

Propertius 3.22: Tullus' Return

MICHAEL C. J. PUTNAM

Propertius' friend Tullus is the recipient of five poems, four from the *Monobiblos*, which tell us as much about the poet as about his interlocutor. The first poem, initiating the collection, announces the taut suffering of Propertius' affair with Cynthia, and the envoi of the book expands self-scrutiny into the wider scope of a land maimed by civic hostility. Two intervening elegies, 6 and 14, look to specific differences between poet and acquaintance. Tullus is richer and loveless, Propertius caught in passion's toils (and Tullus should be wary!). Tullus also is a servant of the state, and is associated with Ionia and Lydia, with the Pactolus as well as the Tiber. Engrossed by his allegiance to *armata patria* (1.6.22), to his fatherland under arms, he has no time for love or marriage.

Finally, with one book of poems and presumably some time intervening, Propertius imagines Tullus' reorientation toward Rome and *amor* in the extraordinary twenty-second poem of book 3.¹ Thought of this literal return to the mother city from Cyzicus, where Tullus has apparently been stationed on the Propontis, sparks a meditation not only on what this means for Tullus' life but also on differing concepts of public and private ethics, of heroism and individual dignity, and the landscape backgrounds which embody their continuity. There can be little doubt that Propertius measured his thoughts against Virgil's famous *laudes Italiae* of *georgic* 2, and the challenging moral dilemmas of the

¹ The most valuable critical discussion of 3.22 is by W. R. Nethercut "The Ironic Priest: Propertius' 'Roman Elegies' III, 1-5: Imitations of Horace and Vergil," *AJP* 91 (1970), 385-407, esp. 403 ff. He does much to counter the strictures of E. Paratore in "Virgilio georgico e Properzio," *A&R* 10 (1942), 49-58 ("pedisequa imitazione," 53).

It is surely no accident that 3.22 bears the same number in its book as the last preceding apostrophe to Tullus, 1.22 (on which see M. C. J. Putnam, "Propertius 1.22: A Poet's Self-definition" forthcoming in *Quaderni Urbinati*).

Aeneid may also have been his concern. In each instance comparison instructs us in Propertian intellectual modes.

The poem divides neatly in half, its central focus resting on a concise but tonally ambiguous definition of contemporary Roman political ideology (21–22):

nam quantum ferro tantum pietate potentes
stamus: victrices temperat ira manus.

Immediately to either side of this fulcrum of abstraction we find (preceding it) four lines on the omni-productive quality of *Romana terra*, and, following, four verses on Rome-centered rivers, lakes and a spring. Working chiasmatically from this core, Propertius devotes twelve lines to detailing Tullus' putative travels in the Mediterranean basin (5–16) and a counterbalancing, equal number to monsters and monstrous doings on the part of human and divine culled primarily from Greek myth. Framing these segments, and thus also the poem, are two pairs of couplets devoted to Tullus, the one outlining his situation in chill Cyzicus, the other cataloguing the duties and rewards that should await a Tullus newly returned to accept a citizen's allegiance toward Rome as land and city, and an individual's responsibility to *gens* and married life (39–42). The journey toward Rome leads from *frigida Cyzicus* to *amor*, from present to future, from visual excitement to a deeper stability based on deeper commitments.² This future destiny, paradoxically, would seem to renounce a teleology of empire for more intimate, yet more universal cycles of human regeneration. Rome and her servant suffer a critical evolution as the mythic pretensions of Augustan Rome diminish before more realistic ends.

The initial segments define Tullus principally as sightseer, following out the exploits of errant Greek warriors. His own domain features a famous isthmus built by Alexander the Great, which strangely "flows" like the water it intersects, and a statue of Cybele with Argonautic associations, made from a vine stalk.³ It also contains one of the "ways" which carried the horses of Dis during the rape of Persephone. This is an excitable, poetically energized landscape, lively with event and doubly studded with the effects of human artisanship and divine amatory exploit. This vitality carries over into Propertius' musings on Tullus' vicarious adventuring which divides itself between east and west, between the

² Cf. Nethercut, *op. cit.*, 405.

³ On the peculiar use of *fluo*, see H. Tränkle *Die Sprachkunst des Propertius und die Tradition der lateinischen Dichtersprache* (Hermes Einzelschrift 15: Wiesbaden, 1960), 51. Pliny (*H.N.* 5.142) discusses the construction of the isthmus. I agree with the defense of the reading *vite* by W. A. Camps (ed., Propertius *Elegies* Book III [Cambridge, 1966]) *ad loc.*

more individualistic hazards of Theseus and Hercules and the communal heroism of the Argonauts whose leader is not named.

Here too there are hints first at metamorphosis, then of the hero as craftsman. Tullus might behold Atlas, once giant, now a mountain. He might see the head of Medusa (with the power to alter man to stone) which Propertius treats metaphorically as if Perseus' brave act were one of careful facial sculpting, not violent decapitation (*secta . . . Persea Phorcidos ora manu*). Other labors of Hercules are defined not by deed but by nominal remnant—*stabula, signa, choros*, marks of event but statuary as well, choral dances but also dancing floors, former deeds frozen into present artifact to be contemplated by a spectator. Propertius chooses to see Tullus' emulation of the Argonauts in more physical terms. He must urge on the river Phasis itself, and not merely his boat, toward its Colchian mouth.⁴ The *Argo* furnishes elaborate evidence of the object crafted as the poet turns from synecdoche to accomplished fact, from the poetic part (*trabs*) to the reality of the ship's construction (*in faciem prorae pinus adacta novae*). The formative act, the moulding of the first boat's features, appears a violence offered to nature, a pine forced to take novel shape.

Propertius had begun his catalogue of Tullus' foreign doings with allusion to Sestos and Abydos, the cities of Helle, daughter of Athamas (another piece of Argonautica). He concludes by reference to the Cayster mouth, with Ortygie its neighboring grove, and to the spreading Nile delta. On an immediate level the list supplements previous references to the Mediterranean's impressive tributaries, Propontic waters or the Phasis. An ancient reader would also have foreseen these estuaries as marks for the famous temple to Diana at Ephesus or the pyramids, magnets on the grand tour but also striking natural settings, the ultimate in tangible reminders of vainglorious man's achievements as monumental artist.⁵ As such they would typify another, still more political aspect of the hero as artisan, and serve as climax to a list which began with the Argonauts' manufacture of Cybele's statue and extended to the strange creation of the *Argo* itself.

It is an effective moment at which to face Rome (17–20):

omnia Romanae cedent miracula terrae:
natura hic posuit, quidquid ubique fuit.
armis apta magis tellus quam commoda noxae:
Famam, Roma, tuae non pudet historiae.

⁴ On *propello*, cf. Tränkle *op. cit.* 84 f.

⁵ M. E. Hubbard ("Propertiana," *CQ* 18 [1968], 319), unwilling to see a visit to Egypt possible for Tullus, would change *septenae* to *serpentes* and see the Meander, not the Nile, as the river in question.

We have seen many *miracula*, much grandeur in landscape and human-kind, but all are surpassed, so the poet hyperbolically claims, by a land whose chief accomplishment (we are no longer dealing with things tangible) is the combination of mental and physical prowess to pattern a world under sway, force of arms at the service of consequential abstractions: "for we stand mighty as much from weaponry as from piety; our anger restrains its conquering hands."⁶ This apothegm first appears a precis of that particular Roman humanistic heroism, displayed in her surpassing organizational talent, with force applied to create and maintain peace and order. Nevertheless there are ambiguities to the sentiment already adumbrated in the preceding couplets. Propertius uses the future, not the present tense, to predict, not preserve, the Roman miracle. If nature placed here whatever existed anywhere, nature created thereby a motley product embracing all levels of the moral spectrum. This is a land more fitting for arms than suitable to fault, but the situation, as Propertius phrases it, is relative. There is more emphasis on war than criminality but the latter is not totally absent. When Rome is addressed it is only to give assurance that *Fama* will not be ashamed of her history. This is an equivocal utterance at best. Propertius could simply have claimed that the Roman past was reputable. But he complicates his statement by adding the dubious figure of *Fama* who can dispense propagandistic report as well as an honest renown. This convoluted phraseology, with the challenge of sensing *pudor* arrogated to such a creature, raises doubts about the poet's tone which are sustained in the next and culminative couplet.

A proper balance between *ferrum* and *pietas*, supplementing and correcting the previous distinction between *armis* and *nox*, is at the core of the Augustan ideology—piety toward state and family based on restrained martial strength. Augustus' self-control had at an earlier time elicited one of the poet's rare moments of apparent praise (2.16.41-42):

Caesaris haec virtus et gloria Caesaris haec est:
illa, qua vicit, condidit arma manu.

But the present utterance is less straightforward. Anger and temperance provoke antagonistic not cumulative reactions. A victor who relies on wrath for moderation bases his actions on a moral paradox.

We may survey this friction between *temperat* and *ira*, toward which *armis*, *nox*, *ferro* and *pietate* aim, expanded still more generously in the

⁶ The different contexts in which *manus* and *temperat* have already been used (8 and 16) point up this change from literal to ideological in its several guises.

ethical world of the *Aeneid* and its hero.⁷ Virgil's song deals with the interrelationship between *arma virumque*, between arms and a man who is, we soon learn, *insignem pietate* (*Aen.* 1.10) and the victim of a goddess' anger (*iram*, 1.4). The end of the epic finds him, fierce in his arms (*acer in armis*, 12.938), watching the beaten Turnus and for a moment restraining his hand (*dextram repressit*, 939). The sight of Pallas' belt provokes an outburst of anger (he is *ira terribilis*, 946-947) during which he kills the suppliant (*ferrum adverso sub pectore condit*, 950).

I have quoted the Latin in detail to show the similarity in Virgil's treatment of his hero's final deed to the tensions in the Roman programme as defined by Propertius. Momentary restraint yields to a furious anger. Each characteristic of Aeneas, his *temperantia* and his *ira*, can be defended as an act of *pietas*, either toward his father, who had urged clemency for the prideful subdued, or toward Pallas and Evander, his protege and befriender. But Anchises' famous words—*parcere subiectis et debellare superbos*—should also be weighty. Their continued vitality is illustrated in Horace's near-contemporary portrait of Augustus in a poem where he is specifically given the pedigree of Aeneas, scion of Anchises and Venus:

. . . bellante prior, iacentem
lenis in hostem. (c.s. 51-52)

Here battling comes first, moderation afterwards, a clear reversal of Aeneas' procedure. Virgil regularly pits the intimate cycles of human suffering or the grander swirls of civilization in history against the linear vision of Rome's imperial apocalypse. Propertius, without direct allusion, sensed the conflict between the morality of a model Roman, living out his ideal role as a gentle conqueror, and the dictates of human emotion which rely more on passion than control. This is a dilemma at the core

⁷ That Propertius knew the gist, if not the scope, of the *Aeneid* as early as 25 is clear from the grandiloquent, perhaps condescending, maybe even deprecatory reference to the epic in 2.34.66 (*nescio quid maius nascitur Iliade*). Since the third book was published after the death of Marcellus in 23 or 22, presumably some further time elapsed before the writing of 3.22 during which his knowledge of the epic would have expanded. For the death of Marcellus in the chronology of Virgil's readings from the *Aeneid*, see *vita Donati* 32 (Hardie).

For more general, recent examinations of the poetic interplay between Propertius and Virgil, see A. La Penna "Properzio e i poeti latini dell'età aurea," *Maia* 3 (1950), 209-236 and 4 (1951), 43-69; F. Solmsen "Propertius in his Literary Relations with Tibullus and Vergil," *Philologus* 105 (1961), 273-289 = *Kleine Schriften* II (Hildesheim, 1965), 299-315; J. Van Sickle "Propertius (vates): Augustan Ideology, Topography, and Poetics in Eleg. IV, 1," *Dialoghi di Archeologia* VIII-IX, fasc. 1 (1974-1975), 104-133, esp. 104 ff.

of the Augustan dream with manifest bearing on Tullus or anyone in service to an *armata patria*, who must support pietistic allegiance through force of arms.

It is reasonable that the center, though not the climax, of a poem luring Tullus back to Rome should scrutinize Rome's unquestioned devotion to the state, in all its guises, over self and family. In Cicero, for example, the importance of fidelity to republic instead of individual can be seen in his strictures to the hedonistic Caelius who changed his ways after a period of pleasure: "revocet se aliquando ad curam rei domesticae, rei forensis reique publicae . . ." (*pro Cael.* 42).⁸ But this last needs to be qualified by a more elaborate breakdown in *de Officiis* (1.74): "Sed cum plerique arbitrentur res bellicas maiores esse quam urbanas, minuenda est haec opinio . . . vere autem si volumus iudicare, multae res exstiterunt urbanae maiores clarioresque quam bellicae."

In suggesting to Tullus a similar reordering of priorities, Propertius suitably enough begins with one sempiternal aspect of what "nature" gave the Roman earth, namely the landscape background of these multifarious patterns of organization (23-26):

hic Anio Tiburne fluis, Clitumnus ab Umbro
tramite, et aeternum Marcus umor opus,
Albanus lacus et socia Nemorensis ab unda,
potaque Pollucis nympha salubris equo.

By contrast to the exotic waters now Tullus' wandering lot Propertius sets his vision on Rome and catalogues first rivers, then lakes that decorate her setting. The reader's eye is always directed on the city. It first follows the Anio, then the Clitumnus from its Umbrian course, each tributaries to Rome's great river. And the *aqua Marcia*, splendid example of man's technology used for civic benefit, coursed in the only aqueduct that led directly to the Capitolium.⁹ The same orientation holds for the stationary waters, the lakes of Albanus and Nemorensis and the *fons Iuturnae*. The first are in the distant hills (and fed from an allied further source, *socia ab unda*). The last takes us directly to the Roman forum and to a moment in history long past when the Dioscuri were said to refresh their horses at the spring of Juturna after the battle of Lake Regillus. This spot is a far cry, literally and figuratively, from the path which Tullus at present admires where the steeds of Dis carried off Persephone. It might serve as a positive reminder to him not only of Rome's essence but

⁸ Quoted by S. Commager in his excellent survey of Propertius' "anti-political legacy" (*A Prolegomenon to Propertius* [Cincinnati, 1974], 37 ff.).

⁹ Re. Front. *de Aquaeductu* 7.4-5. A union of *aeternum opus*, the Capitoline, and Roman imperial continuity was a congenial subject of speculation for Horace and Virgil as well.

of a former moment when battling in the hills near Rome was over and horses were watered at peace in the midst of *res urbanae*.¹⁰

With landscape established, Propertius turns back to Greece to show by contrast with Italy first what natural enormities, then, more expansively, what human oddities fail to exist on Italian soil. These lines (27-38) serve as counterpoise to the earlier outline of Tullus' supposed itineraries and the aspects of vivid heroism they conveyed. We relinquish the public for the private sphere of action, exchanging emphasis on physical prowess, craftsmanship or mere visual persistence for scrutiny of myths involving the ethics of individual human conduct. These emphasize heavily but not exclusively the perversion of *pietas* between parents and offspring, the burden of guilt resting largely with the former. We begin with Andromeda who suffered for her mother's pride and with an allusion to the banquet of Thyestes, engorging his own children. The first part of the list concludes with reference to another mother, Althea, who killed her son Meleager by burning a log on whose preservation his life depended.

Mention of Pentheus, torn apart by his mother Agave and her sisters, introduces a new variable (33-36):

Penthea non saevae venantur in arbore Bacchae,
nec solvit Danaas subdita cerva ratis;
cornua nec valuit curvare in paelice Iuno
aut faciem turpi dedecorare bove; . . .

Not only does parent do violence to child but the poet treats Pentheus, seen by his mother, as prey, herself as predator. The same notion of human envisioned as beast, reflecting metaphorically back on the protagonist's behavior, is extended in the next episode to Agamemnon who would have sacrificed his daughter had not an animal been substituted in her place. The point becomes most explicit in the episode of Juno and Io. We move from a level of parental misdeeds to divine mistreatment of human in an action which at once makes a mockery of *pietas* and eliminates human dignity by forcing the victim to suffer direct metamorphosis into an animal. In a parallel passage earlier in the poem Propertius planned the construction of the *Argo* as in part a forced twisting of the natural into the unnatural (*in faciem prorae pinus adacta novae*, 14), a novel monster that would not rage, we assume, in Italian waters (*Itala portentis nec furit unda novis*, 28). We now watch *decus* withdrawn from a human being by a similarly degrading alteration, this time

¹⁰ The Greek mythic-heroic world thus finds a creative resolution in Roman civic peace.

totally within the realm of the animate and of supposedly rational beings.

Sinis, Sciron and Procrustes figure with enigmatic briskness in the final couplet of perversities (37–38):

arboreasque cruces Sinis, et non hospita Grais
saxa, et curvatas in sua fata trabes.¹¹

Abuse here extends from human to inanimate. Not only do these three uncivilized denizens of the Saronic coast destroy the traditionally sacred relationship between host and guest, they corrupt nature and landscape in the process. Trees are transformed into instruments of torture, timbers are curved against their own instinct for the undoing of others. The verb *curvare* is deliberately repeated from line 35: Juno's disfigurement of her rival is only varied in a robber's misuse of land for the destruction of mankind. It remained for Theseus to remove these hybrid menaces from the path of those travelling toward Athens. The two basic subjects called to Tullus' attention, aspects of public heroism and personal morality, thus converge at the end. And while Theseus recalls Athens, Tullus, and Propertius' readers would think of Rome by analogy.

It is surely no accident that Propertius urges Italy on her errant son by a pejorative register of what she does not possess in tangible monuments to former heroic prowess or in unenviable standards of personal conduct. He singles out for praise neither specific deeds in the Roman past nor personalities embodying virtues of consequence. Italy could be said to gain by comparison with the Hellenic past, yet the poet's avoidance of open praise, save in his treatment of landscape setting, strengthens its negative opposite. Tullus, though his potential change of heart is treated positively, is the only Roman named, whether public or private ethics, imperial or civic virtue is Propertius' concern.

Certainly the new relationship between Tullus and the metropolis to which Propertius devotes his final, climactic lines, appears the more productive by comparison with what has gone before (39–42):

haec, tibi, Tulle, parens, haec est pulcherrima sedes,
hic tibi pro digna gente petendus honos,
hic tibi ad eloquium cives, hic ampla nepotum
spes et venturae coniugis aptus amor.

¹¹ Though absence of a verb has led most critics to postulate a *lacuna* before line 37, the exacting symmetry of the poem tells against such a view (such a syntactic disjunction is by no means unique in Propertius). More troublesome is the distribution of *arboreas cruces*, *saxa* and *trabes* among Sinis, Sciron and Procrustes. My own view is that Propertius, for his own purposes, has exchanged Sinis and Procrustes. See the detailed discussion of both problems by Camps, *op. cit.*, *ad loc.*

Suddenly the complexities of the Propertian style disappear, and therewith much of the problematics the poem had posed to highlight this very moment.¹² Nurturing landscape and the intense beauty of a stable spot affirm an important reformation of Tullus' values, a turning away from heroism based on strength or itinerant hedonism, from propagandistic representations of Roman imperialism combining virtue and force, from ethical values corrupting family life and personal *dignitas*. Their replacements, which take eternal abstractions and posit them in Tullus' putative future, conjoin the urban and the familial. To lure Tullus out of distant service to arms Propertius formulates a union of devotion to one's immediate household, to tribe and to state that assumes a continuous responsibility. Art lies in the use of words, not deeds, not in reinforcing Roman rule over Asian allies but in rhetoric before citizens (it is not long since our inner eye has rested on the forum's grace). Embarking on the *cursus honorum* will reassert the quality of *gens*. Above all *nepotes* and *amor* will assure not only domestic happiness but family continuity as well.

I will return to the intimations of immortality that children bring by assuring endurance of *nomen*, and to an inherent contrast with Propertius' own grasping at eternity. Suffice it to point out here the wide difference between this ending and Virgil's thoughts on Roman spiritual objectives, first because they conclude where Propertius has only reached mid-point, second because of an added pessimism constantly tempering Virgil's projection of future Roman glory.

Throughout his speeches in *Aeneid* 6, Anchises makes clear the tight interdependence of "name" and *nepotes*. Yet the latter word recurs emphatically in his final obituary of Marcellus whose human mortality obliterates genetic future and makes meaningless the combination of *pietas* with *invicta bello dextera* that links him with the Augustan credo as detailed by Virgil and summarized by Propertius.¹³ Virgil undermines this

¹² These lines seem particularly inept to G. Williams who speaks of "empty and unconvincing talk of magisterial office, eloquence, hope of descendants" (*Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* [Oxford, 1968], 425). His complaints have been in part answered by R. J. Baker "Duplices Tabellae: Propertius 3.23 and Ovid *Amores* 1.12," *CP* 68 (1973), 109-113, esp. 110.

¹³ *Aen.* 6.878-879. Virgil's gloom in forecasting continued reputation in historical time after death takes many guises. In one form we ponder Priam *truncus* (*Aen.* 2.557) and Aeneas himself *inhumatus* (*Aen.* 4.620). Lesser characters like Palinurus, Misenus or Caieta, give their names to features of topography, a dubious distinction Virgil makes clear in the case of the last (*si qua est ea gloria*, *Aen.* 7.4). The reputation of Nisus and Euryalus will endure as long as the house of Aeneas dwells on the Capitoline (*Aen.* 9.448-449), but the fallibility inherent in such a prediction is magnified in Virgil's irony at the greed of their blood-thirsty progress.

ideology most succinctly at the end of his epic, allowing his hero to be victimized by an aspect of that *furor* which had guided his opponents and challenged his own goals. Propertius strides forward in a direction Anchises might have considered mediocre. *Alii . . . orabunt causas melius* Aeneas' father had said just before his famous dictum on sparing suppliants and warring down the prideful. In spite of a Cicero in Rome's future, others will be better rhetors. For Propertius, however, such prowess is an essential part of civic duty, of the *res urbanae* that, as a good elegist, he urges for antidote to the martial activism of Rome found incorporated most expansively in the paradoxes of Virgilian epic.

Virgil also forces us, again by internal means, to question the tone of his *laudes Italiae* from the second *georgic*, the single strongest influence on Propertius' ideas in 3.22 and their ordering (*geo.* 2.136-176).¹⁴ Here too the elegist, with his own special difficulties of modulation, has proposed an alternative to Virgil's didactic awareness of nature's combined violence and productivity, and of man the warrior, Italy's strangest crop. In pieces of virtually the same length (the Virgilian excerpt measures forty-one lines), each poet deals with the land as *parens*, though Virgil's concluding apostrophe is more fulsome (173-174):

*salve, magna parens frugum, Saturnia tellus,
magna virum: . . .*

Allusion to a once golden age, *Saturnia tellus*, becomes for Propertius acknowledgement of actual Rome's universality, first through *Romana terra*, to which a generously ambiguous nature gave everything that had been created, then by the more directly worrisome *armis apta tellus*.

Propertius has little concern with nature's beneficence and Virgil leaves reference to her constant spring and double creativity to only a few lines. Even the products of a presumably Saturnian age, when the land flowed with silver, bronze, and gold, contemporary man, artificer of competition, has hardened for his destructive ends, Virgil tells us elsewhere in the same book. But the poets overlap in dealing with the realms

¹⁴ The relationship between 3.22 and Virgil's *laudes* has recently been treated in detail by Tränkle, *op. cit.*, 101 f., and G. Williams, *op. cit.*, 421-426, with Virgil winning the prize in each case. Tränkle finds the Propertius poem disjointed by comparison: "Bei Virgil fügt sich alles zusammen, . . ." (101). In Propertius "haben wir kein einheitliches, sich rundendes Gesamtbild, da die einzelnen Beispiele nicht angekündigt und vorbereitet heraustreten, sondern überraschend und stossweise, aber reiche, ja verwirrende Fülle und bunte Vielfalt" (102). Williams (425) speaks of the "verbal posturings and erudite elegances" as well as "the tasteless ineptitude of style and content in Propertius." Cf. also C. Becker "Die späten Elegien des Properz," *Hermes* 99 (1971), 449-480, esp. 461 f.

of landscape and of myth. Virgil singles out large bodies of water, the northern lakes Larius and Benacus, and the Lucrine harbor constructed by Agrippa, and comments primarily on their energy—Benacus rising with the roar of the sea, the Lucrine chafing with loud thunderings against its man-made barriers. Propertius, as we have seen, has none of this, offering instead a catalogue of specifically Roman waters remarkable for its simplicity and restraint, to enhance his turning of Tullus away from arms, distant or near, to Roman civilities, from *armis apta tellus* to *aptus amor*, from *noxa* to a *nympha salubris*. Unlike Agrippa's forced control of nature for military purposes, Propertius' *aqua Marcia* orders nature for civic ends.

The one topographical spot both poets share illustrates graphically their divergence. For Propertius mention of the Clitumnus merely draws the eye along its stream from his native Umbria (*ab Umbro tramite*) toward the Tiber and Rome. For Virgil it serves the same purpose but with an additional fillip (146-148):

hinc albi, Clitumne, greges et maxima taurus
victima, saepe tuo perfusi flumine sacro,
Romanos ad templa deum duxere triumphos.

The eye again leaps to Rome but only to see Clitumnus' white bulls partaking in Roman ceremonies of triumph and then immolated, the final amalgamation of military glory and Rome.

The poets' use of myth also provides an object lesson in their differences. Propertius analogizes through myth what Tullus now is and what his Rome should not be. Tullus, in his patriotic journeying, is viewed as a Herculean or Argonautic wanderer, not necessarily fully committed to the Roman heroic fusion of *pietas* and *ferrum*, the "here" of Rome's miraculous, volatile, abstractions. This "here," as we have noted, is also scrutinized by Propertius for its private ethics, this time using Hellenic tales to mirror what Italy is not. In watching Greek models for the relationships of parents and children, gods and mortals, hosts and strangers, we substituted torture, annihilation, de-personalization, even the rending apart of the human body, for sustained affection and respect for personal integrity. In finally embracing as his goals civic *honor* and familial *amor*, Tullus would suffer dual metamorphosis away from his chill Cyzicus, not only from Greek heroics and Roman arms guided by piety instead of evil, but also from the private improprieties of Hellenic legend. In the process Propertius' Rome would seem to change for the better as well.

Virgil by contrast treats myth with a more pervasive irony. His one

bow to the Greek past comes at the start of his aretology and also is meant to urge contemplation of what Italy does not offer (140-142):

haec loca non tauri spirantes naribus ignem
 invertere satis immanis dentibus hydri,
 nec galeis densisque virum seges horruit hastis; . . .

Virgil also disclaims any Argonautic influence on Italy's growth. Literally there are no fire-breathing bulls, no dragon's teeth to sow, no crops of men armed with helmets and spears, springing from Italian soil. By the end of his hymn, however, Virgil has enticed his reader to perceive the symbolic aptness of the same tale of Jason. The developing "myth" of an historical Rome, that uses bulls for sacrifice at triumphs and encloses a seaside bay as an arena for naval maneuvers, is in fact engendered by its crop of armed men, the *genus acre virum* that Italy has borne. This harvest begins with general reference to peninsular tribes—Marsi and Volsci equipped with darts—extends to pluralities of Republican Roman notables—Decii, Camilli, sons of Scipio hard in war—and culminates in a unique Caesar, mightiest of them all upon whom Virgil casts a particularly detached glance. This apex of the Italian martial heritage is off in the farthest reaches of Asia, making war against the unwarlike Indi, preserving the fortresses of Rome from her onslaughts. It is no wonder that the art of Virgil's praises is based on Hesiod's *Ascraeum carmen*, for both have full, if idiosyncratic, awareness of the many levels of *labor* in human existence.

Virgil, treating landscape and people in one ontological expression, thrusts against his formal thesis from within by imaginative means.¹⁵ Propertius, while he unfolds a linear development of heroism and of Rome itself as backdrop for Tullus' own growth, senses alternatives both in the literal placement and in the spiritual outlook of his protagonist. Virgil offers no relieving modification. There was, to be sure, a time past (the second *georgic* concludes) when families were stable and man's competitiveness found easy release in gaming at festival time. The present, by contrast, finds Saturn yielding to Jupiter as men banquet on cattle they have slaughtered and forge swords. The contemporary stance which Propertius and Tullus share (*stamus*) objectifies much the same ethical pattern.¹⁶ But the elegist's personal involvement ultimately directs itself toward a future for which Rome is centripetal. This future moment of Tullus' return would fulfill the poet's desire. It would also

¹⁵ For a more detailed re-evaluation of *georgic* 2.136-176 see M. C. J. Putnam "Italian Virgil and the Idea of Rome," forthcoming in *Janus*.

¹⁶ The ideological significance of *statio* is discussed by G. Binder *Aeneas und Augustus* (Meisenheim, 1972), 15 f. and n. 37 for further bibliography.

assure Tullus of a continued existence based on his progeny. The final emotion is *amor* but the operative virtue is *spes*. Each challenges war's destructive feuding in a Rome which can now promise a setting for the peaceful execution of civil and familial trust.

Propertius' meaning is often sharpened by friction with adjacent poems, and 3.22, as recent critics have well noted, is no exception. The preceding poem outlines a trip to Athens and its intellectual attractions as a *remedium amoris*. Where Tullus at Cyzicus had avoided love and city through Roman adventuring, Propertius urges on his boat toward a different isthmus, away from Rome and the bitterness of an unresponsive Cynthia. The elegy that succeeds 3.22 finds Propertius again in Rome but now with his *tabellae* lost.¹⁷ This is thought, with some reason, to define a lack of inspiration or productivity concomitant with the cooling of the Cynthia affair. The last two poems of the book, bitter leave-takings, are climax and conclusion of the series. It is natural that the linear directness of this grouping should find its balance in the opening five elegies which have long been recognized to coalesce around the theme of a poet's response to his craft and to its relationship with present Roman society.¹⁸

There is elaborate poetic interaction between the two segments. If this parallelism is viewed chiasmically, the fourth and the twenty-second poems are complements. In each the poet is at Rome, voicing his concern for the attitudes of those in power. The first word *arma* sets the tone for an appraisal more rich with irony than the exhortation to Tullus. Roman *historia* (the word appears prominently in each poem) at the moment could be seen as idealistically based on the piety of revenge (*Crassos clademque piate!*). The immediate results of this plea, however, are victories and booty, not moral uplift. The arms godlike Caesar is pondering are against the wealthy Indi as he prepares to cleave a gem-rich sea. A great reward, the poet exclaims, to achieve a triumph from the farthest land (and from a people Virgil called unwarlike). But Propertius expresses his final disdain by surveying the procession pass by from the lap of his girl. The aloof elegist observes, and that is all, the celebration of background facts for an epic he could never write.

¹⁷ The relationship between 3.22 and 3.23 is treated in detail by R. J. Baker "Propertius' lost *Bona*," *AJP* 90 (1969), 333-337.

¹⁸ The linear interrelationship of the last poems is discussed by R. J. Baker "*Miles annosus*: the Military Motif in Propertius," *Latomus* 27 (1968), 322-349, esp. 339 f.; J. A. Barsby "The Composition and Publication of the first three books of Propertius," *G&R* 21 (1974), 128-137, esp. 135 ff. Cf. the words of W. A. Camps, *op. cit.* 154, in his introduction to 3.22: "His [Tullus'] reappearance here may be significant, for the neighboring Elegies xxi, xxiv and xxv suggest that a new phase is about to begin for the poet."

Juxtaposition again sharpens intellectual design since the subsequent poem reviews similar arguments. Propertius is a poet of peace and needs no rich crystal from which to slake his thirst nor bronzes from the sack of Corinth. What good reliance on externals since death, the great equalizer, mixes conquered and conqueror, poor and rich. In his life of the mind, when old age interrupts elegiac powers, he will turn to larger realms of nature, to didactic physiology, certainly not to the epic of those who care for arms and for vengeance over the standards of Crassus.

The number of such correlations in Propertius' third book argues for a pattern of organization extending beyond the linear stretches of the beginning and the end. These correlations rely as much on alternation as on unity of theme for their potential. Divergence between what might be called public and private topics becomes a frequent principle of fusion. Taking up after poem 5 we have a poem on the depth of Cynthia's affection next to an indictment of the avarice that drove Paetus to his maritime death. Praise for the advantages of lovers' squabbles (8) neighbors one of Propertius' two addresses to Maecenas: his restraint in matters of politics should serve as warning against any generic overreaching on the poet's part (9). The tenth poem is a birthday hymn to Cynthia while the eleventh, announcing the dictatorial power of woman, ends pointedly with praises of Caesar for extricating Rome from Cleopatra's threatening coils. But the ring of this laudation is immediately dulled with a poem that shows the devastating results of public intrusion on the private sphere (3.12.1-2):

Postume, plorantem potuisti linqwere Gallam,
miles et Augusti fortia signa sequi?

Postumus and Augustus, warring, journeying and greed are on one side, Galla and Rome, stability and fidelity remain on the other.

But whether one traces patterns of sequence or alternation or their combination, there are certain topics that permeate the book as a whole.¹⁹ The chief of these, which in some way marks each poem, is the idea of time and the artist's desperate postures between death and life. We contemplate this struggle in the most intimate as well as the most expansive poems. In poem 16, for instance, as he faces the danger of a

¹⁹ For recent views of the structure of the third book see A. Woolley "The Structure of Propertius Book III," *BICS* 14 (1967), 80-83; E. Courtney "The Structure of Propertius Book III," *Phoenix* 24 (1970), 48-53; H. Juhnke "Zum Aufbau des zweiten und dritten Buches des Properz," *Hermes* 99 (1971), 91-125, esp. 113 ff.; J. A. Barsby, *op. cit. passim*. Woolley (81) sees poem 22 balancing 14. Juhnke summarizes 3.22 as "Römische Land und Leben als Überhöhung der elegischen Welt." But one of the curious facts of 3.22 is the presence of only slight relatedness to the poet's inner elegiac world.

nocturnal venture to his mistress in Tibur, Propertius concludes with a meditation on the proper status of a poet's tomb. Cynthia's genethliacon prays for frozen time: may her beauty (*forma*) be everlasting (*perennis*), her reign over the poet eternal and these rituals annual. But *forma*, as the last duet of poems proves, is a highly evanescent endowment. Its disappearance should strike fear into Cynthia as it does final scorn in the poet (3.25.17-18):

has tibi fatalis cecinit mea pagina diras:
eventum formae discere timere tuae!

The road to immortality, that ultimate illusion of genius, lies through poetry for his material and for its creator (3.1.23-24):

omnia post obitum fingit maiora vetustas:
maius ab exsequiis nomen in ora venit.

Propertius' page is from the muses, whatever its contents, and as a *vatis* he can predict its endurance as well as Rome's moral breakdown or Cynthia's withering age (3.1.35-36):

meque inter seros laudabit Roma nepotes:
illum post cineres auguror ipse diem.²⁰

The defiance time's variousness presents human goals is a theme that unifies Propertius and Tullus, each in his different sphere. For Tullus, return to Rome betokens espousal on the ethical level of what Propertius lays claim to on the aesthetic. The autonomous purposes of history and poetry, fact and imagination for once supplement each other. Propertius' renunciation of epic to maintain his stand as an elegist of breadth parallels Tullus' foregoing of an imperial Rome bolstered by dogmatic arms to accept the urban civilities of political and familial life. Each will have his *nepotes*—those who in a later time will sing the praises of Propertius' poetic accomplishment or those more literal creatures who will carry on Tullus' name into the future. Tullus is more fortunate than Augustus who loses his Marcellus (genealogy, the poet matter-of-factly observes in elegy 18, gave him little help in the face of death). He is more felicitous still in that, like Cynthia, he was befriended by a poet. In spite of Propertius' yearning for the one and seeming repulsion of the other, it is the strange excellence of his verse that has earned for them both, as well as for himself, their fragile yet continued triumph over mortality.

Brown University

²⁰ R. J. Baker, among others, has discussed in detail Propertius' grasping at eternity in "Propertius III, i, 1-6 again. Intimations of Immortality?" *Mnemosyne* 21 (1968), 35-39. See also Nethercut, *op. cit. passim*.