic status. But, as we know, Hercules does not return to the generically appropriate location within the landscape of 4.9, a location better suited to his enormous thirst with its epic sized waters. Instead, his epic traits and epic temper result in the draining and destruction of the elegiac spring. Hercules' destructive power, perhaps, explains Propertius' closing plea to the hero to be kind to his poetic endeavour (*uelis libro dexter inesse meo*, 4.9.72).

It is important to remember, however, that Hercules, here, in the Bona Dea episode, is not an *exclusus amator*. He is not an elegiac lover and he does not belong in the elegiac setting. He merely recalls his cross-dressing and he does not actually disguise his appearance. He is not the Hercules of 3.11 that the hero recalls in his pleas before the entrance to the grove. Here, before the grove, he is wearing his famous lion-skin and wielding his celebrated club, just as he was when he killed the monstrous Cacus. It comes as no surprise that his anger gets the better of him and he smashes his way into the grove just as he breaks into Cacus' lair (*nec tulit iratam ianua clausa sitim*, 4.9.62; *furis et implacidas diruit ira fores*, 4.9.14). He does not revert to epic type when he resorts to his customary violence to force his way past the grove's doors, he has, in fact, never left it.

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<sup>99</sup> Debrohun (2003), p.208, notes the reversal of the situation in 3.3.

The Propertian *amator* does not resort to such behaviour (although, no doubt, he often wishes he could).<sup>100</sup> Despite his raw anger (*nunc est ira recens*, ‘now my anger is fresh’, 2.5.9), Propertius vows never to let his temper drive him to break down his lover’s doors (*nec mea praeclusas fregerit ira fores*, ‘my anger will not break your closed doors’, 2.5.22). When preparing to abandon his relationship with Cynthia (*flebo ego discedens*, 3.25.7), he recalls proudly that he never broke down her door (*ualeant ... / nec tamen irata ianua fracta manu*, ‘farewell door not broken by my hand despite its anger’, 3.25.9-10). Hercules is not a refined enough character for the refined style of Propertius’ elegy. Despite his casting in the role of elegiac *amator* and despite a bold attempt to play the character in convincing fashion, Hercules remains the familiar, epic monster-slayer that we meet in the first part of the elegy.

When Propertius outlines in 4.1 his new literary endeavour and proposes to tackle new themes, he hopes that his narrow stream of voice will be enough for the task:

moenia namque pio coner disponere uersu:  
 ei mihi, quod nostro est paruus in ore sonus!  
 sed tamen exiguo quodcumque e pectore riui  
 fluxerit, hoc patriae seruiet omne meae. (4.1.57-60)

For should I try to set out the walls in patriotic verse:  
 Alas for me, that the sound in my mouth is small!  
 But yet from my tiny breast whatever stream  
 Will flow, all of this will be at the service of my fatherland.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>100</sup> As Debroun (1994), p.59, notes.

<sup>101</sup> I translate *prio* (4.1.57) as ‘patriotic’ after Richardson (1977), p.418, n.57-58, and Heyworth (2007b), p.588. Note that Heyworth (2007b), pp.421-423, n.55-64, based on 4.9.64 (*Vmbria Romani patria Callimachi*, ‘Umbria, the fatherland of the Roman Callimachus’) considers *patriae* (4.1.60) a reference to Umbria and not Rome. Even if this be the case, it need not undermine the argument offered here. Propertius is planning a patriotic work on Roman foundations, both literal and metaphorical; the walls (*moenia*, 4.1.57) he proposes as poetic material are the walls of Rome from the time of Romulus and Remus, as is made clear by the reference to the she-wolf who nurtured the twins (*optima nutricum nostris, lupa Martia, rebus, / qualia creuerunt moenia lacte tuo*, ‘best of nurses for our state, she-wolf of Mars, what walls have grown from your milk’, 4.1.55-56).

The walls of Rome (*moenia*, 4.1.57), the patriotic verse (*pio ... uersu*, 4.1.57) and service of the fatherland (*patriae seruiet*, 4.1.57) suggest that the subject matter Propertius proposes to sing of will involve patriotic glorification of the origins and history of Rome, the kind of material most suited to epic verse. It seems that his concern is warranted, for, as it happens, his poetic flow, just as he feared, is not large enough to sustain the epic Hercules. In fact, when Hercules crashes his way into the grove and comes face to face, as it were, with the source of Propertius' poetic inspiration, the spring within the grove, he drains it completely (*exhausto iam flumine*, 4.9.63). In 3.3, when Propertius dreams that he can write epic verse (3.3.1-4), we saw that this type of poetry requires *magni fontes* of inspiration (*paruaque tam magnis admoram fontibus ora / unde pater sitiens Ennius ante bibit*, 3.3.5-6), not the insufficient water of the pure, little spring that we find within the grove of Bona Dea.<sup>102</sup> Hercules exhausts the supply of Propertius' poetic power. Propertius' elegiac inspiration is simply too small to sate the epic sized thirst of Hercules.

So, when Propertius forces the juxtaposition of elegiac and epic themes, he presents himself as lacking the epic-sized poetic flow to incorporate successfully the epic material into his elegiac framework. He presents his enjambment of epic and elegy as a poetic clash rather than a satisfactory marriage of different generic themes. This clash, as we have seen, is manifest in Hercules' (recollection of his) ill-fitting clothes and his delivery of words demeaning his heroic and divine status. Hercules is not well-suited to his new role and Propertius suggests that his poetic style and customary themes are not well-suited to marrying these competing concerns in a serious and reverential fashion.

Of course, Propertius, with typical elegiac irony, sustains epic and elegiac themes very successfully in 4.9 – but not, perhaps, in terms of the proposal outlined at the beginning of the book when he promises to sing of Rome's rites and rituals and the names of ancient places (*sacra diesque canam et cognomina prisca locorum*, 4.1.69) and outline the foundations of Rome in a respectful and more

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<sup>102</sup> The issue is confused by the fact that in 3.3 epic and elegy are both metaphorised by springs – as Debroun (2003), p.208, notes.

serious tone (*moenia namque pio coner disponere uersu*, 4.1.57). Part of the elegists' *modus operandi* is to set elegy and elegiac themes in contrast to epic poetry and concerns, and the undermining of expectations and assumptions is an integral and intriguing aspect of Roman elegy. In this respect, Propertius does incorporate epic material into an elegiac model and he does so in a very successful way. Regardless of how successful the poem might be, however, it is clear that Hercules' actions within the landscape of 4.9 do not symbolise the harmonious incorporation of epic themes into an elegiac framework. Epic themes, indeed, prove to be overpowering and destructive forces in an allegorical sense. In fact, as always, Propertius presents the different generic themes as warring and incompatible factions. Paradoxically and ironically, then, Propertius portrays elegy and epic as incompatible forces in a very satisfying and successful elegy that does, indeed, combine epic and elegiac themes.

### Realising Callimachean Ideals

I want to consider now the landscape of 4.9 in relation to the Callimachean aesthetic in order to gain perspective and to better judge the overarching poetics of the landscape. I argue that Propertius presents a landscape in agreement with Callimachus' poetic announcements and, in doing so, that he portrays elegy as a stylistically superior (although, not more powerful) genre to epic, thereby reflecting Propertius' realisation of his claim to be the *Romanus Callimachus*.<sup>103</sup>

Propertius, in the new project of book four, as we know, styles himself the Roman Callimachus (4.1.64) and proposes to compose Callimachean style aetiology and tell of sacred rites and days and the names of ancient places.<sup>104</sup> Indeed, book four contains a number of elegies that fulfil these criteria. The second, fourth, sixth, eighth and tenth elegies are concerned, ostensibly, with

<sup>103</sup> I make a distinction between a stylistically superior and a more powerful genre. I think that Propertius presents epic as a more powerful genre in the sense that it has the ability to overwhelm elegy and elegiac themes in much the same way as, in Callimachean terms, the great big flow of epic rivers would swamp the small, clear and pure flow of an elegiac spring. But, again, in Callimachean terms, Propertius, here in 4.9, presents elegy as the stylistic superior to epic in the same way as big epic rivers are filthy and overpowering in their flow in comparison to the small and refined flow of the pure elegiac spring.

<sup>104</sup> For discussions of Callimachean influence on Propertius' fourth book, see Pillinger, H. E. (1969), 'Some Callimachean Influences on Propertius, Book 4', *HSCP*, 73, pp.171-99. For Callimachean influence with particular regard to 4.9, see Pillinger (1969), pp.182-89; Pinotti (1977), pp.50-71; Debrehun (2003), pp.201-09.

etymology, aetiology and ritual. Propertius tells of the (supposed) origins of the name of Vertumnus in 4.2 with a number of (apparently) false etymologies before the god, himself, reveals the true origins of his name:<sup>105</sup>

at postquam ille suis tantum concessit alumnis,  
Vertumnus uerso dicor ab amne deus.  
seu, quia uertentis fructum praecepimus anni,  
Vertumni rursus credidit esse sacrum. (4.2.9-12)

mendax fama, nocēs: alius mihi nominis index.  
de se narranti tu modo crede deo.  
opportuna mea est cunctis natura figuris:  
in quamcumque uoles uerte, decorus ero. (4.2.19-22)<sup>106</sup>

But after he [Tiberinus] yielded such ground to his nurslings,  
I am called the god Vertumnus from the turning of the river.  
Or, because I received the fruit of the turning year,  
Again, the rite is believed to belong to Vertumnus.

Lying rumour, you do harm: there is another explanation of my name:  
You, believe only a god talking about himself.  
My nature is suited to all forms:  
Turn me to whatever you like, I will be well suited.

In 4.4, Propertius promises to tell of the aetiological origins of the grove and grave of Tarpeia – with a play on words contained in the description of her tomb<sup>107</sup> – and describes the origin and rites of the Parilia:<sup>108</sup>

Tarpeium nemus et Tarpeiae turpe sepulcrum  
fabor et antiqui limina capta louis. (4.4.1-2)

<sup>105</sup> For the Callimachean aspects of 4.2, see Dee, J. H. (1974), 'Propertius 4.2: Callimachus Romanus at Work', *AJP*, 95 (1), pp.43-55.

<sup>106</sup> Hutchinson (2006), pp.91-92, n.19-20, and Heyworth (2007b), pp.437-38, n.13-20, argue for *uaces* in place of *nocēs* (4.2.19) after Housman, A. E. (1972), *The Classical Papers of A. E. Housman*, eds J. Diggle and F. R. D. Goodyear, 3 vols. (1; London: Cambridge University Press), pp.300-01, noting that *fama*, here, is not harmful in either a general sense or to the god Vertumnus. But the more widely attested *nocēs* remains perfectly intelligible and, in a general sense, *mendax fama* is harmful when it comes to determining the truth; and truth is Vertumnus' main concern in this elegy.

<sup>107</sup> The play on words is *TARpeium ... TARpeiae TURpe ...* (4.4.1).

<sup>108</sup> He also ends the poem with the nomenclatorial origins of the Mons Tarpeius, derived, according to Propertius, from Tarpeia's role in guiding Tatius safely into the citadel (*a duce Tarpeium mons est cognomen adeptus*, 'the hill took the name "Tarpeius" from the guide', 4.4.93).

urbi festus erat (dixere Parilia patres),  
 hic primus coepit moenibus esse dies,  
 annua pastorum conuiuia, lusus in urbe,  
 cum pagana madent fercula diuitiis,  
 cumque super raros faeni flammantis acervos  
 traiecit immundos ebria turba pedes. (4.4.73-78)

The Tarpeian grove and Tarpeia's shameful tomb  
 I shall tell of, and the captured threshold of ancient Jove.

It was a feast day for the city (the fathers called it the Parilia),  
 This began as the first day for the walls,  
 The annual party of the shepherds, games in the city,  
 When village platters drip with riches,  
 And when over scattered heaps of burning hay  
 The drunken crowd hurls their filthy feet.

He offers his narrative of the battle of Actium in 4.6 as an aetiology of Apollo's temple on the Palatine (*Musa, Palatini referemus Apollinis aedem*, 'Muse, we shall tell of the temple of Palatine Apollo', 4.6.11; *Actius hinc traxit Phoebus monumenta*, 'hence Actian Phoebus gained his monuments', 4.6.67). In 4.8, he explains the rites of the snake cult of Juno Sospita at Lanuvium (4.8.3-14) (*Lanuuium annosi uetus est tutela draconis*, 'Lanuvium is an ancient protectorate of a very old snake', 4.8.3).

He begins 4.10 by telling of the origins of Jupiter Feretrius and the *spolia opima* and concludes with alternative etymologies of Jupiter's epithet:

nunc lous incipiam causas aperire Feretri  
 armaque de ducibus trina recepta tribus. (4.10.1-2)

nunc spolia in templo tria condita: causa Feretri,  
 omine quod certo dux ferit ense ducem;  
 seu quia uicta suis umeris haec arma ferebant,  
 hinc Feretri dicta est ara superba lous. (4.10.45-48)

Now I shall begin to reveal the origins of Jupiter Feretrius  
 And the three sets of arms received from three leaders.

Now the triple spoils are stored in the temple: the origin of 'Feretrius',  
 That with sure omen leader struck leader with a sword;  
 Or because they carried these conquered arms on their shoulders,



Hence the proud altar is said to belong to Jupiter Feretrius.

We know, already, that 4.9 has an (ostensibly) aetiological theme with its explanation of the origins of the Ara Maxima:

‘Maxima quae gregibus deuota est Ara repertis,  
ara per has’ inquit ‘maxima facta manus,  
haec nullis umquam pateat ueneranda puellis,  
Herculis aeternum ne sit inulta sitis.’ (4.9.67-70)

Not only is 4.9 an elegiac αἶτιον supposedly after the style of Callimachus, there are a number of Callimachean elements in the poem itself.<sup>109</sup> The spring and grove of Bona Dea display a number of Callimachean characteristics. The grove contains an altar which is protected by a hut that is set apart (*quae se summota uindicat ara casa*, 4.9.56), the spring within the grove is off track and secluded (*haec lympa puellis / auia secreti limitis una fluit*, 4.9.59-60) and the entrance to the grove is correspondingly remote (*deuia puniceae uelabant limina uitae*, 4.9.27). Callimachus, as we know, employs similarly secluded landscapes and features as metaphors for his own style of poetry. In the *Aetia* prologue, Apollo, much as he does when instructing Propertius in 3.3, advises Callimachus in his poetic endeavour to find a new path (*Aet.* 1, fr. 1.25-28). Callimachus ‘hates the cyclic poem and does not enjoy the road which carries many here and there’ (*Epigr.* 28.1-2). He tells us that he ‘drinks not from the [public] well’ (*Epigr.* 28.3-4)<sup>110</sup> and that he ‘loathes all things common’ (*Epigr.* 28.4). In the Hymn to Apollo, when Callimachus has Apollo rebuke Envy in an argument about poetry, he likens epic poetry to the filthy flow of a big river and compares (presumably) Callimachus’ verse to the pure clear waters of a holy spring (*Ap.* 108-112). In 4.9, the grove and spring and altar within are similarly secluded, private and away from the common roads and byways.<sup>111</sup> Indeed, Hercules goes to some lengths to reach them. The spring within the grove has a small flow – so

<sup>109</sup> Debrohun (2003), p.201, claims that Propertius has manipulated images and vocabulary associated with Callimachus.

<sup>110</sup> For κρίνη (Epigr. 28.3) as ‘public well’, here, see Gow and Page (1965b), p.156, who note that Callimachus means ‘the source at which others drink’.

<sup>111</sup> Debrohun (2003), p.202, notes that the off-track setting of the grove of Bona Dea is a Callimachean feature.

small, in fact, that Hercules is able to drain it completely – and, given that it belongs to a goddess, is pure and sacred. It is, clearly, not common water as it is reserved for female worshippers of Bona Dea only and is hidden in a secluded grove.<sup>112</sup> The water and grove of Bona Dea, then, conform almost perfectly to the Callimachean aesthetic.<sup>113</sup>

There is specific allusion to Callimachus and his tale of Tiresias' blinding at the Hippocrene (*Lav. Pall.* 68-82), as we have noted, in the aged priestess' warning to Hercules to spare his eyes (*parce oculis*, 4.9.53; *magno Tiresias aspexit Pallada uates, / fortia dum ... membra lauauat*, 4.9.57-58). Indeed, access to forbidden space is a central theme of both the *Lauacrum Palladis* and 4.9.<sup>114</sup>

Hercules undergoes a kind of Callimachean transformation when he attempts to assume the guise of the *exclusus amator* before the entrance to the grove of Bona Dea, for he tries to reduce his epic status in line with Callimachean poetics.<sup>115</sup> His speech before the grove contains words demeaning his divine status (*uerba minora deo*, 4.9.32) and while, here, *minora* refers to the quality rather than the number of the words, the quantitative meaning remains as a suggestion to the reader of his attempt to downsize and downplay his epic status in line with the refined nature of the Callimachean aesthetic.<sup>116</sup> His request for a mere handful of water (*caua suscepto flumine palma sat est*, 4.9.36) represents a similar reduction, with Hercules attempting to hide his gargantuan, epic sized thirst. He has no need of a great flowing river; a cupful of water will suffice.<sup>117</sup>

Not only, then, is 4.9 offered as one of a number of aetiological elegies in Propertius' role as the *Romanus Callimachus*, it also contains a number of Callimachean allusions, motifs and themes. In fact, Propertius, here, presents a landscape in almost perfect alignment with the Callimachean aesthetic. He locates the epically styled River Tiber and Velabrum within the public expanse of Rome

<sup>112</sup> As Debrohun (2003), p.202, notes.

<sup>113</sup> Cairns (1992), p.86, goes so far as to claim that 4.9 is probably based on a lost passage of Callimachus.

<sup>114</sup> Welch (2005), pp.127-28, makes this claim and notes that the setting of Athena's bath, the Hippocrene, is untamed like the grove of Bona Dea in 4.9. For the links between Callimachus' *Lauacrum Palladis* and 4.9, see Debrohun (2003), pp.202-03.

<sup>115</sup> See Debrohun (2003), pp.203-07.

<sup>116</sup> As Debrohun (2003), pp.203-04, notes.

<sup>117</sup> Debrohun (2003), p.204, and (1994), p.48, recognises his reduction, here, as Callimachean.

and the elegiac spring within the grove of Bona Dea in a secluded, hidden, private grove, in an apparently trackless region some distance from the elegy's opening scene.<sup>118</sup> Propertius' aquatic settings recall Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo*, where Apollo, in response to Envy's assertion that he likes only epic poetry (ὁ Φθόνοϛ Ἀπόλλωνος ἐπ' οὐατα λάθριος εἶπεν / 'οὐκ ἄγαμαι τὸν ἀοιδὸν ὃς οὐδ' ὅσα πόντος ἀεῖδει', 'Envy said privately into the ear of Apollo, "I do not admire the poet who does not sing as large as the sea"', *Ap.* 105-06), counters with the claim that epic poetry, although its flow might be great, is not pure and clean like the Alexandrian waters of a sacred spring (*Ap.* 108-112). Epic is a big but dirty river in comparison to the pure, clean and sacred waters of more highly refined poetry such as elegy. Callimachus, when confessing his hatred for epic poetry (*Epigr.* 28.1), compares epic verse to drinking from a common well (*Epigr.* 28.3-4).

The River Tiber in 4.9 represents epic poetry just as the Assyrian river does in the *Hymn to Apollo* (108-09) and the spring within the grove of Bona Dea and the sacred, pure spring from which the Mellisae draw their water (Call. *Ap.* 110-112), alike, represent more refined Alexandrian poetic styles such as Callimachean style elegy, the styles that Propertius, as we know from the previous chapter, considers he has been writing all along. Callimachus likens epic poetry to common, freely available, public water; Propertius presents epic as the most freely available (*non nullas ... aquas*, 4.9.22) and public of all of Rome's waters by representing it as the major river flowing through the city. Epic waters, according to Callimachus, are full of much dirt and rubbish; Propertius' epic water, the Tiber, forms the Velabrum, an area which was later drained by the construction of the Cloaca Maxima, Rome's largest sewer and, thus, can be seen to accord with the dirty and rubbish filled nature of epic waterways.<sup>119</sup>

Callimachus contrasts the secluded and private nature of elegiac waters with the common publicly accessibly waters of epic poetry (*Epigr.* 28.1-4). The Callimachean style poet is advised to avoid well-

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<sup>118</sup> Welch (2005), p.113, notes that in a real topographical sense the elegy's first scene is set in a very public place, while the grove of Bona Dea is very secluded.

<sup>119</sup> For the draining of the Velabrum by the Cloaca Maxima, see Claridge (1998), p.62.

travelled roads and seek instead new, unworn, pathways (*Aet.* 1, fr. 1.25-28). Propertius, as we have noted, locates elegiac poetry in a secluded, hidden, private, off-track grove, far from the (contemporary) public area of Rome. The poetic setting of Propertius' proto-Rome accords almost perfectly with Callimachus' own programmatic landscapes and the basic elements of the Callimachean aesthetic are faithfully reproduced in Propertius' Roman topography.

In 2.10, the landscape and topography of Mount Helicon and its surrounds are presented as the antithesis of the Callimachean aesthetic, with elegy occupying the lowland river and epic situated at the pure, clear mountain-top springs. Propertius' landscape, there, suggests that his elegiac poetry is generically inferior to the epic verse and other higher genres. In 3.3, Propertius and his poetry have journeyed (in his dream, at least) from the lowland river to the Ascrean Springs atop Mount Helicon and although he seems unsure of the appropriate location for elegiac poetry and receives directions from Apollo in this regard, he no longer represents elegiac poetry as the generic inferior of epic. Both genres are located at the same altitude. Although, by locating both epic and elegy in sacred groves and situating epic poetry at the most sacred of all poetic springs, the Hippocrene, his landscape remains at variance with the Callimachean aesthetic. In 4.9, too, the vertical hierarchy of poetic genres is absent. It is as though Propertius, to some extent, has transported the scene atop Helicon in 3.3 to the site of Rome. In this sense, he really is the Roman Callimachus. No longer is he required to use the (Greek) landscape of Mount Helicon as the model programmatic landscape; he has created his own Roman version. Rome, itself, is the inspiration for Propertius, and the Roman Callimachus, accordingly, draws inspiration from the poetic waters of Rome, just as Callimachus took inspiration from the water sources of Mount Helicon. But in 4.9, unlike 3.3, we see agreement with the Callimachean aesthetic. Epic has found its appropriate Callimachean setting and is symbolised by a large and (likely dirty) publicly accessible river, while elegy is situated far from the public roads and paths, hidden away in a private, secluded, sacred grove, represented by a pure, clean and small spring. In this respect, just like Callimachus, Propertius presents elegiac poetry as stylistically superior to epic verse. Propertius' poetry is no filthy, common, river, but an elite, pure and scared

spring. Propertius, it seems, no longer suffers from his previous inferiority complex. The landscape of 4.9 reveals that Propertius has realised his claim to be the *Romanus Callimachus*.

## Conclusion

Propertius tale, then, of Hercules' arrival at the site of Rome, his defeat of the cattle-rustling Cacus, his encounter with the worshippers of Bona Dea and desecration of the goddess' grove is a fascinatingly complex elegy and one that has facilitated a number of diverse interpretations. My analysis has focused on the poem's metapoetics and, in particular, Propertius' programmatic landscaping. We have seen that Propertius invites the reader to consider generic concerns by his manipulation of the aquatic topography of early Rome, that Hercules' actions within this setting symbolise Propertius' poetic endeavour and that the hero embodies the competing concerns of elegiac and epic themes. We have noted that Propertius has carefully constructed a landscape that offers an insight into his view of generic hierarchy and his own poetic evolution and that he engages with the aesthetic of Callimachus and presents a landscape that demonstrates that he has completed his transformation from the elegiac poet-*amator* of book one to the Roman Callimachus as we find him in book four.

# Conclusion

To conclude, I want to summarise briefly my investigation of Propertius' programmatic landscaping and consider Propertius' poetic journey and development from the elegiac poet-*amator* of the intensely personal poetry of book one to the Roman Callimachus and the ostensibly aetiological collection that he offers in his final book and my claim that analysis of his programmatic landscapes reveals a poet continually re-evaluating the status of elegy and the hierarchy of genres, and ever increasing in confidence as he engages and aligns more explicitly with Callimachean ideals.

In my first chapter, I examined Propertius' presentation in 2.10 of the generic waterways of Mount Helicon and I focused particularly on the elegy's final couplet where Propertius antithesizes the River Permessus and the Ascrean Springs as metaphors, respectively, for erotic love elegy and more serious styles of poetry. I found, following the identification of a number of potential poetic models ranging from Hesiod to Virgil, that although Virgil's poetic evolution and, in particular, his development from the bucolic poetry of the *Eclogues* to the didactic verses of the *Georgics* seems to best fit Propertius' proposed transition from erotic elegy to a more serious style of poetry, this comparative approach becomes rather lost in allusion.

I then took a different approach with a broader examination of 2.10 within the context of the surrounding elegies. I argued that 2.10 is, indeed, a *recusatio*, but one that is better understood as a failed but genuine attempt at rejecting Cynthia and writing poetry about her, rather than a disingenuous proposal to sing the praises of Augustus and I asserted that this reading produces a more satisfactory understanding of the elegy's final couplet and addresses problematic aspects of the text and its interpretation. I determined that the symbolic significance of the Ascrean Springs lies not in the style of poetry that they represent – for this is very difficult to determine given the crowded nature of Mount Helicon – but in the style they do not and that we can only say with surety that in 2.10 Propertius' amatory elegy is securely located at the River Permessus and that the type of

poetry that he hopes to write in the future and imagines situated at the Ascraean Springs is anti-amatory elegy.

I then considered Propertius' picture of the poetic hierarchy of Mount Helicon's waters in relation to Callimachus' own poetic landscapes and concluded that, although Propertius cites Callimachus as a poetic model in the programmatic elegies beginning and ending his second book and despite 2.10 displaying obvious Callimachean influence, Propertius' Heliconian landscape conflicts with the Callimachean aesthetic. His elegy languishes in the relatively lowly water of the River Permessus and is presented as the hierarchical inferior of more serious poetic genres which are situated at the Ascraean Springs at or near the summit of the mountain.

In my second chapter, I moved on to analyse 3.1 and 3.3 and began by considering the claim that Propertius in the beginning of book three proposes a more learned Hellenistic style of elegy after the fashion of his Alexandrian predecessors, Callimachus and Philetas. I found, however, that although we can detect the growing influence of Callimachus (and, presumably, Philetas) in a more sophisticated and varied style of composition, Propertius has ever been a keen student of Hellenistic poetry and that book three represents a development of the poetics and style of book two rather than any real departure. I determined, accordingly, that the invocation of Callimachus and Philetas in 3.1 and the questions therein do not indicate a change of poetic style and, therefore, that Propertius is not asking how to become a Callimachean poet because he is, in fact, already such a poet. A closer examination of the elegies that begin book three revealed that the power of poetry to bestow fame and posthumous immortality upon the poet is a central theme and I determined, thus, that Propertius in 3.1 wonders how he might acquire something of Callimachus' and Philetas' fame and reputation and that in 3.3 he decides that elevating the status of love elegy and, thus, the elegist will afford him the reputation and fame that he thinks that he deserves and has, unfairly, been denied.

I then compared the landscapes in 2.10 and 3.3 and found that the elevation of elegy becomes all the clearer. Love elegy no longer languishes in the River Permessus at the base of Mount Helicon; it

has, instead, managed the journey that it was unable to make in 2.10 and now resides in the pure, clear (Ascrean) spring within the grove of the Muses atop Mount Helicon alongside the epically styled Hippocrene. By relocating love elegy in this way and removing the vertical hierarchy of 2.10, Propertius no longer presents it as inferior to epic verse (or any other type of poetry). His elevation of love elegy reveals a poet moving closer to his Callimachean ideals, for his elegiac verse has found its rightful place in the pure and secluded Callimachean waters of the spring. Yet, the landscape of 3.3 is still at odds with Callimachus' aesthetic because Propertius continues to locate epic poetry at the pure, clear waters of the Hippocrene.

In my final chapter, I examined 4.9 and Propertius' version of Hercules' arrival at Rome, his battle with Cacus and the subsequent tale of his encounter with the worshippers of Bona Dea. I demonstrated that Propertius invites the reader to consider generic concerns with his manipulation of the aquatic topography of early Rome and that, although it contains no explicitly programmatic statements and depicts a landscape far from Mount Helicon, the elegy is very much concerned with poetic composition and inspiration, is programmatic in nature and, importantly, that it depicts a Roman recreation of the Heliconian landscape in 3.3.

I argued that Propertius presents the grove of Bona Dea and Hercules' actions before it as particularly elegiac and erotic and, accordingly, that the spring within the grove represents love elegy. I argued, too, that the waters of the River Tiber and the Velabrum symbolise epic poetry and themes. Furthermore, I demonstrated that Hercules embodies the competing concerns of elegiac and epic themes and, thus, Propertius' poetic endeavour in book four and that Propertius presents elegy and epic as incompatible and warring generic factions.

I concluded the final chapter by showing that Propertius presents a programmatic landscape in 4.9 that agrees almost perfectly with the Callimachean aesthetic by presenting love elegy as stylistically superior to epic poetry. I argued that in doing so, by locating love elegy at the pure, clear, hidden spring within the grove of Bona Dea and epic verse at the large and publically accessible River Tiber



(and the Velabrum), Propertius' proto-Roman landscape symbolises the realisation of his claim to be the *Romanus Callimachus*.

Propertius' poetic journey reveals a poet continually re-evaluating the status of love elegy and its place in the generic hierarchy. In 2.10, elegy is the generic inferior of other more serious types of poetry. At the beginning of book three, Propertius re-evaluates the lowly status he afforded elegy in 2.10 and sets about elevating its status and, along with it, his reputation as a poet. In 3.3, he presents elegy as the equal of other genres and, in particular, the equal of epic verse. In 4.9, he re-evaluates elegy's status once more and we find elegy presented as superior to epic poetry.

Increasing in accordance with the re-evaluation and elevation of the status of Propertius' elegiac poetry is his growing confidence as a poet. In 2.10, Propertius appears as a poet asserting his inability to tackle more serious styles of composition and assigning his poetry the lowliest of Heliconian rankings. In 3.1 and 3.3 we find a more self-confident Propertius proclaiming the worth of his love elegy and seeking a greater reputation for his talents, although he remains somewhat uncertain of his and his elegy's location in the Heliconian landscape and requires the guidance of Apollo and Calliope in order to find his rightful place. In the presentation of his proto-Roman landscape in 4.9, Propertius no longer needs guidance and creates a Roman generic hierarchy, no longer presenting a Heliconian model, and confidently asserts the superiority of his elegy over epic verse.

My investigation of Propertius' programmatic landscaping reveals a poet continually re-evaluating and elevating the status of his elegiac poetry and growing in confidence as he aligns himself more closely to Callimachean ideals. Moreover, it contributes to our understanding of Propertius' poetry and, in particular, his development as a poet by showing that Propertius constructs and responds to programmatic landscapes in a more self-aware fashion than has previously been demonstrated with a greater level of complexity that has been observed. The fact that he (re)visits his poetic landscapes

regularly throughout his career and continues to reevaluate and rework his programmatic scenes suggests a poet ever-conscious of his poetic development and the status of (his) elegiac poetry.

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