PROPERTIANA

The study of Propertius has been greatly facilitated by the publication by Stephen Heyworth of his Oxford Text and of his *Cynthia*. Many problems are now resolved or at any rate as near resolution as they are likely to be in the absence of some unexpected MS discovery. Other problems remain, and this very corrupt text will no doubt continue to provoke attempts at emendation; here are three. All citations are taken from Heyworth's OCT; references to comment by Heyworth are to his *Cynthia*.

3.18.1

Clausus ab umbroso qua ludit pontus Auerno

Goold (1999) translates 'the sea, locked out from shadowy Avernus'. Heyworth points out that since Agrippa's harbour works of 37 BC this was no longer the case, and that the meaning should be 'enclosed by shady Avernus'. No doubt, but the natural meaning of *claudo ab* is "to shut off from'; cf. Liv. 30.24.9 *ea [insula] sinum ab alto claudit*. The correct meaning can best be obtained by altering *ab* to *in*:

Clausus in umbroso qua ludit pontus Auerno

By opening up Avernus to sea-going vessels Agrippa has permitted the sea to enter the lake; cf. Suet. *Aug.* 16.1 *portum Iulium apud Baias immisso in Lucrinum et Auernum lacum mari effecit*; Verg. *Georg.* 2.164 *Tyrrhenusque fretis immittitur aestus Auernis*. The corruption could either be a trivial accident or else the deliberate work of a literal-minded scribe who could not see why it should be desirable to have the sea disporting itself inside a harbour.

3.23.6

illae [tabellae] iam sine me norant placare puellas
atque eaedem sine me uerba diserta loqui;

The archetype had the feeble *et quaedam*; the almost equally feeble *atque eaedem* is due to Heinsius. Heyworth adduces synizesis of oblique forms of *idem* at 2.8.26; 3.6.36; 4.7.7; 4.7.8; however, there is no example with the nominative and none where *idem*

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has quite so little point. Furthermore, *eaedem*, though used at Lucretius 1.306, is avoided by the Augustans and by Catullus; we may therefore be reluctant to accept it as a conjecture. Besides, Propertius or any other competent Latin poet would surely have expressed these sentiments by means of a stylish and emphatic repetition:

illae iam sine me norant placare puellas
et <norant> sine me uerba diserta loqui;

For the chiastic repetition, cf. 2.24B.36–7 *eheu tu mihi certus eras. / certus eras eheu*. Such repetitions could easily confuse a scribe, who would already have the alternative word order in mind. Omission of *norant* followed; *quaedam* is a prosaic metrical interpolation.

4.1A.17

nulli cura fuit externos quaerere diuos

The problem here is the anomalous scansion of *fuit*. Platnauer (1951, 60–1) shows that such scansions are regular with otherwise tribrachic verbs like *petiit abiit*. This he attributes to a return 'metri gratia, to the older vowel quantity'. But the supposed motivation is inadequate; such tribrachs are easily employed in dactylic verse, as Platnauer himself points out. On the other hand, if the motivation is mere convenience, there is no reason why the licence should be confined to tribrachs. It is much more likely that the shortening of the first i which followed from dropping u in forms like *abiuit* led to the lengthening of the second i by way of compensation. If that is the correct explanation, there can be no justification for *fuit* here. The problem vanishes with:

nulli cura fuit peregrinos quaerere diuos

Not merely does this restore normal scansion, it also gives *diuos* a marginally more precise epithet, though of course *externos* would make perfectly good sense. There is nothing wrong with *externi diui* as such, and *externi homines* are free to worship them as much as they like. Objection arises when a Roman acquires (*OLD* sv *quaero* 7) one or more *externi diui* and thus makes them resident aliens, *peregrini* (cf. *OLD* s.v. *peregrinus*[1] 1a); without senatorial authorisation such peregrine deities are disreputable and in permanent danger of suppression.

The progression is illustrated by Liv. 4.30.9–11 *animos quoque multiplex religio et pleraque externa inuasit, nouos ritus sacrificandi uaticinando inferentibus in domos quibus quaestui sunt*

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capti superstitione animi, donec publicus iam pudor ad primores ciuitatis peruenit cernentes in omnibus uicis sacellisque peregrina atque insolita piacula pacis deum exposcendae. datum inde aedilibus ut animaduerterent ne qui nisi Romani di neu quo alio more quam Romano colerentur. We may also compare Cic. *Leg.* 2.37 *nouos uero deos .... sic Aristophanes .... uexat, ut apud eum Sabazius et quidam alii dei peregrini iudicati e ciuitate eiciantur*; Liv. 5.52.10 *peregrinos deos transtulimus Romam*. Scribes were always inclined to the accidental substitution of synonyms or near-synonyms. Alternatively, *externos* could be a deliberate gloss; in Christian Latin *peregrinus*, like its reflexes in the Romance languages, meant 'pilgrim', and it may have seemed sensible to anticipate a potential misunderstanding.

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