The Two Faces of Apollo:
Propertius and the Poetry of Politics

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
DLitt (Latin)

in the Faculty of Humanities

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
PRETORIA

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8 January 2010

For Anneke

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PREFACE

This thesis grew out of a fascination with Augustan poetry and its complex social world to which the author was introduced through the *Eclogae* of Vergil. The topic was originally suggested by a comment in a footnote in Ross' *Backgrounds to Augustan Poetry* (1975: 27-8) that there is no comprehensive study of the image of Apollo in Augustan poetry. Now, 35 years later, there is still no such study and in view of the complexity of the problem, which is becoming more and more evident, it seems less and less likely that a truly comprehensive study of the subject can be made in a single lifetime or be presented in a single volume. However, the importance and usefulness of such a study are self-evident and the present study, in some small way, tries to contribute to this vast project.

The title *The Two Faces of Apollo: Propertius and the Poetry of Politics* belies to some extent the complete picture of Apollo in Propertian poetry. In Republican Rome, as in Classical Greek mythology, Apollo had many faces and he was associated with aspects of life as disparate as tending live-stock and producing prophecies. However, in the poetry of especially Vergil and Propertius two of the god's aspects are emphasized much more often than the others. Apollo the leader of the Muses and inspirer of poets had a natural attraction for poets and the Augustan poets were no exception. Apollo was also linked to the house of the *Iulii*, whose best known (adopted) son became the first Emperor of Rome and the most powerful person in the known world. Octavian used the image of Apollo in his national programme of rebuilding Rome and the famous Temple of Apollo on the Palatine was commissioned by Octavian and joined to his own house. The deity also featured strongly as Apollo *Actius*, to whose intervention the victory at Actium was ascribed by Vergil and Propertius. It is then in these two faces of the god that the two spheres in which the poets lived came together. Through the image of Apollo – the god of music – the poet could examine subjects such as his craft, his fellow poets, poets who influenced him, his place in tradition and the importance of his poetry. Through Octavian's Apollo – the Apollo who favoured the Trojans in Homer and Octavian at Actium – the poet could speak about current Roman politics and issues of national interest.

Lastly it remains to express my immense gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Beatrice Martin, who guided my studies from the inception, was always ready with invaluable advice, freely volunteered criticism and finally read and reread the various drafts with painstaking meticulousness and patience.

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INTRODUCTION:

Approach to the Augustan World and its Poetry

The study of Propertius and his place in Augustan elegiac poetry has been in vogue for some decades now and the stream of publications shows no signs of letting up. As the title suggests, the present study will focus only on a small scope within the field of Augustan poetry and will limit itself to the poetry of Sextus Propertius[1] – specifically to key poems in the Propertian corpus and their closely associated texts. As far as the associated texts are concerned, the focus will naturally fall on poetry, but less closely associated texts, such as prose and even visual art will be included where relevant. The aim of the present study is not to attempt to answer the major questions that dominate Augustan or Propertian studies, but rather to facilitate future study by illuminating a smaller, but important theme.

Since the study of Apollo and the role he played in the latter half of the last century BCE covers a very wide field, the focus will fall specifically on the figure of the deity as he appears in the poetry of Propertius and his contemporaries. In these instances, the figure of the god in the poetry of that time displays in particular two distinct sides. On the one hand, Apollo stands as *Musagetes*, that is the leader of the Muses, the patron deity of poets and the embodiment of *ars*, the craft of the poet. In this guise he is invoked in introductions, introductory poems and *recusationes*. On the other hand, Apollo stands as a political figure, with established affiliations with the *Iulii* and a strong connection with Octavian himself. Apollo was crucially credited with inspiring the victory at Actium and honoured by the new emperor himself in building projects on the Palatine and later at the *Ara Pacis.*

This introduction serves two purposes. Firstly, it will place the present study within a theoretical framework. A short overview of the various approaches to Augustan poetry will be given, the tools and techniques that have cross-pollinated the different fields will be discussed and the methodology and approach adopted for the present study will be discussed. This section will also delineate the attitude of the present study towards the latest ideas on generic and intertextual studies and relate the relevance of the study to these ideas and other important

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[1] The additional *nomen* Aurelius and the *cognomen* Nauta conferred on Propertius by some manuscripts are now considered to lack any authority. A discussion of Propertius' name can be found in Cairns (2004: 4).

questions. Secondly, the introduction will discuss the scope of the inquiry and specify the desired outcomes.

The study of the difficult subject of the Augustan poets has, not surprisingly, been attempted through various approaches. The present study also utilizes tools and techniques from different fields. These techniques are mostly not foreign to the classicist and in some approaches tools and techniques from the fields of history and anthropology have been successfully utilized. The approaches can be conveniently divided into five groups: the traditional linguistic and philological approach as well as the historical, anthropological, biographical and thematic studies.

The Traditional Linguistic and Philological Approach

Our main source of information regarding the Augustan age including its poetry is of course the texts themselves. It follows that any student of Augustan literature should focus primarily on the text. Classical scholars are usually at an advantage in this regard, as so little is known of the authors that biographical data external to the text hardly interferes with the reading. Similarly, our knowledge of the Augustan world view, too, is fragmentary at best and mostly derived from the literature itself, which makes arguing for a certain interpretation on the grounds of the prevailing world view very untrustworthy. The interpreter's first priority is to get to the meaning of the text.

Getting to the meaning – even to the simple meaning of the surface structure – is often harder than it sounds.-The texts we have today of authors, even authors of the stature of Vergil, are, to a greater or lesser extent, the product of a long tradition of corrections and emendations. The text of Propertius has suffered in particular and the difficulties presented by his text are notorious.[2] Secondly, although the Latin of the Augustan age is very well documented and a comparatively large body of texts still exists, this was first of all a literary language based on a language that has not been spoken in many centuries, with the result that the exact meaning of certain words and concepts is hard to pin down. Evidence of this lies in the number of textual and critical commentaries that are still being published and the addenda and criticism on these commentaries in professional journals. The difficulties that face the interpreter are

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[2] The text of Camps (1965-7) was used as a guideline throughout, but alternative readings, especially from Heyworth (2007), have been adopted or at least supplied where relevant.

further compounded when the possible nuances suggested by the various figures of speech are included. The scope of the ancient literary world was vast, as any cursory glance at any text of the New Poets demonstrates; the mythology, history and tradition they could draw on was by the first century BCE already 800 years old and could, by no stretch of the imagination, be considered to have constituted a coherent system or neatly compartmentalised body of knowledge. Metaphor and allegory present difficult problems, but even greater difficulties are presented by intertext where an author enters into dialogue with his predecessors or contemporaries through references and allusions in the text and even more so when an author uses the conventions of literary forms or genres to communicate his message.

A thorough and detailed study of the text is therefore of paramount importance as a starting point, but to this should be added a sound knowledge of the culture, its texts, literary and otherwise, as well as some common sense. Additionally, numerous guiding caveats and alternative ways of approaching a text were constructed in the twentieth century. Today we accept as a matter of course the guarding against reading a text as a biography rather than as a literary text, while at the same time not ignoring the cultural and historical context of the text by recognising, for instance, the patriarchal nature of society, the social position of the author, etc. We are also aware of the importance of the narrative, its structure and the reaction or response of the audience. And lastly, armed with various new post-structuralist tools and approaches, ancient texts can be viewed from multiple angles, which facilitates the generation of fresh insights.

Historical Studies

Historical studies include works such as the groundbreaking *Roman Revolution* by R. Syme (1939), which differs from his illustrious predecessors in that, besides the narration and interpretation of the mainly political historical events, the work also deals with 'The National Program' (the title and subject of Chapter 29) as well as 'The Organisation of Opinion' (Chapter 30). To the scholar interested in the study of literature these chapters are even more important than those on the rise of Octavian or the struggle of the Senate against Anthony. Ever since its publication attention has never strayed far from the question regarding the nature of the multi-faceted revolution that occurred in Rome at the end of the Republic. This work owes some of its favourable reception, even outside the realm of classical studies, to the fact that it was written at the time when the spectre of fascism was haunting Europe and

Syme's modern reader could share some of the late Republic's fear of an autocracy (Giles (1940: 38-41), Millar (1981: 147-8) and Galinsky (1996: 3-4)). This coincidence, however, also reminds us how deeply rooted in and how hugely dependant on the social and political climate of its particular time the interpretation of literature or any text is.

Strictly historical studies tend to rely more on non-literary sources and in general strive to depict the history in an unbiased and objective fashion. For this reason more attention is paid to archaeological evidence, to letters, such as those of Cicero, that have survived and to ancient historical works. These, having been subjected to rigorous internal and external criticism, underpin the historian's arguments and serve as starting point for his conjectures. Historical writing of the first half of the twentieth century also shows an important weakness. Syme's *Roman Revolution,* for instance, shows to what extent the political climate of the time in which the interpretation is made, influences the particular interpretation. Since historical studies can never be completely objective anyway, more recent studies have turned to subjects less tangible and more difficult to study through material sources, such as the study of public opinion, of interpersonal relationships within an oligarchy etc.

Today such studies as, for instance, Gruen's *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic* (1974), continue to explore Augustan propaganda, the new emperor's political programmes, the nature of *patronus–cliens* relationships and the influence which the transition from an oligarchy to an autocracy had on the minds of the people in Rome. Just as an anthropologist can profitably compare the temples and monuments commissioned by Augustus and compare them to Mussolini's restoration of Rome in order to understand attempts to foster feelings of patriotism, so the literary critic can fruitfully interpret and understand a poet keeping his social connection to the principate and his role in the imperial court in mind and comparing it to an era that post-dates it.

The Anthropological Approach

Closely related to the historical approach is the anthropological approach. This approach differs from the historical in that it is chiefly interested in the social, as opposed to political, aspect of the past. It focuses on exactly that part of history which is the most interesting to literary critics, namely how people experience the historical events that surround them. This method is a comparatively recent addition to the arsenal of the classicist, which enables him

better to interpret various addresses to patrons, panegyrics and other programmatic poetry ranging from the opening lines of Vergil's *Eclogae* to the aetiologies in Propertius' final book.

Anthropological studies of various aspects of Augustan literature seldom comprise whole books, but tend to combine with history or criticism. So, for instance, R.A. Gurval's *Actium and Augustus: the Politics and Emotions of Civil War* (1995) deals mostly with poetry, but also with the impact the civil war and its aftermath had on the minds of the poets. Similarly Fox's *Roman historical myths: the regal period in Augustan literature* (1996) can also be said to deal chiefly with literature, but the historical myths, symbols and images a society creates and uses and how these myths function fall properly in the domain of the anthropologist. Lastly, Peter White's *Promised verse: poets in the society of Augustan Rome* (1993) cannot be omitted as the review of the function of poets before and after the battle of Actium and the relative social status of individual poets (conveniently summarised in an appendix) proves invaluable to any scholar interested in Augustan poetry.

A notable exception to the general dearth of distinctly anthropological studies of the Republic in book length is Galinsky's *Augustan Culture* (1996). Written in reaction to Syme, the book addresses the drawback of Syme's prosopographical method and attempts, with great success, to describe Augustan culture from a more holistic perspective.

These studies are of great value to a literary critic. Firstly, they supply background information to the culture from which the literature sprang, by elucidating key aspects of that culture, such as what the concept of *auctoritas* or the word *respublica* meant to Romans after 27 BCE or what the cult of Augustus actually was. Secondly, these studies also have a more direct value. Since a large part of the sources available to the historian or anthropologist interested in the Augustan age consists of literary texts, any research in the field must be accompanied by a rigorous study of the applicable texts. It is here, then, that the tools from other fields are combined with the instruments of the philologist to produce readings that are fresh and important.

Biographical Studies

Closer to the realm of the classicist is biographical study, which includes works such as Fraenkel's *Horace* (1957), Hubbard's *Propertius* (1974) and Sullivan's *Propertius: a critical introduction* (1976). They grew out of the way research on poetry was presented earlier in the twentieth century, namely in books that dealt with either the texts of a single poet, or with all the problems associated with the interpretation of a particular poet's texts. This method differs from the anthropological approach in that it has the poet and his text as main subject instead of the society or an aspect of the society within which the poet existed. The present study cannot but benefit from the influence of the biographical approach and in the most recent addition to the biographies of poets Francis Cairns' *Sextus Propertius: the Augustan elegist* (2006), the author's appropriation of various approaches has produced excellent results.

To this biographical approach the usual caveat should be added. The method that involved reading the life of the poet instead of his or her poetry is now buried under so much criticism, that it is little more than an interesting aside in the history of Latin literary criticism. Already in 1986 Jasper Griffin (1986: 48) could remark "[i]n enlightened quarters, again, the quest to identify Vergil's farm, armed with the first and ninth *Eclogae* and autopsy of the Mantuan region, raises only a weary smile." Hindsight, however, is a powerful prophylactic and today biographies are written in a much more responsible manner. In the study of poets, poetry and people of the late Republic, the paucity of evidential material forces the scholar, whether historian, anthropologist or literary critic, to approach the poetry with the realisation that the poems might contain historical revelations of that world. If the method of reading a poem as a biography is false, it does not follow that no historical data can be salvaged from the poem.

Thematic Studies

Lastly, the approach labelled thematic studies comprises the greatest body of literature today. In these studies problems related to a certain theme in Augustan poetry are tackled and the abundance of literature that can be classified under this approach can be explained by the number of topics that present problems. Studies on all kinds of problems have been conducted. In the new order under the princeps it would seem like a promising idea to research the poets' use of Roman historical myths and see how they have been reworked in the new political climate. Groundbreaking in this regard was Fox' *Roman historical myths* (1996). In the same vein studies on the retelling of the battle of Actium can be added – not too

long ago Gurval published *Augustus and Actium* (1995). Another promising theme would be the poetic descriptions of triumphal processions held by the new Caesar. Such studies are usually concerned with two different fields: on the one side historical and cultural studies give insight into the public opinion of the time about historical figures, on the other, tracing the development of a poet's ideas and opinions deepens our understanding of his work.

Studies on literary themes, motifs and *topoi* are also popular and useful. Copley's famous work on the *paraclausithyron* in *Exclusus Amator* (1956) not only gave a concise appraisal of the texts where the *topos* occurs, but also supplied tools to interpreters of other texts where the relationship of the lover and his mistress is mentioned, where the social position of married women is an issue or where the social protocol regarding marital fidelity and Roman tradition is investigated. More specific to Augustan poetry are studies such as T.D. Papanghelis' *Propertius: a Hellenistic poet on love and death* (1987), which, although its first concern is with Propertius' poetry, also gives insight into Roman poetry in general, the themes the poets explored and their views on interpersonal relationships and mortality.

Other studies take recurring concepts such as the concept of the *limen,* on which DeBrohun dedicated a chapter in her *Roman Propertius and the reinvention of Elegy* (2003) or the *vates* as in *The concept of* Vates *in Augustan Poetry* by Newman (1967). This study has done much to elucidate the use not only of the word *vates* and the role of the poet in the poetry of Vergil, Horace and Propertius, but it also explained much of the fascinating history of the word and by comparison, added to our knowledge of the relationship between the Augustan poets and their Greek and Roman predecessors. The study admirably demonstrates the advantages of the thematic study and how it can be used to compare different poets much more effectively. The development of concepts and themes can be traced through time, which in turn facilitates the interpretation of intertextual allusions as it generally gives a better insight into the world of ideas in which the author composed his work.

Such words or concepts are studied not only within the limited scope of one poet, but also in other poetry, contemporaneous as well as earlier. These studies are extremely useful for all scholars interested in ancient texts, because as poetry was widely read and regarded as the most important medium for literary output, the poetic usage of terms and concepts greatly influenced other authors. Such studies are also of value for the student of ancient history or art. The poetry produced in Rome at the end of the Republic was written by artists who were

generally held in high esteem; their texts were widely read and their opinions considered valuable. Because of this, their texts can be considered valuable reflections on the issues and opinions that dominated the conversations of the literate classes.

The Scope of the Present Study

Technically, the present study falls into the category of studies about certain recurring themes or concepts and takes as its theme the use of the image of the god Apollo. Apollo was an interesting figure in Augustan poetry: not only was he considered the patron deity of poetry and poets, but he was also associated with the *gens Iulia*, to which both Julius Caesar and Octavian belonged, which linked him to the new ruler of Rome. In this, the study touches on two different spheres of the human condition: the individual's personal life and dreams, which includes his love life, family and friends, as well as the individual's public life in the new and unknown world of an autocracy, with its personality cults, propaganda and censorship.

The Apollo in Augustan poetry displays two important faces in particular – a poetic face and a political face. On the surface, mention of him might be a simple literary expression, usually in an introduction in which the Muses are beseeched to lend inspiration. This prayer for inspiration is a stock *topos*, familiar from Homeric times and often used in all kinds of poetry. The substitution of Apollo for the Muses as source of inspiration is more recent and in this context not affiliated to a particular genre. Mention of this poetic Apollo may also be used to express allegiance to the Alexandrian school or to the precepts of Callimachus as well as to indicate an aversion to the epic mode of expression. The other face of the Augustan Apollo is the political one. Augustus' association of the Julian family with this god and the dedication of the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine after – if not because of – the battle at Actium, provided poets with another system of interrelated symbolism around the deity.[3]

The subject of the present study has the advantage of encompassing a large enough scope to be applicable to various poets, even outside the temporal limits of the Augustan age, as well as being useful to interpreters of architecture and painting of this period. The disadvantage, however, is that in such a vast field a study may easily become so general as to be of limited value to anyone interested in the particulars. In poetry, as in much else, the specific context is

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[3] Apollo's association with the *gens Iulia* is noted and explained in Nisbet and Hubbard (1970: 30 *ad* Hor. *C*.1.2.32), Clauss (1985: 205-6) and in greater detail in Gurval (1995: 111-3). As for the reasons why Octavian chose Apollo as his patron deity, see Galinsky (1996: 215-8).

paramount and a cursory glance at the most famous texts would hardly suffice. A more limited scope would be more useful, because even if its results can be applied to other fields only indirectly, they can be applied in detail with due consideration of particulars. The present study therefore will focus on one poet only – Propertius – without, however, ignoring his predecessors and contemporaries. Catullus, at the very beginnings of the 'New Poetry,' never saw the political face of Apollo in Rome. Both Vergil and Horace, born 70 and 65 BCE respectively, were old enough to have experienced the civil wars as adults and consequently yearned above all else for peace. Vergil's yearning for peace and his willingness to compromise some of his Republican ideals to enjoy it, is already evident in the first *Ecloga* (35 BCE[4]), where the little piece of land held by Tityrus, one of the farmers, is saved by intervention from a god-like *iuvenis* in Rome. Horace, too, apparently endorsed some aspects of the new regime quite readily with his moral poetry, especially in the *Ars Poetica* and scattered references throughout *Odes* 1-3. Unlike Vergil and Horace, Ovid on the other hand was too young to have witnessed the horrors of civil war firsthand. Born in the year when the second triumvirate was formed and only six at the time of Actium, his view on Roman politics cannot be gauged by the same yardstick as that of his predecessors – his obvious credentials and genius notwithstanding. This leaves what Galinsky (1996: 226 and 270) calls the middle generation: Propertius and Tibullus.

Unfortunately Tibullus left us little in terms of political poetry, his 1.7 and 2.5 being the only exceptions, but even these have little to say. What the reason for this was will probably never be known, but what is known is that he did not share the literary patronage of Maecenas with Vergil, Horace and Propertius. What the Tibullan texts lack, however, those of Propertius supply in abundance, but not without presenting some interesting and extremely difficult problems. Although he started out in his first book almost exclusively with the topic of his ostensibly personal love affair with a certain Cynthia, the presence of poetics, politics and Apollo are already present albeit veiled (see Chapter 1). In his second book Propertius' poetic voice seems to have grown in self-confidence and his love songs are interrupted by commentary on Augustan triumphs, temples and the work of other poets. It is only in the third book where Propertius finally fully assumes the *vatic* persona often associated with the Augustan poets. This is where he starts to engage fully in dialogue with Horace and Vergil, where he volunteers his own opinions on poetry and politics and, most importantly, where the

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[4] This date seems more likely than the older 42-39 BCE in the light of Clausen's arguments (1994: 234-5).

god Apollo appears to him in a dream. The most problematic poetry in Propertius is his fourth collection of elegies. One of the main questions that have dominated Propertian scholarship at the close of the twentieth century was that of the 'sincerity' of the poet in especially this fourth and last book. The poet who, according to his own admission, did not dare touch upon the grander themes of epic and limited himself to creating well wrought and not too lengthy elegies on love and his personal life, suddenly published a book containing several aetiologies in which he expresses some of his views on the history of Rome, gives commentary on Roman society and even praises the new Augustus.

Intertextuality and Genre

The solution to these Propertian problems, and indeed similar problems presented by the second half of Vergil's *Aeneid*, has been sought lately in the interplay between genre, intertext and, to a lesser extent, myth. Studies in intertext and genre are closely associated with studies in Augustan poetry and no problem in ancient poetry can be approached today without an exploration of the intertext[5] within the texts under scrutiny, nor for that matter, without a clearer idea of the theories regarding the Augustan use of reference and allusion. Neither the problems concerning generic appropriation through intertextual allusions nor the implications of assumptions inherent in a certain generic form, has escaped close attention. It is these questions that dominate dialogue at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Two important studies on the problems of intertextuality as they manifest in Roman poetry have seen the light recently. They are Hinds' *Allusion and Intertext. Dynamics of appropriation in Roman poetry* (1998) and Edmunds' *Intertextuality and the reading of Roman poetry* (2001). Throughout the present study due consideration will be given to the latest theories on the subject, but generally the disengaged approach suggested by Thomas (1999: 1) in *Reading Vergil and his texts* will be adopted. He prefers to approach intertextual connections, once they are established, as philological facts in so far as functions and purposes can be inferred from them. The advantage of this approach is that the investigation

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[5] The terms allusion, reference and intertext are not always used in the same way in different sources. In the present study, for the sake of clarity, intertext will be used to refer to the presence of another text within a text regardless of authorial intent, but with the acknowledgement that such intertextual phenomena are often dependant on interpretation. The word reference will refer to intertext where the source is overtly referred to i.e. with mention of the author, quotation from the source text or any other clue that suggests that the source text was uppermost in the author's mind. Allusion will refer to instances where the intertext is not so overt and, for instance, based on coincidence of metre or theme. For a more extensive discussion see Thomas (1999: 1-3). Such a differentiation is of course subjective, but for the majority of instances, its application presents little difficulty.

can proceed from empirical evidence, without too much anxiety regarding the intangible intent of the author.

The problem of genre is closely linked to the study of intertextuality. The first part of the problem is how important generic categorisation is when studying Latin texts. Newman (1997: 3 n.3) argues that genre is prior: "Since it is genre which tells us what markers to look for, and how to integrate them, genre is prior, as Horace argues (*A.P.* 86-7)". Of course if ancient poets used genre and generic assumptions to communicate, it would be ludicrous to suggest that generic classification of a piece should be ignored. However, things are not that simple and Thomas (1999: 247-8) raises an important objection: more often than not, an ancient text incorporates various genres. In some cases, the text will consist mainly of one genre and will include smaller sections where conventions from other genres are used for stylistic reasons. In other cases, the number of genres incorporated in the text is so high that no dominating generic affiliation can easily be discerned, and classification of the text into a particular genre becomes impossible. A case in point is Propertius 4.6, which will be discussed in Chapter 6. Newman (1997: 3 n.3) argues that even in cases where genres crossed, we still need to know what these genres were and what roots they have in contemporary usage. He also notes that this genre crossing does not destroy the "overall generic allegiance", which holds true for his examples – the epics of Vergil and Homer. It might be argued that genre, though important, is not primary and that generic labelling is generally not very useful. Thomas (1999: 247-8) makes an excellent case for seeing generic designations in a post-performative context as largely unhelpful, citing Rosenmeyer's little known article 'Ancient Literary Genres: A Mirage?'.[6]

The present study aligns itself more with the latter view. Genre and generic categories basically reflect groups of *topoi* that often occur together and poems are usually classified under the generic heading according to how closely the *topoi* in them match the typical list of *topoi* associated with the genre. This is not a difficult task in performative poetry, where the very fact that the poem will actually be performed in certain specific circumstances ensures that certain *topoi* cannot be absent. Post-performative poetry, as for instance that composed in Alexandria c. 300 BCE proves more difficult to classify. But, since the poets of that time still adopted traditional genres even if the composition would never be performed, such

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[6] "Ancient Literary Genres: A Mirage?" was first published in *Yearbook of General and Comparative Literature* 34: 74-84, but is now available in Laird (2006: 212-39).

classification is generally still possible. It is easy to see how classification problems are compounded in Augustan poetry, which relies to a greater extent on tradition. Although it is sometimes possible to classify a given poem according to a generic classification, often it is not. Some poems, especially programmatic Augustan pieces, display a large number of characteristics associated with different genres and not one specific genre stands out to indicate the text's main generic allegiance.

A different, but also useful view, even if it does not solve all the problems, is expressed by DeBrohun (2003: 26). She sees genres not as "static aesthetic objects or stable entities" but as "strategies or generative matrices," following Depew and Obbink (2000). This view allows DeBrohun to approach the genre 'elegy' as a manipulable space (2003: 24-5) in which she sees the ends of a 'bipolar system' in Propertius meet. The bipolar system she sees in particularly the fourth book has on the one end *amor* which is expressed through love elegy and on the other *Roma* which is expressed through aetiological elegy. Her views on Propertius are discussed in Chapter 6. The present study, which also sees a bipolar nature in the Augustan images of Apollo, will rely to some extent on her analysis.

The Political Climate

Any discussion of a poet or his poetry without consideration of his social circumstances is generally considered deficient – this is especially true of the Augustan poets. At least since the time of Marius and Sulla it was clear that the Roman Republic's system of government was ineffective. All the careful strategies for preventing too much power falling into the hands of too few counted for nothing, once an individual could muster enough military power to challenge the state. Through the course of the civil war during the middle decades of the last century BCE, the various factions gradually eliminated one another until the last remaining two met at Actium in 31 BCE. Even after Octavian's victory, the situation remained far from clear. Although Octavian was now in sole possession of the greatest army in the Mediterranean world, this power did not guarantee long-term mastery of Rome. Without at least conditional support from the old ruling class and cooperation from the senate, the new master of Rome would not be able to hold on to his power any longer than the victorious generals before him.

History eventually revealed Octavian to be a shrewd politician and an extremely clever manipulator. Having absolute military power as leverage, he started to restructure administration and introduce new legislation, which centralised as much power as possible in his own office, but he avoided displaying this power. Like a modern-day public relations officer, he promoted an image of himself as the benign saviour of Rome, who rescued her from a situation of hopeless civil war and put her on the road to peace, prosperity and a new Golden Age.

Members of the upper classes were, of course, not fooled, but this is not to say that they were completely unhappy with the new peace. Like the rest of the educated population, the Augustan poets probably felt ambivalent about the situation. On the one hand, they welcomed the end of the civil war, looked forward to a period of relative peace and were ready to resume where they left off in the 50s. On the other hand, the ingrained Roman abhorrence of monarchy and autocracy could not stomach the idea that power over the whole of Rome should be in the hands of one man. Throughout their poetry Vergil, Horace, Tibullus and Propertius make it quite clear that they are for peace, but this is not to say that they were completely for Augustan peace.

Augustan poets also faced another, more personal dilemma. Poets in Rome relied on the patronage of rich individuals and the *patronus-cliens* system, which was already part of Roman society, greatly facilitated the creation of such associations. The great patron of Augustan poets and close friend of the princeps was Maecenas, whose name has since become proverbial. Maecenas collected the best poets in his circle and afforded them the time and means to compose poetry. The poets' dilemma thus lay in this: unqualified or one-sided praise of Augustus and his new regime would seem naïve if not fraudulent to the reading public, while criticism, even qualified and informed criticism, might incur censure and subsequent lack of financial support.

The extreme view that the Augustan poets were veritable spokespersons for the Augustan regime has never been proven conclusively and the problem has received close attention. White in *Promised Verse* (1993) made a thorough study of the ancient evidence and rejects the view that Augustus had a policy that included literary management (1993: 123). Gurval in his study *Augustus and Actium* (1995: 133) subscribes to this more moderate view and comes to the conclusion that Augustus' relationship with the poets was "complex, varied and

unclear," and ventures the opinion that his attitude toward literature did not differ that much from the traditional attitude of the Roman aristocracy.

What the Present Study Aims to Achieve

The study of Apollo in Propertius' poetry seems promising, because consensus has not been reached on many points in the interpretation of Propertius. Because he is one of the most important poets of the Augustan age, a different approach to even one of the smaller subsections in the study of his poetry may prove useful in solving other problems. The present study would primarily benefit work done on three different aspects of Augustan studies. The first relates to textual studies, in which three aspects can be singled out: (1) Studies of the poetry of Propertius, especially pertaining to the development of his poetic voice. (2) Intertextual problems in Propertius' poetry, especially those regarding Vergil and to a lesser extent Horace, but also allusions to the poetry of Callimachus, all of whom used the image of Apollo extensively. (3) And lastly, by comparing their usage of Apollo in the programmatic poetry of Propertius and Vergil, more can be learned about their opinions regarding each other's poetry, the poetry of their Greek models and even their opinion regarding their political situation.

The second aspect is more anthropological in that it pertains to questions regarding the Roman people's response to their new political status as subjects of an autocracy. It is hoped that a better understanding of the figure of Apollo will elucidate some of the prickly problems regarding the 'sincerity' of these poets in their poetry that deals with contemporary political affairs, such as Octavian's triumphs, his social reform programmes, building projects and his victory at Actium.

Lastly, it is hoped that the present study would also benefit scholars in fields beyond literary studies: that the archaeologist studying the *Forum Romanum* might read Propertius, one of the important sources for the statuary of the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine, with greater insight and greater understanding of the deity's affiliation with artists and their autocratic patron: that the results of the present study will facilitate the study of Roman religion in Augustan times, personality cults and the influence that the state religion had on the lives of private individuals.

An Outline of the Scope of the Present Study

The present study limits itself to questions such as: what system of symbols can be read into references to the god Apollo? In other words: what is designated when the figure of Apollo is used by the poet? And how do references to the god fit into the bigger picture of a poet's system of symbols?

When considering all the texts from the designated period in which the name of Apollo, Phoebus or indeed any other eponym or reference occurs it is obvious that certain texts are of greater value that others. The relative value of a text for our study can be gauged from its temporal position in the development of the author and the principate. This means that in later poems an author, having seen more of history unfold, will presumably display greater insight into political affairs. More value can also be granted to introductory poems, poems at the close of books and other programmatic pieces in which the author declares personal details (presuming that authorial intent can be assumed in a given instance). Lastly, important texts are also found in apparently unrelated material. Chief among these are texts to which the author explicitly refers. A case in point is the Ninth *Epode* of Horace. In this poem little is made of Apollo, although the setting in a symposium after the battle at Actium and its obvious similarity to a setting at the close of Propertius 4.6, in which Apollo features strongly, makes the poem significant.

Chapters 1-3 constitute three preliminary discussions which explore the links between Apollo and the nature of the poetic persona. Chapter 1 looks primarily at the development of the relationship between the poet and his audience in Propertius' poetry and focuses chiefly on the addressees in the opening poems of each book. The development of Propertius as poet can be compared with the development of Vergil, because of one important similarity between the two poets. At the inception of their careers, both Vergil and Propertius unequivocally voiced their aversion to the so-called 'grander themes' of historical and political themes, a dislike of the 'lofty style' associated with epic as well as sympathy for the aesthetic model proposed by the Alexandrian poets. Yet the last works of both these poets took the history of Rome, including the recent civil war, as its theme.

Chapter 2 takes a closer look at programmatic statements that influenced Propertius. Extracts from Callimachus' *Aitia* (fr. 1.21-8) and *Hymn to Apollo* (2.105-13) as well as Vergil's

Ecloga 6 (ll. 3-5) and *Georgicon* 3 (1-48) will be discussed and the discussion will revert to Propertius' *recusatio* in 2.1. The next chapter discusses the concept of *vates* as it appears in Augustan and Propertian poetry. Since assumption of the vatic persona was often inextricably linked to the poet's poetic programme and the *vates* as prophet was linked to Apollo and his oracles, this chapter focuses on the usage of the word in specifically Vergil's *Eclogae* and *Georgica*, Horace's *Ars Poetica* and Propertius 2.10.

Chapters 4-6 discuss the role and function of Apollo as he appears in the poetry of Propertius. A chapter is devoted to the appearance of the god in crucial poems in each of the books 2-4. Chapter 4 discusses poems 2.31 and 2.34 (A and B).[7] The former describes the newly dedicated Temple of Apollo on the Palatine and the latter, among other things, discusses Augustan poets and their poetry in a long and important piece with advice on how to read and write poetry, the poetry of Vergil and the place of his own poetry among that of his contemporaries.

The subject of Chapter 5 is the programmatic unit of the first five poems of the third book. These poems, which might be called Propertius' 'Roman Elegies',[8] display numerous allusions to Horace (especially *C.*3.30), Vergil (the opening of the third *Georgicon*), and Callimachus (*Aitia* prologue); it seems clear that, at least on one level, Propertius is entering into dialogue with his illustrious contemporaries and predecessors. It is in these poems that Propertius' vatic persona develops fully and he feels himself sufficiently prepared and, more importantly, accomplished enough to attempt a book mostly on political themes. Comparisons between these texts and those where Horace assumes a similar vatic persona (*C.* 3.1-5) have of course been made,[9] but the striking difference between the poets' expression of their literary intentions has been somewhat neglected. Horace often avoided the image of Apollo as patron of the arts in his poetry, but Propertius had no such qualms. In fact, the great epiphany of Apollo to the poet, which occurs in Propertius' so called 'Roman Elegies' (3.1-5), is awarded the prime position in 3.3, the central piece.

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[7] Poem 2.34 is printed as one in the text of Camps (1967). His arguments may not be conclusive, but for the purposes of the arguments presented here, it does not matter.

[8] Propertius 3.1-5 was first called the 'Roman Elegies' by Nethercut (1971: 385) and the first argument in favour of seeing these five poems as a unit was Solmsen (1948: 105-9). See Chapter 5.

[9] See especially Solmsen (1948: 105-9) and Nethercut (1971: 385-407), but most commentaries take this important facet of the poetry into account.

The last chapter is devoted chiefly to poem 4.6, which celebrates the battle of Actium. This curious and extremely difficult poem has been in and around the spotlight for more than three decades and critics still seem to be unclear on many of the important points. The history of the scholarship is fascinating as opinions regarding this poem have swung full circle more than once. As was hinted earlier, the present study will not presume to supply all or any of the important answers, but will, by investigating an important theme of it, try to show new avenues to investigate. Apollo plays a leading role in the events described in this poem and not only the events during the battle itself, but also in the prayer that serves as an introduction and in the symposium the poets attend in the sacred grove afterwards. In this poem the dual nature of Apollo comes to the fore most distinctly: as patron of the arts he features in the opening prayer and concluding party, but as protective deity of the *gens Iulia* he participates in the battle, not only by firing arrows, but also by giving a long exhortative speech to the future emperor, explaining the importance of the battle, the role of his *gens* and of the city itself. It is in this poem, then, where an understanding of the role of the image of the deity in Augustan poetry can be most valuable.

CHAPTER 1:

The Singer and his Audience: The Opening Lines of Propertius' Four Books

This chapter forms part of three preliminary discussions which explore the links between Apollo and the nature of the poetic persona. It looks primarily at the development of the relationship between the poet and his audience in Propertius' poetry and focuses chiefly on the addressees in the opening poems of each book. The following two chapters will then focus on the link between Apollo and programmatic poetry and that between Apollo and the vatic persona.

There are two reasons why the discussion of the audience that Propertius addresses is important for the study of two of the faces of Apollo. In the first place, Apollo, as patron deity of poets, is almost always closely linked to programmatic Augustan poetry. While the history of this link and how it manifests in Propertian poetry is the subject of the next chapter, in this chapter the focus falls on the persona that the poet dons in order to present himself as an author with an important, even divinely inspired message. In Propertius' first book this is not primarily a political message dealing with the greatness of Rome: Propertius only introduces political themes and his own poetry as subject in his second book and there only intermittedly. A relatively complete picture of the poet's literary affiliations emerges only in the third book where explicit claims are made to artistic originality; and only in the fourth book are poems found devoted solely to the Roman state or historical events. This gradual progression is certainly due partly to the success of the first book, partly to his introduction into the poetic circle of Maecenas and definitely because of his growth in stature as a poet. Speaking about political subjects, such as the aetiologies in the fourth book, is not something a fledgling poet or even neophyte in the circle of Maecenas could attempt. Propertius develops into a poet that can speak about these things only gradually and the outline of this development can be traced through the programmatic poems opening each book.

The First Book

Unlike Catullus in his first poem or Horace in his *Odes* 1.1, Propertius does not start his book with a dedication to his patron or a formal statement on its content, but like Vergil in his *Eclogae*, he starts with a programmatic statement imbedded in the first poem.

The addressee of 1.1 is a certain Tullus,[1] who is named only at the ninth line. As neophyte poet, it seems, Propertius could not yet address a group of people as if he is reciting at a symposium, much less the reading public at large. His poetic sphere at the time of writing the *Monobiblos*[2] encompassed only the emotions of the poetic persona he dons for the purpose and the relationship of that persona with Cynthia. Throughout the *Monobiblos* the speaker addresses only one person at a time and in general the whole book is presented as a poetic utterance by a humble poet, who lays bare his love life to the reader. The collection contains poems of events in the poet's affair with Cynthia: sometimes he complains or boasts to a friend about them and sometimes he speaks directly to his mistress, but rarely does the poet venture beyond the sphere of this relationship with Cynthia.

Propertius' *Monobiblos* starts with a very emphatic mention of Cynthia and the poet professes that she is the first and only source of his poetry.[3] (1.1.1-2):

> Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis,
> contactum nullis ante cupidinibus.

[Cynthia was the first. She captured me with her eyes, me, a fool who had never before been touched by desires.][4]

The usual characters of the Latin love poem are present: the girl, with whom the poet is completely infatuated, has been a stock *topos* since Catullus, and the poet, cast as a wretched slave stricken by his love and completely in his girl's power was exploited not only by

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[1] This Tullus is probably a nephew of L. Volcacius Tullus, cos. 30-29 BCE (Richardson 1977: 147). More extensive discussions can be found in Butler and Barber (1933: 162), Hubbard (1974: 24-5) and Newman (1997: 190-1). He is also addressed in poems 6, 14 and 22 of Propertius' first book and in Book 3, poem 22 at lines 2, 6 and 39.

[2] The title *Monobiblos* comes from Martial (14.189), see Manuwald (2006: 222 and note 21 on the same page). In Propertius 2.24.1-2 'Cynthia' seems to refer to the author's first book as a collection (Manuwald 2006: 221).

[3] In the third book (3.24.6) the poet tells us that Cynthia was not all that pretty and that the praises he sung were the product of a madness that seized him. This later revelation, however, gives no reason to doubt the 'sincerity' of the poet at this point.

[4] All translations are the author's own, unless otherwise indicated.

Catullus but also by Gallus and Tibullus.[5] That Propertius would begin his first publication of love poetry very much according to the conventions of the time is hardly surprising. The standard form of love elegy, which the introduction of the book promises, is exactly what the book contains. As a new and as yet unknown author, Propertius follows the contemporary conventions of love poetry by introducing the two main characters of his poetic world: the girl, Cynthia, as the object of his love and the lover-poet inexperienced in love – the poetic persona which the poet establishes for himself here at the outset. Only after he has established these conventions and has placed himself within a poetic tradition, can he exploit these *topoi* and generic conventions.[6]

Of the seven words in the first line, five refer to Cynthia. In *prima* we learn that she was the first girl with whom the poet became infatuated and we can deduce that she is primary in his poetry. In the same line we also learn about her relationship with the poet: she has captured him with her glances. This may mean, on the one hand, merely that the poor poet was so infatuated the moment he laid his eyes on her that he instantly became a captive and started to serve as a slave to this love he had for her. On the other hand, the same lines also hide another meaning. *Miserum,* the adjective qualifying *me* in the first line, casts the poet as a victim, while the further qualification in the second line seems to shift the blame squarely onto Cynthia. By saying that he, the poor poet, has never before been touched by desires, he suggests that he was inexperienced and naïve in love. This in turn implies that Cynthia took advantage of his vulnerability and seduced him, which makes her the culprit. *Miserum me* are the only words to describe the poet directly in the first line and they cast the poet-speaker in the familiar and stock role of the wretched lover. This character is common in Augustan poetry and was exploited by Catullus who, as far as we know, was the first to cast his poetic persona in this role, when writing about his affair with Lesbia. Already in the first line Propertius introduces the main motif of the whole of the book and by using the traditional characters of Roman love poetry, the author assures us that this is what we can expect.

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[5] The major themes and motifs in Propertius' love poetry have been set out succinctly by Maltby (2006: 147-81).
[6] An example of a simple but effective exploitation of generic convention can be seen in the opening line of Ovid's *Amores* (1.1.1) *arma gravi numero violentaque bella parabam* [Heavy artillery and violent war I was preparing …] in which the first word is strongly reminiscent of the opening word of the *Aeneid* and the hexameter promises an epic poem. But the line that follows – *edere, materia conveniente modis* [to begin, in a measure to fit the material] – being a pentameter, delivers the punch-line. This 'false start' is discussed by Kennedy (1993: 58-63).

The very first word of the first line – *Cynthia* – conjures up a number of associations and hides deeper levels of understanding. Mt. Cynthius on Delos was the birthplace of Artemis and Apollo, hence Apollo's epithet Cynthius – used by both Callimachus and Vergil (see Chapter 2) – and this epithet of Apollo would naturally lead to his sister being known as Cynthia. This veiled allusion to Apollo immediately evokes associations with the god of poetry and leader of the Muses, while allusion to Artemis evokes a complex set of characteristics normally attributed to the goddess and here applied, by implication, to the poet's mistress. Artemis was first and foremost the goddess associated with the hunt, wild nature, and the moon as well as childbirth; she was also a fiercely chaste goddess. On this level the name Cynthia fits Propertius' mistress in that she is as inaccessible and unapproachable as the chaste goddess.

Probably through her association with the moon, Artemis was also identified with Hecate, the witch goddess[7] and in this Ahl (1974: 81-6) sees in the poet's Cynthia a composite of various associations: "beauty, death, chastity, magic, evil, coldness – and the very beginning of life."[8] Propertius is not insensitive to these undertones. The second line of the poem, *contactum nullis ante cupidinibus* [who had never before been touched by desires], though referring to the poet-lover, suggests the aspects of desirability and inaccessibility indicated by Ahl. In *cupidinibus* one senses the lust after the desirable and unattainable, which is embodied in Artemis' beauty and chastity. To this one can add that the meaning of the word *cupido* stretches further than can be conveyed merely by "desire." The word is often used negatively and applied to carnal desire and lust (Hor. *C.* 2.5.10-4[9]), greed (Lucr. *DRN* 3.59-60[10] and

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[7] Propertius calls Diana/Artemis Trivia in 2.32.9-10. On this see especially Camps (1967: 209) on Propertius 2.32, where he refers to Ovid's *Fasti* 3.263 for the ritual procession to Diana's shrine at Aricia – a prominent city in the Early Republic. The famous temple of Diana on Lake Nemi and its peculiar cult was the starting place for Frazer in his mammoth work, *The Golden Bough*. Newman (1997: 533) gives a useful list of the name Cynthia being applied to Diana/Artemis in extant Roman literature.

[8] Ahl refers throughout to the goddess as Diana, by which he means the fully Hellenised Diana, which is equivalent to Artemis.

[9] *...tolle cupidinem / immitis uvae: iam tibi lividos / distinguet autumnus racemes / purpureo varius colore; / iam te sequetur; / currit enim ferox / aetas* (text, including the punctuation, taken from Quinn (1985: 40)). [… lift the desire for unripe grapes, variegated Autumn shall soon distinguish (them) darkened for you, clusters with purple colour. Soon she will seek you out, since cruel time flies…] The poet is addressing an unnamed man who, it would seem, has married a much younger girl. She is compared first to a heifer that is still to be tamed and then to unripe grapes. The poet argues that, given time, the young bride will become a woman and only patience on the part of the husband is required. The metaphor is decoded in lines 15-6: *iam proterva / fronte petet Lalage maritum*, [soon Lalage herself will boldly, with her brow, seek you as husband].

[10] *denique avarities et honorum caeca cupido / quae miseros homines cogunt transcendere finis / iuris* [Moreover, avarice and the blind craving for office, which compels wretched people to transcend the boundaries of the law …] (text from Bailey 1966a: 304).

1077[11]) and is even avarice personified (Hor. *C.* 2.16.15-6 as *cupido sordidus*[12]). By saying that he has never before been touched, the line implies that it is only after Cynthia touched him that he first felt the need to become a poet. In this aspect Cynthia assumes a function such as that of Artemis/Lucina in assisting with birth. The verb *contingo* at the beginning of the line links Cynthia/Artemis with her incarnation as moon goddess and her associations with Hecate. *Contingere* is more than touch, it also has overtones of the meanings 'afflict' or 'contaminate.'[13] This fits the poet's argument that he has been so stricken by his love that he cannot function normally and suggests that Cynthia is exerting some unnatural or magical influence over him. The theme of magic is again picked up in a prayer to the witches and their chthonian deities at line 19.[14]

The Second Book

In the opening of his second book Propertius assumes a new persona and immediately addresses a wider audience (2.1.1-2):

quaeritis, unde mihi totiens scribantur amores,

unde meus veniat mollis in ore liber.

[You ask from where come the love poems, so often described by me, from where my book, that falls so softly on the tongue.]

The first word, as was the case with *Cynthia* in 1.1.1, is strongly emphasised, this time by a diaeresis pause and not merely a diaeresis end. In the very first word the poet makes it clear that his reasons for writing now differ from those of his first book. Here he is writing in order to answer a question asked by his audience. The plural *quaeritis* acknowledges a larger audience in contrast to the opening of the first book. Moreover, the subject of *quaeritis* is never made clear and this both elevates the poem to the level of a public discussion and draws the readers in by elevating them to the level of critic (Wiggers 1977: 334-5). The opening suggests a sympotic framework and it is tempting to think that Propertius, the real life author

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[11] *quae mala nos subigit vitai tanta cupido?* [And what evil craving for life constrains us?] (text from Bailey 1966a: 356).

[12] *vivitur parvo bene, cui … / nec levis somnos timor aut cupido / sordidus aufert.* Quinn (1985: 51) [He lives well on a little, for whom … neither fear nor sordid greed for material possessions carries off soft sleep.]

[13] *Contingo* in the sense of 'contaminate' occurs in Lucretius (*DRN* 2.660) and in the sense of 'afflict' in Vergil, conspicuously in the final line of the third *Georgicon* (3.566).

[14] *at vos, deductae quibus est fallacia lunae / et labor in magicis sacra piare focis* [But you, whose trick it is to lead the moon down and whose task it is to make sacrifices on magical altars.] For an insightful discussion of these lines see especially Ahl (1974: 90-2).

of this poem, has by this time entered the literary circle of Maecenas, whom he addresses in line 17 and that, as a new member of the circle, he felt that he had to expound upon the nature of his inspiration.[15] This speculation is supported by the nature of some of the other poems in the second book, notably 2.10 which, like 2.1, is an excuse for not writing on epic themes, as well as 2.34 where Propertius has more to say on the poetry of his contemporaries. The exact circumstances that prompted the composition of the poem will probably never be known, but it is clear that in the opening lines of the second book the poet assumes a different persona from the *amator miser* in the *Monobiblos*.

Comparing the respective opening lines, one is struck by metrical similarities:[16]

> Cynthia prima suis ¦ miserum me cepit ocellis, (1.1.1)
> quaeritis, unde mihi ¦ totiens scribantur amores, (2.1.1)

The opening hexameters of both poems start with three consecutive dactyls, the first foot is filled by a trisyllable and the third divided by a strong caesura, which in turn is followed by a spondaic fourth foot. Colaizzi (1993: 130 n.7), quoting Platnauer (1951: 36), notes that this pattern (DDDS) constitutes 4.7% of Propertian hexameters and that this percentage in itself is not disproportionately low (the 16 possible arrangements of dactyls and spondees in the first four feet, will each occur on average 6.25% of the time). The arrangement of words around the strong caesura is noteworthy. In 1.1.1 the caesura emphasises the *suis* while relegating the *miserum me* to the background. The softer *m*-alliteration contrasted within the harder *c*-sounds which dominate the line further underlines the difference in importance between the poet and his mistress. The same rhythm is exploited quite differently in 2.1.1. In this poem the focus falls on the poet and in the first line he has placed the *mihi* that refers to himself before the strong caesura. In the second line the *unde* that preceded the *mihi* in line 1 is repeated and immediately precedes *meus* thus emphasising both words. The opening line of a book is of enormous importance and usually sticks in the mind of the reader (*arma virumque cano …* is a case in point) and repeating the metrical rhythm of 1.1.1 in 2.1.1 is a sure way of inviting comparison.

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[15] This is not, however, to say that the poem was actually performed or intended to be performed.
[16] This comparison is indebted to the discussion of Colaizzi (1993: 126-33). His comparison is more thorough in the sense that the whole poem 1.1 is compared with the whole poem 2.1. However, he sees the persona in 2.1 as being different from that of 1.1, which is unnecessary and implies that the *amores* in 2.1.1 refers to something other than the poet's first book.

It is not difficult to see that the *amator* persona Propertius assumed in the first book does not suit the themes he promises to handle in the second. While it is quite acceptable for the *amator* to be completely immersed in his own world and his relationship with his mistress, this is not acceptable when writing about poetry. Writing about one's place in the poetic tradition or excusing oneself from writing certain other kinds of poetry necessitates a persona that has the ability to seem more objective, more learned and interested in a wider spectrum of life. As Colaizzi (1993: 127) succinctly puts it "[w]here Book 1 had depicted Propertius obsessively and almost exclusively as *amans*, Book 2 begins to examine Propertius *scribens*." What exactly constitutes this new persona is, however, not spelled out. In the first book the *miser ego* constitutes a stock *topos* and hence makes it easy to gauge the nature and subject matter of his poetry. The character of the speaker in the opening of the second book is harder to pin down, but two observations can be made. Firstly, the voice of Propertius the poet is stronger than it was in the first book. While it was still possible to imagine the speaker of the first book as the usual *amator miser* with no relevance to the actual author, it is harder to listen to the speaker in the opening poem of the second book without feeling a real person behind the voice. Secondly, the persona is now ready to talk about poetry. Of the two functions of poetry Horace mentions in the *Ars Poetica* (ll. 334-5), namely to entertain and to teach, the *Monobiblos* focuses on the former, while at the opening of the second book, the poet promises to instruct his audience at least insofar as it concerns his own poetry. When the poet writes (2.1.3-4): *non haec Calliope, non haec mihi cantat Apollo, ingenium nobis ipsa puella facit* [Neither Calliope nor Apollo sings these things to me – my girl, herself, makes our genius] he is asserting his continued intention to compose amatory poetry as in the first book, but, in doing so, he is more aware of the process of writing love poetry and is in fact writing about his own poetry.

The development of the poetic persona between the first and second books seems very natural. The characters and themes of the *Monobiblos* were well-known and do not vary greatly from their archetypes – as was to be expected from a poetic debut. The *Monobiblos* seems to have enjoyed a favourable reception and it seems reasonable that the author would, in his second book, expand his repertoire of themes. This fits with the second book as we have it, which contains a mixture of amatory poetry along the lines of the first book as well as programmatic pieces discussing poetic themes and other poets.

The Third Book

Propertius' third book opens with a solemn and impressive prayer. 3.1-2:

Callimachi Manes et Coi sacra Philitae,[17]

in vestrum, quaeso, me sinite ire nemus.

[Callimachus' spirit and holy rites of Coan Philitas, I pray let me enter into your grove.[18]*]*

The slow pace of the opening line with three consecutive spondees after the introductory dactyl and two spondees opening the second line is in stark contrast to the opening lines dominated by dactyls of the first two books and indicates that the poet is attempting something quite different from his earlier books. Like the first two books, this poem opens with a polysyllabic word (*Cynthia* in 1.1.1 and *quaeritis* in 2.1.1) and it also starts with a dactyl and displays a strong caesura (which may even be interpreted as a sense pause) in the third foot, but here the slow pace created by the spondees signify reverence and awe. Nor is the pace picked up in the second line, which displays two spondees in the first penthemimer as well as a caesura pause in the second foot. With the solemn plurals *manes* and *sacra* and the decorous pace, the first lines make it clear that the poet is here involved in or even leading a religious ritual and that the persona assumed by him again differs from those in the preceding books.[19]

The opening poem of the second book implies that it is to be read at a symposium or gathering of friends and fellow poets and in such a setting, in order to discuss poetry and poetics, it becomes necessary for the poet to incorporate into his persona the characteristics of someone who can speak with authority. Now, cast as the leader in a religious ritual at the opening of the third book, the poet's persona has evidently grown in stature. Just as he felt that he could speak with more authority on poetry in his second book, having successfully published his first, he now believes that he can play the role of poet-priest and incorporates in his persona certain vatic aspects.

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[17] The spelling Philitas will be preferred to that of Philetas from the Oxford text, if only to avoid confusion with the Philetas, who appears as an old man in Theocritus' *Idyll* 7. cf. Bowie (1985: 67-91) and Heyworth (2007: 281).

[18] The exact meaning of *sacra* is of course a problem. Numerous and various interpretations have been suggested: Luck (1957: 175-9), Baker (1968: 35-9), Ross (1975: 113-4, 136-7 and 149), Sullivan (1976: 12), Newman (1997: 230) and Heyworth (2007: 281).

[19] Though a lot of work has been published on Propertius 3.1 (see Chapter 5 n.1 below) most commentators are, understandably, more interested in the poet's programmatic statements and start their discussions at line 7 of the poem.

The opening lines of Book 3 promise even more elevated themes than did the *recusatio* that opened the second book. The audience addressed in the first two lines constitutes the most striking difference between this and the author's preceding work. Instead of a single addressee or a group of fellow poets, the poet turns to the very *manes* of his models. While this poem, too, might be construed as sympotic, in the sense that it could be read at a gathering of poets, it differs markedly from the conversational opening of 2.1. It also differs significantly from that poem in that here reference to the speaker is relegated to the second line, as in the opening lines of the first book. In 2.1.1 *mihi* and *meus* appear at prominent places in lines 1-2, while the *me* in 3.1 only occurs in the second half of the second line. In this the opening of 3.1 more closely resembles the opening of 1.1 – where Cynthia took centre stage – and tries to establish the same kind of hierarchy of importance between the subjects in the poem. As it was necessary to show in the first line of the first book that Cynthia will be the main focus, it is necessary here, in the first line of the third book, to show that the poet's models and his literary affiliations will constitute the main subjects of the book.

It is important to note that despite promises made in opening lines, the poems in a given volume are not exclusively and monotonously all cast in the same mould. Although primacy was afforded Cynthia in the opening lines of Book 1, centring most of the action around his relationship with her, these lines serve to set the volume within a general framework. Likewise, the suggestion of dialogue opening the second book does not promise a whole book filled with such conversations, but serves as a marker to the audience that in this volume such themes will be discussed at various places. The same programmatic strategy is followed in the third book. By mentioning Callimachus and Philitas at the beginning of the book, the poet warns his audience to be on the lookout for various appropriations from the Alexandrian poets. These include intertextual references and allusions, reworkings of the famous literary creed of Callimachus and his programmatic statements regarding epic poetry.

A comparison between the opening poem of the third book and those of the first and second will only take one so far. While poem 3.1 is, like its counter parts 1.1 and 2.1, a programmatic opening poem designed for a book, it is also part of a smaller, well-defined subsection that encompasses the first five poems of the volume as shown by Nethercut (1971: 385-7). These five poems, which constitute a lengthy exposition by the poet regarding his poetic agenda, are the subject of a different discussion and will be treated in Chapter 5. Here only a few remarks

regarding the persona itself and the anticipation created by the introduction of such a persona will be treated.

The opening lines of the third book set the tone for the entire book. An opening prayer and the mention of Greek models advertise a collection partly or predominantly concerned with themes such as the origin of his poetic inspiration, the nature of his Greek models and his place in the literary tradition. This is borne out in the poems that follow. Dialogues with his predecessors in the form of intertext recur throughout the first five poems in the book. For instance, the imagery of the first elegy recalls the opening of Vergil's third *Georgicon* (Wimmel 1960: 214-9); the second relies heavily on Horace's *Odes* (2.18 and 3.30[20]); the third again has echoes of the opening of Vergil's third *Georgicon*, but also of Callimachus and Ennius (Wimmel 1960: 220 and Butrica 1983: 464-8); the fourth intersects with the *Aeneid incipit*, no less (Cairns 2003: 309-11) and *Aeneid* 8.714-28 (Williams 1968: 433-4); the fifth elegy most obviously with *Georgicon* 2.475-82 (Camps 1966: 72) and importantly with Lucretius *De Rerum Natura* 4.1-17 (Conte 2000: 308-9).

By opening with a prayer, Propertius' poetic persona has moved away from the poet-*amator* persona of the first and second books and is recast as a *vates* – a poet, a prophet and a priest. This is hinted at in the polite request in the second line *quaeso, me sinite ire* and made explicit in the *sacerdos* in the following line (Prop. 3.1.3-4):

> primus ego ingredior puro de fonte sacerdos
>
> Itala per Graios orgia ferre choros.

[I am the first priest to start bringing from springs of pure water the Italian mysteries of love through Greek rhythms.]

The *vates*-concept and what it entails, like the word itself, has a very interesting history and when it found its way into Augustan poetry, it became a key concept and an important persona in which a poet could express opinions about his art.[21] The subject of the vatic persona is discussed at length in Chapter 3 as Apollo is inextricably linked to the concept of *vates* in Augustan poetry.

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[20] Nisbet (1971: 57-9) as well as Hubbard (1974: 75-86) and Miller (1983: 289-99). A review of the older literature on the literary relationship between Horace and Propertius is given in Nethercut (1971: 386 n.3).

[21] Groundbreaking lexical work on the occurrence of the word in classical poetry has been done by Dahlmann (1948: 337-53) and Bickel (1951: 257-314) and the interpretation of the use of the term was explained by Newman (1967).

Since the dawn of Greco-Roman literature, or at least since the opening lines of Homer's *Iliad*, a special place in society has been afforded to poets. They were thought to be imbued with a gift of which the ultimate source lay in the sphere of the divine. They had a special relationship with the Muses and the gods, who would whisper dictation in their ears or reveal the future. Being vessels of such divine knowledge they functioned as repositories for cultural wisdom and formed a caste somewhat removed from society. As will become clear in the next chapter, the poet often claimed ultimate authority on philosophical matters, by virtue of his divine connections and alleged supernatural wisdom. Thanks, partly to these attributes that the poets claimed for themselves and partly to the social structure of a society, in which many still received knowledge about beliefs and traditions through oral transmission, the poets could justifiably claim to fulfil important social functions such as teaching the youth and advising the leaders, cf. Horace *Odes* 3.1.1-4[22] and his *Ars Poetica* 391-401 quoted in Chapter 3. By the time Propertius wrote his third book much had changed from Archaic Greece, but Roman authors, mainly under the influence of Vergil, had revived the old word *vates* to denote the poet and to emphasise specifically those aspects of the poet, which include divine inspiration, prophetic clairvoyance, authoritorial teaching and the prerogative to advise the political leaders.[23]

For the purposes of this chapter, Propertius' assumption of the vatic persona is important insofar as he is claiming greater authority for what he has to say. It follows that the audience he addresses now encompasses more than the audience attending the gathering hinted at in the opening of Book 2. As leader in a religious rite in a sacred grove, the persona in the poem is in the position where he can interpret the will of the gods or *manes* of his predecessors and communicate this to the rest of the world. Granted, the subject of the divine message still pertains specifically to poetry, but the importance of its content is heightened as a divine source is cited as its origin.

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[22] *odi profanum volgus et arceo. / favete linguis: carmina non prius / audita Musarum sacerdos / virginibus puerisque canto.* [I abhor the vulgar crowd and avoid them. Silence please: I, priest of the Muses, sing a song not heard before to girls and young men.]

[23] An excellent and still current overview of Greek ideas about the role of the poet can be found in Russell (1981: 84-98).

The Fourth Book

In his last book Propertius reaches the ultimate level in terms of the size of the audience he addresses. In 4.1.1-4 he says:

hoc, quodcumque vides, hospes, qua maxima Roma est,

ante Phrygem Aenean collis et herba fuit;

atque ubi Navali stant sacra Palatia Phoebo,

Evandri profugae concubuere boves.

[Whatever you see here, foreigner, which is mighty Rome, was hill and grass before Phrygian Aeneas; and where the Palatine shrines stand for Apollo Navalis, Evander's exiled cattle lay down.]

This is a familiar *topos* in Augustan poetry. Propertius also used it elsewhere in the fourth book (4.2.1-10, 4.4.1-14 and 4.9), Tibullus had a lengthy treatment in his elegy 2.5 (ll. 23-38 and 55-60) and it was continued by Ovid, most notably in the *Fasti* (1.243ff., 2.279ff., 2.391ff. and 3.179ff., cf. Hutchinson (2006: 62-8 *passim*)). The most famous treatment of this *topos* is found in the eighth book of the *Aeneid* (ll. 314-365), where Evander treats Aeneas to a tour of the site of future Rome. It is this text to which Propertius is apparently most indebted, at this point.

It is clear from the very first lines that Propertius is addressing an even wider audience than he did in the third book. By addressing the reader as *hospes* he includes not only Romans, but also strangers and guests to the city. Since he is addressing a foreigner or at least someone not familiar with the city; the persona he adopts cannot limit the subject of his poetry to his personal love-life, his poetic programme or position in the poetic tradition, but should also include a broader and more cosmopolitan scope, such as the founding of the city or the myths of the origin of institutions and buildings. Because he treats new subjects, the persona is also forced to stand in a different relationship to his subject matter. The origins of the city or the mythic history of Rome cannot, like love poetry, be effectively communicated subjectively. The persona that speaks about these things should be more detached, more objective and stand further away from the subject, so to speak, in order to see and relate the bigger picture.

The word *hospes* is pivotal to these opening lines, but the three words preceding it *hoc, quodcumque vides,* should first be treated following the interesting and important suggestion of DeBrohun (2003: 35-8). She suggests a slow reading word by word, of the first three words

with due consideration of what a Roman, with knowledge of Propertius' earlier works, would have expected – the reader would very naturally assume that the words refer to the book he is holding. The following word, however, would come as a mild surprise (DeBrohun 2003: 36-7). Framed on both sides with strong caesura pauses, *hospes* is singled out as a key word, but before one gets to the final two feet, the implications are still unclear. An initial reaction might be to recognise the text as part of a kind of epigram such as one would find on a tomb (Hutchinson 2006: 62). On a certain level this is not far off the mark, since a great part of the fourth book is epigrammatic in a sense, although the subject is the city of Rome and not a person. The last two feet put matters in clearer perspective. The addressee is in fact a visitor foreign to Rome and what he sees is the city of Rome. The epigrammatic *hoc, quodcumque* which he sees is not a monument in a necropolis, but the city of Rome, which is a monument of the Roman people.

Moreover, the word *hospes* is loaded. In this context the meaning of 'stranger' or 'visitor' suggests itself, but Vergil also used the word *hospes* to describe Aeneas when Evander took the Trojan leader on a tour of the site of future Rome in Book 8.314-66. This allusion seems significant as Propertius specifically names Evander in the fourth line.[24] The context of the *topos* in the *Aeneid* supplies the clue to how this passage should be read and the numerous echoes of Vergil found in the Propertian version comes from the end of Evander's tour at the point where he and Aeneas enter his humble house (*A.*8.359-65):

> talibus inter se dictis ad tecta subibant
>
> pauperis Evandri passimque armenta videbant
>
> Romanoque foro et lautis mugire Carinis.
>
> ut ventum ad sedes: "haec," inquit, "limina victor
>
> Alcides subiit, haec illum regia cepit.
>
> aude, hospes, contemnere opes et te quoque dignum
>
> finge deo rebusque veni non asper egenis."

[Talking to each other in this way, they approached Evander's poor house; they saw lowing cattle all around, where the Roman forum and the luxurious Carinae are today. When they arrived at the dwelling, he [Evander] said: "This threshold the victor Hercules stooped to

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[24] The eighth book of the *Aeneid* seems to be a favourite of Propertius. The battle of Actium is referred to in 2.34 and constitutes the only reference to the *Aeneid* in what is a catalogue of Vergil's poetry. The description of Aeneas' shield from the same book is also the model upon which the description of the battle of Actium is fashioned in Propertius 4.6.

enter, this royal abode received him. Have the courage then, my guest, to scoff at riches, imagine yourself worthy of the god and come uncritical to our humble possessions."]

The most striking similarity is of course the word *hospes* metrically emphasised here in Vergil as in Propertius. Evander and his cattle are also present here and in Propertius' poem, as is Aeneas to whom these words are addressed. The verbal echoes invite closer comparison and indeed the key to the Propertian text lies in this comparison. Three points of intersection can be isolated: the scene of Rome described by both poets, the identity of the *hospes* and the commentator on the scenery in each passage.

In terms of how the scene is presented, the two passages differ: in Propertius the *hospes* is asked to imagine a rural landscape with Evander's cattle while looking at the grandeur of the capitol; in Vergil, Evander and Aeneas are looking at a rural landscape before the founding of Rome and the voice of the author supplies details regarding the later development of the site. Both texts, however, convey the same sentiment: Propertius, like Vergil, is contrasting pre-Aenean Rome with their contemporary city in order to show how great the city is. Both poets also stress the fact that the humble beginnings of the city are nothing to be ashamed of. Vergil expresses it in the form of a challenge *aude, hospes, contemnere opes* and gives the *exemplum* of Hercules, while Propertius follows his opening lines with these (ll. 5-8):

> fictilibus crevere deis haec aurea templa,
>> nec fuit opprobrio facta sine arte casa;
> Tarpeiusque pater nuda de rupe tonabat,
>> et Tiberis nostris advena bubus erat.

[These golden temples grew from earthen figures of deities, and a hut fashioned without skill was not to be scoffed at; Pater Tarpeius thundered from the bare cliffs and Tiber was foreign to our cattle.]

Vergil imposes the image of future Rome onto the rural landscape; Propertius does exactly the opposite by recalling the rural origins of the city. The point lies in the intrusion of foreign elements into both his and Vergil's scenes. In Vergil it is the *hospes*, Hercules, who is not usually associated with rural life that intrudes. Nevertheless, Evander notes, such a hero does not scorn being a guest in such a simple dwelling. Aeneas and the Trojans, too, are intruders in Evander's world, but intruders who are destined to merge with the indigenous peoples and lead Rome to greatness. In Propertius' version the foreignness of Aeneas is emphasised in

Aenean Phrygem and the audience is invited to compare the *hospes* addressed in the Propertius poem with the *hospes* Aeneas, addressed in the *Aeneid.*

This brings us to the second intersection between the two treatments – the nature of the *hospes* addressed. When the poem was written in about 16 BCE, fifteen years after Actium, Rome was growing steadily thanks to an influx of people from various parts of Italy and colonies further away. It would not have been difficult for any member of the audience to picture such a *hospes*, foreign to the city, though part of the Roman world. Propertius' placement of this foreigner on more or less the same level as Vergil's Aeneas suggests some important social commentary. Is Propertius suggesting that these foreigners would, like Aeneas, play an important role in the future of Rome? Is he foreseeing a new merging of peoples such as was related in the *Aeneid*? Judging by the epithet *Phrygem* applied to Aeneas, the answer seems to be yes. Vergil used this word of Aeneas in 12.75 *Phrygio … tyranno* and in 12.99 *semivir Phrygis* and it seems that Propertius, by retaining the negative overtones of primitiveness that Vergil attached to the word, keeps the link between his poem and the Vergilian description firm and in doing so imports Vergil's message into his own poem: the newcomers to Rome, although they are not from the original stock, are welcome and they will, like the Phrygian Aeneas, prove valuable to the city.

The last point of intersection between the two passages is the nature of the speaker. In Vergil, it is Evander who guides Aeneas and it is the voice of the poet that supplies the remarks about future Rome. In the Propertian version, the poet is both the speaker and the guide. This intersection is directly important for our discussion of the persona of Propertius. Just as he placed the *hospes* in 4.1 on the same level as Aeneas by alluding so extensively to the *Aeneid* he, like Vergil, styles himself as a guide to the city. As with the first lines of his other books, Propertius establishes the subject matter of the book as a whole in the first couplet. The intertextual references to Vergil in these two lines continue throughout the first part of the poem. The epigraphical flavour of the opening words, *hoc quodcumque vides,* in 4.1.1 is repeated in 4.2.1 with *quod mirare* (Hutchinson 2006: 89) and 4.6 revisits the treatment of the battle of Actium related in *Aeneid* 8 (675-714). In fact, much of the aetiological content, which makes up large parts of the fourth book, displays echoes of the *Aeneid,* the great origin story of Rome.

Conclusion

As far as the texts lead us this gives the development of Propertius' poetic career, in broad outline. He started out as an elegiac love poet with his *Monobiblos* around 31 BCE and the content and style of his first publication are almost exactly what one would expect from a love poet in his position. Judging by the success of his first book and his position in the illustrious company of the circle of Maecenas, related in the second book (2.1, 2.10, 2.31 and 2.34), it seems that he was introduced to the circle of Maecenas not long before the publication of his second book (c. 27 BCE). In the opening lines of his second book his critics and friends become the addressees and the book includes more programmatic poems. So, for instance, 2.10, is a *recusatio* poem in which Propertius excuses himself from writing epic verse; this might suggest that someone valued his work so highly that such a suggestion was made to him. The concluding poem of the book, too, is programmatic and in it Propertius ventures to place himself in the poetic tradition. This indicates that Propertius at this stage views himself as part of the literary elite of Rome, ready to assume a persona through which he can not only speak about the nature of poetry and the function of the poet but can also discuss themes of national interest.

In the opening of his third book Propertius presents his persona as a *sacerdos* performing a rite at a sacred grove and assumes the persona of the *vates* – the prophet-priest. As *vates* he could continue the progression of his poetic voice by claiming originality (*primus ego ingredior* 3.1.3), by defining his poetic purpose in greater detail (in the *recusationes* 3.3 and 3.9) and even venture opinions about the politics of the day (*arma deus Caesar dites meditatur* 3.4.1 and 3.11 about Cleopatra). In the fourth book Propertius shoulders the other responsibilities and obligations associated with poets and the *vates* – he becomes an instructor. In the opening line he addresses a foreigner to Rome and discusses some of the city's history. Now, as teacher of men, Propertius not only addresses the citizens of Rome, but includes all readers. Evidently, his authority as well as his relationship with the gods as *vates* have become such that his instruction can be considered useful to everyone. The publication of Vergil's *Aeneid* (c. 19 BCE[25]) after Propertius' third, but before his last book, no doubt had a great influence on the decision to write aetiological elegies: not only did Vergil ensure that poetry about the history of the city would become more popular, but he also constructed an

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[25] It is generally agreed that the *Aeneid* was still unfinished when Vergil died in 19 BCE, but Propertius 2.34, which refers specifically to the eighth book of the *Aeneid*, indicates that Vergil's plans with the epic were known, at least to his poetic circle, early in the third decade BCE.

officially sanctioned mythic history of the city in which other poets could express themselves with less fear of censure.

This chapter constitutes part of the groundwork necessary for the interpretation of the use of two of the faces of Apollo as they occur in the Propertian corpus. Having established in this chapter the progression of the poet's voice and the nature of his presumed audience, the next chapter will take a closer look at how the image of Apollo is used in such programmatic pieces. The link between Apollo and programmatic statements in poetry is of course not unique to Propertius or even Augustan poetry and the subject will be discussed with due consideration of its historical foundation.

CHAPTER 2:

Apollo and the Propertian Programmatic Poems

Apollo has many faces in Greek and Latin poetry. He often appears in programmatic statements of the Augustan poets and the poems of Propertius are no exception.[1] In this chapter a closer look will be taken at the image of Apollo in firstly, the programmatic poetry that influenced Propertius' programmatic poems, especially Vergil's *Ecloga* 6.3-5, *Georgicon* 3.1-48,[2] and secondly, at the programmatic poems of Propertius himself, namely 2.1 and 2.10. The best approach to a study of development seems to be a simple chronological one, which starts with the poet's earlier statements and proceeds chronologically according to book. Propertius, like Vergil, presents the critic with a problem: both poets started out professing an unwillingness or inability to write about 'loftier' themes (that is, epic, or the political subjects associated with it), Vergil in the *recusatio* opening the sixth *Ecloga* (ll. 3-5) and Propertius in 2.10, yet both ended up doing exactly that: Vergil composed the *Aeneid* and Propertius' last book is filled with aetiological poems on Roman institutions and recent history.

Much has been said about the Vergilian side of the question and the great poet's gradual shift from shorter pastoral pieces, through longer didactic pieces to his national epic; albeit that the pastoral landscape of the *Eclogae* is disturbed (as early as the opening of the first poem) by the political dispossession of Meliboeus' land and the *Georgica* go much further than merely ostensible advice to the farmer by including political and social commentry. This development has been thoroughly described, the methods used by the poet investigated and the intent of the author has been scrutinised. At the moment, the last word seems to be that of Thomas (1999: 101-13). Similar studies on Propertius are not so numerous. This chapter, although it focuses on the role of Apollo as he appears in the programmatic poems of the poet, must necessarily also take the development of the poet into account, because programmatic poems have a lot to say about the views of the poet and the nature of his poetry.

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[1] Apollo is of course also present in Propertius' later poems, most notably 2.31, 2.34, 3.1-3 and 4.1 and 4.6.
[2] This Apollo is also mentioned in the programmatic statements by Tibullus in 2.5 (c. 19 BCE) and by Horace in *C*.4.15 and *Sat.*2.6.13-5, though his use of the image of the god differs from that of Vergil and Propertius, see Dettmer (1983: 262-3).

In essence, this chapter aims to show how Propertius used the image of Apollo to describe his personal view of his poetry and its subject matter. Since the use of the image of Apollo, especially in his role as patron of poets, did not originate with Propertius, but was the product of an already long tradition, investigation of the poet's use of the image should start with his literary predecessors and models. Apollo is introduced as the god of music and leader of the Muses in the first book of the *Iliad* (ll. 601-4), but not before he features as the god who punishes (*Il.*8-11 and 37-42) and as the god of prophecy (*Il.*69-72). In the *Odyssey* (8.487-8) the description of Apollo as god of music is more specific and here it is suggested that he is directly responsible for instructing and inspiring the bard. Hesiod, likewise, ascribes the very existence of singers to Apollo and the Muses (*Th.* 75-103). During the 6th and 5th centuries, Apollo would feature in the Greek lyric poets: he was praised no more than other Olympic deities, and myths like the story of his birth, Hermes' invention of the lyre and his role as leader of the Muses were retold as were those of other deities.[3] Apollo and his associations with poetry and poetic inspiration feature more strongly in the Alexandrian poetry of especially Callimachus. Augustan poets were strongly influenced by the Greek poetry produced during this era and the influence on their use of the image of Apollo will be discussed in greater detail below.

Apollo seems to have been a latecomer to Latin poetry. In Lucretius he is mentioned only four times: Bailey (1966b: 1774) gives 1.739, 5.112 and 6.154 all referring to the prophetic powers of the god. To these 2.505 can be added where '*Phoebea*' metonymically refers to the lyre (Bailey 1966a: 262-3 and 1966b: 886). In Catullus Apollo is only mentioned in poem 64.299, where the poem tells us that he and his sister refused to attend the wedding of Peleus and Thetis – Homer (*Il.*23.63) notwithstanding. Along with the Homeric version, Fordyce (1961: 314) also mentions the versions by Pindar (*Nem.*5.41) and Aeschylus (fr.450 quoted by Plato *Rep.*383b) in which Apollo in fact sang at the feast and notes that Catullus must have been using a different version – his reason for choosing this particular version is not obvious. Ellis (1889: 329) in his notes to the relevant line in Catullus (64.299) mentions various suggestions, the best of which seems to be that Apollo's "strong feelings for Troy" and the prophecy that Apollo would kill Achilles, the son of the bridal couple (*Il.*21.278), would be enough to keep the god away.

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[3] For a general discussion of Apollo in Pindar and the *Homeric Hymns* see Rutherford (1988: 65-75).

After Lucretius and Catullus, the image of Apollo was much more frequently used by the Augustan poets Vergil, Horace, Tibullus and Propertius. Vergil names Apollo in his various guises several times in the *Eclogae*: he is mostly linked to poetry, but also appears as a pastoral deity with Pales (5.35). Horace, curiously, hardly ever portrays Apollo as a god of poetry (Dettmer 1983: 262). Dettmer notes that the Muses are invoked in *C*.1.12.1-12, 1.24.2-4, 1.26.6-9 and 3.4.1-4, the lyre in *C*.32.1-4, 12-6 and 3.11.3-8 and that Mercury instead of Apollo is the teacher of poets in *C*.3.11.1-8. Tibullus, with the exception of poem 2.5, sticks to conventional literary allusions to Apollo (Gosling 1986: 333-40). He is pining with love in 2.3.11-2, the patron of poetry in 2.4.13 and, with Bacchus, an example of youthful beauty in 1.4.37. Tibullus' sparing use of Apollo, especially in connection with Augustus is not surprising, perhaps because he moved in the circles of Messalla. Gosling (1982: 78) notes that Tibullus' poetry alone, from all extant Augustan poetry, does not mention the new princeps or Maecenas. Tibullus 2.5 stands out as it celebrates the initiation of Messalla's son, Messalinus, into the priestly order of the *Quindecemviri*, a political position, but the references to Apollo in the poem focus on the god's role as the god of prophecy and do not indicate a link between him and Augustus. Propertius' first extended invocation of Apollo as patron of poetry and arbiter of poetic style occurs in the important *recusatio* in the tenth poem of the second book, but more complicated and interesting programmatic statements are to be found at the end of the second book (2.31 and 2.34) and in the openings of books 3 and 4. These latter books increasingly focus on the relationship between Apollo and war, especially the civil war, and it is often alluded to in unambiguous terms.

Apollo was a god with many and often contradictory aspects.[4] In both Greek and Latin poetry, he was first and foremost the deity that inspired poets and bards as leader of the Muses. In this guise he was often depicted as carrying his lyre, dressed in flowing robes and wearing his hair loose as, for instance, the *Apollo Citharoedus* attributed to Scopas.[5] In Greek mythology, however, he also had various other functions. As god who punishes and destroys, he appears in the *Iliad* and in the story of Niobe to which Propertius refers several times (2.20.7, 2.31.14 and 3.10.8) and as such he was depicted with a bow. As the god of prophecy he inspired the oracle at Delphi and gave the gift of second sight to various mortals including Teiresias,

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[4] This summary is indebted to W. Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology* (1870), which, though old, contains useful references.

[5] See discussion in Chapter 4.

Cassandra and the Sybil of Cumae.[6] Propertius uses the epithet *Pythius* for Apollo at 2.31.16 and 3.13.42 and refers to the slaying of Python at 4.6.35-6. As the pastoral deity who protects flocks and cattle, Apollo is mentioned in Homer's *Iliad* (2.766 and 21.488) and this aspect of the god would become more prominent in Pindar (*P*.9.144) and Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo* (discussed below). In Augustan poetry, he features in this aspect notably in Vergil's *Georgica* (3.2), but also in Tibullus 2.3.11. Apollo was also called *Archegetes*[7] (Pindar *P*.5.80) and he helped build the walls of Troy (Prop. 3.9.37-40).

In Rome, Apollo was worshipped as healing deity (*Medicus*) by the Vestals (Graf 1996: 122-3) and the first edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* usefully cites Macrobius *Saturnalia* 1.17.15 (Rose: 1949: 69)) and in this guise he was also called *Paean*. Under Augustus, after the battle of Actium, Apollo was also linked to the *gens Iulia* to which Octavian belonged – this will be discussed below – and known in Rome under the name *Actius* (*A*.8.704 and Propertius 4.6.67), since a shrine dedicated to him overlooked the bay of Actium (Prop. 2.34 and 3.11). At 4.1.3 Propertius used the epithet *Navalis* instead of *Actius*, as the god assisted Octavian in the victory over Anthony in the famous naval battle.

Apollo assumes his dual role of patron deity of poets as well as patron deity of Octavian only in the later books of Propertius. Two reasons can be cited for this. In the first place, between 29 and 25 BCE, the period in which Propertius published his first two books, the outcome of Octavian's bid for absolute power was not yet clear. Even if the poet was persuaded to support Octavian through the influence of Maecenas, an outcome to the power struggle favourable for Octavian would still have left the poet in doubt as to the form the new ruler's political programme would take. For instance, a negative attitude towards certain political figures might be popular at the particular moment, but if the factions were to resolve their differences peacefully, or, if the political landscape were to change, the author's words once published, could not be fully retracted. Secondly, invoking Apollo as patron of the arts and thereby implying a personal relationship with the god might have been considered very daring, if not arrogant, for a young poet like Propertius, at the time still a neophyte in Roman poetic circles. Moreover, Propertius might genuinely have felt insufficiently *doctus* so early in

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[6] This Sybil was prominent in Rome: according to legend, she offered the Sybilline books to Tarquinius Superbus, the last king of Rome (Pliny *N.H*.13.28 and Gellius 1.19) and according to Vergil guided Aeneas into the Underworld (*A*.6.10 *et seq.*).
[7] The text of Gildersleeve (1965: 93) gives ἀρχαγέτας.

his career to venture opinions in writing on the important issues of the day, let alone commit unambiguously to a poetic programme.

Propertius, when invoking the image of Apollo in his programmatic statements, was acutely aware of the long and impressive tradition of invoking the image of the god. Some of these instances date from Propertius' own time and can be found in the work of poets he probably knew personally, while others date from periods with which the poet would not be so familiar. While it is impossible to gauge Propertius' qualities as a literary critic, it is obvious that he was sensitive to the tradition and, very careful in composing his own poetry modelled on this tradition. It would thus not seem unfruitful to re-examine his main sources, as far as we are able.

The Greek poet who really bequeathed the figure of Apollo (among much else) to the Augustan poets was Callimachus. Since the discovery of the *Aitia* fragment at Oxyrynchus in 1928,[8] readers of Augustan poetry have realised just how indebted poets such as Vergil, Horace and Propertius were to their Alexandrian predecessor. Any discussion of Apollo necessarily needs to start from the famous introduction of the *Aitia*. The archetypal image of Apollo *Musagetes*, that is as leader of the Muses and patron deity of poetry, which would feature in the Augustan programmatic poem, be it in a *recusatio*, in a dedication to a patron or in any other form, is found in its most complete form, up to that time, in Callimachus. A fragment from the introduction to his *Aitia* and the conclusion of Hymn 2 (*To Apollo*) provide this archetype. Although these passages have been discussed by several scholars, it is worthwhile to look at both these excerpts again. First the lines from the *Aitia* prologue (Call. *Ait.* 1 fr. 1.21-30 from Trypanis *et al.* (1975: 6-9)):

> καὶ γὰρ ὅτε πρώτιστον ἐμοῖς ἐπὶ δέλτον ἔθηκα
>
>   γούνασιν, ᾿Α[πό]λλων εἶπεν ὅ μοι Λύκιος·
>
> "..........]...ἀοιδέ, τὸ μὲν θύος ὅττι πάχιστον
>
>   θρέψαι, τὴ]ν Μοῦσαν δ᾿ ὠγαθὲ λεπταλέην·
>
> πρὸς δέ σε] καὶ τόδ᾿ ἄνωγα, τὰ μὴ πατέουσιν ἅμαξαι
>
>   τὰ στείβειν, ἑτέρων ἴχνια μὴ καθ᾿ ὁμά
>
> δίφρον ἐλ]ᾶν μηδ᾿ οἶμον ἀνὰ πλατύν, ἀλλὰ κελεύθους
>
>   ἀτριπτο]υς, εἰ καὶ στεινοτέρην ἐλάσεις."

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[8] An insightful recent interpretative study by Schmitz (1999: 151-178) gives a useful overview of the bibliography that has accumulated around this text.

τεττίγω]ν ἐνὶ τοῖς γὰρ ἀείδομεν οἳ λιγὺν ἦχον

θ]όρυβον δ᾽ οὐκ ἐφίλησαν ὄνων."

[For, when I first placed a tablet on my knees, Lycian Apollo said to me: "… poet feed [your] victim to be as fat as possible but, my friend, keep the Muse slender. This too I bid you: tread a path which carriages do not trample; do not drive your chariot along the common tracks of others, nor along a wide road, but on unworn paths, though your course be more narrow. For we sing among those who love the shrill sound of the cicada, not the noise of the … asses.] Tr. Trypanis (Trypanis *et al.* 1975: 6-9).

And from the *Hymn to Apollo* 2.105-112 from Wimmel (1960: 61):

ὁ Φθόνος Ἀπόλλωνος ἐπ᾽ οὔτατα λάθριος εἶπεν·

"οὐκ ἄγαμαι τὸν ἀοιδὸν ὃς οὐδ᾽ ὅσα πόντος ἀείδει."

τὸν Φθόνον ὡπόλλων ποδί τ᾽ ἤλασεν ὧδέ τ᾽ ἔειπεν·

"Ἀσσυρίου ποταμοῖο μέγας ῥόος, ἀλλὰ τὰ πολλά

λύματα γῆς καὶ πολλὸν ἐφ᾽ ὕδατι συρφετὸν ἕλκει.

Δηοῖ δ᾽ οὐκ ἀπὸ παντὸς ὕδωρ φορέουσι μέλισσαι,

ἀλλ᾽ ἥτις καθαρή τε καὶ ἀχράαντος ἀνέρπει

πίδακος ἐξ ἱερῆς ὀλίγη λιβὰς ἄκρον ἄωτον."

["Envy secretly whispered in Apollo's ear: 'I do not admire the (this) singer, who does not sing as much as the sea.' – Apollo kicked Envy and said: 'The Assyrian river is vast, but it carries with it plenty of mud and much waste on its water. To Demeter, however, bees do not bring every water, but the finest flower of the few droplets that pour forth pure and immaculate from a holy fountain.'"]* Tr. Kohnken (1981: 411).

The most striking similarity between the two extracts is that in both Apollo is speaking about what constitutes proper literary style.[9] In the *Aitia* prologue the god reprimands the poet for attempting to write in the grand style of epic, and in the *Hymn to Apollo* he rebukes Envy, after the latter has told Apollo he likes the poet who "swells like the sea". It seems that it was this conceit of the Alexandrian poet, speaking his mind through the god of the Muses and propagating his poetic creed in this fashion, which attracted Vergil and later Propertius.

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[9] The most complete comparative studies between these two passages still seem to be those of Kambylis (1965: 77-9), Williams (1978: 85-9) and Bulloch (1985: 557-61).

From these passages come the main Alexandrian metaphors associated with the Augustan poets. From the proem of the *Aitia* the slender Muse and fat sacrificial animal are seen at least in Vergil's *Eclogae* (6.3-5) and Horace's second book of *Satires* (2.6.13-5), the image of the narrow roads and trails less travelled by, associated as in this case with poetic originality, is also encountered in Vergil's *Georgica* (3.8-10 and 3.291-3) and in Propertius (3.1.18 and 3.3.26). The contrast between shrill and melodious sounds as in Callimachus' noisy donkeys contrasted to the shrill cicadas is found in the contrast between the melodious swans and geese in Vergil (*E.* 9.35-6) and Propertius (2.34.59-60). In the *Hymn to Apollo* the water metaphor, which was to become famous in Roman poetry, is used to compare the 'epic' water of the Euphrates with the slender Callimachean libation carried by the bees. This water metaphor was extended by poets of the late Republic to include fountains, springs and even the sea, as well as travelling by boat, and is used extensively in the opening panel, namely, poems 1-5, of Propertius' third book.[10]

What is most pertinent to the current discussion is the figure of Apollo himself, warning the poet. Vergil's *Eclogae* is the first extant Roman poetry to refer to this image. In *E.*6.1-5 Vergil follows Callimachus closely:

> prima Syracosio dignata est ludere versu
>
> nostra, neque erubuit silvas habitare, Thalia.
>
> cum canerem reges et proelia, Cynthius aurem
>
> vellit, et admonuit: "pastorem, Tityre, pinguis
>
> pascere oportet ovis, deductum dicere carmen."

[At first my Thalia deigned to play with Syracusan verses and was not ashamed to dwell in the woods. But when I intended to sing of kings and wars, Cynthius grabbed me by the ear and warned: "Tityrus, a herdsman should fatten his sheep and compose finely spun songs."]

These opening lines are part of a larger dedication to Varus, which extends to line 12 of the poem and in which the speaker excuses himself from writing about Varus' military exploits. The audience is given ample warning that a programmatic statement is pending in the very second word – Syracusae being the birthplace of Theocritus – and this is reinforced by the emphatic mention of the Muse Thalia – here mentioned for the first time in extant Latin

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[10] See Arkins (1988: 285-93) for a clear and insightful discussion on how the Augustan poets and especially Propertius, were influenced by Callimachus and how they extended the Callimachean metaphor in order to explain why their poetry was fresh and original.

poetry (Clausen 1994: 179). The entrance of Apollo and his warning to the poet vividly recall Apollo's metaphor of a fat sacrificial animal and a slender Muse in Callimachus. Cynthius as an epithet for Apollo is used by Vergil only here and in *Georgicon* 3.36 and is a clear intertextual marker pointing to Callimachus. As Clausen explains (1976: 245-7 and 1977: 362) the epithet is used only and uniquely by Callimachus – in *Hymn* 4.9-10 and twice in the *Aitia* (3.67.5-6 and 3.114.8).

These five lines introduce an *Ecloga* largely concerned with poetry. It is concerned with the proper subjects of pastoral poetry – as is clear from the *recusatio* – but it also goes beyond the sphere of pastoral. Silenus, whose song comprises most of the poem, is not found in Theocritus – this song seems to be based on Apollonius' song of Orpheus and its central figure is Gallus (Clausen 1994: 175-7). It is also interesting to note that the author of Vergil's song of Silenus, as is revealed in lines 81-6, is in fact Apollo. The presence of Apollo throughout this programmatic poem suggests that Apollo was, at least in Vergil's mind, closely linked to poetry about poetry and it might be speculated that the original Roman appropriation of the Callimachean Apollo can be found in Gallus.

Even more striking, however, than the similarity between Vergil's *recusatio* and that of his model are the differences. Although the poet receives an epiphany in both the passages of Callimachus and in that of Vergil, in the latter the relationship between the poet and his patron deity is depicted as much more personal. In the *Aitia,* Apollo appears to the poet at his first attempt at poetry and in *Hymn* 2 Callimachus relates the episode of Apollo and Envy in order to make the point that his poetic creed was divinely inspired. Vergil, however, has Apollo tweak the poet's ear before admonishing him, which suggests that their relationship is much more personal.[11] The second important difference lies in the indirectness of the admonition in Vergil. The direct command to Callimachus is replaced in Vergil with a general statement of fact using an impersonal verb. This nuance has important ramifications in that Vergil implies a qualification to the Callimachean creed of the fat animal and the slender Muse, that is, it behoves only a shepherd-poet to follow this method.

The fact that Apollo refers to the poet as Tityrus and calls him a *pastor* instead of a *poeta*, a *vates* or even a *cantor* is clearly significant. These days it is considered rather naïve to read

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[11] The ear was also believed to be the seat of memory – Page (1968: 140), who quotes Pliny *N.H.*11.103.

the persona of Tityrus in the *Eclogae* as a mask for Vergil himself.[12] What Apollo in fact says is "Tityrus, you are a shepherd-poet. Shepherds should concern themselves with tending their flocks, and when you sing, do not sing of wars and kings," and with such advice one can find little fault. However, the subtle choice of words and the multifaceted nature of the other poems in the collection invite another reading as well. The shepherds are in fact the poets in the *Eclogae*, as is clear from the fact that they call themselves such at *E.*7.25 and *E.*10.70; furthermore, Tityrus himself is the speaker of a large part of the first poem in the collection and in this instance Apollo is witnessing Tityrus composing songs (l. 5). So to see behind the shepherd Tityrus at least one aspect of the author of the *Eclogae*, would not be unacceptable, nor would it be impossible to interpret Apollo's admonition as directed to the author, Vergil, as well as to his persona – in this case Tityrus.

In the context of a dedication, this confusion of *personae* becomes more problematic. We assume that Vergil is addressing Varus as Vergil and not as Tityrus, and it is thus Vergil who starts his address with the first person verbs. However, in the pastoral landscape Apollo addresses the singer as Tityrus, the shepherd. This could be construed as a wink to the audience that implies that the Tityrus of *Ecloga* 1 is in fact a mask for Vergil himself, but it could also be read as a polite refusal by the poet to approach the political world of his dedicatee. In the second case, Vergil's argument can be restated as saying "I considered composing verses on your political and military exploits, Varus, but I am singing now as a shepherd-poet; ask Apollo, he should know, and, as he rightly remarks, such themes do not suit me at this moment."[13] Vergil would in fact later write exactly about horrible wars in the *Aeneid* (*A.* 7 41-2):

<div align="center">dicam horrida bella,</div>

   dicam acies actosque animis in funera reges

[I shall sing of horrible wars, battle lines and kings driven to the funeral pyre by passion.]

The passage doubtlessly recalls the sixth *Ecloga* (l. 3): *cum canerem reges et proelia* [When I wanted to sing of kings and war]. However, in this case Vergil is not hiding behind the persona of a shepherd-poet.

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[12] An illuminating study of the various voices in the poem can be found in Thomas (1999: 288-96).

[13] Note that Vergil is not saying that he lacks the talent to sing of such themes and is not using the *recusatio* as an excuse to write about epic themes at any rate, as Williams (1968: 46-7) maintains.

Vergil's references to political subjects in his pastoral poetry are certainly not without precedent. Theocritus, Vergil's pastoral model, did it, as did Callimachus. Since the *recusatio* in *E.*6 and the warning figure of Apollo are taken from Callimachus, it makes sense to look at the presence of political themes in his poems. Pillinger (1969: 193-4) has shown how Callimachus in his *Hymn to Apollo* refers to the ruling powers in Alexandria at the time (he quotes lines 27 and 68) and argues that "whatever the exact interpretation, … Callimachus intended his *Hymn to Apollo* to be something of a political statement as well." Gosling (1992: 508-12) took a closer look at the relationship between Callimachus and his patron Ptolemy II Philadelphus[14] (Pillinger only hints at this) and has shown that the poet did indeed link Apollo to the family of his patron, thus making him political as well.[15] It seems that Callimachus was not unaware that the multifaceted nature of Apollo made the deity an excellent symbol through which subjects even as different as poetic aesthetics and current politics could be described.

Callimachus' use of the image of Apollo warning the poet in programmatic statements left an indelible mark on the Augustan poets and chiefly two of his ideas were appropriated. Vergil used the image of the god in dedicatory pieces (*E.*6 and *G.*3.1-48) in which he, among other things, wanted to honour his patron.[16] The image of Apollo as it was used by Callimachus was appropriated differently. Vergil used the Apollo warning the poet in a dedication in *E.*6, but he would later use various other images of Apollo. In *Georgicon* 3 the pastoral attributes of Apollo are emphasised (Apollo *Nomios* and Apollo *Archegetes* feature) and in *Aeneid* 8, he would use Apollo *Actius* in his description of the battle of Actium. Propertius also used the image of Apollo warning the poet – most notably in 3.3 – as well as various other images of the god. Though, unlike Vergil, Propertius does not once use Apollo in a dedication to a patron, he would emphasise various different attributes of the god throughout his poems. The

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[14] Since Callimachus died c. 240 BCE Ptolemy II, who reigned from 285 BCE until his death in 246 BCE, seems the more likely patron of Callimachus. However, patronage under Ptolemy III Euergetes cannot be ruled out, since he was born between 288 and 280 and he would have been about 20 in 264 when Callimachus was at the height of his powers (Ameling (2002a: 134) and (2002b: 138).

[15] Her evidence consists mainly of *Hymn* 2.26-7, 95-6 and 189-90 and *Hymn* 4.162-70 (cf. also Gosling 1982: 44-6). The same conclusion was draw by Hollis (2006: 115-6) looking at Callimachus' *Aitia* 4.

[16] Varus was certainly not as powerful as Maecenas, who is the dedicatee of *Georgicon* 3, and it is very difficult, if not impossible, to show how important he was as political player. His full name is P. Alfenus Varus, *consul suffectus* of 39 BCE. Syme (1939: 235 n.8) mentions him and notes that the "political affiliations of this mysterious character are not unequivocally recorded." Nisbet and Hubbard (1970: 227-8) in their commentary on Horace, *Ode* 1.18, where a certain Varus is also addressed, who may or may not be the same Varus named in *Ecloga* 6, give a more complete picture of the man.

rest of this chapter will first look at the use of Apollo in *Georgicon* 3 and then turn to preliminary questions on how Propertius employed the image of Apollo.

Vergil left himself a loophole in the *Eclogae* by making Tityrus the direct recipient of Apollo's warning. Propertius' Apollo warns the poet directly – addressing him by the name Propertius (3.3.17). This would make a big difference to Propertius when, in Book 4, he actually started to write about current political subjects. More programmatic pieces would be needed (cf. 4.1) to explain the poetic persona's position toward poetry.

The loophole, which Vergil built into *Ecloga* 6, would allow him to write poetry on more political subjects in his next collection – the *Georgica*.[17] In the opening lines of the third poem in the collection Vergil placed what is his longest programmatic statement of poetic intent. This statement, incidentally, stands geometrically in the same position in the collection, at the opening of the first poem of the second half, as does the *recusatio* in *Ecloga* 6 and Vergil would employ this positioning again in the seventh book of the *Aeneid* (7.1-46).

Although the opening of the third *Georgicon* is not a *recusatio,* insofar as the poet is not making any excuses,[18] the first 48 lines of the poem are Vergil's first extended confession of a poetic programme and in them he makes clear references to current political events.[19] In the first *Ecloga* he refers to a patron powerful enough to give his confiscated farmland back – merely as *deus* (*E.*1.6-7) or *iuvenem* (*E.*1.42), generally taken to be Octavian himself[20] – but at the very least a patron powerful enough to give his confiscated farmland back. References in the fourth poem of the same collection are similarly ambiguous. Here, in the opening of the *Georgica*, however, Octavian is called by name: "*in medio mihi Caesar erit templumque tenebit*" (l. 16).

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[17] In line 10 of the third *Georgicon* Vergil inserts another condition in this promise to write poetry immortalizing Octavian: "*modo vita supersit*".

[18] Notwithstanding Wimmel (1960: 177-87) whose opinion has been superseded by Wilkinson (1969: 323-4).

[19] The current political players and events are Octavian, the consolidation of the eastern frontier and the triple triumph of 29 BCE – succinctly noted and discussed in Thomas (1988b: 36).

[20] This is the general interpretation although it has been questioned. Du Quesnay (1981: 35 and 141) cites the "occasional dissenters", namely Liegle (1941: 91-119.) and Hardie (1975).

Syme (1939: 112-3) reminds us that when Gaius Octavius was adopted into the house of the *Iulii* (September 13th 45 BCE), he changed his name to Gaius Iulius Caesar Octavianus and would later be known as Imperator Caesar Divi filius Augustus. Importantly, Augustus did not use the name Octavianus and preferred to be called Caesar for obvious reasons.

Apollo makes his appearance in the second line of the poem as "the shepherd from Amphrysus" (ll. 1-2):

te quoque, magna Pales, et te memorande canemus

pastor ab Amphryso, vos, silvae amnesque Lycaei.

[You too great Pales, and you shepherd from Amphrysus who ought to be commemorated, we shall sing – and you, woods and streams of Lycaeus.]

The Apollo here is Apollo *Nomios*. The reference is to the myth of Apollo's sojourn with Admetus and of course Apollo *Nomios* also suits the pastoral themes about which Vergil sings. The expression *'ab Amphryso'* refers directly to the Callimachean *Hymn to Apollo* where we are told the god was called *Nomios* ever since he tended cattle ἐπ᾽ Ἀμφρυσσῷι (Call. 2.47). But this is not the whole story. Pales is named before Apollo and, it seems, in order to qualify the Apollo who is invoked in the second line. In Vergil's time the link between Apollo and Pales was twofold: their respective connection to herds and flocks is the most obvious common denominator – Apollo and Pales are also coupled as protective rural deities in *Ecloga* 5.35 – but both also shared in the *Parilia*.[21] Mynors (1994: 178) mentions that Apollo and especially the Apollo from the Amphrysus, is connected to cattle and horses as, according to legend, Apollo tended horses (Hom. *Il.*2.763-7) or horned cattle (Eur. *Alcestis* 8) during his stay in Thessaly. Pales, on the other hand, is connected to sheep and goats (*G.*3.294) and together the two deities cover the scope of the third *Georgicon*.

The addition of the invocation of the pastoral Pales and the pastoral Apollo *Nomios* to the Roman foundation myths on the one hand, as well as the direct reference to Callimachus' second hymn, which contains references to his patrons and the powers that ruled in Alexandria, prepare the audience for the programmatic statement. First the poet claims originality in being the first to bring the Muses to Italy (ll. 10-1),[22] Idumaean palms[23] to Mantua (l. 12) and to place a marble temple next to the river Mincius in which Octavian will live (ll. 13-6). The temple metaphor is continued up to line 39 and Vergil describes the rituals,

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[21] The *Parilia*, which was held in honour of Pales, was celebrated on the 21st of April – the day on which both Cicero (*Div.*2.98) and Ovid (*F.*4.801) tell us that the city of Rome was founded. Pales was closely linked to the myth of the founding of the city via the *Parilia*. Apollo, too, as Apollo *Archegetes*, delighted in the foundation of cities, as we learn from Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo* (ll. 55-9), Horace (*C.*3.3.65-8) and Vergil *A.*8.336, where Evander tells Aeneas how he was urged by Apollo to settle on the spot where Rome would be built.

[22] Vergil is echoing a passage from Lucretius (Mynors 1994: 180) and Thomas (1988b: 40) explains that Vergil is "claiming to bring to Italy the Hesiodic Muses as transformed by Callimachus".

[23] This adjective, according to Mynors (1994: 180-1), stands for Palestine, which was famous for its palms. Thomas (1988b: 40-1) adds that this place name appears in Strabo and Josephus, but in Latin here for the first time. The adjective, he argues convincingly, probably comes from Callimachus.

artworks on the doors and sculptures that would adorn the edifice. The last of these include a statue of Apollo ("*Troiae Cynthius auctor*" (l. 36)[24]). At this stage of the description the poet reminds us (ll. 40-1) that he is still writing didactic poetry as he was asked to do by his patron,

> interea Dryadum silvas saltusque sequamur
>
> intactos, tua, Maecenas, haud mollia iussa

[Meanwhile, let us pursue the woods and unspoilt valleys of the Dryades – your charge, Maecenas is not easy.]

But he returns to the subject of the ultimate goal of his career – to sing for Octavian and to carry his name through many years (ll. 46-8).

> mox tamen ardentis accingar dicere pugnas
>
> Caesaris et nomen fama tot ferre per annos
>
> Tithoni prima quot abest ab origine Caesar.

[Soon I shall prepare myself to tell of the fiery battle of Caesar and to carry his name in fame through as many years as Caesar is removed from the first origin of Tithonus.]

It seems that, as Vergil changes his subject matter from the pastoral *Eclogae* to the more political themes enumerated here in the introduction to the third *Georgicon*, he also changes his image of Apollo. The transition is, in a certain sense, very natural. He did not need to invent a new aspect of Apollo. Apollo as *Lukios* or *Nomios* suits the pastoral landscape admirably and as *Loxias* and Pythian Apollo he is associated with prophecies regarding the state and as *Archegetes* he has long been involved in the foundation of cities. Very importantly, for the Augustan poet, there also existed a shrine devoted to Apollo overlooking the bay of Actium. These various aspects of Apollo converge in the Apollo *Actius*, which reaches its fullest manifestation in *Aeneid* 8.704. Moreover, it would have been impossible for a poet to bring about a fundamental change in the nature of such an important deity. All Vergil had to do was find an aspect of Apollo – among the many – that could bridge the gap between the pastoral landscape and the cityscape of Rome and to link a myth to it. In Apollo *Archegetes* and the celebration of the *Parilia* he found it. This Apollo is not yet the Apollo *Actius* of the *Aeneid* and his association here with the founding of Rome is only hinted at. Vergil, as he rightly reminds us, is not yet writing about his Caesar, but only promising to do so and preparing the ground for doing so.

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[24] The epithet *auctor* is interestingly also applied to Apollo at *Aeneid* 8.336 where Evander tells Aeneas how he was urged by the god to settle on that spot where Rome would be built.

Propertius, too, emphasised different faces of Apollo in his later poetry, no doubt partly under the influence of Vergil. It is important to note that programmatic pieces, comparable to those of Callimachus and Vergil discussed above, are almost completely absent from Propertius' first book. This being said, it is interesting to note that the very first word of his first collection evokes associations with Apollo. The name Cynthia was used in connection with the Roman Diana/Artemis as discussed in Chapter 1. Ahl (1974: 81-3) has shown that here and in the rest of the *Monobiblos* the references to Diana/Artemis are quite strong and fitting for the opening of a book of love poetry: he sees in the poet's Cynthia a composite of various associations with the goddess: "beauty, death, chastity, magic, evil, coldness – and the very beginning of life" (see Chapter 1). The cult title *Cynthius* referring to the mountain on Delos – the birthplace of Apollo – was borrowed from Callimachus' second hymn (*H*.2.10), in preference to the cult title *Lukios* used in the *Aitia* proem (l. 22) and revived by Vergil in his sixth *Ecloga* and third *Georgicon*. This, together with the fact that Tibullus, who wrote at more or less the same time, chose the pseudonym Delia for his mistress, constitute strong circumstantial evidence in favour of an intentional reference to the god Apollo by Propertius right at the beginning of his first book.[25]

In his second book things are different. In the very first poem of the collection, the subject of his poetry is treated in a long argument. The previous chapter described how Propertius assumed a new persona in the opening of his second book and it seems evident that his poetic programme developed during the composition of the first book and was transformed by its success. This change in attitude, at least to the extent that Propertius now felt obliged to explain his poetry and even excuse himself from writing different kinds of poetry can also be attributed to his entrance into the circle of Maecenas. Cairns (2006: 254) for one, is convinced that "Propertius had either been instructed to give precedence as subject-matter to Augustus, as he does over the whole of Books 2 and 3, or was tactful enough to do so without instruction."

The second book starts with a *recusatio* addressed to Maecenas. It is not only considerably longer than that of Vergil's *Ecloga* 6 discussed above, but it also differs in three other vital aspects. Firstly, unlike Vergil, Propertius does not put the excuse in the mouth of a character –

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[25] It is interesting to note that Vergil chose the epithet Delius for Apollo in *A*.6.12 *Delius inspirat vates* [Apollo inspires the *vates*]. In this case the *vates* is not a poet, but the prophetess the Sibyl, the point being that Apollo is speaking through someone else.

it is his own poetic persona that speaks. Secondly, where Apollo tells Vergil's Tityrus that he is unsuited for epic poetry, he can imply both that Tityrus has no talent for it or, and this is more likely, that his station and the pastoral sphere in which he exists do not allow for it. Propertius blames it squarely on his own lack of talent (*quod mihi si tantum, Maecenas, fata dedissent* (l. 17)). Lastly, there is no Apollo who admonishes the poet. In fact, the poet explicitly denies being inspired by either Apollo or Calliope and tells us as early as the second couplet (2.1.3-4):

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

[Neither Calliope nor Apollo sings these things to me – my girl herself, makes our genius.]

The first difference between Propertius 2.1 and his Vergilian model is not difficult to understand. The opening poem of a collection usually has to say something about the content of the book and for Propertius, who has just joined the circle of Maecenas, this meant explaining why he, unlike Vergil who moved from the *Eclogae* to the slightly more lofty didactic poetry of the *Georgica*, will publish a second book of love poems. Since the collection consists mainly of love elegy, Propertius also faced the problem of how to formulate his excuse so that the opening poem would still fall within the generic boundaries of elegy or, at least, would not seem incongruous in style in relation to the rest of the collection. Propertius found what seems to be the best solution. He keeps the mood sincere and he does not speak through another character, which would place an additional barrier between himself and the audience. By styling his opening line as a direct address to his audience he draws them in and attempts to establish a more personal relationship with them, in order to make his love affairs, which he will recount in the following poems, more acceptable.

The second aspect of the *recusatio*, which differs from the Vergilian model is the modification of the cause of his refusal. Where Vergil's Tityrus is reprimanded for writing about things unsuited to a shepherd, Propertius says that the Fates have not "granted him the power" (l. 17) to do so. The basic argument of 2.1 runs like this: Propertius first describes the source of his inspiration and gives a reason for the success of his poetry (ll. 1-16), then blames his inability to write epic poetry on his lack of talent for it (ll. 17-42). The explanation is that each man should stick to writing about what he knows best and what he, Propertius, knows best, is love (ll. 43-70). This leads to the conclusion that he will only gain a little fame

(compared to epic poets), but would be envied by youths for having lived a life of love (ll. 71-8). Vergil left himself a loophole, by putting the excuse in the mouth of a pastoral character and not blaming a lack of talent on the poet's part. But it does not follow that Propertius, without such a loophole and having blamed the Fates for his lack of talent in certain departments, could not later change his mind. In 2.1 blaming the Fates for not bestowing on him the talent to "lead heroic armies to war" (l. 18), serves a specific purpose: it restricts the scope of subjects with which the collection will deal to those which brought him such success in his first book. It is extremely difficult to assume at this point of Propertius' career that he is professing a programme that will serve him throughout his life and it would be too pedantic to insist on taking the poet seriously, when he professes a lack of talent.

The most important aspect of this *recusatio* is the denial of inspiration from Apollo or the Muses. This denial should be understood in the light of the two differences discussed above. Since the book that is being introduced will contain love poetry based ostensibly on the personal experience of the poet (without necessarily supposing that it happened in real life to the empirical Propertius) and is purportedly not going to speak about epic themes, the poet would not need the divine knowledge of these subjects usually imparted by Apollo and the Muses. In order to write with authority about love, all the poet needs is "the girl herself" and, by implication, experience of a life of love. More importantly, by denying divine inspiration, the poet also denies being a *vates* – a priest of the Muses and a prophet as well as a poet. The *vates*-concept is the subject of the next chapter; suffice it here to say that the *vates* was at this time regarded in poetry as something greater than a mere *poeta* in that he could speak with authority about subjects of social, national and even existential importance. Thus, by denying the status of *vates*, the poet not only liberates himself from the obligation to write about war or politics, which he was not yet ready to do, but also reaffirms the limited scope of his poetry and its comparative unimportance.[26] The denial of being a *vates* of course also comes at a price and this price is made clear at the conclusion of the poem where the poet implies that he will not become famous for his poetry (ll. 71-2).

> quandocumque igitur vitam mea fata reposcent,
>
>   et breve in exiguo marmore nomen ero,

[Thus, when someday the Fates will reclaim my life, and I shall be a lowly name on a small marble slab…]

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[26] Propertius mostly refers to his own published material in a humble fashion, even in Book 3, cf. 3.2.17 and 3.3.19-20.

It can hardly be doubted that the publication of the *Georgica* (29 BCE[27]) greatly influenced the poets in Rome. Vergil's new programmatic statement revised the stance professed in the *Eclogae* and reconsidered the role of the poet in the changing times at the end of the Republic. His decision to write about and even eulogise the political achievements of his patron Maecenas and of Octavian, put all the poets in Rome, including Propertius, in somewhat of a predicament. Propertius' reaction, as we saw, was to reaffirm his commitment to the subjective love poetry of his first book. Whether this reaction is due to political pressure (doubtful at this early stage in Propertius' career) or artistic pressures (trying to keep up with the other poets) is difficult to say. But the opening poem of the second book, as we have it, already moves so far from the first in its handling of themes beyond the scope of the *amator*-poet, that one suspects that Propertius gradually became a more and more important voice speaking about the political issues of the time. Clearer signs of these are present in the final poems of the collection (2.31 and 2.34).

Vergil's other important decision was to start redefining the image of Apollo in its Roman context. Linking Apollo with the founding of the city and with Octavian, Vergil made it very difficult for poets to invoke the image of the god, without also suggesting political undertones. While it was unclear at this stage where these early steps would lead Vergil in his promised epic, it was enough to prompt Propertius into denying that he received inspiration from Apollo (2.1.3-4). However, by denying that he is inspired by the god, Propertius, in the context of the tradition, also denies a lot more. Firstly, not being divinely inspired means accepting one cannot be a *vates* (poet-priest-prophet) as knowledge of the future and revelation of the truth come from the gods. Being an *amator*-poet, Propertius would not find this unacceptable. Secondly, according to Vergil's *Eclogae,* being a *vates* was that to which a talented poet aspired (see next chapter), which means that conceding that one cannot be a *vates* is also conceding that one is not talented enough. Propertius is quite prepared to accept this, too, and makes it clear by citing his lack of talent as the reason for not writing epic poetry.

After writing his second book, Propertius in fact did turn *vates* and he used the image of Apollo more extensively and started commenting on the political issues of Rome. The answer

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[27] Following Thomas (1988a: 1).

to why and how this happened seems to lie in 2.34, the concluding poem of the collection. This poem will be discussed in Chapter 4, but first the word *vates* and what the concept denotes should be considered in greater detail.

CHAPTER 3:

Propertius and the *Vates* Concept

The Augustan concept of *vates* is closely linked to the development of Propertius' poetry and the persona he adopts at various stages in his career. Yet the word *vates* denoting poet appears in only two poems of Propertius. The first is as early as the tenth poem of the second book (2.10.19) and the second – and that twice – in the fourth book in the opening address of the important sixth poem. While this does not mean that these are the only two Propertian poems in which the poet wanted to assume a persona that would enable him to discuss political themes, the use of the word *vates* sheds light on how Propertius viewed his role as poet in society and the place of poets generally. In Augustan poetry and, especially after Vergil's *Eclogae,* the word *vates*, without becoming synonymous with the term *poeta*, became an acceptable term with which to describe a poet. The word did not shed its earlier meanings, like "soothsayer," "diviner" and "prophet," which remained common as applied, for example, by Vergil to Proteus in the fourth *Georgicon* (ll. 378, 392 and 450) and to the Sybil of Cumae in *Aeneid* 6.

Gradually the semantic field of the term *vates* was enlarged to encompass the meaning "poet" without, however, becoming completely interchangeable with the term *poeta*. But *vates* is more than a word whose semantic field has shifted during the last century BCE. Through this concept the role of the poet in society could be redefined and the word *vates* signified a shift in the perception of what a poet is and does. This chapter will try to demonstrate how the Augustan poets, by using in certain cases the word *vates* instead of *poeta*, suggested that the poet also had a social responsibility. It will also show how the word *vates* was linked to the ancient concept that the poet was more than merely an entertainer, but was also, in some way, inspired by the gods – chiefly Apollo – and as such could lay claim to speak with authority about various social and political issues.

The vatic persona is linked to the present study of the role of Apollo in Propertian poetry on various levels. Apollo was associated with prophets and seers (the epithet *augur* being applied to him at *A*.4.376) and as god of prophecy he presided over many oracles and inspired the priestesses at Delphi. Apollo's association with poets and poetry is of course well known. The

concept *vates* admirably expresses the link between poetry and prophecy and assuming the role of a *vates* enabled Augustan poets to deliver social criticism and to expound on matters of the state, as mouthpiece of the gods (especially Apollo). All of the major poets of the Augustan age used the *vates*-concept to some extent as demonstrated convincingly by Newman (1967).

From a historical perspective, the changing role of the poet in the community explains to some extent the problems facing the Augustan poets in defining their role in society. At the dawn of Greek literature, singers like Homer and Hesiod played a vital role in society as repositories for cultural knowledge and communicators of tradition. This perception of the role of poets remained valid for several centuries until changes resulting from historical events brought about a shift in this perception. After the Persian invasions the role of the poet as historian was usurped by prose writers such as Herodotus and Thucydides. Although their work can hardly be called "scientific" by modern standards, it is much more so than the poetic retellings of past events. The rise of Greek rationalism and the subsequent revaluation of Greek culture during the fifth century BCE also resulted in a revaluation of poetry and the role of the poet in society. Plato went so far as to attack poetry, accusing it of inspiring dangerous emotions in people and portraying a false picture of reality.[1] Gradually, with the exception of the dramatists, poets found it increasingly difficult to define their role in Athenian society. Poets lost their credibility as authoritative sources of social commentary. Just as Herodotus doubted the veracity of Homer's Trojan War (*Histories* 2), the events related in Hesiod's *Theogony* could likewise be doubted. Without a claim to divinely inspired knowledge and wisdom Greek society moved beyond the point where poets could credibly fulfil the role of repositories and communicators of cultural knowledge.

In third century Alexandria, poets found a new niche for their work. Callimachus and Philitas were not professional poets in the sense that this was their main occupation – their main occupation was tending the great library. This situation in Alexandria was similar in some respects to the situation of poets under Augustus. At both places, the poets were financially supported by a *de facto* autocratic head of state, Ptolemy II and Ptolemy III in Alexandria and Octavian (at first through Maecenas) at Rome. In addition, the poets were part of a very small and intimate community whose members were all extremely knowledgeable not only about

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[1] See especially *Republic* 10.589b-600e and 6008a-b2.

each other's poetry, but also about the poetic models they shared. When the practice of poetry fell into the hands of these very learned and highly skilled librarian-poets in Alexandria, the art gradually took on a form that would have far-reaching implications for Roman poets later. As librarians, these poets could lay real claim to the title of repositories of knowledge – or, at least, to be in charge of repositories of knowledge. Yet they knew that rewriting history in poetic form was no longer feasible and that their poetry would hardly be commissioned for or performed at social or religious events. The themes and topics of their poetry thus tended to come more often from the realm of the personal and the subjective. Though their themes and topics were more personal and the poems would never really be performed, the Alexandrian poets still composed according to the poetic forms bequeathed by earlier poets and the Greek poetic tradition. Now the forms that used to be dictated by the particular social events for which a poem was composed became merely a literary convention (Williams 1968: 35). Their hymns were written without the intention of performing the rites and their sympotic poetry without a drinking party in mind. The new audience, which consisted of other poets and the literary elite, combined with the fact that this poetry was not composed expressly for performance at public events, facilitated the shift to new subjects and different modes of expression. Because they wrote for each other and because they were librarians and interpreters, the subject of literary criticism was bound to be important. Because they were dependent on the patronage of politically well connected people, they were necessarily very interested in courtly intrigue and infighting in the ranks of the ruling elite and this found its way into their poetry.

In Rome the literary tradition started around 240 BCE and the notable literary figures of the time were of lower social status. The playwright Livius Andronicus, for example, was a freedman of Greek descent and Ennius obtained Roman citizenship only late in life.[2] But, unlike in Alexandria, these early authors had a well defined social role in Rome and produced plays for public events under the direction of the *curule aediles*. As during the fourth century BCE in Athens, the role of drama gradually declined in Rome, but soon, as Rome grew richer, a large educated reading public emerged from the higher middle and upper classes. By the first decades of the first century BCE, the pursuit of poetry as a leisure activity had become an acceptable avenue to win fame and recognition (Ross 1975: 5-6).

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[2] The date is usually given as 184 BCE, but Brown (1997: 72) warns us that the date is not fully reliable.

As political events unfolded in Rome during the last century BCE, political power concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer men for longer periods at a time. A political landscape where various senatorial families vied for top honours gave way to one which was divided into a few factions after Julius Caesar returned from Gaul. The number of important players in the political landscape shrank and power gradually gravitated towards an autocratic rule by a few and later one powerful individual. Conflict between parties and factions affiliated to these powerful individuals became more common and greater pressure was put on poets, as on all members of the elite, to align themselves to such persons. By c. 35 BCE political themes would intrude into Vergil's *Eclogae* and soon after, a large central piece is devoted to Octavian in the *Georgica*. Horace, too, turned to panegyric in the *Odes* written c. 23 BCE. This pattern repeats itself in the career of Propertius. In the *Monobiblos* political themes are hardly dealt with, but at the opening of his second book, having achieved some recognition and having procured the patronage of Octavian's friend Maecenas, Propertius seems to have felt obliged to at least give an apology for not praising Octavian's triumphs.

In this new political climate in Rome after 31 BCE, when power lay in the hands of one individual, Roman society was experiencing uncommonly peaceful times and new problems faced the poets. Roman society was still divided along the fissures that separated the factions of the civil war, but under the autocratic rule of the victor it was difficult to discuss certain political topics in poetry. It was still possible to write subjective love elegy like Catullus did earlier and to avoid political themes for the greater part, as was done by Tibullus and Propertius in their first collections. However, once a poet was introduced into the patronage of a powerful individual, such as Maecenas, pressure of some kind was doubtlessly exerted on him. While the poet may not be asked directly to write laudatory verse of his patron or of Octavian, certain subjects were frowned upon. For instance, the complete lack of any open criticism against Augustus in Augustan poetry is certainly not because everybody saw him as the perfect head of state. The dearth of balanced accounts of the battle of Actium is also significant.

Poets were also, to some extent, indirectly censored by the more pervasive national programme (so-called by Syme (1939: 440-58)). The most obvious symptom of the programme was that Augustus was pushing for the re-establishment of traditional Roman family values, which culminated in the *lex Iulia* in 18 BCE. He placed greater emphasis on the traditional Roman religion and had numerous temples built and restored throughout the

city. These found their way into the poetry of the time, the description of the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine being a case in point (see Chapter 4). It also meant that love poetry, such as Catullus had written, came under pressure. Not only because the metamorphosis of the city offered more themes and subjects, but also because writing about promiscuous love affairs might seem to undermine the traditional family values Octavian was trying to foster.

The true meaning of the national programme, however, is to be found in the fundamental shift in the self-consciousness of Roman society. The new Rome under the *Pax Augusta* not only had to reintegrate a society torn by a recent and pervasive civil war, but it was now composed of numerous ethnic groups from all over what was soon to become the Roman Empire. The city was no longer merely the capital of a city-state, but had become the capital of the Western World. As such, the need arose among its inhabitants – citizens, freedmen and even the ruling elite – for a revaluation of what it meant to be Roman. This was a need to hear, retold to suit the current context, the stories of the origins of the city and through them to justify its very existence.

The phenomenon of redefining or even recreating the origin myth of a people is a fascinating one.[3] Miles (1999: 323 as quoted in Rea 2007: 130) makes the following observation: "Foundation stories are typically generated not at the time of foundation, but after the fact, in an effort to address changes in self-perception associated with other changes in the community." One could therefore assume that there existed a need in the community of Rome to understand their rapidly changing world and a willingness among the poets to explain their opinions about these issues.

The problem facing Augustan poets was this: on the one side they wished to stay current, that is, to talk and write about the issues of the day such as the new direction of Roman politics and society, the *princeps* and the reintegration of Roman society after the civil wars. On the other hand, the poets were part of a social structure and could not avoid operating in a network of social and political protocols. Thus, whatever is said within such a network,

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[3] Work on the importance, nature and content of the foundation stories in Rome during the formation of the Empire has been popular lately. The most important studies are Hinds (1992), Fox (1996) Barchiesi (1997), Miles (1999), Murgatroyd (2005), Syed (2005) and Rea (2007).

especially if it were committed to writing, might incur public or private censure.[4] The problem was solved to some extent by Vergil through his significant reintroduction of the *vates* concept.

Newman (1967), in his thorough study shows how the word shed the negative connotations it carried in Ennius. Following Dahlman (1948: 343), Newman (1967: 15) cites a fragment from a tragedy by Ennius (Warmington 1956: 340-1) (Tr. *Fr*. 332-6):[5]

> … superstitiosi vates impudentesque harioli,
>
> aut inertes aut insani aut quibus egestas imperat ;
>
> qui sibi semitam non sapiunt, alteri monstrant viam ;
>
> quibus divitias pollicentur, ab iis drachumam ipsi petunt.
>
> de his divitiis sibi deducant drachumam, reddant cetera.

[… soothsaying prophets, shameless gut-gazers, clumsy or crazy, or obedient to the behest of want; men who know not their own path yet point the way for another, and seek a shilling from the very persons to whom they promise riches. From these riches let them take out a shilling for themselves, and hand over the rest. Tr. Warmington.*]*

Newman then shows how the concept of *vates* grew to encompass a whole system of ideas during the Augustan age. As *vates,* the poet could do more than merely write for entertainment. Thus one can conclude that, although Augustan poets could no longer be repositories of cultural knowledge such as poets in Homeric times were, as *vates* they still had authority to comment on history. As *vates,* they could comment on various subjects in the guise of priest or of prophet and they could expound upon matters of the state. Most importantly, the poet could, as *vates*, speak in the voice of a prophet and priest, without attracting the stigma that accompanied this position, as in Ennius, before the first century BCE.

While it is true that donning the *vates*-persona enabled the poet to speak with greater authority about current issues, it did not exempt him from official censure. But the poetic persona did afford some protection while doing so. As prophet or priest – as opposed to historian or

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[4] Taking the author's social situation into account when trying to understand his text cannot be avoided, but this is not to say that authorial intent *per se*, on the part of the author as historical person, even if such intent has been voiced, should necessarily prevail over other readings of the text.

[5] Newman also quotes from the *Annales* 370 (Warmington 1956: 136-7): *… satin vates verant aetate in agunda?* [… Do seers, in all their life's course, tell much of the truth?].

annalist – the poet was not obliged to relate past events as they actually occurred. In fact, the poet was not expected to reveal the source of his knowledge or even openly name the characters in his story (as for example in Vergil's *Ecloga* 4). The poet had licence to employ allegory and metaphor, allusions and intertext and although these may not have escaped the eyes of an overzealous critic, it afforded some freedom.

The term *vates* accumulated a lot of baggage between its first use denoting poet by Vergil c. 35 BCE and its use in Propertius' second book (c. 28-25 BCE). As can be expected, the shift in the semantic field of the word and the formation of the concept was a gradual one with each poet adding to the concept as it suited him.

In Vergil, it seems clear that the word *vates* has a somewhat different meaning from *poeta*. Dahlman (1948: 347-55) considers Vergil's usage of the word in the two places it occurs in the *Eclogae* – 7.28 and 9.34. The importance of these two cases warrants another look. From the seventh *Ecloga* (ll. 25-8):

> Thyrsis
>
> pastores, hedera **crescentem**[6] ornate **poetam,**
>
> Arcades, invidia rumpantur ut ilia Codro;
>
> aut, si ultra placitum laudarit, baccare frontem
>
> cingite, ne **vati** noceat mala lingua **futuro**.

[Arcadian shepherds, decorate the burgeoning poet with ivy-garlands, so that Codrus would burst his sides with envy; or, if he praises excessively, encircle my brow with berry-garlands,[7] to stop his wicked tongue harming your future vates.*]*

The passage is taken from an amoebaeic singing contest between Corydon and Thyrsis. Thyrsis asks the shepherds of Arcadia to decorate him as poet in order to make Codrus jealous and also to protect him from the envy he aims to instil in Codrus. Thyrsis refers to himself as poet twice in this short passage and in these two descriptions the difference for Vergil

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[6] Following the text of Clausen (1994: 19) and his commentary on page 221. Servius reads *nascentem* and, according to Clausen, it has an equally good manuscript tradition. For the argument here, it makes little difference as the idea is that the singer, already a *poeta*, still aspires to become a *vates*.

[7] The berry-garland seems to function as a protective amulet. The word *baccar* comes from the Greek βάκχαρις and is an unidentified plant. Servius, *In Eclogam* 4.19, which reads *herba est, quae fascinum depellit*, and on this line (*E.*7.27) notes *herba est ad depellendum fascinum.* Vergil seems to be the only poet to attribute magical properties to the plant (Clausen 1994: 222) That Vergil intended the suggestion of witchcraft is supported by the *mala lingua* in the next line. An evil tongue is one that casts spells as in Cat. 7.12 *mala fascinare lingua.* Maybe 'garlic' would be a better translation in as much as it transposes the sentiment to more modern times.

between the *poeta* and *vates* can be seen. The *crescens poeta* in line 25 is only an ambitious amateur, not yet accepted and acknowledged by his peers – in this case the other Arcadian shepherds. The *futurus vates* of line 28 foresees the poet as one already praised (and in danger of being praised excessively) and worthy of the protection of his fellow poets. The term *vates* in this case clearly denotes something more than *poeta*.

A similar juxtaposition of the two words occurs in the ninth *Ecloga,* ll. 32-6:

Lycidas:

        … et me fecere **poetam**

Pierides, sunt et mihi carmina, me quoque dicunt

vatem pastores, sed non ego credulus illis.

nam neque adhuc Vario videor nec dicere Cinna

digna, sed argutos inter strepere anser olores.

[Me too, the Muses have made a poet, and I have songs, the shepherds, too, have called me a vates, *but I do not believe them, because I seem not yet to sing of themes worthy of Varius and Cinna, but to cackle like a goose among the musical swans.]*

The action in the poem takes place on the road to town. Moeris and Lycidas have just met each other and, to pass the time, they recite poetry, their own, but also that of Menalcas whom they greatly admire. In the lines immediately preceding the extract Lycidas asks Moeris to recite something of Menalcas and in the extract offers the explanation as an excuse for not reciting his own poetry. Here, too, the name *vates*, applied to the poet, is linked to acceptance and acknowledgement by peers and again denotes something greater than merely *poeta*. Lycidas acknowledges that he was made a *poeta* and reveals that he has even been called *vates*, but does not believe that he has reached such a level.

Clausen (1994: 277-8) in his commentary on this passage ventures the opinion that "[m]uch, too much perhaps, has been made of the distinction between *poeta* and *vates*", and continues to say that in the case of Vergil "[c]ertainly too much has been made". He argues that Vergil largely gave the word up after the *Eclogae* and merely used it here (and in *E.*7.28) because he needed a "more elevated word meaning 'poet'."[8] However, in both the passages from the *Eclogae* discussed above, juxtaposing *poeta* and *vates* invites comparison and emphasises that

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[8] That *vates* is 'more elevated' than *poeta* is exactly what is argued here and the fact that such a word for poet is sometimes needed is very important.

the two words refer to two different kinds of poet. Clausen's argument that Vergil largely gave up the word *vates* as denoting poet is also not strictly true. The word *vates* is applied to Vergil himself, as poet, in the important programmatic introduction to *Aeneid* 7 (ll. 41-5), as will be discussed below. As far as we know, these constitute the first Augustan usages of the word *vates* denoting poet and it therefore seems reasonable that Vergil, when introducing this new concept into poetry, would take care to distinguish it from the existing word *poeta.*

In these two passages Vergil emphasises an important aspect of the *vates*: that is, that the *vates* is a poet of a higher quality and that this should be acknowledged by his peers (in these two cases the other shepherds) before he can lay claim to the title. A similar sentiment is voiced by Horace in the dedicatory poem to his first collection of *Odes* – the example is taken from Newman (1967: 45) who looks at all the instances where the term *vates* occurs in Horace's *Odes*. Addressed to Maecenas, the poem ends with the following promise (ll. 35-6):

>   quod si me **lyricis vatibus** inseres,
>
>   sublimi feriam sidera vertice.

[But if you should count me among the lyric vates*, I shall strike the lofty stars with the crown of my head.]*

Here the *lyricis vatibus* refer of course to the Greek lyric poets and it is clear that Horace is telling Maecenas that if he, the great patron of poets, would consider his poet to have reached the same level of proficiency in poetry as his Greek predecessors, he would feel so proud, that the top of his head would graze the stars. Horace uses the word *vates* here, like Vergil did, to describe poets of a higher order and, like Vergil, Horace subscribes to the idea that the title *vates* is bestowed on a poet by his peers.

Traditionally, however, the link was between the prophet or soothsayer and the supernatural world of the gods or the dead. Vergil, again, is our guide. The word *vates* occurs four times in the *Georgica*: in 3.491 it refers to soothsayers, but in the other three instances (4.387, 392 and 450) all from the fourth book, it is applied to Proteus. In lines 387-8 Cyrene calls Proteus a *vates* and explains to Aristaeus a little later in lines 392-5 that Proteus knows all things (past, present and future) because "it is surely the will of Neptune", whose herd of seals he tends. In the *Aeneid* the word *vates* appears all of 36 times,[9] the bulk of which refer to the Sybil in the

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[9] The instances were counted by Newman (1967: 51) and usefully tabulated.

sixth book. This is not surprising as the sixth book deals mainly with Aeneas' journey to the Underworld and his guide, at least for entering, is the prophetic Sybil.

One instance of the use of the word *vates* in the *Aeneid*, however, stands out – *A*.7.41-5:

> tu **vatem**, tu, diva, mone. dicam horrida bella,
>
> dicam acies actosque animis in funera reges
>
> Tyrrhenamque manum totamque sub arma coactam
>
> Hesperiam. maior rerum mihi nascitur ordo,
>
> maius opus moveo.

[Remind your vates*, goddess. I shall tell of horrible battles, I shall tell of the battle lines and of chiefs driven to death by courage,*[10] *of the Etruscan armies and the whole Hesperia under arms. A larger order of things is born for me, I move on to a greater work.]*

This passage comes from a short *prooemium* in the centre of the *Aeneid*, where the poet calls on the Muse Erato to remind and help him in his new venture. While the word *vates* applied to the poet himself might not strike the modern reader of Augustan poetry as out of the ordinary, this is the only place in the existing Vergilian corpus where the great poet ventures such a claim.

In keeping with his usage of the word in the *Eclogae*, Vergil here also applies *vates* to a poet who has moved on to "greater work" (l. 45). But the link here between the *vates* and song of particularly *bella* (wars), is even more interesting. While in the *Eclogae* the title *vates* was applied to poets of exceptional quality and with a special relationship with the Muses or gods, what this exceptional quality was or how it manifested in the poet's work was not qualified. Here Vergil says that he (and he is not hiding behind the persona of one of the characters as in the *Eclogae*) is a *vates* to the Muse, because he is busy with a "great work" that tells of "horrible battles". This link between the poet as *vates* and poetry about social and political comment becomes more frequent during the third decade BCE, as we shall see in Horace and Propertius.

The idea of a poet as the person who advances society by teaching morality and conveys information about the will of the gods was believed to have had its origins at the very dawn of

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[10] For *animi* = courage cf. *A*.8.228, 9.144, 249 and 703.

civilisation. Horace's commentary on the subject from the *Ars Poetica* (ll. 391-401)[11] is illuminating:

> silvestris homines sacer interpresque deorum
>
> caedibus et victu foedo deterruit Orpheus,
>
> dictus ob hoc lenire tigris rabidosque leones;
>
> dictus et Amphion, Thebanae conditor urbis,
>
> saxa movere sono testudinis et prece blanda
>
> ducere quo vellet. fuit haec sapientia quondam,
>
> publica privatis secernere, sacra profanis,
>
> concubitu prohibere vago, dare iura maritis,
>
> oppida moliri, leges incidere ligno.
>
> sic honor et nomen divinis vatibus atque
>
> carminibus venit.

[Orpheus, the sacred interpreter of the gods, restrained primitive man from bloodshed and the bestial way of life; because of this he is said to have tamed tigers and savage lions. Amphion, the founder of Thebes, is said to have moved stones by the sound of his lyre and to have guided them where he pleased by a supplicating spell.[12] It was formerly wise to distinguish between the public and private and the sacred and profane, to prohibit casual intercourse and to give marriage laws, to build towns and to inscribe the law on tablets. So honour and fame came to the vates *and their song.[13]]*

Horace maintains that the story of Orpheus taming wild animals really means that he, as archetypal poet, civilised humanity who were like wild animals; and that Amphion's construction of the walls of Thebes is an allegory for the poets' power to bring order to society by instructing people and by instituting useful laws.[14] The idea did of course not originate with Horace, but can be traced to the Sophist claims made in the introductory speech of Protagoras in Plato (316). Here Protagoras maintains that among others Orpheus, Musaeus, Homer and Hesiod were Sophists that went in the guises of prophets, soothsayers and poets.

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[11] This example is used by Newman (1967: 77-81) to try and date the *Ars Poetica* to just after *Odes* 1-3 (c. 23 BCE).

[12] *blanda* = that which casts a spell.

[13] Or with even greater emphasis on the divine as in "*Zo kwammen goddelijke dichters en hun lied aan roem en naam*" Schrijvers (1990: 49).

[14] The allegorical interpretation of myth, as here, was considered a valid way of understanding myth throughout the Greco-Roman World, as for instance Plutarch's reading of the Osiris myth in *De Iside et Osiride*.

As Brink (1971: 385) notes, the very fact that Plato chooses to parody this notion of the ancient origins of the "teacher of men", shows that it was not an uncommon notion.

The interesting point in Horace's explanation is the emphasis he places on the role of the divinely inspired poet as a teacher of social and political matters. Orpheus, who was taught by his father Apollo, did not teach mankind music or poetry, but restrained them from living like wild animals. Likewise Amphion is credited with a political accomplishment in charming the stones to construct, of their own accord, the walls of Thebes. Having given the key to the allegorical interpretation of these myths, Horace gives some of his own social commentary in the slightly ironic '*quondam*' in *fuit haec sapientia quondam* (396). These 'things', he promptly explains in abstract terms (397-9), are rules regarding the distinction between private and public life, the sacred and the profane and the institution of laws – things that should surely still be "wise to distinguish between" in Horace's Rome. Horace's argument becomes clear in lines 400-1: poets were once honoured as teachers of men, when the creation of laws to govern social order was considered important, since it is still important; Horace assumes that poets should still be honoured as teachers of men.

Propertius' use of the word *vates* to denote "poet" is surprisingly limited. It does not occur in the *Monobiblos* at all and only once in the second collection. He avoids it again in the third volume, but uses it twice in the last book – both occasions in the opening of 4.6. The single occurrence in the second book is, however, striking. It is set in a *recusatio* (2.10.19-20):

> haec ego castra sequar; **vates** tua castra canendo
>
>> magnus ero: servent hunc mihi fata diem!

[I shall follow these camps, I'll be a great poet-priest by singing of your camp: may the Fates reserve that day for me.]

This is the only application of the word *vates* for poet in the whole of the Propertian corpus before poem 4.6 and perhaps not too much should be read into it. However, it is curious that Propertius generally avoided this usage, despite examples in Vergil and Horace, and saved it for two special occasions only. The first from the second book quoted above and the second from the last book in the *prooemium* of the Actium poem 4.6. The similarity of the contexts is striking: in both poems Propertius styles himself as a poet from the military camp of Augustus. In 2.10 this is done in the future tense – the poet promises to turn to writing about fighting in his old age (l. 8) when he is done writing about his *puella* (l. 9). In 4.6 the poet casts himself as an already established *vates*. In the opening lines of this poem he leads a

sacred ritual, gives the customary call for silence and begins by speaking of the Temple of Palatine Apollo and the victory at Actium.

This chapter, being chiefly concerned with the *vates*-concept, will confine itself to the question of how Propertius' use of the word pertains to the development of his persona, what he thinks his role as poet is in the new regime and what the role of poets in general should be.[15]

Like Vergil in *Ecloga* 7.25-8, Propertius sees a *vates* as something to which a poet should aspire and he, too, expresses the wish to achieve that status *fatis volentibus*. Like Vergil, too, Propertius links the *vates* to political themes in poetry. Compare *dicam horrida bella* (*A*.7.41 quoted above) and *bella canam* (Prop. 2.10.8). Though it is not clear whether either poet was influenced by the other text in this specific case, it seems clear enough that both poets, along with Horace, associated the *vates* (among all its other associations) with a poet that handled political or social themes. Propertius, however, goes further. Where Horace maintained that *vates* have a social function of creating order through instruction and Vergil said that he can be a *vates* as he is remembering past wars and the foundation of the city, Propertius makes a more specific claim: he hopes to become a *vates* by singing of the camp (military and political) of Octavian. He thereby suggests both that this particular topic is guaranteed to gain the approval of his peers which will give him the status of vates and that only a poet with the status of vates can sing about these matters.

It might easily be construed that Propertius has succumbed to official pressures and committed to paper his intention to write poetry in praise of Octavian – since capitulation and the promise to capitulate come to much the same thing. On the other hand, since this statement is imbedded in a *recusatio*, as Stahl notes (1985: 158), it may also constitute an attempt by the poet to buy time. This, Stahl continues, would afford the poet space to continue "to go on announcing his own message – if necessary, in disguise."

The two points of view are not mutually exclusive. Following Stahl, it might be conceded that Propertius is trying to buy time for writing love poetry instead of working on the Augustan

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[15] Much has been written on the textual problems in which Propertius' second book abounds, but interpretative studies of poem 2.10 have not been lacking. The most important ones are: Hubbard (1974: 102-3); Wyke (1987: 47-61); Warden (1977: 19-21); Stahl (1985: 156-62); Tatum (2000: 393-410) and Cairns (2006: 326-33).

programme. But this does not necessarily mean that he is not sincerely buying into the programme – it might only mean that he prefers the genre of love poetry. The other point of view equally allows for qualification. A promise to write about recent events in Roman History and in so doing to praise Octavian, who was indeed victorious, does not necessarily mean that the poet agrees with the whole new programme of social reforms in Rome. Or, if the poet in principle supports the programme, it does not follow that he supports every aspect of it. It seems that describing Propertius' attitude toward Octavian and the new regime in poem 2.10 as either for or against is an oversimplification. The poet's feelings were ambivalent, as could be expected and never explicitly explained in his poetry. However, he says more about these themes toward the end of the second book (2.31 and 2.34), which will be discussed in the next chapter.

In this chapter it has been shown that the Augustan poets, starting with the *Eclogae* of Vergil, reinvented the use of the term *vates* to denote poet and that this new term for poet differed in meaning from the term *poeta* in several important aspects. By linking the poet as *vates* to the divine, to the oracular and to the ancient conception of the bard as teacher of men, the Augustan poet could, when necessary, assume a persona that could speak about current political issues with authority. In Vergil's *Aeneid* (7.41-5) and Propertius' poetry (2.10 and 4.6) the term *vates* is also applied to a poet who sings about battles and war. Whether Propertius implies that he will or can become a *vates* only when he follows Octavian's camp or when he starts singing the praises of Octavian is not so clear.

Propertius returns to the subject of his own poetry in the final poem of the second book, 2.34, where he also gives a curious and outwardly lopsided review of Vergil's work, the *Eclogae*, *Georgica* and of the *Aeneid,* of which he seems to have heard a considerable part. The poem deals, in part at least, with the 'national' poem Vergil was composing – 'national' in the sense that Vergil was retelling the myth of the origins of Rome and re-examining what *Romanitas* was. Just a little earlier in the book, poem 2.31 touches on Octavian's building programme and its association, especially in the case of the Palatine temple, with the victory at Actium which ended the civil war. Since these two poems are the subject of the next chapter, here it is enough to note that, though it is clear that the poet of 2.34 prefers Vergil's *Eclogae* and *Georgica* to the *Aeneid*, he does not make it clear why he does so. He does not, however, call Vergil a *vates* for writing the *Aeneid*, nor does he apply the word to anyone again before poem 4.6.

CHAPTER 4:

The Apollos in Propertius 2.31 and 2.34

Propertius' elegies 2.31 and 2.34 are especially important for this study, not only because the image of Apollo features strongly in both, but also, in the bigger picture of Propertius' career and poetry, the second book is important as it celebrates the poet's entry into the circle of Maecenas. This had some important consequences. As was noted in the discussion of Propertius' earlier programmatic poems, it was important for him to assert or reassert his poetic intentions in the second collection, hence the *recusatio* that opens the book. But, it seems that he felt this one poem was not sufficient and Propertius restates his position, with due variation on emphases, in 2.10, where, as was discussed in the previous chapter, he was not yet ready to use the *vates* persona. Entry into the circle of Maecenas and thus being considered as one of the more prominent poets in Rome afforded Propertius the opportunity or maybe even the obligation of writing about other poets and their poetry, as he does in 2.34. Lastly, one would imagine, membership of the elite society in Rome also entailed taking part in discussions of current political affairs with patrons and other wealthy citizens, hence the references to legislation (2.7), the imminent invasion of Parthia (2.14) and the new buildings on the Palatine (2.31).

Poem 2.34 is furthermore especially important for Propertian and Augustan studies in general as it not only constitutes an important revelation by the poet regarding his own poetry, but it also volunteers opinions about contemporary poets – some of them known to us, like Vergil and Catullus, but also some largely unknown, such as Varro, Gallus and Calvus. This poem is also important for the discussion of the image of Apollo because here, for the first time in Propertius, Apollo appears as both protecting deity of Octavian and as god of poetry in the same poem. The poem has, not surprisingly, enjoyed a lot of attention. Not only are there various textual problems concerning the second book and this poem in particular, but the poem has also generated conflicting interpretations. It is hoped that a comparison between the two figures of Apollo, which this chapter proposes, will solve some of the problems and shed more light on the remaining difficulties.

Propertius 2.31[1]

Poem 2.31 offers an excuse to Cynthia for being late, which the poet blames on his dallying at the opening of the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine (9 October, 28 BCE). It consists mostly of a description of the artworks in the temple.[2] This temple also features in a poem by Horace – *Ode* 1.31 (*Quid dedicatum poscit Apollinem / vates?*) – published about two years after that of Propertius and it is mentioned in the *Aeneid* (8.720) at the end of the description of Aeneas' shield, where the conquering Augustus sits on the porch of the temple, looking at the triumphal processions.

Apollo features in the poem as the subject of several of the artworks described by the poet. The poem is very visual, yet the poet does not describe the nature of the artworks clearly, whether they are sculptures in the round or relief works, assuming that his audience would be familiar with the temple. It is even unclear how many images of Apollo are described by Propertius and much has been written about the exact number of images[3] of the god described in this poem. Reading Propertius as describing only one image, however, necessitates significant textual transpositions – see Richardson (1977: 302-8) for the various suggestions – and is not supported by most scholars.[4] Neither does such a reading seem necessary as there were doubtless various images of the god in and around his temple and there is no reason why Propertius could not describe more than one.[5] What is important for the argument in this chapter are the specific attributes of the god to which the poet draws attention. Considered together, various aspects of the artworks, which the poet singles out for special mention – whether explicitly stated or implied – progressively build a subtext of comment.

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[1] Following recent commentators, reading poems 2.31 and 2.32 as two separate poems seems to make the best sense. I am following chiefly the interpretation of Hubbard (1984: 281-97), who rejects most of the line transpositions suggested by Richardson (1977: 301-8) and Camps (1967: 56). The most recent arguments are discussed in Heyworth (2007: 246-8) and Bowditch (2009: 402 n.3). For the sake of clarity, the numbering is retained, as in most editions and specifically that of Camps. Here, however, the poem is of interest mainly with a view to poem 2.34, and as such is important mainly for its mention of Apollo.

[2] The temple must have been well known to Propertius' readers, who would have visited it, probably more than once. Camps (1967: 204) gives a list of all the contemporary descriptions of the building and its artworks.

[3] Most commentators identify the images of Apollo described in lines 5-6 and 15-6 as statues (Butler and Barber 1933: 247, Last 1953: 27-9 Camps 1967: 205, Richardson 1977: 303 and Newman 1997: 85). Though Pliny (*N.H.* 36.25) places the famous Apollo *Citharoedus* at the Palatine temple of Apollo, there is no indication that the images of Apollo described by Propertius are in fact statues.

[4] The most important arguments for more than one image of Apollo are Last (1953: 27-9), who interprets Propertius' lines to support two images of Apollo in the temple precinct. Babcock (1967: 189-94) also supports two as does Kellum, *Sculptured Programs and Propaganda in Augustan Rome* (Diss. Harvard Univ. 1982) 68-74 (quoted by Roccos 1989: 572), who locates three images of Apollo in the Temple precinct.

[5] For multiple images of divinities in other sanctuaries Roccos quotes Ridgway (1984: 38) (Apollo at Delphi); 40 (Zeus at Olympia); 59 (Athena on the Acropolis in Athens.) Finally, Pausanias 1.3.4 mentions three statues of Apollo in the Agora temple.

It would therefore be useful here to give a brief survey of all the artworks he describes. The specific mention of the columns of "Punic marble" (l. 3) adds to the visual impact of the poem, especially if Camps (1967: 205) is correct in saying that this marble was yellow or red in colour. Richardson's contention (1977: 303) that the adjective seems to be no more than a way of saying that the marble was from Africa, is somewhat misleading: the reference to Africa is repeated in the adjective Libyan (l. 12) applied to the ivory of the temple doors and the story of the Danaids is also linked to Africa. These descriptions are not only of the exotic origins of the building material, but also the explicit mention of Africa and the implicit reference to the Aegyptioi evoke the memory of enemies of Rome that came from Africa. From the columns, the poet's glance moves to the Danaids. Details of the myth of the Danaids must be pieced together from various works resulting in many variants. The salient points are that there was some form of conflict between two brothers, Danaus and Aegyptus, each with fifty children. The result of the conflict was that the daughters of Danaus were forced to marry their cousins, the Aegyptioi. On their wedding night, all except Hypermnestra killed their husbands. Later they are eternally punished in the Underworld by having to carry water in jars perforated like sieves. (These myths are summarised with usefull references to the ancient sources by Graves (1960: 200-3) and Gantz (1996: 203-7).)

The illustration of this myth is an apparently strange choice of decoration for this temple. Horace also refers to the Danaids in *Ode* 3.11.25-52, where they are already in the Underworld being punished for impiety. Not only is theirs a story of family strife with violence being done within a family, and deceit, but they also were judged in the Underworld and found guilty of impiety. Richardson (1977: 302) assures us that there is "no special connexion between the Danaids and Apollo", but this is not completely correct. Graves (1960: 200-1 and 203 n.4) informs us that when Danaus arrived in Argos, the king, Gelanor (or Pelasgus), would not cede the throne. However, a wolf came down from the hills and killed the leading bull of a herd of cattle and this was seen as an omen that, if Danaus was opposed, he would take the throne by force. Hence, Gelanor decided to resign the throne and Danaus, convinced that the wolf was Apollo in disguise, subsequently dedicated a shrine at Argos to Apollo *Lukeios* (so Pausanias 2.19.3-4).

The poet next describes an image of Apollo in lines 5-6:

hic equidem Phoebo visus mihi pulchrior ipso

marmoreus tacita carmen hiare lyra;

[Here a marble image with mouth wide open in song to a silent lyre seemed to me even more beautiful than Phoebus himself.]

For the moment it is sufficient to note that the poet chose to highlight the musical attributes of this Apollo – his lyre and his mouth wide open in song – and the audience is invited to consider these attributes of the god.

Before the poet gets to another image of Apollo, his gaze is drawn first to the four cattle sculpted by Myron, the 5th century Attic sculptor, who was famous for his work on animals (Richardson (1977: 303) citing Pliny (*N.H.* 34.57)). The description of cattle in the Temple of Apollo naturally leads the mind to the god's association with herds and specifically to the cattle he tended in Piera, which were stolen by the infant Hermes. After mentioning the shining marble of the temple itself (Carrara marble Richardson (1977: 303) informs us, citing Servius *ad Aen.* 8.720), Apollo's guise as sun god is alluded to in the sculpture of Sol in his chariot on the pediment. Next are the two leaves of the temple door, made of ivory (ll. 12-4), the one depicting the defeat of the Gauls at Parnassus, the other the funerals of the Niobids.

The story of Apollo and Artemis slaying the Niobids is related by various sources. Homer (*Il.*24.602-9) says there were six sons and six daughters born to Niobe and that they were killed because their mother compared herself with Latona and boasted that she had borne more children. In later tradition, Ovid (*Met.*6.146-312) fixes the number of children on seven boys and seven girls, following (Pseudo-)Apollodorus (*Bibliotheca* 3.5.6) and Diodorus Siculus (*Bibliotheca Historica* 4.74.3-4). Most versions concur that the tragedy was caused by Niobe's hubris.[6] The defeat of the Gauls on the other door refers to the invasion of 279 BCE.[7] Pausanias (10.23.1-9) relates how, when the Gallic forces were camping at Delphi, portents were sent by the god. He notes specifically that the ground shook for the whole day and that there was continuous thunder and lightning, which not only prevented the Gauls from hearing orders, but also set those who were struck on fire. In the evening, he continues, there was a severe frost and snow and great rocks broke from Parnassus and fell on the Gauls.

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[6] Interestingly, Hyginus (*Fab.* 9) adds that besides her boast of having more children than the Titaness, she also spoke contemptuously of Artemis and Apollo, because she wore a man's attire and he wore his hair long and dressed in a woman's gown.

[7] Polyb. 4.46.1; Liv. 38.16.1-2; Paus. 1.4.1, 10.19-23 and Just. 24.4.1. These and other ancient sources are reviewed in Champion (1995: 213-20).

The presence of Apollo is strongly felt in the events depicted. He features, with his sister Artemis, in the case of the Niobids, as divine avenger and punisher of hubris and in defeating the Gauls, he is cast in his role as protector god, especially of his oracle at Delphi. Galinsky (1996: 219) feels that these "characteristics [saviour and avenger] resonated in the Augustan context far beyond a mere reference to the battle of Actium." Just as Apollo was the saviour of Delphi, the symbol of civilization, so Augustus styled himself as the saviour of the citizens. Regarding the 'message' in the Niobid panel, Galinsky (1996: 219) points to what he describes as an Augustan tenet, articulated in Horace (*C*.3.6.5: *dis te minorem quod geris, imperas* [because you hold yourself to be less than the gods, you rule]). However, as Galinsky rightly remarks (1996: 221-2), the artists working with Augustus on the temple were developing an "imagery that involved experimentation and multiple meanings" because Augustan culture was characterised "not by frigid homogeneity, but by plentiful tensions and contradictions".

The last image of Apollo described by the poet seems to stand inside the temple, for the poet's glance seems to have progressed from outside the temple, through the ivory doors (ll. 15-6):

> deinde inter matrem deus ipse interque sororem
>
> Pythius in longa carmina veste sonat.

[Next the god himself, between his mother and sister, Pythius, in flowing robes, pouring forth songs.]

Pliny (*N.H.* 36.25) informs us that a famous statue of *Apollo Citharoedus* by Scopas stood in the temple and it seems that it might be this one to which Propertius is referring.[8] Here the god is again depicted as singing, but he is also flanked by his mother and sister, linking the image to the story of the Niobids depicted on the doors. The cult title *Pythius* refers directly to his role at Delphi, which was noted in the scene of the Gauls on Parnassus also on the temple doors.

The descriptions of both these images of Apollo draw attention to the musical attributes of the god and, taken on their own, would fit a poet's view of the temple admirably, in that his eye would naturally follow what is important to him – poetry and music. In the larger context of the poem, however, such a simple interpretation falls somewhat short of the whole truth.

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[8] The surrounding statues of Latona and Artemis, Pliny tells us (*N.H.* 36.24 and 32) were by Cephisodotus and Timotheus respectively (Richardson 1977: 303). A panel from Sorrento, also displaying Apollo between Latona and Artemis, forms the basis of an important study of Apollo statues during the Augustan age by Roccos (1989: 571-88).

Firstly, the name of Caesar Octavian is associated with the temple in the first couplet of the poem[9] and secondly, besides the images of Apollo various other artworks are also described focussing on other characteristics of Apollo and myths associated with him.

Images of Apollo and artworks depicting various scenes from myths in which he was involved are of course exactly what one would expect in a temple dedicated to the god. The question, however, is whether the selection of artworks Propertius chose to describe is in anyway significant – after all they represent only a few pieces of what must have been a vast collection.[10] An even more important question for the present study of the political face of Apollo is whether the temple contained any association with Apollo *Actius* or if at least it was associated in the minds of the poets with the battle between Octavian and Anthony.

Opinions are divided as to how closely at this stage the Apollo of the Palatine temple was associated with the victory at Actium. The artworks in the temple, as far as they have survived, as well as numismatic evidence are discussed by Zanker (1988) and Gurval (1995). Neither could show direct evidence of any reference to Apollo *Actius* and, in considering the circumstantial evidence, they hold opposing opinions.

Zanker (1988: 85) contends that there had been a statue specifically of Apollo *Actius* in the complex near the statues of the Danaids and associates this statue with depictions of the god on a *denarius* (*RIC*[2] 365-6) which is clearly identified as Apollo *Actius*.[11] Gurval (1995: 125 and 285-6), having studied the same coin, finds the identification with the temple dubious. He suggests that Zanker might have followed earlier interpretations (which he cites in notes 20-2 on pages 285-6). Having studied the coin himself, he could not find any indication that the Apollo on the coin was in fact a depiction of a statue from the temple on the Palatine and it is hard to disagree with him on this point. He dismisses (1995: 126) the idea that the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine displayed any allusions to Actian Apollo for there existed no official

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[9] Though the temple's specific association with the battle at Actium is at the most not clear and possibly absent, as will be argued below, the temple was originally commissioned in 36 BCE during his campaign against Sextus Pompeius.

[10] The artworks excavated at the site of the temple are thoroughly interpreted by Zanker (1988 *passim.*) and Gurval (1995: 123-36).

[11] The coin in question, Gurval (1995: 285) says, was issued by one of the moneyers from the *collegium* in Rome in 16 BCE. The obverse reads "IMP(erator) CAESAR AUGUST(us) TR(bunicia) POT(estate) IIX" and the reverse "shows the male god in a long robe, standing on a low platform ornamented with what is probably three naval prows flanked by two anchors." The god holds a *patera* in his right hand and a lyre in his left and the legend above and below the altar reads "APOLLINI ACTIO".

cult titles or dedicatory inscriptions linking the Palatine Temple to Actium; archaeological evidence proposed for such a link is inconclusive and historical documents record no steps taken by Augustus to embellish the memory of Actium at the dedication of the temple (Gurval 1995: 131).

What probably tilts the argument in Gurval's favour is the fact that any memorial of the battle of Actium, however hidden, would seem to be incongruent with Octavian's political agenda at the time. By 28 BCE, the new master of Rome was not in a secure position at all. Rome was only beginning to recover from the civil conflict and Octavian went to great lengths to try and heal the schisms created by the war and to integrate citizens who supported Anthony into his administration. Syme (1939: 307 and 313) recalls that 27 BCE was also the year in which Octavian returned power to the senate and the people (at least according to the *Res Gestae* 34) and it is interesting that no contemporary account of the details of the battle at Actium has survived.[12] While Octavian might have avoided reference to Actium and Actian Apollo in general and specifically in the artworks of the Palatine temple, this need not have prevented the poet from expressing thoughts on the new regime or from associating Actium with the temple.

A cursory glance at the better-known poetic texts in which the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine features, gives ample grounds for suspecting that Actium and this temple were closely associated with each other in the minds of the poets. In Horace's *Ode* 1.31 the poet dons the *vates* persona, which was more political than the *poeta* persona, in Propertius 2.31 *magnus Caesar* (referring to Octavian) appears in the second line, in Vergil's *Aeneid* (8.714-28) the image of Octavian sitting on the steps of the temple appears after a lengthy description of the victory at Actium and, lastly, Propertius 4.6 professes to be an aetiology of this very temple, but consists mostly of a description of the circumstances surrounding the battle of Actium.

Here in 2.31, Propertius professes ambivalent feelings toward the new regime in very veiled terms, but taken in conjunction with the sentiments he voices in 2.34, they seem clear enough. His ambivalence is reflected especially in the description of the two ivory door panels in lines 13-4:

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[12] The ancient sources, both contemporary and later, are usefully listed and discussed in Tarn (1931: 173-99).

> altera deiectos Parnasi vertice Gallos,
>
> altera maerebat funera Tantalidos.

[One mourned the Gauls thrown off the cliff of Parnassus, and the other the funerals of the children of Niobe, Tantalus' daughter.]

In the images of the murderous Danaids allusions to both the civil war (the murder of relatives) and to the war against Cleopatra and Egypt can be seen (see Zanker 1988: 85-9, Gurval 1995: 124-6 and above). Although the link between the story of Aegyptus and Danaus and the war between Octavian and Anthony may seem tenuous, the link between this story and Apollo *Lukeios* is even more so. Thus, if it is a choice between explaining the presence of the images of the Danaids in the temple by saying on the one hand that they represent a depiction of a myth in which Apollo features, and on the other that they represent a veiled allegory for the conflict between Anthony and Octavian, the latter seems easier to believe. However, even if the images were placed in the temple intending a reference to Apollo *Lukeios* in Argos and even if such an intent could be proven, it still does not follow that Propertius could not read the images as an allegory in this poem.

As for the images on the ivory doors, it is also curious that the poet would draw specific attention to these two images of mourning in what seems to be a celebration at the opening of the temple. Even more curious is the content of the myths referred to, for in both stories Apollo is at least an accessory to the violent acts that lead to the deaths being mourned. Against the background of Apollo's part in the battle of Actium, eloquently portrayed in *Aeneid* 8.675-713 and Propertius 4.6, it seems not unreasonable to see in Propertius' use of myth here an allusion to the deaths of so many Roman citizens in the civil war, specifically with the aid of Apollo at Actium lurking in the background.

Propertius mentions the civil war often in his poetry and often deplores the loss of human life. Earlier in the second book, in the programmatic opening poem, Propertius mentions some well-known battles from the sequence of events that led eventually to the establishment of Octavian's rule. There he explains at length that, if the Fates had granted him the power (2.1.17), he would not sing of ancient mythology, or the origins of Rome (ll. 19-24) or even the Punic wars, but he would prefer the wars and political deeds (*bellaque resque*) of Octavian (ll. 25-6). He continues to enumerate typical subjects he would describe (ll. 27-34):

> bellaque resque tui memorarem Caesaris, et tu

>Caesare sub magno cura secunda fores.
>
>nam quotiens Mutinam aut civilia busta Philippos
>
>>aut canerem Siculae classica bella fugae,
>
>eversosque focos antiquae gentis Etruscae,
>
>>et Ptolomaeei litora capta Phari,
>
>aut canerem Aegyptum et Nilum, cum attractus in urbem
>
>>septem captivis debilis ibat aquis,
>
>aut regum auratis circumdata colla catenis,
>
>>Actiaque in Sacra currere rostra Via;

[I would have remembered the wars and politics of your Caesar, and you yourself [Maecenas], next to great Caesar, would be second. Because how often I would sing of Mutina or the civilian graveyard at Philippi or the naval battle and flight at Sicily, the overturned hearths of the ancient Etruscan race, and the capture of the coast of the Ptolemaic Pharos, or would sing of Egypt and Nile, when dragged into the city he went maimed, with his seven estuaries captive; or of the necks of kings encircled with golden chains and Actian prows moving along the Via Sacra.*]*

With the exception of one, the events are related in chronological order:[13] (1) the defeat of Anthony at Mutina (43 BCE), (2) Anthony's defeat of Brutus and Cassius at Philippi (42 BCE), (3) Octavian's war on and eventual defeat of Sextus Pompey, son of Pompey the Great at Naulochus (38-36 BCE), (4) the Perusine War against L. Antonius (41 BCE) and (5) the Alexandrian War against the remaining forces of Cleopatra and Anthony just after Actium. The final description of the triumph refers to the one held in 29 BCE, after the capture of Egypt. On this list Nethercut (1971: 413) remarks that Propertius implies a different order to the processions at the Triple Triumph of 29 BCE to that we have from Dio (51.21.5-8) and makes the point that Propertius' 'promotion' of the Actian procession to last in the list, instead of on the middle day as Octavian had it, gives a clue to the latent intention of the poem.

What is furthermore striking about this enumeration is the single instance where the chronological sequence of events is disregarded. The Perusine War or siege definitely happened before hostilities between Sextus Pompey and Octavian broke out, as any Roman of

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[13] The identification of the events to which the poem referes is indebted to the commentary of Richardson (1977: 212-4).

the time would know, especially as Propertius has already mentioned Perusia in 1.21 and 22. The siege of Perusia, which has since become infamous for the cruelty displayed by Octavian to its senators, who were executed, must have weighed heavily on the mind of Propertius who, it would seem, grew up, if not in the town, then very close by it.[14] In any event, the family of Propertius no doubt suffered considerable financial losses after the events.

The two references to civil war in 1.21-2 and 2.1 also share a curious comment on the events. In 2.1.27 *civilia busta* are found at Philippi and in 1.22.3 *sepulcra* are found at Perusia. It is of course well known that Propertius often deplored the loss of Roman lives in the civil war and at least once (3.5) he makes it completely clear that he is not cut out to partake in or to sing about war.[15] Propertius' views on Actium specifically are negative in the same way. Nethercut (1971: 413-4) discusses the four instances where the battle is mentioned in Propertius' second book (2.1.19-34, 2.15.41-8, 2.16.39-42 and 2.31), in all of which the loss of Roman lives are deplored. To return to Propertius' description of the ivory panels of the temple doors in 2.31 and the references to the mourning of the death of Niobe's children and of the Gauls being flung from Parnassus, it seems not too much to see in this detail another allusion to the horrors of war.

Besides the two faces of Apollo, as we see them in the Augustan poetical climate – on the one hand that of *Musagetes,* the god of poets, and on the other that of the patron deity of the *gens Iulia* – Apollo also has a much older duality. As bringer of pestilence as well as healer he already features in the *Iliad* and myths of the god as both punisher of impiety as well as helper are common. The description of the panels on the temple doors and the fact that he chose these details seem to indicate that Propertius had this darker side of Apollo's nature in mind.

Propertius' ambivalent feelings towards the new regime now become clearer. He is grateful for the peace that followed Actium, he is favourably impressed by the building projects in Rome and no doubt looks forward to a time of relative peace in which the arts will flourish. But in the same breath he reminds us that these pleasures did not come without a price. While he and other citizens can enjoy the opening of the new temple, other Romans are mourning

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[14] The events are related by Appian (*BC* 5.5.38-9) and Dio Cassius (48.14.3). Modern historical discussions include Syme (1939: 210-2), Nethercut (1971: 401-6), Putnam (1976: 93-123) and especially Stahl (1985: 99-129).

[15] The selections given in Sullivan (1976: 54-75) make Propertius' opinion regarding war and especially the civil war quite clear. These extracts on their own, however, do not constitute proof that Propertius was anti-Augustan *per se*.

those who died in the civil war and especially at Actium. Propertius is not a reactionary Republican wishing for the 'good old days', he seems prepared to sacrifice the comparatively greater political freedom afforded by the Republic, in order to enjoy the peace brought by Octavian under a more autocratic rule. His issue with the new regime, it seems, is the shape it threatened to give to the myth of Actium and by extension to the civil war. For Propertius, Actium and the rest of the civil war were a tragedy in which countless Romans lost their lives and not to be celebrated as a glorious victory.

Propertius 2.34[16]

Poem 2.34 is important for Propertian and Augustan studies for two reasons. The poet provides insight into his social position and the nature of his own poetry by describing his relationship with the other poets from the circle of Maecenas and by discussing Vergil's *Eclogae* and *Georgica* as well as the *Aeneid* – the pre-eminent literary work of that generation and of the entire Roman culture, at a very early stage of its composition – the poet provides insight into both the process of composition of the *Aeneid* and of his own aesthetic preferences. The question that immediately springs to mind is what Propertius' opinion of Vergil and, more importantly, of the epic he was busy writing, was. This question is of fundamental importance. Consideration of this question, on the one hand, can show how Propertius defined his poetry in relation to the pre-eminent poet of his generation and, because so much of Vergil's poetry has survived, his poetry can be used to form a clearer picture of Propertius' poetry. On the other hand, knowing how Propertius expressed his views on the world around him in relation to Vergil can shed more light on their socio-cultural situation. The very fact that Propertius had the freedom to voice an opinion open to various interpretations on the work of Vergil, provides insight into the actual historical situation in which both poets found themselves under Augustus.

Thus, the question that has elicited the most scholarly debate is exactly about this relation between Propertius and Vergil and, more specifically on the most basic aspect of the relation: whether Propertius is criticising Vergil's epic or not. Unfortunately, but not unexpectedly, the text of the poem does not volunteer a clear and straightforward answer. The poem is littered with learned allusions to Greek predecessors, poetry from contemporaries and mythological

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[16] The unity of 2.34 is assumed, following Richardson (1977: 311-2) and the Oxford text (Heyworth 2007: 262-5), despite Camps (1967: 222) and Butler and Barber (1933: 76). The argument in this chapter, however, focuses specifically on the last part of the poem and would apply regardless whether 2.34 is one or two poems.

references and this makes extracting an answer to the question even harder. Since the poem, especially the latter half, is mostly concerned with the poet's own poetry, finding an answer to what he thought of Vergil and the *Aeneid* entails dissecting various levels of meaning within the poem.

This section will not attempt to answer the question fully and to show the relation between the two poets in detail, but it will rather try to refine the question. It will be argued that the relation between Propertius and Vergil can be more fruitfully studied by first asking why Propertius selected only certain parts, and then only particular aspects of these parts of Vergil's work. In particular why did Propertius pick the Actium section from *Aeneid* 8?

Poem 2.34 starts off as an invective against a certain Lynceus, who writes philosophical and didactic poetry and ends with what is chiefly a statement by the poet about his own poetry set in an appraisal of what seems to be his favourite themes from Vergil, before it enumerates several love poets (Varro, Catullus, Calvus and Gallus) among whom Propertius would like his name to be placed.

The basic argument of 2.34 is not too difficult to follow. Lynceus apparently made a pass at the poet's girlfriend. Propertius explains that he is a very jealous man and that he would tolerate almost any breach of the protocols of friendship except the attempted seduction of his girlfriend. But even this temporary lapse he is prepared to forgive since, he says, it happened while Lynceus was drunk and, it later transpires, he was not yet ready to withstand Love's temptations. The poet rejoices at the fact that Lynceus has fallen in love and is suffering like a true elegiac love poet. He continues to explain to Lynceus that his knowledge of philosophy and the natural sciences will not help him in his current state; he would be better off emulating Philitas or Callimachus; he will not be able to survive 'savage love' on his own, but he needs Propertius' help. The point, as Propertius makes clear, is that girls are interested in what he writes and not in philosophical or religious explanations – he, who possesses no family fortune and can lay no claim to ancestors with military credentials.

The poem continues with a comparison between Propertius and the greatest poet of his generation – Vergil – in lines 59-66:

> me iuvet hesternis positum languere corollis,
>> quem tetigit iactu certus ad ossa deus;

Actia Vergilium custodis litora Phoebi,

    Caesaris et fortes dicere posse rates,[17]

qui nunc Aeneae Troiani suscitat arma

    iactaque Lavinis moenia litoribus.

cedite Romani scriptores, cedite Grai!

    nescio quid maius nascitur Iliade.

[Let me languish, laid down among yesterday's garlands, me whom the unerring[18] god, has struck to the very marrow. Vergil can sing of Actium's shores under the guardianship of Phoebus and of Caesar's brave ships that now shake the arms of Trojan Aeneas, and of the walls cast on Lavinian shore. Make way, Roman writers, make way Greeks! Something greater than the Iliad is being born.]

These lines clearly refer to Vergil's *Aeneid* and specifically to the ecphrastic description of the Shield of Aeneas (8.675-714). The political content is clear: Apollo is directly linked to Actium and so to the victory of Octavian there. Vergil made the role Apollo played in the battle central in two ways:[19] The description of the battle of Actium is depicted in the centre of the shield made by Vulcan (l. 675: *in medio classis aeratas, Actia bella*) and Apollo's role in the battle is described as follows (*A*.8.704-6):

Actius haec cernens arcum tendebat Apollo

desuper: omnis eo terrore Aegyptus et Indi,

omnis Arabs, omnes vertebant terga Sabaei.

[Apollo Actius *seeing this from above bent his bow and all the Egyptians, Indians, Arabs and Sabaeans, terrified at this, turned and fled.]*

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[17] Commentaries pass over the lack of a main verb in silence. The accusative with infinitive may still fall under the *me iuvet* of line 59, though Camps (1967: 63) separates the line with a semi-colon. Understanding *Vergilium …posse dicere* under the *me iuvet* of line 59 would give a curious slant to the passage: "It would please me that Vergil can speak of …". The text has also been questioned. Heyworth (2007: 274-5) prefers to read *Vergilium ... dicere posse* as *Vergilio* with an omitted *est* understood, even though *est* after *Vergilio* or *Vergilium* would have been metrically possible. Heyworth has no problem reading an indicative here and argues (2007: 399) for also reading an indicative at line 59: *me iuvat hesternis.…* Stahl (1985: 180) is satisfied to understand the clause under the *iuvet* of line 59, which would give the meaning: "It would please me to lie … it would please Vergil to be able to speak of …".

[18] 'Unerring' follows Katz (2004: 227), but the *certus* applied to *deus* implies a greater semantic field. If one reads *certus* as 'true,' Propertius, as *amator,* is also expressing his allegiance to Amor. Besides, according to mythology, the god Amor was not always 'unerring.' The *certus deus* might also refer to Bacchus, the god of wine, and such a reading suits the image of the poet waking up with a hangover after he has passed out among the previous night's party decorations.

[19] See Thomas (1983b: 175-84) for an insightful discussion of Vergil's fascination with centrepieces, especially with regard to the ecphrastic descriptions in *Ecloga* 3.36-48, *Georgica* 3 and the Shield of Aeneas in *Aeneid* 8.

Propertius would later, in his own version in 4.6, follow suit – in fact, in Propertius 4.6 Apollo almost single-handedly destroys the enemy fleet. However, the passage from 2.34 begs an important question: why does Propertius, from all of Vergil's work, pick the ecphrastic description of the shield from the eighth book to represent the *Aeneid*?

The *Aeneid* is of course not the only Vergilian poetry Propertius reviews and besides these six lines on the *Aeneid,* he lavishes ten on the *Eclogae* (ll. 67-76) and four on the *Georgica* (ll. 77-80).[20] What is curious is not only the disproportionate number of lines he allocates to each of Vergil's works – the shortest collection getting the most – or the order in which he examines them – the last work being first – but also the themes from the works to which he chooses to refer. Though the *Eclogae* are certainly not lacking in political content, nor devoid of programmatic statements regarding poetry, the themes chosen by Propertius are those of love and song. Likewise, nothing is mentioned about the political content of the *Georgica*. This subjective selection of themes from the poetry he reviews continues into the final catalogue of poets Propertius names (ll. 85-94). Varro, whom he names first,[21] also wrote epic, but the fact that he turned to amatory subjects after his epic is emphasised.

Propertius' selection of amatory themes from Vergil at first seems obvious enough: as love poet he would be most sympathetic to these themes and in order to compare himself with Vergil, he can cast himself in a favourable light if he draws attention to the similar themes he used. However, this does not explain why the description of the battle of Actium was specifically selected from the *Aeneid*, since this poem, too, contains amatory themes. Propertius' juxtaposition of the current and previous work of Vergil has led to a question discussed at length among scholars: is Propertius praising Vergil for attempting his epic, although it is something Propertius does not like and would not try, or is he criticising Vergil for turning away from the kind of poetry Propertius admires? The discussion of this question warrants a digression. Just as Propertius' choice of themes from Vergil explains how he feels about Vergil's work, so can what he feels about Vergil's work explain why he chose those

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[20] Thomas (1999: 263-4) takes only the two lines 78-9 to refer to the *Georgica* and comments on the interesting numerical correspondence to the Vergilian corpus: in the case of the *Aeneid* and the *Georgica* one line corresponds to two books each respectively, while in the case of the *Eclogae*, there is one line for each of the ten poems. Whether Propertius refers to Vergil's *Georgica* in two or four lines does not make a difference to the argument presented here: the *Eclogae* still receives a disproportionately large number of lines.

[21] Line 85: *haec quoque perfecto ludebat Iasone Varro* [Varro, his *Jason* completed, also played at these (sc. *carmina* above in line 81 and below in lines 87 and 89.)]

specific themes. The two questions are inevitably closely intertwined and the more specific question is better understood in terms of the more general.

On the more general question – does Propertius criticise Vergil or his epic – opinion is divided. Sullivan (1976: 24) questioned the traditional view that the passage complements Vergil,[22] but unfortunately begins his argument by enrolling the poetic voice of Ezra Pound who, in his *Homage to Sextus Propertius* (1934),[23] 'translated' this passage:

> Upon the Actian marshes Virgil is Phoebus' chief of police,
>
>   He can tabulate Caesar's great ships.
>
> He thrills to Ilian arms,
>
>   He shakes the Trojan weapons of Aeneas,
>
>   And casts stores on Lavinian beaches.
>
> Make way, ye Roman authors,
>
>   clear the street, O ye Greeks,
>
> For a much larger Iliad is in the course of construction
>
>   (and to imperial order)
>
> Clear the streets, O ye Greeks!

Somehow the spirit of this rendering does not capture that of the Propertian poem. Propertius does not come over as someone clearing the way for Vergil, he is rather conceding that Vergil may write his epic if he wishes and besides, Propertius does not profess to know that it is an Iliad that Vergil is writing (*nescio quid* (l.66)). But the main false note comes in the parenthetical "(and to imperial order)". It seems that once Pound assumed that Propertius was criticising Vergil's epic ambitions, he naturally assumed that the poet was doing so because of political pressure.

Sullivan (1976: 24-5) argues that the six lines afforded the *Aeneid* are not nearly as complimentary as the ten and four lines devoted to the *Eclogae* and *Georgica* respectively and, without more ado, concludes that the "bows to the *Aeneid* may thus be seen as purely perfunctory". Stahl (1985: 349-50 n. 18) agrees with Sullivan that there are numerous passages in which Propertius criticises or at least expresses ambivalent feelings about the Augustan regime, but, quite rightly, criticises Sullivan for not making "detailed interpretations

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[22] For others sympathetic to Sullivan's case, see Levin (1982: 418-538) and Little (1982: 254-370).

[23] Ezra Pound (1934). *Homage to Sextus Propertius*. London, Faber and Faber.

of their overall contexts." Stahl (1985: 172-88) obliges in his own study of the poem and argues compellingly for reading Propertian criticism of Vergil's epic.

The first point Stahl makes (1985: 180) is that Propertius is defining himself and his poetry through the provocative contrast with Vergil, lines 59-62; that is, Vergil's "eagerness to praise Octavian's 'brave ships'" versus "Propertius' relaxed morning after". Exactly how provocative the contrast is, is debatable[24] and even if Propertius places himself and Vergil on opposite extremes, it does not necessarily follow that he is criticising the latter. Stahl (1985: 180-1) also thinks that Propertius' assertion that something greater than the *Iliad* is being born is a "dubious, because ambiguous, compliment." Ambiguous, because Homer is not spoken of particularly admiringly in Propertius' poetry (Stahl cites 1.7.3-4, 1.9.11 and 2.34.45) and because granting Vergil the first prize in the category of epic – a category in which Propertius refused to compete (2.1) – means little. But this is simply not true. In all three cases that Stahl cites, Homer is mentioned as being of little use to someone in love, but there is no insinuation that Propertius did not admire his poetry, in fact, in 1.7.3 (*primo ... Homero*) the opposite is made almost explicit. As to the remark that Propertius refused to compete in the category of epic poetry, it must also be remembered that he cited as reason his own lack of ability and talent and not his aversion to the genre. To these two points Stahl adds (1985: 182-3) that the criticism of Vergil is not overt thanks to the latter's powerful patron, but that he is criticising the great poet can be inferred from the criticism directed at Lynceus in the preamble and the number of couplets he dedicates to each of Vergil's three books (*Aeneid,* 3, *Eclogae,* 5 and *Georgica,* 2).

More recently, Newman (1997: 220) vociferously expressed the contrary opinion: "At the outset, no interpretation of this elegy is acceptable which makes Propertius 'polemicize' (even 'subtly'!) with Vergil." He notes that if Propertius compared his own poetry with that of Vergil, it was done to exalt his own genius and not to detract from Vergil. He goes so far as to say that denigrating Vergil "would have been utter folly" and that "there is a danger here of pressing the Alexandrian code to extremes, when all the Roman poet is doing, is to talk in very general terms." Newman, however, does not explain why 'polemicizing' with Vergil would have been unacceptable, why praise is not bestowed upon the epic in the same way it is

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[24] The problem is further compounded by questions regarding the transmission of the text, see note 17 above.

on the *Eclogae* (l. 76) and the *Georgica* (l. 81), nor how we know that Propertius is speaking in general terms in a passage loaded with overt intertextual references.

Cairns (2006: 295-319) takes what is more a middle road between Stahl's view that 2.34 constitutes in part a polemic against Vergil and Newman's opinion that no such reading is acceptable.[25] He believes (2006: 301-2) the attack on Vergil, just as that on Lynceus, is a mock attack. He cites similar attacks by Propertius on Bassus, Ponticus and Gallus from the first book and argues that such "publicization by Propertius of a friend's or patron's œuvre through apparent polemic is in fact complimentary." His argument seems quite convincing and his is no doubt a very plausible reading. It begs the question, however: if this is a mock attack, what would a real attack against another poet look like? Put differently, how can one distinguish between the real and the mock attack?

Whether Propertius is criticising Vergil is not at all clear and may not be the most useful question to ask. The question can be broken down into smaller units: Is Propertius criticising Vergil the author, or his new epic and specifically the form it is taking? If he is criticising Vergil the author, is he criticising him for his decision to write about current politics and historical events in the not so distant past, or because in starting the *Aeneid,* he turned his back on the Callimachean prescriptions? If he is criticising the text of the *Aeneid*, what particularly about Vergil's earlier works did he like and what about the *Aeneid* does he not like? These questions, of course, all assume that Propertius is in fact criticising Vergil. Starting from the assumption that Propertius is praising Vergil or his works, these questions can be changed *mutatis mutandis* to ask about the specific nature of the praise.

Since the poem does not at any point make it explicitly clear, Propertius' praise or criticism of Vergil or his texts must be inferred from the juxtaposition of the three works as they appear in 2.34.61-80. The *Aeneid*, Vergil's latest work, is conspicuously placed first. In the six lines devoted to it, nothing is said about the first six books and focus falls mainly on the books set in Italy and particularly on Book 8 where the Shield of Aeneas is described.

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[25] Cairns approaches the poem from a somewhat different angle. The nature of his enquiry is biographical and hence he reads Propertius 2.34 chiefly to understand the poetic relationships within the circle of Maecenas. He is thus more concerned with the identity of the Lynceus addressed in the poem and with the philosophical values that linked the poets in the circle. Although Cairns' ultimate goal is to reveal aspects of Propertius' life, the poem in question constitutes his main source and, as such, is subjected to a sensitive critical reading. His research leads him to Epicureanism and the Epicurean school of Philodemus at Naples that links the characters in the poem.

Newman (1997: 227-8) discusses Propertius' choice of this particular episode from the *Aeneid* and makes some suggestions in the conclusion to his interpretation of the poem. First he says it "is … clear why Propertius chooses such a curious feature of the *Aeneid* for his praises", and then gives three possible reasons. The first possibility is that there was perhaps an early reading of the *Aeneid* 8, implying that only the eighth book was read and that is why Propertius selected it. That the eighth book of the *Aeneid* would have been ready for a public reading before sections of any of the other books had been read privately among the poets, would be impossible to prove. But evidence from this Propertian poem suggests that the contrary might be true since Heyworth (2007: 275) gives four intertextual links between Propertius 2.34.59-66 and various other parts of the *Aeneid*: 1.1-3, 1.258-9, 3.280 and 7.44-5.

Newman also suggests that the poet was thinking of coins and commenting on the propaganda programme in them, for which Newman (1997: 40-2) argues earlier in his book. However, his arguments for a coherent propaganda campaign through coinage are not convincing.[26] His last suggestion is that "[t]o him [that is Propertius], Virgil's venture also perhaps suggested a need for the epic treatment of *litora* by the *nauta*, which would be their final, necessary 'epic' and yet somehow Callimachean canonization". What exactly he means is difficult to gauge, but the suggestion that the poet or *nauta* (a usual Callimachean metaphor) felt the need to explore his *litora* (that is, the coasts from which he should not stray too far) warrants closer examination, especially as Propertius picks it up again in 3.3 and 4.6.

The *Georgica* are dealt with last and only four lines are devoted to them (ll. 77-80):

> tu canis Ascraei veteris praecepta poetae,
>> quo seges in campo, quo viret uva iugo.
> tale facis carmen docta testudine quale
>> Cynthius impositis temperat articulis.

[You sing about the things you have learned from the ancient poet of Ascra, in which fields the crops and on which slopes grapes flourish. You make such music as Cynthius measures, with fingers placed upon his learned lyre.]

This is even less than we have on the *Aeneid*: Propertius gives us Vergil's model – Hesiod – the subjects of essentially only the first two poems – crops and viniculture – and his conclusion that the poetry was composed in such a way that Apollo would approve.

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[26] For an excellent discussion of coinage before and after Actium see Gurval (1995: 47-65).

In stark contrast to the handling of the two larger works, the *Eclogae* receive a full ten lines (ll. 67-76):

> 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 vilis pomis mercaris amores!
>> huic licet ingratae Tityrus ipse canat.
> felix intactum Corydon qui temptat Alexin
>> agricolae domini carpere delicias!
> quamvis ille sua lassus requiescat avena,
>> laudatur facilis inter Hamadryadas.

[You sing of Thyrsis and Daphnis with their well-worn pipes in the shade of the pine tree at the Galaesus and how it is possible to corrupt girls with ten apples and an unweaned kid. Fortunate are you who exchange affairs for cheap fruit. It's fine for Tityrus himself to sing to an ungrateful girl. Fortunate is Corydon who tries to seduce chaste Alexis, darling of his master the farmer. Although he is exhausted and resting from his flute, he is praised by the easy-going Hamadryads.]

The themes taken from the *Eclogae* focus on various aspects of love: perverted love (ll. 69-70), unrequited love (l. 72) and illicit love (ll. 73-4) and this, too, stands in stark contrast to the descriptions of the *Aeneid* and the *Georgica*. Neither the *Aeneid* as we have it, nor the *Georgica* are without love stories and though it might be argued that the second and fourth books of the *Aeneid* may not have been known to Propertius when he wrote this poem, the fourth book of the *Georgica*, with Vergil's handling of the Orpheus myth, was already famous. Propertius' selection of themes from the *Eclogae*, though greater in volume, also displays a singular subjectivity: just as the love affairs were deselected from the *Aeneid* in favour of the military and political, so the political themes in the *Eclogae* (which encroaches conspicuously on the pastoral landscape as early as the third line of the collection) are omitted.

It is not so easy to discern a pattern in Propertius' descriptions of Vergil's works. He selects from the *Aeneid* only the military and political episodes from the Shield of Aeneas, from the

Eclogae, the amatory themes and of the *Georgica* he mentions only their Greek model and the subjects of the first two books. A solution, or at least beginning of a solution, might lie in the second reference to Apollo in poem 2.34 where he appears as *Cynthius* in lines 79-82:

> tale facis carmen docta testudine quale
>
> Cynthius impositis temperat articulis.
>
> non tamen haec ulli venient ingrata legenti,
>
> sive in amore rudis sive peritus erit.

[You make such music as Cynthius measures, with fingers placed upon his learned lyre. Nevertheless, these poems will come welcomed by all readers, whether new to love or experienced.]

It is quite obvious that the Apollo *Cynthius* used here in the lines referring to the *Georgica* is not the same as the Apollo *Actius* used when referring to Vergil's epic. The Apollo here is the Augustan version of the Callimachean Apollo, who is also called *Lukios*, *Delius*, *Pythius* and *Cynthius*. This version of Apollo was also used in the opening of the second book, which was discussed above, in a context where the poet was commenting on his own poetic inspiration and the nature of his poetry. Following the example of Callimachus, this Apollo is also linked to poetic inspiration in particular and the Augustan *recusatio* in general. In fact, the reference to Apollo is so common that it would have sufficed to remind any reader of the generic allegiance and poetic creed professed by the Augustan poets. Moreover, by using the epithet *Cynthius* as in this case, Propertius is specifically echoing the influential programmatic statements of Callimachus and Vergil.[27] It also seems clear that the other Apollo – Apollo *Actius* – mentioned in 2.34.61 in conjunction with Vergil's epic, conjures up a completely different set of allusions.

The references to both Apollos in the same poem within a few lines of each other and both in the context of Vergil's poetry seem significant. The use of the epithet Phoebus in the first more political instance, and that of *Cynthius* in the second instance, which deals with poetry *per se*, is an indication that a comparison between the different 'faces' of the god is invited. The names 'Apollo' and 'Phoebus' seem to have been used more or less interchangeably by the Augustans and did not exclude or emphasise specific attributes of the god, but by using

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[27] *Cynthius* as an epithet for Apollo is used by Vergil only in *Ecloga* 6.3 and in *Georgicon* 3.36 and here is clearly an intertextual marker pointing to Callimachus. As Clausen explains (1976: 245-7 and 1977: 362) the epithet is used only and uniquely by Callimachus in *Hymn* 4.9-10 and twice in the *Aitia* (3.67.5-6 and 3.114.8).

two different and specific epithets for the god in the same passage, the poet seems to suggest that Apollo can stand for different things in different contexts. In view of this, the suggestion that Propertius is indeed commenting on Vergil's epic can be modified and an answer can be supplied as to why Propertius chose the description of the battle of Actium from the *Aeneid* to symbolise the contemporary epic subjects from the *Aeneid*. Propertius invokes the Actian Apollo here as a marker that he is thinking of the new regime and the war from which it was born.

It is not that Propertius is criticising Octavian and his new regime, but he is expressing his reservation about the possibility of the new regime and its leader getting unreserved praise in the new national epic. He reminds us in 2.31.13-4 that the new peace came at a price and this price was paid in Roman lives and here, where he is referring to Vergil's epic, the theme of the horrors of the civil war crops up again. The appearance of the figure of Apollo, associated in different places within the same section of the poem with different aspects of the god is also to be found in 2.31. Rather than quitting love poetry, Propertius seems to try to incorporate current political themes and social questions into his existing framework and to do so by expanding the symbolism of the image of Apollo.

At the end of the second book Propertius begins to emerge as more than a poet obsessed with his girl and satisfied only with writing amatory poetry. With Apollo to guide him, he starts to explain his own poetic genius, ventures to comment on his fellow poets' work and to express opinions about politics and the new regime. Apollo seems an excellent guide in this new endeavour. Not only is Apollo traditionally associated with the tenets of Alexandrian poetry which Propertius prefers to follow, he is also associated with Actium, the *gens Iulia* and Octavian, who dedicated the famous temple on the Palatine to the god and could, at least in the minds of the poets, not completely eradicate all associations between this temple and the civil war. To Propertius, if he wished to combine criticism or commentary on poetry and the state, the current status of Apollo could not be more favourable. Callimachus, his Greek model, already combined these two faces of Apollo (*Hymn* 2) – one Apollo to castigate his critics and the other to praise the ruling powers in Alexandria. Likewise, the Palatine Temple of Apollo was linked to Octavian's political power and military victories, but contained a statue of Apollo *Citharoedus* and Greek and Latin libraries.

The shift in Propertius' poetic scope to also incorporate social commentary is easily recognisable at the beginning of the third collection. The collection opens with an elaborate programmatic panel of five poems that describes the initiation of the poet as *vates*, expounds upon his new poetic subjects and reasserts his allegiance to his Alexandrian predecessor Callimachus. Closely linked to these themes and interwoven in the Callimachean metaphor in which the poems abound, stands Apollo. These five poems and especially the central poem (3.3), in which Apollo appears to the poet in a dream, will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5:

Apollo in the 'Roman Elegies' of Propertius (3.1-5)

A great deal has been written about the poet's programmatic statement in the opening poem of Propertius' third book of elegies, especially on the first six lines of the poem.[1] However, the programmatic statement by the poet extends much further than merely the opening lines of the first poem or even the first poem in its entirety and in fact encompasses all of the first five poems in the book – the set of poems which has been dubbed the 'Roman' elegies (3.1-5).[2] It seems that the central point of the programmatic argument that opens this collection lies in the third poem (3.3). While the opening lines of 3.1 are of vital importance for understanding the new themes and subject matter of Propertius' third book, this chapter will consider 3.3 the focal point of the programmatic argument presented in the first five poems. Unlike the first six lines of the first poem, comparatively little has been written about the 'Roman Elegies' and a large part of this chapter will be devoted to an analysis of the poems.[3] Since it is difficult to argue constructively without analyses of the relevant data, it is hoped that the sometimes lengthy digressions will clarify more than they obscure. This chapter will consider the first five poems as a unit and focus mainly, but not exclusively, on the *recusatio* placed conspicuously at the centre and the way in which the poet uses the figure of Apollo to explain his poetic agenda in poem 3.3.

The opening poems of Book 3 and the epiphany of Apollo in 3.3 are important in the study of Propertius' poetry and specifically for the present study for two reasons. The second book concluded with a poem concerned mainly with the poet's own poetry and his place among the

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[1] The more important opinions on Propertius 3.1 are, in chronological order: Luck (1957: 175-9), Baker (1968: 35-9), Hubbard (1974: 75-7), Ross (1975: 113-4, 136-7 and 149), Sullivan (1976: 12), Harmon (1980: 317-34) Thomas (1983a: 101-3) and Stahl (1985: 190ff.); more specifically on the opening six lines: Solmsen (1948: 105-9), Nethercut (1971: 385-407), O'Sullivan (1976: 107-9) and Allen (1996: 308-9). Conspicuously absent from this list is Gordon Williams' *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* (1968) and a cursory glance at the index entitled 'Poems and Passages Discussed' reveals that his discussion of poems 3.1-5 is limited to the fourth poem only. Recent discussions of Newman (1997: 229-52) and Gurval (1995: 256-7 and 276) only mention these five poems in passing.

[2] So called originally by Nethercut (1971: 385).

[3] It has already been mentioned (note 1 above) that Williams (1968) only mentions poem 3.4 and there is no extended discussion in Sullivan (1976) or Hubbard (1974). Stahl (1985: 189-212) devotes a chapter to poems 3.1, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.22, but omits 3.2 and 3.3, which are doubtlessly part of the panel. Articles on these poems are limited to short extracts – Butrica (1983: 464-8) on 3.3.7-12 and Ennius, Frost (1991: 251-9) on 3.3.45-6 and Vergil – and intertextual links to other Augustan poetry – Miller (1983: 289-99) and Mader (1993: 321-40) on poem 3.2 and Horace and Cairns (2003: 309-11) on 3.4 and *Aeneid* 1.1-4.

other poets of his generation. The opening of Book 3 continues and expands on this self-definition and becomes the poet's most complete programmatic statement.

Apollo is named in each of the first three poems and in each instance he appears as the patron god of poets. In 3.1 the poet believes Apollo will heed his prayer and guarantee that a substantial stone will mark his grave (3.1.37-8) and in 3.2 the poet boasts that, with Apollo on his side, it is little wonder that a throng of girls are hanging on his lips (3.2.9-10). However, in 3.3 the poet, on the verge of writing epic verse, is about to stray from his set course when Apollo intervenes and reprimands him. The epiphany of Apollo is centrally placed and his importance thus emphasised. This *topos* refers back to Vergil (*E*.6), who in turn refers back to Callimachus, whose name is the first word in Propertius' third book. By using this *topos* Propertius is not only directly comparing himself with the great Roman poet of his time, but he is also defining himself and the role his poetry is to play in Rome.

A central theme of these five elegies, which is also specifically mentioned by Apollo in his speech to the poet in 3.3, is the fame of the poet, both during his life and afterwards and with what kind of poetry he can achieve it. In these poems fame, in turn, is also linked to material wealth and military honours. Propertius, as is customary among the poets of that time,[4] professes an aversion to excessive luxury and a dislike for the hardships associated with war, but he goes even further. Apollo's recommendation to the poet in 3.3 to stick to amatory and comparatively less important poetry and to stay away from political subjects in his poetry is expanded in the final two poems of the set. In 3.4 and 3.5 the poet does in fact discuss political matters – in 3.4 Augustus, purportedly planning to invade India, is encouraged and in 3.5 the impermanence of material wealth is stressed. Although Propertius says he is willing to grant the spoils of war to those who have earned it, he of course places himself unequivocally on the side of the non-materialistic pacifists (cf. 3.4.22 and 3.5.1). It is in this categorisation – the soldiers and politicians on the one side and the poets on the other – that Propertius' subtle and keen criticism of the Rome he lived in is to be found.

Propertius opens the third book impressively with an invocation to the shades of Callimachus and Philitas (3.1.1-6):

> Callimachi Manes et Coi sacra Philitae,

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[4] See especially, but not exclusively, Tibullus 1.1, 1.3 and 1.10, Vergil's *Georgicon* 4 and Horace *Epode* 2.

in vestrum, 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

        quove pede ingressi? quamve bibistis aquam?

[Spirit of Callimachus and holy rites of Coan Philitas, I pray let me enter your grove. I am the first priest to start bringing from springs of pure water the Italian mysteries of love through Greek rhythms. Tell me, in what cave did you make your poems slender,[5] with what foot did you enter, what water did you drink?]

Without hesitation Propertius dons a vatic persona in the opening lines (3.1.1-6). Like an official priest he calls upon the shades of Callimachus and Philitas, and professes to be the first to try to use Italian material while composing to Greek rhythms. He is not the first to make such a claim nor is he claiming it in a substantially novel way.[6] All he is in fact doing is introducing a programmatic statement by announcing some of his main themes and stating the questions regarding poetry on which he would like to elaborate in due course. These themes are his Greek models (Callimachus and Philitas l. 1), the setting (*nemus* (l. 2) and *antrum* l. 5) in which he will receive his inspiration, his claim to primacy (*primus* l. 3), his status as a divinely inspired poet-priest (*sacerdos* l. 3) and what he believes his inspiration should be for a specific style and specific type of poetry (*puro de fonte* l. 3).[7] The questions with which the poet is concerned are given in lines 5 and 6. The themes he suggests here are developed, to a greater or lesser extent, throughout the five programmatic poems, while the questions themselves are dealt with in the third poem.

The fact that Propertius dons the vatic persona is significant. Propertius' poetic persona has been discussed in almost all the preceding chapters and this seems like a suitable moment to recap the development of Propertius' poetic persona. In the opening poem of the second book Propertius denies that he is inspired by Apollo or Calliope (2.1.3-4 cf. Chapter 1) and also concedes that he will not become very famous (2.1.71-2). In 2.10 Propertius comes closer to

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[5] The translation is indebted to Van Tress (2004: 61).

[6] As Hubbard (1974: 75) explains, the image of the poet as priest predates even Callimachus and is already found in Pindar. This passage looks back to Vergil's *Georgicon* 3.10-2, although similar claims have been made by Horace (*C*.3.30.10-4 and *Epist.* 1.19.23-4). For a discussion of the intertextual references see Thomas (1988b: 40) who also discusses Lucretius 1.921-30 and 1.117-9.

[7] The specific style in which poetry should be written was of immense importance to Callimacus and Roman poets who professed to follow his precepts. Van Tress (2004: 43-71) explains how the words λεπτός and *deducere* came to denote a specific style in Greek and Roman poetry.

calling himself a *vates*. He promises that one day, when he has finished writing about his girl, he will sing about the military conquests of Augustus, but he does no more than promise. By the end of the second book Propertius comes even closer to assuming the vatic persona: in 2.31 he interprets the artworks adorning the new Temple of Apollo on the Palatine and in 2.34 he feels qualified to judge the poetry of Vergil.

Propertius, it seems, has found what he believes is a new niche, to write elegiac poetry that delivers social commentary: poetry that speaks about how people should live and what should be important in life. This kind of poetry would then be important to Romans just like epic poetry. By donning the vatic persona in the opening lines of the third book, Propertius is going to do what he promised in 2.10, for Book 3 is not about the wars and conquests of Augustus and it is not epic poetry, but it is still a kind of poetry socially relevant to Romans. Making this kind of pronouncements falls within the scope of the *vates* – not so much the priest, but the prophet and teacher of men.

The opening words are carefully chosen to stand also as a title for the book.[8] The name Cynthia as title and indicator of subject matter did admirably for the first book and here it seems that *Callimachi Manes* or even just *Callimachi* would fit as a title for a book by an author who eventually styled himself as the Roman Callimachus (4.1.64). These lines stand at the very beginning of the book and constitute a very effective introduction to the book, yet they are in fact but a small part of the programmatic statement that is developed throughout the first five poems.

There seem to be two compelling reasons for seeing the third poem (3.3) as the focus of the whole programmatic panel that stretches over the first five poems, instead of regarding the first poem or even its six-line introduction as the focus. In the first place, this conclusion is dictated by the internal structure, in the second by the content.

Propertius' placement of a *recusatio* in the middle of this set does not really come as a surprise to a reader of Augustan poetry. The first line of the poem (3.1.1), *visus eram molli recubans Heliconis in umbra* [It seemed that I was reclining in the gentle shade of Helicon],

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[8] This usage was apparently common cf. McKeown (1989: 11 and 1987 106-7) and especially Kennedy (1993: 83-100) for an extended discussion of the use of *arma* which is the first word in Ovid's *Amores* and Vergil's *Aeneid.*

recalls to a certain extent the first lines of the *Eclogae*[9] and in that collection Vergil famously placed his most direct programmatic statement in the middle (*E*.6.1-12). In that collection the programmatic statement also took the form of a *recusatio* as in the Propertius poem; and exactly like Propertius' *recusatio*, Vergil employed the figure of Apollo to put the poet on the right track. The parallels between Propertius' placement of his *recusatio* and that of Vergil are in fact so striking that it seems very likely that Propertius had that specific text of Vergil in mind when he worked on his third book. By recalling the opening line of the *Eclogae* Propertius not only reasserts his allegiance to the poet of the *Eclogae*, whom he also praised in the last poem of the previous collection (2.34), but also alludes to Vergil's placement of programmatic pieces in the centre of his collections as Propertius is in fact intending in the opening panel of this book.

The last two poems in the set (3.4 and 3.5) are obviously complementary: both deal chiefly with the themes of war and peace. The former starts with *arma deus Caesar* which is contrasted in the first line of the next by *pacis Amor deus.* In the same way 3.1 (excluding lines 1-6) and 3.2 complement each other – at the very least insofar as both are largely concerned with the fame and the renown of the poet living on in his work and even increasing after his death (3.1.21-38 and 3.2.17-22).[10]

Already in the opening line of the book the audience is warned that the book will deal, to a much greater extent than the first two books, with the nature and scope of the author's own poetry. Poems 3.1 and 3.2 deal chiefly with Propertius' achievements and with the power of his poetry to immortalize himself and the loves about which he writes. Somewhere through the first two poems a knowledgeable reader of Augustan poetry would already be expecting a *recusatio,* firstly because such a negative assertion of poetic allegiance – the poet saying what he refuses or is unable to write – balances the positive assertions made in the first two poems; and secondly, because expressing poetic allegiance in such a form was frequently used in Augustan poetry. Furthermore, incorporating a *recusatio* in the programmatic panel would also give the poet the opportunity to compare himself with other poets who expressed their poetic allegiances through the same form. This expectation is met in 3.3.

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[9] The famous opening line reads: *tu, Tityre, patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi* [You, Tityrus, while you were reclining under cover of a wide-spread beach tree] and in line four: *nos patriam fugimus; tu, Tityre, lentus in umbra* [While we flee from the land of our fathers, you, Tityrus, stretched out in the shade…].

[10] The structural balance of the programmatic set is described in greater detail by Hubbard (1974: 75-83) and a structural analysis of the whole book is given by Marr (1978: 265-73) and Putnam (1980: 97-113).

As to the content, topics pertinently mentioned in 3.1.5-6, namely, the particular water that is the proper source of poetic inspiration and the cave where poetry is composed, feature strongly in the third poem. Poem 3.3 opens with the poet dreaming that he is on Helicon reclining in the shade next to a spring, composing poetry, when Apollo himself appears and directs the poet to the proper cave (ll. 25-36) where he receives the correct type of water, that is, inspiration (ll. 51-2). Not only do these lines pick up the topics of 3.1.5-6, but they answer two of the questions posed by the poet: *quo pariter carmen tenuastis in antro* [In what cave did you make your poems slender] and *quamve bibistis aquam* [What water did you drink?][11] The opening six lines of the book stand closer to poem 3.3 and specifically to the speech of Apollo in it (3.3.15-24) than to the remainder of the first poem. In this sense, the opening lines of the book are more an introduction to the whole of the first five poems and its central focal point in 3.3, than they are a programmatic statement to introduce the first poem only. All the poems in the opening panel are linked to 3.3 both thematically and intertextually and the opening lines (3.1.1-6) have a stronger link to the central poem: because they are the first lines of the opening panel they naturally refer strongly to 3.3, which is the central poem in the panel and because the questions posed in 3.1.5-6 are addressed in 3.3. These thematic and intertextual links between poem 3.3 and the other poems in the panel come mainly from the speeches of Apollo and Calliope addressed to the poet.

Poem 3.3 and indeed the whole programmatic panel of five poems centre on the appearance of Apollo and the speeches addressed to the poet that follow. The introduction of a dream sequence introduced by the opening two words of the third poem, *visus eram*, comes as no big surprise. At this stage, the reader, having been primed by the preceding programmatic poems and familiar with Callimachus' *Aitia*, would now expect the imminent arrival of the figure of Apollo warning the poet, but the poet diverges from his models in a subtle and important way. In the *Aitia* fragment (1.21-8) quoted above (Chapter 2) the poet need only have placed the writing tablet on his knees before the god appeared (ll. 21-2) and in Vergil (*E*.6.3, also quoted in Chapter 2) only half a line is spent on *cum canerem reges et proelia* before the god intervenes. Poem 3.3 keeps its audience in suspense for 12 lines, enumerating various epic subjects, before a rather lethargic Apollo, leaning on his lyre, appears in line 13.

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[11] Hubbard (1974: 76) sees no need to look for the answers to these questions, asserting that "[w]e are given no direct answer to these questions," but Luck (1957: 178-9) demonstrates that a suppliant seeking an oracle at a shrine would usually ask specifically for factual information and refers to Dodds (1951: 80-2).

Propertius' postponement of the epiphany of Apollo, besides building tension, also serves another purpose. Butrica (1983: 464-8) notes that the actual events of the possible epic topics against which Calliope specifically warns the poet, occurred in the time between Ennius and Propertius and this leaves one with the impression that Propertius was intending to continue where Ennius left off. Moreover, the enumeration of topics handled by Ennius (ll. 7-12) effectively balances the possible topics mentioned by Calliope (ll. 41-6) and leaves the general remarks of Apollo on Propertius' unique talent and consequent inability to write epic verse to stand on their own in a slightly elevated position.

Moreover, Propertius allocates a whole couplet, more than his direct models Callimachus and Vergil, to the appearance of Apollo, explaining both where and how he was sitting (ll. 13-4):

> cum me Castalia speculans ex arbore Phoebus
>
> sic ait aurata nixus ad antra lyra:

[When Apollo eyed me from a laurel tree and, leaning on his golden lyre near the cave, said:]

The translation above takes *Castalia* as an adjective agreeing with *arbore* (cf. Camps (1966: 65 and Heyworth (2007: 290)), and reads it as referring to the laurel (the 'Castalian tree'), following Richardson (1977: 327), who cites Tibullus 3.1.16 (Lygdamus) in support.[12] While the specific mention of the lyre emphasises Apollo's role as inspirer of poets in this passage, the use of the word *Castalia*, moreover, conjures up associations with Parnassus and hence also with Delphi – the site of the oracle of Apollo.[13] The prophetic attributes of the god, though only hinted at, tie in with the programme in this set: it was a prophetic answer the poet was seeking in the opening lines of 3.1 and it is Apollo's prophetic powers that enable him to give Propertius guidance.

The argument of poem 3.3 is involved, but effectively articulated through its finely crafted internal structure. The poem divides easily and elegantly into two halves of thirteen couplets

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[12] The phrase *ex arbore* has also generated different opinions. Butler and Barber (1933: 268) understand that the god is speaking from a grove, Camps (1966: 65) that it is "from the (Muses') grove" while Richardson (1977: 327) feels Apollo is actually in the tree. While it is not clear whether Apollo is sitting in a tree or speaking from a grove – this is after all a dream – it becomes clear that he has been keeping an eye on the progress of Propertius' third book.

[13] Ovid uses the adjective in *Metamorphoses* 3.14 (*Castalio Cadmus discenderat antro*) of the cave of the oracle.

each.[14] Lines 1-26 describe the dream of Ennian epic and give the commentary of Apollo and his advice culminating in a gesture. The second half (ll. 27-52) describes the cave of the Muses, gives Calliope's advice to the poet and her gesture of moistening his lips. Each half can then be subdivided into two parts of unequal length. The speech of Apollo in the first half (ll. 15-24) forms a unit and his gesture with the plectrum in lines 25-6, should be taken as conclusion and culmination of his advice. The first section of the first half of the poem also forms a unit: the poet dreams of composing epic verse (ll. 1-12) and the sudden and not unexpected epiphany of Apollo (13-4) is best be taken as part of this section. Apollo's appearance in the first half after a description of the setting is balanced by the appearance of the Muse Calliope in the second part (ll. 37-8) after that setting has been described (ll. 27-36) and her advice to the poet that concludes with her physically moistening the lips of the poet with the water from the spring (ll. 51-2). Thus:

lines		
1-12		The dream of Ennian epic
13-14		Apollo enters
	15-24	Apollo's speech
	25-26	Apollo's gesture
27-36		The cave of the Muses
37-38		Calliope enters
	39-50	Calliope's speech
	51-52	Calliope's gesture

The line of the argument is not difficult to follow and its execution is admirable. The poet dreams of lying in the shade next to the Hippocrene, drinking from its water (*iam ... admoram ... ora* l. 5) and composing an epic filled with the events and characters found in Ennius (ll. 1-12). The introduction to the dream and its contents take up six couplets. Then predictably in the next couplet Apollo appears. In the god's subsequent speech the poet is first reprimanded for attempting epic and then told that his talent is not such as to allow the composition of such weighty material (l. 22, *non est ingenii cumba gravanda tui* [The skiff of your genius should

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[14] Richardson (1977: 325) has made a similar structural analysis, dividing the text into four equal parts (1-12, 13-24, etc.), but this seems to neglect some important points.

not be overburdened.]). But instead of telling the poet what to do, Apollo merely points the way down a newly-made pathway (ll. 25-6)[15] which leads to a decorated cave.[16]

Just as Apollo interrupted the poet's epic in the fist half, Calliope here interrupts the description of the wondrous cave. Calliope's interruption, just like Apollo's, is also followed by a speech, but her speech takes up six couplets, so that it corresponds quantitatively with the dream of the Ennian epic, while the subject matter still corresponds to that of Apollo's speech. Finally, she too, does not tell the poet what to do, but shows him, by moistening his lips with the pure water of Philitas she has drawn from the spring.

The first speech to the poet in 3.3 looks back to the first two poems in the panel and the poet cleverly lets Apollo use intertextual references to the poet's own words in the first two poems. (3.3.15-24):

> "quid tibi cum tali, demens, est flumine? quis te
>
>   carminis heroi tangere iussit opus?
>
> non hic[17] ulla tibi speranda est fama, Properti:
>
>   mollia sunt parvis prata terenda rotis;
>
> ut tuus in scamno iactetur saepe libellus,
>
>   quem legat exspectans sola puella virum.
>
> cur tua praescriptos evecta est pagina gyros?
>
>   non est ingenii cumba gravanda tui.
>
> alter remus aquas alter tibi radat harenas,
>
>   tutus eris: medio maxima turba mari est."

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[15] The 'new path', Arkins (1988: 285-93) argues convincingly, alludes to Callimachus and especially the Callimachean programme that encouraged originality in poetry.

[16] The mention of *tympana* in the description of the decorations in the cave is strange. Tambourines are usually associated not with the Muses, but with the orgiastic rituals of Cybele or Dionysus. Richardson (1977: 328) explains that the *tympana* were frequently hung as decorations on architraves and in shrines and that it is a common device in Pompeian decoration. But here, in the cave of the Muses, the point of the reference to the orgiastic rituals of Cybele or Dionysus – with which the tambourine, the pipes of Silenus and Pan were associated – is unclear. A tangential connection between Apollo and the Muses and the throng of Dionysus might lie in the myth of Marsyas (related by Ovid (*Met.* 6.382-400)). This satyr challenged Apollo himself to a musical contest – he playing a cursed flute discarded by Athena and Apollo his lyre. The Muses were the judges and Marsyas lost, of course, and was flayed alive for his trouble. Propertius' treatment of Dionysus / Bacchus and the myths associated with him is not confined to this poem – 3.17 is a hymn to the god – and exactly how Dionysus fits into Propertius' poetic programme still needs to be investigated.

[17] The *hic* follows the manuscript tradition retained by Butler and Barber (1933: 82) and Richardson (1977: 327), while Camps (1966: 17) prefers the emendation *hinc* though noting (1966: 65) that this emendation is not indispensable; Heyworth (2007: 290-1) feels the suggested emendation is not important enough to warrant a comment.

[Insane man, what is there for you at such a stream? Who ordered you to touch the work of heroic song? For you there is no hope of fame from this, Propertius: soft is the terrain your small wheels must cut, so that your little book, which a girl is reading while waiting alone for her lover, might often be thrown on a couch. Why did your page turn from its prescribed course? The skiff of your genius should not be overburdened. Let one oar touch the water, the other sand, then you will be safe – far too much do they make waves in the deep sea.]

Apollo's intertextual references to the earlier poems in the book form an intricate web. In this short admonition he deals with the inspirational water and its source which Propertius used as metaphor in 3.3.2 and 3.1.6 (*quamve bibistis aquam*); he deals with the fame of the poet which is discussed in 3.1.7-12, 33-8 and 3.2.18-26; and includes the metaphors used by the poet himself to explain the limits of his talent – the reference to his book in the diminutive (3.1.11-2), the small wheels of the chariot of his success (3.1.9-10), staying within the proper sphere suited to his work (3.2.9-10) and that girls are the proper audience and consumers of his poems (3.2.9-10). Apollo's speech also refers to Propertian poems on another level. Firstly, by asking the poet if he was asked to write epic poetry (3.3.16), Apollo participates in Propertius' discussion about the nature of his poetry and, secondly, by the very fact that the god appeared to the poet, other texts where the god appeared to poets, especially Vergil and Callimachus, are pulled into the discussion in 3.3 and by extension the whole panel.

Apollo first remarks on the poet's choice of inspirational water and this would seem to be his most pertinent objection. Not only does this recall the last of the three questions posed in 3.1.5-6 (*quamve bibistis aquam?*), but it directly alludes to the opening of this poem, where the poet was dreaming specifically next to the Hippocrene. Apollo, however, does not supply an answer to the question regarding the proper source of inspiration; he only says that the source he is currently at is not suitable, nor does he expressly tell the poet that there are better and poorer sources of poetry. His objection is that the poet was composing heroic poetry without being bidden to do so and, hence, must be *demens* to put his mouth to the fountain that inspired Ennius. Whether the water is a poor source of inspiration because it comes from the Hippocrene, is at this point not made explicitly clear. In the *Hymn to Apollo* of Callimachus, Apollo clearly distinguishes between poetry that is like the Euphrates, broad and deep and filled with debris and poetry that is pure and clear and emanates in a slender trickle from a spring (see Chapter 2). In 3.3.1-6 Propertius indicates that he knows that Ennius, when he wanted to compose his epic, drank from the *fons* to which Propertius was putting his lips.

While Apollo is obviously objecting to Propertius' choice of poetic inspiration, he gives no other clue as to why this source is wrong besides referring to this source as a *flumen* (3.3.15) instead of *fons* (3.3.5) as Propertius called it.

The question of the water best suited to the poet, which Apollo left half unanswered, is picked up again in the description of the cave to which the poet was directed by Apollo. After describing the various decorations in the cave, the poet remarks that the water in the cave comes from the *gorgoneus lacus*. Since there is no reason to doubt that this is water from the very same Hippocrene to which the poet put his mouth earlier, as the word *gorgoneus* indicates, it follows that he objects not necessarily to the fountain from which the water originates, but to the state in which the water is found, that is, flowing or motionless. This is argued convincingly by Nethercut (1961: 392-3) following and expanding upon Luck (1957: 133). At this stage in the poem, however, Apollo makes nothing explicit.

Apollo then moves on to the topic of Propertius' fame. He informs the poet that he cannot hope for fame or renown by choosing the epic subject matter of Ennius. It must, however, be noted that Apollo is not objecting to the poetic themes the poet is attempting *per se* and does not maintain that they are ill-suited to good poetry; he rather says that such themes are not suited to Propertius in particular. In fact, Propertius himself has also cited his talent as excuse for not writing about historical or political events in 2.1.17 and 41-2 as well as 2.10.5-6[18] and both Propertius and Apollo agree (at 2.34.93-4 and here at 3.3.17 respectively) that the poet's road to fame lies in the genre of the love-elegy.

Apollo's comments on the poet's fame refer to the greater part of the first two poems of the collection, both of which conclude (3.1.33-8 and 3.2.18-26) with the poet explaining how his poetry will immortalise himself and his subject matter.[19] Specifically the *fama* in Apollo's speech finds its clearest echo in 3.1.7-12 where *Fama,* personified, raises Propertius from the ground "by his *tenui* (slender) verses".

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[18] Citing his lack of talent distinguishes Propertius' excuses from Vergil's in *Ecloga* 6. This is discussed in Chapter 3.

[19] These passages can be read in conjunction with Horace's famous *Ode* 3.30 (*exegi monumentum*) in which the poet also speaks about his future fame and which Propertius seems to have had in mind when he wrote this panel. The most important studies still seem to be Nethercut (1971: 385-407), Solmsen (1948: 105-9), Miller (1983: 289-99) and Frost (1991: 251-9).

Closely connected to the theme of *fama* are the various other intertextual references made by Apollo. When the god is informing Propertius that he cannot hope for fame from the subjects he is attempting, he alludes to the *fama* Propertius said would lift him from the earth in 3.1.9. The next reference – to the small wheels of the poetic chariot – also recalls the passage in 3.1.9-12, with the difference that there it was "small *Amores*" riding in the chariot and a *turba* of writers following the wheels. Apollo, in lines 19 and 20, refers to Propertius' published works in the diminutive *libellus* and tells the poet exactly for what his poetry is useful:

> ut tuus in scamno iactetur saepe libellus,
>> quem legat exspectans sola puella virum.

[… *so that your little book, which a girl is reading while waiting alone for her lover, might often be thrown on a couch.*]

The reference to the poems of Propertius in the diminutive in line 19 recalls the poet's own words in 3.2.17 (*fortunata, meo si qua es celebrata libello* [you are fortunate, if you are celebrated in my booklet]). The diminutive also sets up the punch-line: what they are good for is for a girl to look at, without too much attention, while she is waiting for something more important. Apollo's revelation that Propertius' audience should be girls is, however, not original. This too is taken from an earlier poem in the book (3.2.9-10). And finally, Apollo concludes his speech with some general advice, which he introduces with a rhetorical question: *cur tua praescriptos evecta est pagina gyros?* [Why did your page turn from its prescribed course?] Rhetorical, because Propertius is quite aware of his poetry's proper sphere (3.2.1-2):

> Carminis interea nostri redeamus in orbem,
>> gaudeat ut solito tacta puella sono.

[Let us return, meanwhile, to our own poem's sphere, and let my girl delight, touched by familiar sounds.]

In the second verse of his speech Apollo inserts, almost inconspicuously, a question regarding Propertius' patron, when he asks who bade him attempt epic poetry. Vergil in *Ecloga* 6 (l. 9) has Tityrus make the point that he does not sing unbidden and of course his whole *recusatio* is placed inside a dedication to Varus. It seems that here Apollo is looking back at Propertius' earlier poems in the book where no mention of a patron is made. In *Ecloga* 6 Tityrus volunteers the information that he was asked to compose his epic, but this did not deter Apollo from reprimanding the shepherd-poet anyway. If Apollo did not consider the request of a patron a valid excuse in Vergil, why then would Apollo ask Propertius if he was asked to

write epic poetry – as if it would now make a difference? There seem to be two possible answers: possibly, though highly unlikely, Propertius read Vergil with insufficient attention to the detail. But for a poet writing about his poetic ambitions and about not writing poetry on several occasions, Vergil's *recusationes* would not only have been read and reread, but also discussed with other poets and maybe even the author himself. A more likely answer is that Propertius places this rhetorical question in the mouth of Apollo, in the context of this poem, to suggest that Apollo knows that no one has asked Propertius to write epic. With this Propertius informs the reader, through Apollo, that the third book will still be love-poetry since he really has no excuse for writing anything else. Of course, whether Maecenas or any other patron has, at this point, asked the historical Propertius to write epic verse is not relevant to the poetic persona Propertius uses in the third book.

Finally, the fact that Apollo in his admonition refers back to the poet's earlier poetry, invites the audience also to see the image of Apollo himself as referring back to earlier invocations and mentions of the god. Just as the strongest intertextual links in Apollo's speech referred back to the opening of the collection, so the mention of Apollo refers back to that passage (3.1.7) *ah, valeat Phoebum quicumque moratur in armis.* [Farewell to him, who restrains Phoebus under arms.] This not only picks up the theme from the first poem of the set, but, by extension, points further back. In the last poem of the previous book (2.34) Propertius did indeed write about a man who was detaining Phoebus in arms – Vergil, in the *Aeneid.* Propertius, in this set of programmatic poems is reasserting his allegiance to the Alexandrian code and his intention to stay away from epic poetry. Propertius' reworking of this *topos* of Apollo warning the poet displays, in this poem, an important addition – after Apollo's admonitions, the Muse Calliope continues the lecture. Her speech, in contrast to Apollo's, is forward-looking in the sense that she pre-empts the topics of poems 3.4 and 3.5. As with the speech of Apollo, hers also contains several intertextual references to Propertius' own words, but in this case chiefly from poems 3.4 and 3.5.

Calliope has already been singled out by Propertius as an important Muse. She appears in the first book (1.2.27), in the important programmatic opening poem of the second book (2.1.3) and in the second poem of this the third book (3.2.16). The fact that Calliope was later associated with especially epic poetry is not important, since at this stage the various genres were not yet assigned to specific Muses. Vergil invokes Thalia at the beginning of *Ecloga* 6 and in the *Aeneid* 7.37, Erato is called upon to remind the poet. In Propertius, however, only

one Muse is named and that is Calliope. Moreover, what seems especially relevant is that, in all instances (including 4.6.12), she is named in conjunction with Apollo.[20]

Her advice to the poet displays some parallels to Apollo's, but differs subtly and importantly in content. Propertius 3.3.39-50:

> "contentus niveis semper vectabere cycnis,
>
>> 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 vectet aqua.
>
> quippe coronatos alienum ad limen amantis
>
>> nocturnaeque canes ebria signa fugae,
>
> ut per te clausas sciat excantare puellas,
>
>> qui volet austeros arte ferire viros."

["You will always be contented to be drawn by snow white swans and never will the neigh of a brave horse lead you into war. Not for you is it to sound battle signals publicly on the raucous horn and taint the Aonian grove with Mars; nor to tell on which fields armies marshalled under the standard of Marius and Rome resisted the Teutonic power, nor how the barbarian Rhine, drenched in Suebian blood, bears mangled corpses on his mourning water. To be sure, you will sing of wreathed lovers at the door of another and of drunken calls for flight in the night, so that he, who wishes to cheat harsh men, can know how to draw out girls locked inside."]

The comparison of the two speeches, suggested by the formal correspondences between them, and the conspicuous parallel syntactical constructions at lines 19-20 and 49-50 respectively strongly delineate the differences between the two speeches. Where Apollo speaks in general terms, Calliope gives detail. Apollo uses the general Callimachean metaphor "soft is the

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[20] 1.2.27-8: *cum tibi praesertim Phoebus sua carmina donet / Aoniamque libens Calliopea lyram* [Particularly when Phoebus gives his songs to you and Calliope is generous with the Aonian lyre.]; 2.1.3-4: *non haec Calliope, non haec mihi cantat Apollo. / ingenium nobis ipsa puella facit.* [Neither Calliope nor Apollo sings these things to me.]; 3.2.15-6: *at Musae comites et carmina cara legenti, / nec defessa choris Calliopea meis.* [But the Muses are friendly to the reader of dear poems, and Calliope does not tire of my dances.]

terrain your small wheels must cut" while Calliope names specific subjects that would be unsuitable to the poet. Where Apollo merely remarks that the poet should write for the entertainment of young girls while they are waiting, Calliope goes into greater detail and explains how his poetry could be helpful to young male lovers.

To a certain extent Calliope also gives an answer to Apollo. Apollo's speech is very much concerned with the sphere in which Propertius' poetry should operate. This sphere is the "smooth road" (l. 18) and "the shallows just off the beach" (l. 23) which stand for shorter, non-epic love poetry and not the *flumen* where he currently is (l. 15), nor the middle of the sea (l. 24). The poet's straying from his proper sphere is Apollo's main criticism and it is spelled out in line 21 (*cur tua praescriptos evecta est pagina gyros?* [Why did your page turn from its prescribed course?]) This concern with the sphere of the poet's work leads Apollo to his second and important point – what made the poet stray from his proper path? Or in Apollo's words *quis te / carminis heroi tangere iussit opus?* [Who ordered you to touch the work of heroic song?] (ll. 15-6).

Calliope also supplies greater detail to Apollo's less specific remarks. The poetry that should be avoided, according to Apollo, is merely referred to as *carminis heroi … opus* (l. 16), while the Muse gives four lines of possible topics not suited to the poet (ll. 43-6). She also gives a description of a theme suited to him (ll. 47-8), namely shut-out lovers at their mistresses' doors. The Muse continues with a statement of the purpose of the love poetry she and Apollo would like to see the poet write (ll. 49-50):

>   "ut per te clausas sciat excantare puellas,
>
>   qui volet austeros arte ferire viros."

[So that he can know from your verses how to draw out shut-in girls by singing, he who wants to trick uncompromising men skilfully.]

The purpose Calliope cites constitutes an interesting and important commentary on and expansion of Apollo's advice that his book should be suitable reading matter for a girl waiting for her lover (ll. 19-20). The female Muse is of the opinion that the poems will be of practical use to the male lover, while the male Apollo (though his erotic interests were not confined to the opposite sex) believes this poetry should be of recreational value for the female lover.

Just as Apollo referred back to the themes in 3.1 and 3.2, Calliope refers to themes in 3.4 and 3.5. The images of warships under full sail and horses charging into battle are exactly what

Calliope warns against in the third poem, but it is not Propertius leading the horses into war, as there, but the horses leading on (3.4.8). Calliope's speech is also picked up in the geography of poem 3.4. The subjects she warns the poet not to touch include the battles on the western front at the river Rhine, while in the fourth poem, the poet is supporting Augustus' wars in the east at the rivers Tigris and Euphrates. But the epic theme with which 3.4 opens is only a gambit and, as becomes clear in the second half of the poem, the poet is not following Octavian into war, but is content to stay in Rome with the rest of the crowd and applaud the victorious general's triumph, lying in his girlfriend's lap.

We may easily agree with Conte (2000: 307) that the two poems 3.4 and 3.5 "constitute a sort of diptych, a diptych in which the latter poem functions as a logical and thematic complement to the former." It was noted above that the opening word of each poem (*arma* and *pacis*) clearly marks them as a pair and the poems are indeed mostly about the wars planned by Octavian and peace venerated by lovers like Propertius. Hubbard (1974: 81) notes that "war and peace are here considered not as themes for poetry, but as ways of life" and that both poems "see the motive for war as the desire for gain." The poet, as is common in Augustan poetry (cf. Vergil, Horace and Tibullus), rejects this acquisitiveness and quest for military glory in favour of peace. In the two poems, both ways of life are described at length and each is associated with other things: the life of war is not only war, but also riches and glory, while the life of poetry is also one of love and study.

Though Apollo is not directly named in these two poems, his presence is undeniable. Propertius has already established in 3.3 that he is following the precepts given to him by Apollo and it is implied that he is writing 3.4 and 3.5 under the influence of the god's advice. However, in writing about Octavian, the poet cannot exclude Apollo's role as patron deity of the family of the new *princeps* of Rome. Through the last two poems of the panel it gradually becomes clear that the poet is dividing the world into two groups, with certain people and deities placed unequivocally on one side or the other, but exactly where the demarcation is made is left unclear and the most conspicuous person not placed in a group is Apollo. This begs the question: Is Propertius saying anything about the politics of the new regime, its wars in the East and the opulent triumphs it displays in Rome? And if he is, to what extent is the poet critical of the new Regime?

On the side of those who choose a life of war and the pursuit of wealth Propertius places Octavian (3.4.1), Latin Jupiter (3.4.6) and Mars (3.4.11). On the side of those who choose peace, he puts himself (3.5.1) and the Muses (3.5.20). Associated with the former are the journeys over the ocean to the ends of the Empire (3.4.1-6) – in 3.4 India is named, as well as the Tigris and the Euphrates. War and bloodletting at rivers at the boundaries of the Empire were also mentioned by Calliope in 3.3.45-6 as part of the things about which she tells the poet not to sing, and keeping one's boat to the shallows, that is, not travelling too far from one's prescribed course, was suggested by Apollo (3.3.23-4). The theme is developed further in 3.5.11-2 where the compulsion to travel across the sea is ascribed to an error made by Prometheus when he created mankind. In short, war reigns at the borders of the Roman world and this is where the warmongers are, while peace reigns in Rome, the centre of the world, in the heart of which Propertius is lying on his girlfriend's lap.

Wealth and riches are also associated with Octavian and war. Poem four opens (3.4.1-2):

> arma deus Caesar dites meditatur ad Indos,
>
> et freta gemmiferi findere classe maris.

[*The god Caesar is planning war against the wealthy eastern peoples,[21] and to split the gem-bearing sea with his fleet.*]

Not only is the prospective enemy rich, but the deep sea, too, is described in terms of material wealth. The procurement of the eastern wealth is foreseen by the poet as weighing down the axles of the wagons in the triumphal procession; and this wealth, we are led to believe, is the reward for a life in war. In 3.5.3-6 Propertius rejects such wealth and luxury outright, depicting himself in stark contrast to Octavian. A little later (3.5.15-7) he makes the point that none of the riches amassed on earth can be taken along to the afterlife where erstwhile antagonists, the rich and the poor, will sit together.

The two poems also contrast the lifestyle of the poet with that of the general in terms of their respective aims. It is easy to dismiss Octavian and his group as greedy warmongers as has been done regarding Crassus, whose disastrous expedition of 53 BCE was believed to be motivated by avarice.[22] But, according to the poet of 3.4, greed and warmongering are not the

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[21] The *Indi* here stands for the East in general, as explained by Camps (1966: 69).

[22] The main ancient sources on the battle of Carrhae – Dio Cassius and Plutarch's *Crassus* – are adamant that "Crassus' downfall is an obvious example of νέμεσις following on ὕβρις" (Marshall 1975: 147). For the most recent discussion of the battle of Carrhae and insightful observations about how the Romans remembered their military defeats see Mattern-Parkes (2003: 387-96).

motivation behind Octavian's eastern campaigns. In lines 4-6 it is explained that the eastern lands must be subdued and controlled – the rivers (l. 4), the province (l. 5) and their trophies (l. 6) – and that this should be done "to pay the ghosts of the Crassi[23] their due and purge our defeat" as Camps (1966: 71) puts it. The passage under discussion (3.4.9-10) reads:

omina fausta cano. Crassos clademque piate!

ite et Romanae consulite historiae!

[I foretell favourable omens. Expiate the massacre of the Crassi! Go! And reflect upon the history of Rome!]

The verb *piare* has strong religious overtones and saying that the disaster suffered by Crassus must be expiated makes it almost a religious mandate. In this light, the poet singing favourable omens makes sense: he is giving his blessing to the undertaking as if he were a priest or a prophet. The religious nature of the anticipated war in the East is further emphasised in the next line where consideration of Roman History is presented as the ultimate good. Thus, whatever the motivation behind Crassus' invasion of Parthia might have been, that of the new Caesar is honourable insofar as its purpose is to correct Roman History.

However, those who are prepared to go to war also stand personally to win great riches and glory for themselves in the service of the state. The poet and the group to which he belongs, on the other hand, are not interested in riches; and the work of Propertius especially, is, according to both Apollo and Calliope (3.3.18-20 and 3.3.47-50 respectively), useful for no more than keeping waiting girls occupied or helping lovers to reach their girlfriends; it would provide the poet with fame only in a restricted circle. This crucial difference between the two groups leads to the important question: is it enough for the poet to be content with so little?

The first word from Calliope's advice in 3.3, *contentus,* addresses this question directly. She explains in detail what the poet can and cannot do and the next poem follows this advice closely. While it may seem, at first, that 3.4 is a poem about precisely what Calliope discouraged, it soon transpires that the poet is in fact not interested in writing about these themes at all, but would prefer to watch events from a distance and the safety of his girlfriend's lap. The last two lines (3.4.21-2), echo Calliope's sentiment:

praeda sit haec illis, quorum meruere labores:

me sat erit Sacra plaudere posse Via.

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[23] The plural is not poetic: both Marcus Licinius Crassus and his son died at this battle.

[Let these spoils go to them who earned it with their toils; for me it shall be enough to be able to applaud them on the Via Sacra.]

But is this really enough for the poet, who in 3.1.33-8 and 3.2.25-6 prophesied his immortality through his creative achievements? The argument presented in 3.5 encourages us to doubt this. First the poet admits that he does not like fighting with anyone (except his girlfriend (ll. 1-2)) and emphasises then, that he does not really care about the riches gained through war (ll. 3-6). He takes his abhorrence of conflict one step further and attributes this hunger for war and spoils to a mistake made by Prometheus when he created mankind (ll. 7-12), and that these earthly possessions and the conquests gained in life, count for nothing once in the afterlife (ll. 13-8). He explains at length that he prefers the life he has led so far, dancing with the Muses on Helicon and getting drunk at parties (ll. 19-22) and, later, in his old age, he would continue his creative endeavours by writing about nature (ll. 25-38) and religion (ll. 39-46), especially about what lies beyond the grave. The punch-line comes in the concluding verses of 3.5 (45-8):

> an ficta in miseras descendit fabula gentes,
>> et timor haud ultra quam rogus esse potest.
> exitus hic vitae superet mihi: vos, quibus arma
>> grata magis, Crassi signa referte domum.

[… or whether a fictitious tale has come down to miserable peoples (that is, the stories about the Underworld) *and there need be no fear for what is beyond the pyre. This is the end of life that remains for me. You, for whom fighting is more pleasing, bring the standards of Crassus home.]*

On the surface it seems that Propertius is saying only that different people have different talents and that those who are good at making war should do so and that they deserve the spoils they earn. However, by giving his argument a religious slant by saying that mankind's hunger for war is an error in his design and that riches gained on earth do not influence the fate of the soul after death, Propertius' argument seems to suggest a different conclusion, although it stops short of actually saying it. Is he not suggesting that it is better to follow the poet's quest to find out about the world and the hereafter and in doing so enjoy ourselves?

One cannot, of course, expect the poet to criticise unambiguously the group he designated as those who seek war, military glory and riches – members of this group were his benefactors

and Octavian was, at least according to official propaganda, regarded as the saviour of the Republic. Neither, it seems, is it possible to find conclusive evidence for disguised criticism at this point. By calling himself a non-materialist, Propertius is merely echoing a sentiment voiced by numerous poets before him; by saying that he is content only to be able to applaud the victors on the *via Appia*, he says little more than that every man has his own unique talents and place; and, lastly, by describing death as the great equaliser, he is expressing no new idea. The point is that by building up the argument, as is done in poems 3.1-5, the conclusion that the poet is criticising the greedy imperialists seems logical. But the argument is in fact suspended at this point and the reader is forced to consider the possibility that he might be reading the conclusion of the argument as he wants it to be, instead of what it is.

A convincing case could have been made, one way or the other, if the poet had placed Apollo in one of the two groups – the god being patron of both Octavian and poets. However, nothing in the description of the god or his speech to the poet gives any hint about on which side Apollo should be placed. Apollo's issue with Propertius' attempt at writing of "kings and their deeds" (3.3.3) is only that these themes are too heavy for Propertius' talent and that it would in fact be dangerous for the poet to venture into the large crowd (3.3.24). Apollo is also not named in connection with Octavian's planned conquests in the East in 3.4: Jupiter, Mars and Vesta are named (ll. 6 and 11) and the *gens Iulia* is associated with Venus (l. 19).

In tracing the image of Apollo in the poetry of Propertius, two important remarks can be made about the third book. By using the well-known *topos* of Apollo warning the poet that the epic he is about to write is a bad idea, Propertius is making an extended and important poetic statement about what he thinks his poetry is. In this sense he is using the image of Apollo – the Apollo that inspires poets – to a greater extent than in his earlier books. On the other hand, he avoids the political face of the god, not associating him with Octavian or the wars in the east at all. The closest he gets to mentioning Apollo in a military or political context is in 3.1.7 where he wishes the poet well who "delays Phoebus under arms" and this constitutes no change from the stance he took in 2.34.

In Book 3 Propertius is still the pacifist he was in Book 2, but he gives more social commentary in this than in the previous two books. This departure from his earlier work would explain why such an extended programmatic statement was deemed necessary at the opening of the book and it would explain the big role given to Apollo in the programmatic

poems. Apollo is the highest authority when it comes to poetic style and subject matter and having Apollo as collaborator in his programmatic statement validates, as it were, his poetic intentions.

In the next book Propertius breaks away from his previous works in various ways. In a book much more concerned with the history of Rome and the aetiologies of its buildings, more themes are included in his poetry and he comes much closer to criticising the current regime. In 4.6, the central and most 'political' poem, Propertius himself goes so far as to detain Apollo under arms, albeit for only a short time, before he is again cast as the leader of the Muses at a symposium. It is in this poem, often regarded as the most problematic of the book and surely the most discussed, that the two faces of Apollo – the protector of the Julian house and the inspirer of poets – are juxtaposed most strongly.

CHAPTER 6:

Propertius 4.6: Mythologising Actium

Over the last five decades poem 4.6 has elicited a multitude of often contradictory interpretations. This chapter will not suggest a new definitive interpretation, but will look mainly at the image of Apollo that features so strongly in the poem and the various themes associated with Propertius' use of this image in order to throw more light on the questions that have dominated interpretation of this poem. The questions that have particularly engaged critics are firstly, to what extent the poet is 'sincere' in his praise of Augustus, or if he is 'sincere' at all;[1] secondly, to what extent he is critical of Vergil, to whose description of the battle of Actium he alludes throughout the poem;[2] and lastly, to what extent Propertius participated in the creation of a new mythical history of Rome.[3]

Recently Wilson (2009: 173-4) has deplored a certain inconsistency in the reading of Augustan elegy. He explains that the erotic relationships in the poems are read with the assumption that the characters (Cynthia, Delia, Corinna etc.) are fictitious as is the persona which the poet assumes in any given poem, but that the political relationships (with Maecenas, Octavian or Tullus) are assumed to be real and that these characters belong to the same empirical reality as the poet. Wilson's objection to the reading of Augustan elegy is valid and important, but does not say enough. While it may seem easy to categorise Cynthia and Maecenas as real or fictitious, it is not so easy with Apollo or Calliope. The poet's mistress, as she is described in the poetry, is a private invention, we assume, and as such the audience can only know her through the author's text. Maecenas or Octavian, by contrast, were real people, whose existence and character can be verified independently. Wilson could have added that deities present a special problem: although the nature and deeds ascribed to Apollo can be verified from sources independent of Propertius, the god is not real in the same way that Octavian, for example, is real. It might be useful to broadly define the relative 'realness' of the characters of Augustan elegy: some of them are inventions of the poet and as such, can be manipulated almost solely according to his own discretion. Real people like

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[1] Most notably argued by Johnson (1973: 151-180)

[2] Recently revisited, not without good reason, by Miller (2004: 73-84).

[3] The creation of a new myth of Rome has been discussed under various headings, most notably Hardie (1986: 33-84), Gurval (1995: 19-85) and Rea (2007).

Maecenas or Octavian sometimes enter the poetry and these characters have to be approached with great care, for these people, even if they are cast as characters in a poem, are never completely under the control of the author. Between these two types of characters fall those not created by the Augustan elegist, but also not living in the real world – characters such as gods. Though the poet may embellish the traditional myths and even add to them, the parameters within which he can operate differ from those applicable to other characters in his poetry.

Wilson (2009: 175) proposes that Augustan elegy should be read with due regard for the fact that even the political relations portrayed in them – including the historical characters mentioned in them – are, within certain limitations, constructed by the poet in order to forward a poetic purpose. For instance, political pressure upon a poet could be feigned by the poet in a text so that he may have an excuse to write a *recusatio*. Of course, Wilson is not so extreme in his viewpoint as to argue that the Augustan political landscape, as seen through the poet's eyes, was constructed; he merely refuses to accept, at face value, everything the poet says about the political climate. The important point Wilson makes is that the political pressures we believe influenced the poets can easily be overstated and it must be remembered that the poems, our main historical source for these pressures, were created by the poets, which means there is very little scope for external verification of the data with which the poets present us.

Here it will be assumed that Augustan poets, like all other authors, can show only that part of life of which they are aware. A poet like Propertius would know his patron Maecenas in a different way from say Vergil's Maecenas, because relationships between individuals are unique and no one individual in real life is privy to full knowledge of another person or the interactions within his social circle. Therefore, a poet, like any other person, can only represent the world around him based on his incomplete perception of that world and the people in it. Moreover, this perception is often deliberately adapted to suit a particular poetic agenda or purpose. It will also be assumed that the Augustan poets looked at their world with certain preconceived notions and that of these views, some were inherited from their culture, but others were unique to each individual based on his or her personal experience of life. This chapter, it is hoped, will contribute in a small way to the ongoing study of how Augustans in general and Propertius in particular viewed their world.

Before trying to answer the three questions posed at the beginning of the chapter, it is necessary to consider the outline of the argument. The three questions – how 'sincere' Propertius was in his praise, how he appropriated his Vergilian model and how he participated in mythologising Actium – are closely interrelated. The poet's 'sincerity' is fundamental to the interpretation of his reading of Vergil and this in turn has to be considered when thinking about his treatment of the fledgling Actium myth. It also works the other way round: Propertius' reworking of the Actium myth indicates that the poet was very much interested in Vergil's version of the battle and this in turn says something about how sincerely he praises Octavian. For the sake of clarity the discussion will start at what seems to be the least pertinent question – how 'sincere' the praise of Octavian is – not that this question is unimportant, but it pales in comparison to the question of how Propertius tried to retell the story of the most important political event in his lifetime. After gauging the feelings expressed toward Octavian in 4.6, the reworking of Vergil's version will be discussed and then the focus will shift to the Propertian myth of Actium.

The modern reader's sentiment regarding the sixth poem of Propertius' fourth collection has been aptly articulated by Hutchinson (2006: 154) "4.6 veers between imposing laudation and obsession with its own oddity and with genre." The poem is indeed a collection of seemingly ill-fitted literary themes, mixed together in a dubious brew to produce what has been called "[o]ne of the most ridiculous poems in the Latin language" (Williams 1968: 43) or slightly more sympathetically a "deliberately and unavoidably poor poem on Actium" (Sullivan 1972: 30).[4]

The difficulties of the poem lie in various aspects and on various levels. Besides the textual problems, which characterise this poem no less than other Propertian poems, and the obscure modes of expression, also generic to the author, the poem touches upon various themes in a seemingly contradictory fashion. Scholars are still divided regarding the exact nature of the genre of the poem – whether it is primarily a hymn, an aetiology, or an elegy. Opinions oscillate between two extremes: trying to pin the genre down to the minutest detail or categorising it in such general terms that it becomes meaningless.[5]

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[4] This view was also articulated, to a greater or lesser extent by Sullivan (1966: 22 n.10, 1972: 34 n.11 and 1976: 71 n.8), Galinsky (1969: 86), Commager (1974: 64 n.62), but reconsidered by Johnson (1973: 151-80) who criticised the named authors for their "failure to appreciate the poetic merits of the piece."

[5] Pillinger (1969: 174) calls it a hymn and explains: "though we may recognize elements of etiology in the poem, the artistic conception is more hymnic than etiological" (1969: 190). Critics have stuck to the label hymn,

How the genre of 4.6 is to be defined, is indeed of no little importance. If the poem is called a hymn of some kind, it implies that it glorifies Apollo, Augustus or the victory at Actium. Gurval (1995: 257) is adamant that the poem "is not a formal hymn to Apollo, mythic or choric" and that though the "elegist imitates features of the literary hymns of Callimachus," the differences are "serious and profound." He mentions specifically that throughout the poem Apollo is neither invoked nor addressed in apostrophe, that no appeal is made for his presence and no assistance or blessing is requested. Nor, for the same reason, can it be a hymn to Augustus – all else aside, Augustus never styled himself as *deus*, only as the son of a *deus*. Though Augustus is the recipient of the praise in the poem and the poem relates events surrounding the battle of Actium, one thing is certain, that the poem itself in line 11 professes to be about the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine: *Musa, Palatini referemus Apollinis aedem* [Muse, we shall tell of the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine].

DeBrohun (2003: 25-8) argues from a different angle. She sees in Propertius' fourth book a competition between genres.[6] On the one hand, there is what she calls *amor*, which she associates with the love poetry of elegy and identifies with the poetic style of the lesser and smaller – the *tenuis*. On the other hand stands *Roma* – the bombastic and nationalistic, which is associated with themes of epic size. She sees Propertius' "use of elegy's discourse as a 'space' for the competing genres and values of *amor* and *Roma*" and that the poetry produces a hybrid discourse that is "neither pure love elegy, nor purely patriotic, aetiological elegy" (DeBrohun 2003: 27). Put differently, Propertius inserts one genre, or 'possible world,' into another. This hybrid elegy, according to DeBrohun (2003: 31-2), mediates, or tries to mediate, between the two extremes, but ultimately and inevitably fails - the point being that, if the two poles can be reconciled, the tension of the juxtaposition collapses.

The juxtaposing of two genres can be discerned throughout the fourth book, as it was in the opening panel of the third, where the materialistic soldier type was pitted against the poet type. In fact, such oppositions were also found in the two poems from the second book

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occasionally qualifying it with a more or sometimes less helpful adjective, for example: panegyric (Sweet 1972: 169), victory hymn (Baker 1983: 159), mythical hymn (Cairns 1984: 137) and a "hymn that praises Octavian's victory" (Arkins 1988: 246). A notable exception is Johnson (1973: 151-80), who prefers to call it a 'poem', not enforcing a classification and recently this terminology has been adopted by Coleman (2003: 45). However, DeBrohun (2003: 210) and Hutchinson (2006: 153) use 'aetiological elegy' and Miller (2004: 77) 'hymnic aetiological elegy'.

[6] DeBrohun (2003: 26) is careful to explain that she sees genres as "strategies or generative matrices, models of possible worlds", invoking the terminology of Conte (1994) and Hinds (1987 and 1992).

discussed in Chapter 5, where Apollo the musician and Apollo the instrument of divine vengeance feature in 2.31 and where Vergil's treatment of Actium is opposed to Propertius' love poetry in 2.34. These oppositions are found in so many poems and on so many levels, that they seem to be natural subjects for verse rather than an aspect unique to Propertius' fourth book. This is not to say that these oppositions are not important; their very abundance suggests that they form part of the very fabric of poetry and in their juxtaposition lies a clue to the poet's view of his world. Besides, it seems unnecessary to explain the oppositions of book four in such a complicated way as DeBrohun does. Put simply, the poet in book four is placing his poetry that contains nationalistic subjects (*Roma*) in an aetiology – an acceptable form in elegy (*amor*) – so that he can speak about these themes, usually foreign to elegy, without breaking the 'rules' he imposed upon himself in his earlier *recusationes.* By doing this he can better comment on his subject by exploiting the apparent disparity between the subject and the poetic form and he can develop his own poetic voice by stretching the boundaries of his genre.

The poem is curious both in terms of its subject matter and in the way in which it is handled. According to the poet's own admission (l. 11), the poem is about the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine, it is sung in the name of Octavian (l. 13) and in the presence of Jupiter[7] (l. 14). But a closer look reveals that the bulk of the poem describes events surrounding the battle of Actium and is dominated by the figure of Apollo. He enters the scene at line 27 and the following nine lines are devoted to the god – his anchoring of Delos, his entrance accompanied by celestial light, his role in the Trojan War and his famous victory over Python. But this is not all. Apollo then makes an eighteen line speech praising Octavian as Augustus, confirming his loyalty to the young Caesar and telling him that the enemy is not as fierce as they seem. Apollo is also the first to fire an arrow at the enemy and the poet specifically says that Rome conquers because of the loyalty of Apollo (*vincit Roma fide Phoebi* l. 57). Apollo is also the central figure at the symposium that concludes the poem. There the god disarms himself and takes up his lyre (ll. 69-70). Now the subject of the poem changes from Actium and its monuments to poets and the subjects of their poetry.

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[7] Hutchinson (2006: 157), strangely, takes *Iuppiter ipse vaces* to mean that Jupiter should "go without being sung" and cites Propertius 1.13.2 in support *... quod abrepto solus amore vacem* (… because with love torn away, I am alone and empty). *Vaces* is best taken as "may you be unoccupied" or "may you be free to attend" as it is understood by Butler and Barber (1933: 356), Camps (1965: 106) and Richardson (1977: 448) and is used in almost the same way in Propertius 4.11.23 *Sisyphe, mole vaces* [Sisyphus, take a break from the weight (of the rock you are pushing).]

In this chapter the poet's assertion will be taken at face value and it will be assumed that the poem is primarily about the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine. It will also be assumed that what the poet tells us about this temple is what he believes should be in an aetiological description of it. The poet, of course, includes in his aetiology elements, which he personally associates with the temple – they include the deity to whom the temple is dedicated, the significance of the temple for Rome, the battle of Actium, the author of the temple (Octavian) and the impact it will have on the formulation of a new mythical history of the city.

Since the Temple of Apollo is professedly the main subject of the poem, it is not surprising that the figure of Apollo dominates the poem. What is surprising is that Apollo is not present at the beginning of the poem. In the opening lines the poet casts himself as a *vates* conducting a ritual and this dichotomy between priest and poet is sustained throughout the first fourteen lines. At first the *vates* seems to lean slightly more to the side of the priest, at the end slightly more to the side of the poet (ll. 1-4):

> sacra facit vates: sint ora faventia sacris,
>
> > et cadat ante meos icta iuvenca focos.
>
> cera[8] Philiteis certet Romana corymbis,
>
> > et Cyrenaeas urna ministret aquas.

[The poet-priest makes the sacrifice: let silence aid the sacrifice, and let the heifer fall, struck down, before my altars. Let the Roman writing tablet compete with Philetan ivy-clusters[9] and let the urn provide the waters of Cyrene.]

These lines are strongly reminiscent of the opening lines of the third book, where the poet, in another ritualistic setting, sought entrance to the grove of Callimachus and Philitas. Here too, the poet refers to his Greek predecessors, Callimachus and Philitas: the Roman writing tablet is trying to outdo the poetry of Philitas; the Cyrenean water refers to Callimachus, who was born in Cyrene and who famously used water in his metaphor about poetic style. Water also features in the rest of the offerings (ll. 5-8):

> costum molle date et blandi mihi turis honores,
>
> > terque focum circa laneus orbis eat.
>
> spargite me lymphis, carmenque recentibus aris

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[8] *Cera* follows the manuscript tradition (Heyworth 2007: 457) though *serta*, an emendation suggested first by Scaliger, seems to make more sense and is printed by Camps (1965: 104-5) and Hutchinson (2006: 42). However, Richardson (1977: 447) makes a good case for *cera*. Since the exact reading of the text in this regard makes no difference to the argument here, the manuscript reading is preferred.

[9] Richardson (1977: 447) prefers to read *Philiteis ... corymbis* as an ablative instead of a dative and translates: "let the Roman wax show its strength (decked) with the berry cluster of Philitas."

tibia Mygdoniis libet eburna cadis.

[Give me soft spikenard and offerings of soothing incense, and let the loop of wool go three times round the altar. Sprinkle me with water, and let the ivory flute pour a libation of poetry from Mygdonian jugs on the new altar.]

The introductory lines end by referring back to the opening line. The ritual call for silence, *ora faventia*, which literally asks that no ill-omened words be spoken, is echoed here in the wish that fraud and evil be somewhere else and the *vates* who was making the sacrifice in the first line can now follow a new road (ll. 9-10):

ite procul fraudes, alio sint aere noxae:

pura novum vati laurea mollit iter.

[Go far away Fraud! Let Evil be under a different sky: pure laurel makes the priest's untrodden path smooth.]

The fact that the introduction is concerned with Propertius' poetry is important because the last part of the poem, which will be discussed below, is also concerned with his poetry and poetry in general. Propertius' discussion of the style and content fitting for his poetry relates to his reception of Vergil and his retelling of the Actium myth. The references in the opening lines to the Callimachean metaphor and to Apollo are subtle, but unmistakable. The purifying laurel is sacred to Apollo and the road it makes soft refers to the soft road about which Apollo was telling the poet in 3.3. Before commencing with his aetiology, Propertius tries to explain why so much of the rest of the poem seems to be concerned with matters of national significance and why he is not going back on his promises in the programmatic poems in the second (2.1, 2.10 and 2.34) and third books (3.1-5). That the poet is not disregarding the advice given by Apollo and Calliope in 3.3 can be seen in lines 11-4, which should be taken at face value:

Musa, Palatini referemus Apollinis aedem:

res est, Calliope, digna favore tuo.

Caesaris in nomen ducuntur carmina: Caesar

dum canitur, quaeso, Iuppiter ipse vaces!

[Muse, we shall speak of the Temple of Palatine Apollo: it is a subject, Calliope, worthy of your favour. The songs are composed in the name of Caesar: while Caesar is being sung, Jupiter, I beg you, yourself, to listen.[10]]

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[10] Cf. note 9 above.

The fact that Propertius is assuming the vatic persona in this introduction to 4.6 is also important. Above all it refers back to the only other poem where he described himself as *vates* (see Chapter 3), namely the *recusatio* he made in 2.10 (ll. 8 and 19-20):

> bella canam, quando scripta puella mea est.
>
> …
>
> haec ego castra sequar; vates tua castra canendo
>
> magnus ero

[I shall sing of war, once my girl is written … this camp (i.e. Augustus') I will follow, I will be a great vates *singing about your camp]*

But 4.6 is not quite about war – it is about the Temple of Apollo – and, though Propertius professes the belief that he would be a great *vates* when he writes about Augustus' camp, he has realised that the *vates* can also write about other things. While the *vates* as soothsayer may foretell favourable omens (*omina fausta cano* 3.4.9) for Romans going to war, as priest and in the case of the poet, priest of Apollo, he may engage in duties such as commemorating the shrine of the deity and teaching about its past.

The opening of 4.6 also refers back to the programmatic pieces of Vergil in *Ecloga* 6, *Georgicon* 3 and *Aeneid* 7. Like those, 4.6 is also placed at the centre of a book and also contains the name of the person to whom the poem is dedicated. Vergil progressed from being reprimanded after *cum canerem reges et proelia, Cynthius aurem / vellit* (*E*.6.3-4) [But when I intended to sing of kings and wars, Cynthius grabbed me by the ear] to *A*.7.41-2 *tu vatem, tu, diva, mone. dicam horrida bella*[11] [You, Muse, help your *vates,* I shall sing of horrible wars]. But Vergil's about-turn can be explained for the poet left himself a loophole by directing Apollo's reprimand in *Ecloga* 6 to Tityrus, a poetic persona, and not to the poet himself (see Chapter 2). Propertius does not hide behind a poetic persona when Apollo reprimands him in 3.3.17 and it seems that the long description of the religious ritual, with which 4.6 starts, is at least in part an explanation for the poet's new course of action.

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[11] It is only at these lines in the *Aeneid* where Vergil links the word *vates* to a poet singing about war; in the *Eclogae* the *vates* was simply more elevated than a *poeta*. Propertius linked the *vates* with poetry about wars in 2.10. Although it is not clear how complete Vergil's epic was at that stage (cf. the discussion of Propertius 2.34 in Chapter 4), 2.34 indicates that Propertius had some detailed knowledge of the content of what would become *Aeneid* 8 at least, and Heyworth (2007: 275) gives several intertextual links between Propertius 2.34 and books 1, 3 and 7 of the *Aeneid*.

In 2.1 and 2.10, Propertius excuses himself from writing about war by claiming that his talent is insufficient for such poetry and by promising that one day, when he is older and wiser, he will do so. In 3.3, where Propertius is in fact attempting to sing about war – presumably feeling older and wiser – he is severely reprimanded by Apollo himself and the Muse Calliope, and informed that his unique talent is not suited for such poetry. This programme, so carefully laid out by the poet, comes back to haunt him in the fourth book, when he actually has something of national interest to say. On a certain level, Propertius is not going back on his earlier statements. He tells his audience expressly that the poem will be about the Temple of Apollo and that it would please Calliope – the same Muse who lectured him in 3.3. And to be completely fair, although Propertius associates the Temple of Apollo with the battle of Actium and the civil war, he only gives four lines of description of the battle itself (ll. 55-8).

In the description of the temple in 2.31 (discussed in Chapter 4) Propertius' ambiguous feelings toward the civil war and the loss of Roman lives became evident. In that poem, Apollo's role as divine punisher was emphasised, especially in the description of the ivory doors of the temple (2.31.12-4). In 4.6 Apollo again features as a destructive deity and an active participant in the civil war, but, unlike 2.31 (and 1.21-2, 2.1 and 3.5 where civil war is also deplored) there seems to be no criticism of the war or even war in general. This seems to be one of the chief reasons why critics sometimes feel that Propertius has caved in under imperial pressure, sold out to the new regime and has become part of Maecenas' propaganda machine.

There seem to be broadly two ways of interpreting the sincerity of the praise of Octavian in the poem, depending on which Propertius one assumes wrote it.[12] One may assume that the Propertius who wrote 4.6 was a subversive critic of the new regime and this viewpoint has given rise to two ways of looking at 4.6. The Propertius who wrote 4.6 has succumbed to external pressure from the leading men in Rome and is singing the praises of the new princeps. On this follows that 4.6 is a poor poem (Williams 1968: 56), because it is not 'sincere' in that the poet does not believe in the programme he is helping to forward, or that the poet is not good at writing about matters of national interest – a lack of talent for such poetry is cited by Propertius himself 2.1 and 2.10 as well as by Apollo and Calliope in 3.3.

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[12] Cairns (2006: 356) optimistically states that there should nowadays be "little doubt about the genuinely Augustan character of Book 4", citing his own 'Augustan' interpretation of the poem (1984: 129-164) and that "there are no grounds for thinking that Propertius subscribed to [an Augustan programme] involuntarily."

Otherwise, it can be argued that the Propertius who wrote 4.6 is still the dissident who publicly deplored the civil war, ostensibly cast himself as a pacifist and repeatedly refused to write poetry about war or politicians and that he is not yet ready to surrender his recalcitrant views, only, now, he is more careful and is prepared to hide them. On this assumption follows that 4.6 is a deliberately poor poem (see note 6 above), a poem that is mocking the prevalent myth of Actium and the architect of the new Roman regime by its profuse and extravagant praise to Augustus (Johnson 1973: 178-80). [13] Cairns (2006: 356) believes that 4.6 has shaken off this view, and looking at the poem through the use of the image of Apollo, strengthens his views.

Reading Johnson's argument, one is left with the feeling that he is imposing on Propertius the mindset of a twentieth-century liberalist, who has an almost organic dislike of autocracy and tries to subvert or at least question the established order at every turn. Though it is probably impossible to show that a first-century BCE poet moving in the higher literary circles in Rome did not have a subversive turn, it can be argued that this is unlikely. After all, the discourse on the social contract, more fully developed in the age of enlightenment, was then still in its infancy.

Though Propertius' praise of Augustus in 4.6 is so munificent that it seems to border on sarcasm, reading it as such ignores the role of Apollo. Though Propertius may possibly have felt that he could get away with ridiculing Octavian, using the image of Apollo as vehicle for his criticism seems to border on impiety. In order to believe, with Johnson, that Propertius is irreverently making fun of Octavian, one also has to read various other parts of the poem as irreverent. Propertius' use of the vatic persona suggests that he took the subject chosen for the poem very seriously. For Vergil and Horace the *vates* was an elevated poet, a poet who had a special relationship with the gods and Muses and one who could speak about matters of national importance with authority. Chapter 2 showed how Propertius, too, bought into this concept. Propertius' sparing use of the term (2.10.19-20 and here in 4.6) supports this and makes it difficult to believe that a poet, who professedly received an epiphany from Apollo, would suddenly speak irreverently of his patron deity, let alone make fun of him, as Johnson (1973: 154) suggests.

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[13] This viewpoint rests on the assumption that Propertius, the author of the Propertian corpus, is an extra-textual individual who can be known independently from the poems. For a slightly broader discussion, see Kennedy (1993: 36).

If the poet is irreverently assuming the vatic persona, then lines 13-4, *Caesar, / dum canitur, quaeso, Iuppiter ipse vaces*[14] [while Caesar is being sung, Jupiter, I beg you, yourself, to listen], must also be taken as irreverent, ordering Jupiter around. Johnson (1973: 154), for one, sees no problem with this. This suggested irreverence would then also apply to his handling of Calliope. Though not a deity of the stature of Jupiter, she and Propertius have a history in his poetry – in 2.1.3-4 he denied being inspired by her, but in 3.3 her speech was instrumental in re-educating the poet. Though the poet might conceivably refer irreverently to the traditional Roman religion, it is almost impossible to believe that his Apollo, with whom he professedly had a close relationship in his poetry, as well as the content of the god's speech, should not be taken seriously. A final argument against this reading of the poem is that if the poet of 4.6 is assumed to be insincere, his impiety would escalate with every couplet and he would also be making fun of Quirinus[15] (l. 21) and even of Julius Caesar (l. 59).

The Octavian in 4.6 is flattered by the very presence of Apollo, regardless of the criticisms and exhortation the god volunteers. By letting the god Apollo appear to a historical person at a historical moment of pivotal importance Propertius is moving the events to a different level of reality – the realm of myth. Octavian is essentially elevated to a mythological character. To take the poet's Apollo here to be not as serious as he was in 3.3, where he gave the poet some fundamental advice on poetry (see Chapter 5), would be to push the interpretation beyond what the data allow. Also, the five statements made about the god as he appears on Octavian's ship are calculated to imply that the god means business. The poet's description of the god here achieves much the same effect as is achieved by zooming in the camera in a scene in a movie. Apollo departs from Delos which he leaves anchored under his will (ll. 27-8), he appears amid some spectacular meteorological phenomena (ll. 29-30), he is ready for action with his hair tied back and without his lyre (ll. 31-2) and, most importantly, he has the same expression he had when he visited a plague upon the Greek camp at Troy (ll. 33-4) and when he killed Python at Delphi (ll. 35-6). The long description of the appearance of Apollo is strongly visual and not without point.[16] Apollo first appears as if on the horizon, coming from

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[14] See note 9 above.

[15] Quirinus is the deified Romulus (cf. Hutchinson (2006: 159)).

[16] For an extensive discussion of these final two similes, including the intertextual references to Vergil's description in the *Aeneid*, see Mader (1990: 325-34). Mader sees in the description of Apollo a "general framework of reference" to a "gigantomachic-type scenario" (331), an interpretation which might be contentious.

Delos, his birthplace. His arrival is anticipated by lights and as the dust settles, so to speak, the audience first discerns the god's obvious attributes – his hair and the absence of the lyre. Then, drawing even closer, the god's facial expression can be made out.

The final close-ups of Apollo form the climax of the description and constitute its main point. The poet wants to make sure that there is no doubt regarding the intentions of Apollo: the image of Delos standing still under the divine will of the god emphasises his determination, the meteorological disturbances foreshadow the dramatic effect he will have on the battle, his tied-back hair and the absence of the lyre remove any doubts that he is in a peaceful mood and finally, the description of his expression invokes his darker traits – he is Apollo, the god who punishes with his bow and arrows.

It has been said about Apollo's speech that the "god seems to say all the right words, but somehow the overall effect of his words is not quite right." (Gurval 1995: 266). Why the speech seems to contain the right words has been explained by Coleman (2003: 37-45) improving on Cairns (1984: 129-64). What the speech says is important when the 'sincerity' of the poet is to be judged. The expression of fidelity to Octavian and his cause (ll. 37-40), the god's emphasis on the importance of Octavian's mission (ll. 41-2) and the final exhortations (ll. 45-54) are explained by the Hellenistic technique of using a divine spokesperson in extolling the virtues of the recipient of the praise (Coleman 2003: 37), but lines 43-4, however, are not so easy to explain.

> quam nisi defendes, murorum Romulus augur
>   ire Palatinas non bene vidit avis.

[If you do not defend her [i.e. Rome]*, Romulus, the augur of Rome's walls, did not read the flight of the Palatine birds properly.]*

Gurval (1995: 267) remarked that the reference to Romulus and the epithet *augur murorum* hints at the 'popular and unpleasant' story of the murder of Remus[17] and it is not difficult to see the link between the slaying of a brother before the establishment of a new era and the establishment of a new order after a civil war. In Chapter 4 it was shown that Propertius could

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However, one cannot fault his conclusion that the two similes are far from "irrelevant and even ridiculous ornamentation" (Mader (1990: 334) on Johnson (1973: 163)) even without positing a gigantomachic-type scenario. Miller (2004: 80-2) explains that Apollo, who was closer to the elegiac poet than to the epic genre of his model, the *Aeneid*, naturally plays a bigger part in the narrative and he sees in the description of this aspect of Apollo a deliberate contrasting of the two roles the god plays.

[17] Gurval refers to Livy 1.7.1-3 for conflicting versions of this story.

have deplored the civil war in unambiguous terms without being anti-Augustan at the same time. Here in 4.6 it seems that little has changed. Though poem 4.6 praises the new ruler of Rome, this reference to the unpleasantness of familial strife in the context of the civil war seems to allude to Propertius' earlier statements about civil war. It would appear that there is still a lot of work to be done on exactly how Propertius viewed the political landscape of Rome in his time. For the present argument, it is enough to note that, if the poet were not completely 'sincere' or wanted to poke fun at Octavian, he would hardly have referred to something as painful to the Roman people and of which he spoke with so much emotion in his earlier poems.

It seems then that Propertius – both the historical person and the poetic persona – is best described as not being essentially for or against the new regime in Rome (Kennedy 1993: 36). A more realistic description of the historical Propertius would suggest that he held a complex view on Roman politics and that his views were to a greater or lesser extent for or against different aspects of Augustus' new regime and were not static, but changed over time as history slowly unfolded and he became older. During the discussion of the texts above (2.1, 2.19, 2.31 etc.) Propertius' abhorrence of specifically civil war became clear and nothing in 4.6 indicates that he has changed this view.

In the opening lines of the fourth book Propertius explains what kind of poetry can be expected in the book and delineates the boundaries of the genre of the book. That is, to what extent he is going to import Greek aetiology into Propertian elegy. The opening of the fourth book defines, to a certain extent, the aetiologies of the book, 4.1.1-4:

hoc, quodcumque vides, hospes, qua maxima Roma est,

ante Phrygem Aenean collis et herba fuit;

atque ubi Navali stant sacra Palatia Phoebo,

Evandri profugae concubuere boves.

[Whatever you see here, foreigner, which is mighty Rome, was hill and grass before Phrygian Aeneas; and where the Palatine shrines stand for Apollo Navalis, Evander's exiled cattle lay down.]

The aetiologies in Book 4 retell the myths regarding the origins of the monuments of Rome to people foreign to the city. Not that the book should be seen as a tour guide – the book's intended audience is and can only be the literary elite of Rome. But the poet is unambiguously informing his audience that poem 4.1 and Book 4, by extension will deal with the monuments

and buildings of Rome and the city's history. This places the poet in a unique position: as recently as about three years earlier, Vergil's *Aeneid* was published and this most famous poem of the Augustan age also dealt with the establishment of Rome. The aetiologies of Book 4 and especially the aetiology of the Temple of Apollo in 4.6 would in their own time naturally be compared with Vergil's treatment.

Although the intertextual links between Propertius 4.6 and Vergil's *Aeneid* 8.675-728 have been studied,[18] much still remains to be said. The present study will focus only on the Apollos that feature in both these poems. Apollo features throughout Propertius 4.6, but in Vergil's description of the Shield of Aeneas – 8.675-728 – the god is mentioned only twice. At line 704 Apollo (*Actius*) can be seen above the battle scene and at lines 720-1 Octavian is sitting on the steps of the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine during a triumphal procession that celebrates the victory at Actium. It would seem, therefore, that Vergil, too, refers to two faces of Apollo in his description of Actium – Apollo the archer and Apollo the musician.

Propertius, in turn, takes from Vergil what he believes is suited to his own poem and amplifies it, while at the same time simplifying the political aspects of the conflict. Like Vergil, Propertius starts with a description of the Ambracian Gulf, but where Vergil gives two lines (676-7), Propertius gives four (15-8). Both poets describe the opposing sides: Vergil devotes seven lines (678-84) to Octavian (of which three are devoted to a description of Agrippa and Octavian's retinue of senators and gods is specifically named) and four to Anthony – specifically named – and his Egyptian *coniunx*, Cleopatra. Propertius simplifies the description by giving two lines to each side (21-2) and (23-4), omitting references to Agrippa and Anthony and omitting the retinue of gods and senators (ll. 21-4):

> altera classis erat Teucro damnata Quirino,
>
> > pilaque feminea turpiter acta manu:
>
> hinc Augusta ratis plenis Iovis omine velis,
>
> > signaque iam Patriae vincere docta suae.

[The fleet on the other side was doomed by Trojan Quirinus, and its spears were disgraced by a woman's hand. On this side was Augustus' ship, sails filled by Jupiter's blessing, standards already trained in victory for their country.]

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[18] The most recent is Miller (2004: 73-84), who also gives a select bibliography, but Casali (2006: 185-204), though focused narrowly on the *Aeneid*, is extremely insightful.

The simplification of the scene allows the striking parallel construction that directly juxtaposes the two fleets and at the same time amplifies the image of the two fleets almost frozen, as it were, in the calm before the storm.

In his handling of Apollo Propertius again displays simplification and amplification. Vergil introduces the god at line 704 merely as *Apollo ... Actius* implying only that he came from his shrine overlooking the bay (Miller 2004: 78) and nothing more. Propertius' elaborate description (discussed above) clearly identifies those aspects of the god that would feature in the coming battle and emphasises that this is not Apollo the musician by supplying two mythological examples, respectively from the war at Troy and the slaying of Python, to show exactly what the god is about to do. Vergil's second reference to Apollo (l. 720) entails only that Octavian was sitting on the steps of the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine during the victory celebrations. This reference is therefore to the musical Apollo, since the Apollo of this temple was chiefly associated with his musical character.[19] Propertius' musical Apollo, introduced in line 69, is clearly identified: *citharam iam poscit Apollo* [Apollo now seeks his lyre]. He can be linked to the temple on the Palatine and its famous statue through the specific mention of the musical instrument. Apollo plays a greater part in Propertius' poem about Actium, where he presides over a symposium of poets privately celebrating Roman triumphs.

The two Apollos mentioned in this passage of Vergil are exactly the same as the two Apollos mentioned by Propertius in 2.34 (Chapter 4) and in 4.6. In 2.34 Propertius defined his Actian Apollo in reply to Vergil's *Aeneid* and in Chapter 4 it was shown that, at least in part, Propertius used Vergil's Actian Apollo to express his doubts regarding the way in which the ending of the recent civil was celebrated and the victor praised. In 2.34, Propertius unambiguously expresses his preference for Vergil's Apollo *Cynthius*, the one who would sing songs like the *Georgica*,[20] and places his own poetry in opposition to the 'national' epic Vergil was busy producing. At first sight it is therefore strange to see Propertius write about Actian Apollo and his involvement at Actium according to the Vergilian version. As Miller (2004: 77) puts it: "It is one of the ironies of Latin literary history that the elegist who defined

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[19] For the famous statue of Apollo *Citharoedus* which stood there, see Propertius 2.31 in Chapter 4 and Gurval (1995: 123-7). Zanker (1988: 85) contends that a cult statue of Apollo *Actius* stood in the temple, but Gurval (1995: 125-6 and 285-6) argues convincingly against this.

[20] Propertius 2.34. 79-80: *tale facis carmen docta testudine quale / Cynthius impositis temperat articulis.* [You make such music as Cynthius measures, with fingers placed upon his learned lyre.]

himself in striking opposition to Vergil's epic Actium, would himself come to celebrate the battle".

The Apollo *Actius* in Propertius, as can be expected, has a lot in common with the Apollo *Actius* of Vergil. Propertius could after all not escape the enormous influence of the great Roman epic. Most striking is Propertius' appropriation of Apollo as a vital, even indispensable, part of Octavian's fighting force. To be sure, Vergil's Octavian is accompanied by the Italians, the Senate, the people, the household gods and the great gods (ll. 678-9), while Propertius' Octavian has the help only of Apollo. Vergil recalls the battle as if it is a kind of Gigantomachia, where the Roman gods are pitted against the foreign deities of the East (see Hardie (1986: 97-109)), while Propertius recalls the battle almost as an execution, chiefly by Apollo, but also by Octavian, of the already damned foreign hordes under Cleopatra. This, too, can be explained as a simplification of the action by amplifying a particular aspect, in this case the role of Apollo.[21] This is particularly relevant in the context of Propertian elegy. An epic battle scene between two world forces is suited to epic and for that reason unsuited to the elegy of Propertius, which generally prefers description on a smaller and more intimate scale. Apollo, leader of the Muses and inspirer of poets, is part of the elegiac cast, unlike gods such as Mars, Neptune or Minerva, who are associated with war and epic. Thus Apollo's role in the battle in Vergil stands out, at least as noteworthy if not incongruous with his usual role in the elegiac poetry of a poet like Propertius. This explains the attraction of Vergil's use of Apollo for Propertius as well as his desire to simplify.

A more subtle correspondence between the two versions of the battle has recently been pointed out by Casali (2006: 186). The Shield of Aeneas is the work of Vulcan, the divine artist and in the introduction to the description of the shield (8.626-8) we read:

> illic res Italas Romanorumque triumphos
>
> haud vatum ignarus venturique inscius aevi
>
> fecerat ignipotens …

[There the Fire-controller delineated the history of Italy and the triumphs of the Romans, not ignorant of the vates *nor uninformed of the times to come.]*

Casali quotes Hardie (1998: 97) on the ambiguous meaning of *vates*: "There is a punning ambiguity which may also be translated as 'poets'; the Shield of Aeneas presents itself as a

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[21] Propertius' simplification also extends to the omission of the other antagonists mentioned in Vergil – Anthony, Agrippa and the senators.

visual summary of the Latin epic tradition, and of Ennius' *Annals* in particular. Vulcan knows the future history of Rome – because he has read the poets who will chronicle that history. The authority of the Vergilian text is no more or less than that of the other texts on which it draws, and which it completes". This explains Propertius' donning of the vatic persona in the opening lines of 4.6. Vergil's divine artist was informed by poet-priests just as Vergil himself was informed by no less a poet than Ennius. Hence Propertius can hardly talk about the battle from any less an authoritative position than that of a fully-fledged *vates*.

Finally, Propertius also appropriated the celebration of the victory at Actium from Vergil. Though it is true that Horace wrote poems set at celebrations of the victory – *Ode* 1.37 and *Epode* 9 – not only are the exact natures of the settings not completely clear, but he did not include Apollo. Vergil's celebration in *Aeneid* 8.714-28 takes place in the streets of Rome and has Octavian sitting on the steps of the Temple of Apollo, the temple noted, at least by Propertius, for its famous statue of Apollo *Citharoedus*. Propertius' celebration is set at a symposium: a party which gives the impression of being exclusive to the inner circles of poets and *patron*; the guests are specially dressed in white for the occasion and the main activity is drinking wine and composing poetry.

Much has been said about this abrupt change of scene and the symposium that follows and the interpretative implications it has for the poem. The scene change comes in lines 69-70:

> bella satis cecini: citharam iam poscit Apollo
>
> victor et ad placidos exuit arma choros

[About war I have sung enough, Apollo Victor now calls for the lyre and disarms himself for peaceful dances.]

Pillinger (1969: 195-7), it seems, was the first to remark on the transition from "the sphere of public ritual" to the "poet's private celebration" (see especially p. 196). He contentiously sees this as indicative of the poem's "hymnic-panegyric" nature, but he does make the important connection between this poem and Propertius 3.4.[22] The latter poem also starts with a lavish description of an event of national interest (the war in the East and the Triple Triumph), but finally reveals the poet applauding from his girlfriend's lap (l. 15), emphasising Propertius' detachment from the proceedings. Sweet (1972: 173) sees a similar detachment on the part of

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[22] Pillinger, it must be added, was the first to show convincingly the extent to which Propertius 4.6 is indebted to Callimachus' poetry.

the poet from political events in 4.6, which he reads as a "self-conscious poem" that deals with the poet's problem of writing about the civil war and Actium. He sees the role which Apollo plays in 4.6.69-86 as leading back from the world of Actium to the poet's own preoccupation with the nature of poetry at the beginning of the poem. Sweet (1972: 174) concludes that Propertius treated his subject matter in a "light Callimachean style" and used the elegiac Apollo and the vatic persona to distance himself from his subject, but adds that the serious theme imposed "too much stress on the Callimachean technique". Johnson (1973: 160-70) and following him Sullivan (1976: 146-7) took this approach to the extreme: Johnson especially, passionately argues for reading 4.6 as "a parody of court poetry" (Sullivan 1976: 147) and a ridiculing of the Augustan regime. They take the symposium as fundamentally not meant seriously by the poet, and Johnson (1973: 171) goes as far as to state: "Vergil would never (one guesses) be found with a wine glass in his hand at sunup", apparently insinuating that Propertius' character, which he interprets from the poetry as being that of a playboy, prevents him from writing serious poetry – thereby strangely confusing the empirical Propertius and his poetic persona.

This extreme view was, rightly, tempered soon afterwards. Baker (1983: 172-3) prefers to read the last section of the poem differently: he sees Propertius casting himself as "president, and not participant" and as such as fulfilling the promise made at 2.10.19-20 (Chapter 3 above) and interprets the 'playfulness' observed by Sullivan (1976: 147) merely as "witty adaptation, in the Callimachean manner". In fact, Propertius made a similar promise to write about themes of national interest in 3.4.9-10 (discussed in Chapter 5) and there, too, the poet withdrew himself from the festivities to applaud from the side.

After perceptive re-evaluations by Cairns (1984: 147-8) and Stahl (1985: 253-4), opinion has swung back in favour of seeing Propertius as endorsing the Augustan regime, but not without reservation. Their work paved the way for more penetrating analyses on the content of the description of the symposium and especially the content of the *carmina* the poets sing in lines 75-84:

> ingenium positis irritet Musa poetis:
> Bacche, soles Phoebo fertilis esse tuo.
> ille paludosos memoret servire Sycambros,
> Cepheam hic Meroen fuscaque regna canat,
> hic referat sero confessum foedere Parthum:

"reddat signa Remi, mox dabit ipse sua:

sive aliquid pharetris Augustus parcet Eois,

differat in pueros ista tropaea suos.

gaude, Crasse, nigras si quid sapis inter harenas:

ire per Euphraten ad tua busta licet."

[Let the Muse stir the mind of recumbent poets: Bacchus, you are used to stirring creativity in your Apollo.[23] Let this one tell of the slavery of the marsh-dwelling Sycambri, that one sing of the dark-skinned kingdoms of Cephean Meroe, another record how the Parthians lately conceded defeat with a truce. "Let him return the Roman standards, soon he will give up his own: or if Augustus spares the Eastern quivers at all, let him leave those trophies for his grandsons. Crassus, be glad, if you know of it, among the dark dunes: we can cross the Euphrates to your grave."]

Johnson and Sullivan regarded the military successes celebrated by these poets as of minor importance[24] and Baker (1983: 173) concurred, though interpreting the poem differently. Gurval (1995: 274-6) subjected the events related in this passage to rigorous scrutiny. His conclusion that the military events related by the poets were not in fact so inconsiderable is not surprising given the political situation at the time. Rome was still reeling from decades of civil war and was only slowly reasserting herself in the Mediterranean – every military success was regarded as significant. The defeat of Crassus (cos.70 BCE), who was defeated at Carrhae in 53 BCE was singled out by historians and poets as the most important event that shaped relations between Parthia and Rome. After Crassus' campaign, that was almost unanimously criticised, the feeling that Parthia should be punished and that the lost Roman standards should be returned, was frequently voiced.[25] Moreover, the defeat of Crassus on the eastern border and the subsequent diplomatic success of Octavian are political events mentioned several times by Propertius and Vergil and were, for that very reason, loaded with intertextual significance. The mention here of the defeat of Crassus and, as importantly, the river Euphrates, merits a rather extensive digression.

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[23] Taking Bacchus to stand for wine, this line might also be rendered differently: "Wine, you are usually conducive to your Apollo's [art]" or, taking Apollo to stand for poetic technique, "Wine, you, who usually make the poet's craft fertile".

[24] "The collocation of Parthia, Aethiopia and the Sygambri involves scraping the barrel" (Johnson 1973: 170 n.17).

[25] Mattern-Parkes (2003: 389 n.12) gives Propertius 2.10.13-4, 3.4.18, 3.9.54 and 4.3.65; Horace *Odes* 1.19.11-2 and 2.13.17-8; Ovid *Ars Amatoria* 1.209-10 and 3.786.

References to the defeat of Crassus and to the Euphrates are important in Propertius for several reasons. Firstly, mention of the name of the river Euphrates is important in Vergil as it recalls the important model Callimachus and his views on what good poetry should be, a model shared by Propertius and Vergil, but followed in different ways. Secondly, the river, part of which formed the far eastern border of the Roman Empire and which was the only shared border between Rome and the Parthian Empire, was necessarily a subject of national interest and could naturally tie in with any mythology that might be written about the city. Lastly, the defeat of Crassus, one of the few memorably painful defeats in Roman military history, could serve as an excellent *exemplum* to warn against overconfidence, impiety, greed or any number of vices – an excellent vehicle for a poet who styles himself as a *vates* and tries to teach or at least inform his audience.

Vergil mentions the river Euphrates only three times and all three are placed at very specific geometric points in his poems: in the *Georgica* at 1.509 and 4.561 and in the *Aeneid* at 8.726 – all three occurring six lines from the end of a book. This fact on its own might seem like a curious coincidence, but as Scodel and Thomas (1984: 339) point out, since a reference to the same river is also placed exactly six lines from the end of Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo* (l. 108) (cf. Chapter 2), Vergil's architectonic pointers are very significant. In the briefest of notes Scodel and Thomas comment on the meaning of the Euphrates in Vergil: "At *Geo.*1.509 the river threatens war; at *Geo.* 4.561 Octavian thunders there; at *Aen.* 8.726 the river, after Actium, is no longer threatening." In a closer look at these particular passages Clauss (1988: 309-20) demonstrates that they provide insight not only into Vergil's own poetry in relation to Callimachus' approach, but also into Vergil's view of the state of Rome in his own time.

Clauss (1988: 309-12) points out that the reference to the Euphrates at *Georgicon* 1.509 comes after an exposition on weather signs. The river is threatening war in a world already turned upside down and in which Mars reigns supreme. Where Callimachus used the river as a symbol of unrestrained verse, Vergil uses it here as a symbol of unrestrained war. For Vergil, who up to this point has not composed poetry with military themes, the river remains, as it did for Callimachus, a symbol of subjects unsuitable for poetry. The atmosphere in *Georgicon* 4.561 is much more optimistic: Aristaeus' bees have been resurrected and the death of Eurydice has been expiated. Now Augustus is thundering at the Euphrates, as victor he is laying down laws and, in doing so, is affording Vergil *otium* in which to compose

pastoral poetry. Clauss (1988: 312-3) sees Vergil making a clear distinction between himself, the poet, who is living a life of luxury in Naples and Octavian, who is fighting in the East.

In the *Aeneid* (8.726), again, mention of the Euphrates has a different significance. It comes in the final lines of the ecphrastic description of the artwork on the Shield of Aeneas. Clauss (1988: 317-9) gives two reasons for the reference here: (1) It recalls the previous two references and calls to mind the progression of military events: first the river threatens war, then Octavian thunders there bringing the region under control and lastly, the river is, like other rivers, subdued and tame. (2) The name of the river recalls Callimachus' statement about poetry and Vergil's restatement of that same credo in *Eclogue* 6. The river still stands for epic poetry, as it did in Callimachus. But, looking back at Callimachus where the river was an unruly and chaotic source unsuitable for refined poetry, the river for Vergil changed gradually: at first it is a threatening force in a world turned upside down, then a force restrained by Augustus and finally it flows with humble waves, tamed as it were, and becomes a suitable source for epic poetry.[26]

By comparison, Propertius mentions the river Euphrates on no less than five occasions – at 2.10.13, 2.23.21, 3.4.4, 3.11.25 and 4.6.84. It would seem reasonable to assume that Propertius had Vergil's treatment of the Euphrates in mind when he used the name of the river in his own poetry – after all, Propertius also used the image of Apollo warning the poet (3.3), which Vergil (*E*.6.3-5) adopted from Callimachus (*Aitia* prologue) and he also used Callimachean metaphors to explain his reluctance to compose epic poetry. Like Vergil, Propertius would have been intimately aware of the various political undertones connected to the name Euphrates. Unlike Vergil, however, he does not mark his references to the river through special placement, but his use of the place name suggests that calculated intertextual referencing is at work.

Of the five instances in Propertius, three can be directly linked both to the poet talking about his own poetry and to current political events. Here a closer look will be taken at the instances in elegies 2.10, 3.4 and 4.6[27] with the following question in mind: how does Propertius use

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[26] For a discussion of Vergilian progression (or capitulation), see Thomas (1985).

[27] The two instances 2.23.21 and 3.11.25 do not refer to political events. In 2.23 the rivers Euphrates and Orontes stand for Mesopotamia and Syria respectively, from which prostitutes come and in 3.11.25 the Euphrates is mentioned as having been diverted to flow through Babylon by Semiramis, one of a number of famous women appearing in the poem.

Vergil's references to the Euphrates to say something both about his own poetry and the circumstances under which he composed the poems?

Even on a first reading there are some curious parallels between these three passages: on a political level, in all three cases, the Euphrates is named in conjunction with Crassus; on a programmatic level, in all three poems Propertius assumes, or promises to assume, a vatic persona through which he can sing about contemporary political events in Rome. Propertius is much more explicit in making the connection between the Euphrates and Crassus just as he more pertinently styles himself as a *vates* in all three passages, something which Vergil only implies in the *Aeneid* (cf. *A*.7.41-5 in Chapter 3). Propertius' donning of the vatic persona is not difficult to explain. Vergil's version of the battle of Actium is told by Vulcan, through the artful decoration of the Shield of Aeneas, and Vulcan, in turn, is aware of the *vates*-poets and their chronicling of future history (see Casali 2006: 186-7 and above). Propertius, in writing about Actium must have been fully aware that he was participating (with Vergil and maybe others) in creating a myth and seems to have felt it necessary to assume a vatic pose to give his version an authoritative ring. Propertius, like Vergil, was writing history through his poetry and, also like Vergil, he was not satisfied with merely retelling or listing historical events; he wanted to comment on them, give them meaning and use them as examples of how people should or should not act. The example of Crassus furnishes Propertius with an excellent negative example, which he can use to preach against war, avarice or the other vices that have been attributed to Crassus as he has done in 3.5.

In the case of the *recusatio* in 2.10, the poet begins as if he is about to write poetry about political subjects, but it soon transpires that he is only promising to write such a poem at some undefined future date and cites his lack of talent as the reason for not doing so immediately. This fact alone already links Propertius' use of the name Euphrates through Vergil with Callimachus, whose opinions about the art of poetry lie behind the Augustan elegists' aversion to epic verse. The passage is linked to *Georgicon* 4.561 on another level. Propertius 2.10.13-6:

> 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;

[The Euphrates denies the Parthian horsemen protection behind its back[28] and it pains her that the Crassi were taken. Even India, Augustus, volunteers its neck for your triumph and the untouched house of Arabia trembles before you.]

This may be construed as a possible start to an epic poem, one the poet refuses to write, but promises to write at a future date under certain political circumstances. It can also be read as a description of the political climate in which Propertius actually finds himself, where it is possible for the poet to foresee the Euphrates as no longer actively helping the Parthians, India as capitulating and Arabia as trembling. In this climate Propertius will become a follower of the camp of Octavian; he will be a *vates* for that camp. (ll. 19-20, *haec ego castra sequar; vates tua castra canendo / magnus ero* [This camp (i.e. Octavian's) I will follow, I will be a great *vates* singing about your camp]. Just as Octavian's thundering at the Euphrates afforded Vergil the *otium* to write poetry, so the successes of the *princeps* in the east will provide Propertius with a platform for his poetry.

Propertius' reference to the Euphrates in 3.4 can also be linked to Vergil. Propertius' *Tigris et Euphrates sub tua iura fluent* [The Tigris and Euphrates will flow under your order] echoes the sentiment in Vergil's *Euphrates ibat iam molior undis* [Let the Euphrates now flow with calmer waves] from *Aeneid* 8.726.[29] Propertius, foreseeing the Euphrates subdued, is looking forward to the same time as does the ecphrastic description of the Shield of Aeneas. However, in the *Aeneid* the description of the Shield of Aeneas ends with a triumphal procession in the Forum and the suggestion that, once the nations of the world have been subdued, peace will reign and a new Golden Age will commence. In Propertius 3.4 a sinister motive behind Augustus' new conquests – the accumulation of more wealth – is suggested, though not made explicit (cf. Chapter 5) and the darker side of conquest is revealed. This is where the example of Crassus comes in. In Plutarch (*Crassus*) and Cassius Dio (40) he is portrayed as fabulously rich and singularly greedy; in fact, both his decision to invade Parthia and his failure to succeed were attributed to his greed.

For Propertius, in this specific poem and its complement 3.5, in which he praises the military victories of Augustus in the East and deplores the excesses of materialism, Crassus is the ideal

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[28] Reading *post terga* with *Euphrates* presents no problems – rivers are often personified in Propertius, see Camps (1966: 110).

[29] In the light of Propertius 2.34.61-6 (Chapter 4), it seems fair to assume that by c. 23-21 BCE a reasonably complete draft of the eighth book of the *Aeneid* was known by poets in Maecenas' circle.

example. In 3.4 it seems that Propertius is in favour of Octavian going to war and is even prepared to support him by "singing propitious omens" (3.4.9-10), yet Propertius' patriotic fervour and enthusiasm are undercut in the final couplet of the poem (3.4.21-2):

praeda sit haec illis, quorum meruere labores:

me sat erit Sacra plaudere posse Via.

[Let these spoils go to them who earned it with their toil; for me it shall be enough to be able to applaud them on the Via Sacra.]

This says more than merely that those whose suffering has earned it, may have the plunder and that the poet will be satisfied with applauding them in the Via Sacra. It is laced with a tinge of disillusioned sarcasm, as if the poet is saying that he has no choice but to be satisfied with applauding Augustus, because now, if he wants to write about political themes he can do nothing else but praise the victor. From a programmatic point of view, this picks up on Vergil's *Georgicon* 4.561, where Augustus' thundering in the East created *otium* for the poet. In Propertius' case, instead of creating opportunity for the poet to write poetry, the conquests in the East have taken from the poet the opportunity to do more than merely praise the victors.

By the time of poem 4.6 (c. 16 BCE) history has caught up with Propertius. A treaty has been signed with the Parthians (20 BCE) and the eastern river has been subdued, so to speak, to Octavian's rule. It is thus easy to take the poem as a fulfilment of the promise made by the poet in 2.10 that he will sing about current military events once Octavian controls the East. Poem 3.4 also foresees an Octavian victory in the East and the poet goes so far as to sing favourable omens of the battle (3.4.9). But 2.10 is a *recusatio* and the praise of Octavian in 3.4 is undercut by the poet pertinently distancing himself from the scene in the final lines.

There seems to be a twofold point behind the fact that Roman military victories and defeats are subjects allowed at the symposium and that the poetry on these subjects is put in the mouths of other poets. Firstly, it reaffirms his commitment to the Callimachean poetic style and secondly, it allows Propertius to avoid (again) writing directly about war and politics.

The fact that the poets present at the symposium sing about Roman wars suggests that the poet regards them as acceptable in the kind of poetry he listens to. The point of the indirect way of speaking about these national themes seems to be that, while Propertius would not object to other poets singing about them and is even prepared to sing about them himself,

albeit in an indirect way, he will do so on his own terms. The terms Propertius imposes on his singing of Roman politics are firstly that it remains elegiac – elegiac in the sense that he will not compose in the hexameters associated with epic verse, which is strongly implied by his own use of elegiac couplets in 4.6, and by the fact that the poet whom he quotes singing about Parthia in lines 79-84 is also using that metre. Stylistically, Propertius remains Callimachean. Pillinger (1969: 191-2) gives, from the opening lines of 4.6, several intertextual pointers: the lustral water drawn from Cyrene (l. 4) refers to Callimachus' birthplace; the adjectives *mollis* and *blanda* (l. 5) are associated with the finely crafted poetry Callimachus enjoyed; the ritual purification of the priest with *lympha* (l. 7) recalls the programmatic poem 3.3.51 and, lastly, the new road smoothed by the bay leaves (l. 10) is a typically Callimachean metaphor. Pillinger (1969: 193-9) also shows how much Propertius appropriated from specifically Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo*, not only the poet-priest narrator and the structure of the poem, but also the allusions to current political events (cf. Chapter 2).

The second point is more subtle. In Chapter 2 and at the beginning of the chapter it was suggested that Propertius found himself in a difficult position at the start of the third book: after his excuses for not writing on themes of national interest (2.1, 2.10 and 2.34) and having even Apollo and Calliope reprimand him for attempting it in 3.3, how can he write about Actium without losing some of his persona's credibility? Vergil, it was shown in Chapter 2, had Apollo appear to the character Tityrus in *Ecloga* 6 to tell him that his talent is insufficient, but when the god appears to Propertius' poetic persona in 3.3, again telling the poet that he is lacking the specific talent to write about political themes, he addresses Propertius by name (3.3.17). It is true that Propertius is handling the political themes in 4.6 in a Callimachean manner and retains the light and allusive style of his earlier work and in this sense he is still sticking to his promises and following Apollo's advice – except, maybe, for writing the kind of poetry a girl would read (3.3.19-20). But besides this, it seems that Propertius, by putting the song about Crassus in the mouth of another poet is again placing some distance between himself and poetry about national themes, while at the same time nodding in acknowledgement to Vergil, who used this trick in the *Eclogae*.

A certain thread can be discerned through the programmatic pieces that deal with Propertius' endeavours to write about current Roman political events, namely 2.10, 2.31, 2.34, 3.1-5 and 4.6. In all these poems the poet is on some level trying to explain why and how he can or cannot write about current Roman politics, but in all these poems, as in poems from the rest of

his work, Propertius is in fact commenting on Rome, whether he is refusing to write about it in any particular instance or promising to write about it in future or quoting someone else who is writing about it.

In the light of 4.6 the promises and refusals made by Propertius earlier can be taken in two ways: it can be said that Propertius in 4.6 has "transformed the Callimachean warning-figure into a spokesman for Augustan triumph" though he has not forgotten "the old elegiac impatience with war" (Miller 2004: 84). The other view is that 4.6 is an attempt by Propertius to find a new way to employ the convention of elegy in order to avoid giving positive or negative criticism on current political events or at least to leave the poet's view on current political events unclear (Warden 1977: 21).

The first interpretation, that of Miller, is perhaps too strong. By the "Callimachean warning-figure", who is transformed into a spokesman for Augustan triumph, Miller presumably refers to the Apollo who appeared in Callimachus' prologue (Call. *Ait.* 1 fr. 1.21-8), warned Tityrus in *Ecloga* 6 (cf. Chapter 2) and pointed Propertius himself into the right direction (3.3) (cf. Chapter 5). To what extent this figure is 'transformed' is debatable and this argument implies that after the previous book, Propertius has drastically changed his stance on what his poetry is and what it can say. The Apollo at the symposium is no different from the Apollo who offered advice in Propertius 3.3: although the poets may be singing about subjects he reproached Propertius for attempting, it is not Propertius singing about war and politics here. What seems to be a simpler interpretation is to take Apollo as a deity with various facets – as Propertius made clear in his description of the artworks of Apollo in the Palatine temple in 2.31 – and to see Propertius here as exploiting various aspects of the god to explain the different emotions he feels about Actium, the civil war and the new Rome.

Warden (1977: 20), in a somewhat neglected article, explains the oblique way in which Propertius is approaching the national themes in 4.6 in a different way. He believes that the poet is now not so much rejecting the subjects themselves as unsuitable for his own poetry, but rather the manner of their presentation. He describes Propertius' approach to elegy as follows: "It is as if the poet is saying: 'I have tried the other more direct approach to political material, and found it wanting. The way to handle such material in the elegiac mode is crab-wise: to sing what you would sing if you were to sing it.'" To strengthen his point Warden

supplies another example where Propertius wrote about current political themes in an oblique manner – 2.10.13-8 – and shows how these lines mirror 4.6.77-84.

The role of Apollo and Propertius' use of his different faces encourage a slightly different solution to the same problem of how Propertius is to tell about Actium and Rome so that his version of events is honest but inoffensive, clear but not simplistic. On the one hand, his poetic persona has to be believable – a too drastic change from his persona's earlier positions (as in 2.1, 2.10 and 3.1-5) is not desirable. Propertius' elegiac voice is professedly unsuited for political themes and can only sing about them if the mode in which the myth is told is modified. From here then, the constant reaffirmations of his poetic allegiance to Callimachus and the comparisons with Vergil. On the other hand, explaining his feelings toward the new regime and its leader is no simple matter. Throughout the previous chapters it has became evident that Propertius had mixed feelings about recent Roman History. He deplored the horrors of the civil war, but the new building projects in Rome excited him.

In Apollo Propertius found an image through which he could try to communicate with his audience. The many aspects of Apollo made it easy to link the deity to different topics. To a certain extent Propertius was lucky: Octavian used the image of Apollo conspicuously in his national programme and, although it may not be clear to what extent the temple complex on the Palatine formed part of a predetermined programme, or if such a programme existed at that stage, the various faces of Apollo depicted in the artworks in the temple furnished Propertius with excellent symbols to express his thoughts. Likewise, it was not Propertius who appropriated the warning figure of Apollo from Callimachus. Although Vergil may have been more subtle in his appropriation of the image, the very fact that Vergil used it afforded Propertius the opportunity to define his own position in poetry and his conception of what the myth of Actium should be, by using the same symbol.

CONCLUDING REMARKS:
Looking back from Propertius 4.6

The aim of this conclusion is to recapitulate the main points of the discussion in chapters 1-5 and, where possible, to mention new avenues of investigation. To a certain extent the arguments presented above lead up to and culminate in the discussion of poem 4.6 in the final chapter. As the vast amount of scholarship that has accumulated around it suggests, this poem presents serious interpretation problems. For the greater part, the poetry discussed in Chapters 1-5 was presented to explain some of the problems in 4.6, for the problems encountered in 4.6 are also present, albeit to a lesser extent, in the poet's earlier work.

The preceding chapters have each discussed an aspect of Propertius' poetry that is linked, to a greater or lesser extent, to his use of the image of Apollo. His image of Apollo comes partly from traditional mythology transmitted orally and partly from the interpretations of this mythology drawn from Homer, Callimachus, Vergil and other poets, as well as images in famous artworks such as those in and around the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine. Moreover, the image of Apollo is also partly constructed by the poet himself. Having cast himself as a *vates*, the poet claims intimate and unique knowledge of the god (cf. among others 3.3) and so the image of Apollo becomes a unique symbol in Propertius' poetry. The various aspects of the god, reflected by the poet throughout his poems, are also present in poem 4.6 and this chapter, like the poem itself, forms a culmination point where these various aspects of Apollo in the poet's work meet.

The second chapter showed how Propertius' intended audience changed through his career and how the fourth book stands slightly apart from the rest in this regard. Not only is it separated from his other books in that more time elapsed between the publication of this book and the previous book than between any of his other books,[1] but it is also distinguished by the fact that it contains aetiologies, something Propertius has not attempted before. To accommodate the new audience and subject matter of his poems, Propertius' poetic persona

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[1] Propertius' first book appeared no later than 29 BCE and the third not before 24 BCE (Camps 1966: 1 and Richardson 1977: 7-9) and well before 20 BCE – probably 23 or early 22 BCE (Richardson 1977: 10). The last book appeared no earlier than 16 BCE (Hutchinson 2006: 2-3).

also changed. The poet's new role as almost divine teacher is obvious in the opening lines of book four and exploited in the opening lines of 4.6, where the poet styles himself as a priest presiding over holy rites.

The very fact that Propertius started to write aetiologies, or at least turned away from mainly writing amatory poems, is intrinsically linked to his persona and his professed poetic aims. His programmatic statements were discussed, first in Chapter 3 and again in Chapter 5. In the former a closer look was taken at his programmatic poems 2.1 and 2.10 and the excuses he made for not writing epic poems. Programmatic statements along the same lines were made by Vergil (*E*.6), and Propertius would deal with Vergil's poetry again in 2.34 and in 3.3. Poem 4.6 is also indebted to Vergil, for Propertius' description of the Battle of Actium borrows from and replies to Vergil's treatment in the description of the Shield of Aeneas in *Aeneid* 8.

Propertius' poetry speaks about Rome. It speaks about the poet's personal life in Rome and among the people of Rome, but it also speaks about the identity of its citizens and tries to interpret the meaning of its mythical origins and attempts to foresee its future. The image of Apollo in Propertius' poetry is intrinsically linked to this need felt by the poet. Propertius' poetic voice developed gradually just as the instances of his use of the image of Apollo through which he expressed his views, multiplied. The image of Apollo is linked to his programmatic statements in which he defined his poetic voice and to the vatic persona he adopts in his third and fourth books.

Propertius' social commentary on the horrors of civil war is done through a description of the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine (2.31) – commissioned by Octavian and logically associated with his victory at Actium. Poem 4.6 is also about the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine and this is one of several poems referring to the battle of Actium (cf. 2.34 and 3.11). The two poems at the end of the second book were discussed in Chapter 4. In 2.31 the poet mentions various aspects of Apollo with special emphasis on his role as the god who punishes. It is not completely clear to what extent the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine was associated with the battle of Actium at the time, but what is clear is that Propertius expressed ambivalent feelings about war and especially civil war, where the deplorable loss of life is balanced by the hope of a new era of peace. Propertius also chooses the image of Apollo in poem 2.34, when he

expresses his opinion of Vergil's work and selects from the great poet's epic poem the description of Apollo participating in the civil war at Actium.

Propertius opens his third book with a panel of five poems in which he redefines his poetic programme and to a large extent gives social commentary especially regarding the ruling elite in Rome. This panel is also fashioned around the image of Apollo, who appears conspicuously in the central poem 3.3. Finally, in the fourth book, Propertius retells the myth of Actium (4.6) following the version given in Vergil's *Aeneid* 8. Here the Actian Apollo of Vergil, of whom he disapproved in 2.34, is drawn into his poetry. However, unlike Vergil's telling of the myth, Propertius creates room for the Callimachean Apollo in the description of the symposium at the end of the poem.

Though undertones of the image of Apollo are present in the name Cynthia in Book 1, the book is generally devoid of both overt mentions of the god and of instances where the poet speaks about his poetry. Throughout the second and third books Propertius' poetic voice gradually grows in stature and more and more poems are devoted to both his own poetics and to current political issues. In the fourth book Propertius would finally compose poems primarily about recent political events in the form of aetiologies and at the opening of this book Propertius feels that his poetic voice is such that he can address his audience as *hospes*, as if he speaks to Romans and non-Romans alike.

Propertius' fourth book seems especially important for studies on the 'mythology' of the new Roman Empire. Studies on the myth of the founding of Rome as it was represented and reworked at the end of the Republic have centred, rightly, on Vergil, but the value of Propertius' poetry should not be underestimated. Unlike Tibullus, Propertius, like Vergil and Horace, was not only uniquely placed in the circle of Maecenas and in that sense close to Octavian and his inner circles, but he was also writing about some of the same subjects as Vergil although in a different way. In this way, Propertius offers us a view on some aspects of Augustan culture from another vantage point.

The nature of Propertius' poetic persona in turn is linked to his adoption of the vatic persona. As Propertius' poetic voice grew in stature, so did his willingness to don the vatic persona. While Propertius denied being a *vates* in 2.1, he dons the persona without any qualms in 4.6. Indeed, if the poet wanted to teach people through aetiologies or invoke a higher authority for

his teaching, the vatic persona would enable him to be priest, poet and teacher, privy to the will of the gods.[2] Here in poem 4.6, where Propertius is dealing directly with matters of national concern, the adoption of the persona becomes both desirable and expedient.

Calling a poet a *vates* (which includes the meanings 'soothsayer' and 'prophet') links the poet to the sphere of the divine and this alone made the term very useful for describing a poet who has the (presumed) authority to speak about matters of national interest. When the term *vates* was used by Vergil in the *Eclogae*, a decade before Propertius' first book, the term denoted no more than a poet regarded as outstanding by his peers. Propertius uses the term in only two poems – 2.10 and 4.6 – on both occasions applying it to himself as poet who is, or is about to write about recent wars. The link between the donning a vatic persona and writing about war is also made by Vergil. Vergil applies the term *vates* to himself only once and that is in *Aeneid* 7.41 where he asks the Muse to remind him about the battles he is about to relate. Propertius' use of the term *vates* may have been directly modelled on Vergil. Though the *Aeneid* was published long after Propertius' second book, the numerous references by Propertius to Vergil's text of the *Aeneid* suggest that Propertius had already heard much of it. Propertius' use of the *vates* concept can thus serve as an important marker to indicate chronologically the progress Vergil made on the *Aeneid*.

The *vates* persona is of pivotal importance in 4.6, where the poet uses the authority associated with such a figure to retell the myth of Actium. The fact that both Vergil and Propertius referred to themselves as *vates* when they were about to write about the wars that shaped recent Roman History indicates that they were aware that they were participating in creating 'myth'. Vergil informs us that Vulcan was not ignorant of the *vates* when he designed the decoration of Aeneas' shield. This, coupled with the fact that Vergil uses the word *vates* to describe himself only once – in the important *prooemium* to the Iliadic second half of the *Aeneid* when he starts to write about war – could suggest that Vergil, too, might have considered the *vates* as a poet with the authority to sing about wars.

An examination of Propertius' poetry from the viewpoint of how the image of Apollo is employed, again shows how greatly indebted Propertius was to Vergil, the pre-eminent poet of his generation. Propertius had to find a way to speak about current political events and

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[2] The vatic persona and what it entailed in Vergil, Horace and Propertius 1-3 were discussed in Chapter 3.

comment on social issues of the day within the established restrictions of the elegiac genre. Propertius' solution – to do it through two particular faces of Apollo – seems to have been suggested by Vergil. In poem 2.34 Propertius 'receives' two faces of the god from Vergil – the Apollo that enjoyed the *Georgica* and the Apollo who fought at Actium.

The Apollo who enjoyed the *Georgica* in 2.34 is essentially the Callimachean Apollo. Though Propertius was without doubt intimately familiar with the poetry of Callimachus and greatly influenced by him – as the poet himself confesses in 3.1.1-2 – the influence on his work of Vergil's use of the various aspects of Apollo has been underestimated. Though Callimachus touches on political subjects in some of his poetry, the Apollo appropriated from him by the Augustan poets – the so-called Callimachean Apollo – was not political. It was Vergil who, in *Ecloga* 6 and *Georgicon* 3, linked Apollo to current political matters and employed the image of the god in speaking about the scope and future of his own poetry.

Propertius contrasts the Actian Apollo – the other face of the god he 'received' from Vergil – with the Callimachean Apollo in 2.34. In this poem Propertius expresses a clear preference for Vergil's earlier, non-epic, poetry. The juxtaposition of the two faces of Apollo in this poem, Propertius' emphasis on the Callimachean Apollo in Book 3 and his use of the same Apollo in poem 4.6 in the celebration after Actium reaffirm the current view that Propertius, stylistically, followed the tenets of Callimachus even in his fourth book, although that book contains themes of national interest seemingly incongruent with these tenets.

It was also suggested that asking why Propertius professes to prefer Vergil's *Eclogae* and *Georgica* to the *Aeneid*, is not as useful as asking why the description of the battle of Actium was singled out in his reference to the *Aeneid* (Chapter 4). Later, in his own version of Actium (4.6), Propertius would also give Apollo centre stage, but at this point in his career – by Book 2 – Propertius is more concerned with writing about Vergil's Actian Apollo than with using it himself. Propertius' opinion of Vergil as seen from the point of view of how both poets used the image of Apollo makes it clear that Propertius is more concerned with defining his own poetry in relation to that of Vergil, than with criticising Vergil. Yet the very fact that Propertius could discuss Vergil's version of Actium and position his own poetry opposite that of the great poet, suggests that the form the mythic version of Actium would take was still to some extent open for discussion and that Octavian's favourite poet, Vergil, did not have a monopoly on it.

Looking at Propertius' social commentary from the vantage point of his use of the image of Apollo also produces promising results. By looking at the aspects of Apollo portrayed in or suggested by the artworks described by Propertius in 2.31, it becomes clear that the relevant artworks were selected by the poet with a specific theme in mind – the horrors of civil war – and that the poet interprets the images in and around the temple in such a way that the vengeful and warlike aspects of Apollo are as visible as his associations with music and poetry. Though Propertius consistently deplores the horrors of war in the rest of his poetry as seems to be the case here, his feelings toward the new regime and its leader are never made explicit. What is clear, however, is that the figure of Apollo served as an excellent image, maybe even the only possible image, through which the poet could describe the complexities of the world in which he lived.

Propertius' social commentary in the final part of the second book is extended in his third and a long and involved set of programmatic poems completes a panel of five poems that opens the book. The Callimachean Apollo features in these poems as a warning figure in the central third poem, a *topos* that refers back to Vergil and Callimachus. The first part of the panel (poems 1-2) is concerned with the nature and purpose of the poet's work: in terms of style and subject matter he reaffirms his allegiance to the Callimachean creed; in terms of purpose he foresees the future fame his love poetry will bring him, despite the comparative insignificance of its subject matter. The last part of the panel (poems 4-5) is concerned with military matters, or, more exactly, with the poet's opinion of people who are involved in military matters.

Considering these poems with the speech of Apollo in poem 3.3 as point of departure, Propertius' programmatic statements in 3.1-2 and his social commentary in 3.4-5, can be appreciated in a new light. This Apollo, being Callimachean, admonishes the poet for not continuing to write love poems in a light and polished style. This responds to Propertius' own thoughts, expressed in 3.1-2, about the fame he might gain from his love poetry. His Apollo here makes the important observation that Propertius' talent is not such as to become famous through poetry concerned with more important themes like politics or war. This placed Propertius in a predicament, for having confessed that he does not have the talent for writing about themes of national interest, how could he gain fame through his poetry? In the closing couplet of 3.4.22-3 he expresses the problem in general terms: "Let these spoils [of war] go to them who earned it with their toils, for me it shall be enough to be able to applaud them on

the Via Sacra." This might suggest that the poet felt that in Rome the best way to gain fame, maybe even the only way to gain fame, was to make war, or at least, to write poetry exalting the fame of those who gained it through war.

In 3.5 Propertius criticises this aspect of Roman culture. He makes an important distinction between those that make war and, through it, become famous and rich, and those who prefer to write poetry – especially love poetry – like himself. Though the poet never explicitly names a historical person in the group of greedy warmongers, poem 3.5 strongly suggests that he has Roman generals in mind (cf. Marius, named in 3.5.16). The criticism of these is scathing and the poet goes so far as to blame greed and avarice in people on a flaw in the creation of man. The programmatic statement of 3.1-5 places Propertius, as poet, firmly in the group of the non-materialistic pacifists – those for whom it is enough to applaud the victorious generals in the forum. Crucially, the poet stops short of actually placing Octavian in a group and any hint as to where exactly Apollo – in any of his guises – fits into the bipolar scheme, is also omitted.

Poem 4.6 represents a merger of these two groups and an incorporation of the two life styles presented as the extremes of a bipolar system described in 3.5. In poem 4.6 the opening prayer belongs to the world of the pacifists – the rites over which the *vates* presides in the opening lines (ll. 1-10) and the poetry he proposes to sing (ll. 11-4), are essentially unwarlike. The adoption of the vatic persona implies that the poet is busy with themes of national importance, while the Callimachean style and the elegiac genre mark it as typical Propertian in style. The description of the battle and the events surrounding it belongs to the group of victorious generals, while the description of the symposium that makes up the final part of the poem again belongs to the world of the poets. The bringing together of the two worlds is expressed through the reconciliation of the two faces of Apollo: Apollo can inhabit both worlds – as Apollo *Actius* he single-handedly decimates the enemy and with his lyre he inspires the poets at the symposium.

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ABSTRACT

In the Ancient World the god Apollo has traditionally been associated with poets and their art and in the Augustan age, the Golden Age of Roman literature, use of the image of Apollo is important for the understanding of the poetry. For Propertius the image of Apollo was, to a large extent, associated with two important aspects of his world: As god of poetry Apollo was associated with a refined and polished style of poetry following the tenets laid down by the Alexandrian poet Callimachus. Apollo was also associated with Octavian, who regarded the god as his patron deity.

Examining Propertius' poetry by looking at how he employed these two aspects of the god gives fresh insights into both Augustan literature and Roman culture of the period. The use of the image of Apollo by Propertius increases as the poet's voice develops through his career and he gives more social commentary. The poet frequently defines his poetic position through the image of the Callimachean Apollo and through the comparison of his Callimachean Apollo with that of Vergil. Propertius' social commentary on the horrors of civil war is expressed through a description of the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine and the artworks in it that display Apollo's warlike aspects. The rejection of Vergil's warlike Actian Apollo in 2.34 and embrace of the Callimachean Apollo in 3.1-5, allows him to comment on the warmongering culture among the ruling elite in Rome and define himself in opposition to them. Finally, the two faces of Apollo serve in poem 4.6 as an image through which Propertius can reconcile the worlds of the Roman general and the poet.