

Housman and Propertius

S.J. Heyworth

Emendationes Propertianae

The *Journal of Philology* of 1887¹ opened with an extraordinary 35-page piece entitled *Emendationes Propertianae*. The first half consists of textual suggestions on some 240 passages of the poet, presented essentially without comment. Besides verbal changes, the author postulates *lacunae*, transpositions and deletions, in a briskly efficient manner. This is an impressively creative and informed contribution to the textual criticism of a famously troubled text, but it is perhaps less impressive than what follows, a detailed examination of the first elegy of the first book. Here are displayed the learning, the sharpness of insight, and the power of argument that were to mark the author's career as a critic of Latin poetry. It was the first public demonstration of Housman's involvement with the text of Propertius, which had begun, disastrously,² in his undergraduate years, would dominate the first third of his career,³ and would still be manifest in his late review⁴ of the commentary by H.E. Butler and E.A. Barber (Oxford, 1933). A critical history of his dealings with Propertius may be found in the account by G.P. Goold.⁵ Fixed points are provided by Housman's letter to Macmillan offering the edition (11 December 1885 = Burnett 1.58-9: 'The collection and arrangement of materials for the commentary will naturally demand further time and labour; and I therefore judge it best that the text with its apparatus criticus should be issued separately'), and by the publication in the *Journal of Philology* in 1892-3 of the three papers laying out his view of 'The Manuscripts of Propertius', for this effectively marked the end of his efforts to get an edition published (Cambridge University Press having followed Oxford and Macmillan in declining to publish a book: cf. University Library, Cambridge, Pr.B.13.9.59). Yet Housman's manuscript survived the scholar himself, and Professor Sandbach told more than once the story of visiting A.S.F. Gow, Housman's colleague at Trinity, in his rooms in 1936, and finding him stoking the fire in which he was burning the famously unpublished edition.

The examination of Prop. 1.1 displays the range of critical analysis and argument that typifies Housman's scholarship. He begins with a defence of the manuscript reading in verse 3 and verse 5; he postulates a lacuna after verse 11; he commends recent conjectures (a bold one in the case of Palmer's *comminus ille* for *ille uidere* in 12, less radical with Hertzberg's *Cytinaeis*, 23, and Otto's *torum*, 36). He supports German editors against English ones in their preference for the conjecture *aut* over *et* in 25. In 13 he explains, as plausibly as anyone has done, the strange corruption of *Hylaei* to *psilli* (already emended in the fifteenth century) and argues for Baehrens' *uerbere* as mediating between the manuscript variants *uulnere* and *arbore*. A concern for what happens in manuscripts is visible also in the discussion arguing for Fontein's *fides* for *preces* (16), *fata* for *sacra* (20), and the *pellacia* (for *fallacia*, 19) attributed to Fruterius and Palmerius. His own conjectures feature transposition (of words and letters, when he suggests *et manes et sidera uobis* for the transmitted *uobis et sidera et amnes* in 23) and an unusual use of familiar vocabulary (*non nostra = non secunda* in 33). The article was not of course the first Housman published, but, given his concentration on Propertius and the rejection of his edition in 1885, the psychological importance is obvious: he puts on display both the quantity and the quality of what he has to offer the hitherto ungrateful world.

The discussion also sparkles with Housman's judgements on scholars, mainly in this case favourable. Thus Baehrens is castigated for reading *cunctas* in 5, but we are left in no doubt about the positive implication of the reference to 'a scholar of Mr Baehrens' acumen' (CP 42). In acknowledging that the problem he points up in verse 16 has not been recognised except by Fontein, he finds an opportunity for rehearsing the names of the great: 'this flagrant discrepancy has run the gauntlet of Scaliger, Heinsius, Hemsterhuys, Markland, Schrader and Lachmann, half a dozen of the greatest names in criticism' (CP 46), before going on to say of Fontein's conjectures: 'many of them of course are the mere guesses which we all jot down in our margins simply to help us take up the thread of thought to-morrow where we drop it today...;⁶ but the residue betoken one of the most acute intellects that have ever been bent on the study of Propertius.' As so often when Housman writes on those he admires, one feels he is partly talking about himself: the generalised element of self-description ('we all') carries over and becomes more focused as we enter the climactic clause.

As a young graduate student, I mentioned to Sandbach my delight at acquiring a copy of Housman's *Classical Papers*, the first volume of which I regarded as vital to my research on Propertius. He expressed caution: he was not convinced that *any* of the early conjectures were necessary (it should be remembered that he had lectured on the text of Propertius in Cambridge, and produced a number of fine conjectures of

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his own).⁷ Whether or not it was literally true, this was clever rhetoric, a salutary warning to a student who was liable to be caught up in enthusiasm for Housman's genius. But it was not in the end effective. When I eventually brought out an edition, the text contained 39 conjectures, lacunae, transpositions published by Housman, rather more than anyone else working in the nineteenth century,⁸ and another 81 published suggestions appeared in the apparatus. Even without the lost edition the work he published on Propertius thus continues to have a major effect. But there was an aftermath also, and to that I now turn.

Housman's Propertii

In his catalogue of surviving books owned by Housman, P.G. Naiditch lists sixteen texts of Propertius,⁹ plus others combined with Catullus and Tibullus. One of these (item **10** below, preserved at Housman's Cambridge college, Trinity) is very rich in marginalia, and was exploited in the 2007 Oxford Classical Text. I have now inspected the nine annotated editions preserved in Housman's undergraduate college, St John's in Oxford.¹⁰ The annotations reveal much about his ways of working as a scholar and a reviewer, and it may be useful to give a more detailed account than the brief 'annotated' or similar that were all Naiditch had room to offer.

These are the St John's editions:

1. L. Müller (Cat. Tib. Prop.; Teubner, Leipzig, 1870)

Little annotation; there is some sidelining of the *Praefatio*; the conjecture *incudere*, attributed to Dilthey at 2.34.43, is said to be 'as old as Bentley's time' (xxxv). However, there is a line through the note, so Housman perhaps decided he was mistaken.¹¹ Bentley does not cite the line with *incudere* when he discusses the passage in his commentary on Hor. *ars* 441 (as David Butterfield reminds me): he there uses Gellius 9.8.3 to defend *includere* against the attack of Scaliger; but Scaliger had chosen the *componere* of F and its descendants.

There is minimal annotation in the Catullus (some underlinings in the preface, and on p. LXXI a list of opening spondees in glyconics)¹² and the *Priapea*; none at all that I have spotted in the Tibullus.

2. F.A. Paley (London, 1872²)

Sparsely annotated, with sidelining, correction of slips, and deletion of nonsense. Occasionally attention is drawn to details of grammatical interest, e.g. *an* introducing a direct question at 1.6.13, 2.25.23; and the short second syllable of *caue* at 1.10.21 and elsewhere.

3. M. Haupt (Cat. Tib. Prop.; Leipzig, 1879)

A very small edition, without notes or apparatus; Housman's copy is interleaved with larger pages that allowed him room for copious notes. This has far more additions by Housman than any of the other St John's volumes, including a number of unpublished conjectures; but its main function for the scholar was as a repository for parallels and material to support textual argument. See below for illustration and further discussion.

The Catullian portion has no annotation, as far as I have noticed. Tibullus, on the other hand, is adorned with underlinings, and (though not to the extent of the Propertius) accompanied by parallels, notes,¹³ alternative readings and a few conjectures: 1.2.58 *ille*] '*ipse* MSS: *iste* A.E.H.' (hardly compatible with *ille* in 57); 1.5.42 *pudet*] '?*rubet* ?*spuit* A.E.H.' (useful as offering an alternative approach to *a pudet* [Müller] or *heu pudet* [Wunderlich]); 1.5.61 '*pauper semper erit praesto tibi* A.E.H.' (unappealing to open with a spondaic word); 1.7.36 *incultis*] '*infultis* A.E.H. cf. Prop. 3.17.18 [*pressantes inquinet uua pedes*]' (*incultis* is awkward in this praise of civilisation, but this is not an attractive alternative); 2.3.36 *operata*] '? *reparata* A.E.H.' (cf. Cic. Ver. 2.5.186 *praedam improbissimam comparauit*; Sil. 15.199; but both the prefix and the tense are awkward; *onerata* would be an easy alternative – 'booty is burdened with much bad baggage'); 3.6.13 *dites*] '? *mites* A.E.H.' [iam rec.]

4. A. Palmer (Dublin, 1880)

The textual notes in the *Praefatio* have quite a lot of sidelining; in particular a double line is used to mark notions of particular attraction, e.g. 1.1.12* [in the postscript] *comminus ille*; 1.8.25* *Artaciis*; 1.13.17 *ueris*; 1.20.52* *ni uis perdere rursus Hylan*; 2.26.39 *montis duo*; 2.33.12* *mandisti, arbuta*; 2.34.29* *plectri*; 3.6.22* *nolo*; 3.9.7 *neruis*; 3.9.38* the transmitted *semper* retained; 3.12.18 *cui sis*; 3.22.3* *Dindymis* (iam Unger); 4.4.47 *cessabitur*; 4.7.57 *uehit*] *ratis*; 4.9.70 (*haec lex aeternum*). Of these, some were supported by Housman in published work (marked with an asterisk), others were not: they deserve careful attention from future editors. There are also more critical comments: 'my dear sir, don't you see that *cineri* and *emerito* are virtually the same thing?' (on 2.14.16).

The text opens with a large number of underlinings, most of those in 1.1 relating to the notes at CP 41-54; after 1.4, however, they are mainly limited to drawing attention to polysyllabic pentameter endings, which are marked consistently. A paragraphus in the margin marks the end of every 26th line in the text: Housman was presumably aiming at a reconstruction on the lines of Lachmann's for Lucretius (where the

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archetype can be deduced to have had 26-verse pages); if so, nothing came of the attempt (it never gets related to transpositions in this volume, e.g.), and it was foolish to make no allowance for titles and omissions.

There are a few marginal notes and conjectures, including the following that were never published: 2.32.61 *tuque es... Latina] turpes ... Latina's*; 2.34.8 *nonne] pone* [the superior *nempe* appears in item 10]; 3.5.11 *maris] miseri*.

However, most of the annotation in this edition without an apparatus is concerned with transposition and deletion: couplets and longer sequences are marked off with square brackets, and often accompanied by phrasing such as 'to follow 4' (on 2.4.17-22); elsewhere reordering is suggested by marginal numerals or letters.¹⁴

5a. J.P. Postgate (Cambridge, 1894: *ad tempus recognouit* on the title page; no reference to the publisher, and no preface)

This is inscribed as a gift from the editor. Most openings have one or two queries and corrections to text and apparatus; there is one conjecture Housman did not publish: 1.9.32 'fort. *ille*' (Smyth attributes this to Postgate, without a date, perhaps mistakenly, as the note in the *Select Elegies* suggests: 'It is better then to suppose *iste* = *ille*.'). There is almost no correlation between the corrections, mainly of slips, and the review, which is to be found at *CP* 369-77 = *CR* 9 (1895), 350-5.

5b. J.P. Postgate (London & Cambridge, 1894: publishers given as G. Bell & Sons in London, Deighton Bell in Cambridge; contains a 5-page preface; text same as 5a)

The annotations are almost entirely corrections of slips or omissions. However, at 3.15.8, there is a *caret* after *uix meminī*, and in the margin: 'you should insert *ut* / Ov. her. 18.25-6 / or read *ut* for *uix*'. Again, there is no connection between the annotation and the review. However, this volume holds several loose sheets, among them some that contain lists in Housman's hand of conjectures and transpositions made by Postgate (in one case grouped into 'good', 'bad', 'unnecessary', 'perhaps right'); and these were obviously made in preparation for the review.

6. J.S. Phillimore (OCT, Oxford, 1901)

There are only occasional marginalia, mostly in the form of exclamation mark, question mark or 'x', for example '!' beside *uisura, dolebat / illa tamen*... at 1.15.13-14 (Housman's underlinings). On the title-page Housman wrote the following couplet:

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Quae, Philomore, fui carmen iuuenile Properti,
Cynthia, nunc crimen sum iuuenile tuum.

7. H.E. Butler (London, 1905)

This still contains a card from J.P. Postgate, offering it to Housman for review ('You can take your own time'; if he did, it cannot have cost him much labour), and there is a clear correlation between the (mainly minimal) marginalia and Housman's trenchant comments on this humdrum edition (*CP* 630-6 = *CR* 19 (1905), 317-20). In the commentary at 1.8.27 the words 'She was here all the time' are underlined, and an exclamation mark in the margin leads to the response (*CP* 633): 'Of course she was, or not a word of lines 1-26 could have been written ... the only people who say such things are live madmen and dead classics.' Elsewhere we find 'x' or 'no'¹⁵ appended, with similar effect. '>' marks places where a note is needed (see *CP* 634).¹⁶

8. C. Hosius (Teubner, Leipzig, 1911)

This is the first edition, not the second, which was reviewed by Housman at *CR* 37 (1923), 120-1 = *CP* 1088-9. The book does not contain much annotation, though there are several deletions of improbable conjectures in the apparatus, and the occasional '!'. A repeated concern is with (i) orthography, especially of Greek words, and (ii) the correct attribution of conjectures. (i) Underlined in the text are, e.g., the final letter of *Alcidem* at 4.9.38 (read *-en*) and the *eio* of *Theiodamanteo* at 1.20.6 (read *Thio-*).¹⁷ The interest in orthography, and in the arguments that one could properly deploy in an area where medieval MSS are notoriously unreliable, had led Housman to publish his 'Greek nouns in Latin poetry from Lucretius to Juvenal' in the *Journal of Philology* in 1910 (*CP* 817-39). (ii) At 2.12.6 'haut uano Housman' is corrected to 'Nodell', for example; and when Hosius attributes Bergk's excellent *Craugidos* at 4.3.55 to Buecheler, this provokes 'liar' in the margin: cf. *CP* 1089 (and n. 1 there) for details on this. On the other hand, *haec non sum* at 1.13.13 is claimed for 'A.E.H.' despite its having been published by Rossberg in 1877.¹⁸

Hosius accepts N's reading *Famae* at 3.1.23, rather than the *omnia* of the later manuscripts. This elicits a 'bravo' from Housman. Though the text with *omnia* is not without awkwardness,¹⁹ *Famae* cannot itself be correct without further change, and it would be clear (even without the note at *CP* 272-3, already published) that this is Housman's typically sarcastic appreciation of an editor following the supposed *codex optimus* into inappropriate places.

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9. O.L. Richmond (Cambridge, 1928)²⁰

Again the annotation is sparse, especially after the first book, and largely negative: repeatedly we find ‘no’, ‘ha’, ‘!’ and ‘ugh’ (twice on p. 50). Housman picks up too on the false attribution to him of Palmer’s *gaza Midae* at 2.26.23 (underlining and exclamation mark), and writes ‘no’ in the margin at 1.1.31 (33 in Richmond’s numeration), where the apparatus claims ‘aura *Puccius laudat, Housmannus*’.²¹ An exclamation mark accompanies 2.10.1, printed by Richmond as the first line of his book 4, even though it reads *Sed tempus lustrare aliis Helicon choreis*. Apparently positive is the sidelining at 2.32.5 where *correxī*, referring to the conjecture *cur ita te* (accepted by a number of subsequent editors, such as Barber and Goold), has been underlined. Burnett 2.96-7 gives Housman’s response to the gift of the ‘stately tome’; he apologetically refers to Tennyson’s acknowledging merely the arrival of Rossetti’s poems, ‘to avoid giving an opinion’, but does go as far as to cast doubt on the credentials of the C family, on which Richmond had founded his lacunose and much re-ordered text.

One note of historical interest comes on p. 11, where the phrase ‘the common exemplar of AF’ elicits ‘? see Ullman’ in the margin: this is a reference to B.L. Ullman, ‘The manuscripts of Propertius’, *CPh* 6 (1911), 282-301, which had showed decisively that F is a descendant of A. Though Housman never published on the manuscript tradition later in his career, this reveals that he did revise his views in the light of later research.

Finally the Trinity volume,²² which has the richest store of marginalia:

10. E. Baehrens (Leipzig, 1880; shelfmark adv.c.20.41).

Marginalia were added at various times and consist largely of conjectures (many afterwards deleted) and citations of parallels, both for Latinity and the habits of scribes. The vast majority of the tolerable conjectures were published in Housman’s early Propertian articles; others (e.g. 1.17.3 *sontem*, 3.19.19 *eius furias*) found their way into the Manilius and other later work. But a proportion remained unknown to the world until they were published in Goold’s 1990 Loeb edition or the Oxford Text I brought out in 2007. For more detail see *Cynthia* pp. xi-xii; and for further material the pages listed under ‘Housman, unpublished notes’ in the General Index (add ‘304’); p. 357 has a complete transcription of a sequence of notes on 3.13.61-2.

Some unpublished annotations

Three of these volumes are particularly important: items **3**, **4**, and **10**. Each was produced by an editor that Housman respected: see e.g. *CP* 234-5 for all three, 29 for Baehrens and Palmer; 42-4, 305-9 for Baehrens; 471-2 on Palmer; 1065 for Haupt. Palmer's edition (**4**), which is without a proper apparatus criticus, served as a repository for transpositions, as has been said. Most of those marked were published, and even in this capacity it was superseded by the other two, as is illustrated by a note in the upper margin before the start of the manifestly disordered 3.7: 'The arrangement proposed below is largely wrong: see in my Baehrens.' The order suggested here runs 1-8, 17-20, 9-16, 43-50, 29-38, 21-4, 39-42, 51-70, 27-8, 71-2. Item **10** has the order published in '*Emendationes Propertianaë*'.

Baehrens (**10**) provided a good apparatus, and so it is here that Housman works on his conjectures, though not without transpositions (as has been seen) and parallels (for which item **4** was preferred). The annotations on 1.13 (pp. 21-2), though a small amount compared with some portions of the text, illustrate the range (material in square brackets is my addition):

- 1.13.12 text *nec, noua quaerendo semper, Adonis eris* commas deleted
a.c. left mg.: *inicus* A.E.H. 2.7.8 [*in ore c: more NF: amore Δ*]
1.13.17 right mg.: Pers. 1.107 [*uero*] *uerbo* PR
Ov. *met.* 10.559 [*uerbis uel labris codd.*]
a.c. right mg.: ~~*rebus*~~ A.E.H. ?
ueris Palmer 2.28.43 [*pro quibus optatis*]
1.13.25 a.c. *amantes*:²³ Cat. 68.129 [*horum magnos uicisti sola furores*]
1.13.29 left. mg.: [Eur.] *I.A.* 49-57
[Leda's three daughters, Phoebe, Clytemestra and Helen]
1.13.35 a.c. left mg.: *qui tibi* Palmer

The interleaving of the Haupt edition (**3**) is a clear indication of an intention to make use of the extra space; this is employed for the accumulation of parallels, not just for the text printed by Haupt,²⁴ but also for corruptions, Latinity and conjectures that Housman notes as enticing elsewhere. So, for example, at 1.20.4 the note 'Stat. *silu.* 5.4.5 [*trucibus fluuiis*], Luc. 3.250 *duces*] *truces* Bentley' provides support for Housman's own conjecture *trux erat* (for *dixerat*), and at 3.1.1 'Sen. epigr. 20.9 *mea fata = me mortuum*' relates to Baehrens' *fata*, not anything printed by Haupt. The volume continued to be used throughout Housman's career: there are references to Birt's *Kritik und Hermeneutik* (Munich, 1913), his own *Lucan* (published 1926), and Löfstedt's *Syntactica* vol. 2 (Lund, 1933).²⁵ Here are the notes on 1.13 (pp. 216-18):

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- 1.13.6: 6. *certus* is part of what is negated?
 1.13.12: 12. Cic. *pro Clu.* 23.64 emend. A.E.H. [*iniquus*] *inimicus* codd. aliquot]
 1.13.13: 13. *ego* om. NF. *haec non <sum> rumore* A.E.H. *augere* Luc. 7.203
 1.13.14-15: 14 sq. 'uidi ego (me ... potes?) | uidi ego te' etc. A.E.H.
 1.13.17: Petron. 79.[8.]3-4 [*transfudimus hinc et hinc labellis | errantes animas*] Ciris 496 [*multis optata labella*]
 1.13.24: Ou. *met.* 1.313 MSS [*Oetaeis*] *actaeis*
 1.13.25: C.F.W. Mueller ap. Friedlaender Juv. 6.520
 1.13.29: *Ioue dignus* Ov. *her.* 9.22, 14.99

The edition contains the following unpublished conjectures²⁶ (I suspect that among the many parallels others may lie hidden that I have missed):

- 1.1.20 ? *picare* (cf. Verg. *ecl.* 8.82 *incende bitumine laurus*) ? *parare* ? *patrare*, but see first what Haupt says
 ? *sacsa* [i.e. *saxa*] *liquare* (cf. 4.4.10, 4.5.12)
 1.4.14 *sub Tacita dicere teste* [*sed Tacita ... teste* Palmer²⁷]
 1.15.29 <*in cap*>*ut alta prius labentur* [*ad caput alta p- l-* T. Korsch, *Nordisk Tidsskrift for Filologi* 5 (1880-2), 259]
 1.16.38 *figere tela* [*figere theta iam Müller*] cf. 2.13.2 [*spicula fixit*], Ou. *ex P.* 4.6.36 [*linguae tela*]
 2.1.41 *conueniat* ? [so subsequently Giardina²⁸] cf. *thes.* IV, p. 835.28-77
 2.3.7 *haut ego sic*
 2.3.27-8 post 25-6
 2.15.28 *certum* ? Auien. *Arat.* 133 [*cardine toto?*], Plin. *n.h.* 10.104 [*neutri nota adulteria. coniugii fidem non uiolant*]. [*solum* suggested in item 10]
 2.22.7-8 post 4 uel ante 5
 2.25.45 *cultaque* cf. Plin. *n.h.* 16.251 *sacerdos candida ueste cultus*. Suet. *Ner.* 32 *matronam in spectaculis uetita purpura cultam*. Juv. 3.95 [*Dorida nullo | cultam palliolo*]. Petron. 32[.4] *lacertum aurea armilla cultum*], 47[.8] *capistris et tintinnabulis* [*culti*]
 2.29.36 *uolutantis incubuisse* [also in item 10, along with the published *concaluisse*: both are deleted there]
 2.32.7-8 post 2
 2.32.24 *furit* [so subsequently Barber²⁹]. Sil. 7.504 *fama furit uersos hostes Poenumque salutem | inuenisse fuga*. Verg. *Aen.* 4.666 *concussam bacchatur fama per urbem*. The same corruption occurs at 4.6.56 and perhaps 3.22.28
 2.33.41-4 post 24
 3.6.6 *timens*] *tamen*
 3.7.22 *Mimantiadae*
 3.11.7 Surely his *iuuenta* was not past. ? *praecipiti*
 3.15.3 *pudor*] ? *pauor*

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- 3.18.19 *omnia granis* | ... *Indis*. Cf. Tertull. [*de resurrectione carnis* 7.30]
rubentis maris grana candentia
- 3.21.6 *posset* [so Richards, *CR* 13 (1899), 16]
- 3.21.7 *bis tantum* A.E.H. or can *tamen* be kept? or perhaps *tandem*? [*bis*
Cornelissen³⁰ in 1879]
- 4.1.8 '? *finis. anth. Lat.* 423 *ultima cingebat Thybris tua, Romule, regna: |*
hic tibi finis erat, religiose Numa
cum bubus nostris aduena Hiberus erat?' (citing Mart. 9.91.10, Verg. *A.*
7.663)
- 4.1.33 *minus*] ?*metus*. Or = *urbs magis suburbana Bouillis* [*metus iam*
Wilymott]
- 4.1.88 *regna subacta* or *sepulta* or rather *superba*. Or *saecula longa*. [*regna*
superba published]
- 4.2.41-2 post 12
- 4.2.43-6 post 18
- 4.3.51 ? *Poenis bis purpura fulgeat*. cf. Mart. 1.26.2 *totiens*.

If I had known of them before producing the OCT, I would have mentioned 2.25.45 *culta*, 2.32.24 *furit*, 3.18.19 *granis*, 3.21.7 *tantum*, 4.1.8 *finis* in the apparatus criticus, and I now see that the *metus* of the ed. Etonensis deserves to be cited at 4.1.33. There are gleanings still to be had in this field, I suspect; and what is true for Propertius is likely to be true for other authors too.³¹ Anyone editing or writing a commentary on a text for which a Housman volume can be identified is strongly encouraged to investigate further.

The manuscripts of Propertius

There is an extraordinary contrast between Housman's work on the manuscript tradition of Propertius and the contemporaneous research of Postgate.³² Housman's articles have great value for the textual criticism of individual passages, and individual notes serve as useful illustrations of method in stemmatic argument; but the complexity of the structure he argues for, and the lack of attention to historical data mean that the stemma he argues for is implausible as well as wrong. Postgate on the other hand puts most of his effort into presenting a simple picture of some MSS that his researches have uncovered. In particular he brings to light L and μ (M in the OCT), and judges their positions in the stemma almost correctly:³³ L derives from the same lost exemplar as F (through one remove, it now appears³⁴), and it gives a more accurate picture of the branch, for 'F is a bad copy of its exemplar' (*TCPHS* 4 (1899), 26); M derives from a lost sibling (perhaps cousin, rather) of N. Postgate also usefully points to the possibility of accidental correction in a carelessly written MS such as F (27-8), and shows that Naples 268 is a descendant of F and thus to be eliminated. The

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penultimate section, on 'O and N' (61-75) is what provoked Housman's ire. Again there are wise things said here: when Postgate asks (66), 'For what if Δ arose from a codex not differing very much from AF to start with, into which readings had been copied from N or some cognate manuscript and also from some other source, say W, whence come the characteristic DV readings?', his hypothesis is close to one that is now regarded as true: D and V have inherited some archetypal readings from the group the OCT denotes with the siglum Λ and their own peculiarities are a mix of fifteenth-century error and fifteenth-century conjecture.³⁵ He was right too on Housman's indifference to the date of N: though dates may theoretically be unimportant, in fact they can be decisive in getting stemmata to hang from the right points. Given their dates and what those dates imply about the milieu in which they were written, it is hardly surprising that 'Δ is much more deeply interpolated than N' (71).

Housman's response (*CP* 351-68 = *CR* 9 (1895), 19-29) displays much logic in its argumentation, rightly claiming that what Postgate 'presents as proofs' 'are not proofs at all' (*CP* 353), but the judgement is on Postgate's side in all the large issues, Housman again led astray by his notion that a manuscript (this time L) is a hybrid. We find assertions here that subsequent scholarship has found reason to doubt, e.g. 'the legitimate glory of a MS is not correctness but integrity'. It is true that we need to look cautiously at MSS that scatter specious readings amidst errors of the later tradition, but if a MS has both attractive (that it to say plausibly true) readings and regular reflections of archetypal error, that MS deserves the greatest attention: correctness is a strong pledge of integrity. Both N and L seem to a modern editor of the text to be comparatively 'sincere' in taking their readings only from the text in their respective exemplars.

However, the qualities of Housman's papers must be appreciated too. Read through §2 and 3 'N better than O: continued' (*CP* 241-57) and you find a sequence of notes that as a group confirm N's independence and individually establish either the true reading³⁶ or a correct analysis³⁷ of problems in the transmitted versions. Often of course the truth has been seen by an earlier scholar, but a clear statement of the correct reasoning can still be important. Thus at 3.14.27-8 (*CP* 274) and 3.9.35 (*CP* 276) Ovidian imitations confirm a widely accepted conjecture and the reading of half the tradition respectively. In the latter case too, Housman makes a subtle point in favour of the transmitted *findo*, 'the earliest example in Latin poetry of a spondee transformed into a trochee by the shortening of a final o.' He continues 'every change must have a beginning', and shows how likely it is that Propertius would have started what Ovid then continues. In between he simply reads the context with more care than others in arguing that at 3.23.11, the indicative *fuerant* (or rather *fuerunt*) is more likely to be right than the

subjunctive *fuerint*, on the grounds that whatever he uses with *forsitan* elsewhere, in this case *aut dixit* follows in verse 15. Such a scholar is always required reading, and an editor deviates from his view with reluctance.

Yet it is striking that someone with such concern for accuracy and evidence should have been willing to base his textual arguments, even in his editions, largely on the reading of others. In *Juvenal*, for example, we find these sentences:³⁸

I began to gather from the printed sources the recorded variants; and I soon discovered that Juvenal's modern editors were ignorant or regardless of even the printed sources. I consulted the oldest MSS in the British Museum, but there was little to be learnt from these; so returning to the published records I chose out seven authorities which seemed to emerge above the crowd and to possess some value of their own. Two of these, thanks to Mr Hosius, were collated already; two were in England, so I examined them myself; three were abroad, but of these I procured enough knowledge for my purpose.

However, the Juvenal was explicitly 'not meant for a model', but 'an enterprise undertaken in haste' (*Juvenal*², xxxvi). Moreover, when we review Housman's work on the MS tradition of Propertius, we should remember that he was an amateur in this period. Both in Oxford and London he had access to the books that mattered, but none of the MSS thought important was within easy reach. He had a living to earn in the Patent Office; already his obsession had cost him his degree at Oxford. His classical reading was done in his leisure time, and it should not surprise us that he did not choose to use up that time collating. If he had been able to prepare his own collations he might well have seen how unreliable even those produced by careful scholars can be. But he was not, and, having established his way of working for the unpublished Propertian edition, he persisted with his dependence on others in later years when he had the professional status and time that would have made collation an easier matter.³⁹ Of course, he was not alone in this period in working so; but his has been a peculiarly influential example, even among those who celebrate Housman's exacting scholarship; so we find D.R. Shackleton Bailey in his centenary talk on 'A.E. Housman as a Classical Scholar'⁴⁰ showing foolish disdain: 'Collation is a job for clerks⁴¹ or electronic machines, and a scholar who happens to possess a brain capable of more delicate operations is right to let others do it for him whenever he fairly can.' For all his greatness as a textual critic, Shackleton Bailey was not seldom led astray by his indifference to manuscripts,⁴² and we would be better advised to follow not Housman's example, but the moral of his scholarship, that we should build our textual arguments on the firmest foundation possible.

Housman's Propertius and the literary aftermath

One very striking aspect of Housman's dealings with Propertius is how little effect they seem to have had on his poetry. *A Shropshire Lad*, published in 1896, was mostly written, as Housman told Sydney Cockerell, 'in the first five months of 1895 at a time of ill-health, and partly perhaps as a reaction from a learned controversy in which he was then engaged'. Naiditch,⁴³ surely rightly, takes this to be the polemical exchange with Postgate about the MSS of Propertius: Housman's response to the Cambridge Philological pamphlet was published in the first fascicle of *Classical Review* of that year, Postgate's reply in the third (dated April; already announced in the second). By this time Housman had been studying Propertius intently for fifteen years or so and his mind must have been thoroughly imbued with the poems, yet allusions are very hard to find, even though the poems owe much in tone to the pastoral and epigrammatic⁴⁴ traditions of antiquity, both of them important to Propertius' manner of composition. For example, Burnett's commentary⁴⁵ cites Prop. 3.7.12 on *Last Poems* XX.9-12;⁴⁶ 2.9.1 (*Iste quod est, ego saepe fui*) on XXXIV.25-6 ('Ay, yonder lads are yet / The fools that we were then'), and 1.12.13-14 *longas solus cognoscere noctes / cogor* on *More Poems* XIX.11 ('I, / Who only spend the night alone');⁴⁷ to *A Shropshire Lad* Burnett's only references are Prop. 2.13.35-6 on XI.10-14 and 3.18.21-2 on XIX.5. Although it is true that the first stanza of *Last Poems* XI has a number of motifs in common with Prop. 1.16.17-44, it equally does with a number of other ancient *paraclausithyra*. Poems XXV and XXVI both begin with reference to 'a year ago'; but they share nothing significant with 1.1 (7: *iam toto furor hic non deficit anno*).

Of course, the two poets share major themes: in particular love and death. Ghosts speak in Propertius 1.21, 4.7, 4.11; and in *ASL* XXI, XXVII, XLII. But it is perhaps willingness to make poetry of the physical effects of death that is the most important shared characteristic: thus Housman emphasises the skeleton in *ASL* XLIII 'The Immortal Part' as Propertius in (e.g.) 4.8.94 *mixtis ossibus ossa teram*, and thus he ends XXIV (5-12):

Send me now, and I shall go;
Call me, I shall hear your call;
Use me ere they lay me low
Where a man's no use at all;

Ere the wholesome flesh decay,
And the willing nerve be numb,
And the lips lack breath to say,
'No, my lad, I cannot come.'

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apparently in imitation of Prop. 2.13, which envisages the poet's funeral and then ends as follows (51-2):

sed frustra mutos reuocabis, Cynthia, manes:
nam mea quid poterunt ossa minuta loqui?

Moreover, we might wonder about the influence of Propertius 3.4 on *ASL* I '1887' (Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee): both combine celebration of an empire⁴⁸ and its sovereign with awareness at home, in peace, of the lives lost.⁴⁹ It is hard to give much weight to the echo in Housman's 'God save the Queen' (I.25) of Propertius' *ipsa tuam serua prolem, Venus* (3.4.19). But there is similarity as well as difference in the antitheses:

We pledge in peace by farm and town
The Queen they served in war,
And fire the beacons up and down
The land they perished for. *ASL* I.21-4

praeda sit haec illis quorum meruere labores:
mi sat erit Sacra plaudere posse Via. Prop. 3.4.21-2

Most interesting, however, is this quatrain:

It dawns in Asia, tombstones show
And Shropshire names are read;
And the Nile spills his overflow
Beside the Severn's dead. *ASL* I.17-20

The use of foreign rivers is a detail shared with the Propertian poem (as well as, e.g., Verg. *A.* 8.711-28). As transmitted, 3.4.3-4 run:

magna, uiri, merces: parat ultima terra triumphos;
Tigris et Euphrates sub tua iura fluent.

But in trying to remove the apparent use of *tua* to refer to the plural *uiri*, Housman had suggested a change that would make an Italian river flow beside the Asian one, and shown how such oppositions recur (*CP* 247):

magna, uiri, merces: parat ultima terra triumphos,
Thybris, et Euphrates sub tua iura *fluet*.

Though it may be pleasing to find a case where the textual critic impinges on the poet, this remains a small haul, and we should wonder why. Partly I think it is simply the difference between Latin and English poetic style: the metonymical specificity of the one lends itself

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to allusion, and this in turn creates expectations in poet and reader; Housman's language is more metaphorical; the specifics typically belong to Shropshire and the closest that comes to Propertius is in the line 'Wenlock Edge was umbered' (*Last Poems* XLI.25). Moreover, their attitudes towards love are very different: Propertius speaks nearly always in his own voice and concentrates from his first word on Cynthia. He cannot travel away from her; their love should last beyond the grave. Housman, on the other hand, is a poet of separation, whether through death or distance, and he varies his voice persistently: any sense of identification between poet and the T is as fleeting as love and life themselves (he is not, of course, a Shropshire lad). Love is an emotion the poet knows, but he uses his knowledge for general reflection rather than to reveal his pain. The tone is thus far more like the experienced Horace of the *Odes* than an elegist.

*

If Housman's Propertius had been published, it would probably have made no difference to his reputation as a classical scholar, and little to the editing of Propertius – the conjectures and the most acute arguments appeared anyway; but it would have removed one poignant strand from the Housman myth, the myth of a brilliant youth so caught up in love and in building himself a monument that he ruined his early career *and then* made himself a great name as a poet and a scholar, though his first attempt at a monument was never finished:

Pollard: I know what you want.
Housman: What do I want?
Pollard: A monument, Housman was here.
Housman: Oh, you've guessed my secret.
Pollard: A mud pie against the incoming tide.
Housman: A fine way to speak of my edition of Propertius.
Tom Stoppard, *The Invention of Love*, Act II

With carefully designed irony, the monument was destroyed by his death, and thus became central to his immortal myth:

Housman: I'm sorry, they're calling me. Did you finish your Propertius?
AEH: No.
Housman: Have you still got it?
AEH: Oh, yes. It's in a box of papers I've arranged to be burned when I'm dead.
Ibid., Act I

Notes

1. Like other numbers, this has a discrepancy between the date on the cover (1887) and the date given inside (1888): that publication was in 1887 is clear from the Bodleian copy, however, as it bears the accession stamp '28SEP87'.

2. Whatever other causes there were for his failure in *Greats*, it seems certain that one was his engagement with textual criticism and consequent inattention to Ancient History and Philosophy.

3. 'Propertius had been Housman's first love' according to Gow 1936a, 12; but note that the love was at least partly of the corruption of the text: 'these three scholars [Paley, Postgate, Palmer] award the poetry of Propertius commendation which I think too high' (CP 52). The elegist is the concern of 161 pages of the 421 in the first volume of the *Classical Papers*: 29-54, 232-304, 314-47, 351-77.

4. CR 48 (1934), 136-9 = CP 1234-8.

5. 'On editing Propertius' in Horsfall 1988, 27-38, at 27-30.

6. This explication of marginalia must of course be taken into account when assessing the unpublished material I reveal later in this paper: what matters is the excellence of the best insight, not any moments of weakness.

7. Cf. the similar observation of Patrick Wilkinson mentioned by Luck in his contribution in this volume (his n. 6). On Sandbach and Propertius see Heyworth 2007b, xii, 177-9, 423-6 (e.g.). The major paper is 'Some problems in Propertius', CQ 12 (1962), 263-76.

8. The only others in double figures are Palmer (28), Lachmann (20), Baehrens (19), Postgate (18), Rossberg (14).

9. Naiditch 2003, 108-51 (at 140-2).

10. They are kept in two inscribed cupboards, one with classical volumes, the other with primarily English poetry. I am most grateful to Catherine Hilliard and her staff for their hospitality in making the books available for my repeated inspection, and to David Butterfield for passing on his notes about these volumes and for encouraging me to explore them. I also leafed through the few pamphlets on Propertius there (all registered in Naiditch 2003, at 140-2). Nothing of scholarly importance, I believe, but regular expressions of exasperation, and one or two funny moments: A. Hänel asks why a scribe was not consistent, and Housman answers in the margin 'because he was a scribe' (*De Propertii codice Neapolitano* 268 (Greifswald, 1902), 42); and when Postgate writes (*AJPh* 17 (1897), 31) 'on a foreigner falls the ungrateful task of instructing two German scholars in the researches of their countryman', in place of 'ungrateful' the margin offers 'voluptuous'.

11. Smyth 1970 ad loc. attributes the conjecture to Dilthey.

12. More interesting is the conjecture (apparently unpublished, and certainly unmentioned in recent editions) *Indis* for *ludens* in the appended Cinna fr. 4 Bl. = 5 Courtney = 17 Hollis *atque imitata niues ludens legitur crystallus*. Editors print the *lucens* of Rutgers, but it is not clear that an epithet is wanted for *crystallus* in addition to *imitata niues*. Though the conjecture looks palaeographical in origin, it is appealing in that it integrates *legitur* more fully with its sentence, and it fits the concentration on geography that we now find in the *Lithica* of the Posidippus collection (1-20: epigram 16 is on crystal from Arabia). On the other hand, *Indis* does nothing to ally the verse to Juvenal 6.155, the line it is used to illustrate (see Hollis 2007, 47).

13. Sometimes rather elementary: *Caryste* at 3.3.14 is glossed 'a town in Euboea'.

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14. Given that I found myself puzzled once or twice, it may be worth pointing out that the annotation was mostly done with a soft pencil, and where it stands in the inner margin this has occasionally left a mirror image on the opposite page. The same thing has happened occasionally in other volumes.

15. Also 'ugh' at 2.15.35, beside '*dolores*. the sorrows which love brings with it', though Housman seems to have been unable to find the words to convey this in his review.

16. At times, it should be said, Housman's judgement is questionable: to a modern reader it seems absurd to deny that *pede* at 3.1.6 is an 'allusion' to the metre of Callimachus and Philitas (Butler has chosen his phrasing carefully); but there are also classic demonstrations of Latinity (e.g. that pluperfect is not used for perfect (CP 631)), and sense (the impossibility of *persuadent* at 1.2.13 (CP 632)).

17. This reminds me that I mis-spelled the word in the OCT, seduced by *OLD* and the preponderant evidence for *Therod-* in the manuscript tradition into forgetting the convention that Greek ε becomes Latin *i*.

18. So Smyth 1970; I have not seen the publication either.

19. See my discussion ad loc. in Heyworth 2007b.

20. Not listed by Naiditch 2003.

21. Naiditch 1988, 31, suggests that Richmond's note may point to a contribution by Housman to the edition. Housman's denial on this point of detail may stand as counter-evidence, alongside the letter to S.C. Roberts expressing his unwillingness to referee the book (Burnett 1.630).

22. David Butterfield reports that Housman's copy of Butler & Barber, also at Trinity (adv.c.20.66), has annotations from perhaps a single read-through for his review (see n. 4), including two characteristic notes: at 3.14.19 (on 'the loss of *capere*'), 'Do you desire to have readers who can be so deceived? When the mind can deceive itself by so transparent a trick as this, it is in no fit state to conduct enquiry' (cf. CP 1237-8); and at 4.3.49 (on 'The greatest love is wedded love for a man who is openly acknowledged as one's husband') 'false and irrelevant'.

23. This word is underlined in the text.

24. As Haupt's reputation might suggest, the text is rather good, and admits a number of fine conjectures that later editors forget.

25. On dating, see Naiditch 1988, 198 n. 61-10, adding arguments from handwriting and abbreviations for texts such as the *Eclogues*.

26. Some published conjectures appear here too, e.g. the transposition of 2.15.31-6 after 2.1.56, and *marcori Ossaeis* at 2.2.11.

27. A. Palmer, *Hermathena* 9 (1883), 71.

28. G. Giardina, *Properzio, Elegie: edizione critica e traduzione* (Rome, 2005).

29. E.A. Barber, *Sexti Properti Carmina* (OCT, Oxford, 1953).

30. J.J. Cornelissen, *Mnem.* 7 (1879), 98-110.

31. Thus from **3** itself I can offer the following conjectures: at 1.4.13 Housman quotes Lucil. 1257-8 M. (= Gell. 9.14.22) and suggests that *sanguis* be read for *tantis* in the transmitted *facie quod honestae / tantis accedit*; and at 2.13.45 he suggests *homines* or *animae* for *enim* at Sen. *Suas.* 4.3 *incertae sortis uiuimus enim*.

32. See also Butrica 1984, 6-8, and the fuller account of relations between the two scholars in Hopkinson's contribution to this volume.

33. 'Almost', for it does not appear that L (or its exemplar) does exploit another branch: Butrica 1984, 48-9; Heyworth 2007a, xxiv-xxviii.

34. Butrica 1984, 52-3; Heyworth 2007a, xvi-xvii.

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35. See Butrica 1984, 125-9, especially the final paragraph, which enumerates a large number of sources for the group. Housman thought N the hybrid.

36. E.g. 4.8.37, 3.6.21-2, 3.8.19, 2.22.33; 2.33.37, 3.1.27, 2.7.3, 3.24.6, 4.3.51-2, 2.26.15, 2.28.9, 3.4.19, 4.1.28, 4.7.41.

37. 2.25.2, 2.32.5-6, 3.22.3, 4.2.2, 4.5.21.

38. *Juvenal*², v.

39. Thus in the preface to his *Lucan* (xxxv) he announces '[m]y reports of the manuscripts are selected from the apparatus criticus of Mr Hosius' third edition', though on p. xxxiii he had acknowledged '[t]he manuscripts collated in his first edition were indeed too few, and the collations in his second were often inexact.' He did acquire photographs for the Manilius. See further the contribution of Reeve in this volume.

40. *Listener* 61 (1959), 795-6 = Shackleton Bailey 1997, 317-23; the quotation is from p. 321.

41. Given Housman's early career, this is a spectacular misjudgement.

42. See, e.g., M.D. Reeve's review of Shackleton Bailey's Teubner edition of *Anthologia Latina* I.1 (Stuttgart, 1982) at *Phoenix* 39 (1985), 174-80, or (on a small scale) n. 5 to my 'Horace, *Sermones* 2.3.62-3', *Mnem.* 48 (1995), 574-6.

43. Naiditch 1988, 82-3.

44. This is a general point about the rural settings (e.g.) and the use of the voice of the dead, but can be seen in specific cases, such as when *ASL* XXXIV draws on Theocritus, *Idyll* 14, LXII on *Idyll* 10, or XLVIII on *AP* 7.472 (Leonidas). The most obvious debt, that of XV to the Narcissus episode of Ovid, *Met.* 3, has affinities to both traditions.

45. Burnett 1997.

46. *AP* 7.285.2 and 374.1 are equally relevant.

47. I should add that *MP* XXXI.9-16 uses a strikingly Propertian structure to end the poem: cf. 1.6.31-6, and especially (given the similarity of sentiment, though not of addressee) 2.1.75-8.

48. *ASL* III also marks a soldier's departure and pictures the return of 'The conquering hero'.

49. *Crassos clademque* (3.4.9), and in the implications of 19-20. Death comes to the fore in the closely related 3.5.